



Upstate New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

A REPORT FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE Conference Assembly - Spring 2012

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'

Isaiah 52:7

Synodical Staffing

Director of Evangelical Mission Named

Rev. Judith VanOsdol is returning to the Upstate New York Synod as the Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM). She is called to this work by the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) Unit of the ELCA. Pastor VanOsdol has a passion for mission and is deeply excited to begin work with the congregations and missional leaders of Upstate New York Synod.

Most recently Pastor VanOsdol has been serving as a mission redeveloper for El Milagro/The Miracle Lutheran Church-- a bilingual/Latino community in South Minneapolis, including work with the Latino Strategy for the Twin Cities. For many years, she served as an ELCA Missionary in Latin America, based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her first call was as an Assistant Pastor at St. Paul's, Pittsford.

Read more about her here (<http://bit.ly/HDJs5A>) and come meet her in person at our synod assembly.



Invitation to Assembly

Join us at the 2012 Synod Assembly, Friday, June 8 & Saturday, June 9, 2012 at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center in downtown Rochester, NY.

A special pre-assembly Global Café on Thursday evening will kick off our theme, Mobile for Mission, which focuses on Global Mission. Look for the feet as you travel around assembly to learn how we live out our mission based on the text from Isaiah 52:7.

The assembly is more than a time to vote on a mission proposal and do the business of the Synod. We also gather to:

- Connect with those beyond the local congregation;
- Find inspiration that Christ is among us and working;
- Grow in hope as we see that we are a part of the larger work of Christ in the world;
- Gain illustrations and ideas to take back to our congregations;
- Experience inspiring worship and music;
- Identify, discuss, and work toward visions and mission that we can do as the larger community together that we cannot do alone, individually or in smaller congregations.



Tremendous response to Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee Disasters

Thanks to your generosity we exceeded our goal and raised over \$37,000 for flood relief in addition to \$5,000 from Thrivent. National Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) also provided \$75,000 for long term recovery. Funds will be used in support of unmet needs in the long term recovery process. Multiple training events have been held and local teams are working hard to develop the infrastructure needed to support long term recovery. We give thanks for the four plus years of work Patsy Glista has given as our LDR Coordinator. A new leadership team, initially chaired by Gary Roller of Redeemer, Rochester, will carry on this work. We give thanks to LutheranCare Ministries in Clinton, NY who continues to support this ministry.

Health and Wellness Priority for 2011-2012

Creating a Healthy and Vibrant Synod

Promoting healthy and missional congregational life

Forming and supporting healthy leaders

GIVE NOW

New Visions Workshop

May 11 and 12

St. John's, West Seneca



New Visions is a training program designed for leaders to raise mission consciousness, to plan mission activity, and to implement mission efforts in their congregations. Recognizing that change will be resisted less if associated with mission, the training includes effective ways to process change. Dr. Peter L. Steinke, who initiated the "Bridgebuilder" program for conflicted churches and "Healthy Congregations" to help leaders create and sustain healthy congregation functioning, is the designer of New Visions.

To register visit <http://upstatenysynod.org/new-visions-steinke>

This workshop is made possible in part because of funds made available by completing the 2011 health assessment from Portico Benefit Services (formerly ELCA Board of Pensions)

Feed the Roots of Leadership

A capital campaign of the Upstate New York Synod for:
Campus Ministry, Outdoor Ministry and Seminary Education

visit <http://upstatenysynod.org/capital-campaign> to find out more today!

The *Feed the Roots for Leadership* Capital Appeal continues. Funds have already started their work in support of outdoor ministries, campus ministries and seminary scholarships. The ELCA Fund for Leaders will provide about \$5000 in scholarships in 2012-2013 to candidate(s) for ordained ministry attending ELCA seminaries. As of January 31, 2012, a total of \$312,825.63 has been received and \$230,131.14 has been passed along to designated ministries. These numbers represent actual funds and do not include pledges.

Financial Health

Thank you to all those who maintained or increased your Synod's mission support over the past year. Your gifts support God's work in so many ways: campus and outdoor ministry, leadership programs, disaster relief efforts, hunger and homelessness programs, our seminaries and youth programs, global mission – ministries accomplished across our synod, our country, and the world. If these difficult times forced your congregation to cut your mission support gifts we say, "Thank you for what you are able to give and we pray that next year will be better."

We have completed another difficult year with mixed financial results. In October despite continued diligence in cost maintenance and strong returns from our investment portfolio, continued decline in unrestricted mission income from congregations led to Synod Council approving the reduction of our ELCA mission support to 40% from 47.2%. This was initiated in the fourth quarter of 2011 and continues in the current year. Mission income has declined by \$600 thousand since 2001, greatly reducing the Synod's ability to fund ministry.

On the positive side, the operating budget ended 2011 in the black. The lease at 110 Hinsdale Road was renewed through 2017. *Feed the Roots of Leadership* continues with positive results which are already being shared with designated ministries. A 2012/2013 budget of \$1.33 million was adopted by Synod Council that again closely controls costs and projects a small surplus.

Please continue to prayerfully consider the value of your congregation's mission commitment that supports essential staff time for all the ministries of this Synod. Opportunities and resources to learn more about stewardship are available by contacting the Synod office.



Resurrection people who pray first, walk together and change lives

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<http://upstatenysynod.org>

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