

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

# NOTES & QUOTES

Volume 20, Issue 3

MARCH 2007

## LEAN INTO LENT.....

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

tskrenes@nglsynod.org

***Death***

***Ashes***

***Silence***

***Reflection***

***Yearning for Forgiveness***

***Seeking Peace***

***Desiring Health***

***Finding Hope***

For forty days we are given the privilege to face our own lives. We are called by this Lenten Season to absorb the voice of God. We listen to that Word remind us that the way of the cross is death. Leaning into Lent, the people of God find hope. Take seriously the time. Cling to the cross. These are disciplines of Lent:

Pray.

Read God's Word every day.

Gather with God's people.

Give. Sacrifice.

Love.

Make room in your life this Lent for God.



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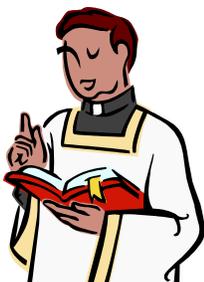
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## THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)



“GOD MOVED  
AND  
INFLUENCED  
ME  
THROUGH  
PEOPLE...”



“It was not my doing...”

### An Interview with Senior Seminarian Scott Ehle

Scott Ehle, a native of Rudyard, Michigan, and a member of St. James Church, is a senior at Wartburg Seminary. He graduates this spring, and will be seeking ordination as a pastor of the Church this summer. I talked to him recently, and parts of our conversation follow.

**Bishop Skrenes:** “Scott, how was it that you decided to seek to be a pastor?”

**Scott Ehle:** “It was not my doing. God moved and influenced me through people. Campus Minister Pastor Jon Magnuson was one. I told Jon, “You are crazy.” But as I became more active in campus ministry at Northern Michigan University - I was being shaped. Fortune Lake Lutheran Bible Camp also influenced me and helped me see my calling from God. Through prayer and careful reflection, I perceived a Call.”

**Bishop Skrenes:** “How has your congregation shaped you?”

**Scott Ehle:** “I grew up in Rudyard, a closely knit community. Lay people held our St. James Church together. For me, they have been incredibly supportive. I am the first seminarian in 100 plus years. I know they are behind me.”

**Bishop Skrenes:** “Scott, how has the synod’s financial support of your work at seminary made a difference?”

**Scott Ehle:** “Sometimes it is groceries. Sometimes it is books. I would be a lot further in debt were it not for our synod. I am here by the grace of God and the Northern Great Lakes Synod. The synod’s support gives me a lot of hope. The support of our synod is an act of kindness.”

All Northern Great Lakes Synod seminarians receive \$2,500 of financial support from the synod in 2007 along with another \$1,100 of scholarship support from the Skogman, Kemppainen and First Ev. Lutheran of Iron Mountain endowment funds. The continuing financial support of the Church is essential in the preparation of the next generation of pastors for the church.

### Tanzania Choir is Coming to Our Synod

May 5-25

It will be great! This spring the Northern Great Lakes Synod will host the 20 member choir from Kijitonyama Lutheran Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. They will be with us for three weeks, and will tour the entire synod from May 5-26 singing in every one of our eight Conferences. The choir will be an important part of our Synod Assembly which meets May 18-20 in Marquette.

The Tanzania Choir ranges in age from 23 to 50 years. They will be accompanied by the Assis-

**THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)**

tant to the Bishop of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Pastor George Fupe and his wife, Elizabeth. The choir is from the companion congregation of Our Saviour's in Iron Mountain, and a group of elders and the pastor of the Kijitonyama's parish will also be visiting Iron Mountain during the time the choir is here.

Deloris Langseth from Faith in Calumet has taken on the huge responsibility of coordinating the choir's visit. The synod is responsible for the cost of the choir, and your generous financial support to the Tanzania Choir Fund is being sought. The Africans presence in our midst will be very exciting as they present the Gospel of Jesus in a wonderful way.

A full schedule of concerts will be published for the Tanzania choir in a few weeks.

## Ask, Thank, Tell

### Pastors Stewardship Retreat

Our synod Stewardship Committee will sponsor an overnight retreat on April 24-25 for rostered leaders in the synod on the important topic of stewardship. Pastor Chick Lane, Stewardship specialist for the ELCA and author of the book Ask, Thank, Tell will be our guest speaker. Pastor Lane has a long career of excellent stewardship work first as a parish pastor, then as Assistant to the Bishop in the Northwest Synod of Minnesota and now on staff for Churchwide ELCA. His book has become a practical favorite around this church.

The first fifteen rostered leaders who register may attend the retreat. The only cost is hotel accommodations and mileage to the event at First Lutheran in Iron Mountain. Call me at the synod office to register.

## Earthkeeper Reflections: Why God Calls Us to Care

Pastor Tari Stage Harvey, Zion, St. Ignace and Trinity, Brevort

The bishop requested that, as one of the Earthkeeper representatives for our Synod, I write some theological reflection on why God calls us to care for the earth. As we prepare for the spring pharmaceutical clean up where we hope to gather some of the medicines that poison our waters, and raise awareness of how our actions have reactions, these were some of my thoughts.

*As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. Mark 1:29-31*

People of faith tend to be wary of environmentalists. We get a little anxious that some kind of nature worship is going on, some kind of idolatry. Sometimes the earth seems to become a god. I asked an environmentalist once why he devoted his life to caring for the earth when he knew, regardless of all his effort, one day it would come to an end. We all know that. One day this beloved planet will end either through man-made or natural means. So why should we bother?

His answer remains a vivid image to me. He said, "If your mother was dying, would you abandon her, or worse, would you abuse her?" Normally, when people look for a religious reason to be environmentally active, it is based on the first article of the creed. God has created us and all that exists so we should care for it. That is solid ground, but I would like to explore some of how Jesus calls us to tend the sick and dying, and how the Holy Spirit works through creation.

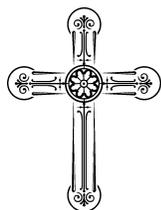
As soon as my friend brought up the image of the dying mother, I began to think of Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus enters the

room where the sick woman lies; he takes her by the hand and lifts her up. What a powerful image for Christ's relationship with our sick world. We tend to be androcentric when we think of Christ's salvation, but Paul reminds us that all of creation is groaning. All of creation is dying and rising, and we are called to be the messengers of God's reconciliation and healing.

When the woman is healed, she begins to serve them, or minister to them, as the RSV says. What an interesting relationship we have with a wounded creation through Christ. We are Christ's hands and feet bringing healing, but we are also ministered to by that which is healed. We are messengers of healing and reconciliation, reaching out to lift up, sharing words and acts of hope while, at the same time, this wounded world is ministering to us. The wounded world is a messenger to us of healing and reconciliation. This wounded world binds up our wounds. That's the process of reconciliation happening here and now because of the cross and resurrection, because of Christ reaching out through all creation and lifting up.

We also need to remember that the Holy Spirit is alive and working sanctification through the grit of this earth. The bread harvested from the earth, the wine from crushed grapes, and water from the lakes are all elements to carry God's grace and Word. When we disconnect, pollute, and destroy this world, we are not only abusing the sick and wounded creation, but we create barriers in our faith journey. When we separate from creation, we disconnect from the work of the Holy Spirit who is always connected with the physical element. The Spirit never comes in a vacuum, but is always connected to an element of the earth.

So, why should we bother? It is not to save the earth. We care and lift up creation as stewards of God's gifts. We care and lift up creation as wounded healers and messengers of reconciliation. And we care and lift up creation as those who experience the Holy Spirit in the sacraments, in the woods, and in one another.



**In Memory**  
**Pastor Allen**  
**Goodrich**  
**1948-2007**

Our brother in Christ, Pastor Allen Goodrich, died at his home in Mohawk, Michigan on Thursday morning, February 15, 2007. Since his ordination in 1990, Pastor Goodrich has been serving under Call at Bethany Lutheran Church of the Keweenaw. A graduate of the University of Michigan, he taught at Rudyard Schools and at Lake Superior State University before attending Luther Seminary. Pastor Goodrich served the entire Keweenaw area for nearly seventeen years, and was a respected community spiritual leader. He also served this Church by taking a leadership role in the development of the Shepherd of the Sea Chapel in Copper Harbor. His ministry was centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Goodrich is survived in this life by his wife, Lavina, and his three children, Sonnet, Kirsten and Matthew; four sisters, four brothers, other family members and many, many friends.

We witnessed to the Resurrection of Christ at Pastor Goodrich's funeral services on Ash Wednesday morning, February 21, 2007, at Bethany Church in Mohawk. During this Lent, we remember Pastor Goodrich and the human reality that "we are dust and to dust we shall return." We will also recall the words of the hymn, "In life, in death O Lord, Abide with me."

We cling to the cross of Jesus.

## TRANSITIONS

+Pastor Len Gilley (Salem, Bark River) is home after complicated hip surgery and extended therapy. May God bless Pastor Gilley and give him full and speedy recovery.

+We welcome back to our synod Pastor Marlin Snyder who will soon begin his responsibilities as pastor (Interim, part time) at **Bethany in Covington** and **Trinity in Trout Creek**. Pastor Snyder served those same congregations more than 15 years ago, and has agreed to come out of retirement for this contractual ministry. Welcome, Pastor Snyder!

+Congratulations to **Pastor Corinne Johnson**

(**Concordia/Palmer and Our Saviour's/Suomi**) on her appointment by the ELCA Church Council to the ELCA Task Force on Human Sexuality. Pastor Johnson and her colleagues are writing a proposed social statement on sexuality which will be considered over the next several years. We pray that the Task Force will reflect the Word of God and will serve God's people.

+Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes  
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### **Lutheran World Relief**

Zion, Marinette  
Holy Trinity, Chassell  
Calvary, Rapid River  
Trinity, Rapid River  
St. James, Marinette  
Bethany, Escanaba

### **Lutheran Campus Ministry**

Faith, Ishpeming  
Bethany, Ishpeming  
Emanuel, Skandia  
Bethany, Amasa  
Grace, Gwinn

### **ELCA Disaster Funds**

Grace, South Range  
Bethany, Escanaba

### **Lay School for Mission**

Trinity, Rapid River

### **Endowment Fund**

Zion, Ironwood

### **Temeke Lutheran Church**

Gloria Dei, Hancock

### **World Missionary Support**

Bethel, Ishpeming

### **Seminarian Support**

St. Paul, Ironwood  
Good Shepherd, Peshtigo

### **Theological Leaders' Event**

Donald & Kathryn Nyquist

### **REGION 5 LAY MINISTERS GATHERING**

*Let My Prayer Rise Before You As Incense*

**-Contemplation and Connection-**

On April 22-24, 2007, Region 5 will hold its biannual Lay Ministers Gathering at Sinsinawa Retreat Center for all Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers, and Deaconesses in Region 5. A brochure was sent to all active rostered lay leaders in the region. Those retired from the lay roster, or students preparing for lay roster ministry, are invited as well, and the synod office has a brochure available. Contact Cheryl Hollich [chollich@machling.com](mailto:chollich@machling.com) or Region 5 Coordinator for Ministry Leadership Carl Richard Evenson [carl.evenson@ecunet.org](mailto:carl.evenson@ecunet.org) for more information. Deadline for registrations is March 15.



**+ From the Assistant to the Bishop +**  
**Pastor Jennifer Johnson Wrege**

**Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to  
me,  
for in you my soul takes refuge;  
in the shadow of your wings I will take  
refuge,  
until the destroying storms pass by.  
I cry to God Most High,  
to God who fulfills his purpose for me.**

**Psalms 57:1-6**

Eight minutes into the worship, they slide into the pew ahead of us, the four of them: Mom, Dad, and two middle school age daughters who looked to be about a year apart in age. Just a quick glance at the expressions they bore told the story of how the morning went in their home, and I'll bet it wasn't pretty. Deep lines of anger and frustration streaked across the forehead of Dad. His eyes were blazing as he indicated with a sharply pointed finger that she was to sit next to him in the pew. He grabbed a hymnal from the rack, knocking the Bible to the floor, and thrust it into his daughter's hands. The expression on her face indicated nothing. Except for the red eyes, presumably from tears, her face was blank, numb, frozen, nothing. Mom, on the other hand, was smiling and sitting close to the grinning other daughter, who was leaning into her mother as Mom put her arm around her daughter, hugged her, and held her there. No blazing eyes here. It was the picture of tenderness. It was the image of a cozy, blessed, beloved relationship between a young teenage daughter and her mother.

What was happening between her Mom and her sister did not go unnoticed by the daughter still sitting next to her Dad.

The sermon was about forgiveness. What a wonder that while the WORD was being preached, the WORD was also working! And, I could see it like I

never had before – right before my eyes. Right in front of me, I witnessed the melting of hardened, angry hearts. I watched as Dad and daughter began to exchange quick and tentative glances that widened into eye contact. Their words were whispered and few: "I'm sorry," they said to each other. Can you imagine what happened next? In full and deliberate motion Dad's arm flew up and around his daughter's shoulders. Immediately, she grabbed his hand and nestled even closer into his side. Suddenly, she was grinning. From ear to ear, she was smiling. And, she was making sure that Mom and her sister were aware of this moment of transformation. Clearly, it was absolutely wonderful to, once again, be safe and secure in her father's arms.

In the same way, there is a huge delight, a deep sense of security, and a welling up of faith and trust in the God who steadfastly loves us and unconditionally accepts us when we take refuge in the shadow of God's wings – God's arms.

I'm thinking that just about anytime is a good time to take refuge in the shadow of God's wings, but in these days of Lent as we journey to the Cross, the crucifixion, before the great celebration of resurrection - when winter is hesitant to loosen its grip upon us, when temperatures remain cold, as the woods remain gray, as news of the changes, challenges, and difficulties others are facing come to us for prayer and support, as we confront our own demons and difficulties – it is a most excellent time to take refuge in the shadow of God's wings.

Lenten blessings to you



## Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors

**Bethany, Escanaba - Pastor Peter Andersen**  
**Grace, South Range - Pastor Jimalee Jones & Pastor Peter Gundersen**  
**First, Dollar Bay - Pastor Jimalee Jones & Pastor Peter Gundersen**  
**Trinity, Ishpeming - Pastor Warren Geier**  
**Bethel, Ishpeming - Associate Pastor Vacancy**  
**Prince of Peace, Marquette - Pastor Rell Spickerman**  
**Trinity, Stambaugh & Bethany, Amasa - Pastor Doug Johnson**  
**All Saints, Wakefield - Pastor John Kuziej**  
**Central, Menominee - Pastor Ken Michaelis**  
**Pioneer Lake, Conover - Pastor Dorothy Lindstrom**  
**Bethany, Covington & Trinity, Trout Creek - Pastor Scott Williams**  
**Holy Cross, Baraga & Zion, Skanee - Pastor Ted Koehl**  
**Bethany, Norway - Pastor Earnest Ness**  
**Bethel, Cedarville & Zion, Allenville - Pastor George Kaiser**  
**Bethany, Mohawk - Pastor Peter Vorhes**

“In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus...” (Colossians 1:3-4a)

Generous January giving from our congregations enabled the Synod to end the fiscal year more strongly than had been anticipated, for which we are deeply grateful. We look forward with renewed excitement to this new year of ministry as we grow in service and witness to our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for the partnership we share with the congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod.

As of 1/31/07	2006	2007	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,033,577	1,051,980	+18,403	+1.2%
Amount Received	52,302	81,140	+28,838	+55%
Designated Gifts	11,286	10,464	-822	-7.3%



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**ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR MARCH 2007**

**[www.prayfaithfully.org](http://www.prayfaithfully.org)**

***JOINT DEVOTIONS WITH OUR BROTHERS AND  
SISTERS IN THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD  
AND THE DELAWARE / MARYLAND SYNOD***