

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

NOTES & QUOTES

Volume 20, Issue 5

MAY 2007

FROM THE BISHOP

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes
tskrenes@nglsynod.org



Northern Great Lakes Synod

Synod Assembly 2007

May 18 - 20

Marquette, Michigan

It will be an exciting time! Our 20th Annual Assembly of the Northern Great Lakes Synod meets May 18-20 in Marquette. The 94 congregations of this Synod gather to worship God, celebrate the grace of God's love for His creation, and do the business of the Church. Under the theme "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One Hope", the Synod's 300 voting members and visitors will worship together with Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists and other Christians in our three-day Assembly.

We will as a Church:

+Celebrate with the Kijitonyama Congregation Choir of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania as they continue to visit our Synod in the month of May. They will perform for the Assembly on Saturday evening.

+Hear from Assistant Bishop George Fupe from the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania as our keynoter.

+Meet the Treasurer of the ELCA, Christina Jackson-Skelton, who will represent Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson reporting on the work of our Churchwide organization. Ms. Jackson-Skelton is a fine leader who continues to skillfully manage the financial ministry of this Church.

+Adopt budgets, resolutions and discuss matters before this Church in workshops and in plenary sessions.

+Pray for God's Church in our Synod area and around the world.



1029 N. Third Street
Marquette, MI 49855

906/ 228-2300

906/ 228-2527 fax

ngls@nglsynod.org

www.nglsynod.org

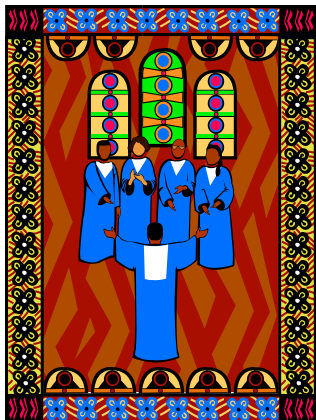
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THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

COME AND HEAR THE MUSIC!

COME AND SHARE THE FAITH!

After two years of preparation, they are coming to Northeastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Kijitonyama Lutheran Congregation Choir of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania will be with us in May. Twenty faithful Christian women and men will sing their way across our Synod, having a concert in every one of our eight Conferences. The Choir members range in age from 23 to 50, and are from a companion congregation of Our Saviour's Lutheran in Iron Mountain.

Our Companion Synod Committee has established a number of concerts, and we invite you to come and be a part of this experience.

The complete schedule of concerts follows:

Sunday, May 6 at 3:00 p.m. CT

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Iron Mountain, Michigan

Monday, May 7 at 7:00 p.m. CT

Crystal Falls Theatre, Crystal Falls, Michigan

Tuesday, May 8 at 7:00 p.m. ET

Grace Lutheran Church, South Range, Michigan

Thursday, May 10 at 7:00 p.m. CT

Zion Lutheran Church, Ironwood, Michigan

Friday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m. CT

Trinity Lutheran Church, Rhinelander, Wisconsin

Sunday, May 13 at 6:00 p.m. CT

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Menominee, Michigan

Tuesday, May 15 at 7:30 p.m. ET

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Escanaba, Michigan

Thursday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. ET

Bethel Lutheran Church, Ishpeming, Michigan

Saturday, May 19 at 7:00 p.m. ET

Synod Assembly, NMU, Great Lakes Rooms, Don H. Bottum Center

Sunday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m. ET

Zion Lutheran Church, St. Ignace, Michigan



**KIJITONYAMA
LUTHERAN
CONGREGATION
CHOIR - COME
AND BE A PART
OF THIS
EXPERIENCE!**

THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)



CONGRATULATIONS, FINLANDIA!

CONGRATULATIONS, PRESIDENT-ELECT PASTOR PHILIP JOHNSON!

A pastor of this Synod has been named President of Finlandia University in Hancock! The Rev. Dr. Philip Johnson will assume the presidency of our church college in Hancock, Michigan on July 1. He replaces Dr. Robert Ubbelohde, who is retiring. Pastor Johnson has experience in many areas of church and university life. He has served as Chaplain and Associate Dean at the University since January 2006.

From 1999-2005, Pastor Johnson taught at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary and the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He served as the Seminary's Dean of the Theology Department from 2001-2003. From 1992-1996, Dr. Johnson supervised the Nairobi Lutheran Parish of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church. Prior to this, from 1988-1991, he was associate pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Circle Pines, Minnesota.

Pastor Johnson completed his M.Div. and Ph.D. at Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is married to Rene' Johnson, the director of servant leadership at Finlandia. The Johnsons have two high school age children, Simon and Neal. They are members of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Hancock.

Our Synod looks forward to many good years of faithful partnership and growth with Finlandia University. God keep Pastor Philip and Rene' Johnson!

THANK GOD FOR BISHOP EMERITUS DALE SKOGMAN!



He is still working for God's Church! Thank God for Bishop Dale Skogman, who has just completed his work as Co-Chair of the Search Committee for the new President at Finlandia University. Bishop Skogman spent hundreds of hours in meetings and on the telephone in pursuit of an excellent new leader for the University. As a member of the Search

Committee, it was a great experience for me to, again, watch Bishop Skogman at work. As we know, Dale runs a tight meeting, and moves a committee efficiently to get its job done. Bishop Skogman's energy, care for detail and pastoral wisdom are nearly legendary in this Synod. Eight years into retirement, Bishop Skogman keeps on doing ministry in the name of Jesus. And then there is Jo! With her own faithful life, spouse Jo has a wonderful sense of partnership with Dale and love for God's Church. Thank you, Dale and Jo, for your witness to Christ!



THE SYNOD OFFICE STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

It now looks like early June! The work continues on the newly remodeled office on Third Street in Marquette. When completed, the offices of Lutheran Social Services will be housed with us in our updated and expanded facilities. Until then, the staff is "squeezed into" a classroom at Messiah Lutheran in Marquette. We hope to have a dedication of the facility in September.

TRANSITIONS



+Congratulations to **Pastor Ken Gibson** who has accepted a Call to be the Vice President for Development with Hillcrest Family

Services in Dubuque, Iowa. For the past several years, Pastor Gibson has served on the staff of Wartburg Seminary. He previously was the pastor at Holy Trinity in Chassell, Michigan. Pastor Gibson is now transferring to the Northeast Iowa Synod. God bless Ken as he continues to serve this Church!

+A new baby in the pastors' family! Congratulations to **Pastor Kari Vadis and Pastor Tim Vadis (Trinity, Rhinelander)** on the birth of their new daughter, **Elsa Lin**. May God bless the Vadis family as they celebrate new life.

+Congratulations to **Bishop Alex and Erica Malasusa** on the birth of a new daughter, **Mercy**. Our Companion Synod Bishop in Tanzania and his wife now have three children: Michael, Miriam and baby Mercy. Thanks be to God!

+Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop
tskrenes@nglsynod.org



THANK YOU

Lutheran World Relief
Zion, Marinette
St. Mark's, Marquette
Calvary, Rapid River

World Missionary Support

Bethel, Ishpeming

Trinity, Stambaugh

Calvary, Rapid River

Trinity, Rhinelander

Pioneer Lake, Conover

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Grace, Gwinn

Trinity, Brevort

St. Olaf WELCA, Rubicon

Bethany, Amasa

Lay School for Mission

Trinity, Rapid River

Seminarian Support

Calvary, Minocqua

Tanzania Teacher Gift

Helen Ademino

Joyce Peterson

David & Mary Lou Blomquist

David & Tracy Rowe

Robert & Phyllis Gottschalk

Albert & Kathryn Sundine

Rev. Rudolph & Darley Kemppainen

Rev. Robert & Deloris Langseth

Marian Gronquist

Helen Koski

George & Jonelle Collins

Bishop Thomas & Luanne Skrenes

Marianne & John Evans

Tanzanian Choir

Zion, Manistique

Robert & Marjorie Nelson

Gloria Dei, Hancock

Holy Trinity, Chassell

ELCA Disaster Funds

Grace, South Range

Bethany, Amasa

Kemppainen Scholarship Fund

Bethel WELCA, Ishpeming

Kisarawe Water Project

Third World Handcrafts Shoppe

Endowment Fund

Rev. John & Kathryn Autio



+ From the Assistant to the Bishop +

Pastor Jennifer Johnson Wrege

*For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.*

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,

when none of them as yet existed.

Psalm 139:13-16

I was alone in the bathroom at a Shopko, and invisible to two young women I could not see who rushed into the room. One of them was crying; the other attempting to do her best at consoling and comforting. As one of them fumbled to unwrap a package which produced the sound of crinkling paper, I heard these words spoken by the one who was not in tears, "Tomorrow we will go to Planned Parenthood. They have confidentiality there." With the door banging behind her, the one who was crying went into the stall beside me, and proceeded with the pregnancy test as her friend read out the directions.

The young woman in tears had a litany of questions, which she spoke with a halting voice punctuated with sobs: "How could this happen? What will I do now? Why is God letting this happen to me?"

Then, she was done. Though I couldn't see the scene on the other side of the door where I was sitting, I could imagine the two of them hovering over the pregnancy test waiting for a sign. Then it came – the sigh of relief. There was no pregnancy. With

the anxiety of an unintended pregnancy lifted, I expected them to toss the test in the wastebasket and exit with lighter spirits. But no sooner had this anticipated response crossed my mind, I could again hear crying and these words, "Why did this happen? I could have been a mother! I could have had a baby! Why is God letting this happen to me?"

Of course, I know absolutely nothing about either of these two young women. But, what I do know is that they are like all of us in this way: We need to be loved. We need to be able to express love to others. We need to know that there is a meaningful purpose, beyond ourselves, for our existence. And, we need to know that we are here, not by accident, but by God's "knitting" in our mothers' wombs.

Like any other month of the year, the month of May is marked by passages and transitions. As we celebrate and observe the glorious Easter season in the Church – a season so festive and central that we keep up the celebration for a full seven Sundays – there will also be graduations, confirmations, weddings, funerals, baptisms, Mother's Day, birthdays, and then, finally, Pentecost. Each step of the way through the Sundays and days of May, there is an opportunity for us to hear God's word to us that is filled with grace, truth, and love.

May that word come to you loud and clear!



Blessings!

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 Marlin Snyder

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

“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:17) The congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod have been generous through the first quarter of 2007. Mission Support (benevolence) gifts are 10% higher than 2006 receipts. We are deeply grateful for the timely remittance of these gifts, and for the partnership we share as together we carry forth Christ’s mission.

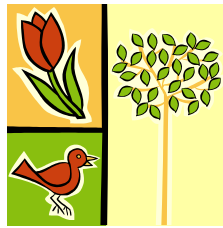
As of 3/31/07	2006	2007	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,033,577	1,052,035	+18,458	+1.8%
Amount Received	175,148	193,033	+17,885	+10.2%
Designated Gifts	32,869	29,713	-3,156	-9.6%



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SYNOD**

1029 N. Third Street
Marquette, MI 49855

Phone: 906-228-2300
Fax: 906-228-2527
E-mail: npls@nplsynod.org



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MAY 2007



ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR MAY
2007

www.prayfaithfully.org

The devotion writers for May are Confirmation students from the following congregations:

May 6-12 / Palmer Suomi Parish

May 13-19 / Trinity, Stonington and Pioneer Lake, Conover

May 20-26 / Our Saviour's, Paynesville & First, Ewen

May 27-June 2 / Calvary, Rapid River