

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD

# NOTES & QUOTES

Volume 20, Issue 6-7

JUNE / JULY 2007

## ONE

**Bwana Asifewe!!**

**(Praise the Lord in Swahili)**

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

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The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of the Northern Great Lakes Synod met in Marquette from May 18-20. From the prayer service with the Roman Catholics on Friday night, to the work of the Assembly on Saturday and Sunday, to the Tanzania Choir throughout the weekend, to the worship service on Sunday morning, the 300 voting members and visitors praised the Lord under the theme “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One Hope.”

### At our Assembly:

+We thanked God for making us “One” under the cross of Jesus. And we asked God to draw us closer to each other and to Jesus.

+The Synod elected a new Vice President. **Pauline Kiltinen from St. Mark’s in Marquette** was elected to serve this Synod for the next four years as Vice President. Vice President Kiltinen comes to us with a wealth of experience in the church and community. She currently serves as our Synod representative on the Lutheran School of Theology Chicago Board and was the President of Finn Grand Fest 2005.

+The Synod elected **Pastor Doug Johnson from Bethlehem in Florence** as our new Secretary. Pastor Johnson has served on the Synod Council for several years and has been pastor in Florence at the Presbyterian and Lutheran Church there since 1988.

+The Synod unanimously re-elected **Pastor Steve Cowen from Our Saviour’s in Iron Mountain** to a second term as our Synod Treasurer. Pastor Cowen has demonstrated excellence in this work over the last four years, and was recognized for his superb ministry as the holder of the Synod’s purse.

+In a language we do not understand, we understood very well, the message of the **Kijitonyma Lutheran Choir** from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The 20 voices were absolutely magnificent in their musical talent and Christian sincerity. The three-week Choir tour of our Synod met a wonderful climax at the Saturday eve-



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

ning concert with 500 people in attendance. Praise the Lord!

+We learned from the **Churchwide Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton** about the continuing work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Ms. Jackson-Skelton is a wonderful representative of our Church and our Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. **Pastor Gary Grindeland** was our Bible study leader and **Pastor George Fupe**, the Assistant to the Bishop from the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, was our keynoter. We were well fed by these presentations, as well as a number of workshops on Saturday afternoon.

+Persons were elected to other positions of responsibility including:

**Pastor Penny Olson, Pastor Devon Barrix, Pastor David Hueter to the Synod Discipline Committee.**

+We adopted budgets for 2007 and 2008, and a resolution asking the 2007 Church Wide Assembly to require the Board of Pensions to provide disability insurance for all pastors under call, even those over 65 years of age.

+The Synod voting members and congregations gave generously at Assembly:

\$12,554.27	Hunger Quarter Offering
\$2,000.00	Lutheran Social Services/Catholic Charities Offering
\$4,629.21	Tanzania Choir Expenses Offering
\$2,864.00	Third World Shop Sales

**SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2007 - YOUR EVALUATIONS**

This is what you said about the Assembly from the evaluations received and are typical of the responses:

“Great sound and images.”

“The Catholic/Lutheran Prayer service was exceptional - even transforming.”

“Friday night service was very impressive.”

“Best treasurer’s report I’ve ever heard.”

“Rev. George Fupe and wife, Elizabeth, were a delight to listen to. Thank you.”

“I appreciate the hard work of the Assembly Planning Committee. You are unsung heroes of the Assembly.”

“Very well run.”

“A special treat - what energy!”

“Bishop’s sermons, both occasions, 10+ as well.”



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

“Wish I could sleep in - but I can't have it all - we need to get things done.”

**And some other comments and suggestions received - with my responses to them:**

“More room for displays please.” (The University only allows us limited space.)

“Narrower tables please for Assembly.” (The University only has these tables.)

“It would have been nicer to have the Tanzania Choir in an auditorium.” (Yes, but every auditorium in town was busy all weekend.)

“Save money by e-mailing reports.” (Maybe in five years, but now one-third of voting members do not have computers and it was a 150 page Pre-Assembly Report.)

“Should have used University dormitories.” (We quit that practice years ago because the written evaluations for years indicated that it was so unpopular.)

“Lunch line was too long.” (Yes it was, but the University has a very limited food service.)

“Cross reference pages in Pre-Assembly Report to Agenda items.” (Great idea - we will do that in 2008.)

One hundred and forty-four Assembly evaluations were received. On a scale of low 1 to high 5, the Assembly, overall, received an evaluation of 4.57. The Choir from Tanzania, the worship services and the registration process received the highest evaluations. Overall, you indicated that it was an excellent Assembly.

Thank you for the excellent Assembly.

**The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Assembly of the Northern Great Lakes Synod will be Sunday, May 18 and Monday, May 19, 2008, in Marquette.**

**SYNOD OFFICE CONSTRUCTION NEWS!**

For twenty years the Northern Great Lakes Synod offices have been housed in a wonderful older home at 1029 N. Third Street in Marquette. Since very early in this year, our offices have been in “friendly exile” in a Sunday School classroom at Messiah Lutheran Church. We had hoped that by late spring we would be back in our remodeled offices, together with our partners in Lutheran Social Services. Delays have happened! Now it looks like we will be at the Messiah office all summer with an early fall return to Third Street.

We are thankful to Messiah Lutheran Church for use of their facility. I am also thankful to our office staff for dealing with the stresses of this temporary work space. It has not been easy, but your Synod staff is patient, and eager to return to our offices. Pastor Jennifer Johnson Wrege and I have been working largely from our homes. We are available to you by telephone at 906.228.2300 or by appointment.

We will be happy to invite you to an office dedication in the near future.



## TRANSITIONS

+Congratulations to the people of **Bethany Lutheran Church in Escanaba** as **Pastor Paul Mai** has accepted their call to serve as pastor. Pastor Mai comes to the Synod from the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. Pastor Mai will be installed on June 24. May God bless him and his family as they serve Christ in our midst.

+Congratulations to **Pastor Keith Kolstad (Zion, Marinette)** as he received his Doctorate of Ministry degree this spring from Luther Seminary in St. Paul. His doctoral project was entitled, "Clarifying a Congregation's Missional Vision through the Art of Discernment."

+God's blessings to our neighboring Synods who have this spring elected new bishops to serve them for the next six years. Congratulations to **Bishop-elect Duane Pederson** who has been called to serve as bishop of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. He succeeds **Bishop Robert Berg** who has been called to serve at the Board of ELCA Pensions. May God bless **Bishop-elect John Schleicher** who was elected to serve as bishop of the North West Lower Michigan Synod. He succeeds **Bishop Gary Hansen** who has received a call to serve Habitat for Humanity. We look forward to years of continuing partnership with our neighbors in this Church.

+We mourn with the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan as they remember with thanksgiving the life of **Bishop James Kelsey**. Bishop Kelsey was killed in an automobile accident on Sunday, June 3, as he was returning from a congregational visit in the eastern end of the Diocese. May God bless his

family and the people of the Episcopal Diocese who mourn the loss of this bishop, pastor and ecumenical leader. He was my friend and I miss him. The Lord is our shepherd.....

+God bless **Pastor Tom Evans (Our Redeemer, Newberry)** on his resignation as pastor of the congregation. Pastor Evans has served Our Redeemer since 2002.

+Thomas A. Skrenes

Bishop

[tskrenes@nglsynod.org](mailto:tskrenes@nglsynod.org)

*Dates to*

*Remember*



- ◆ Leadership School - July 23-27
- ◆ Senior High Week at Fortune Lake Camp with Bishop Skrenes from July 29-August 3
- ◆ Synod Bishop's Golf Outing September 10
- ◆ Mackinac Island Leaders and Spouses Retreat September 23-25



**Lutheran World Relief**  
Holy Trinity, Chassell  
Calvary, Rapid River

Zion, Marinette

**ELCA Disaster Fund**

Holy Trinity, Chassell

Grace, South Range

Mission United, Pelkie

**Tanzanian Choir**

Holy Trinity, Chassell

Kristine Carlson

George & Jonelle Collins

Immanuel, Negaunee

David & Sandra Etelamaki

Wayne & Eileen Stordahl

Dora Jane Swanson

Erwin & Marjorie Savala

Thomas & Joyce Dupras

Earl Maki

Karin Carlson

Rudy & Vicki Schiller

Men of All Saints, Wakefield

Daniel Laatsch

**Lay School for Mission**

Trinity, Rapid River

Grace, Gwinn

**World Missionary Support**

Calvary, Rapid River

Trinity, Stambaugh

Faith, Rock

Grace, Gwinn

Bethel, Ishpeming

Mission United, Pelkie

Trinity, Rhineland

**Matumbi Lutheran Sunday School**

Trinity, Ishpeming

**Seminarian Support**

Bethany, Amasa

Pastor John West

**Lutheran Campus Ministry**

Trinity, Ishpeming

Bethany, Amasa

Emanuel, Skandia

Bethany, Ishpeming

Faith, Ishpeming

**Tanzania Teachers' Gift**

Peter & Trudy Johnson

Jeffrey Clark

Jonathan & Jennifer Nelson

Elmer & Marie Moisio

Curtis & Judith Erickson

**Kisarawe**

Pastor John West

**Bishop's Discretionary**

Bethany, Mo-

hawk



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

*"Hear this, O Job; **stop** and consider the  
wondrous works of God."*

Job 37:14

It was about a week or so before the 2007 Synod Assembly. I was driving the short distance between Messiah Lutheran Church and my apartment, but obviously not thinking about my driving. There is exactly one stoplight on Magnetic Street between the church and the apartment. As the light turned red while I approached it, I dutifully stopped, looked both ways to see if there were any cars approaching, and because there were none, I pressed my foot to the gas, pulled out the clutch and continued through the red light. I was halfway through when I suddenly became aware of what I was doing. Perhaps it was the police car parked on the other side of the street that startled me to attention.

What could I do? I couldn't stop in the middle of the intersection, especially with a green light for the crossing traffic. I didn't think I could just back up! So, I kept right on going, keeping my eyes straight ahead in order not to make eye contact with the police officer who was observing these less than exemplary driving skills. Once past the intersection, I turned my attention to the rear view mirror in order to monitor the police car's activity. Would the officer make a u-turn and come after me?

You bet he did! He turned on his lights and pulled me over. As he walked up along side my open window, he was already exclaiming, "I can't believe you did that right in front of me!" He asked what I was doing, listened to my story, took a look at my driver's license and registration, went back to his car to check for arrest warrants and to get my "stats," and finally offered that I should go home, stay there, get some sleep and pay better attention to my driving. He did not give me a ticket.

I drove through that same intersection this afternoon. This time the light was green for me. I sailed through without incident, except for a thought that crossed my mind. It was a thought that widened the earlier in May incident at this light into something upon which a stub-

born Swede - such as myself - ought to think and reflect.

So, I am wondering if there have been times when the Holy Spirit has endeavored to help me to stop what I am doing, reflect upon where and to what God is calling me, pray, seek the counsel of others, and perhaps, change direction! I know there have been times when I have stopped - however briefly to consider where and to what God is calling me. Most of the time, like at the stop light that day, I take a quick look around me, assess if there are any obstacles in my way, utter a brief prayer, and continue to move ahead with little or no regard to discerning the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps one thing to look for this summer might be a time to stop ticking down the list of things that call for our attention or need to get done and, instead, set aside time, willingness, and the effort to discern just where and to what work and tasks God is calling us in our lives as disciples of Christ. It could be that there is a change into which we are being invited - a change that would renew, energize, deepen, strengthen, and help us in our faith. Maybe no changes are necessary - though the older I get, the more I doubt that reaching the kind of personal spiritual perfection where change is no longer needed isn't going to happen anytime soon, or even on this side of heaven. We are, to the end of this life, sinner saints.

So, sometime during the next three months or about 12 weeks, I'm hoping that you and I will just STOP at the feet of Jesus, listen to Him, and trust Him to set us on course for our participation in kingdom work.

Blessings!



## **Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors**

**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 - Pastor Ted Koehl**

**Bethany, Norway - Pastor Earnest Ness**

**Bethel, Cedarville & Zion, Allenville - Pastor George Kaiser**

**Bethany, Mohawk - Pastor Peter Vorhes**

**Our Redeemer, Newberry - Pastor LaVonne Stephenson**

Calendar year Mission Support giving remains above last year, due in part to excellent January receipts. However, fiscal year giving is \$20,634 less than FY 2006. As we enter the summer months, and what is traditionally a challenging time for congregational giving, we encourage everyone to trust that God will provide for all our needs as we carry forth the mission of the Northern Great Lakes Synod and the ELCA. Thank you for your partnership in this mission!

As of 5/31	2006	2007	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,033,577	1,045,301	+11,724	+1.1%
Amount Received	352,492	360,697	+8,205	+2.3%
Designated Gifts	78,122	69,013	-9,109	-11.7%



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**ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR JUNE / JULY  
2007**

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

*June 3-9 / Members of Shepherd of the Lakes, Sayner*

*June 10-16 / John Ahola, Seminarian, Luther*

*June 17-23 / Jeff Bonn, Seminarian, Wartburg*

*June 24-30 / Dave Johnson, Seminarian, Luther*

*July 1-7 / Lori Hunter, AIM Candidate*

*July 8-14 / Michael Mannisto, Seminarian, Luther*

*July 15-21 / Dan Durbin, Seminarian, LSTC*

*July 22-28 / Jean Schmidt, Seminarian, Wartburg*

**Anyone feeling God's call to share devotions would be appreciated.  
Please contact Jean Schmidt at [prayfaithfully.org](http://prayfaithfully.org).**