

NOTES & QUOTES

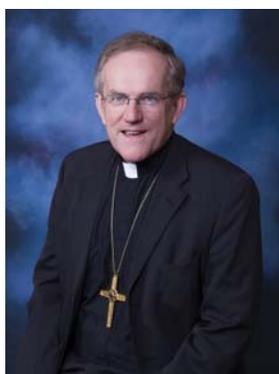
Volume 20, Issue 10

NOVEMBER 2007

IN TANZANIA

Bishop Thomas A. Skrenes

tskrenes@nglsynod.org



On November 11, 2007, Bishop Alex Malasusa of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, will be installed as the nation's presiding Lutheran Bishop. We in this Synod have had the privilege of knowing Bishop Alex since he was with us for several weeks in 2005 as our Synod Companion Bishop. Bishop Malasusa and his wife, Ericah, were our guests at the Synod Assembly in May of that year, and also toured a good part of our Synod in the spring of 2005.

My wife, Luanne, and I will be attending his installation as Presiding Bishop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on November 11. Representing our ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, I will participate in the service. Pastor Peter Andersen and his son, Philip, (Christ the King, Escanaba) as well as Roger and Kay Knuth (Immanuel, Rhineland) will be traveling with us on this two week "safari" to our friends in Africa. We should be home on November 16.

The Companion Synod program is an exciting ministry of our Synod. For more than ten years, through trips and choir tours, work projects and official visits, one hundred and more of our Synod members have experienced Africa. And we have had the privilege of inviting a very similar number of Tanzanian Lutherans to tour our Synod and to live in our midst. It continues to be a wonderful faith building and Church building experience.

We often wrongly assume that the Africans "need things" from us. And while it is true that Tanzania is a very poor nation, the people of the Church have a delightful, joyful faith. They continue to teach us about how we can boldly share the Gospel. They are rich in the spiritual life - with Christ as their Lord.



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THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)

The world is becoming a much smaller place. Please pray for the six of us as we travel many thousands of miles, and as we meet with our sisters and brothers in Tanzania. Pray for Bishop Malasusa and the Tanzanian Church on November 11 as he begins this new work. And pray that God's spirit might surround all of us as we grow closer to Jesus.

“Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher, Jesus Christ, into every walk of life, together serving in Christ’s mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

--ELW Prayers p. 75.



HAPPY
THANKSGIVING!



“If we merely give out of our surplus, donating money that we will never miss, the experience of sacrifice can be lost.”

A STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

From Dr. Mark Powell

Trinity Lutheran Seminary Columbus, Ohio

**Questions for us: If you are not giving cheerfully, why not?
 If your giving is not a sacrifice, why not?**

God does not want people to give reluctantly, out of compassion or guilt (2 Corinthians 9:7). Giving becomes cheerful when it is a grateful response to God's grace, and when we are able to envision our gifts to bless others.

But cheerful giving *is* to be a sacrifice. If we merely give out of our surplus, donating money that we will never miss, the experience of sacrifice can be lost. The goal is to experience in some real way the absence of what we have given up - and yet to be pleased to have given all the same.

Giving that represents a “cheerful sacrifice” moves us beyond “duty” to “delight.” It is the difference between giving what we ought to give and giving what we truly *want* to give. We give simply because the goodness of God has taken hold of us and transformed us into joyful, generous people.

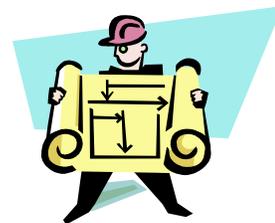
Isn't that the sort of person you would like to be? A person who has discovered the delight of making cheerful sacrifices to God!

“You will be enriched in every way for your generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:11)

THOMAS A. SKRENES, BISHOP (CONTINUED)



Synod House Update



It has been slow going - much slower than any of us imagined. Yet, progress is being made. The painting is about done, the floor coverings are being completed and sometime after early November, we will be moving into the new space. Your Synod Staff is very much looking forward to it! We have appreciated the hospitality of Messiah Lutheran Church as our Synod office's temporary home. Yet, it is time to move back into our old and new office space. We will keep you posted as we move our boxes and desks and file cabinets.

LIFT UP YOUR MISSION STATEMENT

Shepherd of the Lakes Congregation in Sayner, Wisconsin prints its congregational mission statement in its worship bulletin every Sunday. It is printed front and center:

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Empowered by the Holy Spirit and rooted in the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are a loving community that follows Jesus and seeks to hear the Word of God and practice it in our daily lives.

Most of our congregations have a mission statement. How is yours made noticeable to your congregation?





TRANSITIONS

+Congratulations to **Pastor Kenneth Lahners** on his recent installation as the Pastor of **Trinity in Ishpeming**. Pastor Lahners comes to us as a recent seminary graduate. God bless him and the people of Trinity as they serve Christ together.

+Congratulations to **Mr. Nicholas Hopman** as he begins his work as **Licensed Lay Minister at First in Dollar Bay and Grace in South Range**. Nick recently completed his Luther Seminary internship in Dollar Bay, and is completing his last requirements for approval to be ordained. God bless you, Nicholas, and the people of South Range and Dollar Bay.

+Congratulations to **Seminarian Dave Johnson (Concordia, Palmer)** and his wife, Wendy, who gave life to Christopher Clare Johnson. Christopher was born on Monday, October 1, 2007. May God bless this young family!

+Thomas A. Skrenes
Bishop

COMPANIONSHIP CORNER



The companionship between Mtoni (Dar es Salaam) and Prince of Peace (Harvey) is one of the newest unions in our Synod. Over the past ten years, three members of Prince of Peace have made a total of six work trips to Tanzania. We were all humbled by the Tanzanians strong Christian faith. LaVerne Locke had the idea of bringing a Tanzanian couple to Harvey so our whole congregation could share in the Tanzanian experience. We held pasta dinners to raise funds, and, last August, Amulike and Atuwene Ngaliama spent a month with us in Harvey. They immersed themselves in our church life, our families' lives and our spiritual life. Their favorite stores were St. Vinnies, Salvation Army and the food Co-op. Surprises for them were: no fences around yards; people left their homes for the day with no one to guard them; a bank on every corner; and, all the "millions" of tall trees. Our impressions: their total devotion to the Lord. Everywhere we went they sang hymns of praise. Whenever a group gathered, they offered a devotional. When they left, we agreed to become a companion church with their church. We have certainly been abundantly blessed in this union.

Any church wishing to become a companion church, please contact Jean Hannemann at 906/ 249-1225 or on line

jeanhannemann@webtv.net.

Thank You

Lutheran World Relief

Immanuel, Negaunee

Zion, Marinette

Grace, South Range

Our Saviour's, Iron Mountain

Holy Trinity, Chassell

Calvary, Rapid River

World Missionary Support

Bethel, Ishpeming

Trinity, Stambaugh

Trinity, Rhinelander

Pioneer Lake, Conover

Calvary, Rapid River

ELCA Disaster Fund

Salem, Ironwood

Grace, South Range

Grace, Gwinn

Ascension, Minocqua

Sharon, Bessemer

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Grace, Gwinn

Emanuel, Skandia

Bethany, Amasa

Tanzania Choir

Rev. Rell & Louise Spickerman

Kimara

Calvary, Minocqua

Synod Endowment Fund

Scott & Pamela Holmgren

George & Anne Balko

Elizabeth Froberg

Marsha Schultz

Seminarian Support

Faith, Rock

Bethany, Amasa

Calvary, Minocqua

Lay School for Mission

Trinity, Rapid River



Give thanks and praise!

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

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus
 Christ, the Father of*

*compassion and the God of all
 comfort,*

*who comforts us in all our
 troubles, so that we can com-
 fort those in any trouble with
 the comfort we ourselves have
 received from God.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4



I'm not sure what the technical differences are that separate *quilts* from *comforters*, but I've been thinking about it since the quilt auction at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp in October. Some items were presented as quilts, while others were announced and described as comforters. The distinction didn't seem to have any effect on the bidding, which is probably a good thing!

I had my eye on a beautiful quilt, and had determined that I would not only bid, but "go for it!" The fabrics were various shades and designs in pink, pieced together in squares that included traditional quilt blocks, as well as contemporary renditions of other traditional quilt blocks. The actual quilting was a meandering pattern that covered the entire quilt. That I knew one of the quilters, a breast cancer survivor who had worked on the project, made it even more meaningful and special.

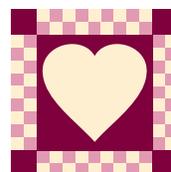
Originally, the quilters had sewn the quilt to be part of an online quilt auction that would raise money for breast cancer awareness and research. When the minimum bid, placed there by the quilters, did not increase, they received the quilt back. Now they had not only purchased the materials, sewn the quilt, and donated it, they bought it back. Together they made the decision to donate it to the Fortune Lake Camp Quilt Auction.

It was no surprise that when this beautiful quilt was brought forward for bidding that I was not the only one who had their eye on it. The bidding was spirited as the dollar amount rose into the hundreds. I dropped out. When the highest bidding woman received her quilt from where it had been shown up in front, she got up, walked toward the breast cancer survivor quilter, wrapped the quilt around her, and gave it to her. I'm thinking, at that very moment, that quilt became a comforter – and not because it was two layers of fabric sewn together on either side of some batting. It was a comforter because of the love, grace, and mercy that came with it. It was a sign of God's gracious love – for the receiver, for the giver, and for those of us who were watching this drama unfold.

Before any of us had any idea of what it might mean to comfort another, we were first the receivers of comfort. God used many others to bring us comfort when the only voice we had was our infant, red-faced cry. Through the years, I'm guessing that there have been a plethora of people who have placed their arms around us, or prayed for us, in an effort to bring us comfort. Some of them have been sent to us by the working of the Holy Spirit. Even now, though we have words we can use to express ourselves, it is still our cries in the midst of challenges, difficulties, anxieties, losses, and doubts where we experience our deepest need to be comforted. And, we can have confidence that the Comforter will come to us.

Perhaps, it is the Comforter who is nudging you this very day to bring a word of comfort and encouragement to someone else.

Blessings!



Pastoral Vacancies and Interim Pastors

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
Messiah, Marquette - Senior Pastor Vacancy
Immanuel, Escanaba - Pastor Jonathan Schmidt

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. (Phil.4:4)

We rejoice in the generous and consistent giving of our congregations to the mission and ministry of the NGLS and ELCA. Through September 30, congregation mission support is 9.1%, or \$58,900, ahead of last year. Thank you! As we enter the final quarter of 2007, we strongly encourage all our congregations to meet or exceed their Mission Support Commitment, that the life-giving Word of God may reach throughout the world.

As of 9/30	2006	2007	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	1,033,577	1,045,301	+11,724	+1.1%
Amount Received	643,577	702,477	+58,900	+9.1%
Designated Gifts	125,125	121,344	-3,781	-3%



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ON-LINE DEVOTIONS FOR NOVEMBER
2007

www.prayfaithfully.org

October 28-November 3 / Marsha Schultz, Trinity, Rhinelander

November 4-9 / Pastor Jonathan Schmidt, First, Gladstone

November 10-16 / Pastor Scott Williams, United, L'Anse

November 17-23 / Larry & Vicki Underhill, Bethany, Norway

November 24-December 1 / Luanne Skrenes, Trinity, Ishpeming

Anyone feeling God's call to share devotions would be appreciated. Please contact Jean Schmidt at prayfaithfully.org.