

2010 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

GROWTH GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

Friday, May 14

- Growth Group opportunities will be offered at 3:45 and/or 5:00 pm and are 60 minutes or 120 minutes in length.
- Supper will be offered at 6:05 and 6:30. Please eat supper during your conference's assigned session indicated by the Group Number on your name tag. Dining services cannot accommodate everyone at the same time so please try and adhere to your assigned time.



GROUPS OFFERED TWO SESSIONS – 3:45 AND 5:00



Where Have All the Young People Gone: Understanding This Abundant Mission Field (3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00, Ivers 210)

Have you ever wondered why your children or grandchildren aren't in church? Have you ever heard the argument, "if only we had contemporary music in our services the young people would come?" There is more to this conversation than worship styles and catchy marketing schemes. Join us as we begin a conversation about what is happening in the lives of our young people. Learn about culture change and how the church can be engaged with that shift. We will be talking about ways that people are already engaging in ministry with young adults as well as cultivating our gathered wisdom about the communities in which we each minister.

Leaders: Emmy Isaackson, Chad Peterson, Joshua Graber, Gretchen Anderson, and Tessa Moon Leiseth are all pastors serving in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

Life Overflowing in India (3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00, Jones 212)

How do our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in areas of the world with much less material abundance than we experience in North America experience abundance in their lives of faith? How do they experience in the midst of many kinds of scarcity life overflowing in Christ? Is there anything we can learn about abundance and scarcity, about life overflowing, from our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world and especially from our companion synod in India? Come and see.

Leader: Sunitha Mortha is from Hyderabad, India, in our companion synod, the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church. Sunitha has worked in cross-cultural youth ministry in India by coordinating social work projects. She also worked at Youth Encounter as the Director for International Team Ministry before joining the ELCA Global Mission Unit. She currently serves as Director for Global Formation, working out of the ELCA churchwide office in Chicago.

Overflowing Life in the Midst of "Scarcity" (3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00, Ivers 214)

We'll explore and compare how Christian faith communities in the context of material poverty supported mission in the first century with some of the ways God's mission is being supported in the 21st Century, here in the Northwestern Minnesota Synod. We'll be inspired once more by those brothers and sisters in Christ who have expressed abundant joy and extreme poverty that overflows into a wealth of generosity.

Leader: Pastor Keith Zeh serves on the Northwestern Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota Synod Staff as the Director for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission. Prior to this call, he served these two synods and the Western North Dakota, South Dakota and Northeastern Minnesota Synods as Mission Director.

Generosity in Relationships (3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00, Ivers 218)

This workshop will explore stories and share tools for having good, healthy conversation in ways that build up relationships rather than tearing them apart when the conversation is about controversial issues or involves people with significant differences. This workshop will explore how Christian people can love God and love neighbor while dealing with difficult issues and interpersonal tensions flowing from different perspectives and different experience of life.

Leaders: Jim Holthus, and Randy Skow-Anderson are both campus pastors in our synod, Jim at Bemidji State University and Randy at Minnesota State University, Moorhead. As campus pastors they are often called upon to help students explore conversation relating to difficult and controversial topics while maintaining good, healthy relationships centered in Christ. Laurie Skow-Anderson, pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church Pelican Rapids recently completed her Doctor of Ministry degree in Missional Theology and has been provided pastoral leadership in helping her congregation to reach out to connect with people in her community, who are a part of a major influx of new Americans, people from national and ethnic groups new to this small community.

ELCA National, Global and NWMN Synod Mission Work (3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00, Ivers 221)

Come and find out what Global Missions and other ELCA programs such as The Fund For Leaders are doing through your mission and personal support. You will be informed about what the ELCA has done in the past and what is now happening as we continue to do “God’s Work with Our Hands.” In addition, Bill Elmstrom will tell what his work is all about – what he has accomplished and what the NWMN Synod hopes to accomplish through his work. Come with questions as this is a time to learn from you about what is important in our Christian witness and support.

Leaders: Pastor Twila Schock, Director of Global Mission Support, and Bill Elmstrom, NWMN Synod Charitable Gift Planner.



GROUPS OFFERED 3:45 UNTIL 6:00



Service Project (3:45-6:00, Olson 139 in registration area)

This group is limited to 50 people. We will meet in the assigned room and then car pool to visit Churches United for the Homeless, a local shelter in Moorhead. We will go on a tour and then spend time conversing and playing games with residents. We will return to Concordia by 5:30 for reflection on our experiences. Churches United for the Homeless is one of the largest shelters in northwestern Minnesota. They are able to accommodate single men, single women, and both one and two parent families. Additional information is available at www.church-united.org.

Leader: Marsha Anderson is the pastor for social concerns at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead.

Assembly Choir (3:45-6:00 – Hvidsten 148)

This is a rehearsal time for the Saturday morning worship service. Join your fellow vocalists and create beautiful music for the Assembly to enjoy.

Leader: Mary Morken is the director of the Chancel Choir at First Lutheran Church in Alexandria. She teaches vocal music at Lincoln Elementary School. Mary grew up in a clergy family and has been steeped in music her whole life.

Open House at the Northwestern Minnesota Synod office (3:45-6:00, 310 14th Ave S (Riverside Center), Moorhead)

For those who are interested in seeing the office space occupied by the Synod since September, 2008.

Hosted by Synod Council Executive Committee.



GROUPS OFFERED AT 3:45 ONLY



Lutheran Buzzwords: Four Things You Often Hear Lutherans Say about the Bible (3:45-4:45, Olin 124)

All Christians say that the Bible is the Word of God... but what do they mean by that? There are a lot of different Christians in the world, and some of them say things about the Bible that you don’t often hear in Lutheran

churches. Lutheran Bible professor Mark Allan Powell will rehearse four things that Lutherans “typically and traditionally” say about the Bible...though as he points out, “one *more* thing Lutherans believe is that not everyone should be typical of traditional!”

Leader: Mark Allan Powell is Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary and an internationally known biblical scholar. He is editor of the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* and author of more than 25 books on the Bible and religion. He has also written in the areas of spiritual formation (*Loving Jesus*), stewardship (*Giving to God*), and homiletic (*What Do They Hear?: Bridging the Gap between Pulpit and Pew*). His DVD's *How Lutherans Understand the Bible* have received widespread use throughout the ELCA and were excerpted for inclusion in the *Lutheran Study Bible* (Augsburg Fortress).

Practices of Creation Stewardship in Your Church (3:45-4:45, Ivers 225)

Thinking about how your church could live out their call to have dominion? Come to this growth group to hear how congregations can care for creation! Participants will leave with tangible examples of ways they can operate a church, care for creation and live in God's Great Creation!

Leaders: Dave Holtz and Laura Morlock. Dave has lived and breathed in outdoor ministries since he was 8 years old! On the date of the synod assembly he will have been the Executive Director of Luther Crest Bible Camp for 2 years, 2 months and 14 days! God is Good! Laura is a life-long resident of Moorhead and welcomes you to her hometown! Laura has served Pathways for a number of years as the Program Director. God is Good!

How Can I Keep From Singing (3:45-4:45, Centrum, Knutson Campus Center)

What do you do in the face of earthquakes, hunger, disappointment alongside celebration, hope beauty...the joys and struggles of everyday life? For years members of Dakota Road have trusted that life flows on in endless song. In the ordinary stuff of our everyday lives God shows up. Join members of Dakota Road as they share songs that lift up and cherish every part of our lives and connect their stories to your stories.

Leaders: Larry Olson and Hans Peterson are partners in Dakota Road Music, a songwriting, publishing, leadership and performance company that specializes in original faith filled music. Hans and Larry have the creative talents of music leadership, a passion for justice and a vision for the church and neighborhood as welcoming places. Individually and with their band, Dakota Road, they have released over a dozen recordings with many of their songs being sung all across the U.S. and beyond.

Scarcity and Abundance in Rural Settings (3:45-4:45, Olin 226)

Churches often feel they don't have enough resources for their ministry, yet Christ promises his presence wherever two or three are gathered in his name. This presentation will discuss the difficulty of small resources – as a concern that is at times legitimate, and at times unfounded – and the reassurances God gives to his church for its ongoing ministry. If our Lord managed to feed multitudes with a few loaves and fish, he can certainly work through our small budgets and membership roles.

Leaders: Paul Koch and Katie Koch. Paul is pastor of Wannaska Lutheran Parish; Katie is Pastor of Gatzke Lutheran Parish.

Best Practices for Congregational Financial Stewardship (3:45-4:45, Ivers 259)

Come and hear about stewardship ideas, education and activities that are making a difference and helping people and a congregation grow together in generosity, love, faith and hope.

Leaders: To Be Announced



GROUPS OFFERED AT 5:00 ONLY



TGI JAM (Thank God its Jesus and Me) – Community Churchwide Youth Outreach Event (5:00-6:00, Ivers 210)

In this Growth Group you will hear how this event was started in a community with all local area churches, and the mission of TGI JAM. There will be a PowerPoint presentation of an actual event, sharing of what unites us as churches in community.

Leader: Jay Ostgaard is in his 12th year as the Director of Youth and Family Ministry at Messiah Lutheran Church in Roseau. He enjoys spending time with God and his family.

The Spirit Says: “Sing!” Enlivening the Musical Life in Your Congregation (5:00-6:00, Ivers 214)

“But I can’t find an organist.” “We don’t have adequate instruments.” “We don’t have a trained choir or soloist.” While it can be tempting to focus on what is lacking in small congregations, our faith calls us to see and utilize the good gifts around us. This growth group will suggest ways to enliven the musical life of your congregation even with limited resources. We will share in conversation and offer practical suggestions, all with the goal of improving congregational song. Come, sing, and explore the possibilities.

Leaders: Rachel Stout, Pastor of Youth and Family Ministry at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wadena and Jennifer Baker-Trinity.

“Grace Based – God Directed” Stewardship (5:00-6:00, Ivers 218)

A brief Biblical overview of “Grace Based- God Directed” Stewardship will be given with discussion on several response methods for a stewardship emphasis. A step by step/month by month sample of details which are the basics of a life-long stewardship lifestyle will be provided in a “Stewardship Toolkit.” Presentation attendees will have the opportunity to win one of 20 autographed copies of Chick Lane’s book *“Ask, Thank, Tell”* compliments of Immanuel’s Men’s Ministry.

Leader: Rob Nelson, Sr Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Wadena. Rob previously chaired the Stewardship Task Force in the SE MN Synod.

“No Gimmicks: Back to the Bible on Money and Stewardship” (5:00-6:00, Olin 124)

Stewardship programs come and go, but what the Bible has to say about how people acquire, regard, manage and spend their money remains the same. Biblical teaching on this topic can be realistic, practical, and gospel-oriented. Such teaching offers a way for the church to connect with members in an appealing way and to promote generous giving in a manner that does not come off as self-serving or manipulative. The big surprise: what the Bible says about money and giving is *good news!* As Dr. Powell says, “Stewardship is not just a way of life; it is the way to a better life.”

Leader: Mark Allan Powell is Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary and an internationally known biblical scholar. He is editor of the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* and author of more than 25 books on the Bible and religion. He has also written in the areas of spiritual formation (*Loving Jesus*), stewardship (*Giving to God*), and homiletic (*What Do They Hear?: Bridging the Gap between Pulpit and Pew*). His DVD’s *How Lutherans Understand the Bible* have received widespread use throughout the ELCA and were excerpted for inclusion in the *Lutheran Study Bible* (Augsburg Fortress).

The Project F-M (<http://theprojectfm.org>) (5:00-6:00 Ivers 221)

In this era of complexity, plurality, overwhelming access to information, and unprecedented rates of change, how do we – as people of faith and leaders within the church – know what to do and how to engage and steward the richness of our context? Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre posits, *I can only answer the question, ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question, ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’* During this interactive 60-minute session, we will reflect on and share the stories within scripture and within our churches, communities and cultures that keep us centered in the present and guide us into the future.

Leader: Karis Thompson. In September 2009, Karis began a yearlong community organizing role with The Project F-M, a vision and venture to cultivate a 21st century faith community led by young adults in the Fargo-Moorhead context. Prior to this role, she most recently served as the director for strategic advancement with Redeemer Center for Life, a holistic community-driven nonprofit organization in North Minneapolis. After her graduation from Concordia College, Karis received a yearlong Fulbright grant to teach English on Jeju Island, S Korea.