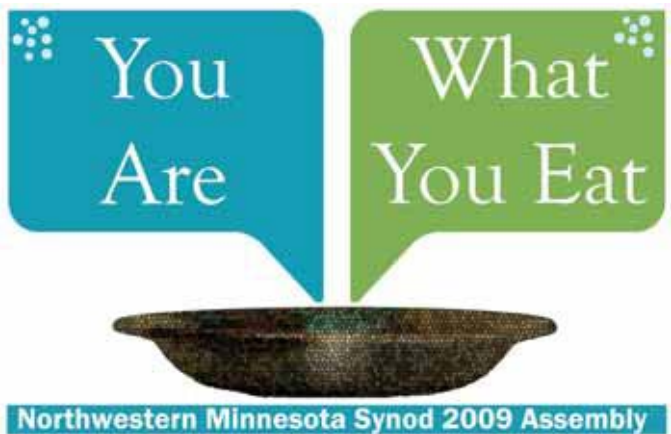


# Northwest Passages

The newsletter of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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## CURRENT WEB TOPICS

Zion/Bigwoods, Olso, featured in The Lutheran:

[www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article\\_id=8180&key=66912398](http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=8180&key=66912398)

Information about Tour de Revs is at <http://www.tourderevs.org>. The site includes an interactive map of the tour, information about the technology of the bamboo bicycle and more.

Information about the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and proposals to be considered is at <http://www.ELCA.org/assembly> on the ELCA Web site.

For regular updates on these and many other topics, go to:  
[WWW.NWMNSYNOD.ORG](http://WWW.NWMNSYNOD.ORG)

## Life-long service in the life of our Church

*The church of Christ in every age,  
beset by change but Spirit-led,  
must claim and test its heritage  
and keep on rising from the dead.*

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, #729*

**These words come to mind as I ponder the imminent departure of three treasured colleagues in ministry with whom I have served over the years.**

At the end of May, we'll say goodbye to the Rev. Dr. Marcus Pera, regional coordinator for Lutheran Campus Ministry since the start of the ELCA in 1988.

In June we'll mark the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Arland Jacobson of the CHARIS Ecumenical Center—a life-long learning agency he has served well since 1983. In October the Rev. Dr. Craig Boehlke will retire from his position as the ELCA's Coordinator for Region III—the nine synods of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Of these three seasoned pastors, only Boehlke will be replaced. A search committee is already seeking a successor to carry on Craig's fine work in assisting the region's nine bishops with the ELCA assignment process, advising the region's nine synodical candidacy committees, and providing wise counsel and expertise in planning for ministry ventures that strengthen God's mission in our region. If, as Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson likes to say, that synods are "the connective tissue in the Body of Christ," Craig Boehlke has contributed to the health of the joints, ligaments and muscles that bind us together in the upper Midwest.

Pastors Jacobson and Pera will not have successors. When Jacobson retires at the end of June, the CHARIS Ecumenical Center, a ministry of Concordia College in Moorhead, will cease to exist. At one time dozens of such Lutheran continuing education centers were scattered across the country. And, even though Concordia College is creating new avenues for helping ministers stay sharp and engaged in God's work, we will miss the focused leadership of Arland Jacobson. Pastor Pera's departure results from the latest rounds of budget cuts made by the ELCA Churchwide organization, in response to lowered mission support giving from the



congregations of our church. As he finishes his work, Pera will take with him a treasure-chest of "institutional memory." Since 1988 he has overseen the calling of some 70 campus pastors and led over 200 quadrennial reviews of campus ministry sites. Regional coordinators and synod staff will try to "take up the slack," but we simply will not be able to offer knowledge and attention Pera has so lovingly brought to this work.

**I'm sharing this all with you for three reasons:**

1. **These three gentlemen have served largely in unseen ways.** For the most part all three of them operated "below the radar." Like so many others, they have helped the rest of us do our ministries with greater joy and purpose.
2. **Their departures mark a truly pivotal moment in the life of the ELCA.** Some of this is good—as our church seeks to operate in a leaner, simpler fashion. But we will also miss the strong leadership and accountability these pastors offered. I hope that as we work smarter, not harder, we won't sacrifice the quality and care God's mission deserves.
3. **Third, we're reminded again about how our generosity, expressed through our mission support ("benevolence") giving always impacts real people and real ministries.** True, we are still navigating our way through an economic crisis of global proportions. But is our diminishing mission support the result of a truly diminished *capacity* for generosity—or are we "holding back" over *fear* of what could happen at some point in the future?

Every goodbye we utter reminds us our mortality. I will miss the partnership I've enjoyed with Pastors Boehlke, Jacobson and Pera. But Christ's church is in the resurrection business. As we follow our crucified-yet-risen Lord, we "keep on rising from the dead."

Your Brother in Christ,



Lawrence R. Wohlrahe

# News from Churchwide

To make June stops in Hawley, Glyndon, Moorhead

## “Tour de Revs” on Mission to Help End World Hunger

Three 60-year-old best friends are on a “mission from God.” They plan to stop at 65 cities, covering 13,000 miles in 100 days – all on a bamboo bicycle built for three. Their mission is to help bring an end to world hunger.

“We are just three guys who like to ride bikes, being used by God for a wonderful purpose,” said the Rev. Reinold “Ron” Schlak Jr. Schlak’s two friends are also pastors of the ELCA—the Rev. Frederick “Fred” A. Soltow Jr. and the Rev. David A. Twedt. All three serve ELCA congregations in West Virginia.

“Cycling is the most advanced transportation a lot of hungry people can afford,” Schlak said. “Whether it is a modern American city or a small village in Africa, many people ride bikes because they cannot afford a vehicle with a motor.” Schlak said they chose a bamboo bicycle “because people in Ghana are lifting themselves out of poverty by harvesting locally-grown bamboo and forming it into bicycle frames and attaching the necessary bike parts.”

The cyclists, friends and supporters will gather at Hawley Lutheran Church (510 8th St.) on Saturday, June 27, at 3 p.m. Local media are expected to be present. After a reception, dessert and beverages, the public is invited to bicycle about 22 miles with the Tour de Revs to Trinity Lutheran Church, Moorhead (210 7th St. S.). There will be checkpoints along the way, with a stop at Glyndon Lutheran (414 Parke Ave. S.).

Trinity Lutheran Church will host a pot-luck supper at approximately 5:30 p.m. and some informal time with Tour de Revs who will talk about their trip. Those involved in world hunger from around the area are welcome and



encouraged to attend. There will be a free-will offering taken for ELCA World Hunger.

On Sunday, June 28, there will be a celebration at Oak Grove Park from 5-8 p.m. with music, picnic food, booths promoting world hunger and, of course, the Tour de Revs. Free-will baskets will be made available for ELCA World Hunger.

## Wanted: Your stories for 2009 Churchwide Assembly

Do you have stories to tell? Stories of God’s work in our lives? Stories of your congregation serving its neighbors? Stories of struggles and joys in our work together? The Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is hoping you will share those stories at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis! Held August 17-23, 2009, the ELCA Archives will provide the means to contribute those stories, record them for posterity, and share them throughout the church.

“I Love to Tell the Story: My ELCA” will allow 15-minute time slots to sit down and share your memories,

thoughts, frustrations, and joys of the first 20 years of the ELCA. As part of the larger Voices of Vision oral history project, the archives is looking for congregational members to talk about their congregations, their synods, their social ministry organizations, their colleges, their seminaries, and their work in the ELCA and in God’s world.

Go to our website for more information about how to participate (<http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/History/ELCA-Archives/I-Love-To-Tell-The-Story.aspx>) or contact the archives ([archives@elca.org](mailto:archives@elca.org) or 1-800-638-3522, x2818). We hope to hear your story!

# 2009 Assembly Highlights

Approves 2 "Human Sexuality" resolutions, rejects 1

## 2009 Synod Assembly, "You Are What You Eat"

Under the theme banner of "You Are What You Eat," which focused on the ELCA Book of Faith initiative, the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly was held May 16-17 at Concordia College, Moorhead. The featured speakers were Rev. Dr. Mark Vitalis Hoffman, associate professor of Biblical Studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg; and Dr. Diane Jacobson, professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary and director of the Book of Faith initiative.



Assembly delegates considered three resolutions dealing with the "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust" document as a possible social statement of the ELCA.



**A "Resolution Rejecting Proposed Social Statement and Affirming Current Teaching Documents on Sexuality"**

submitted by American Lutheran Church, Long Prairie, Minn., was amended and defeated by ballot: Yes, 202; No, 256; Abstain 16.

Speaking against the resolution, a retired pastor said, "I was brought up in a Biblically law-oriented family. But since then I



Left: Dr. Mark Vitalis Hoffman. Right: Dr. Diane Jacobson confers with assembly committee member Randy Schatz

have learned much about grace. I would rather see us err on the side of grace."

**A "Resolution Rejecting Recommendations on Ministry Policy and Affirming Current ELCA Policy"** submitted by United Lutheran Church, Gonvick, Minn. was amended and passed by a narrow margin: Yes, 225; No, 223; Abstain 13.

Speaking in favor of the resolution, one assembly delegate said, "Scripture makes it clear that gay relationships are detestable in God's eyes. God sends a clear message, and we need to follow His law."

**A "Resolution in Support of Two-Thirds Majority Vote"** at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, also submitted by United Lutheran, was amended and passed by show of hands.

Assembly delegates also passed a **"Resolution in Support of Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota Mission Fund"** and approved a task force recommendation that would allow nominations in the 2013 bishop's election to be made in advance.

Special guests at this year's assembly were Martin and Katy Luther, who "stepped through time" to share their insight and humor with the audience. (The Luthers were admirably played by Johan and Sonja Hinderlie, directors of Mount Carmel Ministries, Alexandria.)



Eyewitness performs during an "evening of soul food."





## Servant of Christ Award

Mark Peterson, president of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota presents the LSS “Servant of Christ” award to Wannaska Lutheran Parish. Parish members were recognized for outstanding outreach efforts, including their parish nurse program and health education, connections with persons in the military, making quilts for Lutheran World Relief, assisting in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and other outreach ministries.

## Pastor Keith Zeh installed

Bishop Larry Wohlrabe installs Pastor Keith Zeh as Director for Evangelical Mission during morning worship of the assembly.

On February 1, Keith officially joined the staffs of the Northwestern Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota synods. His change in call came on the heels of the ELCA’s restructuring, which created the unit for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission.



## Synod receives Youth & Family Institute grant

The Northwestern Minnesota Synod has received a \$5,000 grant from the Youth & Family Institute Foundation. These funds will be used to support a combination of “Passing on Vibrant Faith” conferences and “Hand in Hand” trainings and coaching with David Anderson.

“This grant from the youth & family institute,” said Assistant to the Bishop Erin Anderson, “will allow us to move forward in partnering with the institute to foster training and implementation of the core values of the Youth and Family Institute, which focuses on the importance of faith being caught and not taught. This grant will help support ‘Passing

on the Vibrant Faith’ conferences in our synod, ‘Hand In Hand’ trainings and the implementation of some of our interested congregations in becoming teaching sites, where they will enter into ministry practices that support these core values and receive direct coaching from the Youth and Family Institute.”

Executive director of the Youth and Family Institute, Dr. Paul Hill, said, “The generous donor who is providing these funds to TYFI is a wonderfully committed Christian who sees this work as ‘the unfinished Reformation.’ It means a lot to be able to provide this grant and to continue our missional partnership.”

# Synod Roster Updates

## Ordination

Pr. Matthew Rose, Peace Lutheran Church, Barrett, June 7

## Installation

Pr. Jeffrey McCracken, pastor, Grove Lake Lutheran Church, Pelican Rapids, June 14

## Retirement

Pr. Arland Jacobson, director, CHARIS, Concordia College, June 30  
Pr. Weston Moir, July 31

## Resignations

- Pr. John Okan, pastor, Folden, Leaf Mountain, Nidaros, Vining Lutheran, Vining, May 31
- Pr. Jo Gast, pastor, Family of God Lutheran, East Grand Forks, May 31
- Pr. Joan Wittrock, pastor, Fahlun & Our Saviour's Lutheran, Nelson, May 31
- Pr. Carl Andersen, pastor, Fisher & Bygland Lutheran, Fisher, June 15
- Pr. Kristin Thvedt, associate pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran, East Grand Forks, June 15
- Pr. D. Rolf Aanestad, pastor, Bethlehem Lutheran, Ulen, June 30
- Pr. Weston Moir, pastor, Bethlehem-West Elbow Lake Lutheran, Elbow Lake, July 31

## Transfers

- Pr. John Okan to Northwest Washington Synod
- Pr. Joan Wittrock to South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
- Pr. Robert Amundson (retired) to Southwestern Minnesota Synod
- Pr. Johan Hinderlie (executive director, Mount Carmel Ministries, Alexandria) from Minneapolis Area Synod

## Congregations in Call Process

Ada, Grace, senior and associate pastors resigned, receiving candidates for senior pastor, interim Pr. Cheryl Berg and part-time visitation contract Pr. Don Walker

Alexandria, Bethesda, interim Pr. Donald Reisig

Audubon, St. Peter's & Detroit Lakes, Augustana, receiving candidates, interim Pr. Jill Steichen

Badger, Faith & Our Redeemer's, interim Pr. Louis Hermansen

Barnesville, Our Savior's, new associate pastor position, in self-study

Barrett, Peace, call accepted

Battle Lake, First, call pending, interim Pr. John Martinson

Bemidji, Aardahl & Guthrie, Malvik, interim Pr. Linda Tenneson

Bemidji, Calvary, call pending senior pastor, interim Pr. Arthur Montgomery

Cimax, Climax, Grue, Sand Hill, call accepted, interim Synodically Authorized Minister Joy Grainger

Crookston, Trinity, call out associate pastor, organizing call committee for senior pastor, interim Pr. Paul Svingen

East Grand Forks, Family of God, pastor resigned

East Grand Forks, Our Savior's, associate pastor resigned

Elbow Lake, Bethlehem-West Elbow Lake, Elbow Lake, pastor retiring

Fergus Falls, Augustana, pastor resigned, interim Pr. Nancy Monke

Fisher, Fisher & Bygland, pastor resigned

Glyndon, Glyndon, in self study, interim Pr. Paul Miller

Greenbush, Bethel, interim Pr. Nancy Jewell

Hawley, Hawley, new associate pastor position, receiving candidates

Hitterdal, Salem, receiving candidates, interim Pr. Sandra Hollands

Kelliher, Our Savior & Waskish, Bethlehem (part-time), pastor resigned

Lake Bronson, Zion & Kennedy, Maria, interim Synodically Authorized Minister Kathy Levenhagen

Mahnomen, First, interim Pr. John Lee

Nelson, Fahlun & Our Saviour's, pastor resigned

Newfolden, Bethlehem & Holt, Nazareth, interim Pr. John Golv

Moorhead, Our Savior's, associate pastor, receiving candidates

Osage, Immanuel, ready for candidates, interim Pr. Phil Johnson

Park Rapids, Calvary, receiving candidates, interim Prs. Kenneth Nyhusmoen & Matthew Williams

Parkers Prairie, First Evangelical, pastor resigned, organizing call committee

Roseau/Ross, Concordia & Pin creek, call accepted

Shevlin, Clearwater & Solway, Solway, interim Pr. Melody Kirkpatrick

Thief River Falls, Redeemer & Black River, associate pastor, in self-study

Ulen, Bethlehem, pastor resigned, interim Pr. Steven Dahl

Vining, Folden, Leaf Mountain, Nidaros, Vining, pastor resigned

Warren, First & Immanuel, interim Pr. Mark Rittmann

## Pastor Hanson thanks local leaders for roles in flood fight

In the aftermath of the 2009 Red River Valley flood, Pastor Deb Hanson presented two quilts from St. Johns/Kongsvinger Lutheran Churches of Donnelly, Minn.

One quilt was given to Blair Brattvet, president of Community Bank of the Red River Valley, Oslo. "During the flood, Blair and his staff went to great lengths to make sure they were available to help our community," Hanson explained. "About two-three weeks into the worst part of the flood, Blair's parents and sister were in a serious car accident. Both parents were killed, and his sister was rushed to the hospital. She has now moved from intensive care to a nursing home, where she continues to heal."

The second quilt was presented to Florence Elden, mayor of Oslo. "During the flood she worked many long hours and continues to work long hours during our recovery," Hanson



Left: Pastor Deb Hanson presents quilt to Blair Brattvet at his office. Right: Oslo Mayor Florence Elden receives her quilt at an LSS Senior Nutrition meal at the Oslo Community/Senior Center.



said. "The quilt was presented to her in recognition of all the things she has so selflessly done, and to remind her to remember to rest and relax for a bit so she doesn't burn out!"

(Pastor Hanson serves Zion and Bigwoods Lutheran Churches in Oslo and is developer of Mision Luterana del Valle Rio Rojo)

## Pr. Jim Holthus gives Minnesota Senate invocation

In the midst of difficult and divisive issues facing the state, Pastor Jim Holthus, Bemidji State University's Lutheran Campus Ministry, offered words of hope and encouragement in his invocation to the Minnesota legislature on May 11.

Pastor Holthus prayed: "Gracious God, we come before you on this day where 151 years ago, Minnesota officially became a state. We are grateful for the women and men in our states past who had a vision of what our country and our state could be. We remember the difficulties our ancestors had in drafting a constitution for this state and how the Republicans and Democrats held two separate conventions and drafted two separate constitutions and how members of one party refused to sign the constitution formed by the other party.

"We acknowledge that at times our own zeal can keep us from cooperation or compromise. We acknowledge that we are



human beings with good intentions who get pulled in many different ways. We hear the voice of our conscience, the voice of our party, the voice of the poor, the voice of our Creator.

"We also acknowledge that we have limited resources and not enough resources to give all these groups all that they ask. We can use the resources of the past to guide us while we govern and make decisions in the present, hoping and trusting in You to weave these choices into a future our children and grandchildren can appreciate.

"We ask for wisdom, for discernment, for compassion, for courage. We acknowledge that at times we have made mistakes, and for those things we ask forgiveness. We are doing the best we can as human beings made in Your image. We are blessed to live in this state. Help us to live and act and govern so that all Minnesotans will be blessed by our actions. Amen."

# ELCA Churchwide Assembly to Meet in Minneapolis, Aug. 17-23

Representatives from the Northwestern Minnesota Synod will be among voting members of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly August 17-23 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Delegates will act on a proposed social statement on human sexuality, a recommendation on ministry policies, a proposal for full communion, and funding proposals. They will also conduct elections, and consider memorials and resolutions.

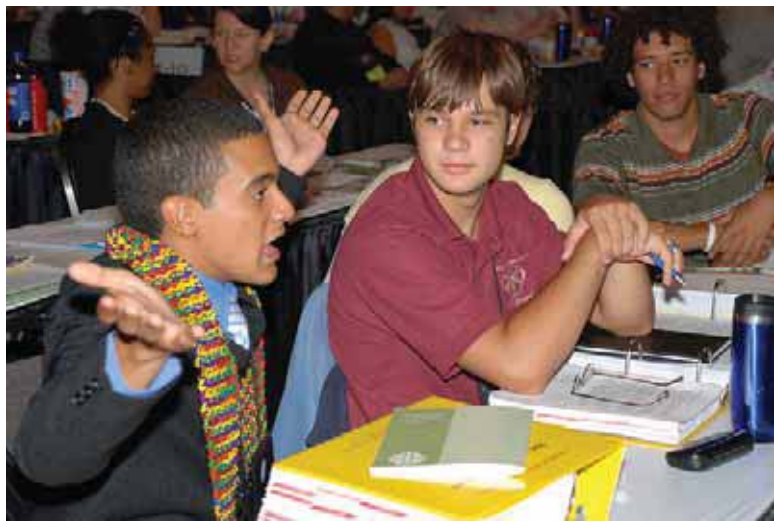
As many as 2,000 people -- 1,045 voting members elected by ELCA synods, plus staff and visitors -- will participate in the ELCA's 11th biennial assembly.

The assembly theme is "God's work. Our hands." Bible studies will be based on the Book of Faith Initiative, endorsed by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. The initiative is intended to help ELCA members increase their biblical literacy.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, in his eighth year as ELCA presiding bishop, will chair the assembly. Hanson is also president of the 68.5-million-member Lutheran World Federation (LWF), based in Geneva, Switzerland. Assisting Hanson during plenary will be David D. Swartling, ELCA secretary, and Carlos Peña, ELCA vice president, Galveston, Texas. The assembly will elect a vice president to a six-year term, and Peña previously announced he will be available for re-election.

In addition to the election for vice president, the assembly will act on:

+ a proposal for full communion between the ELCA and the



United Methodist Church, adopted by the UMC General Conference in 2008

+ a proposed social statement, "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," requested by the 2001 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

+ a "Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies" requested by the 2007 ELCA Churchwide Assembly

+ a fundraising proposal for a churchwide HIV and AIDS strategy

+ a proposal for further development of a "Lutheran Malaria Initiative" (LMI) with Lutheran World Relief, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the United Nations Foundation (UNF).

Preceding the assembly is a three-day conference, "Book of Faith Jubilee," based on the Book of Faith Initiative. Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., one of eight ELCA seminaries, will host the event. Synod vice presidents will meet prior to the start of the assembly. During the assembly, gatherings are planned for youth, young adult voting members and for young professional church leaders. There will also be a young adult networking event.

Information about the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and proposals to be considered is at <http://www.ELCA.org/assembly> on the ELCA Web site.