

Notes from our Giving Counselor

To our Parish Pastors, Church Council Members, Treasurers:

For year-end synod gift encouragement we have provided each parish with envelopes. Please consider utilizing the envelopes provided to your parish (should arrive by Nov. 30th). Please include these envelopes in your Sunday bulletins one of the first three Sundays in December (December 2, 9, 16). A cover letter with a sample announcement is provided with your box of envelopes. A reminder letter will be sent via email. | Year-end note to Church Treasurers: Please note that our administrator, Mr. Keith Wiederhoeft, requests that you send your church offerings for synod by January 7th. If your treasurer uses the electronic option, that date extends to January 9th. Call him if you have questions (507-344-7395).

Year-end Christian giving and tax planning is always a good stewardship exercise.

Consider...

1. **Making sure you are on track** with your proposed yearly giving to your church and missions (proportional, generous).
2. **Maximizing your gift deduction by using one or more of the following strategies.**
 - a. **“Bunch” your gifts** and make sure you can itemize and take your full deduction.
 - b. **Consider other ways to give**, such as gifts of appreciated assets allowing you to receive a full deduction for value.
 - c. **If you are age 70 1/2 or older** note that the IRA rollover may return for 2012-2013 tax years. Stay tuned for the news.
 - d. **Partial tax-free income** from a Charitable Gift Annuity may be a good GREAT strategy for you and your spouse, especially if you are already planning to make a gift. Much of your income from charitable gift annuities becomes tax-free income.

To learn more go to the following link (www.els.name/christmas2012) or call the Estate Planning Office and Pastor Dan Basel at 507-344-7311 or email: danbasel@blc.edu.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jer. 29:11). - Rev. Dan Basel

President’s schedule

December 9 - preach for 20th anniversary, Christ the King, Green Bay, WI
December 10-11 - Doctrine Committee meets in Mankato, MN
December 13 - Synod staff meeting
December 30 - preach at Peace, Kissimmee, FL
January 3 - Centennial Committee
January 14 - Planning and Coordinating Committee (9am – 5pm)
January 25-26 - Circuit 1 retreat in Orlando, FL
January 27 - preach at Grace, Vero Beach, FL
January 27 - Board for Home Outreach
January 28-30 - Home Mission Seminar, Orlando, FL



President’s Newsletter

Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Office of the President
John A. Moldstad

6 Browns Court Mankato, MN 56001 507-344-7356 jamjr@blc.edu

December 2012

Dear Fellow Workers in Christ’s Kingdom:

Advent has us contemplate for ourselves the “three-fold coming” of our Lord Jesus – his incarnation, his coming again in glory, and his work in our hearts through the means of grace. Linked with the latter, we wish to share a remark by our seminary president in his Lord’s Supper devotional. He writes of the significance of the term “Maranatha” (O Lord, come), how it brings to mind for us the immeasurable value of the Lord’s Supper:

Maranatha in the liturgy of the ancient church not only reminded the faithful of the Lord’s coming in Bethlehem but also of his coming in the Holy Supper. As certainly as the child came to Mary that first holy night, so he comes to us with his body and blood in the Sacrament. At the altar the Christmas miracle, the mystery of the incarnation, is made perfect for us, a great and mighty wonder. Here we receive his body and blood for the complete forgiveness of our sins. The Sacrament gives us comfort in this life and hope for the life to come. The Father gives us his Son under the form of bread and wine as a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb, which will be ours at the final coming.

- G. Schmeling, *God’s Gift to You*, NPH 2001, p. 20

During this season we pray, “O Lord, come.” May our pray also be, “Lord, use me to help others come – come to the Supper, a personal manger for burdened souls.” What a Christmas feast!

In the love of the holy Christ-child,

John A. Moldstad

News from Board for World Outreach

Through the use of Helping Hands support, the board approved the purchase of licenses for Spanish language People’s Bible Commentaries for all seminary students in the countries of Peru and Chile. | A gift of \$2,500 has been made available through Cross-stitch for necessary food expenditures in order to assist students attending Amazon Lutheran High School. | In our Korean field, preparations are being made for forming a sister congregation to East Seoul Canaan. | We ask all to pray for our world mission efforts, especially as we are being advised by the Schwan Foundation of likely 25-30% reductions in support for the year of 2013.

Women's Mission Rally in Northern MN

The Circuit #8 Women's Mission Rally was held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Bagley, Minnesota on September 22. The guest speaker for the day was the Rev. Dallas Miller from the Lutheran Home Association who presented information on Jesus Cares Ministry and also on each church's responsibility for its senior members, both excellent opportunities for local mission outreach.



River Heights Lutheran

On Sunday, November 18, 2012, the congregation of River Heights Lutheran (RHLC) in East Grand Forks, Minnesota, celebrated its fall mission festival. President Moldstad preached for the occasion and presented during the Bible class hour. Rev. Nile Merseth, pictured with his wife Lynne, has served as pastor of RHLC since 2006. The congregation began in 1933 and was located near Fisher, Minnesota. In 1956 it moved to East Grand Forks and took on its present name. The present church building was constructed in 1981. Students from the University of North Dakota frequently attend worship services at RHLC.



Lingenfelder Colloquy

Rev. Fred Lingenfelder (Pem.) of Sun City, Arizona, successfully completed a pastoral colloquy on November 15, 2012. Fred will be helping Pastor Jay Weber as needed at Redeemer Lutheran in Scottsdale, Arizona. In July of this year his dear wife, Pam, with whom he enjoyed 48 years of marriage, was taken to her heavenly home. We welcome Pastor Lingenfelder to our clergy list.



Engage Others with Jesus Retreat

The ELS Board for Home Outreach held the first "Engage Others with Jesus" Retreat for Circuit 9 on November 16 and 17. Over 70 pastors and lay couples attended from fifteen of the circuit's seventeen churches. Attendees were given practical methods for engaging others in their communities with the Gospel message, while being reminded that we, as Lutherans, have the best evangelism tools already



available to us: the Word and Sacraments. President John Moldstad and Pastors Tim Hartwig and David Russow led presentations and discussions on a variety of evangelism topics. Participants left with fresh ideas, new friends and a renewed commitment to help their congregations be more mission-minded.



Thanksgiving in Leander

Our exploratory mission in the Austin, Texas, area held its first Thanksgiving service at the newly acquired ministry center in the city of Leander. The outdoor setting worked well and was graced with special music (Benhur on guitar and Amy on keyboard). Pastor Brad Kerkow reports that average worship attendance has been over 40. Eight people are currently enrolled in an information class. Students from our Bethany Lutheran College have been assisting the mission with the development of three videos. To see the videos go to: <http://www.hopeaustin.com>



Chairmen of Boards/Committees

- We will be having the Planning and Coordinating Committee (P&C) meeting on Monday, January 14.
- All boards/committees should have their budget requests for the year of 2014 submitted to Business Administrator K. Wiederhoeft by January 1.
- The P&C will be making a 2014 budget recommendation to the convention; assessing progress on the strategic plan ("Engage Others With Jesus"); and working on an evaluation form for synod entities.