

Praxis

*(prak'sis) *n.*, 1. Practical application or exercise of a body of knowledge.

April 2008

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Global Mission



Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa

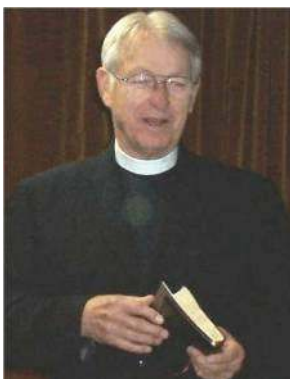
In July 2006, members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church gathered to bid farewell to Dr Karl Smith as he left to join Bishop Mullen's delegation to our companion Synod in Africa, the Lutheran Church in Rwanda. Smith is a past treasurer of the Sierra Pacific Synod and started as a somewhat reluctant participant who suddenly found himself confronted forcefully and undeniably by the Holy Spirit on his visit to Rwanda.



Kayonza Parish in Rwanda, Africa

A life-changing bond was formed between people on two continents. The journey from the steps of a church in Santa Rosa, CA to a sister congregation in Rwanda is told on page 4.

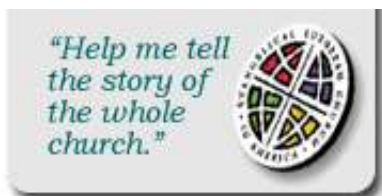
Stewardship



Pr Bud Egdahl

Read Bits from Bud in the weekly Byte of Synod. Not a subscriber? Send a note to info@spselca.org

Email Pr Egdahl:
padreegdahl@aol.com



[Stories of the church to Share](#)

THE ON-GOING TUG-OF-WAR

When it comes to our stewardship of money, we often find a battle going on within us. The Apostle Paul put it clearly: “I love to do God’s will so far as my new nature is concerned, but there is something else deep within me...that is at war with my mind...”
Romans 7:22-23 THE BOOK

Isn’t that the picture? Clear cut is the invitation to share generously out of the abundance God has given us, and deep down is our willingness to respond, even our joy when we do so.

But always there is this other voice in us, this darker side of us that wants to cling to what we have, and protect our other options for using our money. And our fear that there won’t be enough.

There was a man, visiting in Alaska, who came to an old native’s door. He noticed two virile looking sled dogs – one chained at each end of the front of the house. When the old gentleman opened the door, the visitor pointed this out and asked why, when it was so cold, they were not tied side by side. “Because they fight when they are close,” was the reply. “Well, which one wins?” asked the visitor.

“The one I feed the most!”

When it comes to the inward battle in the stewardship of finances, the question is “Which one do we feed the most?”

There is plenty of “food” thrown at us by the culture in which we live. Happiness is defined as Having. It is a “plate” of food that is shoved in front of us day in and day out, from so many sources. We can’t live in our culture and avoid it. It is almost like being “force-fed.”

But we can counter it by making sure that we are availing ourselves of the “feast” that God keeps serving up for us in God’s Word. Think of faithfulness in hearing the Word week in and week out in worship, exploring that rich banquet in study classes, and small groups, and exercising our “trust muscles” by stepping up in our money investment in God’s mission as a regimen that God’s has promised to use to build up our faith and our joy in doing so.

We are not in this alone! “Who will free me...? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord.” *Rom 7:25*

The Bishop

The first Christians were convinced of the resurrection by their experiences of the risen Christ in their midst. The Church teaches that we meet the risen Christ by his presence in our Christian assemblies! The liturgical celebrations of Word and Sacrament are, to the eyes and ears of faith, the evidence of living Christ! Ah, but there is something in us that resists this message. Settling for mere liturgical habit, or for the old familiarity of church and world after the celebration, our consciousness of the resurrection reality may be as thin as a flat stone skipping across a deep pond.

In a remarkable poem, “Wean Yourself”, the Sufi mystic poet, Rumi, captures this human dilemma and encourages us to take the risk of a maturing faith and vision:

Little by little, wean yourself.
This is the gist of what I have to say.
From an embryo, whose nourishment comes in the blood,
move to an infant drinking milk,
to a child on solid food,
to a searcher after wisdom,
to a hunter of more invisible game.

Think how it is to have a conversation with an embryo.
You might say, “The world outside is vast and intricate.
There are wheat fields and mountain passes,
and orchards in bloom.

At night there are millions of galaxies, and in sunlight
the beauty of friends dancing at a wedding.”

You ask the embryo why he, or she, stays cooped up
in the dark with eyes closed.

Listen to the answer.

*There is no “other world.”
I only know what I’ve experienced.
You must be hallucinating.¹*

There is a similar voice speaking to us from near the empty tomb, voice asking to us to take seriously an event of cosmic significance: *Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen!*

And we answer with the rest of our life; it’s either more of the same old comfort of a cozy darkness, or : Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

And we are born into a whole new way of being! Alleluia!



¹ *The Essential Rumi*. Page 70 Trans. Coleman Barks. 1997. Castle Books, New Jersey

Report from Karl J. Smith Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa, CA

When I left with Bishop Mullen's delegation, I had no idea of the outcome of our adventure. After a 36-hour journey, we were warmly greeted and progressed through our planned agenda meeting with sister parishes, governmental officials, and leaders of several global mission agencies.



Robin Strickler and Pr Celestine visiting property in Rwamagana

One of the highlights of our visit was delivering medical supplies to the Mumeya congregation. On that day, a dream for a Lutheran Center was presented to a part of our group. It was a hope for a building to house a school, a church facility for our sister parish in Rwamagana, and offices for the Lutheran Church in Rwanda. After the tour, I was singled out and presented with a plan to bring back to the United States. My response was that if I were to be involved, there would need to be not only local support, but divine intervention, since there was no way I knew how to make the dream a reality.

The first thing I did when I returned to Santa Rosa was to call a meeting with my pastor and congregational president. I told them about the plan and that I wanted Bethlehem to donate \$100,000 for this project. After the laughter

stopped, I told them I was serious, and they said to go ahead and see if I could raise the money; however, they let me know the funds would need to come from individuals, not the congregation.

What could I do? I approached three individuals, who several years ago had contributed \$25,000 or more each to a building fund at our church. The building was not built and the money was just gathering interest. We went out to lunch where I told them of the dream. They each agreed if I could convince the congregation, they would support moving the \$75,000 they contributed to the Rwanda School Project. After bringing it to our church council (and being told that contributors no longer have any “strings” on their gifts), they agreed to call a congregational meeting so I could plead my case.



Robin Strickler teaching in Rwanda

At the congregational meeting, \$50,000 was approved with the condition that the additional \$25,000 would be available as matching funds. After a year and half we have purchased the land, and we are now looking forward to building a school. For more information go to The Rwanda School Project at

www.rwandaschoolproject.org/Youcanhelp.html

Assembly



Dr Kathleen Hurty

A featured speaker at this year's Assembly will be Dr Kathleen S Hurty. Professionally active as a grant-writer, researcher, and consultant to faith-based organizations, she is also a Teaching Fellow in Leadership Studies at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley.

A former executive director of Church Women United, an ecumenical movement of Christian women in the United States, she has returned to Oakland and continues leading an active life.

A teacher at heart, she has led seminars, written curriculum, and served as keynote speaker for various conferences and assemblies. Long active both in this country and internationally, she has participated in the World Council of Churches Assemblies in Vancouver, BC and in Harare, Zimbabwe, and in the Second China-US Conference on Women's Issues in Beijing, China.

Her teaching background includes classroom teaching in Santa Barbara and Oakland. She also was a school principal before moving to New York to serve as the Director for Ecumenical Networks of the National Council of Churches.

Dr Hurty and her husband, the Rev David L Hurty, have four grown children and six grandchildren.

Synod Assembly Displays

Be sure to visit the display area during breaks, etc.. Augsburg Fortress will be with us with lots of items of interest. Music, books, vestments, games, DVD's—it will all be in the bookstore!

Augsburg Fortress is a key partner in the Book of Faith Initiative working to develop resources. The first resource to be released is *Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study*. To celebrate its release in April, attendees at our Assembly will have the opportunity to receive a free copy of the book when they sign up to get Book of Faith resource E-updates. So, sign up for E-updates and your copy of the book at the bookstore while supplies last!

Check out the new Evangelical Lutheran Worship resources including the new pocket edition. Preview www.Sundaysandseasons.com/Contemporary and sign up for more information and a free gift.

The various agencies and institutions of our synod will also have tables and lots of information for you to peruse and things to take with you.

Our hospitality folks presiding over the coffee and tea will be the good folks from Sunnyview Lutheran Home in Cupertino. Bring along your own travel mug and help us be as green as possible!

FEED THE COOKIE MONSTER!

Delegations are asked to bring cookies to share at the Assembly. A time-honored tradition, cookies and coffee helps the Assembly feel comfortable. Folks are invited to bring along their own healthy treats to munch. The hotel and city health regulations do not allow us to bring in anything other than the cookies. (Yes, it's strange, but true!)

We Pray

continued prayers for retired Pr **Marty Schaefer**—nearing full recovery and for his wife **Barbara** who is also making a good recovery. They extend their thanks for all the prayers, cards and expressions of support to them both.

for **Joan Grochau**, wife of retired Pr Bob Grochau, recovering from melanoma surgery on her neck and scalp. Prognosis is good, with a consultation later this month on future options.

Prayer requests may be sent to info@spselca.org
(Please be sure to secure permission first)

Roster Changes

Nick Droge, newly ordained, to Bethany, Kerman

ELCA Directories

Looking for a rostered leader in another synod? Try the Directory at the ELCA web site. <http://www.elca.org/directories.html>

This includes directories for colleges, campus ministries, camps, Lutheran Social Ministries, and more!

Congregations in Transition

Key: (1) Forming Call Committee, (2) Developing Profile, (3) Interviewing, (4) Calling

Congregation

Auberry, Sierra (2)
Concord, Good Shepherd (2)
El Dorado Hills, St Stephen's (1)
Elko, Faith (4)
Fairfax, Christ (2)
Fresno, Hope (1)
Fresno, Immanuel(Associate) (3)
Grass Valley, Peace (Associate) (3)
Lodi, Emanuel (2)
Marysville, Faith (2)
Merced, Shepherd of the Valley
Mi-Wuk Village, Mt Calvary (1)
Palo Alto, First
Quincy, Our Savior (3)
Redding, St James (1)
Reedley, Christ (2)
Reno, Holy Cross (2)
Rio Linda, Calvary(3)
Sacramento, Good Shepherd (2)
Sacramento, Our Redeemer (2)
San Leandro, Epiphany (1)
San Leandro, St James (2)
Saratoga, Immanuel (2)

Interim Pastor

Carl Bengston
Russ Creydt
Beverly Jensen
Terry Hamilton-Poore
Jan Womer
Stan Niemi
Kirk Shipley
Arlynn Turnquist
David Rohrer
Ruth Hanusa
Larry Quanbeck
Bruce Johnson
Jack Niemi
Ruth Leshar
William Norman

Synod Calendar

March

3-4 Clergy/Spouse Retreat
6-11 Conference of Bishops

17 Chrism Mass
21 Good Friday—office closed
23 Resurrection of Our Lord

Save This Date—July 12, 2008

The Installation of the Fourth Bishop of this Synod

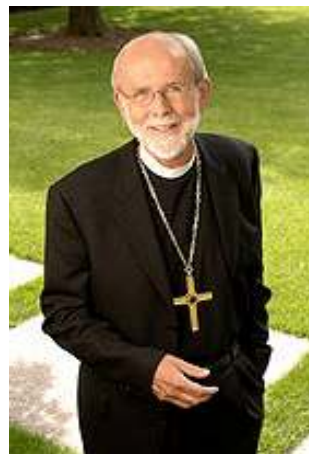
Bishop Mark Hanson, presiding

April

1-3 First Call Theological Education
11-13 Candidacy Committee
24 Synod Council
25-27 Synod Assembly
28 Office Closed

May

1 Ascension of Our Lord
17 Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Commencement
11 The Day of Pentecost
18 The Holy Trinity
26 Memorial Day (office closed)



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www.spselca.org

by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA

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