

Praxis

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

October 2007

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Sent with a Mission

This past July and August Pastor Lucy Kolin (Resurrection, Oakland) was sent by the Sierra Pacific Synod to serve in and with The Lutheran Church of Rwanda (LCR) for six weeks. Her primary mission, according to Bishop David Mullen, was to meet with LCR leaders to draft a Covenant between the two church bodies. That document is meant to serve as a guide in our life as companion churches. In meetings with Bishop George Wilson Kaliisa and other members of the Bishop's office, with Lutheran World Federation staff, and with LCR pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders, Pr. Kolin gathered ideas, language, and vision for the covenant.

"I was struck by the profound theological insights and wisdom of LCR leaders, by the connections they saw between the history and circumstances of our two churches, and by their awareness of all the LCR brings to this ministry of equals." The current draft of the covenant is now circulating among Synod and LCR leaders to create the final version to be signed later this fall.

(Story continued inside on Page 4)



Some members of the Sunday School Choir at Kigali parish



Pr Bud Egdahl

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

GETTING NEW HABITS

No, I am not referring to fresh garments – for the “religious” or otherwise.

I am thinking of why we do what we do, and how much we are creatures of habits – unthinkingly doing what we do - automatically – without question.

It came to me this summer as, struggling with a back problem, I suddenly realized that every day I put my trousers on left leg first and then the right. And the socks – right foot first and then the left. Made no sense. But never thought about it nor realized it.

The Bible tells us to “train up a child in the way she/he shall go, and he/she will not soon depart from it.” Which tells us two things about our giving:

1. We have some giving habits acquired from our past, which takes our giving decisions into the “automatic” response mode. We need to recognize this. It is strong.
2. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about change, and that only comes as we speak and hear God’s Word – the change agent.

That’s why making the needs of the congregation the focus of our teaching and preaching and reaching about money never gets it done. That has no power to change ingrained habits. Raises questions like “my fair share” and issues of disagreement about how the congregation uses the money it has. That approach is why many clergy are uncomfortable about speaking about the stewardship of money. Looks too self-serving – that approach.

The Biblical focus is on the need of the giver to give. Made in God’s image, knowing God’s generosity and abundant, graceful provision for us, we are encouraged to respond in gratitude and in wanting to live and give as God’s wants us to live and give.

God is not asking for “blood” here. Jesus’ blood is sufficient.

God is asking for faithfulness in our daily walk, as we receive, use, and enjoy the plethora of gifts that God gives to us. DAILY!

Preach it! Teach it! The Holy Spirit will take it from there.

Witness and Service

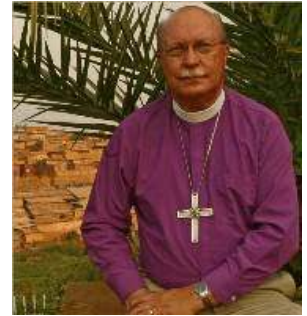
As I write today, I see that September 27 is the memorial day for St. Vincent de Paul, a French priest (1581-1660) who felt a profound call to serve the poor. His vision continues in the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Most of us have heard of soup kitchens and places of service to the needy, and some of us have helped serve meals at “St. Vincent’s” in our communities.

St. Vincent’s commitment to the poor lifted up the Scripture’s own voice—a cry for compassion and justice and actual service to those who are desperately poor, outcasts, and beggars. In the 20th century, another Roman Catholic, Mother Teresa felt such a call and from her vision developed the Sisters of Charity.

There is a long Lutheran tradition of and commitment to service to the world as well. Currently Lutheran Services in America (of which LSS is a part) is a pre-eminent provider to services to the needy in the USA, right along side Catholic Charities in scope and depth of steadfast compassion.

At recent Synod Assemblies there has been heated debate about our mission plan (budget) and what our priorities ought to be. Concern has been voiced regarding our commitment to justice and advocacy, and what is perceived as a stepping away from commitment to the poor and marginalized for the sake of evangelical outreach.

Are “witness” and “service” in opposition?



Faithful Christians of passion, such as St. Vincent de Paul, remind us that the Spirit calls the church to give voice to the merciful and saving gospel of Christ. Many voices, perspectives and commitments are needed to advance the gospel and develop the manifold ministries of the church, in our case of the ELCA. It is possible, and indeed, it is the case in this church, that both evangelical outreach and committed service to the poor are present—and both are needed.

“Service” is a significant commitment in many, many congregations. For this we give thanks to God. But, significant attention to evangelization is also needed if we are to be the church for the world. The poor need food and shelter. The poor also need the Bread of Life and faith-full life under the sheltering compassion of God.

Grace and peace be with you as these conversations continue.

+ David G. Mullen

October Candlelighting for Mental Illness

All Lutheran congregations are invited to light a candle and say a prayer for persons with mental illnesses and their families. We pray for understanding and compassion for all who suffer in mind, body or spirit.

The Lutheran Network on Mental Illness/Brain Disorders is a joint program of the ELCA and LCMS to assist faith communities to work effectively with persons with mental illnesses and their families, to educate about mental illness and to combat stigma.

Mailings have been sent to all congregations with information and suggested prayers. Select any Sunday in the month.

To be a Contact Person in the congregation or, for more information, call 1.800.638.3522 ext 2692

Lutherhostel February 17-22, 2008

Spirit in the Desert at Carefree, Arizona, a wonderful location and a wonderful opportunity to participate in “**The Holy Spirit-Changing Lives** “. Leaders are Bonnie Jensen, Dick Jensen, plus, Mary Preus and Tom Witt of Bread for the Journey. **More information at www.SpiritInTheDesert.org Or call 480.488.5218**



Did you know

...that synod congregations hold over \$28,078,125 million in savings, memorials and endowments?

... that individual members and 55 congregations and ministries have \$6,546,699 at work in Mission Investments?

... that 18 congregations and ministries in our synod are supported by \$11,882,653 in Mission Investment Fund loans?

To learn more about MIF, go to www.MissionInvestmentFund.org or call 877.886.3522 (toll free)

Lecture, PLTS, October 31

Featuring Professor Scott H. Hendrix speaking on “ The Future of Luther’s Theology.” Registration at 8:30 am at the Chapel of the Cross, 2770 Marin Ave, Berkeley.

Catered lunch \$10.

RSVP 510.559.2737 or cevans@plts.edu

Rwanda Connection

Sent with a Mission: Living into our Companion Synod Relationship with The Lutheran Church of Rwanda *(continued from page one)*

Pastor Kolin served in a number of other ways as requested by the LCR. She preached and led the new English language service at the Kigali parish, provided training in Lutheran worship to local pastors and the Kigali parish English language worship committee, consulted with the Lutheran World Federation-Rwanda program and with Congregations Rebuilding Community in Rwanda, the congregation-based organizing project directed by Pr. John Rutsindintwarane. She also met with Emily Freeburg of the ELCA's Washington, DC office regarding a Youth Conference in Rwanda next year, and visited the women and youth of the Kigali parish and with potential funders like the Clinton Foundation/Partners in Health and Waterlines. In addition, Pr. Kolin visited students and ministries supported by Synod congregations, met with Robin Strickler regarding the school project, and visited Rwandan members of her Oakland parish and other friends made in five previous visits to Rwanda.

“Just a year after the visit of our Synod delegation led by Bishop Mullen, the Lutheran Church of Rwanda is remembering that visit with joy. I saw more positive changes in the countryside: more housing and roads being built, power lines appearing in the rural areas, and *gacaca* and peacebuilding efforts bringing deeper levels of reconciliation. However, there

are also continuing challenges, including a widening economic gap in the capital, which needs to be addressed by people of faith and by the government so that it doesn't provide new cause for hatred and division. The LCR has an important role to play in this effort.”

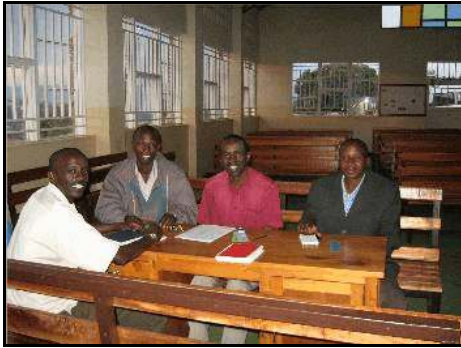
“I have beautiful memories from this visit, including being part of a traditional women's dance on my last day in the Kigali parish. This dance which features graceful hand and arm movements is said to have been inspired by the dance of the Ugandan crane. I'm not sure my dancing was as graceful as either the cranes or the Rwandan women, but I loved being invited to dance alongside my sisters.”

Pastor Kolin is preparing a power-point presentation about her summer mission trip and would be interested in sharing it with Synod congregations. Please contact her at: lucyk@pacbell.net.

(Pictured below, Pr Kolin reporting to the Bishop, Dean and Kigali parish. More pictures on the Companion Synod page of the Synod web site www.spselca.org)



Rwanda Album



Youth Ministry Leaders planning meeting



Building a secondary school dormitory
(Support from St John's, Sacramento)



View of land cleared for the foundation of a future clinic at Mumeya



Refuge camp near the Tanzanian border



Akagera National Park

Around the Synod

We Pray

for retired Pr Harry Carlson, at the death of his wife Violet

those recovering from surgery and/or illness:
Ann Watkins,(Word & Sacrament Team) Dee Wright,(Synod Resource Center) Christopher Leshner, (grandson of Pr Bill and Jean Leshner) Earna Mikulasek(wife of Pr Ken Mikulasek)

Roster Changes

David Dahl, to Counseling Ministry
Andreas Pielhoop, to Interim Ministry
Gregory Schaefer, to University, Palo Alto

Congregations in Transition

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

Congregation	Interim Pastor
Auberry, Sierra (1)	
Auburn, Bethlehem (4)	Dan Hodgson
Citrus Heights, Advent (Associate)(2)	
Davis, Belfry Campus Ministry (3)	
Elko, Faith (2)	Beverly Jensen
Fairfax, Christ (1)	Terry Hamilton-Poore
Fort Bragg, Trinity (2)	Chris Warner-Carey
Fresno, Immanuel(Associate) (3)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection(1)	John Ridenour
Kerman, Bethany (1)	
Lafayette, Our Savior (Associate)(4)	
Lodi, Emanuel (1)	Stan Niemi
Marysville, Faith (1)	
Merced, Shepherd of the Valley (2)	Carl Bengston
Modesto, Emanuel(3)	Roger Lee
Palo Alto, First (2)	David Rohrer
Petaluma, Elim (Outreach& Discipleship)(3)	
Quincy, Our Savior (2)	Ruth Hanusa
Redding, St James (1)	
Reno, Holy Cross	
Rio Linda, Calvary(3)	Bruce Johnson
Sacramento, Good Shepherd (Sr)	Russ Creydt
Sacramento, Our Redeemer	
San Leandro, St James (2)	Ruth Leshner
Santa Clara, Our Savior (3)	Andreas Pielhoop
Saratoga, Immanuel (2)	
Stockton, Zion (3)	Cindy Beck
Woodland (Associate)(2)	

Synod Calendar

October

- 4-9 Conference of Bishops
- 9-11 First Call Theological Education
- 12-14 High School Youth Gathering
- 13 Synod Profile Regional Event, Fresno
- 15 Deans Meeting, Rostered Women' s retreat
- 16-18 Professional Leaders Conference
- 22 Assembly Planning Committee
- 26-27 Candidacy Committee
- 27 Hunger Workshop
- 27 Synod Profile Regional Event, Bay Area
- 31 Reformation Day

December

- 18 Discipling Team Chairs and Bishop' s Staff
- 24 Christmas Eve, Office closed at noon
- 25 Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day

November

- 3 Imitate My Heart, Christian Educator' s Event
- 7 Interim Pastors-Bay Area
- 8 Interim Pastors-Valley
- 9-10 Women of the ELCA Convention
- 10 Tri-Synod Campus Ministry Board
- Synod Profile Regional Event, Lodi
- 22 Thanksgiving Day
- 23 Office closed
- 26 Assembly Planning Committee

January

- 1 Name of Jesus Day/New Year' s Day (office closed)
- 8-9 Region 1 & 2 Assembly Planning Staff
- 11-12 Candidacy Committee
- 12 Rwanda Connection Committee
- 16 Deans Meeting
- 17-19 " Leading the Song" event
- 21 Assembly Planning Team
- 25-26 Synod Council

Praxis is published monthly (except July) and posted at the web site

www.spselca.org

by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA

Rev F Noreen Meginness, Editor

Rev David G Mullen, Bishop
