

# Praxis

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

December 2007

Inside this Issue

- 2 *Stewardship*
- 3 *Bishop*
- 4 *Discipling Team*
- 5 *Global Mission*
- 6 *News*
- 7 *Around the Synod*
- 8 *Synod Calendar*

Telephone  
510.430.0500  
800.ASK.ELCA  
Fax 510.430.8730  
[www.spselca.org](http://www.spselca.org)

Subscribe to the weekly  
Byte of Synod email  
[info@spselca.org](mailto:info@spselca.org)

## Global Mission



**Rev Jerry Schmallenberger serves as an ELCA Global Mission Volunteer. Officially retired, he teach seminary students, as well as preaching and traveling long distances.**

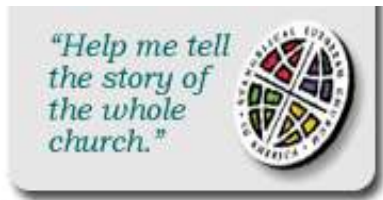
**He is one of “our pastors” and teaches at the Hong Kong Seminary and from there travels to many other settings. He mentors and supports those who will become pastors and teachers of the Christian faith.**

**Excerpts from two recent reports are inside on page 5. Dr Jerry is now home!**



## Pr Bud Egdahl

Read Bits from Bud in the weekly Byte of Synod. Not a subscriber? Send a note to [info@spselca.org](mailto:info@spselca.org)



[Stories of the church to Share](#)

## LITTLE THINGS - A BIG DIFFERENCE

Our culture is “nuts” about size: the biggest, the costliest, well, you get the idea.

So we are swimming upstream in our world when we live out what Jesus taught – that it is the little things that change lives and reflect the Kingdom Life.

For instance, something as small as a comma can change the whole tone and meaning of a sentence. Look at this sentence for example:

*What on earth are you doing, for heaven’s sake?* Sounds like an exclamation of disgust. But try removing the comma and see what happens:

*What on earth are you doing for heaven’s sake?* Now we have a question that gets at the meaning of life, and the ways of our days as Jesus’ followers.

Jesus held up the little things in life, done in His Name, as great actions in the Kingdom of God. The “cup of cold water”, the “visit” in prison, the “clothing”, the meal, etc., all point the Way for us.

We are called not to random acts of kindness, but small acts of Christ likeness. That is the essence of faithful following of Jesus.

Being stewards of our God-given life in all that we are and all that we do is what God calls us to be and do.

We pray in the confession: “Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name.”

That is what stewards do! Small steps of faithful living and Christ like giving of oneself for the sake of the Kingdom and the mission of our Lord.

I like the question without the comma! What about you?

I love the Christmas season, but every year, there is a sense that something's not right—something that bugs me like a string of lights gone out on Christmas tree. I know what it is, but that doesn't change this sense of displacement, this inkling of wounding that leads to a narrowing of hope and trust in the great scheme of things: for someone like me, born and raised in the upper Midwest, it's the lack of (real) cold and snow! I miss walking home from the midnight candlelight service, the snow squeaking under my boots, my breath like mini-clouds drifting in the glow of streetlights. Ok, it's nostalgia, and I deal with it—but still...

There is something not right--but in a sense far larger than my yearly nostalgia. We know that this world is "fallen" and abuses our trust and hope and sometimes even shuts them down. There are people and forces ready to crumple like so much discarded gift wrapping the wide-open expectation of peace, justice and compassion the Spirit poured into our hearts in our baptisms. And so the Advent texts with their poetic yearnings for the wholeness of humanity and the healing of creation haunt us and we might wonder if we dare open ourselves to hope on a Biblical scale.

In Luke's Christmas story at the end of their taxation journey, Mary and Joseph end up as virtual strangers in their ancestral town, where, in a setting as simple as a solitary string of lights on an apartment patio, Jesus the Savior is born. And the angels sang over a rugged laborer-immigrant landscape: a child is born, hope for all God's children.

My wife, Sue, works in a large office and hears from co-workers about their joys and struggles.. Now that it is Santa Claus time, she heard of two incidents involving little children of employees. One mother's little girl, sitting on Santa's knee

was asked "Have you been a good little girl, or have you done bad things?" And the tot began to cry. Another mom described how on Santa's lap her little boy timorously told the fake-bearded one he wanted a skateboard for Christmas. Santa's reply? "You're not going to use that in the street, are you?" His mother says her boy's head bowed down and he slinked away from Santa and was sorrowful for the rest of day, asking over and over, "Why did Santa say that?" (The family lives on a cul-de-sac where the kids play on the street all the time—but what did Santa care? He didn't even ask.) Where do the malls find these guys? Don't they know about the open, hopeful soul of the child on their laps, and the power their stupid moralisms have to disappoint and wound and drive their souls into hiding? Or is their purpose to teach children how the world really is?



But moralism is not the hope of the world. And Christmas is not really about Santa and certainly is not about snow. It is about Jesus the Savior (bringer of Divine Salve), the teacher on the margins, beckoning our souls out of hiding. I pray that this Christmas will be for you an opening of your souls and your congregations to God and thus, snow or no snow, to the real Christmas: to Jesus Christ, lover of the world and sign of how the world really is when the world has hope.

+ David G Mullen

# Discipling Team

## Witness & Service Discipling Team

## Witness and Service Synod Hunger Advocacy Network

*Chair*  
Richard Stahlke

*District A*  
Pr Jim Goldsmith  
Fortuna

*District B*  
Ms Marilyn Minke  
Reno

*District C*  
Ms Kathryn Sizemore  
Manteca

*District D*  
Pr Michael O' Berg  
Redwood City

*District E*  
Pr Ron Kreinsieck  
Clovis

*At Large*  
Pr John Goldstein  
Alameda

*At Large*  
Pr Dan Solberg  
San Francisco

*Dean*  
Pr David Beard  
Pleasanton



On Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup> about 50 people from across the synod attended a hunger education event at Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Davis. Rev. Adisa Armand-Miller started the day with a bible study emphasizing how Matthew 25 calls us to minister to those who hunger today. Bob Sitze, Director of Hunger Education for the ELCA, an inspiring keynote speaker, encouraged us to tackle the difficult task of ending hunger with humor and enthusiasm.

After lunch a simulation allowed participants in small groups to plan meals based on the amount of money usually spent for food in several different countries.

The Asante Network provided an opportunity for early Christmas shopping with beautiful well-made baskets, batik and tie-dyed textiles and hand-carved crafts. These are purchased directly from the Miichi Women's Group in Tanzania and NEEPU Women's Group in Uganda. The money the women earn help them feed their families, send their children to school, and support AIDS orphans.

If you are interested in the work of the Synod Hunger Network, or would like a speaker at your church on hunger related topics, call or email Edie or Denny Lott at [thelotts@gmail.com](mailto:thelotts@gmail.com) or 530 582-5362.

## Reports from Dr Jerry:

### Sava is Safe for Now

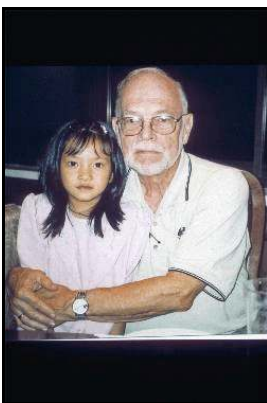
There is a horrible slaughter of people going on right now in Myanmar, formerly called Burma.

Our international student fund and St. John's member Keith Knapp saved one young pastor from certain persecution. Sava had attended Lutheran Theological Seminary in the Theological Librarianship 2 year program. He returned to Myanmar and began work in a little Christian seminary. Then he began work at LTS in the doctor of ministry program.

Badly beaten while on the way to visit an ill member of his church, Sava made it to Hong Kong. He had no money. and would have had to return. Dr. Jerry wrote to Keith Knapp, who has helped Indonesian students in the past, and asked for enough money to keep Sava in Hong Kong until Christmas. This would spare him possible imprisonment and perhaps even torture. And he could be awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree. Keith graciously put the necessary funds in the St. John's International Student Fund and it was transferred to Hong Kong right away. Now Sava is safe and working hard on his thesis.

### Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong

Total enrollment: 335, 184 men and 151 women  
77 Lutheran , 214 other denominations



Pr Jerry and friend

### Tang Kam Poh, Paul's Story

Tang Kam Poh aka Paul, is a Chinese Malaysian whose grandfather emigrated from Mainland China in the 1940's. Paul is a recipient of an ELCA scholarship.

When Paul was 17, a chemistry teacher told him about the Christian faith and he was baptized. His family disowned him and did not speak to him for months. He later married and his wife became a Christian. Their two children have also been baptized.

Paul attended the Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican & Presbyterian Trinity seminary in Singapore. After that he served as a parish pastor in the Lutheran Church of Malaysia until his Bishop selected him to come to Hong Kong in the Masters program. When he graduates, he will return to serve on the faculty of the Lutheran Bible Training Institute in Malaysia.



Above: Batak Students

To learn more about ELCA Global Mission and how you might serve:

[www.elca.org/globalserv](http://www.elca.org/globalserv)



### LIRS visit to California

Sacramento area Lutherans met with Ralston (Ralie) Deffenbaugh, President of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), at Opening Doors, Inc., a refugee resettlement and immigrant support organization. This is a joint partnership of LIRS and Church World Service ([www.openingdoorsinc.com](http://www.openingdoorsinc.com)). Left to right: Mark Carlson, Director of the Lutheran Office of Public Policy, Rev. Jim Munson, St. Paul's, Deffenbaugh, Rev. Lloyd Hanson, First English, Michelle Beckwith, St. John's

Lutheran Church, a federal attorney and George Niesl, a council member and adult education leader at St. John's.

Ralie's travels took him to California Lutheran University and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and meetings with Bishop David Mullen and Southwest California Synod Bishop Dean Nelson. As we reflect on the search by the Holy Family for safe, secure shelter, the needs of those displaced by war, violence and discrimination press for our response. For more information on LIRS: [www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)

Mark Carlson, Director, Lutheran Office of Public Policy - California

### Next Chapter for these Synod Staffers

Pastor Lauren Egdahl and Pastor F. Noreen Meginness happily announced their intention to retire in 2008 to their staff colleagues at the early December staff meeting.

Bud has served as the Synod's Stewardship Specialist since 1993, following his retirement from parish ministry. Noreen has served as Assistant to the Bishop with three bishops—going back to 1988 and the beginning of the synod and the ELCA.

Bud's date is May and Noreen's is August. The two plan on celebrating at Ole's in Alameda over a festive Swedish pancake meal!



## We Pray

for Todd Van Laningham, undergoing cancer treatment.

for Karen and Pr Jim Goldsmith, at the death of Karen's mother Connie Stolp. And, in thanksgiving for the birth of a grandson, Dale James, born to daughter Heather and son-in-law Dave Christison.

for Flora Schultz and family at the death of Pr Gus Schultz.

for the family and friends of Bob Stewart, former Copy and layout editor of the Praxis who died in November.

( We welcome prayer requests—please be sure to secure permission from those you wish to have included in this public space)

Send prayer requests to [info@spselca.org](mailto:info@spselca.org)

## Roster Changes

Jody Golden-Lund, on leave from call  
Jerry Gray-Reneberg, to Grace, Redway  
Eric Strom, to Southwest California Synod

## Congregations in Transition

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

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Interim Pastor</b>
Auberry, Sierra (2)	
Citrus Heights, Advent (Associate)(4)	
Concord, Good Shepherd (1)	
Elko, Faith (3)	Beverly Jensen
Fairfax, Christ (2)	Terry Hamilton-Poore
Fort Bragg, Trinity (4)	Chris Warner-Carey
Fresno, Immanuel(Associate) (3)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection(3)	John Ridenour
Grass Valley, Peace (2) (Associate)	
Kerman, Bethany (2)	
Lodi, Emanuel (2)	
Marysville, Faith (1)	Kirk Shipley
Merced, Shepherd of the Valley (2)	Nick Droge
Millbrae, Calvary (3)	Richard Smith
Modesto, Emanuel(4)	Roger Lee
Palo Alto, First (3)	David Rohrer
Quincy, Our Savior (3)	Ruth Hanusa
Redding, St James (1)	
Reno, Holy Cross (1)	Larry Quanbeck
Rio Linda, Calvary(3)	Bruce Johnson
Sacramento, Good Shepherd (2)	Russ Creydt
Sacramento, Our Redeemer (1)	Scott Minke
San Leandro, St James (2)	Ruth Leshar
Saratoga, Immanuel (2)	William Norman
Stockton, Zion (4)	Cindy Beck
Woodland (Associate)(2)	

# Synod Calendar

---

## December

- 4 Discipling Team Chairs and Bishop' s Staff
- 8 Special Meeting-Synod Council
- 17 Assembly Planning Committee
- 24 Christmas Eve, Office closed at noon
- 25 Nativity of Our Lord

## February

- 6 Ash Wednesday
- 17-19 Clergy/AiMs/Spouses Retreat
- 18 Assembly Planning Team
- 26-28 Region II Staff Retreat

## January

- 1 Name of Jesus Day/New Year' s Day (office closed)
- 8-9 Region 1 & 2 Assembly Planning Staff
- 11-12 Candidacy Committee
- 11-13 Bishops Academy
- 12 Rwanda Connection Committee
- 13 Delta Diablo Conference Assembly  
Sierra San Jaquin Conference Assembly
- 14-17 Professional Leaders Retreat
- 16 Deans Meeting
- 17-19 " Leading the Song" event
- 21 Assembly Planning Team
- 25-26 Synod Council

## March

- 3-4 Clergy/Spouse Retreat
- 6-11 Conference of Bishops
- 17 Chrism Mass
- 21 Good Friday-office closed
- 23 Resurrection of Our Lord

---

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

[www.spselca.org](http://www.spselca.org)

by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA

Rev F Noreen Meginness, Editor

Rev David G Mullen, Bishop

---