

Praxis*

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

December 2006

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Flying Pastor and Flying Doctors In El Salvador



From November 11-19 Dr. Doug Zike, pastor of Faith, Meadow Vista, was in El Salvador with Flying Doctors. Pastor Zike is the vice-president of the Gold Country Chapter and has been with the organization for 12 years. Dr. Zike's PhD in Spanish was put to use as he did intakes in the triage unit seeing over 1100 patients in 5 days of clinic. The clinics took place in Los Cobanos, Izalco, Sunzal, and El Espino.

The group also participated with local groups in giving out more than 130 wheel chairs to those in need. Normally Pastor Zike makes trips with Flying Doctors (Los Medicos Voladores) to the States of Sonora and Baja Norte and Sur in Mexico. He is also government and foundation liaison with the State of Sonora for arranging approval of trips there.

Over the course of the years a number of members and medical professionals from his congregation have also participated in trips to Mexico which provide medical and dental services and optometry clinics which give out used glasses.





WHICH ONE ARE YOU FEEDING?

Pastor "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist

I like the story of the man visiting an Eskimo at his dwelling. Two dogs were tied up outside, one on either side of the door. They were snapping and snarling at one another. When the man mentioned it, the Eskimo told him that those two are always fighting. "Which one wins?" the man asked. "The one I feed the most!", was the reply.

Each of us has two battling needs in our lives.

On the one hand we have the need to acquire and possess. It is a powerful push in each of us, and it gets a lot of encouragement from the culture in which we live. Advertising does its number on us even subliminally. Stature in the social scene rises with the amount we own. Getting and keeping is a strong need in each of us.

On the other hand, we also have a need to give. This is not nearly so obvious. And it certainly runs counter to the culture in which we are immersed. But made in God's image, we have the need to give!

And the need to give, primarily, has nothing to do with the need of another person or the church to receive, important as that is.

Think of an orange tree. Wonderful fruit in all the various ways we might devour it. But the orange tree produces oranges, not because we need them or enjoy them, but because the tree itself has a need to produce oranges. It is in the nature of the tree, and it is important to the tree's health. The by-product is our enjoyment of its product.

So we have these two needs doing battle with each other in us: the need to acquire and keep; and the need to give, generously and gratefully.

Which one is winning in your life? Like those dogs, it will be the one you feed the most.

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**Enjoy
an
Orange!**

Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod

Advent Thoughts This Is the Time

The Northern Hemisphere darkens as winter approaches. In the “bleak mid-winter” human hearts feel a cosmic chill and loneliness. Ancient anxieties about the vanishing light and a global catastrophe find a voice in the biblical texts and themes of Advent. The forces of destruction in a cultural sense have brought us now to say that we live in the post-modern world. In Europe and North America, outposts of the one holy catholic and apostolic church seek to find a way in the wilderness of the post-Christendom era. There is pain and loss to be lived with and through.

“Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins,” is the prayer for the First Sunday in Advent. That is what God will do, in the ultimate sense. In this interim time between the coming of Christ into the world, and ultimate new creation, there is something in which we are directly involved: the stirring up of our hearts. The prayer of the church is precisely that. We need God to do in us and among us what no program, preacher, tradition, liturgy, can do. God enters among us and creates the new, that which is truly redemptive.

God does not offer a superficial response to the cry, “O Lord, come and take everything back to the way it used to be!” There is a deeper gift waiting for us.

In this wilderness of apprehension, we voice our hope and longing for the world to be made right, and it will, by God’s grace, be so. But we also pray that we will not blindly be a part of the human problem. We know, after all, that our complicity in the day’s evil is real, yet often obscured by our self-righteous, self-defending, superficial layers of “justification”. For the world to be made “right” we must know that we ourselves have been made right—by grace, through faith. Not by our own effort, but solely by the Spirit of the Living God.

As Advent leads to Christmas, we unwrap the swaddling cloths of the beloved but troubled existence we share with all humanity and all creatures. Lo, we find the Christ, who fulfills the prophetic dream: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”
(Micah 6:8)

This is the time to pray for such a birth among us, and thus, for a truly Merry Christmas, walking humbly and hopefully with our God. This is the time!



The Sierra San Joaquin Conference met in Assembly in October at Trinity Lutheran Church in Fresno. Bishop David G. Mullen presided over the election of a new dean. Pr Ted Niemi, the outgoing dean, assisted in the installation of newly-elected Dean Robert O'Berg. Pr O'Berg serves Trinity Lutheran Church in Fresno.



Conference congregational choir members sang at the gathering.



Bp Mullen (rt) and Pr Ted Niemi (lt) install Pr Robert O'Berg (back to camera) as the Dean of the Central San Joaquin Conference.

Guest speaker was the Rev Dr. Jane Strohl, from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley. She spoke on "Luther's Lens on the Old Testament: Joseph and Jesus"



Global Missions Connections



Some dozen people gathered in November to share stories and reflections about their congregational sister parish experiences. Traveling from various areas of the synod such as Sugar Pine, Santa Cruz, Palo Alto, Roseville and Lodi, the common thread was the desire to strengthen these ties. Currently, we have sister parishes in Rwanda and El Salvador. In the near future, we will have sister parishes in Taiwan. How can we best nurture and develop these relationships?

Our gathering was blessed with two dedicated and experienced leaders from the ELCA: Sandra Holloway, the Director for Global Cross-Cultural Relationships and Companionships for Africa, and, Christoph Schneider-Yattara, the Associate Director for Companionship, Advocacy, and Education/Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. These two led the day's reflections on the theme of accompaniment... "walking with sister parishes".



Two items were identified for further work;

1. A covenant to be developed between each companion synod
2. A Global Missions contact person for each congregation in the synod.

To learn more about Global Mission and accompaniment, go to <http://www.elca.org/globalmission/>



prayers@spselca.org

Prayer Ventures depends on you—not only for prayers, but also your prayer requests. Please e-mail your requests to prayers@spselca.org or call us. Remember to practice forgiveness when we err and let us know about errors and omissions.

Prayers for Healing: Retired **Pr David Schroeder**, recovering from surgery to place a stent in a coronary artery. Hip replacement surgery will take place this month; **Pr David Peters** (Atonement, Sacramento) recovering from placement of stents in coronary arteries;

Comfort of the gospel to: **Pr Carl Tuisku**, (Bethel, Roseville) at the death of his mother; for the families of **Pr Robert Meineke** and **Pr Richard Solberg**, who both died in November, and for **Pr George Steffens**, at the death of his wife Sally last month.

ROSTER CHANGES:

Rebecca Schlatter, to Associate, Good Shepherd, Reno

Congregations in transition

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

Congregation	Interim Pastor
Arcata, Arcata (4)	
Auburn, Bethlehem (2)	Dan Hodgson
Citrus Heights , Ascension (Associate) (2)	
Elko, Faith (2)	Beverly Jensen
Fairfax, Christ (1)	
Fresno, Immanuel (Associate) (3)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection (3)	
Hollister, Trinity (4)	Frank Starkey
Livermore, Holy Cross (4)	Lori Eichmann
Los Altos, Immanuel (2)	Jan Womer
Mariposa, Mariposa (2)	Kirk Shipley
Modesto, Emanuel (2)	Roger Lee
Orinda, Lamorinda Korean (4)	Jae Guen Lee
Oakland, Bethlehem (2)	
Reno, Good Shepherd (Associate) (4)	
Sacramento, St John's (Associate) (4)	Todd Eckblad
San Jose, Grace	
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)	
San Leandro, St James	Ruth Leshner
San Mateo, Hope (3)	David Ernat
Stockton, Zion (3)	Stan Niemi
Ukiah, Grace (3)	Allen Dunn

NOTE: Congregations engaged in a self study process, or on hold for various reasons, are not listed.

December

- 1-3 3rd-6th Grade Gathering
- 2 Evangelical Lutheran Worship Workshop, Fresno
- 5 Discipling Team Chairs/ Bishop and staff
Middle School Youth Gathering
- 7 Synod Finance Committee
- 19 Synod Assembly Planning Committee
- 25 Nativity of Our Lord
- 26 St Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

January

- 2-3 Council of Dean Retreat
- 6 Evangelical Lutheran Worship Workshop, Sacramento
- 6-11 ELCA Bishop's Academy
- 16 Synod Assembly Planning Committee
- 26/7 Synod Council



ELCA youth will "Stir it UP!" *2007 Souper Bowl of Caring is Coming!*

"Over 2,000 Lutheran groups have already registered to participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring 2007 under the theme Stir it Up", said Kathryn Stime, director of the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

America's youth are transforming Super Bowl weekend into the nation's largest youth-led day of giving through the Souper Bowl of Caring. Asking for only \$1 on one day-on or near Super Bowl Sunday- this event encourages people of all ages to care for their neighbors in need.

The 2006 Souper Bowl reported over \$725,000 for hunger-related charities.

Groups may register, learn more, request a free resource kit, and report their totals at www.souperbowl.org

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To receive the Synod weekly e-mail, "Byte of Synod" send a note to info@spselca.org