

Praxis*

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

July-August 2006

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Bp Kaliisa accepts the gift check from Bp Mullen

RWANDA CONNECTION

Our synod Rwanda delegation had so many touching and enlightening experiences as they journeyed to various areas and visited congregations. Most have commented on the hospitality which was extended wherever they traveled. "A life changing experience" one delegate told Bp Mullen. "We have much to learn," said Bp Mullen. "We were guests and came as companion synod partners, not experts to try to solve problems. It is important to remember this is an accompaniment process. We walk together as Christians."

Our Global Missions Advocacy Team will be hearing more from the delegation about the trip. Congregations interested exploring how to connect with a sister church, may call the Office of the Bishop at 510.430.0500 for information.



People walk many miles to collect water for home



Pr. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl

GOD'S SPIRIT: POWERFUL SHAPING FORCE

Pr. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist

It is titled "The Lone Cypress." Without a doubt, the most famous site on the 17 mile drive between Carmel and Pacific Grove.

This tree has a DNA that says it should grow up entirely straight - 90 degrees from the horizon. But it doesn't. It lists sharply toward the east. No matter that its DNA said "straight." The westerly wind said "east."

You are human. I am human. The people of our congregations are human. No doubt about it. But we have been born anew of the Holy Spirit. As the Psalmist puts it: "Yea, we have a goodly (Godly) heritage."

Which, by Biblical indications, seems to suggest that our DNA would call for "generous, first-fruits, tithing" of our income. A recognition that we believe "that God has given, and still preserves to us all that we are and have."

The Luther small catechism explanation goes on to add: "for all of which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve and obey God." That is our DNA in Jesus Christ.

You will agree that the winds of our culture blow incredibly hard and strong against that way of life. Consequently, those winds dry up our generous financial response to God's generosity. Those winds wipe out our DNA. They bend us and our giving in a different direction that God wants our generosity to move. God's mission suffers.

The "Lone Cypress" may be magnificent to view, but people of faith growing "up, entirely straight, 90 degrees from the horizon" of our culture's shaping force" need help and encouragement from each of us. They will also need some Biblical material for stamina!

Are you supplying it? Much help is available just for the asking. And at your "beck and call," padreegdahl@aol.com

The DNA of the "Lone Cypress" is to stand 90 degrees from the horizontal. Not to stand "alone." Help your flock to "defy" the "winds of today's culture." Jesus would! Jesus does!

**Defying
Cultural
Winds**

Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod

The 2004 Sierra Pacific Synod in Assembly voted to enter into a companion synod relationship with the Lutheran Church of Rwanda, the newest Lutheran Church in Africa, organized after the 1994 genocide. The first ten days of July I led a Sierra Pacific Synod delegation to visit the Lutheran Church of Rwanda. We were greeted at the Kigali Airport by Bishop Kaliisa of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda, Pr. John Rutsindawarene (whom many in our synod have met while he was here studying the faith-based community organizing), and a number of pastors and other church people. It was a happy time for all of us, and the hospitality manifest at the airport continued for the duration of our visit. As with many such visits, this one was an eye-opener. Members of our delegation will have much to report to their home congregations, and there will be other reports given as time goes on, including a presentation at the Synod Assembly 2007. Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in African, and the most populated, and the Lutheran Church, along with the rest of the country, manages to get by with incredibly meager resources. Pastors of the churches are not paid salaries, but must find ways to support themselves and their families. There is great and obvious need everywhere. Seeing such need, our natural instinct is to offer help, and in fact, much help has been given by individuals and congregations of the Sierra Pacific Synod. Because of the generous offering for the LCR given at our last Assembly, I was able to give a ceremonial check for nearly \$5,400 to Bishop Kaliisa at the Kigali church on Sunday July 9. It feels good to be able to help in that way, but I am also quite aware of the ELCA policy regarding our relationships with global churches. In a word, the policy is accompaniment. Our goal is not simply to offer help out of our wealth in ways that please us. Our first goal is to see ourselves as partners in ministry with our companion synods. We need to be careful and prudent in our helping, and attentive to the actual needs and situations of the members of those churches. Indeed, Bishop Kaliisa is concerned about the possibility of our generosity resulting in a sense of dependency by leaders and members of the Lutheran Church of Rwanda. In fact, accompaniment, the sense of being full partners in the gospel is an appropriate model for relationships for all our companion synod relationship (the Lutheran Church of Rwanda, the Lutheran Church of El Salvador, and the Lutheran Church of Taiwan), and everywhere in the church. We are strengthened in Christ and humbled by the reality that others have different life experiences, different ways of being Christians, and different perspectives on important issues. Even as Christ accompanies us every day, let us see our calling as accompanying others as true and abiding friends in him.



Word & Sacrament Discipling Team

Chair

Ms Ann Watkins
Our Savior's
Lafayette

District A

Pr Brian Classen
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Santa Rosa

District B

Mr Carlton Holte
Davis

District C

Ms Susan Peterson
Dublin

District D

Pr Susan Scott
Union City

District E

Mr Greg Silliman
Ceres

Conference Dean

Pr Chris Warner-Carey
Ukiah

At Large

Pr Judith Morgado
San Jose

At Large

Ms Susan Tevis
Chico

Word and Sacrament Discipling Team

Ann Watkins, Chair

*“Marked with the Cross of Christ forever, we are claimed,
gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.”*

ELCA Mission Statement

The Word and Sacrament Discipling Team is focusing on increasing communication about the ministry of the baptized between congregations, individual members, and the members of the Discipling Team. Two new tools are facilitating this communication.

The first is a new brochure. The brochure contains a list of resources that can be used to find information about the ministry of the baptized and a description of the work of the Word and Sacrament Discipling Team. Also included is information about the web-site, an e-mail address for the team, and a tear-off sheet which encourages comments and questions and can be mailed. All questions receive a response from the team. Multiple copies of the brochure can be obtained by contacting the team through the Synod office.

The Word & Sacrament Web-site is up and running. You can reach the site through www.wordandsacrament.org. The site will be up-dated monthly. The e-mail address for the team is wordandsacrament@sonic.net. We hope that the Web-site will help increase the visibility of the Word & Sacrament Team and provide an additional site for networking and communication, education, and information about worship and the ministry of the baptized.

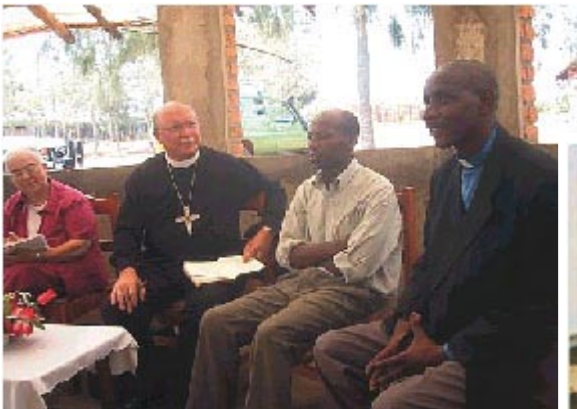
During the remainder of 2006 Word & Sacrament will begin to work on the Catechumenate – increasing knowledge of the team members, researching churches which have the Catechumenate in place, and determining how to best bring this to the attention of churches who may be interested in incorporating it. Churches currently having the Catechumenate as a part of their ministry are encouraged to communicate with the team about its use in their congregations.



Diane Lowe greeted by Kigali church members



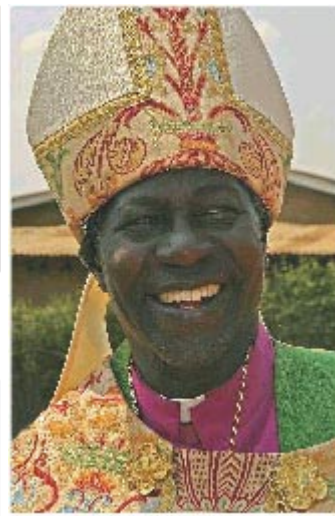
Karl Smith delivered medical supplies to a remote site, Mimima



Meeting with local pastors



Children's choir and Bp Mullen



Bishop Kaliisa



Getting a look at the map of the territory



Kyanzi Refugee Camp



Akagera National Park



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 for: Retired Pr Marty Wager still recuperating, **Pr Mary Lou Petitjean**, (Lord of Mercy, Sparks, NV) at home following treat for heart arrhythmia, **Gabe Moeller**, grandson of Clint and Pr Bonnie Bell.(retired)

Comfort of the gospel: Jean Fuller (Secretary for Bp Mullen) and family at the death of her mother.

Jill & Pr Ray Olsen (Advent, Citrus Heights) at the death of Jill's mother Helen

ROSTER CHANGES

Kirsten Barnes, to St Mark's, Pleasant Hill

Richard Miller, to retirement

Marcy Schaefer, Associate in Ministry, on leave from appointment

Matthew Smuts, to Grace, Palo Alto

Paul Theiss, to Mission Developer, Fernley, NV

Linda Vogelgesang, to St John's, Antioch

Congregations in transition

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

Congregation	Interim Pastor
Arcata, Arcata (3)	
Auburn, Bethlehem (2)	Dan Hodgson
Citrus Heights, Ascension(Associate) (2)	
Elko, Faith (1)	Beverly Jensen
Fresno, Immanuel (Associate) (3)	
Granite Bay, Resurrection (3)	John Ridenour
Hollister, Trinity (3)	Frank Starkey
Livermore, Holy Cross (3)	
Los Altos, Immanuel (1)	Jan Womer
Mariposa, Mariposa	
Modesto, Emanuel (2)	Roger Lee
Orinda, Lamorinda Korean (2)	Jae Guen Lee
Reno, Good Shepherd (Associate) (3)	
Sacramento, Church of the Master (3)	Dick Smith
Sacramento, St John's (Assoc) (3)	Todd Eckblad
San Francisco, Our Savior	Ron Moore
San Jose, Immanuel (3)	Todd Charles
San Jose, St Timothy's (Associate) (3)	
San Mateo, Hope	David Ernat
Santa Rosa, Thanksgiving (2)	Lorents Flak
Stockton, Zion (2)	Stan Niemi
Ukiah, Grace (3)	Allen Dunn

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

Synod Calendar

August

- 12 Word & Sacrament Discipling Team
- 19 Assembly Planning Committee
- 20 Executive Committee

September

- 4 Labor Day, office closed
- 7 Region II Council
- 12 Discipling Team Chairs/Bishop's Staff
- 16 Discipling Teams Joint Meeting
- 20 Founder's Day, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
- 22-23 Synod Council



Maria Paiva, ELCA Latino Ministry Director for the western US and Pr Jose Luis LaTorre, were in line to enter the state capitol in May on Immigrant Day.



Pr LaTorre led a procession into St John's Lutheran in Sacramento for the program on civic participation and leadership development sponsored by the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights. After the day of training, food and fellowship, about half a dozen St John's families hosted guests from Southern California for the night.

Photos on this page by Mark Carlson

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Pr. F. Noreen Meginness, Editor, Bob Stewart, layout. Items may be submitted for consideration by the 1st of the preceding month.

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