

Praxis*

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



November 2006

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Across Indonesia, survivors of the December 2004 tsunami are rebuilding their lives. Thanks to generous donations to the Wave of Giving® campaign for tsunami recovery, LWR is providing support to affected communities through its Indonesian partner organizations in Action by Churches Together (ACT), a global alliance of churches and related agencies responding to disasters worldwide.

Relief efforts now include long-term redevelopment and rehabilitation projects, the results of which are coming to fruition: houses are being built, livelihoods restored and families are regaining a sense of well-being and hope.

In addition to the projects in Indonesia, LWR is also supporting tsunami recovery efforts in India and Sri Lanka, both through ACT and directly with local partner organizations. Much the work in Sri Lanka has been made possible by a generous gift from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

WHO IS LWR? Headquartered in Baltimore, LWR has been responding to emergencies and disasters since 1945. Working through partners and global relief and development networks, LWR works in 35 countries to provide relief and combat the causes of poverty and restore dignity to people's lives. We advocate for Fair Trade that helps farmer and artisan families earn a better income. We teach people to better care for themselves, their communities and the environment. We teach people how to be less vulnerable to natural disasters. We counsel them after human and natural disasters, and help them recover with aid and long-term programs.

Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of the ELCA, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Rev. Don Haven is the
Western States Mission Advancement
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CHECK THE TEMPERATURE

Pastor "Bud" Egdahl, Synod Stewardship Specialist

Remember your mother shaking down the oral thermometer to check if you had a fever? Each morning, when I arise, I check the temperature gauge attached to the outside of my bedroom window to decide what to wear for the new day.

We know there are several ways to get a read on the "fever" of a congregation. For instance, Bishop Mullen points us to the adult baptisms as a sign of how feverish our outreach may or may not be. In addition, there is an evaluative process which lists twelve signs of a healthy congregation.

Surely, one way to measure the temperature of a congregation is to look at what is done in the area of stewardship. Not just how much money is given, but what place does this aspect of a Christian's discipleship have in the education program and the pulpit preaching/teaching.

Here are three bench marks to consider in taking the temperature of your congregation:

1. We have no financial stewardship programs. We simply receive offerings. Well, of course, all congregations do that. But if that is all you do with financial stewardship research indicates you can expect at most an average of 1.5% of people's income.
2. We ask people to pledge to support our proposed budget. Researchers know that people who write their estimate of giving in such a congregation will give an average of 2.9% of their income to their church. While that is about double of the first one, there is a better way.
3. We ask people to consider what percentage of their income God is calling them to give. In such congregations people give an average 4.6% of their income, fully three times more than the congregation that just receives offerings. Below the tithe, but on the way!

**What's
the fever
point?**

Bishop's Message

Bishop David G. Mullen, Sierra Pacific Synod



The proud bishop cuddles his first grandchild, Audrey June, shortly after her birth. She weighed in at over 9 lbs.



A retreat for rostered leaders was held at the beautiful Asilomar State Park in Pacific Grove in late October. Pastors, spouses and in some cases, children joined for this special time. Walking the beach, resting and golf were some of the activities folks enjoyed. Ever-Widening Circles: Living the New Community of Christ was the theme, carried out through worship, and various small and large group activities. The Council of Deans and a Women Clergy day preceded the retreat. The Leadership Discipling Team has begun planning for two retreats next year, plus, a theological conference for next year's time at Asilomar.

Photos below show pastors enjoying reconnecting with each other before the startup of the first session.



LAMN Takes Lead in Helping 5 Judicatories in Nevada Join Forces for Advocacy

By Larry Struve, Interim Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Nevada (LAMN)

On September 30, 2006, a legislative forum was held in Sparks, Nevada attended by over 60 people from five judicatories that have joined together to form a coalition known as the Religious Alliance in Nevada (RAIN). RAIN is comprised of five Christian denominations (Lutheran, Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist) that are committed to defending human dignity, standing with poor and powerless people, advocating justice, working for peace, and caring for creation. More than 500,000 Nevadans participate in the parishes of these church bodies.

RAIN is represented in the Nevada Legislature by their registered lobbyist, Larry Struve, who is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Reno and Director of LAMN. As noted by Tom Beck, Pastor of Faith Lutheran in Reno and Vice President of RAIN, "we advocate for policies that would serve the common good and bring hope to disadvantaged people throughout the state." In an article that appeared in the Reno Gazette Journal on the day of the forum, it was noted that a core belief of RAIN is that ". . . human dignity is inherent and inborn in all people. It is the foundation of all human rights. Accordingly, the issues with which RAIN has become involved, deal, in one way or another, with preserving the dignity of the least among us and following the commandment of 'love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

In 2001, RAIN played a key role in persuading the Legislature to authorize an interim study of Nevada's death penalty law, which resulted in a number of reforms, including the prohibition of executions of people with mental retardation and youthful offenders. In 2003, RAIN spoke out against draconian budget cuts that would disproportionately hurt low-income children, families, and seniors. In 2005, RAIN opposed a constitutional amendment that was defeated, which would have forced the Legislature to adopt a formula-driven budget that could prevent consideration of the needs of people dependant on government services.

New challenges facing disadvantaged people were discussed at RAIN's recent legislative forum. Michael Willden, Director of the Nevada Department of Human Resources, explained how revenue may not be sufficient to fund social programs in view of recent federal budget cuts (a move that was opposed by all ELCA Lutheran Bishops in 2005.) A low income housing expert reported that there is no affordable housing in Nevada for those who earn at or below the median income of the State. People working with inmates who will eventually be released from the State's prison system gave compelling arguments that programs to prepare prisoners for re-entry into society do work and can help reduce recidivism. And Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie of Reno, Chair of the Assembly Health and Human Services Committee, shared information on the importance of providing access to health care for uninsured people. Because of this event, legislators and other elected officials in Nevada know that the people of faith in these denominations care deeply about the common good and will measure success by how well we as a society treat the least among us.

Join Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for a Signature Event Benefiting Lutheran Social Services.

An afternoon of jazz, no-host wine bar, cheese and art

Sunday, November 12, 2-7 pm
[Peace Lutheran Church](#), Danville

This is a day for music lovers -- full of excitement with wine tasting, dancing, food buffets, indoor/outdoor jazz, book signing, silent auction and raffle and a fine art exhibit.

Musicians include the [Oakland Jazz Choir](#), contemporary jazz vocalists Ro.Sham.Bo, and international pianist and R&B recording artist Ricardo Scales. You can even sample their excellent music on [their website](#).

The event will conclude with "Jazz at Peace," an hour of spiritual reflection and rejoicing, from 5-6 pm with a brief reception following.

Tickets cost \$50 each or 10 for \$450 -- a full \$40 of the ticket cost can be considered a charitable donation. All proceeds benefit Lutheran Social Services of Northern California.

Even if you are unable to come, please consider sponsoring one or more hardworking LSS staff members.

Advertising space and sponsorship opportunities are also available. A limited number of complimentary tickets are available for event volunteers. For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact jazz@lssnorcal.org or call Christine at 925.825.1060 x 12.

Please see the [downloadable file](#) for more event details. (It's a large file so be patient as it downloads.)

We hope you can join us!

Passing on the Faith Conference

The Episcopal Diocese of California extends an invitation to participate in this exciting conference. Aimed at clergy, parents, grandparents, baptismal sponsors, faith mentors, Christian educators, youth, volunteers, anyone who touches the lives of the next generation is encouraged to attend. November 17-18 at Trinity Episcopal Church, Menlo Park. For more information and registration, go to www.episcopalbayarea.org/passingonfaith

Stretch and Pray DVD

While on a pilgrimage trek through Thailand, Murray D. Finck discovered the benefits of daily stretching and quiet prayer. On the physical level, after only one week, the chronic back pain that had plagued him for twenty years disappeared. On a spiritual level, the poses deepened his prayer experiences. The Stretch and Pray DVD: A Daily Disciple for Physical and Spiritual Wellness, a companion to Finck's popular Stretch and Pray book, is now available.

The DVD features Pastor Finck guiding you through forty gentle stretches, movements, and postures to improve physical and spiritual well-being. To order Stretch and Pray call 1-800-328-4648 or visit the web site at www.augsburgfortress.com. Books from Augsburg Fortress are also available at your local bookstore



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: Pr Mike Murphy's daughter and granddaughter, both sustained bumps and bruises in a car accident; **Barbara Droher Kline, (LSS President)** recovering from a car accident.

Comfort of the gospel to: retired **Pr Hoy San Loke**, at the death of his wife, Ann; **Kristen and Pr Ted Niemi**, (and the extended Niemi family) at the premature birth and loss of twin babies; **Pr Bruce and Margaret Johnson** at the death of his mother.

ROSTER CHANGES:

Diane Bowers, to on leave from call (study)

Tom Clay, to on leave from call

Paul Geye, to Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod

Peter Krey, to Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Suk Yeon Lee, to Associate, Good Shepherd, Concord

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 (3) | Frank Starkey |
| Livermore, Holy Cross (3) | Lori Eichmann |
| Los Altos, Immanuel (2) | Jan Womer |
| Mariposa, Mariposa (2) | Kirk Shipley |
| Modesto, Emanuel (2) | Roger Lee |
| Orinda, Lamorinda Korean (2) | Jae Guen Lee |
| Oakland, Bethlehem (2) | |
| Reno, Good Shepherd (Associate) (4) | |
| Sacramento, St John's (Associate) (3) | Todd Eckblad |
| San Francisco, Our Savior | Ron Moore |
| 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.

November

- 1 All Saints Day
- 2 Sacramento Conference Assembly
Finance Committee
- 3-4 Tri-Synod Campus Ministry Board
- 4 Sierra San Joaquin Conference Assembly
- 5 Monterey Bay Conference Assembly
- 10 Birthday of Dr Martin Luther
- 10-12 Spouses of Clergy Retreat
- 11 Evangelical Lutheran Worship Introductory
Event
- 12 Foothill Conference Assembly
- 13 Synod Assembly Planning Committee
- 16 Peninsula Conference Assembly
- 19 Vineyard Conference Assembly
Redwood Conference Assembly
- 23 Thanksgiving
- 24 Office Closed
- 30 Middle School Youth Gathering



Christ Lutheran in El Cerrito

December

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



*Pr David Beard is the newly
elected Dean of the
Southern Alameda Conference.*

*Rev Beard serves as the
Lead Pastor at
Trinity Lutheran Church
in Pleasanton.*

Like to see your church picture here?
Send one to us and we'll be happy to
include it in a future issue. Or, pictures of
church activities along with a story,
Send to info@spselca.org

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