



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

COULEE COURIER

December 2011

La Crosse Area Synod

Volume 24 Number 4

From Bishop Arends

"They saw the child with Mary his mother...Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts..." Matt. 2:11

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Matt. 25:40



FOR THE LITTLE ONES

It's the holidays. We center our preaching on our God who loves us enough to take on our likeness, who is incarnate in a baby. We look at the children around us and we think of the Christ. And we give gifts.

In October Layla Noelle Antje Arends was born in Napa, California - our third grandchild. Around the first of November we expect our fourth to be born in Buffalo, NY. Babies are filling my thoughts and I am seeing God. I am praying the little ones into God's care. And I am praying for gifts.

I pray for the faith of our grandchildren. I pray that our church will be there for them throughout their lives. I pray Christ will use us to build, grow and strengthen our church so it will be what the children need. I pray for life in the church that will pour life into the young ones - life that will last for life.

I pray for the three, four, and five year olds that I met in crowded towns and dusty deserts in Peru. I'm giving gifts to Sembrando through our synod that those little ones can count on their preschools providing nutrition for body and soul. And I am praying that Christ will grow, build and strengthen their life-giving church.

I pray for the children in the schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land. As they live

Quick Links

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Help us "GO GREEN!"

The Coulee Courier is now sent out via e-mail or via the US Postal Service, according to your preference.

PLEASE HELP THE SYNOD CUT OUR COSTS AND SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL

CALL 608-788-5000 or
office@lacrosseareasynod.org

THANK YOU!

MEETINGS

Middle East Subcommittee, Mon, Nov. 14, 1 pm, synod office

Peru Companion Synod Subcommittee, Mon, Nov. 14, 6:30 pm, synod office

South Conference Pastors, Tue, Nov. 15, 9 am, De Soto/Freeman

East Conference Pastors, Tue, Nov. 15, 9 am, Woodland

Lutheran Campus Ministry Board, Thu, Nov. 17, 7:30 am, Morris Hall, UW-L

Assembly Planning Committee, Thu, Nov. 17, 9:30 am, synod office

with constant unrest and times of fear, I am thankful they have a strong church to embrace them. And I celebrate that congregations of our synod help supply Lutheran Palestinian libraries with books.

I see Jesus in the little ones and I place them before the throne of God. I pray for the children of Adams and Wauzeka and Black Hammer and Alma and La Crosse. I pray for the children of Lima and Trujillo and Cusco. I pray for the children of Addis Ababa and Nekemte and Arjo. I pray for the children of Bethlehem.

God, grant your goodness to the little ones. Use your church to bring them Good News and comfort and care. Let my resources become your resources that the little ones may flourish. Amen.

Bishop Jim Arends



**From Pr. Libby Howe,
Dir. for Evangelical Mission /
Assistant to the Bishop**

A man I got to know well while I was on internship used to greet people by saying, "SO Brother/Sister _____ (your last name)! How goes it with YOU and the LAAWWDD?" He

wasn't trying to be entertaining, and he really did want an answer. I heard the question every week at text study, and it started to get under my skin. First, it was none of his business; why does he need to know about my relationship with the Lord? Second, I'm a Lutheran, and we don't just go around asking people questions like that about faith. Third, I felt ill-prepared and inadequate for what I imagined he was asking about: the hours I must spend in prayer and Bible Study and/or the assumed weekly mountain-top spiritual experience.

Does it sound like I protesteth-ed too much to his question? I hope so. Truth is I felt defensive because my weakness was being attacked. I felt ill-prepared because I had no answer. I felt inadequate because my own spiritual life and my own relationship with God was nearly non-existent. Deep down I knew that there was something hugely disingenuous about being a leader in a church and having a relationship with the Lord that was on the fritz. I felt ashamed and burdened. For good or for ill, I know that I have not been, nor am I now, the only church leader who has ever neglected my relationship with God.

There's a big push these days for "wellness." I'm all for it. And one's spirituality is usually presented as one aspect or piece of a person's whole wellness picture. The typical other pieces of the picture are family, finances, friends,

Deans, Thu, Nov. 17, 1:30 pm, synod office

Executive Committee, Thu, Nov. 17, 4 pm meeting, synod office

Synod Council, Thu, Nov. 17, 5:15 pm supper, 6 pm meeting, synod office

Mission Support Committee, Tue, Nov. 22, 6:30 pm, synod office

North Conference Pastors, Tue, Nov. 29, 9 am, Fagernes

Evangelism and Outreach Comm., Thu, Dec. 1, 5:30 pm, synod office

Interim Pastors, Mon, Dec. 5, 10 am, synod office

Global Mission Committee, Mon, Dec. 5, 6:30 pm, synod office

West Conference Pastors, Tue, Dec. 6, 9 am, Prince of Peace

Candidacy Committee, Tue, Dec. 6, 2 pm, synod office

Lutheran Campus Ministry Board, Thu, Dec. 15, 7:30 am, Morris Hall, UW-L

North Conference Pastors, Fri, Dec. 16, Christmas gathering at John Ashland's home

East Conference Pastors, Tue, Dec. 20, 9 am, Trinity, Sparta

Evangelism and Outreach Comm., Thu, Jan. 5, 5:30 pm, synod office

South Conference Pastors, Tue, Jan. 10, 9 am, Bethel/Bethany/Zion

Church in Society Committee, Thu, Jan. 12, 6:30 pm, synod office

DEADLINES for synod publications

Dec. 1 - Leaders' Mailing

Jan. 1 - Leaders' Mailing

Jan. 15 - Crosswinds

**Lutheran Campus
Ministry**

job, physical health, emotional strength. As if "spirituality" or, for Christians, a relationship with God in Jesus Christ, could be set apart from all the other aspects of our lives! When we think of it in such a small way, tending our relationship with God becomes more of an extra-curricular activity that we do when we get a chance instead of the everyday every minute every second gift that it really is. This relationship with God is the core and foundation and cover and sides of our entire lives, especially as workers and public leaders in Jesus' church.

There are lots of excuses we make and burdens we can feel about how we do or don't connect with God each day. None of those excuses are really good ones. Because whether we're afraid or sad or inadequate or defensive or ashamed, God is fine with that. God can handle us. In fact, God is completely holding us. Love encircles us constantly. Jesus promises that.

The cultivation of a relationship with God is not just a matter of wellness, though it has that benefit. For people who lead in pulpits and at council tables and from an organ bench or before a group of children, tending our relationship with God is our first and only non-negotiable task. We simply cannot lead congregations faithfully without knowing and listening to the living, breathing, loving and challenging God of our lives. Tending this God-given relationship is not what we do when we find the time or feel like it any more than preparing a sermon or going to work or brushing our teeth or taking our medicine. This relationship is God's gracious gift to each of us, and we DO have time for it, and we must believe, preach and teach that tending it is PRODUCTIVE activity. I hope somewhere in the next few weeks, you ask someone, maybe your pastor or another church leader in your congregation, "SO Brother/Sister _____ (insert last name)! How goes it with YOU and the LAAWWDD?" (or some variation thereof) And expect an answer. Enjoy the conversation. Marvel at what God is doing.

Happy Holydays to you during this beautiful and busy season,
Pastor Libby Howe

From Mission Developer, Pr. Steve A. Meyer

Looking Back . . .

For the past 7+ years I had the privilege of being called by the synod to be a mission developer, working to develop a new congregation in the Holmen area which we called Bridge of Life. I am deeply thankful for all the generous gifts and multitude of prayers that were lifted up over the years for that process. About a year ago the call took a new direction after a sister congregation in Holmen, Christ

SEE ALL THE EXCITING NEWS from Lutheran Campus Ministry and your invitation to the groundbreaking ceremony for their new building [HERE](#) (or on insert)!

CALL PROCESS & PRAYER CONCERNS

SELF-STUDY

- Fountain & Trinity, Hustler - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Jim Steinbrecher, part-time)
- French Creek - Pastor
- Wilmington, Caledonia - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Jim Scaife, part-time)
- Kickapoo United & Peace - Pastor
- Luther Memorial & Our Savior's, Gays Mills - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Kent Johnson, part-time)
- Our Savior's, West Salem - Senior Pastor (Interim: Rev. Roger Grow)
- St. Paul's, Wilton - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Jim Steinbrecher, part-time)
- Trinity, Immanuel, Bethany, Cashton - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Gary Daines)

INTERVIEWING

- Blair - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Chris Hallemeier)
- First, Onalaska - Associate Pastor
- Our Savior's & Skogdalen, Westby - Pastor (Interim: Rev. Steve Minnema)

CALL ACCEPTED

Bethel & Bethany, Viroqua - Pastor - Rev. Pete Beckstrand, began Nov. 1

PRAYERS SYMPATHY

- To Rocky Danielson (Dir. For Raising Up Leaders) upon the death of her mother, Lillian Wohlers on Sun., Nov. 6. Memorial service was Thu, Nov. 10, Immanuel, Caledonia

the King suffered a congregational split and was in need of pastoral help. After serving both congregations on a part time basis it became clear that there was an opportunity for a whole new ministry to emerge. The combined resources and energy of the two worshipping communities would make it possible to fulfill the mission of reaching out to unchurched in the Holmen area in new and exciting ways. This new ministry became known as **Journey Lutheran Church**. By the time you read this Journey Lutheran will have organized and become the newest congregation of the ELCA and my call from the synod as its developer will have ended. Thank you again. Although Journey Lutheran no longer has the title of a "mission start" it continues to be a congregation in mission. The resources you gave continue to bear fruit and you are invited to come and visit anytime as we continue seek ways to reach out.
Pastor Steve

UPCOMING EVENTS

PRAYER VIGILS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Thu, Nov. 17 & Dec. 15, English Lutheran Church,
1509 King St, La Crosse, 5:30 pm (3rd Thur. eachmonth)
Coordinated by Marla Engbloom, 608-784-9783
Sponsor: Middle East Subcommittee

LIVING WELL DAY

(back by popular demand!)

Thu, Jan. 12, 9 am -3 pm, Trinity, Sparta
Sponsored by Bd. of Pensions as a free gift to pastors, this day is set up to remind you that wellness is connected to faithfulness and your spirituality. Come be refreshed! To REGISTER simply respond to this e-mail (office@lacrosseareasynd.org) or call the synod office at 608-788-5000.

Sponsor: Professional Service and Care Committee

2012 BOUNDARIES WORKSHOP

Thu, Jan. 26, 9:30am - 4pm, synod office
2301 South Ave, La Crosse
Presenter: Barbara Keller, ELCA Vocation & Educ. Unit
To REGISTER simply respond to this e-mail (office@lacrosseareasynd.org) or call the synod office at 608-788-5000. *(Rostered Leaders are expected to attend a boundaries workshop every 3 years.)*
Sponsor: Professional Service and Care Committee

SPRING THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Tue, March 13, Sugar Creek Bible Camp
Presenter: Dr. David Lose
Theme: Practical aspects of preaching in the new century
Sponsor: Professional Service and Care Committee

- To Erin Rodriguez (2011 synod Certification School graduate, employed at Good Shepherd, La Crosse) on the death of her father, Jeff Morrison, Oct. 31
- To Marsha Bateman (former synod council secretary) upon the death of her father on Oct. 6 in Onalaska. His funeral was Oct. 10
- To Melanie Timmerman (synod office manager) upon the death of her father, Calvin Kelly. His funeral was Oct. 28, Ashland, Illinois

FOR CONGREGATIONS & PASTORS

- For the start of Journey Lutheran Church (in Christ the King's church building in Onalaska) as it begins its ministry; formal organization celebrated Sun, Nov. 13.
- Zion, Bethel, Bethany, Viroqua as they begin their journey together Nov 1, with Rev. Pete Beckstrand as their newly called pastor

MISSION SUPPORT

Synod / ELCA Mission Support:
Received \$523,907 from Feb-Oct 2011
Received \$534,121 from Feb-Oct 2010

Received Feb-Oct 2011

Ethiopia Clinics: \$3384
ELCA Disaster Relief: \$7450
ELCA Malaria Campaign: \$20

STEWARDSHIP

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Rev. Chick Lane, Dir. of the Center for Stewardship Leaders, Luther Seminary, shares this prayer, penned by Pr. Mark Jaramillo of Norway Lutheran Church, Wind Lake, Wis.

"Let us prayer together.
ALL: Your church is composed of people like me. I help make it what it is. It will be friendly, if I am. Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.

2012 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
 Mark Your Calendars!
 Fri-Sun, June 8-10
 Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

YOUTH

SYNOD YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERS

Next meetings: Nov. 21 & Dec. 19, noon, synod office
*Convener: Rocky Danielson, rul@lacrosseareasynd.org
 or 507-450-8702.*
Sponsor: Raising Up Leaders Program

GLOBAL MISSION

ELCJHL LIBRARIES' PROJECT

Schools in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) have few, if any, libraries. That is very hard for us to even imagine. So Pr. Elly McHan, a daughter of our synod serving in the ELCHJL, is promoting the "Libraries' Project" here and in other synods. What a wonderful way for Sunday Schools, women/men's groups, the Social Ministry & Outreach committee or others from YOUR congregation to be involved in the mission work of our church! Our synod promoted this project via the Accompaniment Resolution at our 2011 Synod Assembly, and it continues to be a vital, ongoing ministry!

Checks for gifts to this program can be made out either to the synod with "ELCJHL Libraries Project" on the memo line, or made out directly to the project. Mail checks to: La Crosse Area Synod, 2301 South Ave, La Crosse WI 54601.

More info can be found at <http://www.elcjh.org/help/librariesProject.asp>. Or contact Pr. Kent Johnson, Middle East Subcom. pastorkentj@gmail.com.
Sponsor: Middle East Subcommittee

NEWS from Pr Elly McHan, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land

View recent post from Pr. Elly [HERE](#) and read about the Freedom Marathon and the Jerusalem olive harvest.

SEMBRANDO PARA EL FUTERO - "sowing seeds for the future"

The Sembrando project was begun by ILEP Iglesia Luterana Evangelica Peruana (our companion synod Peru) as a way to meet the tremendous need for children and families. This program provides a healthy daily meal, school materials/books, a safe play and study environment, and more. Sembrando was taken on as a mission support

It will do great work, if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver. It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I invite and bring them. It will be a church where people grow in faith and serve you, if I am open to such growth and service.

Therefore, with your help Lord, we shall dedicate ourselves to the task of being all the things you want your church to be.
 Amen."

"GREEN" IDEA

A BREATH OF FRESH VOCs?

Those fresh paint fumes you smell in new or refurbished buildings may not be good for you. Many paints contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to indoor air pollution. Exposure to high levels of VOCs can irritate the eyes and respiratory tract and cause headaches and dizziness. When selecting paint, look for labels that indicate compliance with EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) standards of VOC content.

Synod Staff Listing

Bishop: Rev. Jim Arends - bishop@lacrosseareasynd.org
Dir. of Evangelical Mission & Asst. to the Bishop: Rev. Elizabeth "Libby" Howe - assistant@lacrosseareasynd.org
Synod Interim Pastor: Rev. Chris Hallemeier
Exec. Asst./Office Manager: Melanie Timmerman - office@lacrosseareasynd.org
Off. Asst./Call Process Secy: Deb Wold - deb@lacrosseareasynd.org
Bookkeeper: Alice DaFoe - bookkeeper@lacrosseareasynd.org
Dir. for Raising Up Leaders: Rocky Danielson - rul@lacrosseareasynd.org

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Office Hours:
 8:30 - noon, 1 - 4:30 Mon - Thurs
 8:30 - noon, Fridays

Mission Interpreters

project of our synod at the 2011 Synod Assembly via the [Sembrando Resolution](#). Read more info about the project and share the info in your congregation with this [bulletin insert](#).

Sponsor: Companion Synod in Peru Subcommittee

NEWSLETTER from PERU

Please read a recent [newsletter](#) (or on synod website - www.lacrosseareasynd.org/globalchurch/Peru) from Pr. Dana Nelson, ELCA missionary serving Cristo Rey congregation in ILEP.

See current information from synod coordinator, Cindy Berg, [HERE](#) or on enclosed insert.

MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

The synod Mission Endowment Fund board has important news to share with you and your congregation! The Synod Seminary Endowment Fund (invested with the ELCA Fund for Leaders) now totals \$30,000. We hope to increase this fund to over \$50,000 in the next 3 years so that more scholarships with larger awards can be given. Read exciting news about this fund and synod seminarian, Shawn Brooks, who received a full scholarship from the Fund for Leaders in the attached [FLYER](#) and [BULLETIN INSERT](#) and find ways that your congregation can support this important program.

INSERTS INCLUDED WITH THIS MAILING:

- ~ [Lutheran Campus Ministry - Exciting News!](#)
- ~ [Synod Seminarian Scholarship Fund - flyer](#) and [bulletin insert](#)
- ~ [Mission Interpreter insert](#)
- ~ [Parish Paper, Dec. 2011](#) - How Do We Successfully Launch a New Project?

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