

## Reports of Coordinators and Consultant

### Latino Ministry Coordinator

Of primary importance this year is the completion of a second / revised draft of the Northern Illinois Synod Hispanic-Latino Ministry Strategy. Following Assembly Breakfast Forum presentations in 2004 and 2005, written and spoken responses were received from over twenty clergy and laity as well as from ELCA leaders in neighboring synods and at churchwide. This feedback was incorporated into the second draft of the strategy, which was available on March 25th, 2006. Eighteen NIS members sponsored the document.

With a focus on the Great Commission and Great Commandment of the Lord Jesus, the strategy provides a variety of challenging yet attainable goals in several areas, including: outreach, cultural awareness, worship and Spanish language training. Steps for implementation and funding suggestions are also in the strategy. The intention of the strategy is to strengthen synodwide engagement in ministry with and to the Hispanic-Latino people of Northern Illinois.

The second draft was presented and discussed at a consultation on April 29th, 2006 at Bethlehem, DeKalb. It is now in the hands of the synod Outreach Committee, awaiting implementation or additional editing.

Copies of the NIS Hispanic-Latino Ministry Strategy / Revised Edition are available through the Mission Director, Outreach Committee or the Bilingual Ministry Resource Center at Santa Cruz, Joliet. (815) 722-4800. It should soon be on the NIS webpage as well.

Also notable during the past year: the San Miguel Mission, housed at First Lutheran Church, DeKalb, celebrated its final Sunday liturgy in June of 2005. The annual series of Las Posadas Advent processions and devotions continued to grow, again drawing over 500 participants last December. "Gracias" to all of our Posada hosts.

With this report, I conclude my volunteer service as the synod's Latino Ministry Coordinator. I am especially grateful for the partners and sponsors in this growing aspect of our life together who have demonstrated genuine collegiality, persistence and faithfulness through the years.

en Cristo,

Pastor Keith Forni

### Mission Coordinator

Together in Mission Engagement

Three years ago the Synod envisioned a cluster process to help congregations renew their focus on mission, and reaching out into the world to invite and serve. Pastor Andy Hagen initially developed the process using proven ideas from the ELCA Division of Outreach, and other sources. In January of 2005, I had the privilege to step into leading this process after Pastor

Hagen took a call to Florida. 8 congregations completed the first cluster process, and 7 additional congregations took on the journey for the second year. Through three Saturday workshops, Congregational Heritage and Context events, small group studies and other tools, these congregations developed a clearer sense of God's mission for the Christian church, and then applied that specifically to their congregation through a goal-setting leadership retreat. The congregations who completed the initial TIME process were:

Good Shepherd in Rockford: Rev. Rich Likeness  
Our Saviors in Seneca: Rev. Kris Zierke  
Zion Lutheran in Belvidere: Rev. Karl Otto  
Nativity Lutheran in Wonder Lake: Rev. Rebecca Gordon  
Trinity in Galsburg: Rev. Tom Larsen  
Bethlehem in Rockford: Rev. Fran Olson  
Tabor in Rockford: Rev. Paul Wold

The current group began in Fall of 2005:

St. Paul in Warren: Rev. Margo Peterson  
Bethlehem in DeKalb: Rev. Gary Erickson  
First Lutheran in Rockford: Rev. Lisa Hufford  
Grace Lutheran in Wilmington: Rev. Heidi Olson  
Shepherd of the Valley in Rockford: Rev. Janet Wold  
Gloria Dei in Rockford: Rev. Ken Storck and Ms. Janet Lepp  
St. Paul in Streator : Rev. Dan Stalker  
Messiah Lutheran in Port Byron: Revs. Wayne & Barbara Melaas-Swanson

Another TIME process is scheduled to start this fall with a pastor's retreat in the summer. For more information, contact Kendall Koenig at [pastorkendall@lightofchristchurch.com](mailto:pastorkendall@lightofchristchurch.com).

## Mission Consultant

On behalf of the Northern Illinois Synod I seek to surface and evaluate potential mission development sites. Generally, we look closely at growing areas that do not presently have an ELCA congregation serving them in the hopes of ultimately developing a new congregation.

### Geographical Locations:

Presently, there are six specific areas under consideration for mission development in the Northern Illinois Synod (Elwood-Manhattan, Poplar Grove, Yorkville, Minooka, McHenry County, and near the junction of Rt. 47 and 167). In addition two existing congregations are seeking to establish satellite missions. The greater Chicago metropolitan area continues to extend south, west, and north into the eastern region of our synod, which is the primary reason these aforementioned sites are under consideration.

Currently, the work in these areas is in various stages of development. In three of them we have persons doing door-to-door calling and working towards starting worship services by the end of the year (Elwood-Manhattan, Yorkville, and Poplar Grove).

Personnel:

We need laity and/or clergy willing to do outreach calling in new and developing areas and working toward gathering a faith community together within one year of entry into the field. Training and support will be provided. If you or someone you know feels called to this ministry of evangelical outreach, please give me a call.

Pastor/developers are also needed for mission outreach and the development of new congregations throughout the ELCA. If you know of any pastor in our synod or anywhere in the ELCA who evidences a commitment to evangelical outreach, works hard, and is enthusiastic about sharing the Gospel, please share their name with me.

Pray that the Lord will provide the persons who can enable our outreach efforts.

Land Sites:

I am presently looking for congregations that would be willing to purchase and hold a land site for a new congregational development that might occur in three to ten years.

In the last five to seven years land costs have significantly appreciated in the growing areas of our synod. Unfortunately, in many of these areas, if we do not have an advanced site purchase, we will not be able to move forward with the development of a new ministry because the cost structure becomes too prohibitive. If your congregation would be willing to hear about this need and how an existing congregation can use its own equity resources to purchase a land site for a new ministry, please contact me.

Pray:

Pray that the Holy Spirit will open hearts and minds so that we might be able to proceed to develop new congregations in the growing areas of our synod and that the mystery of Christ might be proclaimed.

Thank you,

Ron Voss  
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