

REPORTS FROM AGENCIES, INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

diakonia™

Purpose and Description of diakonia™

diakonia™ is a two-year process of spiritual formation and theological education for baptized members of the Lutheran church. This process occurs in three ways:

- By thorough grounding in the classic seminary disciplines of practical, systematic, historical, and Biblical theology;
- By identifying particular skills and aptitudes in ministry, and encouraging their use in the local parish;
- By providing spiritual growth through worship, retreats, and a supportive community of students, mentors, and instructors.

Highlights of 2008-2009

The Northern Illinois Synod is one of eight ELCA synods to offer diakonia™ to its members. 2008-2009 is the sixth year in which classes have been held. Classes currently are offered in Cary, Rockford, Peru, and Moline. More than 20 pastors of the Northern Illinois Synod participated as instructors this year, and 29 students completed the year at the four sites. Seventeen of these students will graduate from diakonia™ at graduation services to be held on Saturday, July 18, at Gloria Dei, Rockford. Bishop Gary Wollersheim and Pastor Stephen Bouman, founder of the diakonia™ program, will participate in the graduation service. The 2008 graduation was celebrated at St. John Lutheran Church, Mendota, for 11 graduates.

With the election of Seminarian Douglas Liston as chair of the national diakonia™ board, Denise Rode assumed the position of the NIS diakonia™ committee chair. Fifteen members of the NIS constitute the board, which includes four pastors, one NIS staff member, and ten laypersons.

The 2009 diakonia™ retreat planned for February 21 was rescheduled due to inclement weather. Thirty-five participants (current diakonia™ students, graduates, rostered leaders of the Synod, and guests) are expected for the new date of May 9 at First Lutheran, DeKalb. The presenter is Anna Marsh of Luther Seminary, Assistant Director of the Book of Faith Initiative, who will lead the group in deepening their understanding of interpreting the Bible from a distinctly Lutheran framework.

Goals for the Future

A continuing goal is to increase first-year student enrollments at all sites. An additional site centrally located in the Synod is desired as a long-term goal.

The 2010 graduation service is planned for May 15, 2010.

The NIS diakonia™ Committee expresses gratitude to God and thanks to the Northern Illinois Synod for support of this important program.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise L. Rode, Ed.D.
Chairperson, NIS diakonia™ Committee

Illowa Lutheran Coalition

The mission of Illowa coalition, a group of 35 congregations and ELCA related institutions in the greater Quad City area, continues to be “Mission in Community”. The major project for 2008 was ‘Lutherans building for Hope’; in partnership with Augustana College and Habitat for Humanity we raised over \$40,000 to build a home in Rock Island. The active partnership of congregations large and small, urban and rural, from both sides of the Mississippi river allowed us to exceed the original goal of \$35,000.

The ministry of the coalition continues to be expressed in and be shaped by its ministry teams.

- Professional Leadership and Support. The Illowa Lutheran Coalition hosts a continuing education component that meets once a month at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL. The professional leaders also meet once a month for lunch, presentation, and fellowship. The Illowa Lutheran Coalition also sponsors an Administrative Assistants Luncheon. This is an opportunity to give thanks for the many gifts and ministry of the administrative assistants in our congregations.
- Multicultural Ministry seeks to lift up and celebrate the gift of diversity in our communities. The Illowa Lutheran Coalition sponsors events such as anti-racism training and multicultural awareness events.
- Lay Leadership Development. This is a cooperative effort to help lay persons identify their gifts for ministry. This ministry area also provides opportunities to equip lay persons for ministry in their congregations.
- Family Faith Formation. This area of cooperative ministry explores ways to be a supportive and resourcing component to congregation in their ministry to families and youth.
- Social Ministry. This is a new ministry area begun in 2007. The Social Ministry team focuses around areas. They are: Awareness and Advocacy, Disaster Response, Barnabas Uplift which is an economic and health initiative in cooperation with Lutheran Services in Iowa, and Habitat for Humanity.

We give thanks to the Bishops and staff of the Northern Illinois Synod and Southeastern Iowa Synod for their support of the Illowa Coalition and our shared ‘Mission in Community’ – God’s work. Our Hands.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Ronald B. Ferrell, Interim Director

Jenny Lind Chapel

The Jenny Lind Chapel, Andover, Illinois, is the first church building of the former Augustana Lutheran Synod, a predecessor of the ELCA. The congregation grew and in 1870 they built a new church in Andover. The chapel was given its name in 1948 as it was presented to the Augustana Synod.

The Chapel is now owned by, and is a ministry of, the [Northern Illinois Synod](#). It is on the National Register of Historic Places. It houses a museum that offers exhibits of the early immigrant experience as well as audio and video presentations, and provides ministry every year by hosting special events including a Christmas service, Founders Day Service the last Sunday in April, and Sunday evening vespers at 7:00 pm during June, July and August.

The chapel is governed by two boards appointed by the synod council: The Operating Committee and the Endowment Trust. About four years ago the two boards started joint meetings which have continued. 2008 was a great challenge for many reasons. Endowment income dropped because of market conditions. By God's good grace we moved just in time the \$200,000 endowment from mutual funds to investments in the ELCA's Mission Investment Fund at a rate slightly exceeding 5%. The move also eliminated the \$200 per month management fee. The trust's principal remains just above \$200,000.

Chapel operating costs exceed the income from the Trust. Bishop Wollersheim asked that an ad-hoc committee be appointed to determine the feasibility of a capital funds campaign in support of the chapel's endowment. That committee has met monthly for the past year. One result is the Jenny Lind Chapel website: <http://jennylindchapel.org/> The ad-hoc committee is working to determine the feasibility of a capital campaign.

2008 brought the difficult news of needed structural repairs to the chapel building. They could not wait since the water tightness of the building was affected. The repairs will cost in excess of \$20,000. Many have been done. They will be finished when warm weather arrives. Some donations have been received, and a grant has been requested. The Synod Council has given permission to withdraw funds from the principal of the trust if required to meet this expense.

I thank all those who have worked so hard to help the chapel survive physically, and to continue its ministry.

Pastor Robert L. Pearson, Chairperson, Jenny Lind Chapel Endowment Trust

Lutheran Men in Mission

The Lutheran Men in Mission of the Northern Illinois Synod met for their 19th Annual Assembly on Saturday, March 29, 2008 at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, Illinois. The Rev. Bob Burton presided at an opening Service of Rogation, inviting the assembly to praise and petition for the precarious beauty and bounty of the earth. George Davis, Facilities Director for LOMC, presented information regarding the synod's "Green Team" and challenged the Lutheran Men in Mission to raise greening to a priority in congregations. The assembly approved a gift of \$500 to the Lutheran Campus Ministry of Northern Illinois University. The assembly approved scholarships of \$500 each to seminarians Nathan Clements of First Lutheran, Prophetstown, a student at Luther Seminary; and Bridget Thien, New Life Lutheran, Bollingbrook, a student at the Lutheran School of Theology.

To support the ministries of LOMC, The Lutheran Men in Mission provided manual labor at camp on Memorial Day weekend.

Representatives from Lutheran Men in Mission of the Northern Illinois Synod attended the Lutheran Men in Mission Churchwide Gathering in Omaha, Nebraska, August 1-3, 2008.

As part of its focus on the involvement of young men in the life of the church, the Lutheran Men in Mission embarked on a ministry initiative called "Stand By Me." A conference was planned for November of 2008 at LOMC to launch the ministry. Response was inadequate to support the conference and it was cancelled.

To strengthen relationships and a sense of purpose, the members of the board of Lutheran Men in Mission, NIS plan to attend a "One Year to Live" event at Lutherdale, November 13-16, 2009.

Submitted by Pr. Gary Blobaum, pastoral advisor to Lutheran Men in Mission, NIS

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center (LOMC) in Oregon, Illinois, has been blessed by the Northern Illinois Synod's support for another year. Thank you for all the awesome support from your synod budget and by sending kids from your churches to camp. Over the last year, our staff has been welcomed by many congregations in the NIS, as we connect with our neighbors in Christ.

With God's help 2008 highlights at LOMC included:

- 1.) Funding the resurfacing of our 88,000 gallon Pool so that swimmers for decades to come will have a spectacular place to swim with a very smooth surface under their feet. The maintenance on this surface is minimal requiring only a fresh coat of "paint" once every 6 years.
- 2.) Strengthening the strong partnership with Bishop Wollersheim and the NIS staff by delivering 8 Mission Gatherings on Greening. George Davis and Pastor Don Knowles were key to making this such a huge success.
- 3.) A new partnership with Bishop Freiheit and the CSIS was launched on Feb. 21st with a Greening Congregations workshop in Springfield for 44 pastors and lay persons.
- 4.) SALT (Service and Leadership Training) grew by launching the first project ever conducted more than 40 miles away from LOMC. This was the handicap ramp project (Jackie White Project) for First and Santa Cruz Lutheran churches in Joliet. The Lutheran magazine had a picture of this project in this month's issue.
- 5.) Augustana College President Stephen Bahls and his Cabinet stayed at LOMC for a spectacular September retreat.
- 6.) LOMC's Camp Grandparent program grew to approximately 30 'grandparents' who spent a week with our young campers to assist with activities. This group included eight alumni from Augustana College.
- 7.) Hosted two dinners to thank our very special donors in Northern Illinois and Metro Chicago Synods. Another dinner is planned on April 19 for CSIS at Advent Lutheran Church in Morton.
- 8.) The JUMP music festival in August 23 featured Christian musical groups from Illinois and Wisconsin. Groups included Peder Eide, Lightswitch and Agape. Youth and families from throughout the state attended this inspirational event.

We are a year round camp, so if your youth group, church council, family reunion or WELCA group is looking for that perfect place to retreat we can create a program that fits your needs. Our 9-week summer program offers unique opportunities for individuals and youth groups. The theme is "Here I Am Called to Serve" based on Mark 10:45. Camp dates are June 14-August 7.

Visitors to LOMC can enjoy our 640 acres comprised of striking sandstone cliffs, vast sections of remnant prairie, beautiful ravines, huge hardwood forests and a pond for fishing and canoeing. LOMC is populated by deer, wild turkeys, hawks, owls and other small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. This serene environment is the perfect setting to connect the Word of God with the World of God.

Thank you, too, for the servants from Northern Illinois Synod who have faithfully given of their time to be on our Board of Directors this past year: Rev. Jeff Clements, Keith Syfert, Joyce Meier, Rev. Gary Erickson, Dianne Gunderson, Rev. Ron Ferrell, Stella Schroeder, Jennifer Buck, Mary Lasits, Alan Janicek, Mic Brooks, and Valerie Talsma. We are blessed to have the strong support of Bishop Gary Wollersheim as well. The blessings continue to abound from Northern Illinois Synod. Thanks again!!!

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Greetings in the name of Christ, the Good Shepherd,

A lot has changed since the last LSSI Report to your synod assembly. We have a new President of the United States. We have a new Governor of Illinois. And we have a new President/CEO at LSSI.

We also have the worst economic downturn in most people's memories. Signs of economic insecurity are reported on a daily basis. The stress level of individuals, families and communities seems to be skyrocketing.

Yet, in the midst of such changes and challenges, some things remain the same: our church, working through LSSI and through countless congregation-based or synod-based social ministries, continues to be a bright beacon of healing and hope for thousands upon thousands of our neighbors in need across the state.

In the last fiscal year, LSSI served close to 75,000 children, women and men through our numerous lines of service, from our Head Start centers in Chicago to foster care and adoption programs in downstate Marion to our Senior Adult Day Care program in Moline. Wherever the church encounters people in need, we ask, ‘How can we serve?’

At the beginning of 2009, I assumed the role of President and CEO of LSSI. I want to honor my predecessor, the Rev. Dr. Frederick Aigner, who led LSSI for eleven and a half difficult years, including the near melt-down of state government in 2008. Pastor Aigner begins a well-deserved retirement.

I also want to honor LSSI Board Members from the Northern Illinois Synod: Dr. Steven Bahls, of Augustana College, Rock Island; Pastor Stacie Fidlar from Rock Island; Mr. Douglas Scott from South Beloit; Bishop Gary Wollersheim; and Ms. Linda Miller from Rockford who will be leaving our Board in June after serving two terms with distinction. I continue to work with our three bishops to identify potential Board nominees who can provide leadership for our ministry together.

I have joined the ministry of LSSI after 30 years as a parish pastor. During my years in the parish, I have learned how important it is for the church to express the gospel in both word and deed. LSSI has served well as the visible expression of the church’s care for all God’s children. As the ELCA in Illinois, I hope that we will have a renewed focus on how we serve people in need in our communities throughout the state. We should increasingly embody the ELCA’s motto: God’s Work. Our Hands.

I hope that my stewardship of LSSI will be marked by an even stronger embrace of LSSI by the three ELCA synods in Illinois and their more than five hundred congregations. I hope that we will—as word and sacrament ministries and as word and service ministries—find ways to strengthen our ministry together, to accompany one another in ministry in the name of Jesus. For so many reasons, doing things “the way we’ve always done them” just won’t work. Change is clearly coming. We need to help shape that change rather than just picking up the pieces of the lives that get broken along the way.

That is one of the reasons the LSSI Board of Directors, following spirited debate, voted unanimously to affirm LSSI’s 2003 resolution in support of tax reform that would:

- increase taxes to provide revenue needed to support state services on a sustainable basis
- protect low-income households from the tax increase by way of deductions, exemptions or credits, thereby making the Illinois tax code somewhat less regressive
- commit state revenue rather than local property taxes as the primary source of funding for Pre-K through high school public education, thereby helping to close the gap between well-funded and poorly-funded school districts.

The Board was aware of two important dynamics during its consideration of the resolution. First, nearly 70% of LSSI’s revenue comes from programs we provide in collaboration with state government. Second, our Board was sensitive to the fact that calling for a tax increase on some middle and most upper income households is a politically risky position. We concluded, however, that unless the state raises significantly more revenue, it will have to slash health care, human services and education funding across the state. If that happens, families living in poverty will, as usual, be hurt the worst. I encourage all pastors, other professional leaders and the members of all ELCA congregations in Illinois to learn about the critical tax and budget issues facing Illinois. I offer LSSI’s Office of Church Engagement and our partnership with the three Illinois synods in Lutheran Advocacy—Illinois as resources to congregations, clusters, conferences and synods in engaging in moral deliberation about what we expect from our government and how we want to pay for it.

By the time you read this, we will already have celebrated Lutheran Day 2009 in Springfield. The plan is to bring together as many Lutherans as possible—yes, both ELCA and Missouri Synod!—to demonstrate to ourselves and to the world around us that we Lutherans—through our churches and our organizations—are a potent force for good in God’s beloved world. In collaboration with our three bishops, we are also working to mobilize the larger faith community to stand in solidarity with people in need. We have offered a holistic view of human need: food, housing, health care, social services and education. None of those needs exist in a

vacuum nor is any one alone usually the critical need. When people are living in poverty, all of those sets of needs are neglected. LSSI has taken the lead in organizing a “Rally for the Common Good” in Springfield on May 6. We hope that a thousand other people will join those of us at Lutheran Day to stand together in support of a state budget that does no harm to people living in poverty or people with disabling conditions. In my live report to your assembly, I will be able to tell you how the rally turned out. Actually, I hope many of you will have been in Springfield for Lutheran Day and the Rally for the Common Good.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the staff of LSSI, our hands in so many places of need in this state - our hands giving strong yet gentle care to very vulnerable people. We in the church understand very deeply that God uses our hands—all our hands...even the hands only folded in prayer-- to do divine work.

Thank you for joining your hands in God’s work.

Sincerely,



Pastor Denver Bitner
President/CEO
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Lutherdale Ministries

Lutherdale is a faith community, dedicated to building lives in Christ, through the wonder of God’s creation, and the study of God’s word.

Lutherdale was founded back in 1944 when a group of faithful people sat on a log and prayed for God’s help in starting a new camping ministry. For 65 years Lutherdale has been sharing God’s love with thousands of guests each year. God continues to guide this ministry as it has grown over the years. We are grateful for all who support this ministry with prayers, participation in our programs, and financial gifts. Investing in the life of a child bears fruit and brings many rewards. Together we are changing lives!

2008 was another great year for Lutherdale Ministries! It was a joy to witness God at work in the hearts and minds of thousands of campers and guests. If you have been connected to Lutherdale, you know first-hand how God is touching and changing lives through our mutual ministry.

Furthermore, Lutherdale has managed well and ended fiscal 2008 with a balanced budget. During these challenging times, we continue to plan carefully and seek to be good stewards of this ministry so that we can remain strong and effective.

2008 was a year to celebrate the completion of the DeBack Family Lodge and its grand opening. It was also a year to celebrate the 11 year ministry of Darlene Breon, our Development Director, who retired on December 31. Many improvements to the camp have been a result of Darlene’s hard work. A search for her replacement is underway.

The winter of 2008 was cold, long, and hard. The camp suffered some damage due to the hard winter and many people contributed to a fund to fix and repair the damage. The dining hall roof was repaired to stop the leaks by a group of men from Atonement in Barrington IL, flashing was repaired around the chimneys, furnaces have been updated, a sanitary wall and ceiling material has been installed in the kitchen, new fireplace doors and hearths have been installed. A new well was drilled at the Watson Center so that old pipes could be abandoned. New entry doors will be installed this spring on the dining hall and chapel.

WWW.LUTHERDALE.ORG The Lutherdale website was totally redesigned in 2008 in order to provide greater access to information and ease of use. Take a look!

Lutherdale was awarded the ACA-Accredited Camp status as a result of being inspected in July 2008. This means that Lutherdale meets or exceeds 300 industry-established health and safety standards for running a quality camping program.

2009 Summer Camp Theme – “Love to Serve”

Jesus described his mission in words of action, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve." Campers will learn that they too are invited into this *action of serving*. The five daily themes will help campers explore scriptures that help them to see themselves as *freed, created, called, saved, and sent to serve*. You can register for camp on-line by visiting our web site.

Jeffrey A. Bluhm, Executive Director

Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA

The Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA continues to serve this synod by providing vital loans for capital projects to new mission congregations, established congregations, and ELCA-related ministries. MIF is able to fund these loans through the sale of investments to ministries and congregation members.

More than 800 MIF loans totaling nearly \$500 million are at work today in ELCA ministries throughout the United States, the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean.

In the Northern Illinois Synod, seven congregations and ministries currently have Mission Investment Fund loans totaling \$6,034,573, while many individuals, ministries the Northern Illinois Synod have investments in the fund totaling \$8,702,438.*

MIF serves ELCA ministries. In addition to the ministry loans and investments that it offers, the fund provides consulting services to ELCA congregations through its church building consultants and staff architects. The consultants review plans for building projects and assist with church construction financing. Staff architects provide initial schematic design proposals that congregations can take to local architects. The consultants and architects' services are provided **at no charge**. MIF's area representatives are available to meet with congregations and ELCA-related ministries related regarding the loan and investment opportunities offered by the fund.

Has your congregation invested? Have members of your congregation invested? Join the thousands of individuals, ELCA congregations, ELCA-related ministries, and synods – including the Northern Illinois Synod – that are earning interest on their investments as they help to build the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Your participation enables the fund to continue this vital ministry. A variety of fixed- and adjustable-rate investment opportunities are available and may be opened with initial investments of as low as \$5. Information on investments and ministry loans is available at www.elca.org/mif and through the fund's representatives listed below who serve this synod.

Thank you for your support of and participation in the Mission Investment Fund. It is a joy to work in partnership with you for the advancement of God's kingdom.

Sincerely,
Deborah Simonson Smith
MIF Area Representative
507.635.3745
Deborah.Smith@elca.org

Patricia Dever
MIF Church Building Consultant
630.761.8650
Patricia.Dever@elca.org

* as of December 31, 2008

MOSAIC

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Last September, Mosaic was honored to have Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson address our national leadership assembly on the important role Lutheran social ministries plays in today's world. I was honored also to have the bishop install me as the new President and CEO of Mosaic.

In his words, the bishop commended Mosaic on our work with and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people who are often forgotten or set aside in our society. Our mission—to help all people know wholeness of life—is God-given and I feel privileged to have been a part of this ministry for more than 25 years.

Mosaic also celebrated our 95th Anniversary last year. One of our legacy organizations, Bethphage, was founded in 1913. (The other legacy organization, Martin Luther Homes, was founded in 1925) Our anniversary theme was “5 Years Young, 95 Years Strong,” reflecting the energy of a young organization combined with the wisdom of a seasoned organization.

As we move ahead, we have five priorities:

- Our services will be of the highest quality.
- Our staff will be highly engaged in the mission of service and advocacy.
- Our stewardship will create mission enhancing efficiencies.
- Our advocacy and social justice efforts will boldly reflect our call to serve.
- Our success will draw partners to our ministry.

You are invited to share Mosaic's ministry. There are many ways you or your congregation can be a partner with us: through relationships with the people we support; through volunteer and donor opportunities; and through your prayers. Please consider this my personal invitation to join us, carrying forth the work that Bishop Hanson called “the labor to bring forth dignity and life in its fullness.”

May we all be faithful and joyful in God's work.

Linda Timmons
President and CEO

For many people, arranging to attend a martial arts class would not be a reason to celebrate. For Richard (J.R.) Dunseth, it was an event ten years in the making.

Dunseth began receiving services from Mosaic in Rockford in 1998. As a new resident, he rarely talked to anyone, refused to go to work, would not make eye contact, and had violent tendencies. Dunseth was only allowed to be home by himself for half-an-hour a day, and could not go into the community without a staff member. He seemed content to close himself off from the world.

Mosaic staff, however, was not content with this. “Everybody worked for years with J.R. to break him out of his shell,” said Dawn Withers, House Manager at his group home.

Staff members realized the best way to communicate with him was to explain the consequences of his actions: being direct was the best way to get a response. They also invited him to their homes for holidays and treated him like family.

The change over the years has been incredible

“I want something better for myself,” said Dunseth, “I like doing things on my own.”

Dunseth now has a second-shift job that he works Monday through Friday, where he has plenty of friends who are happy he's there. He is able to spend more time alone at home and in the community, and takes responsibility for himself, and has learned to check his blood sugar and to monitor his medication schedule.

He is also more articulate and outgoing. An avid fan of wrestling, Dunseth was interested in taking a martial arts class. Instead of asking for assistance, he found the phone book, looked up the number, called the

organization and arranged for a trial visit. For the staff of Mosaic, it was an enormous steppingstone. For Dunseth, it was just the right thing to do.

“I’m proud that I can do these things by myself,” he says, “I learned that from Mosaic.”

J.R. Dunseth receives services from Mosaic in Rockford, Illinois

Northern Illinois Synodical Women’s Organization

We try to be forward thinking. Our calendars are dotted with dates and duties. Responsible living insists on such planning. Then events take unexpected turns. The adequacy of our response is crucial. We look to the Lord to work through us, to help us bring to bear the very gifts God has provided. We believe this will be so, because, though the times are “out of our hands”, these events are never out of God’s grasp.

Shortly after our Synod Assembly last year (June 2008), 40 women from the Northern Illinois Synod traveled to Salt Lake City for the 7th Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA. Six delegates and the President went ahead of the others to do the business of our Churchwide organization. The gathering that followed was inspiring, spectacular, and enjoyed by all in attendance.

Our convention was held September 19, 2008 at Faith Lutheran Church, Joliet. We were led in worship by Bishop Wollersheim. It was exciting to have five young women, Pastor Diane Dardón, and Pastor Dawn Jones from Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northern Illinois University assisting in the worship. The first speaker was Jeana Fors, who shared her experience going to India with a Northern Illinois Synod delegation that went to sign a covenant with our new companion Synod, Arcot Lutheran Church. Jeana was followed by Esther Prabhaker who also traveled to India with the delegation. Esther told us about the Tsunami orphans we have been supporting in Shiloh. Sharon Wadle then spoke about her trip to attend the graduation of Mary E. Laiser and updated us on the work being done by Mary and Elizabeth Megiroo. Each speaker affirmed the work that we have been doing with our sister “Across the Waters” and encouraged us to continue our efforts to truly be their companions.

Our retreats this year were led by Pastor Diane Dardón inspiring us to “Dance with the Spirit.” She not only encouraged us to “affirm one another’s gifts” but also to thank God for the gifts we have been given and to use those gifts to “promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.” Pastor Dawn Jones served as our chaplain at both retreats. We are grateful to these two faithful Pastors who share this message daily with the young men and women at Northern Illinois University.

This year’s Convention will be held Saturday, September 19, 2009 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Dixon, Illinois. Our Convention theme is **“Act Boldly – Live Joyfully.”** *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13* The Friday evening entertainment will be “Spirit’s Harmony.” At this year’s convention we will have several workshops, such as Messages from Arusha; Going Green; and Tower of Refuge. Plan to come and enjoy a great day!!

Northern Illinois Synodical Women’s Organization continues to encourage the monthly Bible Study found in “Lutheran Women Today”. LWT provides a 3 session study during the summer for those women who wish to continue their Bible Study in the summer. Some choose to have a retreat and do all 3 sessions in one day. This year’s study is “Mary: A woman for All Seasons. The new Bible Study for 2009-2010 is “To God’s Beloved: Paul’s Letter to the Romans” by Rev. Dr. Sarah Henrich.

God has again held these events in His grasp and we believe He will again guide us and hold us in His hand for the year ahead.

Important Dates 2009-2010

*21st Convention: September 19, 2009 @ St. Paul Lutheran Church, Dixon, IL

*Leadership Gathering: November 7, 2009, St. John Lutheran Church, Peru, IL

*Retreats: TBA at the Women of the ELCA workshop at this Synod Assembly

New Board Members:

Vice President	Carolyn Schuring, Harvard IL
Central Conference	Betty Stralow, Morrison, IL
North Conference	Ruth Fairchild, Rockford, IL

Websites:

www.nisynod.org see "Links" www.womenoftheelca.org www.boldcafé.org

Publications:

Northern Highlights – quarterly NISWO newsletter

Interchange – publication to equip and empower Women of the ELCA

Lutheran Women Today-monthly magazine with a Bible Study & excellent articles

Ministries:

Dixon Prison

Rocky Boy – Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Box Elder, MT

Hispanic/Latino Outreach

World Hunger

Lutheran World Relief

Equal Exchange Coffee/Chocolate

Arcot Luther Church, India Companion Synod & Shiloh Church

Arusha Diocese, Tanzania Companion Synod

Church Women United

Amy Laurin, President NISWO

REGION 5

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Rev. Carl Richard Evenson
COORDINATOR FOR MINISTRY LEADERSHIP—REGION 5

675 Deerwood Ave.
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Synod Assembly Report Spring, 2009

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus,

The twelve synods of Region 5 stretch from Iowa, through Illinois and Wisconsin, and include the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Gathering when mutual ministry can happen, regional work demonstrates our partnership with other synods and with the churchwide expression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In the past year some synod pastors found new call through our regional mobility conference. And other new rostered leaders came through the ELCA candidacy process and were approved for call in the church. In administering the distribution of new pastors throughout our church, synods participate in the assignment process together. And in the shadow of all these procedures Region 5 can be found nurturing and easing the way.

Region 5 brought your synod-elected leaders together with the other eleven synod leadership groups for consultation with the ELCA secretary David Swartling, and leaders from churchwide Synodical Relations and the Evangelical Outreach and Congregation Mission teams for mutual learning and encouragement.

Two important consultations also have taken place. Synod candidacy committee

chairpersons gathered. And Associates in Ministry, Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses met to add important conversation about their rosters' future in the ELCA. Bishop Michael Burk is new this year in Southeastern Iowa Synod and Bishop James Arends has taken office in La Crosse Area Synod. We remember with thanksgiving Alton Zenker, former bishop of Central Southern Illinois Synod who died in the past year. Region 5 bishops take part in the annual *Bishops' Visit* at our ELCA seminaries. This year's schedule:

Bp Warren Freiheit	Luther, St. Paul MN
Bp Michael Burk	LSTC, Chicago IL
Bp Jim Arends	LSTG, Gettysburg PA
Bp Bruce Burnside	LTSS, Columbia SC
Bp Paul Stumme-Diers	Wartburg Sem, Dubuque IA

April 30, 2008 brought the retirement of Region 5 archivist Robert Wiederaenders after 44 years as archivist to the church. We are grateful for his ministry even as **Nancy Carroll** has taken over as Region 5 archivist, with volunteer Jean Peterson as assistant.

Region 5 includes the coordinator and a part time secretary, **Jennifer Bernardi**. The Region 5 Steering Committee directs the region and Bishop Gary Wollersheim is the current chair.

We are grateful for assembly action last year, so that all twelve synods are now fully supportive of Region 5. Churchwide office support, and income of seven cents per baptized member of each of our twelve synods comprises our funding. Thank you for supporting this ministry.

--Rev. Carl Richard Evenson

Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries

Location, Location, Location! How many times have we heard how important location is to the success of a business or venture? Location has played a huge role in the program and ministry development of Rockford

Area Lutheran Ministries throughout its 24-year history - and to an even greater extent this year. Lutheran Ministries, designed to “bring congregations together in partnership to make Christ known in the community through creative ministries of witness and service,” involves its 20-member churches in a variety of efforts throughout the greater Rockford area. Listed below are some of our prominent locations.

Katie’s Cup coffee bar, Seventh Street: Almost 200 people gathered on January 28 for the exciting ribbon-cutting ceremony heralding the long-awaited opening of Katie’s Cup coffee bar! Special guests included Bishop Wollersheim and Rockford’s Mayor Morrissey, and, the naming of the Denver W. Bitner presentation room was announced. Since that time, business has been brisk, and a sense of community has quickly developed. From morning to night, weekdays and weekends, friends meet for coffee, large and small group meetings are regularly scheduled, and book clubs gather for discussion. Fair trade coffee items are a hit and a variety of books are offered for sale. Designed as a community gathering place for conversation, coffee, books, and entertainment, Katie’s Cup is a collaborative, revitalization, outreach project developed by Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries and ZION Development Corporation.

Liberty Park, southwest Rockford - home of the Park PLAYers nonviolent conflict resolution playground program: The 16th season of our playground program began earlier this month. This year’s program focuses on cooperation as an important tool for avoiding conflict. Young teens, ages 14-15, have been hired to learn, teach, and model positive conflict management skills to young children who will visit the playground from locations all across Rockford - daycare and community centers, private child welfare agencies, and Park District programs. To date, cumulative daily attendance figures indicate that 11,270 children have participated in the program since 1994, as well as hundreds of teens. The Park PLAYers is funded through local church and community grants, governmental bodies, the ELCA and RALM fundraising events.

A Church Gym - center of activities for STAR: The STAR (Singles Together Across Rockford) fellowship group continues to be a vital ministry coordinated by Lutheran Ministries. Twice-a-month volleyball/game nights held at Grace Lutheran Church regularly see 60-70 single people gather from locations all around the state line.

All Around the Town - Divorce Recovery Workshops & Marriage Preparation Seminars: RALM churches, in rotation, graciously host our workshops and seminars which are provided several times a year. 12 individuals were served in our most recent Divorce Recovery Workshop series, and 15 couples have attended Marriage Preparation Seminars so far this year.

On the air and in the press: Until the program ended earlier this year, Lutheran Ministries facilitated local support of Grace Matters’ broadcasts for 13 years. On behalf of our member churches, the RALM office also maintains, and often creates ads for, our local newspaper’s weekly Worship Directory. Northwest Rockford, site of Habitat for Humanity Lutheran House of Prayers: This spring, ground was broken for RALM’s third House of Prayers Habitat house, the 12th “Lutheran” Habitat home built in Rockford since 2000! Boards used in the stick-build house were purchased by church members who wrote prayers, blessings, Bible verses, and good wishes on them. The home, located in northwest Rockford, has also been awarded a Thrivent Builds grant. No matter where our ministries and programs are located, we are always mindful of the support and encouragement we receive from our member churches and pastors, Bishop Wollersheim, his assistants, and the staff of the Northern Illinois Synod. Thanks be to God!

Ms. Lori Mueller, President, and Mariel Heinke, Executive Director,
Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries

Trinity Regional Health System

Focusing on the Trinity mission to improve the health of our community and to be a strong community partner, this past year was one in which our efforts were consistently aimed in that direction. Here is a sampling of Trinity Regional Health System initiatives:

Parish Nurse Program

In its nineteenth year, Trinity's Parish Nurse Program continued to serve the community with health education and prevention services. The 21st parish nurse orientation class brought the number of nurses educated for the Quad City Community to 179. Fifty-six churches participated in the Parish Nurse Program during all or part of 2008, with thirty-one paid positions and twenty-nine volunteer programs. These programs served a combined church membership of approximately 31,450 people through forty-one Illinois churches and fifteen Iowa churches. Their activities resulted in the following statistics:

Individual contacts – 27,534

Educational programs – 8,242 individuals in 466 programs

Support groups – 1,861 participants in 141 groups

Blood pressure screenings – 5,063 individuals

Abnormal B/P readings with subsequent referrals – 727 individuals (14.4%)

Trinity's parish nurses worked a total of 35,786 hours and supervised an additional 5,035 hours volunteered by church members. Total contacts averaged 2,295 per month. Of those, 46% were brief client visits of less than 15 minutes while 54% exceeded that time frame. The breakdown of visits by gender similarly reflected the breakdown of the elderly population with 28% being male clients and 72% female.

With 54% of all contacts pertaining to surveillance of health issues and 47% to health teaching, referrals comprise a large part of parish nurse activities. For diagnosis and treatment of issues and connecting clients to health services, the program made 5,882 referrals to pastors and church resources, 1,665 to physicians, 891 to health care professionals, 693 to community agencies, and 350 to other services. The client base remained similar to past years with 98% Caucasian, 1% African American, and 1% for all other ethnicities.

The fifth Parish Nurse Regional Conference was held in April attended by 122 health-care professionals. Coming from as far away as Champaign, Ill., the attendees consisted of parish and hospital nurses, clergy and social workers. Activities included a keynote address by nationally recognized author Joyce Rupp and a choice of topics at three different breakout sessions. The breakouts provided sessions that focused on either the physical, mental, or spiritual component of the holistic health philosophy. Financially, receipts from the event and a small donation covered all expenses and did not impact the department's budget.

As a community partner and service, networking is important and staff from the Parish Nurse Office shared information from the program through the Speaker's Bureau and various community committees on which they are involved. Committee work included the Quad City Health Initiative's Wellness Warriors, Council on Community Services, Elderly Consortium and Activate Quad Cities (YMCA). In May, the department provided a presence and information at "Put a Smile on a Child" which is a Churches United event. Also the children's health fair, HAM, was used throughout the year at eleven different sites and taught 261 children throughout the QCA about healthy lifestyle choices. After nine years of use, the materials and components for HAM were reviewed and updated to ensure continued use. Staff also made appearances at partner churches to recognize service milestones and acknowledge Trinity/church partnerships.

Nationally, Trinity's program participated in several projects to stay current with parish nurse trends. Linda Guebert attended Westberg Symposium in September. The Educational Partnership with the International Parish Nurse Resource Center continued. Their basic curriculum, which is the national standard for parish nurse education, was used in the annual training class for new nurses/churches with the program assistant serving as the instructor for classes in the fall. The Basic Prep format was changed to 18 hours of independent study modules and 18 hours of class sessions to better accommodate the varying schedule needs of churches and nurses.

Two of our Parish Nurses are featured in a book this year by Carol J. Smucker, Faith Community Nursing: Developing a Quality Practice, published by American Nursing Publishing, November 2008.

The network of fifty-six churches exemplifies Trinity's mission "to improve the health of our community" as testified below in comments from the partner churches.

-My husband has ALS and can't speak or walk. The Parish Nurse comes once a month to see us and he enjoys her visit so much. He looks forward to her visits. She is so upbeat and always has a smile. She conducts the support group at church once a month. It is so good for me to get away. She gives us great spiritual guidance. She helps with so many programs in the church. I don't think we could have survived without her. She is a great asset to the Pastor. She always writes some health advice in the bulletin. The Parish Nurse program is WONDERFUL! Keep up with the Parish Nurse Program. She has helped us through many hard times, we are so fortunate. (A Parishioner in Moline, IL)

-Our Parish Nurse was a big help to me when I came home from the hospital. She is a great help and we need her very much. She made sure I was straightened out with my medicine I had to take. (A Parishioner in Davenport, IA)

-Our Parish Nurse is always there for us. She has excellent advice and always willing to help, serving the Lord in all ways. Her programs are fantastic. She has a special touch with all generations. We love her. (A Parishioner in Orion, IL)

Volunteers/Auxiliary

Trinity Medical Center's Volunteer/Auxiliary Services has a very strong commitment to enhance and reflect the presence of Trinity Medical Center in the community. We also strive to provide the community a means of meeting the human need to be of service. We do this with:

465 Volunteers including students

415 Auxiliaries (147 of which are also volunteers)

In 2008, Trinity Volunteers logged a total of 66,551 hours. This was done in a variety of different ways, such as:

- 141 SHIP counseling sessions were held for Seniors and their families
- Blood drives were held in March, June, and November
- Volunteers helped at Flu clinics in October and November, assist at Safety fairs
- They made baby hats and blankets for newborns and stillborns, Prayer Shawls and ostomy covers
- They made and distributed Cool Bears for multiple sites and departments.
- Distributed 1200 "Get Well" e-mails that were sent to patients
- They have continued to purchase, inventory and distribute clothing for the Trinity Caring Closet, which will provide new, clean clothing for our patients who need something to go home in.
- Through several fund raising projects, such as baby photos, book fairs, jewelry sales, three gift shops, Tabletops, and Style Show, the Trinity Auxiliary granted \$147,775 to Trinity for the Lift Assist Program, along with student scholarships.
- Through these fund raisers the Auxiliary is also presenting scholarships on an annual basis to Trinity College of Nursing and Allied Health and Iowa and Illinois Hospital Associations.

Trinity Volunteers serve in over 48 different locations in the hospital. Trinity Volunteers serve in many roles and in numerous departments throughout our three campuses, helping us to provide a better experience to our patients, our staff, and our community.

Pastoral Care

Trinity's pastoral care department served the needs of the community in the following ways:

- 1) Continued our leadership role in educating the public and Trinity employees about the importance of advance care planning and assisting individuals in completing advance directives.
 - Five community presentations
 - 444 individual facilitations
 - Eight new volunteer facilitators trained
 - Participated in Choices Connection steering committee in partnership with Genesis Medical Center and Generations Agency on Aging
- 2) Sponsored two grief support gatherings for families affected by perinatal loss:
 - Butterfly Blessings – intergenerational memorial event
 - Fall graveside burial service for miscarried infants.

- 3) Presented 19 community presentations on various aspects of the spiritual/mental/physical health connection.
- 4) Made 28,529 in-patient visits with staff of 2-1/2 chaplains and 30 trained volunteers.
- 5) Compiled and distributed holiday grief packets to employees and the public.
- 6) Played leading role in hospital ethics committee and participated in Gift of Hope (organ donation) steering committee.
- 7) Provided 30 hours of training to 8 individuals in pastoral visiting skills.
- 8) Department staff donated 717 hours in various community agencies and organizations.

Mental Health Services

The Robert Young Center for Community Mental Health proudly serves those area residents with mental illness. It helps its clients with everything from transportation, money management, medication costs, socialization skills and so much more. In 2008, the Robert Young Center:

- Provided more than \$1.5 million worth of charity care with more than 4,600 residents of Rock Island and Mercer counties benefiting directly from this care.
- Provided more than \$25,000 in emergency assistance to individuals returning to the community after a psychiatric hospitalization, including rental assistance, rent and utilities assistance.
- Provided more than \$13,000 in assistance to children in low-income families, including the purchase of clothing, bedding, camp scholarships and school supplies.
- Provided \$9,000 in un-reimbursed psychiatric nursing services to elderly in their homes.
- Provided a free drop-in-center for the seriously mentally ill with services and meals valued at \$63,000.
- Provided an indigent medication program for those who are unable to purchase their psychotropic medications with associated nursing services valued at \$32,000.

Community Classes:

- There were 579 hours of free community classes held in 2008 – an average of 11.13 hours per week.
- A total of 1,976 people attended the free community classes in 2008.

Speakers' Bureau:

- There were 60 Speakers' Bureau engagements facilitated by one or more Trinity employees for the year.
- A total of 3,014 people attended the free Trinity Speakers' Bureau events in 2008.

Health Information and Referrals

My Nurse handled 97,466 health-related transactions. These transactions mostly include telephone calls, made for free to this health-information and physician referral service.

Community Benefits

Trinity Community Benefits grant awards amounting to \$194,503 were allocated in 2008 and were provided to programs that focused on six areas:

1. Health promotion and prevention
2. Community outreach/health-care access
3. Behavioral health
4. Community partnership/collaboration
5. Corporate sponsorship of health initiatives/projects
6. Primary care

Some of the sponsored programs included:

AIDS Project Quad Cities (APQC)/ I MATTER

This AIDS/sexually transmitted infections (STI) prevention and detection program is targeted to youth aged 13-19; young adults aged 20-25; youth and young adults involved in the criminal justice system as well as youth who are not in school. Via "social marketing," school testing and mobile testing using peer educators, APQC served over 500 people.

American Red Cross/Health and Safety Preparedness in the Hispanic Community

A grant was awarded to the American Red Cross to train 200 Hispanic American adults and youth in health and safety preparedness skills.

Boys and Girls Club/Cavity-Free Zone

A grant was awarded to help implement an oral health promotion program for 250 of the members of the Boys and Girls club, aged 6 – 18 years old. This organization serves predominantly lower income youth. Funds were expended on program and oral health supplies, travel and field trips.

Martin Luther King Center/Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Prevention in Youth Program (ATODP)

A grant was awarded to the school-based substance abuse prevention program that the King Center currently offers in seven Rock Island schools; the Center's After School and summer programs. 750 youth have been or will be served.

Quad City Health Initiative

The Quad City Health Initiative is a community partnership in active pursuit of a healthier community. The initiative acts as a catalyst for improving the health and overall quality of life within the Quad City community. It raises awareness of health issues, encourages or creates programs to address gaps in health services and fosters community collaboration in all aspects of health.

In addition to its focus on Oral Health and Healthy Lifestyles it has also added an initiative on Mental Health with Robert Young Center representatives actively involved in this project.

Casa Guanajuato/Family Advocacy Program

Casa Guanajuato is a Moline based community action organization in the Hispanic community. A seed grant was awarded to cover the cost of two community health outreach workers in the Latino community in the Illinois Quad Cities.

Epilepsy Foundation North/Central Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska Hispanic Community Outreach – Quad Cities

Via this grant award the Epilepsy Foundation has been able to work with other area agencies and organizations to identify persons with epilepsy and thereafter provide individualized patient/family epilepsy education and case management. The program also provides interpretation services as it helps Hispanic people with epilepsy access health care. Additionally, the Epilepsy Foundation, with the assistance of this grant, provides in-services to educate professionals on the cultural issues that may impact the person's ability to access and receive care.

Illinois/Iowa Center for Independent Living Outreach/Access for Visually Impaired

Scott County Adults

This grant enable the Illinois/Iowa Center for Independent Living to purchase assistive devices such as talking watches, magnifiers, pill dispensers, etc. for 100 Scott County adults over the age of 55 who have low vision or are blind. The devices were distributed free of charge. Currently, Rock Island County's visually impaired adults receive these devices from the Center, courtesy of a grant from the Illinois Bureau of Blind Services. No similar funding was available in Iowa

Rock Island County Health Department Family Case Management Medical Transportation Program

A grant was awarded to the Rock Island County Health Department to help provide transportation to medical appointments for "at risk" persons. The program will serve 2,800 persons of whom are pregnant women and Spanish speaking.

Community Health Care Center

The Community Health Care Center provides medical and dental care to lower income persons in its clinics located throughout the Quad Cities.

Children's Therapy Center of the Quad Cities/Medical Rehabilitation Evaluation Services

A grant was awarded to provide 21 therapy evaluations to 21 children with developmental delays. These evaluations result in the identification of the level of the child's delay and suggestions re: the types of therapy required to address the delays.

Alternatives for the Older Adult/Positive Light on Later Transitions: Counseling

This grant provided seed money to help support a counselor health educator position in the agency's SAGE Center. The objectives of this program are to help seniors "move beyond their loss...be realistic about their limitations and abilities; to reduce signs of anxiety or depression and to develop plans for redirections in life." 175 seniors or their caregivers will be served.

Marriage and Family Counseling Services/Spanish Family Therapy Program

This grant helps support a Spanish Family Therapy Program. It employs the only Spanish speaking licensed family therapist in the Quad City area who in turn, provides services to 43 families in the Florescent neighborhood.

Robert Young Center/Douglas Park Place

A grant was awarded to the Douglas Park Place is the only provider of recovery home services for women substance abusers and their children in West Central Illinois.

Two Rivers YMCA/Healthy Kids Day

Two Rivers YMCA, founded as the Moline YMCA, has been in operation since 1885. It is currently in engaged in an initiative to reduce childhood obesity. One component of that initiative is titled “Healthy Kids Day” and the theme of that initiative is “Put Play in Your Day.” A series of events and activities that are family focused will be conducted during the “day.” A grant was awarded to help support this event.

In closing, I’d like to tell you that Trinity is proud of its Lutheran roots, and please know that it is a constant focus as we aim every year to be the best Community Partner we can be.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Y. Coleman, President/CEO
Trinity Regional Health System