

# Making Christ Known

in the Northern Illinois Synod



September/October 2008 Volume 21 Issue 5 [www.nisynod.org](http://www.nisynod.org)

## Caring for God's Creation Where I Live

The environmental issues plaguing the world such as global warming, drought, deforestation, landfills, and polluted groundwater, to name a few, seem so huge that it's hard to imagine what an individual or a congregation can do about it. But there are things that we can do to care for God's creation where we live. There are simple things, small steps that we can take that together will have a big impact on global issues.

The 2008 Mission Gatherings, "Caring for God's Creation Where I Live," will explore ways that individuals and congregations can make a difference in caring for God's creation. Along with a brief discussion of a theology of ecology, practical suggestions for being "greener" will be presented. There will also be an opportunity for participants to learn from each other and share what their congregations are already doing to care for God's creation where they live.

These Gatherings will provide an ideal opportunity for innovation and discussion for anyone interested in environmental stewardship, especially pastors, congregational green teams, council members, and property committee members.

Attend an event at the most convenient place and time for you. All but one of the Mission Gatherings will be from 7-9 pm: Thursday, September 18, Grace, Loves Park; Tuesday, September 30, New Life, Bolingbrook; Thursday, October 9, Bethany, Crystal Lake; Tuesday, October 14, St. John's, Peru; Tuesday, October 21, Immanuel, Rock Falls; Sunday, November 9-4-6 pm-Bethany, Woodhull; Tuesday, November 11, First, Freeport; and Thursday, November 13, First, Geneseo. Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m. (Please note that registration begins at 6:30 p.m. – not the program itself). The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m.



## The Offering as Worship

Stewardship leaders and worship and music leaders of your congregation are especially invited to a special workshop entitled, "The Offering as Worship." It will be led by Ken Medema and Dr. Mark L. Vincent, founding editor of *Giving: Joyful Stewards in Your Congregation*.

The Church has always been a singing Church. We sing when we are glad, we sing when we lament, we sing to praise God, to admonish each other, to build community, and to reassert our beliefs and proclaim the mysteries of God's good news. So it is that we can sing to celebrate the wonder of being chosen to give of ourselves and our substance to the work of God's dominion here on earth. Participants will not only learn a host of new songs but will spend some time reviewing several ways of helping the community

be more active in singing. The act of singing is closely tied to the act of giving and singing can be a practice for and a celebration of giving.

The workshop will be held Saturday, November 1 from 9 - 11 am at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 3300 Rural Street, Rockford. Cost per church for up to 6 people including book and CD is \$95. Churches that have purchased the CD may bring up to 6 people for \$35. The event is sponsored by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center, Design For Ministry™, a partner with much of the stewardship work done in the ELCA, and Brier Patch Music. Registration deadline is September 24. Contact Rockford Area Lutheran Ministries at 815-962-4279 or [ralmmail@aol.com](mailto:ralmmail@aol.com). For more information visit [www.designforministry.com](http://www.designforministry.com).



Though blind from birth, Ken Medema has

demonstrated his extraordinary musical vision to a growing number of loyal fans around the world.

**The Offering as Worship**

## From the Bishop



## Creator and Owner

When I was growing up, our family did not own a lawn mower, so we had to borrow the neighbors' next door. It was my job to cut the grass. Every time I borrowed the neighbors' lawn mower, my mother would remind me to take good care of it and to clean it up before I returned it. "After all, that mower is not ours, and they only let us use it out of the goodness of their hearts."

Herein is found the first principle of Christian Stewardship: What we have is not ours; it belongs to God. After all, God made it. God only lends it to us out of the goodness of His heart. Thus we need to take good care of all that which God has lent us and clean it up before it is returned. And let's face it, we ultimately return everything to the Creator, even our bodies.

The First Article of the Apostle's Creed and Luther's meaning summarize this theology of creation: "I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

What does this mean? "I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul; eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties.

In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock and all property, along with all the necessities and nourishments for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all. For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true."

Our GREEN emphasis in the Synod is based upon this confession of faith.

God is creator and owner. God graciously and abundantly provides. We respond in thanksgiving, service, and obedience.

I hope that each of our congregations will send several representatives to our Mission Gatherings this year as we reflect upon God's generosity and our response of thanksgiving, service, and obedience.

In Christ,

Bishop Gary Wollersheim

## Fish are Biting at LOMC

*Submitted by Russ Senti*

Bishop Wollersheim, an avid fisherman, spent a morning in mid-July at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center fishing on Paul's Pond with boys and girls enrolled in Fishing Camp.

Fishing Camp is one of more than twenty different camps offered during the nine weeks of summer camp at LOMC. Camps are designed for youth from first grade through high school. Examples include music and drama camps, construction camp, Early Ventures, SALT (Service and Leadership Training), Sports Camps, and Images of God.



Bishop also spoke to more than 40 college students serving as counselors and group leaders. Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center counselors often choose a vocation within the church from pastor to Associate in Ministry.

## Diakonia Graduates

This year's Diakonia graduation was held Saturday, July 12, at St. John's, Mendota. Bishop Wollersheim preached and Pastor Rick Meier, of Alpine, Rockford, presided.

Diakonia gives you time with God through a series of classes on the Bible, our church, possible ministry gifts, and a variety of other courses. But it is more than just a class: it is a chance to listen with your heart and soul too.

There is time to register for the classes starting in September which are held in Cary, Rockford, Moline, and Peru.

Find out more at [www.nisynod.org/diakonia](http://www.nisynod.org/diakonia) or contact Doug Liston at 815-331-3000 or [dliston@premmag.com](mailto:dliston@premmag.com).



Front Row L-R: Nancy Ramirez, Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley; Jill A. Shepherd, St. Mark, Waukegan; Kimberly A. Halper, Nativity, Wonder Lake; Bishop Gary Wollersheim; Robert O. Johnson, Trinity, Galesburg; John MacCall, Calvary, Moline; Back Row L-R: Douglas Liston, Northern Illinois Synod Chairperson; Ida M. Dudleston, St. Mark, Waukegan; Sharon K. Beksell, Trinity, Durand; Kim Gustafson, Alpine, Rockford; Keith Meyer, Tabor, Rockford; Edward Goelz, Grace, Loves Park. Not pictured: Nancy Carol Schuchard, Christ, Belvidere.

## Harvest Festival Offers Fun and Learning for All

Submitted by Planning Committee for the Conferences FRB Growing Project

The NIS congregations of the Southwest and West Conferences invite you to their Foods Resource Bank Growing Project Harvest Festival. The celebration will be held Sunday, September 28 at Calmer Farms, 550 North Knox Road, Alpha, IL, located just south of Alpha off Route 150.

The Harvest Festival begins with lunch served from 12:30-1:30pm. Field demonstrations are scheduled from 1:00 to 3:00 with the Harvest Festival Worship Service at 2:00. There will be corn-picking, combine rides, hayrack field tours, and much more! In case of rain the worship service will be held indoors onsite.

Come and see! Learn about the stewardship of soil, seed, water, and power. See how donations given by farmers, individuals, congregations, VBS children, WELCA organizations, and Thrivent come together to help the people in our Machokos Development Program in Kenya. Offerings received at the celebration will be matched

through the Mercer County Thrivent Chapter.

Congregations can help publicize this celebration. Bulletin inserts and posters will be coming early in September. Please save the date on your calendars. If you have questions please contact Myrna Andersen [myrnaandersen@yahoo.com](mailto:myrnaandersen@yahoo.com), 309-343-0590, or Pr. Jane McChesney, [jmccchesney714@hotmail.com](mailto:jmccchesney714@hotmail.com).



## Learn to Care for Veterans

As veterans return from wars abroad, there are a host of issues for veterans, families, communities, and churches. The ELCA Federal Chaplains Ministry office will offer a workshop entitled, "Care for Returning Veterans" on October 29 at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque.

This important conference will provide resources for pastors and caregivers to help them understand and work with returning veterans. Watch *Walking Together* for more information. Sign up to receive *Walking Together*, the synod's weekly email newsletter, at [www.nisynod.org/pubs/wt](http://www.nisynod.org/pubs/wt).

“It’s a wonderful miracle of God’s love and the love of God’s people.”

## Alleluia! Joins People in Faith and Fun

Written by Kathy Millen and reprinted with permission from the Naperville Sun

For years, Alleluia! Lutheran Church has welcomed new residents to the south side of the Naperville community with a loaf of bread. The church’s calling card has become a metaphor for its rapid rise in membership. It has led to the creation of the Rise committee which has successfully raised funds for the expansion of the 13-year-old building.

Alleluia! Church, located on Book Road at 103rd Street, celebrated the opening of its third and final phase in August. The 36,000-square-foot, \$8 million addition has seamlessly expanded the entire building to 80,000-square feet.

“It’s a wonderful miracle of God’s love and the love of God’s people,” said the Rev. Michael Nelson, Alleluia! senior pastor, whose father, Rev. Gerald Nelson, helped plant the new church in the early 1990s while pastor of Our Saviour Lutheran Church.

Alleluia! worship services were initially held in the gymnasium at Patterson Elementary School until a church was built in 1995. The first addition was built in 2002.

This second addition includes a 1,000-seat sanctuary, additional classrooms, offices, a coffee shop, a youth worship space, a multimedia room, a performance stage, and activity rooms designed to make church a desirable place to be not only on the weekend but throughout the week as well.

“We really try to minister to the entire family and to all ages, which really has a profound impact on the development of children,” Nelson said. “... What’s really driven this building program is to make space available for people to use and to be able to come in and feel comfortable. That’s why we do all these different programs, to give people a foot in the door. Once they are able to feel God’s

love in one of these programs, they naturally want more.”

The church serves about 2,000 families monthly, most from Naperville, Aurora, Plainfield, Bolingbrook, and Oswego. Children make up the largest segment of the congregation.

The new addition has allowed the church to revamp the entire building and expand Christian-based programming for children and adults. This includes dance classes, music and voice lessons, youth basketball, kids tumbling, women’s fitness, and the Little Blessings Preschool.

Gary Zoet has been an active volunteer during his seven years at Alleluia!, serving on the church council and the Rise capital campaign and heading up the youth basketball program. Families like his, he said, benefit from the many programs available through the church. “What we’re trying to do for the whole family is pretty impressive,” he said. “There’s a lot you can do here. If you keep everybody involved, everybody’s going to keep coming to church. That’s the key.”

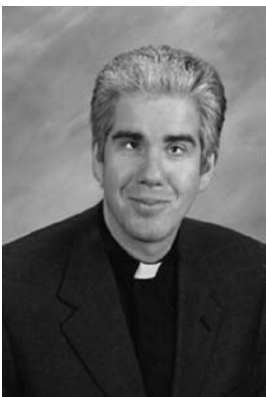
## Proclamation in the Time of Change

This year’s Professional Leaders Conference, Proclamation in the Time of Change, will be September 22-24, 2008 at Sinsinawa Mound.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Craig Setterlee, associate professor of Homiletics at LSTC. Larry Peterson, Augustana College Director of Music, will be music leader.

The NIS Professional Leaders Conference is the key yearly opportunity for leaders to experience collegiality and connect with what is going on in our Synod. All NIS professional leaders are encouraged to come and share in this opportunity.

Find out more about this year’s PLC and register online at [www.nisynod.org/plc](http://www.nisynod.org/plc).



Dr. Craig Setterlee, associate professor of Homiletics at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago will be the keynote speaker at this year’s Professional Leaders Conference.

## Stand By Me

Submitted by Russ Senti

Stand By Me as I face the uncertain future.  
Stand By Me as I learn what I will be. Stand  
By Me before the awesome face of God.

Stand By Me is a new initiative of the  
Lutheran Men in Mission of the Northern  
Illinois Synod. We will walk with young men  
through the journey of the teenage years into  
young manhood. We will commit ourselves  
to discerning together the Lord's will for our  
lives.

Stand By Me is a four-year journey offered  
to young men at the recommendation of  
their pastors and with the involvement of  
their parent(s) or guardian(s). Successful  
completion of each year of the journey will  
earn one thousand dollars toward post-high-  
school education or training.

Find out more or recommend a young man  
for the program by contacting Pastor Gary  
Blobaum at 815-732-2367.

The Stand By Me program will kick off with  
an overnight retreat November 21-22, 2008 at  
LOMC. Paul Hill from the Youth and Family  
Institute is the featured speaker. The retreat  
is only \$99 (includes lodging, 3 meals, and  
program). Come learn how to bring younger  
men closer to God. Call Russ Senti at  
815-732-2220 for reservations.

## LSSI's Spring Ridge Opens

Submitted by Carol Vandermey

By providing quality, affordable housing  
for seniors with limited incomes, Lutheran  
Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is also  
strengthening communities. Recently, LSSI  
opened a new senior housing community,  
Spring Ridge Senior Housing, in Rockford.

"I don't like being here – I love being here,"  
says Linda Wilson, a Spring Ridge resident.  
"I feel like I have another family, and the staff  
people are tremendous."

Spring Ridge does not fit the image of what  
some might imagine as "subsidized housing."  
Far from being a generic, box-like structure,  
the building's interior and exterior reflects the  
influence of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Spring Ridge features 60 one-bedroom  
apartments that include a full kitchen  
with appliances, a visitor entry system  
and other amenities. Construction of the  
residential community was funded through  
the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban  
Development (HUD).

LSSI has other senior housing sites in the  
area served by the Northern Illinois Synod,  
including Lincoln Manor (Rochelle),  
Luther Center (Rockford), Meadow Ridge  
(Freeport) and Prairie Ridge (Freeport).  
For more information on Spring Ridge, call  
815/397-4210 or visit [www.LSSI.org](http://www.LSSI.org).

"I don't like  
being here –  
I love  
being here.  
I feel like  
I have  
another family..."

## ELCABOP Continues Wellness Plan

ELCA News Service

Again in 2009 the ELCA Board of Pensions will offer plan  
members the opportunity to earn wellness dollars to apply  
to their medical costs when they take the Mayo Clinic  
Health Risk Assessment (HRA).

Plan members may earn up to \$300 by follow-up health  
improvement activities, including lifestyle coaching.

The trustees recommended "that the Board of Pensions  
continue in 2009 to give a 2 percent discount on health  
plan contributions to ELCA organizations and sponsoring  
employers within an organization or a synod when at least

75 percent of plan member employees and spouses in the  
organization or synod take the Mayo Clinic Health Risk  
Assessment."

"Our challenge now is to educate and inspire members  
to take the Health Risk Assessment and to obtain the  
available savings. This is a stewardship issue for all of us,"  
said David D. Swartling, ELCA secretary, Chicago.

As of August, only one of the ELCA's 65 synods had  
qualified for the 2 percent discount, but others still have  
time to earn the discount if 75 percent of plan members and  
spouses in their area complete the HRA before Sept. 30.

Find out more at [www.ELCAbop.org](http://www.ELCAbop.org)

## Synod Calendar

## September

- 1 Office Closed
- 3-4 Region 5 Steering Committee, Madison, WI
- 5 Finance Committee, Synod Office, 3:30-5 pm
- 5 Exec. Committee, Synod Office, 5:30-8 pm
- 6 Synod Council, Christ, Belvidere, 9 am – 3pm
- 6 Social Ministry Committee, Christ, Belvidere, TBD
- 9 NIS Candidacy Meeting, St. Paul, Dixon
- 16 Global Missions Committee (Health Committee), TBD
- 17 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 18 Mission Gathering, North Conference, Grace, Loves Park, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 18 Dean's Meeting, Synod Office 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- 18 South Conference St. John's, Princeton
- 20 NIS WELCA Convention, Faith, Joliet, Bishop preaching
- 21 St. John's, Mendota, 150th Anniversary (Bishop preaching)
- 22-24 PLC, Sinsinawa
- 26 Illinois Conference of Churches, Springfield (Bishop preaching)
- 28 Immanuel, Compton, Bishop preaching
- 30 Alternative Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 30 Mission Gathering, East Conference New Life, Bolingbrook, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

## October

- 2-7 Conference of Bishops, Chicago
- 9 Mission Gathering, Northeast Conference, Bethany, Crystal Lake, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 9 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 12 First, Plano, 125th Anniversary (Bishop preaching)
- 14 Mission Gathering, South Conference, St. John's, Peru, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 16 South Conference, Mendota Lutheran Home, Mendota
- 16 FCTE (08-11), Synod Office, 10 am - 2 pm
- 18 Anti-racism/Multicultural Committee, Faith, Rochelle, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- 19 150th Anniversary, First, Lee (Bishop preaching)

- 21 Mission Gathering, Central Conference, Immanuel, Rock Falls, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 21 Alternative Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 26 Reformation Worship Service & Ordination, Zion, Rockford, 4:00 p.m.
- 28-29 Bishop visits Luther Seminary

## November

- 1 LSSI Amicus Certis Dinner, Chicago
- 6 Dean's Meeting, Synod Office 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- 7 MIF Board Meeting
- 9 100th Anniversary, Salem, Moline (Bishop preaching)
- 9 Mission Gathering, Southwest Conference, 4:00- 6:00 p.m., Bethany, Woodhull
- 11 LSSI Board of Directors, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 11 Mission Gathering, Northwest Conference, First, Freeport, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 12 Interim Pastor Meeting, Synod office, 12:00 – 3:00 pm
- 13 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 13 Mission Gathering, West Conference, First, Geneseo, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- 16 Food Resource Bank Harvest Celebration, St. John's, Sterling, 4:00 p.m.
- 20 South Conference, Zion, LaMoille
- 20-22 Zion Urban Ministry Conference, Rockford
- 25 Alternative Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 27-28 Office Closed

## December

- 2 NIS Candidacy Meeting, St. Paul, Dixon
- 2 Illinois Conference of Churches, Bloomington
- 4 FCTE (08-11), Synod Office, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- 7 150th Anniversary, 1st, DeKalb (Bishop preaching)
- 11 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
- 11 South Conference, Pleasant View Luther Home, Ottawa
- 24-25 Office Closed
- 31 Office Closed

## September 2008 Prayer Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Priggie, Pr. Richard & Janice - Augustana College, Rock Island	2 Prior, Seminarian Simon - Plainfield	3 Quinn, Pr. Jay, Asst. to Bishop/North Conf., & Kristine - Faith, South Beloit	4 Radloff, Pr. Ralph & Mary - Rock Island	5 Rapp, Pr. Barbara, Asst. to Bishop for Candidacy - Shepherd of the Hill, Scales Mound	6 Rasmussen, Pr. Carl & Nancy - First, Kirkland
7 Pr. David Rasmussen - Creston	8 Reedy, Pr. Bret & Betty - Plattville, Minooka	9 Roberts, Pr. James & Sallyann - Emmanuel, Rockford	10 Rogers, Mr. Kevin - Synod Council Youth Representative	11 Rogers, Pr. Sharon & Al - Light of Christ, Algonquin	12 Rogers, Jr., Pr. Thomas-Redeemer, Woodstock & Sarah Wilson	13 Rooney, Diaconal Minister, & Donald - Huntley
14 Runestad, Pr. Luverne & Barbara - Rockford	15 Samuelson, Pr. C. Franklin & Donna - Moline	16 Sauter, Seminarian Vicki - Amboy	17 Schaffner, Pr. Sarah - First, Lee & Pr. Steve Dow	18 Schattauer, Pr. Thomas & Paula - Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA	19 Schlesinger, Pr. Jeffrey & Theresa - St. Matthew, Princeton	20 Schmidt, Pr. Scott & Patricia - All Saints, Byron
21 Schneider, Pr. Roger & Rosemary - Shepherd of the Hills, McHenry	22 Schock, Pr. Twila - ELCA Global Mission, Chicago	23 Schoon, Pr. Christine & Steven - Trinity, Ottawa	24 Schroll, Ms. Ellen, Assoc. in Ministry, & G. Robert - Shepherd of the Hill, Lockport	25 Schweppe, Pr. David & Lynne - Sterling	26 Sefrhans, Seminarian Gwen - Kingston, NY	27 Sisson, Ms. Brenda, Assoc. in Ministry, & Mark - St. Paul, Sterling
28 Smith, Pr. Carlyle & Sharon - Surprise, AZ	29 Stalker, Pr. Daniel & Beth - St. Paul, Streator	30 Stees, Pr. Arthur & Audrey - Byron				

## October 2008 Prayer Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Steinke, Pr. Charles & Betty - Sterling	2 Stienstra, Pr. Christine, Asst. to Bishop/Central Conf., & Daryl - Amboy	3 Storck, Pr. Kenneth & Ellen - Gloria Dei, Rockford	4 Strahl, Pr. Marcia - First, Chadwick
5 Swanberg, Pr. Kenneth & Josephine - Moline	6 Swanson, Pr. C. Jeffrey & Donna - Offutt AFB, NE	7 Swanson, Pr. John & Shirley - Stanwood, WA	8 Swarbrick, Pr. William & Frances - Dixon	9 Thien, Seminarian Bridget - Chicago	10 Thomas, Pr. Michael & Tammy - Living Waters, Crystal Lake	11 Thoren, Jr., Pr. Arnold & Barbara - Rock Island
12 Tweedt, Pr. Vernon & Lois - Plano	13 Ufkes, Pr. David, South Conf. Dean & Linda - Immanuel, Marseilles	14 Uhl, Pr. Paul & Linda - Bensenville	15 Vanatta, Ms. Carla, Assoc. in Ministry, & Ronald - Salem, Sycamore	16 Vidler, Pr. C. David & Adrienne - First, Mt. Carroll	17 Vincent, Seminarian Gene - Ohio	18 Voss, Pr. Ronald, Mission Consultant, & Rebecca, Followers of Christ, Plainfield
19 Walker, Pr. Howard & Lois - Joliet	20 Watson, Pr. Nolan & Ruby - Rockford	21 Weeks, Pr. Kevin & Sarah - Zion, LaMoille	22 Weiss, Seminarian Laurie - Dubuque, IA	23 Welk, Pr. William & Diana - Rockford	24 Wherry, Seminarian Stephanie - Nashville, TN	25 Whitney, Pr. Kathryn - Trinity, Rockford & Pr. Lee Bennight
26 Whitney, Pr. Milton & Evelyn - Freeport	27 Whittaker, Seminarian Amanda - Shoreville, MN	28 Wigtil, Pr. Norval - Aurora	29 Wilcox, Pr. Dorothy & Wayne - Immanuel, Yorkville	30 Wilder, Seminarian Theresa - Polo	31 Willers, Pr. Randy - Salem, Moline	



**Northern Illinois Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
 God's work. Our hands.  
 103 West State Street, Rockford IL 61101

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is a free bimonthly newsletter published by the  
**Northern Illinois Synod**  
 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA),  
 The Rev. Dr. Gary M. Wollersheim, Bishop.

Congregations may request additional copies  
 for greater distribution and may reprint articles  
 for congregational use.

Deadline is the first of the month  
 prior to month of issue.

Submissions, questions, comments, and requests for  
 additional copies should be directed to:  
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[karin@nisynod.org](mailto:karin@nisynod.org)

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