

Making Christ Known

in the Northern Illinois Synod



November/December 2008 Volume 21 Issue 6 www.nisynod.org

What Do You Know About the Book of Faith?

About the Book of Faith Initiative

Welcome to the ELCA's "Book of Faith" initiative! The Book of Faith initiative invites the whole church to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

The Bible is a book of faith.

The Bible is the written word of God that creates and nurtures faith through the work of the Holy Spirit and points us to Christ, the incarnate Word and center of our faith. The Bible invites us into a relationship with God, making demands on our lives and promising us life in Christ. The Bible tells the stories of people living their faith over the centuries and, through its demands and promises, forms us as a people of faith.

The language of Scripture is our first language of faith.

The language of the Bible becomes our language. It shapes how we think and speak about God, about the world, and about ourselves. We become renewed, enlivened, and empowered as the language of Scripture forms our hearts, our minds, our community conversation, and our commitments.

We have a calling as the people of God.

Part of our calling is to know, hear, share, and be rooted in Scripture. As we live into our calling as people who are formed by Scripture, we become renewed in our faith, enlivened by the Spirit, and empowered through the cross of Christ to serve God and neighbor.

Opening the book of faith

So, what does this all mean? We are called to experience more fully the power of the Word and to recall or learn anew the Lutheran approaches to Scripture that have been so fruitful over the centuries. The ELCA, teamed with Augsburg Fortress, will offer a wide variety of learning tools for congregations and individuals. Ranging from Bible Studies to worship material to a new Lutheran Study Bible, there will be tools to assist those of every age to more fully experience the Bible. But, this is not a "program." It does not include a specific curriculum or plan. It is a grass-roots initiative that is designed to meet each congregation and each individual at their own level and to encourage everyone to think creatively about how to achieve biblical fluency. In other words, different groups will experience the Book of Faith in different ways. But, together, we will all experience Scripture, the first language of our faith.

Book of Faith Synod advocates

Elizabeth Martin, Minister of Word and Pastoral Care at Christ Lutheran Church in Belvidere, and Matthew Marohl, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Augustana College, have been asked to serve as the Northern Illinois Synod advocates for the Book of Faith initiative. This means that Martin and Marohl will work with a team from around the synod to encourage everyone in our synod to consider how they might engage with the Bible in new and exciting ways. For more information about the Book of Faith initiative, please feel free to contact the synod office or to contact Elizabeth Martin or Matthew Marohl directly.

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Book of Faith Online Resources

Find out more about the Book of Faith at www.bookoffaith.org

Book of Faith printed resources are available from the Augsburg Fortress online store at www.augsburgfortress.org

Facebook even has two groups related to the Book of Faith: *Reading the Book of Faith* and *Initiating the Book of Faith Initiative*. Go to www.facebook.com and search for Book of Faith.

From the
Bishop

“...we respond
to God’s
graciousness
with continued
generosity.”

In God We Trust

I am writing this on the day that the House of Representatives voted 228 to 205 to defeat the bill proposing the 700 billion dollar emergency rescue (bailout) of the nation’s financial industry. The stock market responded to this news with a 777 point decline.

There are many people across the country and in Illinois who are hurting in the wake of this news. Jobs are lost. More homes are foreclosed. Businesses, large and small, are declaring bankruptcy, pensions are threatened, and much more. Several communities across the territory I serve as bishop, Northern Illinois, are struggling, notably Galesburg, Rockford, Freeport, and others. This is a scary time for all of us.

Hopefully by the time you read this, there will be a plan approved by Congress that will address these complicated issues. I doubt there will be a quick fix; it took years to get us into this mess, and it will probably take a long time to get us out again.

I think Americans will need to respond to this economic crisis with a change in lifestyle. This will call for more frugality, simplicity, prudence, and generally good stewardship of what God has entrusted to us. I do believe the economy will recover because of the resourcefulness, ingenuity, and character of the American people.

But here is the point: when all is said and done, where are we going to put our trust? Should we put our trust in the stock market? Should we put our trust in our elected officials? Should we put our trust in an economic system? No, as Christians, we put our trust in God.

We believe that God does and will provide for our daily needs. We recognize that compared to most of the world, even in an economic crisis, we are wealthy. And we

are reminded of the words of Scripture: “to whom much is given, much shall be required,” so we respond to God’s graciousness with continued generosity.

In Matthew 6, Jesus puts into perspective what this all means to the person of faith:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Let us seek first God’s kingdom.

In Christ,

Bishop Gary Wollersheim

ELCA Conference of Bishops Addresses Financial Crisis

ELCA News Service

In a pastoral letter to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the ELCA Conference of Bishops called on church members and others who are concerned about the financial health of the United States to discuss and pray about economic life, financial behaviors and “the interconnectedness of all life and creation that cries out to be reclaimed.”

The Oct. 7 pastoral letter addressed the current financial crisis in the United States, compounded by its effects on global markets.

“We are deeply concerned about the current financial crisis, which is affecting not only our nation but the entire global economy,” the pastoral letter said. “This crisis is causing fear and loss in our country as thousands of families face unemployment, foreclosure, and uncertainty about savings and pensions. Meanwhile, they struggle to put food on the table and gas into their cars.” The future is uncertain for everyone, and it is “especially frightening,” the letter said, for those who are already vulnerable and struggling to survive.

In their letter the Lutheran church leaders offered prayers for those whose lives are affected and for national leaders as they seek to address the complex financial crisis.

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly addressed issues about economic life in the 1999 social statement, “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All,” the letter said. The conference encouraged members to use the statement to understand the significance of theological and biblical principles in responding to the crisis.

The letter cited four specific principles: concern for people in poverty, personal and corporate responsibility, the need for good government, and the benefits and limits of free markets.

“As people of the God who calls us out of fear into hope and community, we welcome all people into widespread and respectful discussion about this current crisis,” the letter said. “In this way we can create partnerships that will help those whose lives are being shattered and encourage responsibility and integrity in our national economic life.”

The text of the Conference of Bishops’ pastoral letter is at <http://tinyurl.com/54cu99> on the ELCA Web site. The text of the social statement, “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All” is at <http://tinyurl.com/549955>.

How Green Is Your Congregation?

Prince of Peace, Freeport has recently sold 50 reusable shopping bags and has ended up ordering 50 more - supply did not keep up with demand! (They were thrilled!)

They created a “recycling center” on site for folks to bring in cell phones, eye glasses, hearing aids, batteries, and ink cartridges. They also purchased two bins for cans/plastic that are visible to the congregation. The recycling center also has a bulletin board with other educational information.

As part of their “Green Worship Service” on Aug. 17, they encouraged their youngsters to create “green” artwork. All of the children who participated received a fair trade chocolate bar.

The Rockford and Rock Island Synod Offices have also gone green. Compact fluorescent bulbs, glass glasses, ceramic mugs, and extensive recycling efforts are some of the ways they are trying to be good stewards of the earth.

Share your green ideas or find out more at one of the remaining Mission Gatherings (11/9, 4pm, Bethany, Woodhull; 11/11, 7pm, First, Freeport; or 11/13, 7pm, First, Geneseo) or visit www.nisynod.org/green.



Prince of Peace, Freeport’s reusable shopping bags.

Fun and Fit Club

Submitted by Pr. Mike Lawyer

In 2007, the Christian Education Director at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Orion saw a need for the congregation to address childhood obesity. She noted that children at church and in the community were in desperate need of an exercise program that also encouraged spiritual health. The Fun and Fit Club was created.

The program is designed to promote healthy lifestyles in children by focusing on the physical, spiritual, and emotional health of children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The program incorporates physical exercise, Bible lessons, nutritional information which includes the sharing of a healthy snack, and homework tutoring. Individuals from the County Health Department, The Red Cross, and Jazzercise also come and present programs for the children throughout the year.

Fun and Fit Club has grown by leaps and bounds; it now includes pre-kindergarten students and meets three afternoons each week for an hour and a half. This year's program also includes a monthly Saturday morning breakfast club. Pr. Mike Lawyer says, "I have witnessed wonderful physical and spiritual growth in the participants as well as the volunteers who give of their time and talents at Fun and Fit."

Last year, at the conclusion of the school year, a one-week summer camp was held with the purpose of ministering to the entire family. In addition to the regular activities for the children and parents, the camp also offered a parenting course taught by the pastor. The evenings concluded with a family potluck.



The program is now free to participants thanks to grants provided by the Congregational Life Committee of the Northern Illinois Synod. Members of the congregation as well as parents and students volunteer on a regular basis to provide the tutoring, teach the Bible lessons, lead the exercise games, and supervise the children. St. Paul is thankful to God for this special ministry and the positive affect it has had upon the congregation and surrounding communities.

Pr. Lawyer adds, "There may be others in the Synod who are doing similar programming, and we would welcome the opportunity to share ideas with them."

Find out more about Congregational Life Committee grants at www.nisynod.org/clc.

LSSI Collects Holiday Hope for People in North Central Ill.

Submitted by Jo Ann Dollard

For the past eight years, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) staff has helped clients in Lee, Ogle and Whiteside Counties celebrate Christmas through the "Holiday Hope Chest."

"Initially, we had 'Christmas for Kids' — for our foster care kids — but a couple years ago, we expanded [the program] to include seniors," says Kathy Hall, senior development director at LSSI's Nachusa office. "We have a lot of home-bound seniors who are alone."

The Holiday Hope Chest is a big undertaking. A mailing is sent out to individuals, groups, churches and businesses asking if they would like to assist someone in need and provide a Christmas for them.

Those who respond can choose whom they wish to help (e.g., a senior or teen), Hall notes.

LSSI program staff members send in a list of their own, detailing their clients' needs. Then, Hall and other staff go to work, making

up a master list and playing matchmaker, connecting donors and people in need.

“Gift cards are popular with seniors, who use them to buy medicine, toiletries, food, etc.,” Hall says. She notes that donors are also connected with clients’ caseworkers, who make arrangements to receive the gifts and to deliver them to clients.

The office also partners with Wal-Mart in Sterling by putting up an “Angel Tree,” which includes names for LSSI’s newer clients. “I would say that any person whose name is on an Angel Tree – whether for LSSI or another group – is really needy,” Hall says. “Some [people] just want simple things like socks or gloves.”

“It’s a wonderful thing; people are so generous,” she adds. She tells the story of one year when she was putting up names on an Angel Tree in Wal-Mart. A woman came up to Hall and asked her if she could use her food stamps to provide a gift for someone. “That was simply amazing,” Hall says. She adds that some churches offer LSSI use of their space to host parties for foster children and their families.

Others put up a mitten and glove tree, or hold a food drive. In total, 17 ELCA congregations participate in the effort, each helping in their own special way.

All told, the Holiday Hope Chest touched 348 individuals and 98 families last Christmas. “We wouldn’t be able to make the holidays brighter for our clients without the collective help from everyone involved,” says Hall.

For more information, contact Kathy Hall at 815-284-7796, ext. 2018; or Kathy.Hall@LSSI.org.

St. John’s Member Teaching in Slovakia

Submitted by Linda S. Johnson

Becky Mason, a member of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Somonauk, Illinois, is serving as an ELCA Global Mission Volunteer. She is teaching high school English through instruction in Western literature and conversational skills at the Evangelical Gymnasium in Tisovec, Slovakia.

Through its Global Mission unit, the ELCA supports missionaries and programs in over 90 countries.

Becky is an interesting and ambitious woman who graduated this year from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies. She is excited about this 10-month assignment.

She recently told members of St. John’s “Since this is the first generation born following the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc and with the Slovak Republic’s entrance into the European Union in 2004, international skills such as learning English have become increasingly important. The Evangelical Gymnasium Tisovec has been designed to prepare students for advanced education, both nationally and internationally, and to continue the Lutheran traditions that began centuries before the Soviet period.”

Becky will keep an active account of her experiences in Slovakia in stories and pictures on her blog at: <http://beckyinslovakia.blogspot.com>.



Slovakian students study English

Pr. Jeff’s Blog

Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Jeffrey Clements, is blogging about various thought-provoking ministry topics. Recent posts have been “Feeling Like an Outsider,” “Hospitality at Miller Park,” and “Dressing for Church.” Come join the conversation at <http://niselca.blogspot.com>.

Synod Calendar

November

- 1 LSSI Amicus Certis Dinner, Chicago
- 6 Dean's Meeting, Synod Office 10 am - 1 pm
- 5 MIF Board Meeting, 1:30 - 7 pm
- 9 100th Anniversary, Salem, Moline (Bishop preaching)
- 9 Mission Gathering, Southwest Conference, 4- 6 pm, Bethany, Woodhull
- 11 LSSI Board of Directors, 10 am - 4 pm
- 11 Mission Gathering, Northwest Conference, First, Freeport, 7 - 9 pm
- 12 Interim Pastor Meeting, Synod office, noon - 3 pm
- 13 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10 am - 2 pm
- 13 Mission Gathering, West Conference, First, Geneseo, 7 - 9 pm
- 15 Nominating Committee, Synod Office
- 19 Katie's Cup Grand Opening, Bishop attending
- 20 South Conference, Zion, LaMoille
- 20-22 Zion Urban Ministry Conference, Cliffbreakers, Rockford
- 21-22 Lutheran Men in Mission, "Stand by Me" LOMC, 6:30 pm
- 25 Alternative Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10 am - 2 pm
- 27-28 Office Closed

December

- 2 NIS Candidacy Meeting, St. Paul, Dixon
- 2 Illinois Conference of Churches, Bloomington (Leadership team meeting)
- 4 East Conference Meeting, Shepherd of the Hill, Lockport, 8:30 am
- 4 FCTE (08-11), Synod Office, 10 am - 2 pm
- 7 150th Anniversary, Ist, DeKalb (Bishop preaching)
- 11 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10 am - 2 pm
- 11 South Conference, Pleasant View Luther Home, Ottawa
- 24-25 Office Closed
- 31 Office Closed

January 2009

- 1 Office Closed
- 2-3 ILMSCC, St. Timothy, Naperville
- 3-17 Bishops' Academy, Israel
- 6 North Conference Bible/Pericope Study, North End Coffee Shop, 1:30 pm
- 8 North Conference Bible Pericope Study, (TBA), 8:30 am
- 13 North Conference Bible/Pericope Study, North End Coffee Shop, 1:30 pm
- 14 North Conference Ministerium Meeting, Rotating, 10:30 am
- 15 North Conference Bible Pericope Study, (TBA), 8:30 am
- 20 MIF Board Meeting, Chicago
- 20 North Conference Bible/Pericope Study, North End Coffee Shop, 1:30 pm
- 22 North Conference Bible Pericope Study, (TBA), 8:30 am
- 23 Finance Committee, Synod Office, 3:30 - 5 pm
- 23 Executive Committee, Synod Office, 5:30 - 7 pm
- 24 Synod Council, Synod Office, 9 am - 3 pm
- 27 All Staff Meeting, Synod Office, 10 am - 2 pm
- 27 North Conference Bible/Pericope Study, North End Coffee Shop, 1:30 pm
- 29 North Conference Bible Pericope Study, (TBA), 8:30 am
- 29 East Conference Meeting, TBA, Bishop Wollersheim presenting
- 31 Anti-Racism/Multicultural Committee, Faith, Rochelle, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Looking Ahead

- February 25 Ash Wednesday
- March 7 CRE, Kishwaukee College
- April 5 Palm Sunday
- April 12 Easter Sunday
- April 18 Synod Council, Synod Office, 9 am - 3 pm
- May 6 Lutheran Day, Springfield
- June 19-20 Synod Assembly, Augustana College, Rock Island IL

Did you know...

For 40+ years, Augsburg Fortress has provided the Little Red Book calendar to rostered leaders. Once again Augsburg Fortress will provide the Little Red Book free of charge.

In addition to the traditional print format, they are pleased to introduce new downloadable versions—also at no charge!

Downloadable versions are available for both Outlook and Palm Desktop. Visit www.augsburgfortress.org/redbook.

November 2008 Prayer Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Widows & Widowers of deceased rostered leaders
2 Wilson, Ms. Sarah-Diaconal Minister - St. John's, Hebron & Pr. Tom Rogers	3 Winkelman, Pr. Linda & Steven - Messiah, Galva	4 Witkowski, Pr. Daniel - First, Moline	5 Wittig, Pr. William & Isabelle - Byron	6 Wold, Pr. Janet-Synod Council, & Alan - Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford	7 Wold, Pr. Paul & Linda - Rockford	8 Wolff, Pr. Paul & JoAnn - Moline
9 Wollersheim, Bishop & Polly - Northern Illinois Synod, Rockford	10 Woods, Pr. Patricia & Tom - Montgomery	11 Ziegert, Pr. Ann - St. Paul, Hanover	12 Zierke, Pr. Kris Ann - Our Savior's, Seneca	13 Zimmerman, Pr. Katharine - Orland Hills	14 Adrian, Pr. Joanne - Emmanuel, Oregon	15 Ahnquist, Pr. Hubert - Rockford
16 Albee, Jr., Pr. Lowell & Inga-Lill - Princeton	17 Almen, Pr. Lowell & Sally - Elgin	18 Andeen, Pr. G. Kenneth & Martha - Milwaukee, WI	19 Andersen, Ms. Myrna-Associate in Ministry - Galesburg	20 Andersen, Pr. Steven & Sandra - St. Johns, Elizabeth	21 Anderson, Ms. Jean-Associate in Ministry - Rockford	22 Anderson, Ms. Ruth-Associate in Ministry & Marshall - Trinity, Galesburg
23 Anderson, Pr. Timothy & Jane - Immanuel, Altona	24 Anderson-Hurdle, Pr. Suzanne & Steve - Good Shepherd, Romeoville	25 Andres, Pr. Carole - Freeport	26 Asplund, Pr. Roger & Marjorie - Dixon	27 Atteberry, Ms. Jane-Associate in Ministry & Wayne - Christ, Belvidere	28 Baik, Pr. Patricia & Thomas - Arlington Heights	29 Baltz, Pr. Frederick & Cindia - St. Matthew, Galena
30 Bartell, Pr. Myron & Iva - Oregon						

December 2008 Prayer Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Beamsley, Pr. Chris - Grace, Wilmington & Pr. Jennifer - St. John, Joliet	2 Beck, Pr. Alfred & Joan - Cambridge, Cambridge	3 Becker, Mr. R. Frederick-Associate in Ministry & Linnea - Crystal Lake	4 Beckingham, Pr. Charles & Lorraine - Moline	5 Bein, Ms. Martha-Associate in Ministry & Steve Larsen - St. Mark, Rockford	6 Bengtson, Pr. Jan & Darlene - Galesburg
7 Bennight, Pr. Lee-Trinity, Durand & Pr. Kathy Whitney	8 Bergeson, Ms. Judy-Diaconal Minister & William - Salem, Sycamore	9 Bergren, Pr. Arthur & Anne - First, Geneseo	10 Bergren, Pr. Lynn & Christine - Geneseo	11 Beynon, DiAnne - Synod Council - Rockford	12 Bishop, Pr. Hollis & Jane - Long Prairie, MN	13 Bitner, Pr. Denver-Urban/Multi-Cultural Ministry Consultant & Pamela - Zion, Rockford
14 Black, Pr. Jonathan-Rural Consultant & Lorine - St. John, Ashton	15 Blobaum, Pr. Gary & Amy - St. Paul, Oregon	16 Booher, Pr. Bruce & Penelope - First, Plano	17 Boster, Pr. Mark & Annette - Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley	18 Briesacher, Pr. Garry & Connie - Trinity, Ottawa	19 Brooks, Mr. Mic - Synod Council - Rochelle	20 Buchholz II, Pr. Howard & Susan - Living Hope, Frankfort
21 Burkheimer, Pr. Kathleen & Gary Puckett - Trinity, Milledgeville	22 Burton, Pr. Robert & Anita - Bethesda, Morrison	23 Capel, Pr. Karen - St. James, Forreston	24 Carls, Pr. Gordon - Tonica	25 Carlsen, Pr. Kurt & Sally - Zion, North Henderson	26 Carlson, Pr. Paul & Sandra - New Life, Bolingbrook	27 Chase, Beth Nelson - Synod Council - Mt. Morris
28 Chell, Mr. Jonathan-Associate in Ministry - Oak Park	29 Chubb, Pr. Jeffrey & Jane - Peace, Morris	30 Clark, Pr. Michel-Asst to Bishop/West Conf & Karen - Grace, Knoxville	31 Clements, Pr. Jeffrey-Asst to Bishop & Paulette - NI Synod, Rockford			



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