

The Epistle

November/December 2009

For clergy, lay leaders, and friends of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

www.iksynod.org



BISHOP JAMES R. STUCK

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In October we gathered in seven forums around the synod under the theme “What Does This Mean?” to discuss the recent decision by the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to allow people in “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders in this church.”

At these meetings, we learned what it means to “deny self, pick up our cross and follow” Jesus, for many are experiencing great pain in our church. We talked about the mission and ministries of our congregations and the synod, and the need to move forward together “empowering, equipping and encouraging” each other to make Christ known.

I am grateful for all who attended and listened intently, as we shared with each other our thoughts, feelings and convictions.

The Decision

There is great love and concern for the church, but some are troubled by the decision and others are encouraged by it. Most expressed love for the church, but concern over how we might best live out our calling “to love God and neighbor” as we bear witness to Christ in the world.

Scripture

There was great concern for the role of scripture in our life together. What does it mean to acknowledge in our confession of faith that the Bible is “the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm” of our proclamation, faith, and life? Some feel that scripture is being undermined, while others feel that the fullness of scripture is being addressed.

Unity

There was great concern over how we might best express our unity in Christ. Many said they could not stay in a church body that condones actions that are contrary to scripture; their own witness to the world would be strengthened by separating. Others maintained that there is room for various understandings of scripture, that we need each other to fully know the truth, and that we can witness most

effectively to a divided culture by “bearing one another’s burdens, loving our neighbors, and respecting the bound conscience of all.”

Pain

Individuals, congregations, leaders at all levels of the church are experiencing anxiety, pain and confusion over what is happening to the church.

Others also expressed that a significant number of persons have for many years experienced much pain because of feeling marginalized by the church.

It is this last observation which has affected me most these last few months. I have been experiencing more pain in ministry than I have ever known. Something is happening to the church that grieves me deeply.

In our gatherings, I expressed this as a death-like experience. The church I grew up in and have known and loved is dying.

“This death has been happening for a long time. It didn’t start a few months ago or even a few years ago, but is decades old. Over the last ten years alone, the ELCA has declined by 10%. There are now fewer persons in the pews.” -Bishop Jim Stuck

Empowering, Equipping, and Encouraging the People of God to Make Christ Known

In talking about this death I shared:

This death has been happening for a long time. It didn't start a few months ago or even a few years ago, but is decades old. Over the last ten years alone, the ELCA has declined by 10 percent. There are fewer persons in the pews.

The ELCA is growing older. Those in our pews tend to be older than the general population.

Besides our best efforts, the Indiana-Kentucky Synod has also declined by 10 percent in the last ten years in number of congregations and members. We are not meeting our goals.

We are starting fewer congregations and putting other ministries at risk even though the need is much greater today.

Our benevolence dollars have shrunk because we have had to spend a higher percentage of mission dollars on operating local congregations.

Sin has been pervasive. For too long, being church has been about *us*, what *we* want and how the church can meet *our* needs. We have assumed the church is there for *us*. We need to give up our "ideal" of the church.

But this death may be "a good and Godly thing." I say that for these reasons:

- Luther says that baptismal living is a daily dying to our old self and our old ways so that the new

self in Christ may emerge. When we know we can't handle things, we are more likely to turn to God.

- The apostle Paul witnessed that God works in the world through weakness, pain and suffering. In our own suffering, loss and pain, we have entered into the suffering of Christ for the sake of the world.

- The scriptures proclaim that the crucified One is the risen One. If death is here, can the resurrection be far away? God is already at work raising up new leaders and new possibilities for the future beyond our imaginations or will.

As your bishop, I call on you to engage in:

Meeting at the Cross

Bishop Hanson after the Church-wide Assembly called us to "meet each other at the foot of the cross." Only when we approach humbly and kneel before God in Christ can we be given wisdom, patience and courage to do that which is God's will.

Praying

Pray for ourselves, one another, the church and the world. In prayer we listen to God's will and become open to "bearing one another's burden" in love and proclaiming the crucified and risen Christ to the world.

Acting out of love

Act out of love for the sake of the other. Talk with one another, listen carefully and respect the values and views of others.

Discerning the Future Together

This church belongs to God. No one has all the answers to our future. Only the Spirit can guide us in the way, the truth and the life. We meet at the cross for holy conversations and discernment, for the sake of our unity and our mission.

I have asked others who attended the forums to share some of their thoughts and responses to the challenging times we face. You can read these letters on the following pages.

You are in my prayers as we continue to be church together. I know these are difficult times for many of you and I know that each situation is different and challenging in its own way.

Be assured that we in the synod office are willing to be of service to you in any way.

May God continue to act powerfully in our midst as we seek to make Christ known to the world.

Your brother in Christ,

Bishop Jim Stuck

"Sin has been pervasive. For too long, being church has been about us, what we want and how the church can meet our needs. We have assumed the church is there for us. We certainly need to give up our "ideal" of the church."

-Bishop Jim Stuck



ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP
REV. BILL GAFKJEN

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I have moved among you these months since the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly – listening, discussing, discerning, accompanying, resourcing, and offering pastoral presence – two key questions have regularly worked their way into my reflection as I have sought perspective and guidance: What is it, really, that unites us? And, what compels us?

What unites us?

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.
[Ephesians 4:4-5 NRSV]

WHAT IS IT, REALLY, THAT UNITES US? WHAT IS IT THAT COMPELS US?

The unity of the body of Christ is God's gift to the world. Each person who passes through the water and Word of Holy Baptism is woven irrevocably into that gift. The oil-etched cross on each brow is the indelible mark and the deal is sealed by God's Spirit *forever*. Our unity does not come to us in denominational structures or like-minded networks. Unity does not reside in ethical conformity. Even agreement about what the Bible says cannot make us one.

In fact, as good and important as denominational identity and moral

or diminish it – play a significant role in how well equipped we are for God's challenging mission of healing and hope in the world. The way in which we steward this gift also provides the world with a witness to the one God who is above all and through all and in all. This is no small thing.

If there ever was a time that the world needed the witness of a body that lives and works together in cruciform love with one another across significant disagreements and in celebration of vast diversity, it is now.

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deliberation and study of scripture are, we are learning again how divisive they can be when we place our trust in any or all of them or so many other good things that entice us to give them primary place. As it turns out, in the economy of the God who is above all and through all and in all, denominations, ethical and moral commitments, and scripture itself serve the body of Christ and God's mission best when we loosen our grip on them and commend them, ourselves, and each other to God, trusting God's Spirit – and nothing else – to call, gather, enlighten, sanctify, unify and send us.

This gift of oneness is also a trust. What we do with this gift, the ways in which we live into it – or in our own brokenness try to deny

If ever the world needed to catch a glimpse of the God who is above all, through all and in all, it is now.

This is the moment. This is our witness.

Of course, we are reminded almost daily that doing so is not easy; it calls each of us and all of us together to take up the cross and follow Jesus deep into Good Friday.

It calls us to die to our own agendas and loosen our grip on what we think is so certain and to cling only to Jesus, crucified and risen, for us and for the life of the world, trusting the certain promise of resurrection and new life which is God's work, not ours.

Gafkjen, cont.

What compels us?

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. [2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NRSV]

We Lutherans get uncomfortable when urged to do something or, even worse, compelled. Yet, the love of Christ urges on – compels – those who are convinced that Christ has died for all.

The Eucharist which is offered at the center of our life together as the one body of Christ re-members us to Christ and to one another, draws us deep into the gift of unity God bestows. It also compels us with centrifugal force into the world as the body of Christ to be broken and poured out for the life of the world.

The deep, abiding, forgiving, renewing, life-giving love that we know in the crucified and risen Christ urges us on to share that same love in word and deed in every moment of every day.

This cruciform living and proclaiming in the everyday world – not filling pews, not preserving church structures, not getting our way, not any other compelling agenda that we are tempted to follow – this love of Christ is what urges us on toward the promises of peace, justice, healing and hope

that ring in our ears and sing from our lips this holy Christmastide.

This is the time, sisters and brothers, for us as congregations, as a synod, as a denomination to repent of the ways we have been lured and compelled by other missions, to receive forgiveness and renewal, and to be moved together again into the world as the body of Christ for the life of the world.

Perhaps this is why Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson has regularly and powerfully reminded us over the last few months that we meet at the foot of the cross. There, on our knees before God and before one another, we gaze on the cruciform gift of what God has wrought for us and for the world.

All of our disagreements, our confusion, our certainties, our need to be right and our fear that we're wrong, along with our persistent tendencies to run after other gods are stripped from us again and again and again.

And there, gathered at the foot of the cross, our gaze is drawn toward the tomb, empty and overshadowed by the new life rising just outside its door.

Gift and trust...unity and mission...made one and compelled by the Christ of the cross to give ourselves away ...gathered and sent by the one true living God who is above all and through all and in all...working forgiveness and hope, resurrection and new life...in our lives and in the world...despite and even in the midst of our own fumbblings, failings, and fears..

So be it. Thanks be to God!

**Pastor Bill Gafkjen
Assistant to the Bishop**

“This cruciform living and proclaiming in the everyday world – not filling pews, not preserving church structures, not getting our way, not any other compelling agenda that we are tempted to follow – this love of Christ is what urges us on toward the promises of peace, justice, healing and hope that ring in our ears and sing from our lips this holy Christmastide.” -Rev. Bill Gafkjen



ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP REV.
RUDY MUELLER

OVERHEARD IN JOE'S BACKYARD

Imagine Joe, a member of St. George by the Carwash Lutheran Church (ELCA), and his neighbor Fred conversing.

Fred Hey, Joe, I read in the newspaper about your church ordaining homosexuals. What's up with that? You don't agree with that do you?

Joe Well, I don't agree with the decision, but I should clarify. We've always ordained homosexuals. They've had to be celibate, but now they can be in a publicly acknowledged life-long monogamous relationship.

Fred But you don't agree with the decision? How can you stay?

Joe I stay because of our relationship with my church. My wife and I love our congregation. The worship is good. The sermons are inspiring. We're doing the kinds of things Christians should be doing – feeding the hungry, caring for one another, studying the Bible together.

Fred Yeah, that's your congregation. I know they make a difference in our community, but how do you defend the denomination? How can you be in a church where you disagree with a decision like that?

Joe I don't defend anything. Jesus doesn't need to be defended. No one's perfect, and no church body is either. Lutherans believe that bishops and councils can err. But that doesn't mean we walk away from each other when we do.

Fred Isn't that just what Martin Luther did? Walked away from the church of his day?

Joe No, he was excommunicated. I can't argue with the fact that Lutherans – and others – have often walked away from each other. It seems to be the way of the world, and church folks have bought right in. We replace instead of repair; we divorce instead of going to counseling; and Christians have found it easier to start a new denomination than live and work together in the midst of disagreement.

Fred But this isn't just a disagreement, Joe. The Bible says it's wrong.

Joe I agree with you, Fred. But so is divorce, selfishness, and division. So is not being a tither. Paul wrote to the Corinthians about a whole variety of behaviors; but the bottom line was their baptismal unity in the one who was crucified and raised from the dead.

Fred Sounds to me, Joe, like you just might think this is okay.

Joe No, I don't, but I think it is also wrong to walk away from my brothers and sisters just because we disagree. Look, Fred, you think capital punishment is wrong and I think it's okay, but we're still neighbors and friends. It would be easy just to forget about this friendship, but we still call each other friends. It's easy to walk away and start something new. It's much harder to stick around and work on things. The world expects us to be divided and contentious. In fact, they love it when we fight, but just think what a witness it would be if a church body this divided continued to love each other and be in mission together. Now that would be a witness worth fighting for.

“One of the things I heard at a forum and in later conversations was something like this: How can I defend my church to my neighbor after this vote?”

-Rev. Rudy Mueller



I-K SYNOD COUNCIL
TREASURER KATE KNOERZER

The Indiana-Kentucky Synod's mission statement has not changed. We are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, yet we are challenged to do so within financial constraints.

The budget for the current fiscal year was passed by the assembly in June 2008 before the bottom fell out of the economy, before "underwater" became a common term for endowments and mortgages, and before the vote in Minneapolis. In the midst of economic uncertainty in June of 2009, the assembly passed a budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2010. Although the endowment was underwater and the economic outlook was bleak, the members of the assembly stepped out in faith and adopted a budget to support the mission and ministry of this church. In the subsequent months, the economic news has been mixed and the endowment is strengthening; however, benevolence is significantly lagging.

EMPOWERING, EQUIPPING, AND ENCOURAGING THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN.

We have all heard that mission and ministry are diminished when funds are withheld. While we can agree that this is true, do we really understand what this means? Policies are not changed, but lives are negatively impacted.

In the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, significant reductions are being made in almost every area, including:

- The grant to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries;
- Campus Ministry support will be further reduced, jeopardizing the long-term viability of sustaining all five ministries. Currently, compensation for the called campus pastors is funded at only 75%;
- Synod Assembly will move closer to break-even through increases in registration fees;
- Reduction in Program Staff: An Assistant to the Bishop position has been eliminated. The workload for the staff has not, however, diminished. We are asking the already overloaded staff to take on additional responsibilities. Wages are frozen.
- Outreach grants are almost non-existent. Although there are plans for starting new mission congregations in our synod, there are no funds to support this.
- Deep cuts to the budgets of existing committees will have a long-lasting impact.

Will they continue to function without budgetary support?

- Support for the educational system through the grant to Trinity Seminary. This comes at a time when all the seminaries are experiencing financial distress due to struggling endowments and reduced support from congregations, synods, and the ELCA.

There is Cause for Celebration!

In the midst of the midst of the financial challenges resulting from withheld benevolence, there is cause for celebration. Seventy-seven congregations have increased their benevolence during 2009! Another fourteen have maintained their level of giving. A heartfelt "thank you" to all who continue to support the mission and ministry of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

Just as you can financially support your individual congregation through designated giving, so can the ministries of the synod be supported through individual and designated giving. It is through your participation in the life of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod that we will be able to continue to encourage, equip, and empower the people of God to make Christ known.

Transformations

Prayers of Celebration and Concern:

Bishop Jim Stuck, who is home from the hospital after undergoing emergency surgery on Thanksgiving and complications from that surgery.

Pr. Paul Meier (St. Matthew by the Lake, Benton, Ky.), whose mother Mildred Kretzmann Meier, died on Oct. 12.

Pr. Shirley Ross-Jones (St. Paul, Louisville, Ky.), who rejoice in the birth of first grandchild, Isabella Keen Boulas, born on Oct. 10.

Pr. Terri Peterson (Christ the King, South Bend, Ind.), whose father William E. Engle died on Oct. 19.

Pr. Marvin Wittkopf (retired, I-K Synod Conflict Management), whose sister Betty Davis, died Oct. 11.

Pr. David Yoder (retired), who recently underwent medical tests.

Pr. Anne Benson Pairan (St. Luke, Cold Spring, Ky.), and husband Tom Pairan, Associate in Ministry, who welcomed their first child, Jonathan Thomas, into the world on Nov. 9.

Pr. Richard Hunt (retired), whose wife Marjorie entered the hospital in November to regulate medications.

Pr. James Capers (Lamb of God, Indianapolis, Ind.), who is recovering at home after undergoing a procedure to have two stents inserted.

Pr. Ron Poisel and wife Sandy (Christ Lutheran, Louisville, Ky.), whose mother Marie Matsen passed away in Wisconsin.

Joe Skvarenina (Freed to Lead Fund, I-K Synod), who was recently hospitalized and is now recovering at home.

Pr. Judy Brennan, OLFC, and husband Dan and daughter Becky, who welcomed Heidi May Brennan to the world on Dec. 15, 2009.

Ordinations and Installations:

Pr. Terri Peterson was installed as associate pastor at Christ the King Lutheran Church, South Bend, Ind., on Oct. 18, 2009.

Pr. Joshua Burkholder was ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament October 25 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Frankfort, Ind., where he has taken a

call and was also installed.

Pr. Robyn Kistemaker was ordained by Bishop Jim Stuck into the ministry of Word and Sacrament November 15, at Messiah Lutheran Church, Cleveland, Ohio. Pr. Jerome Burce preached and Pr. Richard Ramiriez presided. Pr. Kistemaker has taken a call to Gethsemane Lutheran Church and St. Peter's Lutheran Church, both in Corydon, Ind.

Pr. Don Gray was installed as pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Evansville, Ind., on Nov. 15.

Pr. Jesse Christopherson was installed as pastor at come2go ministries in Fort Wayne, Ind. on Aug. 31.

Pr. Jim Cress was installed as pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. on Nov. 1.

Pr. Mary Poston was installed at St. John Lutheran Church, Dubois, Ind. on Nov. 15.

Pr. Ellen Mills was ordained in the Northeast Ohio Synod on Dec. 5. She was installed as pastor of Sugar Creek Parish.

Deaths:

†We mourn with the family and friends of **Pr. David Williamson** (retired), who died December 11, 2009 in Hot Springs Village, Ark. Pr. Williamson leaves behind his wife Millie (Jakovljevic) Williamson, Hot Springs Village; two sons, Bart Edward Williamson and his wife, Eila, and their two children, Eric and Kayma Williamson, San Antonio, Texas, and Brian Andrew Williamson and his wife, Raquel, Raleigh, N.C. The funeral took place December 15 at Christ Lutheran Church in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, Pastor Charles Gilmore officiating.

†We mourn with family and friends of **Pr. Walter F. Johnson** (retired), who died December 15, 2009. His wife, Nona, preceded him in death on May 6, 2008. He is survived by daughters, Letitia K. Johnson of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri; Larissa C. Johnson and her partner Eric Sparks of Bloomfield, Indiana; and granddaughter, Addison Sparks. A memorial service took place at St. Thomas Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Ind., on Saturday, December 19.

†We mourn with family and friends of **James S. Hundley**, formerly of the I-K Synod, who died December 19, 2009. He leaves behind his wife Betty Leigh Small Hundley; a son, James S. Hundley Jr.; daughter-in-law, Melissa Hundley and grandchildren, Madison and Jacob Hundley. The funeral took place Tuesday, December 22, 2009 at Christ Lutheran Church, Louisville, Ky.



A Resignation: Pastor Heather McCulloch

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of Pastor Heather McCulloch as Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission.

Since Pr. McCulloch joined the Indiana-Kentucky Synod staff in 2007, she has worked on a redesign for mission and outreach according to new ELCA guidelines, supported various projects and initiatives relating to mission, such as a new pastor at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Marion, Ind., work at Lamb of God Church in Indianapolis, and Light of the Cross, Fort Wayne, Ind. Pr. McCulloch also supported efforts to revitalize mission work in Crown Point. In addition to her work as mission director, she was a synod liaison for the EPAM (Every Person A Missionary) initiative, and an I-K Synod advocate for the ELCA Book of Faith initiative.

A decrease in shared benevolence receipts has resulted in the need to redesign synod financial structures relating to synod work and mission. The loss of Pr. McCulloch is a result of the reduction of available funds.

Pr. McCulloch's resignation takes effect at the end of December 2009. Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Bill Gafkjen will take over her duties as Director of Evangelical Mission.

The Indiana-Kentucky Synod staff and family wishes to thank Pr. Heather McCulloch for all the gifts that she brought to her work with us. We will miss her smile, her sense of humor, and her insight and willingness to bring forward the mission of making Christ known.

As Pr. McCulloch moves forward, we pray that "the dawn from on high may shine upon her to guide her feet in the way of peace." Luke 1.78-79

Visit www.iksynod.org for more listings

Indiana-Kentucky Lutheran Center will be closed on January 1, 2010.

I-K Synod Candidacy Committee Meeting

January 7-9, 2010
Benedict Inn and Retreat Center, Beech Grove, Ind.
Contact April Lynch at alynch@iksynod.org

I-K Synod Finance Committee Meeting

January 9, 2010
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., I-K Synod Chapel
Contact Kate Knoerzer at hsckate@sbcglobal.net

I-K Synod Interim Ministry Meeting

January 11, 2010
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., I-K Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Karen Eppert at keppert@iksynod.org

I-K Synod Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Meeting

January 16, 2010
10 a.m.- 2:00 p.m., I-K Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Mark Radloff at mrادloff@iksynod.org

I-K Synod Freed to Lead Dev Board Mtng

January 21, 2010, 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
I-K Synod Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Pr. Tom Weitzel at tweitzel@iksynod.org

I-K Synod Leadership Support Meeting

January 22, 2010
9:30 a.m., I-K Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Karen Eppert at keppert@iksynod.org

I-K Synod Council Meeting Deans Meeting

January 22-23, 2010
I-K Synod Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Karen Eppert at keppert@iksynod.org

February 2010

I-K Synod Christian Education Team Meeting

February 16, 2010, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
I-K Synod Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Ed Seykowski at edseykow@juno.com

I-K Synod Freed to Lead Grant Board Meeting

February 8, 2010, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
I-K Synod Lutheran Center Chapel
Contact Pr. Tom Weitzel at tweitzel@iksynod.org

March 2010

I-K Synod Worship for Mission Event

"A Still More Excellent Way"
Contemp. Music, Luther, & the Future of the Church
March 13, 2010
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Faith Lutheran Church, Jeffersonville, Indiana
Contact Karen Eppert at keppert@iksynod.org

Congregations in the Call Process:

As of December 10, 2009

Mission Discernment:

Bethany, Indianapolis, IN Interim Pr. Martin Bomhoeft
 First Trinity, Indianapolis, IN
 Gethsemane, Lexington, KY Int. Pr. John Hawkins
 Grace, Columbia City, IN Int. Pr. Joyce Gerwing
 Grace, Huntingburg, IN Int. Pr. Ron Atkins
 Grace and Glory, Goshen, KY Int. Pr. Brian Fingerson
 Hilltop, South Bend, IN Interim Pr. Bill Hoerger
 Redeemer, Bryant, IN
 Redeemer, Elkhart, IN
 St. George, Edinburgh Interim Pr. Jerry Curry
 St. John, Sunman, IN
 St. Mark, Fort Wayne, IN Int. Pr. Nathan Wadewitz
 St. Mark, Uniondale, IN
 St. Peter/St. Matthew, Camden/Delphi Int. Pr. Scott Vana
 St. Stephen, Louisville, KY Interim Pr. Laura Meier
 St. Thomas, Richmond, KY Interim Cindy Geisen
 Third, Louisville, KY Interim Steve Renner
 Trinity, Logansport, IN Int. Pr. Larry Devos
 Trinity English, Fort Wayne, IN Staff Position
 Zion, Hartford City, IN

Searching for Candidates:

Bethel, Gary, IN Int. Pr. David Norland
 Calvary, Angola, IN Int. Pr. Ken Witt
 Calvary, Bluffton, IN Int. Pr. Gene Kinney
 Faith, Logansport, IN Sem. Matt Knopf
 Gethsemane, Indianapolis, IN Int. Pr. David Furuness
 Hopeful, Florence, KY Staff Position
 Messiah, Brownsburg, IN Int. Pr. Donn Abdon
 Resurrection, Madison, IN Int. Pr. Dennis Zimmerman
 St. John, Otwell, IN Int. Pr. John Stacy
 St. Paul, Milan, IN Int. Pr. Ron Haseley
 St. Paul, Smyrna
 Zion, Pershing, IN
 Zion, Sunman, IN

Interviewing and Extending Calls:

Faith, Lexington, KY Staff Position
 First, Attica, IN
 Emmanuel, Merrillville, IN Mr. Rob Saler
 Messiah, Fort Wayne, IN Staff Position
 St. John, Lawrenceburg, IN Staff Position
 St. Matthew, Paducah, KY Mr. John Rogers
 Zion, North Manchester, IN Int. Pr. Jeff Hawkins

Calls Accepted in 2009:

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| St. Paul, Michigan City, IN | Pr. Mark Reshan (Jan) |
| St. Mark/Mt. Pleasant, Albion/Kendallville, IN | Pr. Phyllis Smoot (Jan) |
| Antioch, Hoagland, IN | Pr. Kris Madsen (Jan) |
| First, Columbus, IN | Pr. Larry Isbell (Feb) |
| St. John Episcopal, Elkhart, IN | Pr. Terri Peterson (April) |
| Resurrection, Marion, IN | Pr. Marty Hampton (May) |
| Gethsemane, Fort Wayne, IN | Pr. Debra Meuter (May) |
| Come2go, Fort Wayne, IN | Pr. Jesse Christopherson (June) |
| Holy Trinity, Muncie, IN | Pr. Tracy Paschke-Johannes (June) |
| Shiloh, Walton, IN | Pr. Sharon Walker (July) |
| St. Paul, Vincennes, IN | Pr. Nan Dehnke (July) |
| St. John, Dubois, IN | Pr. Mary Poston (July) |
| Corydon Parish, Corydon, IN | Pr. Robyn Kistemaker (August) |
| Redeemer, Bryant, IN | Pr. Bjorn Teichert (Aug) |
| Cross of Christ, Crown Point, IN | Pr. Howard Clevenger (Aug) |
| St. Mark, Evansville, IN | Pr. Don Gray (August) |
| St. Paul's, Frankfort, IN | Pr. Joshua Burkholder (August) |
| Christ the King, South Bend, IN | Pr. Terri Peterson (Aug) |

Sanctus

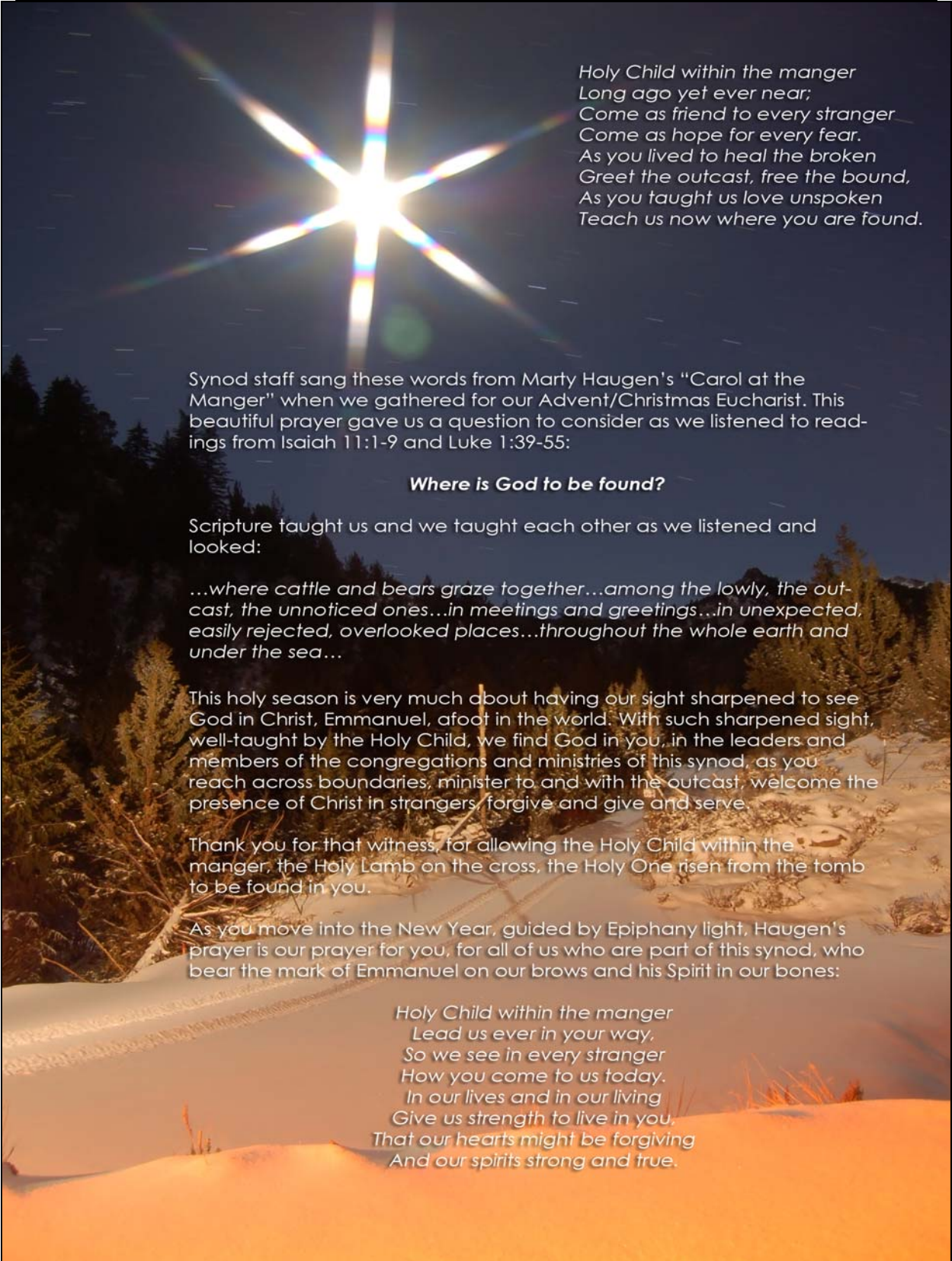
"The Year of Luke"

The winter issue of the Sanctus worship newsletter is now online. Among other articles and information, you will find:

- Eucharistic Prayer suggestions for January and February
- an update on worship resources
- calendar of events
- last in a series of "Psalm Notes"
- more on the ELCA Worship Web site

www.iksynod.org/filestodownload/Sanctus%202009/Sanctus%201209.pdf

Where every member is a missionary, every pastor a mission director, and every congregation a mission center.



*Holy Child within the manger
Long ago yet ever near;
Come as friend to every stranger
Come as hope for every fear.
As you lived to heal the broken
Greet the outcast, free the bound,
As you taught us love unspoken
Teach us now where you are found.*

Synod staff sang these words from Marty Haugen's "Carol at the Manger" when we gathered for our Advent/Christmas Eucharist. This beautiful prayer gave us a question to consider as we listened to readings from Isaiah 11:1-9 and Luke 1:39-55:

Where is God to be found?

Scripture taught us and we taught each other as we listened and looked:

...where cattle and bears graze together...among the lowly, the outcast, the unnoticed ones...in meetings and greetings...in unexpected, easily rejected, overlooked places...throughout the whole earth and under the sea...

This holy season is very much about having our sight sharpened to see God in Christ, Emmanuel, afoot in the world. With such sharpened sight, well-taught by the Holy Child, we find God in you, in the leaders and members of the congregations and ministries of this synod, as you reach across boundaries, minister to and with the outcast, welcome the presence of Christ in strangers, forgive and give and serve.

Thank you for that witness, for allowing the Holy Child within the manger, the Holy Lamb on the cross, the Holy One risen from the tomb to be found in you.

As you move into the New Year, guided by Epiphany light, Haugen's prayer is our prayer for you, for all of us who are part of this synod, who bear the mark of Emmanuel on our brows and his Spirit in our bones:

*Holy Child within the manger
Lead us ever in your way,
So we see in every stranger
How you come to us today.
In our lives and in our living
Give us strength to live in you,
That our hearts might be forgiving
And our spirits strong and true.*