



**NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Marquette, Michigan

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**E-Notes for December 15, 2016**

**The Season of Advent**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

"Stir up your power, Lord Christ and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever." Amen

- Prayer of the Day for Advent IV C

**Bishop's Transition Team Hard at Work!**

The Bishop's Office Transition Team is chaired by Pastor Doug Johnson. Since created by the Synod Council, the Transition Team has had two meetings and is working on two separate but connected projects.

**A synod "self-study" has been approved by the Synod Council.** In February, four persons from the churchwide offices in Chicago will be with us to hear the hopes and dreams of our synod members as we lean into the future. Invitations to all congregations will be sent in late December to

attend interviews on Saturday, February 18th, at two different locations in the synod. The Interview Team will be eager to hear opinions and ideas from our congregational leaders - pastors and laity. Watch your email and regular mail for more details!

**The Transition Team is also working on the process for the election of the bishop.** The Synod Council will be approving the process complete with schedule at its January meeting. Immediately after that meeting, the complete process schedule will be communicated with the synod's congregations and pastors.



## 2017 STANDARD MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATES ANNOUNCED

The Internal Revenue Service has issued its 2017 optional standard mileage rates. Effective January 1st, 2017, the IRS standard rate will be 53.5 cents per mile driven for ministry or business purposes. The new rate is down from 54 cents per mile for 2016 because of lower gas prices. Use of this rate is optional, though it is widely seen by churches as a simple way to determine a standard rate for calculating mileage reimbursement for employees who use their personal vehicle for ministry or business purposes. If your organization uses the IRS rate to calculate mileage reimbursement, be sure to update your systems to account for this change.

Clergy always have the option of claiming deductions based on the actual costs of using a vehicle rather than the standard mileage rates. When a staff member uses the church-owned vehicle for personal use, the value must be added to their W-2 income. Personal use is any use which is not ministry related. Commuting is considered personal use. The individual is

Commuting is considered personal use. The individual is required to log their mileage and provide the church with a statement showing the ministry/business miles driven and the total miles driven.

## **Coming to Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp...**

**January 13-16: Winter Wonderland Retreat**  
**February 17-19: Jr and Sr High Retreat with Agape!**  
**February 28-29: Congregational Leadership Intensive**  
**March 3-4: Financial Peace Retreat**  
**March 17-18: Upper Elementary Retreat**  
**April 28-30: Adoptive Family Retreat**

**For more information about any of these great opportunities, go to [www.fortunelake.org](http://www.fortunelake.org)**

**Always**  
being made  
**New.**

*The Campaign for the ELCA.*

**The Always Being Made New Campaign  
in the Northern Great Lakes Synod**

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A letter has been sent to Pastors, Council Presidents,  
and has been included in the most recent Congregational mailing.  
If your church has not already done so, consider making an offering towards  
next year's grant cycle to benefit congregational efforts to address hunger and  
poverty in their communities.

Your donation must be received in the Synod office by February 28, 2017.

Even if your congregation doesn't have a pantry, a backpack program,  
a clothes closet, a community meal, or some other ministry to address hunger,  
you have the opportunity to make a difference to a sister congregation  
that does.

Please be generous! Funds raised in 2016 will be split evenly between ELCA  
World Hunger and grants made  
available to support local NGLS efforts to address  
hunger and poverty.

Let us join together to do God's work on a scale and  
scope that we could never do within our individual  
congregations.

## **MARKED! EVENTS**

**Sunday, February 26, 2017 at Eden, Munising**  
**Sunday, March 5, 2017 at First, Iron River**

Make plans now to attend  
with your Confirmation Youth,  
and to collect Health Kit and Love Bundle  
supplies in your congregation.

## **LIFTING UP TO GOD IN PRAYER**

+For all who suffer and struggle, especially the people of Aleppo, Syria.

+For all our pastors and other worship leaders this Christmas.

+For those for whom the Christmas season adds to their burden of grief and sadness. May they be comforted.

+For our nation as we transition to new leadership, for President Barack Obama and President-elect Donald Trump.

+We give thanks for the presence of Christ among us and in us. May we bear that presence to neighbors and friends and invite others into a relationship with Jesus and be blessed by the community of faith.

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## **LOOKING AHEAD**

### **Congregational Leaders Intensive**

**February 24-25, 2017**

**at Fortune Lake Camp**



## Crystal Falls, MI

**Effective leadership is important!  
Be equipped, learn new skills, deepen  
your understanding of what effective  
congregational leadership looks like.**

**Featuring Mike Rehak with tools to  
enrich your ability to lead.**

**Request a Thrivent Action Grant to  
help with expenses.**

Check out [www.prayfaithfully.org](http://www.prayfaithfully.org)  
for weekly **"Breath Prayer"**  
and **Daily Devotions**.  
The synod website is [www.nglsynod.org](http://www.nglsynod.org)

## Lutheran Men in Mission's Triennial Gathering



**BG**

**BOLD GATHERING**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
July 21-23, 2017

- It's a gathering for men of all ages. Start inviting and recruiting guys and young men to attend with you.
- Experience workshops, worship, speakers, service projects, networking, music and more.

• The Lutheran Men in Mission Assembly is July 20-21.  
• Watch for details and registration at [BoldGathering.com](http://BoldGathering.com).  
See you in Minneapolis!

What's on your schedule for July 2017? We're hoping it will include the Lutheran Men in Mission's (LLM) Triennial Gathering. It will be July 21-23, 2017 in Minneapolis. The **BOLD GATHERING** is a weekend for men to come together to learn, to worship, to network, and be equipped to **BOLDLY** live out their faith!

This is the first time the Gathering has been held in the Midwest since the 90's. Please share this information with the men and pastor(s) in your congregations.

Registration for the **BOLD GATHERING** is open. Details can be found at this link: [Bold Gathering Website w/ Info and Registration](#)

Contact Lon Buss, SCSW LMM Task Force Leader at 608-516-7875 if you have questions.

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