

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

[npls@nplsynod.org](mailto:npls@nplsynod.org)

**E-Notes for [December 31, 2014](#)**

**The Season of Christmas**

**“QUOTE OF THE DAY”**

“Dear Father, give us our daily bread, good seasons, and health. Protect us from war, disease, and drought. If you would tempt me a bit by withholding your blessings for a while, then your will be done.

If my time is up and my hour has come, deliver me from all evil. If not, give me strength and patience. Amen.”

-Martin Luther

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*E-Notes* is a twice monthly electronic newsletter  
from the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# REFLECTING ON TANZANIA

Along with the bishop, three pastors visited the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania in November and December. Pastor D.J. Rasner writes of his experience in Tanzania with the people of

## Temeke Church—the companion congregation of Gloria Dei in Hancock:

“Since returning from Tanzania, I have been asked by a number of people, “How was your trip?” I am struck by how one simple question can be so difficult to answer. How was my trip? Words are inadequate. My pictures fall short. How was my trip? I cannot tell you how it was. It is just as difficult to answer that question as it was when I returned from my first trip to Tanzania. There is much that I experienced during my time in Tanzania that I believe every western Christian needs to experience. I went to Tanzania to learn and to build relationships. I was not there to evangelize, proselytize, fix, or otherwise impose my western view of the faith we share, nor my western view of the world and the church’s role within it. I was there to learn, and boy did I learn. I certainly learned about the people and culture of Tanzania, but more than that I learned a great deal about myself. I learned about hospitality and how poorly I fail at showing it. I learned about time and how enslaved I

am to it. I learned about worship and how disengaged I have been with it. I learned about persecution and how sheltered I have been from it. I learned about contentment and how easily I have lost it. I learned about joy and how far I have been from it. Yes, I learned a bit about myself while I was in Tanzania. How was my trip? I'll ask you the same question when you return.”

More about this inspirational experience later!

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Coming [February 8-9, 2015](#) at Fortune Lake  
Lutheran Camp

# **The Theological Conference for Rostered Leaders:**

**Featuring our Keynote Speaker, Bishop  
Craig Satterlee,**

former professor at Lutheran School of  
Theology, Chicago and  
current bishop of the Northwest Lower  
Michigan Synod.

**Synod Assembly will be**  
**at Finlandia University**  
**in Hancock**

**Friday to Sunday May**  
**15-17, 2015**

THE “AUDIT TIME” OF

# YEAR—FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Congregation Council is responsible for protecting the assets of our congregations. The Congregational Council is responsible for support, training and oversight of those managing finances. Excellent financial practices protect the treasurer and allow him or her to work as a trusted person in the church. We have good financial controls so that our people have confidence in those responsible for the finances.

There are several resources available for those given the responsibility of handling finances in the congregation. Call or email the synod office for an audit guide to be sent to you by email. **The ELCA website ([www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)) has a wealth of information available for church treasurers, financial secretaries, and finance and audit committees. These include a Financial and Accounting Guide for Congregations, Handling Financial Matters, and a Congregational Audit Guide. These can be found on the website through the Office of the Treasurer – Financial – Resources. Please use these documents!**

Even in small congregations where the number of members with financial work experience may be limited, it is possible to follow the guidelines for handling cash funds. For example, simple training procedures could be done to teach three or four members how to count the offering. **It is important to note that no one person should be responsible – or allowed – to handle the congregation’s cash at any point. This is not only for the protection of the congregation, but also for the financial person required to handle the funds. We need do everything possible**

**to protect their reputation as well.**

If your congregations would like assistance in “best practices” or even a workshop on this matter please call us at the synod office. We would make every effort to assist you! Thank you for your ministry in the financial life of your congregation. May we all take seriously the need for fiscal responsibility and provide the proper support, training and oversight necessary to honor God with our gifts. This is important work!

## **A & C Reports**

Starting [January 7, 2015](#), A&C Reports for congregations will be accessible on the ELCA website.

Contact the synod office by phone ([906/228-2300](#)) or email [npls@nglsynod.org](mailto:npls@nglsynod.org) to get your password. Pastor Jim Duehring is the synod’s statistician so if you need help or clarification, please contact him at [906/249-3122](#).

## **MILEAGE NEWS FROM THE I.R.S. -- 2015**

“The Internal Revenue Service issued the 2015 optional standard

mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes. Beginning [on Jan. 1, 2015](#), the standard mileage rates for the use of a car, van, pickup or panel truck will be:

[if !supportLists]· [endif]57.5 cents per mile for business miles driven, up from 56 cents in 2014

[if !supportLists]· [endif]23 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, down half a cent from 2014

[if !supportLists]· [endif]14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile, including depreciation, insurance, repairs, tires, maintenance, gas and oil.

The rate for medical and moving purposes is based on the variable costs, such as gas and oil. The charitable rate is set by law.

Taxpayers always have the option of claiming deductions based on the actual costs of using a vehicle rather than the standard mileage rates.”

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**FEBRUARY 2015**

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**BANNER**

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# WORKSHOP

Coming to Bethany Lutheran, Republic [on Saturday, Feb. 21, 2015](#)

(In case of inclement weather, call the Bethany office for alternate date)

**Cost: \$10.00 a person**

Time:	<a href="#">8:30am ET</a> Registration with coffee
<a href="#">8:45am</a>	Welcome
<a href="#">9:00am</a>	Workshop begins
	12:00noon Lunch
<a href="#">2:45pm</a>	Wrap up and good-bye

Bring anything you're currently working on, completed projects for show and tell, and your ideas & measurements for future banners.

**Come with your thoughts, hopes, and ideas:  
Leave with more ideas, a pattern, and plans of action.**

Led by Rev. Chrys (Levesque) Hendrick. Feel free to call her with questions at [906-458-8687](tel:906-458-8687) or email her at [pastorchrish@charter.net](mailto:pastorchrish@charter.net).

Register by [Monday, February 16, 2015](#). Call Bethany, Republic at [906-376-8826](tel:906-376-8826). Pay your \$10 upon arrival. Covers lunch and materials.

**Festival 2015**

**The Festival of Congregational  
Renewal is  
coming October 16 – 17, 2015 at  
Ascension Lutheran, Minocqua, Wi.**

**Plan on meaningful worship,  
interesting workshops,  
riveting discussion,  
and a boatload of ideas to bring  
back to your congregations.  
Mark your calendars now to avoid  
future conflicts.**

Looking for a book to read about the church  
today? Feel free to check out

***“The Agile Church: Spirit-led***

# *Innovation in an Uncertain Age”*

by Dwight J. Zscheile

## **Treasurers and Bookkeepers: Two Important Dates**

**January 12, 2015**: Last day for checks to arrive in Synod Office so that 2014 benevolence gifts can be credited for 2014 giving.

**February 10, 2015**: Last day for checks to arrive in Synod Office so that January 2015 giving can be credited to the Synod 2014 fiscal year.

**Nominations wanted**

for voting members  
to attend the

**Churchwide Assembly in 2016**

**August 8-13, 2016** in New Orleans,  
Louisiana

Nominees will be considered and elected at  
the **May 15-17, 2015** NGLS Assembly  
at Finlandia University.

Call the Synod Office for application  
information.

We will elect 2 clergy and 4 laity.

No more than one can be elected from any  
single congregation.

Nomination forms available at  
**[www.nglsynod.org](http://www.nglsynod.org)**.

# Matthew 28 in Action Retreat

Coming January 30 – 31, 2015, Friday – Saturday

at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp.

Cost will be **\$50 per team** for lodging, meals, and program.

Come to this retreat with a team of 4-6 congregation members and your pastor.

Register by calling the Synod Office at 906-228-2300 by Monday, January 26, 2015.

Sponsored by the Transformational Ministry Team, this retreat will give church teams a taste of the possibilities for transformation and renewal available through a variety of resources, activities, Bible Study, prayer, discernment, ministry efforts and more.

Come and find out what can happen in your church and begin the journey of discovery of what God is up to in and through your congregation.

## **!!! MORE QUARTERS !!!**

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**Every year a Quarter Offering is taken at Synod Assembly for World Hunger.**

**HOW ARE YOU HELPING?**

**This year our goal is 100% participation.**

**Even with not every church giving, we raise more than \$10,000 every year.**

**Imagine what we could do if every congregation of the synod participates!**

**Start collecting loose change NOW.**

**Put a jar out, a basket, a piggy bank, and  
let the coins pile up.**

**Let's make an intentional effort to let  
our loose change make a difference.**

**Synod Assembly will be at  
Finlandia University in Hancock  
May 15-17, 2015**

**CONFIRMATION YOUTH:  
2015**

**MARKED!**

**4:00 – 7:00pm local time.**



Sunday, March

1: Prince of Peace,  
Harvey

Sunday, March

8: Zion, Ironwood

Sunday, March

15: Northland Village,  
Marinette

**Youth are invited to bring a baby picture of themselves.**

MARKED! is a Synod sponsored event for all NGLS Confirmation Students. Every congregation is asked to attend a MARKED! event at least once every two years, every year

as distance allows. Pastors and leaders bring their Confirmation youth for an afternoon of service, learning, music, and fun. **Supper is included in this FREE event.**

Like last year, every NGLS congregation will be asked to participate by collecting items. This year it will be all about BABIES! Baby kits for LWR and Baby Bundles for shelters and food shelves will be assembled. Your congregation will receive a letter soon detailing how many of each item we need from your church. Any questions, please call the Synod Office.

# Rise Up Together: Detroit 2015

Plans are well underway for the Youth  
Gathering in Detroit

**July 15-19, 2015.**

Your church should have received a poster and a DVD. Please use these materials to generate enthusiasm and commitment among your leaders and young people.

Some dates to remember:

**TODAY:** Registration soft opening. Leaders may enter data.

**October 15:** Website goes live. Primary leaders can submit registrations.

**January 15, 2015:** Registration fee increases \$50, from \$325 to \$375.

Places to find more information:

[www.gatheringleaks.com](http://www.gatheringleaks.com)

[www.elca.org/gathering](http://www.elca.org/gathering)

**Facebook page ELCA Youth Gathering**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=28>

[5650866539](tel:5650866539).

If your church is interested in riding a Synod Bus to the Gathering (leave on Tuesday, [July 14](#), return Sunday, [July 19, 2015](#)) please call the Synod Office at [906-228-2300](tel:906-228-2300) or email Rev. Katherine Finegan at [kfinegan@nglsynod.org](mailto:kfinegan@nglsynod.org). She is the NGLS Gathering Synod Coordinator and Synod Day Director. If she doesn't know the answer to your question, she'll direct you to someone who will. The cost of the bus will be split between those who ride it. The Synod will provide T-shirts for all NGLS participants for our Synod Day. It's all very exciting!!! Don't miss this incredible opportunity for a faith-deepening, group building, justice proclaiming, fellowship gushing and love overflowing event!

[Start saving for your congregation's  
trip to the  
2015 Youth Gathering](#)

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)

**Go to “The Northern Great Lakes  
Synod” page  
and “like” us.** 😊

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# TRANSITIONS

+**Pastor LaVonne Stephenson** has moved to New Richmond, Wisconsin to be with family. Pastor Stephenson spent 25 years in the Northern Great

Lakes Synod. After the death of her husband George earlier this year, Pastor LaVonne is now seeking ministry opportunities in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

+Congratulations to **Pastor Tom Otis** from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod who has accepted the Call to serve as pastor at **First Lutheran in Gladstone**. He begins his work in our midst in February.

## LIFTING UP TO GOD I N PRAYER

\*For those who travel in this season. For those on the roads or in the air. For those who are cold and alone. For those who despair. Lord have mercy!

\*We offer prayers of thanksgiving for the relationship that exists between our synod and the people of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Be with us O God as we walk together into our ministries serving you.

\*For our pastors and congregational presidents as they lead our churches into a new year.

\*For those congregations in the call process. For the candidates being considered in our synod's congregations. Come Holy Spirit!

\*For Soren Schmidt as he begins an Internship at the Northern Lights Parish. For senior seminarians Ann Gonyea and Tera (Kossow) Lowe as they are entering the assignment process for call. For all those discerning a call to ministry in Christ's church.

**+Thomas A. Skrenes, Bishop**

