



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Spring 2013

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!"
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On Jan. 1, 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was born. As you gather for your synod assembly, may our 25th anniversary year become the occasion to look back with gratitude to God and look to the future with hope in Christ. Our anniversary theme, "Always being made new," is God's promise in Christ Jesus.

How would you describe the past 25 years of life and service together as the ELCA? These words come to mind:

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| Continuity | We are a church deeply rooted in the faith that is shared with every generation. Our faith is the Holy Spirit's work through the gospel. It is formed and nourished in worship, strengthened through prayer and study, lived out in our varied daily callings and is often tested. We are a church rooted in Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, tradition and in the rich histories of congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. |
| Change | <p>How can we begin to summarize the pace of change these past 25 years? The capacity to be connected through technology is mind-boggling. The tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, gave us a sense of vulnerability and fear. The U.S. religious landscape is dominated by religious pluralism, the growth of "nones" – people with no religious affiliation – and perspectives on social, economic and political issues that are passionate and often polarizing.</p> <p>As the ELCA, we have grown in multiple ways and we continue to be transformed by the global body of Christ. We have six full communion partner churches and have adopted 11 social statements. The actions of the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly on human sexuality brought joy and new possibilities for ministry for some and caused painful conflicts and separation for others. What began as a five-year initiative designed to encourage members, congregations and synods to become fluent in the language of Scripture, continues today as we are a "Book of Faith" church. We have created a constellation of worship resources with "Evangelical Lutheran Worship" as our core resource, accompanied by "Prayer Book for</p> |

Armed Services,” “Libro de Liturgia y Cántico,” “This Far by Faith” and the “Chinese Lutheran Book of Worship.”

Challenges

There are challenges before us that could cause us to turn inward and become preoccupied with the future of the various parts of the ELCA. Among these are loss of baptized membership; congregations with decreasing resources; ELCA membership that is 95 percent white and where the median age of an ELCA member is about 16 years older than the U.S. population; and financial challenges facing ELCA-related ministries, institutions and agencies, including our seminaries. While these challenges are serious, within them we also find hope as they call us to renewed commitment to work together with imagination, passion and courage.

Commitments

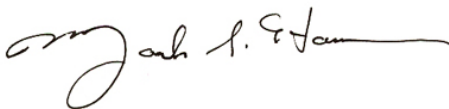
Anniversaries are wonderful opportunities to renew our commitments to one another as we proclaim Christ and engage in God’s mission for the life of the world. Together, let us be a church that:

- Supports all the baptized, as we live out our varied callings to be disciples of Jesus Christ in our daily lives;
- Serves the gospel – through vibrant new and renewed congregations;
- Gives a clear evangelical Lutheran witness to the gospel, building upon the strong foundation of the ongoing Lutheran Reformation;
- Prepares wise, courageous, imaginative and diverse evangelical leaders to serve in church and society;
- Deepens and extends our global and ecumenical partnerships as we serve God’s mission of restoring community and reconciling relationships;
- Welcomes all with radical hospitality, while confronting the barriers of attitudes and action that exclude people from full participation in church and society; and
- Grows generous and faithful stewards of God’s abundant gifts.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God’s grace. For us, this faith comes through the good news of Jesus Christ and gives us the freedom to boldly participate in God’s work in the world for our next 25 years together.

Thank you for your partnership, gifts and ministry in proclaiming God’s reconciliation in Christ. May the Holy Spirit bless you as we live and serve together, trusting in God’s baptismal promises.

In God’s grace,



Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop



Bishop's 2013 Annual Report to the South Dakota Synod

The South Dakota Synod has had a wonderful year since we last met. Let me share some of the highlights.

We have been blessed by eleven seminarians being called to serve in our Synod. In a five-month period we had eleven ordinations for those pastors who had been invited into new leadership roles across South Dakota. I give thanks for the fine work of Susan Marone, AIM as she guided all of our seminarians and congregations throughout the call process. We had over 30 rostered leaders attend an energized First Call Retreat this past February at Joy Ranch. The energy and passion for ministry that are in these new rostered leaders is a gift to our Synod. This year we received three seminarians in the spring draft and two of those three have received calls as I write this. We are receiving a fourth seminarian from another Synod who we pray will be called to serve in South Dakota.

A year ago six of our largest churches were without senior pastors and today five of those six have called pastors to serve them. We have welcomed a total of seven pastors from across the church to come and serve in congregations across South Dakota.

For the first time since 2009 we experienced an increase in Mission Support. We ended our fiscal year with more mission support than in 2011. Your statements of support for 2013 were 4.8% higher than 2012, and the Mission Support that has come in to date is on track for meeting that higher goal. Thank you for your generosity in our shared ministry.

The highlight for me in 2012 was our ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Our teenagers had been invited by the Mayor and the people of New Orleans to return for a second Youth Gathering after our Gathering in 2009. For the first time ever, our young people were housed together in one hotel. They had five days to get to know one another, worship, work and play together. We were blessed by solid Lutheran preaching at our evening gatherings and by opportunities to serve the people of New Orleans. For me personally, the worship service that all 1400 of our South Dakotans attended on the opening day was an amazing experience. What a delight to worship together as we started our time in New Orleans!

By the time we gather in Assembly, we will have celebrated two new congregations being born in our Synod. Woyotan in Rapid City officially organized on April 14th of this year and WestSide Lutheran in Sioux Falls will do the same on May 19th. Both congregations have been blessed with outstanding leadership as they have become congregations of the ELCA. Pastor Bill Tesch our DEM has provided wise counsel and guidance through the years as these communities of faith have come together. Pastor David Piper and Jonathan Old Horse (a TEEM candidate) have done very fine work in finishing the organizing and development work at Woyotan and moving this community into becoming a congregation. At WestSide Lutheran, Pat and Roe Eidsness have been a blessing as this new community of faith has been gathered together and organized. Throughout this process, both communities have been supported and nurtured financially, spiritually and with shared leadership, from Churchwide, the Synod and from neighboring

Congregations. While these new congregations will continue to need our generous support, this step means that they are able to provide the leadership to gather the resources and guide the ministry. I give thanks for the ministries that have come together from this shared effort.

St James Lutheran in Leola and First English in Lennox have left the roster of the ELCA. St James has completed the needed work to become an independent congregation and their departure was granted by the South Dakota Synod Council. First English voted twice to disaffiliate with the ELCA and has since joined the NALC. Pastor Hugh Brewer who is serving First English refused to resign from the roster of the ELCA and I removed him from the roster for schismatic behavior.

I continue to thoroughly enjoy my week at Outlaw Ranch having opportunity to teach with the Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen and spend time with my wife and all our grandchildren. I look forward to doing both those things again this summer. In January of this year I had an article in "Word and World", entitled "80,000 Seeds: Rural Families in the Midst of Change" (tinyurl.com/wordandworld-zellmer). I wrote about the significant impact that changes in farming practice have had on our families, congregations and communities in South Dakota.

I want you all to know what a gift the people on the Synod staff are to you and me. They are dedicated, creative and hardworking as together we serve the people of the South Dakota Synod. Each one of our Synod staff has been a delight to work with and I give thanks for the gifts and passion that they bring to their service.

In our family we have welcomed a fifth grandchild, Christopher Nath. Pastor Chris Beasler and the good people of Trinity Lutheran in Mitchell were kind enough to let me have the honor and delight of baptizing my grandson. We are looking forward to welcoming a sixth grandchild as our youngest daughter is expecting in just a few days. I continue to give thanks for the love and support of my wife LaDonna, our four children, and their spouses and grandchildren. I could not fulfill this call without them.

Thank you for the privilege to serve as your bishop and for our shared ministry in Jesus name.



Rev. David B. Zellmer
Bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA

CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES and ROSTER CHANGES

Anniversaries and Dedications

50th Anniversary

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Huron
Messiah Lutheran Church, Flandreau
Faith Lutheran Church, New Effington

75th Anniversary

First Lutheran Church, Wakonda

100th Anniversary

American Lutheran Church, Bison
Indian Creek Lutheran Church, Meadow
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Corsica
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Elk Point
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Kimball

125th Anniversary

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bryant
Goodhue Lutheran Church, Florence
First Lutheran Church, Mitchell

150th Anniversary

St Paul Lutheran Church, Elk Point

Congregations Left ELCA

7/14/12	Vale Lutheran, Vale
2/24/13	First English Lutheran, Lennox

Commissioning

2/3/13	Claire Meyer, AIM
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Disability

3/22/13	Rev. Robin Wanner-Schaunaman
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Installations

6/8/12	Rev. Jeanette, Clark, Sioux Falls, Pueblo de Dios
7/1/12	Rev. Steven Martens, Vermillion, Dalesburg Lutheran

8/5/12	Rev. Anthony Haglund, Sioux Falls, Holy Cross Lutheran
8/12/12	Rev. Kevin Bergeson, Aberdeen, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran
9/2/12	Rev. Cassandra Lamb, Rapid City, South Canyon Lutheran
9/9/12	Rev. Kent Stillson, Watertown, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
9/16/12	Rev. Nicholas Collins, Sioux Falls, Hope Lutheran
9/23/12	Rev. Jacquelyn Braun, Salem, Christ Lutheran
9/23/12	Rev. Jessica Daum, Tea, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran
9/23/12	Rev. Wayne Gallipo, Tea, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran
9/23/12	Rev. Andrew Nelson, Vermillion, University of South Dakota
9/30/12	Rev. Elizabeth Hoium, Sioux Falls, Peace Lutheran
9/30/12	Rev. Amy Martinell, Sioux Falls, Augustana Lutheran
11/18/12	Rev. James Steen, Renner, Renner Lutheran
12/2/12	Rev. Denise Broveak, Humboldt, St Paul Lutheran
12/9/12	Rev. Scott Hackler, Brandon, Brandon Lutheran
12/23/12	Rev. Katie Jerabek, Huron, Our Savior's Lutheran
2/3/13	Claire Meyer, AIM, Sinai, Sinai Lutheran
3/17/13	Rev. Stephan Sandness, Spearfish, Our Savior's Lutheran
4/21/13	Rev. Erika Lehmann, Dimock, St John Lutheran
5/5/13	Rev. Chris Anderson, Aberdeen, Scandinavia Lutheran
6/2/13	Rev. Marcia Brennan, Newell, First Lutheran

Leave from Call

8/1/12	Rev. Ronald Brugger
9/1/12	Rev. Karen Matuska
9/3/12	Rev. Aaron Matson
10/1/12	Mary Hendricks Wilkens, AIM
12/31/12	Rev. Glen Enright
3/1/13	Rev. Daryl Schubert

Necrology

9/18/12	Rev. Gerald Koehler
11/13/12	Rev. Dale Jenson

Ordinations

5/22/12	Rev. Jeanette Clark
6/29/12	Rev. Nicholas Collins
7/8/12	Rev. Cassandra Lamb
7/13/12	Rev. Jacquelyn Braun
7/25/12	Rev. Elizabeth Hoium
8/18/12	Rev. Amy Martinell
9/09/12	Rev. Trey Daum
9/16/12	Rev. Jessica Daum
9/29/12	Rev. Denise Broveak
9/30/12	Rev. Amber Marten Bergeson
10/13/12	Rev. Katie Jerabek

Removed from Roster

3/22/13 Rev. Hugh Brewer
3/22/13 Rev. Curtis Matson

Retired

7/1/12 Rev. Donald Clifford
7/1/12 Rev. Gary Pabst
7/31/12 Rev. David Astrup
8/1/12 Rev. Stephen Lauricella
10/1/12 Rev. Dennis Hansen
12/1/12 Rev. Arthur Weitschat
1/1/13 Rev. Dr. Karen Soli

Transferred Into South Dakota

5/27/12 Rev. Michael Mortvedt, 2E Rocky Mountain
8/12/12 Rev. Kevin Bergeson, 3G Minneapolis Area
9/23/12 Rev. Andrew Nelson, 3I SE Minnesota
11/18/12 Rev. James Steen, 5E W Iowa
12/9/12 Rev. Scott Hackler, 5A Metro Chicago
3/17/13 Rev. Stephan Sandness, 5L La Crosse Area
5/19/13 Rev. Marcia Brennan, 2A Sierra Pacific

Transferred Out of South Dakota

5/1/12 Rev. Leonard Halvorson, 5E Western Iowa
6/1/12 Rev. Philip Larsen, 3D Northwestern MN
6/1/12 Rev. Jerry Nuernberger, 8B SW Pennsylvania
10/1/12 Rev. Timothy Robertson, 5A Metro Chicago
10/1/12 Rev. Kathleen Soldwisch, 3F Southwestern MN
12/15/12 Rev. Jason Burggraff, 3I Southeastern MN
1/15/13 Rev. Patricia Lehrer, 4F TX-LA Gulf Coast
1/21/13 Rev. Amy Eisenmann, 3B E North Dakota
3/1/13 Rev. David Winterfeldt, 3F Southwestern MN
3/19/13 Rev. John Degelau, 3H Saint Paul Area
3/19/13 Rev. Leslie Svendsen, 3G Minneapolis Area

Annual Report of Pastor Bill Tesch to the 2013 South Dakota Synod Assembly

It has been a joy to walk with you as we give expression to the Gospel of Jesus as Christians living in the 21st century. By far the most rewarding part of my work is the time I get to spend in Congregations, both our newest ones and those long-established, discerning together how God is calling us to be the church in these rapidly changing times. Below, I have provided a brief summary of my work for the preceding twelve months, and conclude with some reflections about our church.

Renewal of Congregations: “*Renewal*” in this context refers a process by which a congregation commits itself to a specific pathway leading to (1) a restoration of healthy functioning among leadership, (2) a deepened relationship with the neighbor whom God has called the congregation to serve, (3) an understanding of God’s purpose for the congregation, (4) the identification of the gifts that God has given for ministry, and (5) clear goals for living out God’s purpose. Congregations that commit to these processes find their faith deepened, and their confidence for reaching out enhanced. Most congregations will also show growth in worship attendance, giving, and engagement with the ministry beyond Sunday morning. The Evangelical Outreach Committee of the South Dakota synod set a goal that every congregation be engaged in a process of intentional renewal every seven years. A related goal is that at any one time, we would have 30 congregations in a renewal process. We can support four different processes for renewal: “Vibrant Faith in South Dakota,” “Transformational Ministry,” “Natural Church Development,” and a modified version of Transformational Ministry called “Listening for a Purpose.” We have 27 Congregations recently engaged in one of these processes:

- Vibrant Faith: 18 Congregations (all receive small grants from Synod and Church Wide)
- Transformational Ministry: 5 Congregations (2 receiving significant partnership support)
- Listening for a Purpose: 2 Congregations
- Natural Church Development: 2 Congregations

New Congregations: Two new congregations will be organized and officially recognized as new congregations of the ELCA: Woyatan Lutheran Church (organized on April 14), and WestSide Lutheran (organized on May 19). This step means that they are able to provide leadership and direction to their congregation through a locally elected council. It transfers their overall direction and leadership from me, the Bishop and the Synod Council to the local people. This is an important step, but it does NOT mean that the congregations will no longer need financial support from partner congregations, synod or churchwide. Our other new starts include: Community of Hope in Aberdeen (focused on reaching and serving with young adults), First Lutheran African Ministry in Sioux Falls (comprised primarily of Liberian and other West African immigrants), Pueblo de Dios in Sioux Falls (comprised of Latino immigrants), and the newest, the Young Adult Community at Rosebud.

Stewardship and Mission Support: The South Dakota Synod is blessed to have 20 trained “Steward Leaders,” 8 of whom are currently assisting congregations besides their own with their stewardship ministry. Our fall “Burgers with the Bishop” in which we focus on Mission Support and provide resources for interpreting the mission of our ELCA has been well received and the packets well utilized. I also organize Council Visits with the goals of deepening relationships between Synod Council and congregations and expressing gratitude for the mission support that congregations share. The council is visiting 1/3 of our congregations each year, so that every congregation is visited once every three years. Each year I have the joy of walking with several congregations through their annual stewardship response campaign, or I get to assist several more by connecting them with Steward Leaders or retired pastors who are trained to assist them. What a joy to see people responding to the Gospel with growing generosity! The annual “Big Read” is the product of our Stewardship/Mission Support Table: which is a team of Steward Leaders who to develop strategies for increasing stewardship and mission support.

Evangelical Outreach and Multicultural Committees: This is the first full year of the existence of these committees as full constitutional committees of the synod. They've each met 4 times and will become the focal point for leadership and oversight of all synodical missional and multi-ethnic ministries. It will take time for these new committees to get to their full potential, and they are already doing fine work.

Other Synodical Work: From time to time, as directed by the Bishop, I have the opportunity to assist congregations moving through times of transition or conflict. People are often surprised to learn that I find this work very rewarding. These are the times when I get to see the amazing resilience of our congregations. At no time is the Holy Spirit's work more evident than when congregations acknowledge their need for and begin to seek God's healing.

Sabbatical: The Bishop and Synod Council and the leadership at the Congregation and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA have graciously granted me a sabbatical. I will be gone June 15 – September 15. Most of my sabbatical will be spent seeking personal refreshment and renewal in God's creation and with friends and family. I will undertake one small project: research and written report/presentation on the function and importance of the "founding narrative" in the life of a congregation, especially congregations formed in the last 1-10 years. My hypothesis is that having a great story of how and why our congregation came to be will contribute greatly to the health of a new congregation.

Closing Reflections: This is the most exciting time to be the church! We still can't see exactly what the church of the 21st century will look, but these features are already evident:

- It will be smaller – and that's not bad! I have come to see the decreasing size of the church in North America as something God is doing. Smaller communities are evolving and emerging, and they are more about following Jesus than they are about "keeping this church going."
- The newly emerging church is more diverse, reflecting the fuller tapestry of God's children.
- The newly emerging church is focused: often on a particular need for reconciliation or on ministry with a particular audience.
- The newly emerging church is leveraging a convergence of philosophy, science and technology to witness to the Gospel in ways that are authentic and compelling for people of this age.
- The newly emerging church will not be clergy-centered. No longer will/can we depend on highly educated professionals to carry out the majority of the church's ministry. The office of Word and Sacrament does not also have to be the office of the chief executive of the congregation, and the smaller, more focused, more diverse church will increasingly force us to re-define how that office functions in the life of God's people.

Thank you again for your support and partnership. This work gets better each year. God has given us to each other for the sake of God's mission. What a blessing!

Respectfully,



Pastor Bill Tesch, DEM, Associate to the Bishop

Synod Assembly Report, June 2013
Submitted by Susan Marone, Associate to Bishop Zellmer

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

It continues to be an honor and great privilege to be part of the SD Synod Staff! I feel very blessed to be part of a talented, gifted and supportive team of colleagues, not only on the Synod Staff but also the many fine rostered and lay leaders we have in our synod!

I am extremely grateful for the sabbatical I received in August 15-November 15th. I was able to attend and to complete my training for being a trainer for Emotional Intelligence, to travel to visit friends and family, and to spend time rejuvenating. I came back to ministry with a renewed sense of call and with new ideas for working with committees and congregations. I cannot say, "thank you" enough for this great gift! (If you don't believe me, just ask my husband!)

Returning from sabbatical was filled with congregational visits and conducting Parish Studies for congregations with Rostered Leader vacancies. In January, the Executive Staff traveled around the state with Chilli with the Bishop events.

One of the great joys of this work is working with newly ordained pastors! Newly ordained pastors of the SD Synod include:

Pastor Jeanette Clark
Pastor Nicholas Collins
Pastor Cassandra Lamb
Pastor Jacquelyn Braun
Pastor Elizabeth Hoium
Pastor Amy Martinell
Pastor Jessica Daum
Pastor Trey Daum
Pastor Denise Broveak
Pastor Amber Marten Bergeson
Pastor Katie Jerabek

We welcome the following out-of-state pastors to our synod:

Rev. Kevin Bergeson
Rev. Andrew Nelson
Rev. James Steen
Rev. Scott Hacker
Rev. Stepan Sandness
Rev. Marcia Brennan
Rev. Daniel DeBlock
Rev. Michael Mortvedt
Rev. Frank Phillip

Mobility in the SD Synod has begun to pick up as the economy has gotten better and folks who had hoped to retire can now afford to do so. Several of our larger congregations are now being served by a great group of senior pastors and our First Call folks have been wonderful! I would like to thank Pastor Patrick Hahn for his leadership as Chair of the Support to Ministries Committee, as well as Kristin Ostercamp and Mindy Erhke for their hard work on the much needed revisions to the Compensation Guidelines for our lay and rostered leaders.

I continue to enjoy working with the Candidacy Committee as we accompany 50 candidates in responding to a call to ministry in the ELCA. The annual Candidacy Retreat in April at Shalom Hills Farm in MN, was cancelled due to a winter storm and we missed our time with the candidates. Many “thanks” to Pastor Will Olsen, Lorna Wounded Head, and Chris Christenson, for their exceptional leadership for this committee!

I continue to grow and thrive in my call to synodical ministry and am grateful for my colleagues and the ministry of our team!

Peace,
Susan Marone

South Dakota ELCA Synod Assembly Report, 2013
Pastor Karen Rupp, Director of Native American Ministries

You all continue to bless our Lutheran Lakota Shared Ministry through your continued prayers, words of encouragement, generous hearts and hands. With grateful hearts we receive financial contributions and donations of quilts, new and gently used clothing, disposable diapers, and food and many other items for the community. Thank you!

We are also grateful for connections developed and grown through visitors coming here for cross-cultural learning from diverse geographic, denominational, educational arenas. Groups reserve their time to come and participate in building and strengthening bridges of relationship with the Lakota community and the calendar fills quickly. We are encouraging groups to consider participating through forming “long-distant” bridges, fundraising to provide materials, tools, and finances to pay members of the local community to perform much needed structural improvement projects.

Interest remains for the local Habitat for Humanity to become active once again. A meeting is scheduled at the PRRC in May to take the necessary steps to reform the unit which will provide opportunity to provide additional housing to the community and give us the opportunity to contribute our time and talents to this effort.

Seminary students continue to engage enthusiastically in our January cross-cultural immersion program. It is rewarding to build relationships as they meet their course requirements and then later on reconnect while on internship or first call arranging to bring groups from their congregations or to continue support from a distance. Lutheran Outdoors, Augustana College and SDSU Campus Ministry continue to offer opportunities for our young people as they come for summer programs and alternative spring and/or fall break and invite our young people to come to their campuses and programs.

Word and Sacrament ministry continues at St. John’s Episcopal Church in N. Oglala, Cohen Home, a residential facility for the elderly in Pine Ridge, Makasan Presbyterian Church and Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church. We seek to strengthen healthy ecumenical relationships. We are discerning avenues to provide additional worship opportunities to the community in response to several inquiries received. Once again I’ll attend the spring Dakota Presbytery meeting to share about our ministry at the Pine Ridge Retreat Center.

We are supporting the upcoming Taize event at Red Shirt Table by participating in planning and offering accommodations as we are able. Information about the event is shared at our gatherings and worship events.

We applied once again to be a Horizon Internship site. We haven’t received any information yet as to whether or not an intern has been assigned to our ministry. The Calvin Institute Worship Renewal Grant enabled us to provide support for our ecumenical partners through worship and prayer. We concluded the Calvin Institute Worship Renewal Grant program with a Prayer and Holy Spirit revival at Makasan Presbyterian Church and a story telling presentation the following week.

Young people from the community continue attend our Sanctuary young peoples’ afternoon program where we host youth for play and worship activities. Over 100 local youth visit on a regular basis in age groups 7 and under, 8 and over and teen. Through generous donations from individuals and faith-based groups we provided Christmas gifts to over 250 young people and gift certificates to about 65 families. During the past year we served over 9,600 lunches to the hungry of the community. Thank you, South Canyon Lutheran Church in Rapid City, for continuing to assist with this program by donating food items for the lunch, Sanctuary meals and snacks.

The Multi-cultural committee continues to meet regularly for the work of supporting multi-cultural ministries, nurturing their growth, fostering educational opportunities and building healthy relationships.

Please check our Face Book page, web page and newsletters for continuing updates. I am very grateful to Bishop Zellmer, Synod Council members, Synod Staff, and our ministry partners, for ongoing prayer and financial support. Please know we keep on keeping you all in our prayers.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Karen Rupp

South Dakota Youth Ministry Assembly Report

This year is known as the “after the Youth Gathering Year” in all of the Synods in the ELCA. Last July the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering was held in New Orleans. Our Synod sent 1400 Young Adults and their Advisors’. Each person attending received a bright yellow tee shirt saying “South Dakota for the Saints: 1400 STRONG AND SERVING”. Once again the South Dakota Synod had the most people attending in all the 65 Synods! What a pleasure to serve a Synod that values their Youth and their Faith Development by sending them to participate in the Youth Gathering.

The people who work with Young Adults in the Synod’s congregations still come together on a monthly basis to talk, laugh, and share their “wisdoms” with each other. The Synod’s Youth Ministry Network has become stronger because of these committed people. We have been using the times that we meet together as a continuing education time by discussing the “Practice Discipleship” topics that come from the ELCA’s Continuing Ed. for Youth Workers whose ministry is working with the Young Adults in their communities. I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of this important ministry in the South Dakota Synod.

Suzanne Hansen AIM

SD Synod Youth Ministry Coordinator