



DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST

SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD • EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

300 S. Second St. • Columbus, Ohio 43215

A Message from ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson on the War in Iraq



The following letter was sent by Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson on January 26, 2007 to my attention. I believe his message is important and want to make sure all of our synod leaders have the opportunity to read his message. The letter in this publication was also sent in the Rostered Leaders mailing on Wednesday, January 31, 2007. Please take a few minutes to read Bishop Hanson's letter and consider the questions he poses for our Church.

*Yours in Christ,
Callon W. Holloway, Jr., Bishop*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

I am writing to you out of my deep concern about the war in Iraq. Our country is engaged in a divisive debate about the nature and direction of this war. It is a war that is taking place both within the context of increasing insecurity in the Middle East and in relation to the unacceptable level of violence and violations of human rights in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

As the war in Iraq escalates and the way to a lasting peace seems unclear, how shall we who are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America respond?

Each one of us has, as part of our baptismal vocation, the call to "strive for justice and peace in all the world." Pastors, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers have committed themselves to support other Christians in this calling and to live it themselves. Working for peace is part of our shared work in Christ. What does this mean during this critical moment in the life of our country? What does this mean in the life of the world, especially as we consider this country's military and economic power? Together we need to discern what is a just response that will contribute to an enduring peace.

One of the most significant contributions we can make is to engage in this debate with intentionality, seriousness, and vigor. We must bring the best insights from our faith, our theology, our experience, and our intellect to this challenge, engaging in what will be difficult conversations in our congregations, communities, and with our elected officials.

I earnestly hope that within all the congregations of this church we, the baptized, will be engaged in prayer and moral deliberation, especially in light of the escalation of violence, the growing casualties on all sides in the war in Iraq, and the urgency to seek peace. I look to the leadership of this church to assist congregations in doing so.

We have helpful tools that can inform and assist us in these discussions. I encourage you to read again the ELCA Social Statement "For Peace in God's World" and the Message on "Living in a Time of Terrorism." These are rich resources that offer guidance to us during these critical times.

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Technology Expands Reach of Congregations, Members Sent to Bear Witness

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) we are sent to bear witness, coach, proclaim and partner with one another to be Christ's witnesses. We, like the earliest disciples, have a limited physical reach, as we can only be in one place at a time. However, unlike those who have come before us, we have tools that can extend our virtual reach—crossing space and time.

Technology allows us as Christian witnesses to reach out to those in need when we cannot physically be present. One example is the use of a blog, which is an online journal kept by one or many people as a way to document experiences through text, audio and even video. A blog provides a history of experience, thoughts and events that those not directly involved with the blogger (writer) could otherwise never know.

One example of the use of a blog by a Southern Ohio Synod congregation comes from Pastor Henry Zorn of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Cincinnati. Pastor Zorn and 10 members of his congregation made their third trek to Slidell, Louisiana the week of November 12-18, 2006. To share the joy and exhaustion the group experienced during their trip, a blog was created.

Pastor Zorn wrote upon his return to Cincinnati in November 2006: "The ELCA is still a very visible presence in this part of our country that has a long way to go to restoration. In Louisiana, where the Roman Catholic Church and the Baptists are dominant, people are learning about Lutherans. Our mission is not one of knocking on doors, but rather, is a witness of sharing God's love through tangible acts of kindness. Many people in the Gulf have told us that the Lutherans have been one of the most prominent

groups involved in Katrina relief. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is well organized and will be on the scene for years to come."

This online journal continues to be updated and can be read through a link from the church's website: www.lcresurrection.org. Images of the destruction still encountered can also be viewed through the blog, as can a video.

The screenshot shows a Blogger blog post with the following content:

- Title:** Hurricane Relief Trip Nov. 2006
- Subtitle:** LCR will be on a mission trip to Slidell, LA from Nov 13-17.
- Date:** THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 09, 2006
- Author:** Pastor Zorn - Nov 9
- Quote:** "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." Matthew 10:39
- Main Text:** On Sunday, November 12, ten members of our congregation leave for our third hurricane Katrina relief trip to Slidell, Louisiana. We have received our work assignment. This time we will be working at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Chalmette, right outside of New Orleans. This church was destroyed in hurricane Katrina and they are hoping to have the church restored in time for worship on Thanksgiving this year. We have been told that they received a delivery of several hundred sheets of sheet rock that need to be hung. My back is already sore! Virtually every member of our congregation has come back from our prior relief trips saying that it was an incredibly powerful experience. Experiencing the monumental devastation of others first hand and becoming vulnerable to their grief and suffering has a deep impact on our lives as Christians.
- About Me:** Name: LCR Hurricane Relief Team. List of names: Amy Larsen, Jason Leupen, Scheffie Lindquist, Justin Long, Kathy Meyer, Mark Meyer, Ed Nemann, David Wagner, Cindy Zorn, Pastor Zorn. Link: View my complete profile.
- Previous Posts:** A link to a previous post titled "I Power Blogger".

Resurrection's Slidell, Louisiana blog is a long-lasting documentation and witness of the work being done by Lutherans in the devastated area. It may prompt other members of the church to join in on the next trip to Slidell or propose another service project, allowing others to rally together for the good of others.

A blog or other Internet technology may be the only exposure someone surfing the web may

have to Christ and the mission we have all been sent to accomplish. Pr. Bruce Kramer, of Hope Lutheran in Springfield, shared a story about a young couple in his congregation who placed information about Hope on MySpace, a website which allows people to post information about themselves, participate in blogs, forums, email, groups and connect with old and new friends. "I thanked them (the couple) although I know I carefully/pastorally expressed some concerns that I'm less than enthusiastic about MySpace. I told them that I had set up an account myself a few months earlier, but have serious concerns about materials/subject matter that's a part of the MySpace culture. That said, Where did Jesus walk? Who did He talk with? So, although I am less than enthusiastic because of MySpace content, I must admit to being open to the Spirit's guidance in this area . . . and I must acknowledge that one middle age couple has begun coming, partly at least, because of the MySpace page." Hope's "space" on MySpace can be found at www.myspace.com/hope_on_damascus.

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A Message From Bishop Hanson *Continued from page 1*

As policy makers discuss how best to conclude the U.S. military presence in Iraq, I believe that there are a number of aspects related to our involvement that compel our response:

- How do we respond to reality of terrorism without letting terrorism become the all-consuming reality?
- How can we reaffirm our witness that all people are created by God and share a unity far deeper than our divisions?
- How can we stay informed about the cost and casualties of this war for all affected, including the Iraqis, while continuing our strong and prayerful support for U.S. military, civilian personnel, and their families?
- What time frame and method should be used both to lessen significantly or to end U.S. military presence in Iraq, and to assist the Iraqi government to address the civil conflict through negotiations, conflict resolution, and reconciliation? How can that government's capacity be expanded to promote and preserve human rights, restore order, and promote the rule of law?
- What opportunities do the present circumstances provide to enable the international community -
- through the United Nations and related efforts -- to pursue regional diplomatic initiatives with all governments, including concrete steps that will lead to, rather than jeopardize, peace with justice in the Middle East?

- How has our involvement in the war affected how the U.S. government and we, its citizens, are perceived globally? What have we learned about how we understand ourselves as a country and about how our country lives out its responsibilities in the global arena?
- How can we as Lutherans become better informed about other faith traditions, especially Islam and Judaism? "Windows for Understanding" is an excellent new resource that encourages face-to-face conversations with Muslim and Jewish people in your own communities.

As we discuss the war, I call on each of us to listen to and respect the views of others. At a time when this country's public discourse has become contentious and people often feel powerless, it is a sign of hope for congregations and communities to engage publicly in civil and moral deliberation. Even as the Congress wrestles with its response to the president's new strategy, it is time for us as citizens and members of this church to engage one another. As members of the ELCA we can model our civic responsibility and offer another way to come together with our varied perspectives to discern what we can contribute to the common good and a lasting peace. I encourage all of us to dare to struggle with these issues and to share the results of those discussions with our elected representatives. As our social statement on peace says, in deciding about matters related to war, "we face conflicting moral claims and agonizing dilemmas."

Finally, we must continue to pray for peace, live out our Christian call to be peacemakers, and encourage all those in authority to redouble their efforts to work for peace with justice and the global common good.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Grants Available to Congregations from Southern Ohio Synod and LIRS— March 1, 2007 Deadline

Southern Ohio Synod Lutheran Endowment Fund Grant Availability

The Lutheran Legacy Endowment Committee of the Southern Ohio Synod will award special ministry grants totaling \$10,000 to congregations in the Southern Ohio Synod.

New projects that have special promise for carrying out God's work in the following categories will be considered:

1. Mission: Assisting new or struggling congregations to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ
2. Elderly: Senior ministries, adult day care
3. Children: Those challenged physically, mentally, or by insufficient opportunities

Applications were mailed in early January 2007 to all Rostered Leaders and are due by March 1, 2007.

If you did not receive an application, you can download one from the synod website under "Mission Development" under the "Services to Congregations" tab. You may also contact the synod office at 614.464.3532 to have an application faxed or mailed to you.

Please direct all questions concerning the Southern Ohio Synod Lutheran Endowment Fund Grant to:

Pr. William E. Saunders
614.451.3639
pastor@adventelc.org

LIRS Offers Grants to Lutheran Congregations for Services to Refugees

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), in partnership with Wheat Ridge Ministries, Itasca, Ill., is offering financial assistance to Lutheran churches to encourage the development of new programs and services for immigrants and refugees.

Good Samaritan Grant application deadline is March 1, 2007.

Seed grants up to \$5,000 are available to enable congregations to develop vital support services needed by deserving immigrants and refugees beyond the initial stages of resettlement.

Good Samaritan seed grants will be awarded to congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Applicant congregations will be expected to contribute at least 25% of the project cost, either through cash or in-kind support. Funding priority will be given to projects that demonstrate at least one of the following services to immigrant communities: social ministry projects, joint projects between community members and new residents, public education or advocacy, and leadership development within the ethnic groups served. Grants will not be made to individuals or church agencies, nor will they be made to support refugee reception and placement activities, refugee resettlement programs or projects of evangelism.

The Good Samaritan Fund is comprised of donations from congregations and individuals committed to assisting refugees, asylum seekers or immigrants through the development of local programs by caring congregations.

To read about a few of the 2006 Good Samaritan grant funded programs, please visit St. Marks Lutheran Church by the Narrows (<http://www.smlutheran.org/page.asp?pid=1268>) or St. John's Lutheran Church - Tamil Worship (<http://www.stjohns-wp.org/TAMIL.dsp>) or Grace Lutheran Church (<http://www.gracelcms.org/AfricanImmigrant/about.asp>).

Interested applicants may download the application packet or review grant guidelines at www.lirs.org. For more information on the Good Samaritan grant program, please contact Pam Bloom, LIRS Senior Consultant for Organizational Capacity Building, at 410/230-2875 or pbloom@lirs.org.



Continued from page 2--Technology

Sometimes reaching out to those that need Christ most means walking into areas where we may not be comfortable. Perhaps technology is one of those areas for you. If so, consider venturing into unknown waters with the guidance of your peers and the Spirit. Many of the Southern Ohio Synod congregations have websites and are using other technology to reach out and keep in touch with others. In the next issue of "Dear Friends," a follow up article will be published discussing what some of our congregations, besides those mentioned here, are doing with Internet technology and why.

If you didn't receive or respond to the email message sent in December to Rostered Leaders, please tell us what your congregation is doing in this area. Please contact Susan Barton-Nonno at the Southern Ohio Synod office (sbarton-nonno@southernohiosynod.org) to share your stories.

Your successes and challenges may help inspire another congregation looking for a new way to reach out.

More information about MySpace is featured on below in "Sacred Space on MySpace."

Sacred Space on MySpace

It gets more page views than Google. News Corporation purchased it last year for \$580 million. And it might just be the next big thing for those who work with youth.

It's MySpace, and like other social networking Web sites, it gives users an easy way to post photos, keep a blog and message other users.

Angie Schaffer, youth director of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Waukee, Iowa, recently led a workshop for parents about MySpace.

Schaffer also uses the site to connect with Immanuel's youth. "It's an incredibly quick and efficient way to stay in contact with them and, on top of that, it fits in with their lifestyle," Schaffer said, adding with a laugh that having a MySpace profile "makes them think I'm probably cooler than I actually am."

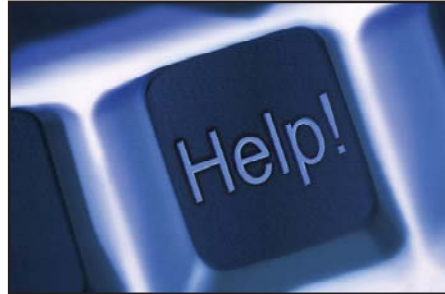
Schaffer sends bulletins through the site about upcoming youth group events and also reads her youth's pages.

"I can send them either a message confidentially to ask how things are going, or I can comment on their page," Schaffer said. "For a lot of them it's more comfortable to communicate with me [through MySpace] rather than in person."

Schaffer cautions both youth and adults that the information they post to MySpace is public and searchable. "You have to be at all times incredibly aware of what you're putting there and what you're saying," she said.

(Sacred space on MySpace. (2007, January). *The Lutheran*, January 2007 Issue.)

Assistance for the Website Woes



Looking to improve, update, or create a website for your congregation? Please email Susan Barton-Nonno, Communications Director at

sbarton-nonno@southernohiosynod.org explaining what kind of assistance you're looking for. The synod Communications Committee is interested in what needs there are in this area. Once the need is established, the committee can work toward offering regional workshops, how-to lists, resource listings and contacts and one-on-one advice.

The Communications Committee meets on All Committee Day, March 10, 2007, where they will begin to evaluate what kind of assistance is needed, where and why. So, don't wait...send your email today!

David Buttrick, Prof Emeritus of Vanderbilt University to Speak at Rostered Leaders Retreat—September 24-26, 2007



David G. Buttrick, Drucilla Moore Buffington Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics, Emeritus of the Vanderbilt University Divinity School, will present "Speaking the Language of Jesus" on September 24-26, 2007 at the Rostered Leaders Retreat at Deer Creek State Park.

Professor Buttrick attended Haverford College and did initial theological education at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He pursued additional graduate study in Systematic Theology at Garrett Biblical Institute and in Contemporary Literature at Northwestern University. He is currently a minister of the United Church of Christ.

Buttrick has spoken at more than 80 colleges and universities, written or edited 17 books, 25 chapters in books and published more than 150 articles and reviews.

He is the author of award-winning books like, *Homiletic* (Fortress) and *Preaching Jesus Christ* (Fortress). His most recent work, *Speaking Conflicts: Stories of a Controversial Jesus* will be published in 2007.

Prof. Buttrick replaces the previously announced speaker who had to withdraw her acceptance of our invitation. His topic, although different from that previously disclosed for the other guest presenter, should add tremendous value to our annual retreat.

More information regarding the Rostered Leaders Retreat will be disseminated at a later date.

Congregations in Transition

In Study:

First, Dayton
Grace, Jackson Center
North Community, Columbus
St. John, Greenville
St. Luke, Zanesville
St. Mathew, Lockbourne (Part Time)
Trinity, Columbus
UALC (Associate)

Interviewing:

Ascension, Columbus
First English, Ashville
Good Hope, Glenford
Good Shepherd, West Milton
Grace, Eaton
Lord of Life, West Chester
Prince of Peace, Loveland (Assistant)
St. Andrew, Enon

St. John, Stovertown
St. Paul, Cincinnati
St. Paul, Glenford
Trinity, Mt. Healthy (Cincinnati)
Zion, Dayton
Zion, Hamilton (Assistant)

Ready to Call:

St. Paul, Botkins
Trinity, Springfield

Calls Extended:

Covenant, St. Paris—Pr. Isabelle Steele
St. John, Lithopolis—Pr. Joseph Wolf
St. John, Zanesville—Pr. Mark Combs
St. Matthew, Sugar Grove—Pr. Meg Knape

In the Family

Prayers and Concerns:

Mary Piel
Pr. Jim Brady
Pr. Paul Elhard
Alan Alburtis, father of Pr. Alicia Nierman
Orinda Hawkins-Brinkley
Virgil Wittenberg

Sympathies:

Family and friends of Pr. J. Herman Bassler
Pr. Steve Gellatly on his father-in-law's death
Family and friends of Pr. Kay Glaesner, Jr.
Family and friends of Tom Stewart
Family and friends of Phyllis Harms, wife of Dr. Paul Harms
Family and friends of Pr. Amy Fauquet
Family and friends of Pr. John Cox
Pr. Richard Genzman on the death of his brother, Fred Genzman
Linda Cole on the death of her husband, Leonard Cole

Noteworthy Mentions:

Cathy Bengson was recongnized for her service to the National Board of the Lutheran Association of Christian Educators (LACE) in a letter to Bishop Holloway. Thank you, Cathy for your dedication to this worthwhile organization.

Dates to Remember

February 10	Congregational Officers Day St. Luke, Gahanna
February 13-14	Large Church Pastors Conference Kings Island Conference Center
February 15	Ministerium Gathering for Rostered Leaders
February 17	Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Zion, Middletown
February 17	Lay School of Theology
February 18	Central Ohio Conference Choir Festival
March 3	Bread for the World Workshop Trinity Lutheran Seminary
March 4	Bible Bowl 2007 Abiding Christ, Fairborn
March 9	Congregational Youth Leaders Gathering St. John, Grove City
March 10	All Committee Day Trinity Lutheran Seminary
March 17	Lay School of Theology
March 29	Rostered Leaders Worship Service
April 16-17	First Call Retreat Procter Center, London OH

See the synod website (www.southernohiosynod.org) for more dates to remember and details.