



THE SYNOD'S NEWSLETTER

SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD
1090 OESTREICH DR.
SEGUIN, TX 78155-3403

COLLEAGUES

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2008

FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Forty Practical Questions About Stewardship - Test Your Knowledge About Stewardship In The ELCA!

- T F A majority of ELCA members believe everything they have is a gift from God.
- T F Faith is the starting point for talking about stewardship.
- T F Average worship attendance on a weekly basis in the ELCA is less than 150.
- T F Average worship attendance on Sunday morning is less than 33% of baptized members.
- T F Stewardship is about money, but it is not only about money.
- T F Most congregations are more concerned about finances than growing stewards.
- T F Adults under the age of 40 usually have a different understanding of stewardship than those over 60.
- T F The Average Household Income of an ELCA household is greater than \$55,000.
- T F A majority of ELCA congregations ask their members to make a financial commitment.
- T F Some congregations would rather close than talk about financial stewardship.
- T F Congregations that ask members to make a financial contributions have 30% higher giving.
- T F The majority of ELCA congregations do not distinguish between financial stewardship and fundraising.
- T F The majority of member time and energy for stewardship ministry is put into the annual invitation and response.
- T F A congregation that receives a financial commitment from 50% of their households is usually doing well.
- T F In most ELCA congregations, 25% of the households will give \$3 or less per week to their congregation.
- T F New members usually do not contribute at the same level as existing members.
- T F ELCA households give less than 1.5% of their household income to their congregation.
- T F Less than 10% of ELCA households tithe.
- T F A congregation is more likely to obtain a financial commitment from a member than a Time & Talent Sheet.
- T F Less than 25% of ELCA congregations practice year around stewardship
- T F A minority of ELCA congregations connect stewardship and creation.
- T F Most ELCA congregations do not connect stewardship with relationships.
- T F Skills for stewardship ministry can be learned.
- T F Mission support from ELCA congregations is less than 10% of Total Congregational Income and declining.
- T F Mission Interpretation is a major role of congregational leaders.
- T F Total Benevolence from ELCA congregations is less than 15% of Total Congregational Income and declining.
- T F Mission support decisions are usually strongly influenced by the pastor (s).
- T F Building funds and special appeals have an impact on General Fund contributions.
- T F Current dollar growth of congregational expenses is greater than the current Dollar growth of congregational income.
- T F Stewardship is more about lifestyle than money.
- T F The ELCA loans money to congregations for new buildings and additions.
- T F The majority of ELCA congregations do not have any debt.
- T F Some congregations meet their annual expenses by relying on bequests and special gifts.
- T F More than 20% of ELCA congregations are at risk financially.
- T F Fewer than 40 percent of ELCA households have a will.
- T F The Average Household Wealth of an ELCA household is greater than \$150,000.
- T F The majority of ELCA congregations do not have an Endowment Fund.
- T F Stewardship ministry is most effective when functioning separate from the Finance Committee.
- T F There is no certain formula for an effective stewardship ministry.
- T F Stewardship ministry can be fun!

Answers on the next Page!

REMINDER! -

Only 37% of you have done the HRA in our Synod. This is one thing that you can do to help your congregation and all congregations in the Synod save over \$36,000.00.

If you are an eligible participant in the ELCA health plan and you haven't completed the Health Risk Assessment yet, please do it today. Not just to save money, but to make positive changes that will lead to a better, healthier life. Thank you.

UPCOMING CHURCHWIDE AND SYNOD EVENTS:

- March 29 - Lutheran Educators' Day, TLU, Seguin
- April 21-22 - Pre-Retirement Seminar, T BAR M Ranch, New Braunfels
- April 26 - Pre-Assembly Meeting Rio Grande Valley Conference, Our Savior, McAllen
- April 27 - Pre-Assembly Meeting Coastal Bend Conference, Holy Cross, Rockport
- May 4 - Pre-Assembly Meetings Austin Conference - Sa-lem, Austin Hill Country Conference - Grace, Bandera San Antonio Conference - Hope, San Antonio Victoria Conference - St. Peter, Ander
- May 30 - Synod Council Meeting, TLU, Seguin
- May 30 - June 1 - Synod Assembly, TLU, Seguin
- July 10-13 - WELCA National Gathering, Salt Lake City, Utah

INSTALLATION & ORDINATIONS OF THE SYNOD:

Transfers Out

Transfers In

Rev. William Irons, From Northern Texas Northern Louisiana

Rev. Sam Brannon, From Arkansas Oklahoma

Installations

**Mar. 2nd - Lord of Life, Austin
Rev. David Seddelmeyer**

Mar. 9th - Triumphant, Garden Ridge, Rev. William Irons

Reinstatement

Rev. Armin Steege, LSS, Inc.

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COLLEAGUES NEWSLETTER
 ON THE WEB!
 WWW.SWTSYNOD.ORG/
 PUBLICATIONS & NEWSLETTERS/
 COLLEAGUES-ISSUES

CHECK WHAT IS NEW ON THE WEBSITE!

**WE HAVE 'ONLINE' REGISTRATION GOING ON NOW
 FOR OUR LUTHERAN EDUCATORS' DAY EVENT,
 MARCH 29TH. SIGN UP NOW!**

SEE THE NEWEST PICTORIAL DIRECTORY OF OUR ROSTERED LEADERS. IF YOU DO NOT FIND YOUR PICTURE, PLEASE SEND ONE FOR THE FILE! CONTACT CARRIE BLANK, DATABASE MANAGER, CBLANK@SWTSYNOD.ORG
 THANK YOU!

AS YOU REVIEW OUR NEW SYNOD WEBSITE, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO COMMENT.

SEND ANY AND ALL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO INFO@SWTSYNOD.ORG
 THANK YOU!

CHECK FOR THE LATEST EVENTS OF THE SYNOD ON THE WEBSITE:-WWW.SWTSYNOD.ORG/EVENTS
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 1 - ALL ARE TRUE

ELCA Men's Gathering

Please let men of the church know about the upcoming gathering of Lutheran Men in Mission, August 1-3, 2008 (Friday through Sunday), in Omaha, Nebraska. Under the theme, "Coming of Age," men of all ages will gather to serve, play, learn and worship. Go to www.elca.org/lmm/ for information and registration.

ELCA Women's Gathering

Please let women of your congregation know about the upcoming gathering of Women of the ELCA, July 10-13, 2008 (Thursday through Sunday) in Salt Lake City, Utah. Under the theme, "Come to the Waters," women will gather to be refreshed, inspired, and connected. For information and registration materials, go to www.womenoftheelca.org or contact the synod's triennial gathering coordinator, Carol Semper, rcsemper@sbcglobal.net.

Interested in interim ministry?

The three Texas-Louisiana synods will hold a workshop on interim ministry, April 15-16, 2008, near Temple. If you are interested in learning basics of interim ministry, networking with other interim ministers, or exploring what intentional interim ministry is about, go to the synod's website, www.swtsynod.org. Click on Events, where you will find information and registration materials. You can also contact synod staff Lynn Schudy Ziese (lziese@swtsynod.org) or Interim Minister Bill Krejci (krejci@comcast.net). Thanks to a synod Vision Project grant, scholarships are available.

2008 Global Mission Event

The annual ELCA Global Mission Event is scheduled for July 17-20, 2008, in La Crosse, Wisconsin. This event is filled with cultural richness, celebration, and people of all ages from all over the world. Please let your congregation know about this family opportunity. Congregations should have received a packet of materials from the ELCA. For more information and registration, go to www.elca.org/gme/gme2008

2008 Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly - May 31 - June 1st - Texas Lutheran University Seguin, Texas - ONLINE REGISTRATION BEGINS FEBRUARY 29, 2008 !!

2008 "Vision Projects" Grant Applications funded:

The "Vision Project" funding for all partners in the synod to participate in Forming Faithfulness has been approved. Ten (10) of the sixteen (16) grant applications were approved for a grand total of \$40,000. The recipients are as follows:

Texas Impact—'Breath of Life Program'	\$ 1,000.00
Southwestern Texas Synod—	
'Congregational Tools for Forming Faithfulness'	\$ 5,070.00
Southwestern Texas Synod—'Intentional Interim Ministry'	\$ 4,220.00
St. Andrew Lutheran Church - 'Fall Semester Internship'	\$ 3,000.00
Trinity Lutheran Church—	
'Uniting with other Lutheran Churches in the Rio Grande Valley'	\$ 8,500.00
Holy Cross Lutheran Church—'Deaf Vision'	\$ 8,710.00
Lutheran Campus Ministry of San Antonio—'Campus ministry programs'	\$ 4,000.00
Lutheran Seminary Program of the Southwest—	
'Marketing for LSPS Spanish Programs'	\$ 4,000.00
Rita Carlson & Dorothy Chesley—'Emergency Response'	\$ 500.00
Austin Conference Beltway Churches—	
'Revitalize ELCA presence in the area'	\$ 1,000.00
Vision Projects Grand Total	\$40,000.00

BISHOP'S CALENDAR

Mar. 2 - Preach & Preside, First, Orange Grove
 Mar. 5 - 13 - Conference of Bishops-San Mateo, CA
 Mar. 16 - Preach & Preside, Immanuel, Comfort
 Mar. 18 - RGV Conference Visit
 Mar. 19 - 23 - Vacation
 Mar. 28 - 30 - LSPS Meetings, Austin
 Apr. 6 - Preach & Preside, Zion, Arneckeville
 Apr. 8 - Hill Country Conference Visit, St. John, Boerne
 Apr. 10 - Victoria Conference Visit, TBD
 Apr. 15 - Coastal Bend Conference Visit, St. Mark, CC
 Apr. 17 - Three Bishops Meeting, SWT Synod, Seguin
 Apr. 20 - Preach & Preside, Two Point Parish, Prince of Peace and Immanuel, West Taylor
 Apr. 22 - San Antonio Conference Visit, TBD
 Apr. 27-29 Wartburg BRD Mtg., Dubuque, IA
 May 1 - Austin Conference Visit, TBD