



2009 NC Synod Assembly

Friday Highlights

RE-ELECTION OF BISHOP LEONARD BOLICK

By Stephanie Grantham

On Thursday, June 4, 2009, at Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, N.C., the Rev. Dr. Leonard H. Bolick was re-elected as bishop of the NC Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Bishop Bolick was elected on the second ballot of the assembly and will serve a 6-year term. He led the second ballot with 442 of 544 votes.

Immediately following the announcement, amid a standing ovation, Bishop Bolick thanked his wife, Rita, who has been a very important part of his journey.

Bishop Bolick also thanked the synod staff and members of congregations who share their gifts everyday.

"We do not walk this journey alone and we go forward by faith," said Bishop Bolick. "I'm absolutely amazed at the time that members of congregations give to the Lord. All of you, who are here today, thank you for your work."

Bishop Bolick joined the synod office in 1986 as a member of the bishop's staff. He was installed as bishop of the NC Synod on February 2, 1997.

DISMISSED BY THE WORD

By Stephanie Grantham

"We inhale what we exhale," exclaimed the Rev. Dr. Foster McCurley, 2009 NC Synod Assembly keynote presenter.

Dr. McCurley discussed what it means to be dismissed by the Word, as each week we hear "Go in peace, serve the Lord."

We go in peace, but do we serve the Lord? Do we help and love our neighbors in Christ's name?

"Luther saw that in order to love God, we needed to pay attention to our neighbors," said Dr. McCurley. "You can hardly talk about loving the Lord without caring for and loving your neighbor."

After we have been cared for by the Word and Sacrament, so many of us are left with, "so what." Dr. McCurley illustrated that it is our job to be God's children in the world, and we should serve our neighbors in need.

Neighbors we encounter each day like the bank teller, checkout person at the grocery store, or receptionist at the doctor's office. And neighbors we never see like the four billion people who live on less than \$2.00 per day, or the 200 million people who are unemployed.

"Be whose you are. Live whose you are and just breathe in and breathe out," Dr. McCurley states.

Don't just go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Friday, June 5, 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

Bishop Election	1
Dismissed by the Word	1
Bishop's Reflections	2
Dwelling in the Word Moments	3
Auxiliary Organization Reports	4
Agape+Kure Beach Campaign Report	4

QUOTES TO NOTE

"I'm absolutely amazed at the time that members of congregations give to the Lord." – Bishop Leonard Bolick

"Keep telling the story, be faithful and true and let others see Jesus in you." – Maxine Amos

"I'm a sinner, I have to live with that. But I have the knowledge that God loves me enough that he gave his Son to die for me." - Bachman Brown

"Breathing in the Good News makes us alive, but how long can you hold your breath?" – the Rev. Dr. Foster McCurley

BISHOP'S REFLECTIONS

By Ann Thompson

Bishop Leonard Bolick reflected on life together as a synod, which includes 237 congregations and more than 30,000 Lutherans. Each Sunday, we gather across NC to worship and celebrate our suffering, crucified and risen Lord and Savior. And, when we join together as a synod and as people of faith, we are able to do much.

"North Carolina is filled with people of faith, people of prayer, who gather around the table and the Word," he said.

Bishop Bolick relayed the accomplishments of our synod for the past year and laid out the goals for 2009. He touched on how our synod has served as a pilot for a new mobility database for the church which will provide a ministry site for congregations searching for rostered leaders and will give leaders the ability to search online for ministry opportunities across the church. In addition, the NC Synod has \$301,000 in its Fund for Leaders that will provide support for 3 students.

The NC Synod reaches out through witness and service to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a changing world. Just as the world is changing, so is North Carolina. Bishop Bolick reflected on the rapid growth and growing diversity of North Carolina and discussed how NC is exploring more ways to reflect this diversity, which is predicted to consist of 30% Latino, 30% people of African descent, and 30% Anglo by 2025. At this year's assembly, a new congregation, Amazing Grace, Waxhaw, was received, and Christina Johnson was installed to help develop La Vela, a Latino mission in Greensboro.

As the synod reaches across differing ethnicities, it also reaches across denominations. Bishop Bolick informed the Synod Assembly that discourse between the ELCA and the African Methodist Episcopal-Zion church continues. A mission statement is currently under development to be shared with Presiding Bishop Hansen and Senior Bishop Walker.

The NC Synod is also reaching across borders. Bishop Bolick was one of 44 ELCA bishops from the US and Canada who visited the Holy Land in January 2009. He met with Christians, Muslims, and Jews to discuss the trauma of life in that war torn part of the world. He visited schools, an LWF hospital, worshipped in Lutheran congregations and celebrated Holy Communion in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a first for Lutherans. And, on a boat on the Sea of Galilee, Bishop Bolick prayed for each congregation and each rostered leader by name.

Reaching out to others would not be possible without the support of agencies and institutions that effectively serve and touch people across North Carolina. Bishop Bolick expressed appreciation to Agape+Kure Beach Ministries, Lutheridge+Lutherock Ministries, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Lutheran Services for the Aging, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas, and Lutheran Retirement Ministries of Alamance for their work to help all of God's children.

Much of our nation has experienced economic turmoil. Synod Council has responded to this locally. The Bishop, his staff, and the council have met numerous times to clarify vision and priorities and to fund a budget that meets as many of the higher priority needs as possible. In response to the crisis, part time staff and the synod staff salaries and retirement benefits have been reduced.

Walking Together, Sharing Christ. The congregations of the North Carolina Synod, the Bishop, and his staff work diligently to achieve these goals. They continue to support the ELCA mission – God's Work – Our Hands.

DWELLING IN THE WORD

Bachman Brown

By Kate Garrison

Bachman Brown brought to the Synod Assembly a humble spirit and encouraging words. He shared one of his favorite verses- a verse that has great meaning in his own life and also inspired Martin Luther himself; Luke 23:46, "Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Father into your hands I place my spirit.'"

At the moment of his death, as he hung on a cross between two sinners, Jesus spoke these words. In his darkest moment, Jesus did not express despair or anger or disappointment, but rather these words of faith and acceptance - faith in God's love and acceptance of his divine plan.

"I'm a sinner," Bachman stated simply. "I have to live with that. But I have the knowledge that God loves me enough that he gave his Son to die for me." The same faith that led Jesus through every step of his life, death and resurrection can now be a comfort to every person who recognizes its saving power.

Martin Luther too found in this verse the truth that we, who were once lost and condemned, are saved not by our own power, but by the love of God and the precious blood of Jesus. Knowing that the Savior died for his sins carries Bachman through life and he encouraged us to remember this each day, and to go in peace knowing our sins are forgiven.

Maxine Amos

By Glenn Mays

For Maxine Locklear Amos, the Bible has been a tremendous influence in her life at home, in school and at church. Recalling times earlier in her life, she shared how her mother would gather her family around her and, using a chair as the altar, would read the scriptures and pray with them. Her mother emphasized that we are all God's children and he loves us unconditionally.

Amos was introduced to Lutheran worship in the 1960s by Lenoir-Rhyne College professor Dr. Wade Franklin Hook. He invited his class to attend a worship service in Startown.

"It was there that I participated in a liturgical worship service," Amos noted. "My response was WOW! Awesome was not a common expression. I was so impressed that my husband and I talked about the experience and visited Calvary Lutheran in Morganton. We soon became members and youth leaders."

Amos added, "Through the years serving as a Sunday school teacher and assisting with confirmation classes enabled me to dwell in the Word. There are opportunities for each of us to be embraced by the Word if we will listen to God's call. Keep telling the story, be faithful and true and let others see Jesus in you."

REPORTS OF AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

By Kate Garrison

Reports from auxiliary organizations contained many messages, but one common theme was weaved throughout each. Each organization, in its own way, is passing on the faith. The organizations demonstrate there are countless ways to connect and share the love of Christ.

Cathy Sell, president of NC Women of the ELCA, brought greetings and discussed how they attempt to share faith generationally. Last week, Cathy noted, they hosted their annual gathering. One of the highlights included participation by 15 young women. These young women followed their own schedule of activities, but were also able to share fun and fellowship with the adult women.

Harold Yost, executive director for the Lutheran Men in Mission, spoke warmly of the scholarships Lutheran Men in Mission has been able to provide to seminarians in financial hardship. He talked about the joy of being able to help many of our future pastors with basic necessities like food, housing and child care. Harold ended his report with a fitting verse that exemplifies the organization's commitment to the Lord: Isaiah 6:8 "Here am I, send me!"

Elizabeth Merritt, president of Lutheran Youth Organization, reflected on the memory of what the Lutheran Youth Organization has meant to her, including laughter, faith, exploring, chaos, pizza, and spending time with God. Just five years old when she was introduced to LYO by her uncle, Elizabeth grew up enjoying the social interaction provided through LYO meetings and retreats, but as she continued to attend over the years, it began to mean more to her. She appreciated the meaningful relationships she formed, as well as the challenge to go "outside her comfort zone," and the opportunity to serve others through projects such as this year's Book of Faith initiative. She, and other LYO members, will collect used Bibles to give away to anyone who would not have one otherwise. Elizabeth ended her report with a simple but direct challenge to the assembly: "Read your Bibles every day."

Tammy Jones West gave a dynamic report from Youth and Family Ministries.

"The question I am asked most often, is this one," said Tammy, "'How can we get more youth involved in our congregation?'"

Tammy's answer? Be the change we want to see. She pointed out that only 23 percent of adults in the Lutheran church attend Sunday school, Bible study, or in some way open the Book of Faith. Tammy's words illustrated this truth- in order to inspire our youth to lead lives of service to the Lord, adults must first learn to live out the call of Christ themselves.

AGAPE+KURE BEACH FINAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

Randy Youngquist-Thurrow, Agape+Kure Beach Ministries executive director, joined camp counselors onstage at the 2009 NC Synod Assembly to report on the *Go Camp! Building What the Church Needs Campaign*.

"Go Camp! Is about more than raising money. It's about building what the church needs," Randy said. "It's about spreading the Word of Christ centered ministry."

Randy reported that the *Go Camp! Building What the Church Needs Campaign*, not only met it's \$2 million goal, but exceeded it by raising a total of \$2,005,255.