



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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The Bishop's Letter

August 2009

It is All Gift

It is a beautiful summer day. This morning your synod staff gathered to hear and reflect on the appointed scriptures for the day and to pray. I shared my observation that though there is no shortage of challenges, we as a staff have been given a calm spirit. One of the staff shared that she still feels anxiety when someone calls, bearing their own anxiety about an awkward or complicated congregational issue. But she has learned to take a deep breath and respond in ways she hopes are helpful and reassuring. This is all gift: a lovely day, exercising our callings with grace and a measure of calm and wisdom.

I'm reading the reports from various units or sections of the church prepared for the Churchwide Assembly this August. I lift up here the report from the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section of our churchwide expression, struck by the gift given to us as members of the ELCA to be in conversation and even full communion with a growing variety of sisters and brothers who like us are daily given the gift of faith in Jesus Christ.

Some of those conversations are complicated and strained, especially with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (even more so right now as we in the ELCA wrestle with the possibility of changes in ministry policies regarding people who are in monogamous, life-long, same gender relationships). Yet the report noted ongoing meetings with representatives of the LC-MS about our shared work in Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Services in America (touching the lives of one of every 50 Americans) and Lutheran Immigration and Resettlement Service. These meetings and common work are huge gifts in the midst of the alienation we often feel.

I read in the report about our recent conversations with the Roman Catholic Church about purgatory, indulgences, and prayers for the dead. Amazing, I think, that we are talking about subjects about which we have so deeply disagreed. I read about the forthcoming vote about full communion with the United Methodist Church expressed in a text called "Confessing Our Faith Together." This is the first such agreement entered into by the UMC, yet another gift, an "impulse" of the Holy Spirit, to allow us to live more fully into the oneness Jesus accomplished for us through his death on the cross.

I read, too, about our emerging inter-religious (inter-faith) relationships. Materials have been developed by the churchwide staff to help us in our dialogue (especially pertinent as we develop the Center for Mission & Ministry) with our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters not gifted with faith in Christ but otherwise gifted with faith in the same God who came to and called Abraham.

This is all gift, that we get to experience such incredibly rich and respectful relationships with such an array of the human family. As Lutheran Christians we bring hearts ever grateful for the cross, for the knowledge that Holy Spirit tirelessly works in and among us to fashion us to be bearers and makers of the peace which the world cannot give. We are so blessed, gifted beyond imagining.

Bishop John

P.S. Read below about the progress toward realizing the vision of collaboration in mission and ministry. I have enjoyed my visits with several congregations already this summer with many more to come into the fall to tell the story about “Making Us One.” Several other “storytellers” will be making contact to set up a time to help reach every congregation by mid-October. Please receive them as warmly and openly as you have received me.

Update on *Making Us One* and the Center for Mission & Ministry

Making Us One is the capital campaign to raise \$2,000,000 for the Center for Mission & Ministry. The campaign was formally launched on April 19 with the groundbreaking for the new campus in DeWitt. Since the synod assembly in May, we have received a total of \$187,000 in pledges from individuals and congregations. Over the coming months, teams of *Making Us One* Storytellers will visit each of the 129 congregations of the synod to share updates on the Center and the capital campaign. In addition, the Storytellers will invite pastors and lay leaders to consider how they might participate in the programs of the Center (which will begin in the fall).

To achieve the goal of fully funding the Center at the \$2 million level, *Making Us One* is seeking a total of 1111 gift units of \$1800. If every congregation in the synod pledged 1 gift unit a year for five years by October of 2009, those pledges would generate almost \$1.2 million and increase the likelihood that the center can be completed in 2010!

Watch this space for monthly updates on the work of the Center and the progress of *Making Us One*. Members of congregations can contact the Sr. Nancy Brousseau at 517-321-5066 or nancybrousseau@mittensynod.org with questions and suggestions.

From Your Center for Mission & Ministry Facilitator

Nancy Brousseau, OP

A question I have received since beginning work as Center Facilitator is about the OP after my name – so, here is a bit of history about Dominicans.

The Order of Preachers (Latin: *Ordo Praedicatorum*), after the 15th century more commonly known as the Dominican Order or Dominicans, is a Catholic religious order founded by Saint Dominic de Gusman (born in Spain – Old Castile) in the early 13th century . Membership in the Order includes the friars, the nuns (cloistered), the sisters (active), and lay persons affiliated with the order (formerly known as tertiaries or third order and also Associates – about 33,000 Dominican men & women world-wide and 100,000 lay Associates) So, technically, I am a sister, not a cloistered nun. The Order is guided by the Rule of St. Augustine.

Our founder, Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221) sought to establish a new kind of order, one that would bring the dedication and systematic education of the older monastic orders like the Benedictines (6th c) to bear on the religious problems of the burgeoning population of cities (urban & university ministry), but with more organizational flexibility than either monastic orders or the secular clergy had. Dominic's new order was to be a preaching order, trained to preach in the vernacular languages but with a sound background in academic theology. Rather than providing for their living on vast farms as the monasteries had done, the new friars would survive by begging – depending on contributions and benefactors for the sake of the preaching ministry. The work of evangelization that inspired the foundation of the Order was not normatively homiletic preaching during Eucharist, but catechetical preaching in any contexts where adult faith formation could take place. Dominicans have always been referred to as “itinerant preachers”. Members of the order generally carry the letters O.P. standing for *Ordinis Praedicatorum*, meaning of the Order of Preachers, after their names.

Founded to preach the Gospel and to combat heresy –especially the Cathar heresy of southern France - the order is famed for its intellectual tradition, having produced many leading theologians and philosophers (Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler, Catherine of Siena, Yves Congar, Pope Pius V, to name a few). The Dominican Order is headed by the Master of the Order, who is currently Father Carlos Azpiroz Costa, OP and he resides at the international headquarters *Santa Sabina* in Rome.

The life mission of St. Dominic, our founder, in 1206 was: TO PRAISE - TO BLESS - TO PREACH and as Thomas Aquinas (13th c.) stated it: “to contemplate and to give to others the fruit of our contemplation.” Our life mission remains the same today.

The mission of Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids, of which I have been a member for 40 years, is to live the Gospel. This includes empowering people spiritually, intellectually, socially, materially, and by promoting justice - all through our charisms of prayer, study, community and service – preaching the Word with our lives and our words.

I am happy to be able to share ministry with this ELCA synod and look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months as we share the story and the dream of the Center for Mission & Ministry. Next month look for new programs scheduled for fall 2009.



Earthkeeping News & Updates

Kim Winchell, Diaconal Minister

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As promised last month, here is Part 2 of Pr. Joan Herbon's reflection on "Why I care about keeping the earth." Pr. Joan serves Lord of Light in Portage, and is a member of the synod's EarthKeeping Opportunities Team. Join the conversation! Send a representative (or two or three!) to "Greening our Spirits, Greening our Congregations," at Michi-Lu-Ca this Oct 9-10. Contact me for more information or see www.elcalivingwater.com.

Why I Care about "Keeping the Earth" – continued

All of my life, God has been revealed to me in the wonders of nature. My first call as pastor was to two churches in rural south east Nebraska. ... One day during the first summer I was in Nebraska, Herb Brokering (who wrote the hymn "Earth and all Stars") brought a choir to our small town of Daykin. After the day, this is what I wrote:

Our plan was to sing blessings over the fields. How can I describe the awesome majesty and the tender sweetness of our God? Listen as thirty voices sing four-part harmony from the heart, accompanied only by the sound of the wind, God's Spirit wind, blowing through the golden wheat. The earth we stand on - God's gift. The sky above us - God's gift. The crops we toil over and depend on for our living - God's gift. The sunshine - God's gift. The rain we pray for - God's gift. The voices with which we sing our praises - God's gift. All of it - ALL! - God's gracious, and glorious gift! It filled me up.

After our songs, Pastor Herb, holding a stalk of wheat, spoke to the choir. "This" he said, "is where the Eucharist begins. In the fall the farmer takes the wheat seeds and plants them in God's good and fertile soil. All winter long the wheat is dormant, sleeping under the snow and under the sky. Then God sends the spring sun and rain, and the wheat bursts into vibrant new life. The farmer cares for it, prays over it, and harvests it. The wheat goes, perhaps, all over the world, but some of it is ground into the flour that makes the bread that is the body of our Lord. I've traveled all over the world and I've seen some wonderful sights, but here, right here in Daykin, is where my spiritual roots are."

As for me, I was born in the city, and I grew up in the city, and I spent most of my life in the city, but standing under God's sky with life all around me and my sisters and brothers in Christ joining their voices to praise the One who is worthy of praise, I knew, even though I had hardly known that Nebraska even existed for the first 50 years of my life, that here, right here, is where my spiritual roots are too.

My heart was filling up and coming out of my eyes and running down my cheeks when Pastor Herb said, “Now let’s hear a couple of words from Pastor Joan.” I stood and cried and laughed at myself and cried again before I could finally say, “What Herb said. Me, too.”

The choir stood in the corn - our own ‘Field of Dreams’. It wasn’t Heaven, and it wasn’t Iowa - it was NEBRASKA! , and it was good -very good. Pastor Herb and I, as we had promised, got down on our knees and kissed the good sweet earth. My lips still tingle.

Almost two years ago I left Nebraska to be home again with my family in Michigan, but my spiritual roots are still in the land, this beautiful world created by the God who loves us. When I think of the Michigan of my childhood - the Michigan which I have recently re-discovered, and when I think of the loveliness of Pennsylvania and the majestic beauty of Colorado’s mountains, and when my heart remembers the much loved land of Nebraska, it seems to me that this Earth is worth caring for, worth keeping.

I’m glad to belong to a church which loves the land and to a synod which dreams of being “green,” and to the EKO Team which helps to make the dream come true. God is good!

Pastor Joan Herbon

joanherbon@hotmail.com

Labor Day—A Celebration and Offering of Vocation

“We offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—our selves, our time, and possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself up for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (LBW, Offertory Prayer)

As Christians, we are called to live our life in our baptismal calling through vocation, where we use our gifts to serve God and others. As you celebrate Labor Day, consider including a vocational offering. During the offering, have people bring signs of their vocation. A nurse might bring a stethoscope, a teacher a book or chalk, a student their backpack, an artist a piece of art, anything that shows how each of us are living out our callings. These “signs” could be brought forward and set in front of the table/altar as a reminder that we offer more than our financial offerings, we offer our time and talent as well. “Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Diaconal Ministers' Atlanta Report



Kim Winchell and Kathy Bonn traveled to Atlanta to attend the biennial gathering of the Diaconal Ministry (DM) Community of the ELCA (July 18-20) and the quadrennial assembly of DIAKONIA World Federation (July 20-27). We celebrate their leadership both in our synod and in wider expressions of the church.

As a member of the outgoing ELCA DM Leadership Team, Kim helped facilitate the business meetings and Kathy assisted in a healing service. Other highlights of the ELCA DM gathering included foot washing, panel discussion with ELCA DMs and Deaconesses (who were celebrating their 125th anniversary), collaboration regarding the community's guiding principles, and blessing of hands during closing worship.

Both Kim and Kathy attended the opening worship of the DIAKONIA World Federation with diaconal ministers from a variety of denominations from 27 countries! Immediately following opening worship, Kim and Kathy met their Anglican diaconal counterparts (earthkeeping and pastoral care, respectively) from Canada. The remainder of their time in Atlanta was full of other serendipitous encounters and lively discussions with Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Lutheran, Non-denominational, and Episcopal deacons, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses from Indonesia, the Netherlands, Tanzania, Scotland, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, the Philippines, Finland, Costa Rica, Germany, India, and the UK. Additional highlights of the DIAKONIA World gathering included

- Blessing of the World Assembly by Tony Walkingstick of the Cherokee Nation.
- An inspirational presentation by Sara Miles, Director of Ministry at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco (www.saintgregorys.org) and founder of The Food Pantry, which provides free groceries to over 650 families every week around the altar of the church (www.thefoodpantry.org)
- Over 350 people actively participating in a bible study on "Healing as Part of God's Shalom Agenda" led by Glory E. Dharmaraj, Director of Spiritual Formation and Mission Theology for the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church.
- Daily morning prayer, including songs from Puerto Rico, Sweden, France, South Africa, Germany, Pakistan, the US, and Scotland.
- Over 350 people singing "Happy Birthday" in their native tongue to ELCA DM Tammy Devine, our "wellness" leader, on her 50th birthday (the Lord's Prayer was also consistently spoken in everyone's native tongue).

Kathy participated in a session of DOTAC (Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean) as the new ELCA DM Alternate (Jan Cherry, DM from Seattle, is the ELCA DM Representative). She and Jan, along with other members of the DOTAC Central Committee, will help plan the next DOTAC meeting that will be held in Oklahoma City (July 11-15, 2011). The next DIAKONIA World gathering will be in Berlin in 2013.



Now is a good time to revive Christian education in our congregations. The Spirit is moving among us and more and more congregations are answering the call to be Book of Faith congregations!

Robert Pooley, Book of Faith Coordinator

A large variety of resources are now available to assist us as we open the Bible and join the conversation. The new Spark Sunday school curriculum is designed to help church members of all ages become more fluent in the first language of our faith – the Scriptures. Augsburg Fortress is also publishing an abundance of adult Bible studies. I cannot remember a time when we could choose from such an inviting variety.

This would be a good time for us to share Bible studies that have worked well in our particular settings. I invite you to send a short critique of adult Bible studies you have found useful to me at Robert Pooley, 217 W. Todd, Reed City, MI 49677. This information will be compiled and published in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

I'll begin by sharing two Bible studies that I have used recently and found meaningful. Both are from the Book of Faith Series, published by Augsburg Fortress,

“John”

This Study can be done in eight one-hour sessions, {this is the format we used} however if I were to use this study again I would use 90-minute sessions or increase the number of sessions. The leader's role is one of facilitator, so this responsibility could easily be shared by others in the group. Our participants especially liked how we approached John's gospel using four different methods; Devotional Context, Historical Context, Literary Context, and Lutheran Context. The questions posed in the study facilitated good discussion – another reason for extending the sessions.

“Making Sense of Scripture”

I am using this study with two groups. The leader's guide offers a variety of timeframes to use, from seven sessions of 45 or 60 or 90 or 120 minutes each to a day and a half retreat setting. The learner's book is very captivating, written as a conversation between two friends, one a bit of a skeptic the other a Bible teacher. It is written with good humor and depth. The questions the skeptic brings to the conversation are questions we have all asked, wondered about or heard, and lead to great discussion.

In addition to the learner's book and leader's guide there is a DVD in which the author, David Lose, gives a short overview of each session. We found it effective to show the DVD and then have two members of the group read the conversation aloud like two friends sitting across the table from one another, stopping every so often for group discussion. With this format there is no need for more than two participant books, though some may want a copy as a personal resource. The leader's guide has reproducible handouts with helpful conversation starters.

As the Book of Faith tag-line states, “Open the Book and join the conversation,”

Political Unrest in Honduras; August Synod Visit Cancelled

Three gracious Honduran people, leaders in our companion synod, traveled to Michigan this May to enhance our Synod Assembly. Many were blessed by their presence here. A group from our synod was planning a trip to Honduras in August. Trip participants geared up with excitement as they met their future hosts here in Michigan.

About a month after the Hondurans returned home their president was forcibly removed from his home by the military and put on a plane to Costa Rica. Honduran church leaders have discussed the ongoing political unrest and have advised us it is too unsafe to visit them this summer. While disappointed, group members are thankful for hosts who care so well for their safety. We all are encouraged to support our Honduran brothers and sisters through prayer and solidarity.

Faith-based, human rights, and activist groups in the United States joined in condemning this coup carried out June 28 against José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the elected President of Honduras. Below is an official statement issued by the Lutheran Church of Honduras regarding the coup:

Communication

On the basis of the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, our highest example, who taught us about the supremacy of love, as reflected in the following Biblical text, and which he put into practice during his life on earth:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

In the light of the Good News of the scriptures, we want to publicly express what we think and feel about what is occurring in our country which represents a setback for our system of democracy as it has been constituted for many years. To reach our present system of democracy has been a process marked by grief and suffering due to what we have called the “lost decade” during which many of our fellow citizens were disappeared for having struggled to re-establish democratic order, with the conviction that the voice of the people is the voice of God.

- 1. We want to express our repudiation and inconformity with the Coup D’etat and with the way that President **José Manuel Zelaya Rosales** was removed from office by means of pressure, intimidation and forced exile.*
- 2. We oppose and call for an end to the violation of human rights resulting from the military action that has been undertaken, using violence, wounding and capturing people in order to stop demonstrations where inconformity is being expressed with the injustices that have taken place since the coup, a coup led by a sector that has dominion over economic power in our society.*

3. *We want to denounce the trampling of freedom of press and restrictions on the freedom of movement, implemented through a curfew and electrical blackouts on a national level. Many media outlets – radio, TV and print – have been closed and their equipment destroyed by the military.*
4. *We want to make clear that this statement is not an expression of favor for President **José Manuel Zelaya Rosales**, but rather a repudiation of the means that have been used to overthrow the President and, in this way, to seize power.*

If the president committed errors, he must be tried on the basis of the legal principle of the right to a broad defense.

The same Spirit of God which guided the prophets in their mission and Jesus Christ in his also guides the ICLH in proclaiming release to the captives, the restoration of democratic order and in giving sight to those who are blind for lack of conscience, calling for peace and justice for all peoples and especially for the people of our country Honduras.

We call on all our Christian brothers and sisters around the world to unite with us in prayer for the people of Honduras, for they are the ones who are suffering the consequences of the current situation. We also call on international bodies to continue working for peace and justice so that order can be re-established in our country.

*Tegucigalpa, Honduras - July 1, 2009.
Iglesia Cristiana Luterana de Honduras
(Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras)*

Mexico City

Judy Enger, Synod Hunger Team
eldonenger@chartermi.net

I am going to Mexico City! The trip will not be a vacation, but a step into the work of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as it strives to help alleviate hunger and injustice.

Each year, hunger leaders from around the U.S. meet to explore new ideas, learn, share stories and insights, and be energized to continue working toward the goal of ending hunger. This year, forty of us will attend the meeting in Mexico City the last week of September.

- We will visit communities who receive help via our ELCA World Hunger Appeal dollars.
- We will learn about globalization.
- We will share small group time with biblical reflections on hunger.
- We will learn about immigration and hunger.
- We will learn about the history and culture of Mexico City.

The meetings, the experiences, the trip are to be shared. If you were going on a trip like this, what would you want to know? I'd love to talk with you and will report back to you. Please keep our group in your prayers as we prepare for our journey.

Coaching Corner

Paul Werner, Coaching Coordinator

A coach is someone who comes alongside and walks with you as you discover and do God's will.

Relate

Reflect

Refocus

Resource

Review

After the leader (person coached) gets to know the coach, what happens next?

Coaching uses five primary tools, which are listed above in capital letters: the five “Rs”. Each is important to the coaching process, and at first may unfold in the order listed. As a coaching relationship moves along, the process may well jump around and focus on any or all of the five “Rs” any time a coaching session occurs. After “relate” comes “REFLECT.”

The REFLECT phase focuses on what the current situation is like. Leader and coach both need to understand the factors underlying a problem, relationship or issue before beginning work. Careful reflection leads to making appropriate plans. The coach brings objectivity to the process that leaders may not be able to provide. Sometimes inventories are used to help focus the process.

Coaching works through the asking of probing, powerful questions designed to get the leader to surface the information he or she owns and to analyze the situation. Leaders gain clarity through sharing and explaining what they know and understand. And, the coach asks questions that encourage the leader to look at the situation from a variety of points of view. This sharing leads to “diagnosis” of the situation (calling what it is what it is) that, in turn, leads to goal setting. Data retrieved is recorded and sorted.

When successfully completed, reflection produces:

- Deeper understanding of key issues
- Issues sorted by importance or urgency
- Agreement on priority issues on which to proceed
- Commitment to address the issues discovered

Powerful questions that may be asked include:

- What are your dreams and hopes?
- What obstacles are out there?
- What's most pressing for you right now?
- What one area most needs to be improved from your point of view?
- What personal values inform your decision making process?
- Who needs to embrace these values and priorities?
- What are you willing to endure?
- What will you stop doing to find time and energy to work on this?
- How can you be held accountable?
- For what can we pray?

Want more information?

We will explore the other “Rs” in upcoming columns. Watch this space in upcoming newsletters for more information about coaching. To learn more, contact Paul Werner, Synod Coaching Coordinator. Phone: 989-326-1184, E-mail: ptwerner@charter.net

Good Shepherd, Holland, to Host Dedication and Open House of New Facility

After one basement, two schools and almost fourteen years of setting up and taking down tables and chairs for Sunday worship, Good Shepherd is finally putting down roots.

Good Shepherd has completed construction of its first permanent home, located at 3990 N. 112th Avenue, Holland Michigan, the southeast corner of 112th Avenue and Quincy Street in Holland Township, two miles east of US 31. At 11:00 am Saturday, September 12, 2009, Good Shepherd will hold a *Service of Blessing for the House of the Church*. “This entire building was designed to be a center for mission and ministry,” says Pastor Jim Foster, “so we want to be sure to ask God to bless every square inch of it. We based our opening worship service on the Houseblessing you might offer a family moving into a new home, moving throughout the building to offer a simple Bible verse and prayer or song for every room within it.”

We are all invited to attend Saturday’s Houseblessing, followed at 12:00 noon by a light luncheon buffet, and a neighborhood open house until 5:00 pm. Vocal and instrumental musicians from among the congregation will perform in the sanctuary throughout the afternoon, on the half hour.

Good Shepherd will offer its first Sunday worship service of Holy Communion in the new facility the next day, September 13, 2009, at 10:00 am, with a brief dedication during the service. Refreshments and an opportunity to tour the building will again be offered immediately following Sunday worship. Sunday School for all ages resumes that morning at 9:00 am; enrollment forms for children are available on the congregations web site, www.goodshepherdhollandmi.com/ssEnrollment.htm, or during the 9:00 am orientation session.

Good Shepherd traces its origins to a meeting of thirteen people in Jerry and Lois Robinson’s basement, in September, 1994. Sparked by the vision of a faith community of healing and hope, their discussion turned toward the possibility of planting a second ELCA congregation in the Holland area. Those discussions continued over the next month, culminating in synod authorization to form a worshipping community of the ELCA. Its first service was held November 6, 1994, in Lakeshore Elementary School; the five acre building site was purchased in 1996. Pastor Foster joined the congregation as its mission developer the following year; and was called by members to be its first pastor, when Good Shepherd was awarded congregational status by the ELCA in 1998. To better accommodate the congregations growth and ministry, Good Shepherd’s worship services moved to its current home in 1999, the chapel of the Corpus Christi Center. Please pray for Good Shepherd on September 13 and consider sending a dedication offering.

For more about Good Shepherd, visit www.goodshepherdhollandmi.com. **See their new house on the forthcoming stewardship DVD for use on September 20, 27, and October 4.**

Electronic Newsletter Distribution May Reap Significant Savings for Your Congregation

Rebecca Bossenbroek
Executive Assistant for Administration

In September 2008, the synod office began distributing The Bishop's Letter electronically to 88% of the recipients. (We honor the requests of those who prefer to receive the newsletter via U.S. Mail.) Some of our congregations have also been distributing their newsletters electronically and are spending less on paper and postage. Other congregations are hesitant to make this change based on the minimum quantity of paper newsletters needed to qualify for the not-for-profit permit mail rate. But savings can still be realized by mailing some paper newsletters at the first class rate and distributing the balance electronically.

Cost Analysis

You are encouraged to conduct a cost analysis to explore the benefits of making this change. The first step is to determine the fixed cost of one paper newsletter. This includes paper, toner (use the per sheet price in your maintenance agreement), labels, envelopes or stickers, and staples. Add to this the average postage cost per newsletter by dividing the total postage amount on your most recent your bulk mail statements by the total quantity of newsletters included in that mailing. At the synod office, we determined the unit cost of producing our newsletter was \$0.29 and the unit not-for-profit postage cost was \$0.15. We were mailing 462 newsletters at \$0.44 (0.29 + 0.15) for a monthly cost of \$203.

Breakeven Point

To determine the breakeven point (the number of paper newsletters that can be mailed at the first class postage rate without exceeding the cost of mailing the larger quantity at the not-for-profit rate) we divided the total above (\$203) by the cost of producing and mailing a newsletter at the first class postage rate (0.29 + 0.61 = 0.90): $\$203 / \$0.90 = 226$. We can distribute 226 newsletters via first class mail for the same cost as mailing 462 newsletters at the not-for-profit permit rate. Savings can be realized if the number of persons preferring paper newsletter distribution is less than 226.

Cost Savings

462 newsletters @ \$0.44 =	\$ 203.00
54 newsletters @ \$0.90 =	<u>\$ 48.60</u>
Monthly savings	\$ 154.40
Annual savings	\$1,853.00

Consider also the environmental impact of using less paper and the time that was formerly used to assemble and mail newsletters that can now be used in other ways.