

North/West Lower Michigan Synod 2009-2010

# Three Weeks for Mission

Sept. 20, 27 and Oct. 4, 2009

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Another word for “mission” is “purpose”. Jesus told his followers on Easter Day, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21) Jesus has passed the baton to us; it’s our turn to keep the faith and run the race.

*Three Weeks for Mission* is a resource designed to provide each congregation in the synod with an opportunity to experience a greater awareness of, and value of, the mission in which all three expressions of the church are engaged in together; each expression supporting one another. The goal is for each congregation to grow in awareness of itself as a vital partner in mission in its context and in the world.

Videos on DVD are at the core of this resource. These DVDs are scheduled to be mailed on or before September 10, 2009. This mailing will also contain a Statement of Intent for 2010, a Thank You DVD produced by the churchwide organization, reflection questions for the video by Stephen Bouman, and mission partner agreement forms.

If your congregation does not own a DVD player, they are generally available for as little as \$40, or perhaps you could borrow one. Perhaps a member of your congregation recently upgraded their television and/or DVD player, and would be willing to donate their old one.

**The Fall Stewardship Consultation** will be included in this resource, as a 5-7 minute video for your congregation council. In past years we have followed a three-year rotation, contacting each congregation by means of a council visit, a conference gathering, or a letter. This year, we are asking each congregation council to view the Fall Stewardship Consultation video in the context of considering their mission support/benevolence for 2010 that you may “share abundantly in every good work” that we do in Jesus’ name “for the sake of the world”.

### DVD Video Content

Introduction by Pastor Clay Bates

Sermon by the Reverend Stephen Bouman

Current ELCA Thank You Video

Sermon by Bishop John David Schleicher

Mission Partner Video, featuring:

Advent, Lake Ann

Body of Christ, Newaygo

Good Shepherd, Holland

Hope Community, Rockford

Sudanese Christ Lutheran Church, Wyoming

Trinity, Battle Creek

Trinity, Saginaw

Sister Nancy Brousseau, Facilitator for the Center for Mission & Ministry

Fall Stewardship Consultation message for your congregation council

If your congregation does not have a suitable projector or other large-screen device, two televisions can be connected to one DVD player. Most televisions and DVD players have the red, white, and yellow connectors, but check yours to be certain.

You may need the following parts if you want to use two televisions with one DVD player, which may be found for \$4 to \$7 each:

RCA Connector Y-Cable (one each for red, white, and yellow connector)

12-Ft. RCA Extension (three)

These parts are available at Radio Shack or most other stores that sell video equipment.

## **Week One: September 20, 2009 – Our Mission as a Churchwide Organization**

*The word “church” comes from the Bible word ek + klesis “calling”; we have been called together*

- **DVD: Sermon by the Reverend Stephen Bouman**, Executive Director of the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission Unit and former bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod. Approximately 7 minutes.

This sermon is primarily intended for use during worship. Rev. Bouman has a compelling and convincing case for engaging in mission that is relevant and biblically based. This video is approximately seven minutes long. This time could be extended by reflections by the preacher; inviting the congregation to turn to a neighbor and discuss the video; or by inviting a panel of three people to discuss their reflections together, while the congregation listens.

Suggested reflection questions will be sent along with the DVD.

- **DVD: Current ELCA Thank You Video “Mission Dollars at Work”**

This video is being released at the churchwide assembly, and will be sent along with the other DVD.

The intent of this video is to provide an introduction to the variety of ministries that we support as a churchwide expression, and to say “thank you” to you on their behalf. It could be used in one of the following ways:

1. For discussion during Sunday School, with adults and with youth
2. For discussion during midweek small group gatherings, such as a Bible Study or a women’s circle meeting
3. During a council meeting
4. As part of a new member orientation to the ELCA

- **Individual or Group Study: Disciples Have a Mission - Disciples Follow Jesus and Obey Him**

Matthew 4:18-22	Why does Jesus have the authority to call you? In what ways does your congregation submit to Jesus' authority? In what ways does your congregation need to change, so that your congregation may more perfectly submit to Jesus' authority? What forces might resist this change?
Luke 5:27	Is Jesus calling you (personally) to leave anything behind so that you can follow him? How about your congregation? Is there anything you need or want to place under his authority? What might happen if you did?
John 1:43-44	Who is your Nathanael; who do you know that you could tell about Jesus? Who could your congregation be telling about Jesus? How would you do that?
John 12:20-26	Why would someone seek Jesus? Is there anything that you feel called to sacrifice so that you may bear fruit that pleases God? What does it mean for you to serve Jesus? What might it look like if many of you in your congregation began to think more about serving Jesus and being concerned about the mission he has for your congregation?

- **Children's Message Idea:**

First, the leader sings a few seconds of "Jesus Loves Me", or other familiar children's song.

Second, the leader starts over, inviting the children to sing along. That sounds better...and it is much more fun, too.

Third, the leader starts over, with the children, inviting the congregation to sing along. That sounds even better! And we can all enjoy singing!

Conclusion: Sometimes, a "solo" is good; other times, a "choir" is better; but sometimes it is better if everyone joins in. It can be that way with serving Jesus too. Sometimes, "one-on-one" works best; other time cooperating gets the job done; other times we need everyone's help. The bigger the job, the more people we need to get it done. When we work together as the ELCA, we can accomplish great things for Jesus in the world.

## Week Two: September 27, 2009 – Our Mission as a Synod

*The word “synod” comes from syn- “together” + hodos “a way, or road”*

- **Sermon by Bishop John David Schleicher** – Approximately 10 minutes  
Bishop Schleicher uses the scripture readings appointed by the lectionary for this day to engage the topic of mission. This sermon is primarily intended for use during worship. It is approximately ten minutes in length.
- **Mission Partner Video** – Approximately 20 minutes  
This video consists of engaging vignettes of new and renewing congregations in our synod which provide an introduction to opportunities for your congregation to become a mission partner. Being a mission partner is to be engaged in sharing a mission field or type of outreach that may be different from your own, which in effect becomes an extension of your ministry.

If your congregation is already a mission partner, this video may be used as a way of lifting up and affirming this partnership with your congregation.

The video could be used in one of the following ways:

1. For discussion during Sunday School, with adults and with youth
2. For discussion during midweek small group gatherings, such as a Bible Study or a women’s circle meeting
3. During a council meeting
4. As part of a new member orientation to the ELCA

Our goal is for every congregation in the synod to be a mission partner with another congregation. If you are already a mission partner, please consider becoming a mission partner. Here are some ways:

- Adding a line item to the annual budget
- “Noisy” (or “quiet”) offerings during worship
- Special offerings, on special occasions for either congregation (anniversaries, milestones, etc.)
- Individual gifts
- Matching fund gifts
- A special gift from a memorial or endowment fund
- A special gift to help with immediate financial assistance
- An immediate gift to help with the current economic challenges would be greatly appreciated, along with a plan for next year’s budget

- **Individual or Group Study: Disciples are “Doers of the Word”**

- John 8:31-32            What does it mean to “continue” in Jesus’ word? What can the truth that comes from Jesus set you free from, that is false or misleading? Are there any struggles that your congregation is “stuck” in, that Jesus could set you free from? How could your congregation discover or be changed by the truth that sets you free?
- John 13:34-35            In what ways do the members of your congregation show their love for one another? In what ways could or does your congregation show its love for other congregations? What could we as a synod accomplish together? What could we as a national church body accomplish together?
- Matthew 16:24-26        Disciples follow the way of the cross. What do you feel called to sacrifice, or “give up”, to more fully experience life in Christ, personally and as a member of your congregation? What could your congregation let go of so that Christ may be glorified?

- **Children’s Message Idea:**

Every living thing that God has created has a mission; a purpose, a job. What is the purpose of a flower? What is the purpose of honey bees? What is the purpose of a tree? What is the purpose of a beaver? God made living things with purposes that fit together. What mission has God given your parent(s)? What mission has God given you? What mission has God given this church? What mission has God given to the whole world? It all fits together.

## Week Three: October 4, 2009 – Our Mission as a Congregation

*The word “mission” may be used as a translation of the Bible word diakonia - “service”*

This week is intended for you to lift up the mission your congregation has in your context. There is no DVD for this week; but perhaps you could put together a slideshow that illustrates your congregation engaged in mission. Or perhaps you could invite someone to share a story of how a ministry of your congregation has touched someone’s life in a powerful or positive way.

- **Sermon Starters for Your Context**
  - How is God calling us to respond to what was presented in the first two weeks?
  - What is our congregation’s mission in light of the wider mission of the church?
  - How shall we as a congregation respond over the next 12 months?
  - Take a fresh look at your congregation’s mission statement. What action words are used?
  - What could your congregation look like five years from now, by living out your mission statement?
  - Is your congregation struggling with a particular issue right now? If so, in what ways could your mission inform the discussion/decision to be made?
  - Does your congregation have an unspoken but widely accepted mission that is taking energy but not returning energy; that has no intentional connection with the mission Christ has entrusted to his followers? Can you name that unspoken mission? Are there any values involved that could be directed to mission in Jesus’ name?
- **Sample questions that could serve as a starting point for discussion surrounding your congregation’s mission:**
  - What unique gifts does the congregation have for its witness?
  - What unique challenges face this congregation?
  - Jesus calls his followers to be servants. What are the needs of the community in which you are called to serve? Do you have a clear idea of whom God has called your congregation to serve?
  - A mission can kindle passion, facilitate healthy functioning, build unity, and clarify direction. Does your congregation’s mission do any of the above? Could it? How?
- **Individual or Group Study – Disciples Bear Good Fruit**

John 15:1-11

What are the blessings of abiding in Jesus? Is your congregation a place that leads both members and guests to abide in Jesus?

A vine has many branches; together they contribute to the health of the vine and bear much fruit. What (or who) connects you to the other congregations in our synod; in the ELCA? A grape vine has the common mission of producing grapes (fruit); what mission do you share with the other congregations of the ELCA?

Would you say that your congregation “bears much fruit? Describe it. How could you share with the other congregations in our synod in bearing much fruit together? In what ways could the ELCA bear much fruit, and how could your congregation join in that?

How can we glorify our heavenly Father? What would it look like? What would it feel like? How would it change your congregation; your community; the world?

Ephesians 4:15-16

Is there a situation in your congregation that could benefit from “speaking the truth in love”? What is that truth? What is at stake? Who could speak that truth?

What does it mean for each part of the body of Christ to “work properly”? Does “each part work properly” in your congregation? Give some examples of what does “work properly”. What could use some attention so that it can “work properly”?

Is your congregation being built up in love? What would it look like for your congregation to be built up in love?

Is our synod being “built up in love?” What is God calling your congregation to do to help it to be built up in love?

- **Children’s Message Idea:**

Serving others makes everyone happy, including God.

Ask the children if they like to be “helpers”. Ask for examples of how they are helpers for the people in their lives, such as parents, teachers, neighbors, or other children. Ask if they think that it makes God happy to see them helping others. Why? Can they think of ways that your congregation helps other people? Perhaps you could bring examples for them to see, like a can of food from the food bank. Tell a story from the Bible when Jesus helped someone. Jesus wants us to help others, too.

## **Congregation Council Message**

This video will be 5-7 minutes long. It may be used apart from the other content if your budget process precedes your use of the other content.

A statement of intent and cover letter will be sent along with the DVD.

## **Suggested songs and hymns from ELCA worship books that relate to Mission**

LBW 397, ELW 668	O Zion, Haste
WOV 755, ELW 576	We All Are One in Mission
WOV 756, ELW 579	Lord, You Give the Great Commission
LBW 433, ELW 729	The Church of Christ, in Every Age
W&P 42	Glorify Thy Name
LBW 377, ELW 660	Lift High the Cross
LBW 503, ELW 810	O Jesus, I Have Promised
LBW 492	O Master, Let Me Walk with You
W&P 132	Step by Step
LBW 406, ELW 685	Take My Life, That I May Be
LBW 383, ELW 669	Rise Up, O Saints of God!
ELW 526	God Is Here!
ELW 574	Here I Am, Lord
ELW 793	Be Thou My Vision
ELW 674	Let us talents and tongues employ
ELW 396	Spirit of Gentleness
ELW 677	This little light of mine
ELW 551	The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve
ELW 513	Listen, God Is Calling

## **Suggested Medleys**

Change My Heart, O God; We Are An Offering; Here I Am, Lord  
Spirit of the Living God; Change My Heart, O God; We Will Glorify  
Open Our Eyes, Lord; As the Deer; Sanctuary  
Bind Us Together; Blest Be the Tie That Binds

## **Prayers for Worship**

*ELW Leaders Desk Edition, pages 138ff*

General, #246

After Communion, #252, #253

After Worship, #259

Mission, #276-280

Social Ministry, #302-311

Stewardship, #314-315

Spiritual Life, Commitment, #350-351

Francis of Assisi, #356

Martin Luther, #359

Mother Teresa, #360

Consider Using Eucharistic Prayer VIII, page 378

It is suggested that we join together in using these resources on Sept. 20, 27, and Oct. 4, 2009. However, each congregation is free to use the resources when it best suits their schedule. For example, you could schedule a congregational potluck, view one or more of the videos after the meal, and discuss the content of the video(s) which you have seen together.

Thank you for your partnership in mission,

Pastor Clayton H. Bates

Assistant to the Bishop and

Director for Evangelical Mission

North/West Lower Michigan Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”*