



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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**News for all members of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod**

**January 2010**

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## **New Year Greetings!**

I give thanks for a blessed weekend:

I presided at the ordination of Andrew Tengwall on December 11 at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN and the following Sunday, presided at his installation as pastor of Lutheran Church of the Savior, Kalamazoo. The calling to be your bishop is richly graced with occasions like this, publically welcoming gifted people into the ministry of Word and sacrament. It was a joy to meet Andrew's family and friends and to experience the radiant hopefulness of a congregation ready to open a new chapter of ministry "for the sake of the world."

A blessed fall:

As your bishop, I have had many opportunities to visit with congregations, with individual members, and with pastors this fall about the Ministry Policy changes adopted at our Churchwide Assembly. Though often passionate and intense, almost always those visits have been respectful, thoughtful, and mutually deepening. I expect those conversations will continue in the months ahead, and I truly welcome that. Together with our conference deans I want to be with you, either to celebrate or mightily struggle with the Assembly decisions. I recently received preliminary drafts for implementing these changes, for example, in the Visions and Expectations document. You can see them (and respond with comments) by visiting [www.elca.org/ministripolicies](http://www.elca.org/ministripolicies) and following the links.

A blessed New Year:

This is primarily a prayer for you and a plea to you as you wait for Jesus to reveal himself in ever surprising ways in your personal life, and in your life in community. I am not weary of being reminded or of reminding others of God's faithfulness. Especially now, when our financial resources are the leanest in recent memory, our wealth is in the loving, trustworthy relationships the Holy Spirit continues to fashion and nourish.

I do ask that you be bold to invite members of your congregation to consider the multitude of ways the world is blessed through faithful mission support/benevolence. Two options for additional, year-end or New Year gifts:

- a) *Synod-wide Special Gifts* will help us meet our obligations to new and renewing congregations, Living Water Ministries, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and Michigan Lutheran Campus Ministry.
- b) *Annual ELCA Vision for Mission Challenge* gifts (offerings over and above normal mission support) will mitigate the debilitating effects of the recession.

Make checks payable to "North/West Lower Michigan Synod" with either *Synod-wide Special Gifts* or *ELCA Vision for Mission Challenge* on the memo line. Gifts received on or before January 31, 2010 will be recorded as revenue in this fiscal year.

On behalf of your whole synod staff, Clay Bates, Julie Bailey, Nancy Brousseau, Regina Miller, Margie Bauer, Rebecca Bossenbroek, and myself, I wish you every blessing for this New Year.

Your brother in Christ,  
Bishop John

*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. (Ephesians 3:20-21)*

Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world!

## **A Trinity, Saginaw “Thank You”**

An example of the ELCA’s tagline, “God’s Work. Our Hands” occurred last month at Trinity, Saginaw. The cost of heating the Trinity Center, formerly an elementary school and recently an activity center for neighborhood youth, and Trinity Church, has become prohibitive. So the decision was made to turn off the boilers while the congregation worships at St. John Lutheran Church a few blocks away. Only one contractor was found to bid on draining the boilers and pipes, and the bid was for thousands of dollars.

A general call went out to God’s people in the Bay Area Conference to see if anyone knew anyone who might do the job for a more modest sum. The result was a crew of people who sacrificed a day of their lives to be good stewards of this property and get the job done. The buildings were prepared to hibernate for the cold winter, but the church’s heart was beating warm and strong through the loving work of this crew serving as God’s hands. Our thanks to these willing servants.

## **Tips from the Synod EKO Team**

### **Circulate your heat and save!**

Running your ceiling fan clockwise, at a slow speed, recirculates warmer air that accumulates at the ceiling, reducing energy consumption by up to 10 percent.

### **Lower that thermostat and save!**

Turning your thermostat down just 5 degrees can cut energy bills (and pollution) by 10 percent, so keep it at 68 degrees Fahrenheit in winter and 60 degrees or less while you sleep.

### **Use cold water to do your laundry and Save!**

Another way to save energy is to wash your laundry in cold water whenever possible. Since each load uses about 40 gallons of water, this small step can make a big difference: One household can eliminate more than a thousand pounds of greenhouse gas emissions in a year just by washing in cold.

Source: (2007, November 12). On a Winter’s Day. The Green Life. Sierra Club. Retrieved December 15, 2009 from <http://sierraclub.typepad.com/greenlife/2007/11/on-a-winters-da.html>.

## **Synod Hunger Team Looks Back on 2009**

Looking back on the year, and reflecting on what we’ve shared, it is heart-warming to know:

- In Mali, Fatima Guindo is using our gifts of water to grow shallots to sell to support her family.
- Artemio Canuan of the Philippines now has a successful, profitable farm, and hope for the future.
- In Bolivia, two-year-old Evo Marcan will grow up stronger and healthier now that his community is growing more nutritious food.
- Donna in New Bedford, Massachusetts receives food as part of a Sharing Harvest Program, a community farm project that grows fresh vegetables for local food pantries.
- Homes damaged by flooding in Rushford, Minnesota, Cedar Rapids, Iowa and in other places were repaired by volunteers.
- Local food pantries and homeless shelters have filled countless needs.

Our gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, for disaster response and for local needs have been given in love and offered a hand up to many, many people. There is hope this Christmas where none existed earlier before. Thank you for your generous support throughout the year. Your gifts warm many hearts.