



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

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Mission Minutes

Pastor Roger Hardy

Director for Evangelical mission

Greetings. I will be introducing myself and some thoughts about our evangelical mission through a DVD that will come to all leaders in March. Look for it!

Have you ever asked or have you heard some else ask, "Just exactly what happens to our money when we send it to the Synod?" Here is a story from Advent Lutheran Church, a new congregation in our N/W Lower Michigan Synod that receives partnership support from the synod and churchwide expressions of the ELCA.

This story was submitted by Pastor Justin Grimm, mission developer and pastor of Advent.

'Let me introduce you to a person we will call Bill. Bill is your normal, hard working thirty-something who has a wife and two young children. Bill grew up in a family that attended church once in a while, but it was really nothing that ever meant anything to him. All of a sudden there is news of a new congregation starting in the Lake Ann area where he and his family live and his wife has been Lutheran but inactive all her life. She convinces him to go and he agrees. He goes, week after week and finally it seems he is going because he wants to. He then starts asking questions, wondering about this God that he hears preached and eventually asks to be baptized. Today...he serves on the council, helps lead the youth group and leads worship on occasion. Bill represents one example of many of how new ministries like Advent enable us as the church to reach new people for the sake of the Gospel.'

Is your congregation interested in saving some money? Here is what could make for a savings to your congregation possible. IF 65% of ALL OUR ELCA-PRIMARY HEALTH PLAN MEMBERS AND THEIR SPOUSES complete Mayo Clinic Health Assessment then ALL congregations in the Synod will receive a 2% discount on their health contributions to the Board of Pensions. All ELCA plan members and their spouses must complete the assessment by April 30, 2010. Since contribution rates increased 2% in 2010, the discount would offset this increase.

Access the Health Risk Assessment at
<https://www20.mayoclinicembodhealth.com/index.cfm?redirect=1>

Earthkeeping Opportunities

Dawn Smith

Earthkeeping Opportunities (EKO) Team

Here are some friendly tips for you to consider as you file your income tax returns:

File electronically

If every tax return was e-filed it would save 660 million sheets of paper. If this amount of paper was stacked it would be taller than 36,000 six-foot-tall IRS agents.

Electronic Tax Refund

Instead of waiting weeks for your check to arrive via U.S. Mail, utilize the electronic refund option. Your refund will be in your bank sooner and less postage, paper and gas will be used.

Brokerage Statements

Go Paperless. If every investor in the United States received their information on line, it would save enough paper to fill the New York Stock Exchange from floor to ceiling.

This month's tip comes from "the green book" www.readthegreenbook.com

Free Food

Synod Hunger Team

Do you find yourself wasting time surfing the web? Do your kids need to brush up on their multiplication tables? Check out www.freerice.com. FreeRice has two goals: 1) Provide education to everyone for free and 2) Help end world hunger by providing rice for hungry people for free. There are six subjects from which to choose. Ten grains of rice are donated to United Nations World Food Program for every multiple choice question that is correctly answered (over 70 billion grains to date)). It's fun and easy to do. You help feed the world's hungry, and you just might learn what a Kagu is!

ELCA Disaster Relief Update on Situation in Haiti

- Shelter still prioritized as urgent need
- 100,000 people still displaced without shelter
- Ministry of Health begins vaccination campaign
- 19,440 Haitian-Americans have been repatriated through receiving sites in Florida
- The US Government continues to evacuate Haitians with critical injuries
- ELCA commits \$25,000 to Lutheran Services in Georgia to help medical evacuees
- Pastor Lauvanus of the Lutheran Church in Haiti returns to Haiti
- ELCA has given more than 20,000 gifts totaling 3.6 million
- Thrivent members can receive match funds now at www.thrivent.com
- ELCA Disaster Response blog at: <http://blogs.elca.org/disasterresponse/haiti>