

The Pink Link

Saturday, June 9, 2007

2007 New England Synod Assembly

**Godspeed
as you travel
home today**

'My story is all about listening,' Payne tells assembly

*By Pastor Rebecca Wegner
Good Shepherd, Brunswick, Maine*

Using a combination of images and biblical insights, Bishop Margaret G. Payne Friday introduced the overriding theme for the next five years of our life together as the New England Synod: *Called to Listen, Called to Live*.

"It is not easy to listen deeply," Bishop Payne noted as she invited us to join her in a five-year effort of holy listening that will run from June 2007 through June 2012.

Listening can evoke recognition of the need for transformation – an often difficult process for each of us, noted the Bishop, but it also provides the connection to a deeper relationship with God and with one another. Holy listening can become the means for conflict resolution within our congregations, a way of providing extravagant welcome and a way to understand our work in the world.

The full text of the Bishop's message was made available to voting members following her address so that congregations could

Continues on page 2

The offering taken at last night's Festive Assembly Eucharist totaled \$3,877.31, marked for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund.



**Living in God's amazing grace:
Thanks be to God!**



Bishop Munib Younan of our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and Bishop Margaret G. Payne (both center) with the six new rostered leaders set apart for public ministry at last night's Festive Eucharist: the Rev. Katherine Shaner (front, left), the Rev. Andrew Borden, the Rev. Derek Harman, the Rev. Carolyn Tryggstad, the Rev. Callista Isabelle, and Jessica Bunger; Associate in Ministry. Bishop Younan participated in the laying on of hands. (Photo by Lisa Teichmann, Messiah, Amherst, N.H.)

Six set apart to public ministry

At last night's Festive Eucharist, two men and four women were set apart to public ministry to serve God "so faithfully and so visibly that you become a glimpse of the kingdom and a sign of hope" to those longing for freedom, peace and new life.

In her sermon, Bishop Margaret G. Payne said that it was clear in Isaiah 42 that God longs for justice for all people. She asked that the Holy Spirit touch and fill the six new servant leaders "so completely today with the power and wisdom of God that you ... not only love justice, but do it."

She referenced her trip in April to the troubled Holy Land, where the rosemary plant grew everywhere, symbolizing relentless hope.

Five were ordained as pastors; one woman was commissioned as an associate in ministry (AIM) at the inspiring service at a packed Trinity, Worcester, Mass.

● **The Rev. Andrew Borden**, a former Associate in Ministry, will serve as pastor at Zion, Worcester, Mass., beginning tomorrow (June 10). Con-

Continues on page 2

LISTENING, continued from page one

have a “preview” of the plans for ministry that she envisions for the next five years.

Year 1 (June 2007) begins with this synod assembly and introduces us to the theme: *On the Way and Listening* (Isaiah 55:3). In this coming year, we will begin to think of ourselves less as an institution and more deeply as disciples of Jesus. Bishop Payne will begin to travel throughout the Synod in September to intentionally listen to the stories of ministry taking place and to invite us to begin to learn how to listen better to one another and to God, asking the question, “How might holy listening change our hearts and our communities of faith?”

Year 2 (beginning June 2008) will follow the theme: *Listen: What is the Spirit saying to our church?* (Revelation 2:29). Within our Synod, we will hold up the vision of being people who pray unceasingly. We will be invited to listen hard through prayer and worship. We will be encouraged to deepen our spiritual practices, our care of creation and our study of scripture while engaging the question: “What is God’s Spirit saying to our congregation? What is the new vision being whispered to our church?”

Year 3 (beginning June 2009) lifts up the theme *Listen: What is Jesus asking of us?* (Mark 9:7). As a Synod whose vision statement includes the call to give extravagantly, how do we learn to move from modest expectations of membership to the more radical and joyful experience of discipleship?

Year 4 (beginning June 2010), we will be listening to hear *What does the Bible say about justice?* (Isaiah 59:15-16) and exploring ways to learn to understand deeply that we are “rich Christians in a hungry world.”

Year 5 (beginning 2011), the final year of the plan, invites us to *Listen: What is God’s plan for our work together?* (John 15:4-5). Congregations will be encouraged to listen for voices of new partnerships to strengthen our witness to Christ.

Huck re-elected in Minnesota

The Rev. Harold L. (“Huck”) Usgaard was re-elected Friday on the first ballot to a second six-year term as bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, our partner synod. (Our assemblies are in session at the same time, coincidentally.) Bishop Usgaard was a guest at our 2004 synod assembly.



Huck Usgaard

A DVD OF ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS IS AVAILABLE. CALL THE SYNOD OFFICE.

-
- Look for additional synod assembly coverage
 - on the synod web site: www.nesynod.org
-

EUCCHARIST, continued from page one

firm in the United Methodist Church, he later served both Emanuel, Worcester, Mass., and Zion, Oxford, Mass., in music ministry. In 1984, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in management engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and most recently worked as principal industrial engineer for Bose Corp. Borden, who studied at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass., is co-leader of the Central Massachusetts youth group, LIPY. Borden and his wife, Karen, have had the pleasure of parenting Borden’s three daughters into adulthood.

●**The Rev. Derek Harman**, who was raised in a missionary family, spent seven years growing up in the Caribbean in Trinidad, West Indies, and Geneva, Switzerland. A former social worker in Seattle, Wash., he received his Master of Divinity degree in January from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. Harman is married to Dawn Piso Harman, and they have an 11-year-old black lab. He will serve as pastor of Grace, West Springfield, Mass., as of early July.

●**The Rev. Callista Isabelle**, who grew up in Iowa, was confirmed in the United Church of Christ. She became a Lutheran while a student at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn. Isabelle will continue to serve as associate university chaplain at Yale, New Haven, Conn., a call she began in August 2006. She is married to Geoffrey Isabelle.

●**The Rev. Katherine Shaner** grew up in Nebraska, where her father served as a Lutheran pastor. She began her theological studies in Germany before coming to Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., to complete her Master of Divinity degree in 2002. Shaner has been called to serve as associate pastor at University Lutheran, Cambridge, beginning in September. Until then, she will serve as the sabbatical pastor at Grace, Needham, Mass. Shaner’s sponsor was her father; her mother designed and crafted her ordination stole.

●**The Rev. Carolyn Tryggstad**, a former elementary school teacher, has been called to serve as pastor at Joy in Christ, Abington, Mass., beginning July 8. She had been a member of Emmanuel, Norwood, Mass., since joining the Lutheran Church in 1979. Born and raised in New York City, she and her husband Reidar have three adult children in the United States, as well as his daughter and three grandchildren in Norway. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass.

●**Jessica Bunger**, who has accepted a call to serve as director of youth ministry at Niantic Community Church, Niantic, Conn., was commissioned for service as an Associate in Ministry, one of the three rostered lay ministries in the ELCA. (The other two are diaconal minister and deaconess.) A native of Wisconsin, she received her Master of Arts degree with a concentration in youth culture and mission in 2004 from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. Her husband, the Rev. Sean Bunger, was ordained in 2006 to serve as associate pastor at St. Luke, Gales Ferry, Conn. They have a two-year-old son, Seth.