

Drenched

The e-newsletter of your Youth, Young Adult, and Family Ministry Team of the New England Synod.

Bringing in the Other Sheep...*Steve Kennedy*

I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. John 10:16

One of the unique things about serving in a synod position is that you get to visit congregations and talk to people throughout our area. The unique part is that during those conversations you do not have to think about how that congregation's ministry is "better" or "worse" than your own. There have been plenty of times when I sat through the dreaded "open forum" for youth ministers. Count yourself lucky if this has not happened to you. But, usually, at some point during the "conversation" it becomes clear that one person will let drop that in their youth group they have 25 kids and they are struggling with "x." The next person will comment that when their youth group was "that size" they found that "y" helped. And so for a while we get to hear about the various sizes of everyone's youth ministry.

For those folks in the room who were worried how to keep their group of three, the discussion tends to blur after a while. The forum is eventually less about ministry and more about **gamesmanship**. Believe it or not, at some point we are all guilty of a little pride when things are going well in our ministry. It does not matter if you are a pastor, a paid lay leader, or more importantly, a lay volunteer. We all want to know that what we are doing is great work. We all want that "way to go" affirmation.

In the midst of all this personal need for attention, we can forget that we are **but one mission outpost in a sea of mission outposts for Jesus**. We are all part of the community and body of Christ. **When one church struggles, we all struggle. When one church succeeds, we all succeed.** We are not in competition for Jesus. We are all on the same team.

(contd. Page 2)

Networking opportunities

Looking for a way to connect with other youth ministry leaders in your area? We are looking for people who are willing to host and invite others from your region/city/area to a time of Bible Study and fellowship with your peers. We have two groups forming currently. **Groups decide how often they meet and where.**

Rhode Island Group
(Woonsocket area)
Contact: Kris Bacon
(bacon12@cox.net)

New Hampshire
(Nashua area)
Contact: Dan Skibba
(dmskibba@adelphia.net)

Contact Steve Kennedy
(stev4uth@hotmail.com) if you are interested in forming one of these groups in your area.

CHECK OUT THE SYNOD'S YOUTH MINISTRY WEBSITE: www.getdrenched.org.
The site should be up and running soon..

Looking for news and information from throughout the synod? Check out the congregational "Care Packet" at <http://www.nesynod.org/care-package.html>.

Did you know that we currently have emails from volunteers and lay staff like you representing 31% of all New England Synod congregations!!

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ELCA YOUTH MINISTRY EVENT Tampa, FL, February 1-5, 2007

Extravaganza 2007 Registration is open! You can now go to the Extravaganza page and click on the **"Register Now"** link to register and pay online, or to download a paper information and registration form that you can mail or fax in.

This year, we're gathering in **Tampa, Florida** from **Feb. 2-5, 2007** (Intensive Care Courses run Feb. 1-2) under the theme "Open House". There are going to be great general sessions with phenomenal speakers and musicians, dynamic workshops and great networking opportunities. Program information can be found on the web site, as well as info on cost, travel discounts and more. The program isn't complete yet, and we keep adding to the web site every week, so be sure to check back.

Plan now on joining us in Tampa in February! Email Steve if you are going so that we can connect at the event!

http://www.elcaymnet.org/index.cfm?PAGE_ID=52

Spiritual Renewal Retreat March 9-11, 2007 @ Calumet

Save these dates next winter! Steve will be leading a retreat just for adult youthworkers. We will do bible study, learn some cool spiritual practices and take time to renew your spirit. No shop talk, just time for you with God! Registration will be limited to 22 people. More details with the next newsletter!

Reach out...(cont.)

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The passage from John struck me because it is a reminder that regardless of how many people are in our youth group, or in our pews on Sunday morning, there are still people who are not hearing the word of Christ. If all are truly welcome, then we need to take a hard look around our own congregation and see who those "all" really are.

As you begin your fall ministry, I challenge each of you to ask yourselves, **"How will we bringing others to Jesus?"** Do you know your neighbors within a block from your church? If not, now is a good time to get to know who they are and if they are a part of another Christian flock or not. Encourage your youth to invite their school friends, especially those who do not have a church home, to youth group and help them create an open atmosphere that welcomes these people into your community.

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"When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God."

---Acts 4:24

The **Lutheran Youth Organization** of the ELCA invites you on **Wednesdays at 4:24 pm** no matter what time zone to pray

Daily conversation with God is important. Based on Acts 4:24, the 4:24 prayer campaign is designed to provide youth and others with a time of intentional prayer and reflection. Whether it is lifting the concerns of our own hearts or joining together in a unified word, we encourage each other to pray. Thus, at 4:24 pm on Wednesdays, no matter what time zone, you are invited to stop and pray.

A group of youth in New Hampshire led by one of our synod delegates is looking to organize a conference LYO for NH. Samantha Claussen is working on beginning an initial LYO group that can find a way to operate most efficiently. After a little experimentation and trials, we will create a solid board that will be devoted to Youth and Youth projects. More details as they organize.

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5 Keys to Balanced Youth Ministry: Part 1, WORSHIP

“Worship” is generally defined as a form of adoring reverence to God. It can take many forms from one denomination to the next, and even from one congregation to the next. How you “worship” becomes a distinct part of the community that you are in regardless of what you use to worship. A lot of times, the objects we use to worship God sometimes take on more significance than the actual act of worship. Regardless of what we use, how we use it, or even when we do it, worship is ultimately about God. Youth ministry is ultimately about connecting youth to God through their relationships.

So, what does worship look like in your youth group? Attending a worship service and sitting together as a group every week is great but is really about community building. I have been in congregations where the youth group stakes out an unoccupied or claimed pew in the middle of the sanctuary, in the front row, and more typically some where near the back. But, when many groups gather for their weekly, or monthly, time as a “youth group” worship tends to be absent.

If you go to <http://thesaurus.reference.com/search?q=worship> (an on-line version of Roget's Thesaurus) you will see a number of words used to describe worship. As you scroll down the page, you will see how the various verb substitutes for this word are quite numerous.

What we want to be able to do for your group over the next few articles is help you unpack

what each of the 5 primary areas of youth ministry can be for your ministry (worship, education, stewardship, outreach, and fellowship). The best thing to do is to get some of your leaders, both youth and adults together and ask them this question: **“What one word comes to mind when you think of “worship”?** The key is to help them brainstorm various things that are not adjectives, or descriptive words like “boring” or “interesting” or “moving,” but rather things that help describe what worship is or does for them. Once you have a word that stands out to the group, you need to write a “key question” to help shape the ministry activities you plan to do.

For example, in one group that went through this process, many words were tossed up onto the easel pad. But the one that stood out for the group was **“gather.”** For this particular group, worship was a time that they gathered together to remind themselves about God's direction in their life. One version of their corresponding key question was “How will this activity **gather** us together as a community?” This question was given meaning for the group as they understood now what worship might be. They never had a lock-in without some form of worshipping activity (including communion), there was always some prayer-type activity, or a time to sing together a favorite song, whenever they “gathered.”

Adding a time of “worship” when you gather is important to recognizing who we are as Christians in the world. Allowing youth to shape that time can bring them closer to understanding their own relationship to God and their place in the faith community.

Next Issue: Education

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IDEAS BOX

With each e-newsletter we will try to include some helpful information for your ministry from all of you! So we thought starting with that age old question about what to do for Bible Study might be a good way to get started.

Q: Help! I need to put together a Bible study group for my High school youth. Where can I get something that will help me with this?

Send your answers to Steve at stev4uth@hotmail.com, put the words "IDEA BOX" in the Subject line.

Have a question about ministry? Send that along to!

Also, *The Lutheran Link*, can be viewed on-line at <http://www.nesynod.org/thelink.html>.

PROJECT CONNECT!!

Connect your graduating high school students to a Lutheran presence at college. Enter names into the **Project Connect** database, www.elcconnect.com or www.projectconnect.org These names will be forwarded to a Lutheran campus pastor at the student's school, if a Lutheran ministry is present at the school, so that they can be in touch once the school year starts.

Any rostered clergy or parish administrator can request a login and password for the database - we especially encourage you to update it each year, at graduation time! For more information, contact Carl Sharon, carl.sharon@yale.edu. Thanks!

MISSION TRIP OPPORTUNITY!!

Looking for an opportunity for a mission event? Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran (Groton, MA) church is inviting other interested youth groups in the synod to join them for a Work Camp experience through Group Work Camps. The trip is scheduled for June 24-30, 2007, and is open to those youth who have completed grades 8 – 12. Contact Wayne Twombly at Wayne.Twombly@Charter.Net, or Pastor Krista Henning-Ferkin at klhenning@yahoo.com for more details and to let them know you are interested!

GATHERING IN THE EAST SEEKS NEW ENGLAND VOLUNTEERS!

Be a part of the exciting planning team for next summer's Region 7 Youth Gathering in the East! The coordinators of the event are looking for **2 adults and at least one youth to serve**. If interested, contact Steve Kennedy ASAP (stev4uth@hotmail.com) to get connected for the next organizational meeting!

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Suggested Reading: [Blue Like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality](#) by Donald Miller (Thomas Nelson, 2003). This is one of those books you just keep reading because Miller's writing is engaging, at times poignant, comical, and always thought provoking. The book follows his faith journey and his seeking for a relevant expression of Christian faith. There are plenty of interesting stories along the way that will cause you to pause and reflect at your own spiritual journey. The story of the confession booth is almost worth the price of the book alone. This is one of those books for your own soul that will resonate with you if you have ever had that love-hate relationship with "Church" while never losing site of your love of Jesus. It might make an interesting discussion piece to use with young adults in your congregation as part of a book study. Some of you may have caught Donald Miller at the Youth Gathering in San Antonio where he was one of the speakers.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
NORTHEAST REGION YOUTH GATHERING
July 19-22, 2007
@ West Chester University, PA
For GRADES 9-12**

**For details and registration, head to
www.youthgathering2007.com.**

JOB POSTINGS

For other ELCA postings go to the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Site:

http://www.elcaymnet.org/index.cfm?PAGE_ID=753

Positions are also posted at www.elca.org/employment.

This newsletter is e-mailed to the New England Synod's volunteers in children, youth, and young adult ministries as well as rostered leaders in the synod. Feel free to forward this email to others on your team!

This is YOUR newsletter. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. Have a devotional thought you wish to share? Send it in!