

Drenched

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

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE, NOW UP AND RUNNING: www.getdrenched.org.

Devo: Christmas Lights...*Heidi Jakoby*

Living in the light.
1John 1:72

We do not lose heart.
Corinthians 4:1

As I write this I have noticed how much like a young child I have felt as I drive around various neighborhoods looking at all the Christmas lights on all the trees, lawns, houses and roofs. Wow look at everyone's light shining so brightly in the darkness all to celebrate the birth of the one true light, Jesus. I am sure many of us use candles and the symbol of light in our ministries. During this time I enjoy looking at all the youth and people in our congregation and how they are trying to live out their call.

It has been an interesting time for me in my faith journey and my life as a professional lay leader. Over the past two months, the two Bible phrases above have continued to speak to my heart and my journey. I had an opportunity to join with youth workers from around the country who represented 12 denominations at the first Youth Ministry Summit. The theme was: "We do not lose heart". There were so many faithful people there who wanted to help youth be and do their best. They all truly seemed like triple A adults (Authentic, Available and Accessible). I have never experienced a place filled with such hope for the future of youth ministry. A place where our hearts were continuously filled by the stories we each shared. The stories of one youth who had been touched by our ministry, and the understanding that for every story we hear there are many more we will never know. Working with youth is like that, if you are lucky, a youth may someday share with you how important your presence, your care, your time was to them but often we will never know.

But, we do not lose heart. What I discovered is that we need to know who we are and how we walk in the light each day and each moment. How does our light shine? How do we own our own Discipleship? We all know that youth can see right through an act; therefore, it is important that we explore our own sense of discipleship. Explore our own individual call and how we live that out each and everyday.

The Summit was at Disney World. There was time for reflection and renewal. I realized that continuously going from one ministry obligation or activity to another is not enough. It is important, and just as critical, to take time for reflection and play. As youth ministry workers, (I am including both volunteers and paid staff) it is important that we know how to play, to clear our minds and truly experience joy. Sometimes we get so caught up in what we have to get done, what we need to read, that we forget we are not in this alone and that God will help us and guide us if we let Him. We need to allow time and space for the Holy Spirit to work with and through us. (contd. page 5)

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.**

Metro Boston Group

Contact: Paul Eldenkram
(paul@byggmeister.com)

Rhode Island Group (Woonsocket area)

Contact: Kris Bacon
(bacon12@cox.net)

New Hampshire (Nashua area)

Contact: Dan Skibba
(dmskibba@comcast.net)

Contact Steve Kennedy

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

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

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Spiritual Renewal Retreat

For Adult leaders working with children, youth, & young adults

March 9-11, 2007
@ Calumet

Registration sheet at end of newsletter. 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.

REGISTER YOUR ADULT VOLUNTEERS BEFORE JANUARY

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.

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

SYNOD YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP EVENT

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, April 28!** The Drenched team invites all your youth ministry leaders (**adults and youth**) to join us in Westboro, MA. Details of the event coming in January! There will be time to learn how to improve your youth group and connect with other leaders.

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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.

*"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.

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5 Keys to Balanced Youth Ministry: Part 2, EDUCATION

Like many of you, I began my foray into Youth Ministry with a single request, "Would you like to teach the High School Sunday School Class?" Answering "Yes" took me on a road that has brought me closer to Christ and introduced me to hundreds, if not thousands, of young people living out their faith and growing in their discipleship.

But, after a few of those youth group nights where I came to "hang" with my Sunday School youth, I realized that something was missing. There is nothing wrong with coming together for some fun, but just like those first few meetings where we gathered without even so much as a shared prayer, I felt we were missing something else too.

"Education" these days often is replaced in church speak by the word "discipleship." When we come together in our youth group setting, we need to make sure there is some aspect of what we do that can help us grow in being a disciple of Jesus. That may mean that we say Jesus' name once in a while too!

There are plenty of ways to use a few minutes in your youth group time to get an important point across to your group. It can be about group building, a faith issue, something that youth in your area are struggling with (drug use, suicide, teen pregnancy, etc.). But there should be some time, in a devotion or other activity, where we hear the word of God and get a chance to think and discuss it. If we do not do this in our Youth Groups, where else will our teens get a chance to have this opportunity?

At some point you will discover that a "devotion" time, which can help set the theme or focus for an evening, will begin to differ from a learning time, which can help create an interactive learning, hands-on experience for the group.

Anytime you can find a way to involve active learning to involve youth in learning you will see plenty of great growth. There are lots of places to find good active learning Bible study activities. But the key is that the group must also own what this will look like.

One of the greatest dangers in education components in Youth Ministry is that it can come across as a top down experience. That is to say, an adult, or anyone really, telling a youth something. This older teaching style just does not work well unless you are a very good charismatic leader, or Jesus. But then the teaching becomes less important than the teacher. Only Jesus was able to overcome that problem. So take a lesson from the master teacher and find ways to learn with your youth group. Discovering a way to facilitate teaching moments instead of directly leading them can be a great learning process for you too.

As with our discussion of "WORSHIP" last issue, we want you to consider what education looks like for you as well. Use the same brainstorming technique to discover a word that really summarizes what education means for your group. Then help your leaders to include something in each youth group activity that will help explore this together.

Next Issue: Stewardship

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

IDEAS BOX

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!

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.

REGISTER YOUR COLLEGE BOUND YOUTH TODAY!

Connect your graduating high school students to a Lutheran presence at college. Enter names into the **Project Connect** database, www.elcaconnect.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 to Reading, PA, for June 24-30, 2007, and is open to those youth who have completed grades 8 - 12. Go to <http://www.getdrenched.org/youth> to see their flyer and for more info. Wayne Twombly at Wayne_Twombly@Charter.Net, or Pastor Krista Henning-Ferkin at klhenning@yahoo.com have additional details.

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Young Adult Spring Break Alternative!

Lutheran Student Movement-USA announces its second annual **Breaking Out! Spring Break Servant Experience**.

Breaking Out! is a service learning experience that centers on Christian service within a local community. The event will take place over three weeks in March, and each week thirty students from all over the country will gather in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

The total cost per person is \$75, which includes travel, lodging, food and registration fees. The remaining cost is funded through a gracious gift from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Applications are available at www.lsm-usa.org as well as more information about the event. In order to ensure diversity among students for each week, we will accept *no more than 2 students from the same college or university*.

JOURNEYS RESOURCE!

Lutheran Outdoor Ministry will no longer be sending a printed copy of **JOURNEYS** the resource for mission and servant opportunities in Outdoor Ministry. The resource will only be available on-line. In the past this resource was mailed out to congregations.

More information is available here:
<http://www.elca.org/camps/journeys.html>

Devo (contd.)

As part of the Summit, the Disney Institute presented "Leadership, Disney Style" and one of the most important points I took away from this was how they value the gifts and talents of the cast members (employees). They know that the people who are doing the individual jobs have the best understanding of that job and management encourages each cast member to continuously think about ways of improving their job. For instance, the maid service cast members in one of the resorts was having a difficult time pushing the cleaning cart on the plush carpets, so they let management know and management asked them for a suggestion on how this could be solved. The women who did the work responded; you see the carts the landscapers use around the property would we be able to put a motor on our carts so they would be easier to move. Management thought it was a great idea they linked the women with a development team and a new cart was created. Additionally, the women who came up with the idea now receive royalties for their innovation. Management gave them room to be creative and to use their gifts. Could you imagine if we gave our youth encouragement and means to develop their gifts? That is what we do and the results are miraculous.

There are so many different lights around us and each one of us is different and our gifts vary but the more we try and do our best the easier I think it is for each one of us to have our light shine a little brighter. I hope all of you can find the joy in this wonderful season and can look around you and remember the joy you felt the first time you saw a lit Christmas tree and realized that the darkness will never over come the light of Jesus.

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Suggested Reading: Frogs Without Legs Can't Hear: Nurturing Disciples in Home and Congregation, by David W. Anderson and Paul Hill (Augsburg Fortress, 2003).

Beware! Youth are watching what adults are doing! The second part of the title of this book is "Nurturing Disciples In Home And Congregation". Two Lutheran pastors have written this excellent book about youth ministry, but they talk mostly to and about adults. "Frogs" is an exhortation to Christian adults in the *home* to live a Christ-like life right in front of their children. Anderson and Hill define *home* as the larger network of relationships and daily life experiences of people of faith. This means not just the church but also the family home and the community. I think one quote sums up what the authors are trying to get across, "If we want Christian children and youth, we need Christian adults and parents."

"We want to be clear: this book is about faith formation centered in Jesus Christ." "All Christian adults are needed to support the

parental activity of raising Christian children in the faith." "The church is not passing on the faith to its own children." The authors freely quote Scripture and Martin Luther to support their plea for more adult involvement in raising our children in the faith. Faith is caught more than taught. Throughout the book, Pastors Anderson and Hill describe Five Principles and Four Key Practices for effective faith formation. In the last chapter, they "talk about the kind of person needed to make the principles and practices come alive. We call these frogs-with-legs *AAA Road Servants*. The kind of person who puts it all together is *authentic, available* and *affirming* of all people, especially the young. They do this work day in and day out as they seek to live as Jesus' disciples throughout the journey of life. Thus they are road servants."

Despite the title, this book is a very serious challenge to how the church currently goes about nurturing the faith in our children and youth. However, it is not critical of Sunday School or Confirmation. Rather, adults are challenged to grow spiritually, to seek to be disciples of Christ and give time to our young. "So deeply do we care for you that we are determined **to share** with you not only the gospel of God but also **our own selves**, because you have become very dear to us." *1 Thessalonians 2:8 NRSV*

Reviewed by Richard Granstrand, volunteer youthworker, Shepherd of the Hills E.L.C.

JOB POSTINGS

For 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.

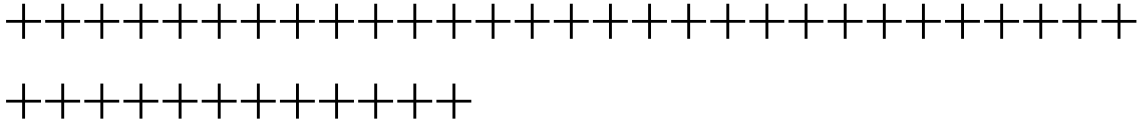
This newsletter is e-mailed to the New England Synod's volunteers in children, youth, and young adult ministries as well as rostered leaders in the synod. Feel free to forward this email to others on your team!

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

SHARE THE INFORMATION! PERMISSION TO USE ANY OR ALL OF THE INFORMATION IN YOUR CHURCH NEWSLETTER IS GRANTED TO ALL OUR CONGREGATIONS.

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Please detach and return ASAP

Youth Leaders Spiritual Renewal Retreat

PO Box 236
West Ossipee, NH 03890

Name _____

Mailing
Address _____

Home phone(_____) _____

Email _____

Fee: \$96.50 per person

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