

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: Give it up?... Steve Kennedy

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Luke 9: 23

“What did you give up for Lent?” This is the question I am usually asked around this time of year. The concept of “giving something up” at Lent has always been something of an odd one for me and I know my answers sometimes were terribly bad: broccoli (never ate it anyway), watermelon (not in season) to name a couple. One year I decided to give up getting frustrated...that was hard, especially working in a church!

But lately I have been thinking about what Lent does for us in our faith walk. I've been thinking about those places in the gospels where Jesus pretty much tells us what we need to “give up” if we are to follow him. The places where we are told we must “deny ourselves” and follow Jesus. The people who are told to sell everything and follow him. The disciples who are called away from real paying jobs to wander around from town to town in an upside down religious gang.

I lately have been wondering, maybe what Lent is all about is trying to capture what it means to sacrifice and hand over our lives to God. Maybe Lent is not about what we give up in our materialistic world. Maybe Lent is not a game of pretending not to “sin” by not doing something for a little while that we would not even give a second thought to actually do any other time of the year. Maybe Lent is not about sarcastically inviting our Catholic friends for a steak dinner on Friday.

What if Lent was really about discovering what it is we cannot do without? What if these six weeks are a reminder of what life would be like without Jesus? What if these funereal plods toward Easter are about trying to slow us down just long enough to help us all understand what it means to follow Jesus? What if we came out of Lent ready to be a people who no longer are guided by the world around us, but serve to guide the world through our reception of the grace of God through the risen Christ?

If we are people of the risen Christ, Lent is our chance to regroup, refocus, and remind our selves how much God does in and through us from day to day throughout the year. It is one more reminder that it is not too late to give up...Amen.

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 Eldenkamp
(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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YOUNG ADULT TRIP TO TAIZE

Taizé 2007, a spiritual journey for young adult ages 18-29, will be held July 7-18 at Taizé, an ecumenical monastery in Taizé, France. The monastic community dedicates its life and work to the spiritual renewal of youth and young adults. This trip, which also includes three days in Paris, is being co-sponsored by the New England Synod and our partner synod, the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Cost is \$1,750 per person. Interested young adults are encouraged to speak with their pastor about congregational sponsorship; scholarship assistance is also available from the Office of the Bishop.

Deadline to register is April 11. Questions? Contact Steve Kennedy, ministry specialist for youth and young adult ministries, New England Synod, at stev4uth@hotmail.com or (603) 882-0274.

You can register online (with credit card) at: https://www.sporg.com/registration?link_type=reg_info&form_id=76392&view_type=windowed

A printable brochure is available at: <http://www.nesynod.org/Care-Packet/March-2007/taize07.pdf>.

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

GOT RAM? 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. Brochure and Registrations mailed out this week! Also online at our website.

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We are hoping to enlarge Youth Ministry Leadership in the synod. We are looking for two adults and two youth from each "Mission Area" in the synod. Come to the April 28 event to hear more and help us shape how this will look in the future!

"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 3, STEWARDSHIP

Let's just start by saying that "stewardship" is a bit screwed up in most of our ministries. I have even been to national events where it has been confused with fundraising. Unfortunately, we spend a lot of time teaching our youth how to raise money and very little time teaching biblical stewardship.

In Youth Ministry, it is important to look at stewardship in a broad way. First, there is the concept of "tithing." It is not hard to understand really, you give 10% of what you make back to God (a great way to start the 10-10-80 model: give 10, save 10, spend 80). You get \$100 in allowance money, \$10 goes to God's work (i.e., the offering). In the many fundraising events I had to deal with in my congregations, I made it a policy that we always took 10% of what we raised to be given in the offering at that event. You raise \$5000, well, \$500 of that is going to the offering. [For a great resource: <http://www.10-10-80.org/>.]

The youth team in my previous congregation even decided that they wanted to give back 10% of the budget that was assigned to them. It went to a variety of things and helped to do some of the servant ministry to the local women's shelter and a teen shelter. This was part of an ongoing discovery process that later included adopting Compassion children with their Sunday School offering.

Stewardship of our personal gifts is also important. It is a good thing to help people discover what their spiritual gifts are, what they are passionate about, and to then help

them discover ways to use those gifts to the glory of God.

One of the ongoing conversations I have had with people is trying to find a way to work towards a 10% giving of time to God. Setting aside 4 hours a week for your spiritual life is really not a lot to ask, right? But how many of us spend about an hour in worship and then do nothing else the rest of the week? What if we each decided to set aside 10 minutes a day, Monday to Saturday, to just read the Bible? There's one hour. Now we still have 2 hours left, if we take 1 hour for worship. Hmm, seems like we could be in a Bible Study group, give an hour to the local soup kitchen, maybe mentor a youth...the possibilities are truly endless.

God also calls us to be good stewards of the wonderful gift of creation. That means thinking about how we use natural resources, what we do with our garbage, how much garbage we create ourselves, and how our use or misuse of creation impacts others.

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

Next Issue: Outreach

GOT SOMETHING FOR THE NEWSLETTER?

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS MAY 1

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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?

A: I've been engaging in movie bible studies with my high school youth group. It started with a book that my pastor shared with me and I just finished up a series that I bought from christianitytoday.com for \$5.95 based on the movie "Big Fish" (there were 4 discussion topics included). Each one contains an 'opener' the time that the movie clip starts and ends, bible verses to relate to the topic at hand, discussion questions and a 'closer'. I find that the kids look forward to watching the movie clip and the discussion that follows is always good. Whether I've got 3 or 6 of my kids there, these bible studies have thus far been successful. My definition of a successful bible study includes: engaged group (they only get off topic in a bad way (school gossip) a couple of times), regular attendees, continuous conversation, that I always learn something and when we say our closing prayer, the kids always relate their part of the prayer (I usually do a "popcorn" prayer) back to the topic of the day.

I usually skip the opener that comes with the bible study and we do "lows and highs" (I started out calling it "highs and lows", but one of the guys in the group thought we should all start with lows and end with highs). During this time, we go around the room and share lows and highs from our week with each other.

K.B.—Rhode Island

Q: One of the kids said to me, "you're the number one reason I come to church on Sundays." OH NO!!! So I'm winning the popularity contest, but I'm clearly not bringing enough Jesus to the table! What should I do?

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!

UPCOMING CALUMET EVENTS

ConfirCamp Weekends

April 13-15 or April 20-22, 2007

For Confirmands ~ \$95/person

These weekends are a great opportunity for pastors and lay leaders to spend some quality time with their confirmands in recreation, Bible study, and community building. A fun-filled weekend has been planned, part of which is time designated for church leaders to meet with their confirmands for curriculum and discussion.

Spring Fling! for Teens

May 18-20, 2007

"My Space"

Musical Guest: Dakota Road

What are we called as Christians to fill "My Space" with in our lives? How can we develop our gifts of Christ's love and use those to fill "My Space"? Throughout the weekend, we'll explore ways to confidently share our gifts of Christ's love with others.

There will be a concert, dance, bonfire on the beach, candlelight worship service, plenty of time for outdoor recreation, great food, plenty of laughs, and new friends. Get your youth group signed up today!

Fall Fling! for Middle School Youth ~

September 28-30, 2007

"How to Save a Life"

Musical Guest: Dave Piper

How many times have we been in school or at home and been exposed to words of hate and anger? How can we, as Christians, use words of love and hope to build each other up instead? How can we use God's love to strengthen our self-esteem and make us strong in spirit? How can we use Christ's example to reflect our love for each other? In what ways can we use the Holy Spirit to share Christ's love? Throughout the weekend, we will explore these challenges we face in life.

For more details on these and other Calumet events, go to www.calumet.org.

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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

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.

Project Connect Reminder!

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.

CALUMET WALK-A-THON

April 21, Gloucester, MA

More info: <http://www.calumet.org/07-Walkathon.pdf>

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>

Lutheran Student Movement News

At the NELSM Winter Retreat, the group elected a new council.

Alli Watson from Plattsburgh State, NY was elected our new Regional Representative/President! Alli is an education major and her email address is: wats9044@mail.plattsburgh.edu

Brandon Sabbag from Gordon College, MA was elected our new Retreat Coordinator/Vice President! Brandon is a youth ministry major at Gordon and his email address is: Brandon.Sabbag@gordon.edu

Caitlin Saunders from Plattsburgh, NY was elected our new Secretary! Caity is a political science major and her email address is: caity327@yahoo.com

Thanks to Amanda Nelson for her service as last year's LSM President. Best wishes to her in her future endeavors and congratulations to the new officers.

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Suggested Reading: The Tale of Three Trees: A Traditional Folktale, by Angela Elwell Hunt and Tim Jonk (Cook, 2004). Three little trees dream of being something special: a holder of treasure, a fine ship, and a hilltop beacon pointing to God. This is a wonderful children's story but I have yet to read this without a lump forming in my own throat as God's plans turn out to be anything but what the trees expected. It is a great story with wonderful pictures and makes for great teaching moments. My wife, Erica, even used this story to talk about stewardship! It makes for a great summary of Christ's life during Holy Week too.

JOB POSTINGS (check the Synod Care Packet for additional listings)

Triumphant Cross Lutheran Church, Salem, NH, seeks a half-time **Youth Ministry Director** to plan, organize and lead youth events and activities for youth in grades 6-12, with the primary focus being on Christian educational growth. About 30 youth participate regularly, with attendance at any one activity ranging from 5 to 20. We seek a leader who will not only maintain the current program, but has the ability and vision to build upon the foundation, increase participation, and find new ways to reach out to our youth. The salary will be based upon experience and will be discussed during the interview process. For an application or more information, send an email to ymstaffing@triumphantcross.org, visit our website www.triumphantcross.org, or call the church at 603-893-0305.

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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