

IN THIS ISSUE...

(CLICK ON ANY ARTICLE BELOW)



Integrating faith and family life as baptized disciples

In keynote addresses on the theme, “Ambassadors for Christ :Baptized Disciples,” Dr. Roland Martinson...talked about integrating faith and life at the annual Virginia Synod Assembly... [READ MORE...](#)



Lutherans in the news

Read about Lutherans in the news, and a great variety of ministry and mission across the Virginia Synod. [READ MORE...](#)



Judge Poston succeeds lawyer Mark Reed as vice president

Synod voting members elected Norfolk Circuit Court Judge Charles Poston of First, Norfolk, to succeed Mark Reed, a Luray lawyer, as vice president... [READ MORE...](#)



Anniversaries celebrated

Bishop Jim Mauney recognized many anniversaries at the Synod Assembly in June, led by the 225th at St. Paul, Shenandoah, where Pastor Mark Briehl serves... [READ MORE...](#)

More News...

Listening for God’s voice in a noisy world

Jason Grace elected LYO president

Busy judge will lead Synod Council

Pastor Jeff May heads ELCA Youth Ministry Network

ELCA Bishop Hanson will speak in Blacksburg

Gloria Dei, Hampton, will build senior living community

Upper Room to be built at Caroline Furnace

Servant projects improve Hungry Mother Retreat Center

Robbie Shuman, 6, buys toys for homeless kids

A diverse church: Why serve the Church?

Daniel Rausen is on his way to become a Tanzanian doctor

Good Shepherd members sew for Lambs of God

Four congregations plan two church parishes

Integrating faith and family life as baptized disciples

In keynote addresses on the theme, “Ambassadors for Christ :Baptized Disciples,” Dr. Roland Martinson, a family life expert at St. Paul Seminary, talked about integrating faith and life at the annual Virginia Synod Assembly at Roanoke College June 8-10. Each generation has both identity and roots, he said. “There is no greater authority on earth than parents over children.”

More than 460 voting members and guests heard Martinson speak about family life and the church, Else Thompson of the ELCA staff report on the work of the larger church and Dr. Marcus Miller, Southern Seminary president, urge reading scripture over and over. “We don’t know because we don’t hear, we don’t listen,” Miller said. Worship—music and the spoken word-- at the Saturday ordination service and at daily matins was outstanding.

In his annual report, Bishop Jim Mauney commended the Synod’s “powerful theology and traditions..(and) wonderfully trained, talented ministerium and committed lay leaders.” The bishop said the 2007 budget is fully funded by pledges from 153 of the 164 congregations in the Synod.

The Assembly:

--Elected new leadership—Judge Charles Poston of First, Norfolk, as vice president and Janet Gomez of Apostles, Gloucester, as secretary.

--Approved, by 71 percent of voting members, a resolution halting consideration of human sexuality issues until the 2009 ELCA Assembly in 2009. This action eliminated two other related resolutions on the controversial issue.

--Adopted a 2008 budget of \$2.45 million, up almost 7 percent from the current schedule. Next year’s budget includes a 4 percent staff increase and increases for insurance, audit and staff travel.

--Set the 2008 minimum compensation base salary of a Synod pastor, with housing allowance, at \$45,417.



*Mauney with Pastors
Kelly and David Derrick*

talks on a variety of issues:

The special needs of autistic children; hate crime bills and free speech; pride in family history and Lutheran heritage; recognition of the rights of faithful Lutherans who are gay; serving a God who does not segregate; living together in disagreement and taking a stand on Biblical teaching; a need to minister to young people who are at risk, and a need for assistance with education expenses of seminarians.



Martinson

Kelly Dawn Bayer Derrick was ordained at a service at St. Andrew’s Catholic Church in Roanoke, led by Bishop Jim Mauney, who preached the sermon. Derrick has accepted a call to serve as associate pastor for youth and family ministry at St. Philip, Roanoke, where her husband, the Rev. David Derrick, is pastor. A graduate of the University of Virginia and Southern Seminary, she has been a member of Zion, Waynesboro, Messiah, Mechanicsville, and Christ, Fredericksburg, before moving to Roanoke. The Derricks have three sons, Tyler, Drew and Reece.

A session on Matters of Faith and Conscience featured brief

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

LUTHERAN

Pastor Gary Schroeder of Luther Memorial, Blacksburg, urged the Assembly “not (to) embarrass ourselves again by continuing to mandate discipline for rostered gay and lesbian leaders who are in committed, monogamous and loving same-sex relationships.” Schroeder referred to a recent decision by a discipline hearing committee that an Atlanta pastor be removed from the ELCA clergy roster because of a same-sex relationship.

The Valley Strategy Team is moving toward five pilot programs in such areas as a future family center along Int. 81 and “we hope it will spread through incubators and testing grounds for other congregations,” said Mark Reed, team chairman. Of the 63 congregations in the valley area, 82 percent have less than 100 people for Sunday worship, he said. Some congregations are focusing on survival, rather than growth, but the team wants to work with those willing to change, according to Reed.

Else Thompson, ELCA representative, said the national church “needs faithful leaders who will share their gifts with others.” Virginia Synod is generous, she said, providing mission support as an act of worship. “Over 80 percent of the ELCA budget depends on mission support.” The Synod gave more than \$262,000 to ELCA World Hunger, an average of more than \$6 per member, better than the ELCA average of \$4 per member, she said.

Pastor Barbara Simmers of Peace Lutheran in Slidell, La., came to the Assembly in Salem to thank the Synod for its financial support of almost \$122,000 for her congregation after Hurricane Katrina. The ministry of rebuilding will take another eight years, she said. “We continue a housing ministry, relying on God’s leadership and faith.”

Bishop Mauney said contributions to the Synod’s Fund for Leaders have reached over \$34,000, enough to award the first seminary scholarship. He said the two finalists are Kate Proctor, St. John, Abingdon, and Kristen Van Stee, St. Mary, Mt. Jackson.

The Fund for Leaders addresses the financial stress faced by seminarians, averaging about \$40,000 in debt, according to President Marcus Miller of Southern Seminary. He said 85 percent of pastors who are Southern Seminary alumni will be retiring within 15 years.

The Synod’s United Lutheran Appeal collected \$118,372 from 123 or 74 percent of the congregations for a record year, according to Pastor Floyd Addison, the coordinator.

Several speakers commended the Roots & Wings program, offering resources and ideas for working with children, parents and caregivers. Three workshops supporting this ministry are planned for St. Paul, Strasburg, and Gloria Dei, Hampton, on Saturday, Dec. 1, and at Luther Memorial, Blacksburg, on Saturday, April 19, 2008.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)



ELCA Bishop Hanson will speak in Blacksburg

ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson will preach at a service at Luther Memorial, Blacksburg, on Wednesday evening, Sept. 19, following the shooting tragedy of April 16.

After the Virginia Tech shooting, Hanson phoned Campus Pastor Bill King and offered to come to Blacksburg and the invitation was accepted. Details of his visit have not been arranged.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

LUTHERANS IN THE NEWS



Garber

Aaron Garber, choir director at College, Salem, was selected as Young Alumnus of 2007 at Bridgewater College, where he graduated in 1995. Garber also was honored when the City of Salem proclaimed May 6 as Aaron Garber Day, recognizing his talent as founder, director and composer of Salem Choral Society. He also directs the Jefferson Choral Society in Lynchburg. A planned performance of the Salem choral group at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Nov. 18 has been cancelled because of a scheduling problem.

Pastors Scott and Cathy Mims, associate pastors at **St. John, Roanoke**, have accepted calls to serve at **Good Shepherd, Virginia Beach**. **Megan Gasink** has moved to St. John as youth ministry coordinator. A graduate of the University of Florida, she holds a master's degree in clinical pastoral counseling. **Denise May** has joined St. John as minister of Christian education.

A dozen members and friends of **River of Life Lutheran Ministry** in Page County, aged 16 to 70, planned a June trip to help rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. They stayed at the Dove of Peace Center, a mission of Peace Church, Slidell, La. This is a cooperative ministry of **St. Luke**, **St. Paul** and **St. Peter** congregations.

Justin Egan, former president of the Lutheran Student Movement at Christopher Newport University, has graduated from the Spotsylvania Sheriff's Academy and has been employed as a deputy sheriff in Spotsylvania County. The **Rev. Janell O. Nickols**, a United Church of Christ pastor and wife of **Pastor James Nickols** of **Reformation**, Newport News, has marked the 28th anniversary of her ordination. She served two churches before entering the Navy as a chaplain.

Don Smith has retired after serving as minister of music at **Muhlenberg**, Harrisonburg, for more than 40 years. Smith said he admires the congregation's "Christian spirit" displayed during changes in worship. He has worked with 14 pastors and interns. The congregation plans to replace Smith with a director of liturgical arts.

Bishop Jim Mauney spoke on the theme, "The Challenge of Ecumenism: Looking Within and Looking Without" at the Tidewater Regional LARCUM (Lutherans, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics and United Methodists) Conference June 25 at Church of the Holy Apostles, Virginia Beach. The topic challenged denominations to identify their own richness rather than the differences with other traditions.

Tede Johnson of **Trinity**, Newport News, was recognized for 10,000 hours of volunteer service at the Virginia Living Museum. Johnson, described as "the ultimate volunteer," leads story time, does outreach at festivals and works on animal programs on the trail. She is best known for her programs on the great horned owl and tarantula. Her committee raised \$100,000 for a museum expansion. She's a retired special education teacher.

Pastor Kenneth Rupp of **Our Saviour**, Richmond, received a doctorate of ministry degree from Philadelphia Seminary in May. He serves on the ELCA Executive Council.

Joshua Rubongoya, Roanoke College political science professor, has written a book about the political development of his native Uganda. A member of the Roanoke faculty since 1991, he has taken groups of students to Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe and he hopes to take them to Uganda. When he left for graduate work in the United States, his move was seen as rebellion or treachery.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

LUTHERAN

David and Joyce Ray and their daughter, **Johanna Ray**, and **Richard and Brooks Nanna** were commissioned as **Tanzania** Mission Partners at **Grace**, Winchester, on June 17. The Rays and Nannas are committing their gifts, talents and significant vacation time to serve people in the Karatu District of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Dr. Jody Brown, a Rural Retreat native and music professor at Iowa Wesleyan College, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, gave a piano concert at **Grace, Rural Retreat**, on June 3, celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Community MacDowell Music Club.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Anniversaries Celebrated

Bishop Jim Mauney recognized many anniversaries at the Synod Assembly in June, led by the 225th at St. Paul, Shenandoah, where Pastor Mark Briehl serves, and the 200th at St. Matthew, Toms Brook, the Rev. Jim Baseler, pastor. The 65th ordination of Pastor Hugo Schmidt, Winchester, was cited.

Retirement was recognized for the Rev. Dwayne Westermann, College, Salem; Rev. Bob Holley, Christ, Staunton, and Rev. Jim Bangle, Ebenezer, Marion.

Other anniversaries marked: Pastors Richard Batman, Williamsburg; Arthur Henne, Raphine, Rockbridge County; James E. Henneberger, Chambersburg, Pa.; Charles H. Mayer, Hayes, Gloucester County, and George Ziegenfuss, Speedwell, Wythe County, 50th anniversary of ordination.

Those honored on the 35th anniversary of ordination: Pastors John Schweitzer, First English, Richmond; Kenneth Rupp, Our Saviour, Richmond; Carl Jensen, Peninsula Counseling Center; Fred Donahoe, Stafford; James Daley, Stoney Mountain Parish, Luray; Terry Clark, Emmanuel, Virginia Beach; Al Fogelman, Rockbridge Parish, and George Feldman, Quicksburg Parish.

Pastors recognized for 25th anniversaries of ordination: the Revs. Mark Briehl, River of Life, Page County; John Herman, Peace, Charlottesville, and Steven Ridenhour, Wytheville.

Holy Communion, Portsmouth, is observing its 50th anniversary, and Christ, Wise, and Shepherd of the Valley, Dayton, are marking their 25th anniversaries.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Jason Grace elected LYO president

At the Youth Assembly, meeting concurrently with the Synod Assembly at Roanoke College, Jason Grace of Our Saviour, Warrenton, was elected president of the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO). He follows Ryan Sullivan of Mt. Zion, Mt. Jackson.

Others named to the LYO board: Tim Cywinski of Our Saviour, Warrenton, 11th grade; Matt Wertman, Grace, Waynesboro, 10th grade; Emily Depew, St. John, Abingdon, 9th grade, and Sara Vogt, Messiah, Virginia Beach, 8th grade.

A Youth Ambassadors School for young people who have just graduated from high school will be held at Roanoke College, July 8-12

Summer Celebration, a senior high servant camp, is planned for Caroline Furnace Camp and Retreat Center, July 8-13.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Busy judge will lead Synod Council

Circuit Judge Charles Poston, newly elected vice president of Virginia Synod Council, is a former South Carolina Baptist who has risen to leadership with a strong background in the church and the legal system. He succeeds Mark Reed, a Luray lawyer.

Poston, son of a Baptist minister, and his wife, Anita, a Norfolk lawyer, came to First Lutheran, Norfolk, in 1994 when their children went to school with the children of Pastors James and Judith Cobb, formerly at First Church, and the families became friends. "We've been very comfortable there," Poston said.

A graduate of the University of Richmond, he studied history in graduate school at the University of Virginia, served in the Army and came back to William and Mary Law School. After practicing law 14 years, Poston was named a Juvenile Court judge in 1988 and a Circuit judge in 1994. That's 19 years on the bench. He also teaches an evening class in business law and ethics.

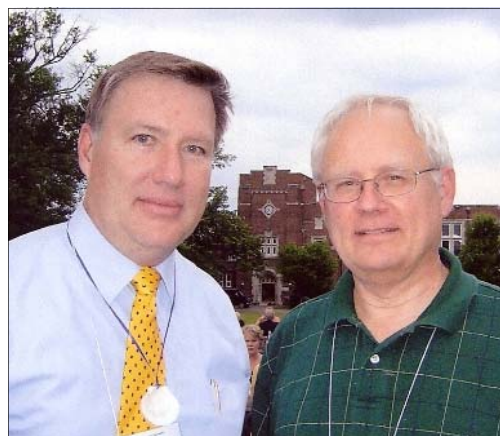
His pastor, the Rev. William Trexler, gives Poston high marks. "His nurturing nature affects all aspects of his life: marriage, children, church and civic responsibilities. As a judge, he is wise, fair and firm, with a touch of grace and humor." When Poston was congregation president, he came by the church on his way to the bench and spend about an hour with Trexler, "assisting my ongoing orientation and continuing education into the unique characteristics of this amazing parish."

At First Church, Poston has taught Sunday School and confirmation class, served as congregation president and he's been a Synod Council member since 2003. He will be a voting member from the Synod at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Chicago in August.

As lay leader of the Council, Poston said he expects "to do whatever I can to assist the bishop and the staff." Presiding over Council meetings is a major part of the position.

He commends the 20-20 Vision for the Synod, led by Bishop Jim Mauney. "We have a good road map, a comprehensive plan. We have followed it. It will lead us where we need to go."

The Postons have three children: Evans, who works at a Norfolk marine terminal; John, who recently left Army service as a medic, and Meg, who is in graduate school at the College of William & Mary. The Postons like to travel and the family takes ski trips.



Reed (l) and Poston

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Servant projects improve Hungry Mother Retreat Center

After youth from a half-dozen churches spruced up Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center, three camps for upper elementary, junior and senior high youth were held center near Marion. A Bring Your Own Tent/Trailer (BYOT) camping event is planned for Labor Day weekend.

A prayer path was constructed by youth from Holy Trinity, Lynchburg; volunteers from Redeemer, Bristol, brought heavy equipment to install a water line; workers from Holy Trinity, Wytheville, and the Rural Retreat Parish built tent platforms and youth from Chilhowie Christian Church and Smyth County Homeschoolers gave a spring cleaning to the camp. Angie and Mike Mucha, camp directors, have invited visits to the camp.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

*A diverse church**Why serve the Church?*

(Another in a series introducing Synod candidates for ministry)

My name is Marissa Harris from St. John Lutheran in Roanoke, and I have been asked to share why I desire to serve the church. Although I've been given 500 words to do this, I think my answer could be summed up in just five: The church is always moving.

Unlike many fields which expect mastery of a certain subject matter, the church is always changing, moving, and growing by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Even though I've been intricately involved in many different aspects of the church, each day God teaches me something new about the church, God's people and their role in the world. I desire to serve the church because the church respects and welcomes all the diverse and unique gifts of its members.

Growing up, the church was a huge part of my life. I knew it was possible that I would one day enter ministry full-time, but the church was only one part of my life. When I went to college I became aware that my faith actually informs everything that I do. I was introduced to Luther's understanding of vocation, and I knew that I wanted to be a part of teaching this to others.

Throughout my campus ministry experiences and my work with the Lutheran Student Movement – USA (www.lsm-usa.org) I began to see that the church is a magical place where life changing (and world changing) relationships can be formed and nurtured.

During my experiences as a hospital chaplain last summer (in a program called Clinical Pastoral Education) I was given the honor to serve people in times of great personal distress. Though this was often difficult, I cannot imagine anything more rewarding. CPE was a reminder for me that the church is huge, touching people from every corner of the world each day.

When I am reading the Psalms or otherwise pondering the vastness of God's creation, I am often drawn to thoughts of the church. I am honored to serve an entity that is constantly being recreated by God and that touches so much of God's world in so many unimaginable ways.

I have recently finished my second year of seminary at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. My classmates are diverse! I have had the pleasure of learning what the church is for each of them, their families, friends, and cultures. They have taught me many things about life and about God. As part of my curriculum, I visited many different churches in the Philadelphia area, some Lutheran and some of other denominations. This too reminded me of what a vibrant being I daily get to serve.

I am thankful for this opportunity to share my reflections on the diversity of the church. I invite you to think about the different people you have met on your faith journey. What was special and unique about each of them? Take a moment and pray for them and for their various ministries, and thank God for uniting us into the one body of Christ.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)



Harris

THE VIRGINIA LUTHERAN IS A MONTHLY NEWS PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA SYNOD, ELCA

Editor: George Kegley - (540) 366-4607; georgekegley@verizon.net

Deadline for submission of articles is the 10th of each month.

Any portion of this publication may be reprinted for use in local church publications with appropriate credit.

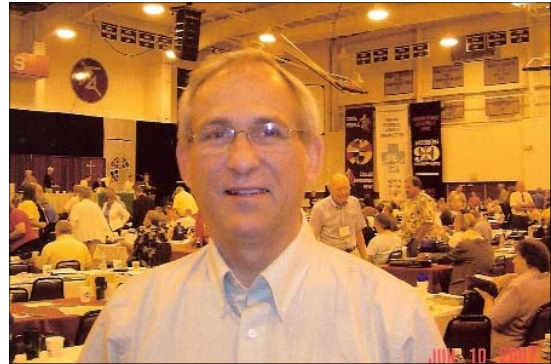
Pastor Jeff May heads ELCA Youth Ministry Network

The Virginia Synod Assembly approved a resolution encouraging adults who work with youth to become members of the ELCA Youth Ministry Network, an organization headed by Pastor Jeff May of Mt. Zion, New Market, recently elected chairman.

May described the network as “an incredible group of 650 folks” committed to support of youth ministry across the national church. The grassroots organization has three major missions—renewal, education and connecting one another. About a half-dozen from Virginia Synod are members.

The resolution asked synod congregations and individuals to send youth workers to the annual Extravaganza to be held in Anaheim, Cal. Feb. 7-11, 2008 and at New Orleans in February 2009.

The resolution said that historically Lutherans have placed a high priority on youth ministry and now congregation leaders are urged to place an even higher priority on training and support of youth leaders. The organization began about 12 years ago with the discovery that small networks of youth ministry leaders were meeting. When they were pulled together for a training event, the network was formed. Among its key values are faith formation for youth and adults, current and potential cultural and spiritual diversity of communities, professional relationships among youth leaders and practices that are informed by Biblical and theological wisdom.



May

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Gloria Dei, Hampton, will build senior living community, life center

Gloria Dei, Hampton, is developing a multimillion-dollar expansion plan to build a 14,000-square-foot Life Center and a 144-unit senior living retirement community, starting in about two years.

The congregation has pledged more than \$750,000 in a Dreams and Visions Capital Funding Campaign. In this 13th consecutive capital campaign, giving is projected to run 40 percent over previous efforts, said Pastor Doug Stowe. “That’s absolutely astounding! Clearly, stewardship at Gloria Dei is seen as a way of life.”

The congregation will build on a 20-acre site recently purchased on Fox Hall Road, adjacent to the church. June 2009 is the goal for the start of construction of both projects, running on a dual track, allowing greater synergy between the two facilities, Stowe said. He called it a “cradle to grave” program.

The Rev. Clyde Christmas, former director of the Twin Lakes retirement community at Burlington, N.C., is project director for the senior living community, to comprise individual and assisted living and residential care units. The housing will be around a 6-acre lake.

The Life Center will feature a gymnasium, lockers, stage, bleachers, central kitchen, indoor/outdoor dining area, youth center, recreational ministry office, multipurpose rooms and inter-generational program rooms. Two architectural firms are working on a site plan and the work will be in two phases. Stowe said. A day care center will be moved to the center site.

The congregation has voted unanimously to call Vicar Garnett Bugg as an associate pastor, pending his ordination by the Presbyterian church at his home church in Charlotte, N.C. Also, Vicar Nathan Robinson will continue a second year of work in clinical pastoral education. A graduate of Boston University Divinity School, he is a candidate for ELCA ordination.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

LUTHERAN***Upper Room to be built at Caroline Furnace***

A ground-breaking and 50th anniversary celebration will be held Oct. 7 for the Upper Room, a three-season pavilion planned to seat more than 150 at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center.

The camp's capital fund appeal has raised gifts and pledges totaling almost \$283,000—more than half of the primary goal of \$500,000. The structure, planned for use in three seasons, will provide gathering space for worship and large group meetings, recreation space for inclement weather days and storage space, said Camp Director Wayne Shelor. .

Other features of the camp's program and property development needs:

Redesign, provide more meeting space, repair the roof, expand the kitchen and upgrade electrical service at Moyer Lodge; remodel eight cabins and the Retreat House, construct a high ropes course, water reservoir, road and bridge and raise endowment funding to provide income for maintenance and upkeep of additions and renovations.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Robbie Shuman, 6, buys toys for homeless kids

Robby Shuman, 6, has been raising money and collecting toys in a big way for children in a homeless shelter. At Faith, Suffolk, his family's church, Robby painted and sold about 120 suncatchers—plastic reflecting light from windows—raising a total of \$1,000.

The kindergarten philanthropist decided to buy toys “for kids who don't have moms and dads” so he and his family gathered reptiles, Legos, stuffed animals, electronic and board games and action figures and delivered them to ForKids, a homeless shelter in Norfolk.

“What started as no big deal was multiplied into a big deal by a little boy with a lot of love in his heart,” said his mother, Linda Shuman. His father, Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Jay Shuman, said Robby probably had “enough toys to fill two day care centers” before he began fund-raising. Church members and his parents matched his earnings.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Daniel Rausen is on his way to become a Tanzanian doctor

Daniel Rausen, a hard-working, charming young Tanzanian medical student, finished a five-week rotation in orthopedic surgery at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit and came by the Roanoke Valley where the American God Parent Scholarship Foundation has raised money to help him and many others achieve their education goals.

Rausen, whose home is in the village of Machame in the Mt. Kilimanjaro region, finished first in his class in lower school and stayed at the top of the class in four years at Mt. Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College where he's training to be a physician. He has one more year toward an M.D. degree and he hopes to return to the Detroit hospital for a five-year residency program in orthopedic surgery.

His ultimate goal is to return to medical service in his native Tanzania which has only one doctor for every 20,000 people. Rausen's father died when he was 14 and the youth has seen much suffering from lack of nutrition and illness related to poverty. He has sold peanuts, pictures and snow cones to help his sister, brother and mother, who is in nursing school. His brother wants to work in wildlife management and his sister wants to be a doctor.



Rausen

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Good Shepherd members sew for Lambs of God

Good Shepherd, Orange, proved to be a good neighbor when a conversation with a nearby church member led to a sewing project for the Lambs of God, a youth choir at Blue Ridge Baptist Church in Orange.

A Good Shepherd member was delivering pillow-cases to Sheltering Arms, a homeless shelter, when she met a Blue Ridge Baptist member who said her congregation could not afford to buy new robes for the youth choir. "We sew all the time...Maybe we can help," said the Good Shepherd member and that started "a wonderful sharing of talents and outreach for both churches," said Pastor Pat Nabers of Good Shepherd.

Blue Ridge Baptist provided the sizes and picked a color. Good Shepherd members purchased material with a Thrivent Financial grant. In a few days, they cut and sewed 16 choir robes for the Lambs of God. On May 29, the youth choir and other Blue Ridge members provided "a rousing concert" for Good Shepherd. The Lambs were "magnificent in their brand new robes" and they shared "their wonderful singing talent," Nabers said. "God sometimes gives us unusual opportunities to help others and when we take the opportunity, it enriches our lives," she said.



Lambs of God

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Four congregations plan two church parishes

Two sets of two congregations—in Augusta County and the Bluefield area—are moving toward new alignments to be served by one pastor.

Faith, Staunton, and St. Peter's, Churchville, have Synod Council approval to form a two-church parish. Since both congregations have a pastoral vacancy, a joint call committee will seek a pastor. In a meeting with leaders of both congregations, Bishop Jim Mauney expressed a willingness to enter into a covenant with lay members in the Southern Valley Conference who could conduct services after training and working under supervision of ordained pastors.

The congregations of Immanuel, Bluefield, and Central, Burkes Garden, in nearby Tazewell County, have entered an agreement for a five-year partnership to seek a fulltime pastor serving them in a single parish. Both of these congregations have pastoral vacancies. Under the partnership, the joint parish could seek an intern or use lay liturgists for worship.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

Judge Poston succeeds lawyer Mark Reed as vice president

Synod voting members elected Norfolk Circuit Court Judge Charles Poston of First, Norfolk, to succeed Mark Reed, a Luray lawyer, as vice president at the Assembly at Roanoke College in June. Reed, a member of St. Mark, Luray, was recognized for his service as a member of Synod Council, as secretary and vice president.

Janet Gomez of Apostles, Gloucester, followed Pat Morgan of Good Shepherd, Chesapeake, as Synod secretary. Gomez, retired from Navy service, has been on Synod Council for three years.

In other elections, Charles L. Downs Jr., Christ, Roanoke, and Jane Nicholson, First, Norfolk, were elected and Elizabeth Smythe, Ebenezer, Marion, and James T. Stensvaag of St. Paul, Hampton, were returned to Synod Council. Jennifer Armentrout, Holy Trinity, Lynchburg; Brent Smith, St. Peter, Stafford, and Pastor JoAnn Bunn, Redeemer, McKinley, were elected to the Synod Committee on Discipline.

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)

LUTHERAN***Listening for God's voice in a noisy world***

Christian formation for adults is essential if we are to hear God's voice in a noisy world, said Virginia Tech Campus Pastor Bill King at the opening service of the Synod Assembly in June. Pastors JoAnn Bunn of Redeemer, McKinley and Mt. Tabor, Augusta County, and Nicholas Eichelberger of St. Mark, Luray, preached at Saturday and Sunday morning services.

The church's identity should be at the center of our reflection, not on the periphery, King said. Campus ministry, 100 years old, is marked by deepening faith and inspiring service, he said.

So many parents are not concerned with their children's spiritual growth—They turn it over to somebody else, "but that's not what the Lord intended...The responsibility is supposed to be with the biological family," Bunn said.

"We are called to be disciples, to go and do, go and tell, go and show, but too often we are filled with fear and trembling," Eichelberger said. "We don't discuss religion and politics (but) we are called to be baptized, Christian disciples."

[RETURN TO FRONT PAGE](#)