

## Other happenings:

- **The United Lutheran Appeal** still needs your help. This is our way to financially support 9 agencies within our Synod –from camps to seminaries. Giving was half of previous year’s (\$49,856). Please join with your congregation in sending a check to the VA Synod, earmarked ULA.
- **St. Mary** in Mt. Jackson celebrates their **250<sup>th</sup> anniversary**.
- **Hooray for those who serve!** Special recognition was made to the Rev. Marshall Mauney and former Bishop Virgil Moyer for their 65 years of ordination. The **Rev. Dr. Paul Huddle**, of Roanoke, celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> year of ordination! He served as a missionary in Japan, India and Europe for more than 40 years. Still active in his 90’s, he said, “I don’t know how much longer I’ll be here, but I will be here to serve.” He still does supply preaching 2-3 times a month.
- **Kathryn Buchanan**, head of Church Relations at Roanoke College is retiring. She’s been on fire for the church and on fire for the college. She is a former vice president of Synod.
- **George Kegley** was honored for his 50 years of service as the editor of *The Virginian Lutheran*, first a stand alone publication and now a part of *The Lutheran* magazine. “Just send in the news,” he said.
- **Let’s eat!** A motion was passed to encourage a \$1 donation from each person attending a Church Potluck to be sent to ELCA World Hunger. [www.amonthofpotlucks.org](http://www.amonthofpotlucks.org)
- **Discussion on other resolutions**, after some initial confusion on the proper ruling, was postponed indefinitely. “I love this church! We are incredible witnesses to the world and the gospel of Jesus Christ. My desire is not to suppress conversation but to lift what we are together,” said the Rev. David Derrick, Roanoke, in his motion to table the resolutions. But, first, there was a modest amount of discussion on resolutions asking for the Churchwide Assembly to rescind its actions voted upon last August regarding the Report of Human Sexuality.
- Heartfelt thanks to **Bishop Mauney and his staff**, who have kept the vision and the spirit of a nationwide church. “**Let this be an intentional year** of listening, of sharing, of best practices within the conference, for mutual building up, to speak about what is going well, naming our shortcomings and looking for remedies together,” said the Bishop.

# Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Assembly

Virginia Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
(ELCA)

June 4-6, 2010

Roanoke, Virginia

*This year’s gathering looked different. The 400 plus participants sat at round tables of six for congregational discussion and often formed groups of 3 with yet others for more sharing. There was a sense of family, looking to the future, to make the Lutheran Church in Virginia and the larger ELCA a dynamic, welcoming, serving church.*

## Interruptions are Opportunities

The Assembly was started with rousing worship. Pastor Chip Gunsten said, “There are many interruptions and changed agendas in our lives –and in the life of the church. Initially they seem to get in the way. But, realize that God may be providing opportunities for Holy Work. **Business as usual should not take precedence over Kingdom business.** These interruptions –small and big– are a part of being a Christian because they are opportunities for mission and ministry, and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Don’t get in the way of the wonderful ministry that can happen when we least expect it.”

## Come! Let us rebuild!

Those were the words of Nehemiah to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. They were also used by the Rev. Raphael Malpica Padilla, director of Global Mission for the ELCA, to urge us to restore community within the church. The walls may seem large, but God is equipping us to rebuild our church at this time and join Him in his extreme makeover of the world.

“Think of the many lives we touch each day through the congregation, the Synod and the larger church; things that we could not do individually or congregationally, or synodically.” Together, **with God**, we can rebuild.

**The church is not the same,  
but Christ Jesus is!  
Our unity comes alone in  
Christ....the Christ we all  
worship.**

Keynote speaker the **Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba**, Director of African National Ministries in the ELCA spoke twice to the gathering. He was inspirational and uplifting in asking us to be open minded and open handed as we represent Christ in our world.

## The marks of an OPEN-MINDED Ambassador of Christ:

***The Holy Spirit opened their minds so they could understand scripture. Luke 24:45***

1. **You understand scriptures.** The Word transforms you. Convince yourself first, preach to yourself.
2. **You are grounded** on the theology of the cross. Salvation is free but discipleship will cost you everything.
3. **You believe in the resurrection** –without apology.
4. **You proclaim BOTH** the message of **repentance** and **forgiveness**.
5. **You commit to local and global mission.** They cannot be separated. The Word is what must be sown because there is life, inspiration and fruit in the Word!
6. **You are a witness.** God is at work and you must say, “Look at God!” Focus where He is active.
7. **You let the Holy Spirit be in charge of your church.**
8. **You pray.** “Be a person of prayer. Seek the guidance and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit”

## “This news just in” See it, hear it, share it.

This was the theme of the LYO (Lutheran Youth Organization) who met concurrently with the Synod Assembly. Ours is the largest LYO in the ELCA! “Evangelism begins with one’s self. You must be in love with Jesus and the scriptures,” said Matt Wertmann, president of LYO and vice president of the National LYO Board. Last summer Virginia youth joined over 40,000 in New Orleans at the National LYO Gathering to become the largest service oriented gathering ever in that city.

**FAITH** is the ability to hear the melody of the future.  
**HOPE** is the courage to dance to its tune today.

## Now, become an OPEN-HANDED Ambassador of Christ:

1. **Be publicly visible;** get out of the church pew.
2. **Connect to the needs of the community.** That is your call.
3. **Concentrate on the spiritual wealth** of the church.
4. **Touch the world.** Get muddy, bloody, sweaty and dirty as you build up and help others. (Lutherans are the largest social service providers in the USA because of our love of Christ.)
5. **Lift up people with the Word of Christ.** It’s OK to say I believe in Jesus, my baptism, the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of Christ, the creation....
6. **Commit to discipleship,** sharing the news of Jesus with others.
7. **Humble yourself** so that it is **God** who will be recognized in you.

## Jesus is the Rock

Addressing the gathering, Bishop James Mauney proclaimed, “Jesus is the UNITY, and HOPE that holds us here. We do not have a consensus on the new ministry policies adopted by the Churchwide assembly, but I have admired how our congregations and leaders have remained in union with one another. People are listening respectfully and honoring each person’s struggle.” He urged continued dialog and bearing the burden of each other as a mark of the cross. “We remain a synod with people holding all four of the different views lifted up by the Social Statement on Human Sexuality, yet remaining together.”

## The Financial Plan for 2011

was approved in the amount of **\$1,801,158**. It is a true bare bones plan, even eliminating \$53,000 in funding for Synodical Committees and programs. Giving from congregations has been down by \$500,000 and for two years there has been no year-end giving to help with budget costs. “With great sorrow,” the decision to reduce the amount sent on to the ELCA from 50.6% to 35% was made believing that cutting staff in order to pay the ELCA would put us in a downward spiral. But, there is **HOPE** that we will build back our level of giving as soon as possible in order to continue the vast ministry that the Lutheran church is able to do with our combined dollars and efforts.

**We are not a perfect church,  
but we serve a perfect Lord.**