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# COUNTRYSIDE NEWS

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Volume 5 Issue 8

A Publication of Countryside Ministry

May 2007

Calvary, Barnum; Faith, Harcourt; Fulton, Roelyn; Trinity, Boxholm; UCC/Congregational, Moorland; Zion, Gowrie

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## BREADTH AND DEPTH

A message from Pastor Jim—

One of the aspects of being a pastor for which I am most grateful is the opportunity to experience the many different expressions the church assumes. This past month, I have had several exciting opportunities to experience the breadth and depth of the ministry we share.

A week ago, Steve Julius and I attended the first regional worship of the North Central Iowa Presbytery. The event was

held at First Presbyterian in Algona and was preceded by an opportunity to learn how Presbyterian Disaster Assistance continues to reach out to those affected by Hurricane Katrina. It was exciting to hear about the lives that are being touched through the work of the church. Mission support dollars and the helping hands of those who are able to assist with clean-up and construction are making a significant difference in the lives

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## Countryside Ministry Council

Marie Bengston -----Trinity  
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Roberta Clausen -----Trinity  
Loretta Daisy ----- Fulton  
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## Countryside Ministry Executive Committee

Loretta Daisy ----- President  
Steve Julius ----- Vice-president  
Greg Moe ----- Secretary  
Steve Lane ----- Treasurer  
Rev. Jim Davis  
----- Administrative Pastor

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## National Day of Prayer—May 3

### 2007 Prayer for Our Nation

*Written by*

*Dr. Charles R. Swindoll*

Almighty God, we pause to reflect on Your character as we seek wisdom for such a time as this. In these unsafe days, You remain all-powerful and able to protect;

In these uncertain times, You remain all-knowing, leading us aright;

In the unprecedented events we're facing,

You remain absolutely sovereign.

Our times are in Your hands. Therefore, our dependence on You is total, not partial

. . . our need for Your forgiveness is constant  
. . . our gratitude for Your grace is profound  
. . . our love for You is deep.  
We ask that You guard and guide our President and all who serve the people of these United States.  
May uncompromising integrity mark their lives.  
We also ask that You unite us as truly "one nation, under God." May genuine humility return to our ranks. And may that blend of integrity and humility heal our land.  
In our Lord's name we pray,  
Amen.

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## NEED A VISIT?

If you or anyone you know could use a pastoral visit, please contact the Countryside office at 352-3645 so a visit can be scheduled.





## Caregiving at some point along the way.

My newsletter article last month on caregiving shared how we will all be caregivers at sometime in our lives. Caregiving can be anticipated, yet untimely, long distance or right next door, two hours a week to 24 hours a day. Caregiving is universal. It knows no boundaries of age, race, religion, profession or economic status. Caregiving will touch all of our lives at some point along the way.

Most recently in my family our mom was diagnosed with colon cancer and had to have surgery. It felt like a hurry-up-and-wait process that we were living in for over 2 weeks. The doctor had said, *“It is a rapid growing kind and must come out.”* We grew impatient as they kept putting her surgical date further and further away, due to the surgeon’s vacation and other reasons. Finally her day came; everyone was anxious, praying and trying to keep positive around Mom. She had been so very positive and kept telling us not to worry—she would be just fine. She even told me, “I prayed to God to please watch over my kids and help make it easier for them.” But when it came time for her to be wheeled down to surgery she looked at each of us and then she buried her face in her hands and wept. All the bravery was gone in an instant as she wondered if she would see us again. This is pretty common when you say your goodbyes before surgery.

But God hears us and answers our prayers and He did that day as she came through the surgery wonderfully. Yesterday we were told the biopsy was clean, no cancer cells remaining. Thank you for your many

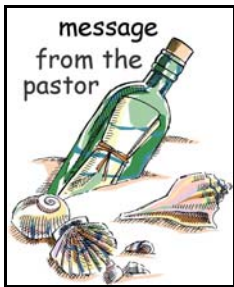
prayers.

Recently my mother-in-law has experienced difficulty walking, and getting around in her home. Her hips and legs have really been painful. She has been to the doctor and had tests and they are certain it is her *polymyalgia rheumatica*. The doctor prescribed some physical therapy with specialized care. She suggested the Gowrie Care Center. As I write this she has only been there 24 hours but already she feels comfortable; everyone is so very nice and once again we can say how lucky we are to live in a community with such a good care center. Mary Ellen, the new administrator, is super! The Gowrie Care Center has some great caregivers who work there.

It makes no difference if you have been hospitalized from a surgery or adjusting to new surroundings, when we are in pain and hurting from a physical anguish it can sometimes interfere with our relationship with God. The pain at times is all-consuming, blocking out any other thoughts. Or we may simply feel so tired from putting up with the pain that it seems impossible to talk with God any more than to continuously ask Him to take the pain away. “Why do I have to feel this way? Why don’t you help me God?” Questions like this have no easy answers. We only know that sometimes the questioning itself draws us more closely into the comforting embrace of a God who suffers with us and wants us to be whole and healed. Let God into your pain. There are great caregivers in hospitals and nursing homes and we have commissioned 53 wonderful caring Stephen Ministers who are ready to be there for you when you need comfort from the pain.

Cindy Youngquist,  
Countryside Ministries Stephen Ministry Leader

*“Bear one another’s burdens...and so fulfill the law of Christ.” GALATIANS 6:2*



(Continued from page 1)

### Breadth & Depth

of those who continue to suffer from the destruction of

Katrina. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance plans on being in the area affected by Katrina for seven years – that is how much work needs to be done. Incredible!

This past weekend I attended the 2007 Synod Assembly of the Western Iowa Synod of the ELCA. The

***Make known the love of Christ to all of God's people.***

most important item of business was the election of a Bishop. Bishop Last was elected to another six-year term as Bishop of the Western Iowa Synod. Please keep him in your prayers as he continues his service to our synod.

It was exciting to listen as Bishop Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, talked about the many ways in which the love of Christ is being made known to others through the members and congregations of the ELCA. It was also good to hear reports of what our members

and congregations are doing through the colleges and seminaries, social service agencies and many missions sponsored by the ELCA. The breadth and depth of the ministry in which we are involved is truly incredible!

Special guests to the Assembly included Assistant to the Bishop Rev. Isaya Mengele, Mrs. Helima Mengele and Rev. Gabriel Nduye, all from the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. It was good to hear them report on the work in which we are involved in Tanzania.

Thank you to those who represented us at the Assembly: Bud and Donita Johanson, Rev. Donald Wahlgren, Tyler McCubbin, Cindy Youngquist, Monte Albert, Kyla Mohr and Claire Davis.

Finally, last evening I participated in a Service of Healing for Leslee Mogenson, wife of Jon Mogenson, who has been one of our worship leaders for several years. The service was held at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rockwell City. Leslee has received an initial diagnosis of ALS. I was deeply moved at the many people who came to lay their hands on Leslee and pray for God's gift of healing.

I am so grateful to be part of a church that reaches around the globe and deep into the lives of those it serves as it strives to make known the love of Christ to all of God's people. It inspires me to see and hear the many ways in which we are involved in ministry together.

I encourage you to take advantage of every opportunity you have to experience the depth and breadth of the ministry in which we share. It is truly inspiring!

## CELEBRATING MOTHERS



**Mother's Day** is a holiday honoring mothers, celebrated (on various

days) in many places around the world. Mothers often receive gifts on this day. (Mothers Day is May 13, 2007.)

One of the best ways to celebrate Mother's Day is to give your mom the day off. Let her take it easy and relax while the rest of the family does the work.

Many families begin Mother's Day with breakfast in bed. Usually Dad and the kids will let mom sleep late as they go into the kitchen and prepare her favorite meal. can consist of anything

After the food is cooked arrange everything nicely on a tray. Don't forget the vase with a single flower. With spring here, the children can pick a tulip or daffodil from the garden outside. When everything is ready carefully carry the tray and mom's favorite sections from the newspaper up to her bedroom. Cards and small presents from the children can be placed on the tray before it is presented to mom in bed.

Many families make a special Mother's Day dinner or take mom out to her favorite restaurant for a meal. It is a good day to let your mom relax and let her see what a wonderful family she has.

# Let's Take Another Look at Stewardship



There has been much debate for centuries over the meaning of the word *dominion*, but this much is clear:

- Humanity has the highest place in the created order. Ps. 8
- A delegation of authority occurs here; God the creator transfers some authority over the creation to human beings. Ps. 8
- There is not a transfer of ownership.

God the creator is still God the owner.

We are accountable to God for how we exercise our dominion. As children of God, and in our lives of discipleship to Jesus, we are asked to be good *stewards*. From scripture we learn that a *steward* is not the owner. Second, the *steward* has a position of high authority in the household of the owner and is given great responsibility. Third, the *steward* cares for the possessions of the owner and for the benefit of other people who depend on the owner for their well-being. (Gen. 43, 44) The *steward* has the responsibility to care for the owner's possessions in such a way that the owner's assets prosper. Translated: we are accountable for the possessions with which God has entrusted us so that his kingdom prospers and flourishes. And, as disciples of Jesus, we are to work for the benefit of others. Translated: we are to practice peace, distributive justice, kindness, and help those in need – in short, to live lives of compassion and love for our neighbor. Matt. 25

But a caution is in order. Contrary to our cultural language that suggests that that which is need to under-belongs to this, then our how we make entrusted to us. ership will stewardship impossible.

*"Sometimes a congregation acts as if God is a God of scarcity, rather than a God of abundance."*

we are the owners of under our control, we stand that everything God. If we understand faith will influence use of all that God has A false sense of own-make a true sense of

Another caution is also in order. It is the false notion that we have what we have because we deserve it, and because we have earned it by our own intelligence and hard work. "But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the power to get wealth." Deut. 8 Contrary to the American "self-made man," we tend to ignore the multitude of complicated factors that cause one person to achieve wealth and power while others have not.

Rather than taking credit for my wealth, my wealth ought to make me ponder why God has chosen to so bless me. Rather than focusing my life on amassing great wealth that dramatically exceeds my needs, I

ought to focus my life on using the wealth that God has entrusted to me to help those who have less.

We should celebrate the fact that God has named us stewards. To be a steward is to be in a place of high esteem and responsibility. To be God's steward is a privilege like few others. We should also celebrate the fact that our creator God promises to be with us when we go out in God's name. We can know that God has already provided us with all the resources we need to accomplish the mission to which God has called us.

Sometimes a congregation acts as if God is a God of scarcity, rather than a God of abundance. Sometimes congregations lack a vision of what they are called to do in God's name, because they don't think they have the resources to accomplish anything. Sometimes congregations congratulate themselves if the budget for the coming year is smaller than the budget for the current year. This sort of behavior is likely an insult to God. God calls us to great and wonderful things. God provides generously the resources we need to do what God calls us to do. Let's celebrate this.

The goal of our stewardship ministry should be to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, abilities, and finances God has entrusted to them. We have quite a ways to go, haven't we?

**Remember:  
The Alzheimer's Support  
Group meets on the 4th  
Wednesday of each month  
at 1:00 p.m. at the Gowrie  
Senior Suites. May's  
meeting will be on  
Wednesday the 23rd.**

# MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

There are currently more than 5,000 children in Iowa who need a home. The majority of children in the child welfare system have been abused or neglected, but they have potential to succeed in a nurturing environment.

Lutheran Services in Iowa has teamed up with five other state organizations to form Iowa KidsNet. Iowa KidsNet is dedicated to the safety and permanency of children and families and provides recruitment, training, licensing and support to current and potential foster and adoptive families. The ultimate goal is to create permanent connections between children and families.

Pastor David Nelson and his wife Kris are some of the dedicated people currently serving as a foster care family. "Foster care is extremely rewarding and challenging. We are delighted to be foster parents and the benefits definitely outweigh the difficulties," says Kris. "It is important that we advocate for the future of all children in order for them to grow up to be happy, productive adults."

To find out more about LSI's foster care programs, call 1.888.4LSIOWA or visit [www.lsiowa.org](http://www.lsiowa.org). For more information on Iowa KidsNet, or if you are interested in becoming a foster parent, call 1.800.243.0756 or visit [www.iowakidsnet.com](http://www.iowakidsnet.com).

## IOWA CONFERENCE OF UCC NEWS

*Strong Roots, Fragile Farms* is a documentary about issues faced by family farmers here and abroad in an age of economic globalization. The film was made by the Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC in 2002 and has been aired several times. It will be aired again by NBC during a 30-day window that begins on May 20. If you'd like to see it, call your NBC affiliate and urge them to air the documentary. You can also find more information at [www.ucc.org/fragilefarms](http://www.ucc.org/fragilefarms).

**Rev. Karen McArthur**, an ordained UCC pastor in Massachusetts, has launched a new web site and electronic newsletter to help local church treasurers as well as all those involved in church finance. She writes, "It is my goal to make stewardship prophetic — to help congregational leaders develop bookkeeping and budgeting systems so that clear and concise financial reports can cut through the confusion and offer a straightforward and understandable assessment of the true financial health of a congregation." To visit her site, go to [www.stewardsprophet.com](http://www.stewardsprophet.com).

On June 9-12 **Bread for the World** is holding a gathering in Washington DC to "launch a renewed movement to end hunger and poverty in the US and around the world." You can find more information at [www.bread.org/gathering2007](http://www.bread.org/gathering2007).

## Zion Lutheran WELCA May Morning Coffee and Bake Sale



# Tuesday May 1, 2007

Martha & Esther Circles invite everyone to attend the coffee and bake sale.

All Women of Zion are encouraged to bring items for the bake sale.

All proceeds will go to Lutheran Services of Iowa.

Matching Funds will be provided by Thrivent Financial.

9:00 A.M. to

11:00 A.M.

at

Zion Lutheran

Church

Gowrie

Public Welcome



# PRISON MINISTRY



**Wanted:** people who are willing to take one Wednesday each month or

just a Wednesday now and then to bring a little hope to our brothers at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility.

Once a month a group of people from our Countryside Ministry churches goes to a worship service at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. Jesus tells us to go and visit those in prison as well as the sick (Matthew 25:39). Please join us!

Our regularly scheduled visit is the second Wednesday of the

month (May 9). We leave from Zion at 5:45 p.m. but will make arrangements to pick people up in Moorland or meet in the prison parking lot.

Anyone wishing to be included in this outreach ministry please call the Countryside Ministry office by the first Thursday of the month (May 3) to reserve a spot.

If you have not previously visited the correctional facility, the Countryside office will need some information. The correctional facility is required to do a background check on each new visitor as a precautionary measure.

## The Little Lutheran

To nurture the faith of the little ones in our midst, "The Lutheran" magazine folks have developed "The Little Lutheran" for toddlers age six and younger. This 24-page magazine (10 issues per year) in picture book format, will help little ones learn about God's love for them and know Jesus as friend and savior. The faith-based stories are meant to be read by or with children, so the text is simple or rhymed. The art is vivid, bold and engaging. In addition to stories, "The Little Lutheran" will contain prayers, songs, puzzles, activities, rituals and more to help children become aware of God's presence and activity in and around them.

Do you have a little one in your life who would benefit from getting a magazine about God's love for them? To learn more or to subscribe, visit [www.thelittlelutheran.org](http://www.thelittlelutheran.org). The launch date for "The Little Lutheran" is July/August 2007.



The last day of school for Prairie Valley is May 29. Have a great summer!

## TANZANIAN GUESTS

The Countryside Ministry will be hosting Rev. Gabriel Nduye on Wednesday, May 9. Rev. Nduye is the Resident Coordinator for our Companion Synod relationship with the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Pastor Nduye was trained both as a pastor and as an administrator at Tumaini University. As Resident Coordinator, he manages the many components of our Hatua Kwa Hatua/Step By Step program, including managing project funds, enhancing overall communications, attending to various project details, etc. Pastor Gabriel is the glue and the shoes that allow our relationship to keep moving forward Hatua Kwa Hatua!

Join us on May 9 at Zion to welcome Pastor Nduye and learn from him about life in Tanzania.

A light meal will be served at 7:00 p.m. followed by conversation with Pastor Nduye. Everyone is welcome! Please help us plan for how much food we need by contacting the church office by May 7 if you intend to join us.



### Dinner & Conversation

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# WIS ASSEMBLY NOTES

The Western Iowa Synod ELCA 21st Annual Assembly was held April 20-22, 2007 at the Convention Center in Sioux City, IA. This year's theme was "Living in God's Amazing Grace, Give Thanks to God!". Members attending from Zion were Pastor Jim Davis, Pastor Don Wahlgren, Cindy Youngquist, Monte Albert, Claire Davis, Kyla Mohr, Tyler McCubbin (youth delegate), and Bud and Donita Johanson (voting delegates). There were 504 delegates and visitors registered.

Registration was Friday afternoon. That evening we had our first worship service. It was ironic that when we sat down to worship, we were sitting by Dean and Barb Sudman. It has been 29 years since they first came to Gowrie and they wanted to send greetings to their Gowrie friends. Following worship we had our first plenary session. At this session the first ballot for the election of bishop of our Western Iowa Synod was held. There was a total of 15 candidates on the first ballot. If a bishop to be elected were to be elected on that first ballot, he would need 75% of the votes cast. This didn't happen, so another ballot would be given at our next session which would be Saturday morning.

Saturday morning began with worship. The churchwide ELCA Presiding Bishop Rev. Mark Hanson gave the sermon. He talked about 3 things: 1. Give Thanks to God, 2. Tell the story of God's love, and 3. Make a difference. A second ballot was cast for the election of bishop—still no one elected. That afternoon at the ple-

nary session we had the 3rd ballot. The ballot was narrowed to 7 candidates. Still no one elected. The next ballot was narrowed to 3 candidates with 60% majority needed for election. Still no one elected. On the fifth and final ballot Michael Last and David Cox were the two candidates; either would win with a simple majority. Michael Last was elected to be the Bishop of the Western Iowa Synod for the next six years.

Saturday afternoon we were allowed to attend different forums of our choice. Bud and I attended the Lutheran Disaster Response meeting which was very interesting telling about helping at New Orleans and Stratford. At the plenary session that afternoon there was a resolution to recognize the Spirit of Life Lutheran Church at Sergeant Bluff, IA. This is a newly organized 85 member congregation and it is the first full-time, mission-started congregation in the history of the Western Iowa Synod. Its charter date was April 15, 2007.

There are 166 congregations in our Western Iowa Synod. Regarding Mission Support, there were 15 congregations who gave more than Zion and 150 who gave less than Zion in 2006.

The 2008 Synod Assembly will be held June 6-7, 2008 at Storm Lake, IA. Attending the Assembly was very busy and interesting. Your Zion Lutheran delegates were pleased to represent you and let others know what we are doing in our rural area.

Bud and Donita Johanson  
Zion's, Synod Delegates

## Do you Yahoo?

Do you Yahoo... for Lutheran Disaster Response? How many times a week do you use an Internet search engine such as Yahoo!, Google, or Ask.com? For many people, the answer is probably "A whole bunch." What if Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) earned a penny every time you performed such a search? Now it's possible. GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half of its revenue (about one penny per search) to the charity of the searcher's choice. You use it just as you would any search engine, and GoodSearch is powered by Yahoo!, so you are guaranteed good search results. To start using GoodSearch, go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com). You will see two boxes—the search box, and a box that says "Who do you GoodSearch for?" In this box simply enter in "LDR" and start searching. You can even download a GoodSearch toolbar ([www.goodsearch.com/toolbar](http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar)) for your Internet browser so that you have a search function always at your fingertips. A penny for every search may not seem like much...but imagine if 1,000 people searched twice each day using GoodSearch. Over the course of a year, LDR would make more than \$7000. GoodSearch makes it easy to support your favorite non-profit organization ... and all you have to do is something that you already do anyway. Start searching for Lutheran Disaster Response today! For more information visit Lutheran Disaster Response at [www.ldr.org](http://www.ldr.org) or call 773-380-2748.

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