



# CURRENTS

SEPTEMBER 2015

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- WORSHIP LEADERS** 3
- SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS** 4
- VISION BOARD MINUTES** 6, 7
- FAITH & FITNESS** 8
- LACROSSE AREA SYNOD** 9
- SUNDAY SCHOOL** 10
- PARISH NURSES** 11
- TREASURER'S REPORT** 12
- HALFWAY CHOIR** 12
- VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PICTURES** 14, 15

## SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION— SEPTEMBER 13

We are excited to begin the year and have some information to share with you.

First, we will have registration and open house on **Sunday, September 13 at 10:00 am**. This will follow our worship service at 9:00 am. Sunday school is for any child ages 2 through 5th grade.

Registration will take place in your child's assigned Sunday school classroom. When you arrive there will be someone to greet you and tell you which classroom(s) to go to.

Immediately following registration, at 10:30, we are going to have rubber duck races! When you arrive for registration, each student will get to pick out a rubber duck and decorate it in their classroom! We will then head outside and have our duck races!

Our first day of Sunday school is September 20 at 9:15 am.

### “HALFWAY HODGEPODGE”—YOU’RE INVITED!

**What:** Halfway Hodgepodge is a progressive meal where you can learn about and volunteer for our ministries here at the church. Tables will be set up and each will

feature a different ministry. Also at that table will be the next part of your meal. It is a fun way to see all that we do here!  
**When: Sunday, September 20th,**

following our 10:30 am service. Also that morning we will have “Leather and Lace”, a polka band, leading worship with us!

### FALL WORSHIP SCHEDULE STARTS SEPT 27

Please note the change in our worship schedule. Sunday worship will be at 8:00 a.m. followed by Sunday

School at 9:15 a.m. and worship again at 10:30 a.m. starting September 27th.



**HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
 W6016 County Road W  
 Holmen, WI 54636  
 Phone 608-526-3701  
 Pastor Jean Pagliaro  
 Worship at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Sundays  
[www.halfwaycreek.org](http://www.halfwaycreek.org)

## Return Service Requested

### OFFICE HOURS

The office will be open Monday 8-4, Wednesday 8-4 and Thursday 8-12. If you need to reach Anna Mally, you may leave a message on the answering machine or e-mail her at [assistant@halfwaycreek.org](mailto:assistant@halfwaycreek.org).

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Holmen, WI 54636



### NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK

This was our float at the Holmen Kornfest parade. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to build the float and walk in the parade!



### NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



The Halfway Creek garden harvest from a weekly pick! All of it is donated to local food ministries!



Some of our Vacation Bible School participants doing what they do best - laughing and running and being who God created them to be! "Children are a gift from the LORD ; they are a reward from him." Psalm 127:3



**NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.  
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**



“My God is powerful. He stands invincible. I will hold on to him. I will hold on to him.”



**NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.  
SERVING OTHERS IN OUR CONGREGATION**

	ACOLYTE	SEXTON	ALTAR GUILD	OFFERING COUNTERS	LECTOR	COMMUNION ASSIST.	USHERS
<b>S E P T 6</b>	Volunteer Needed	Mike Martin	Volunteer Needed	Rhonda Britton Sonja Nelson	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
<b>S E P T 13</b>	Max Hammond	Stan Schwier	Volunteer Needed	Bette Pedretti Susan Jostad	Ruth Jostad	Sonja Nelson	Earl & Mary Hammond
<b>S E P T 20</b>	Alyssa Rink	Archie Achterkirch	Volunteer Needed	Kendra Bringe Sally Johnson	Jean Latham	Logan Pagliaro	Matt & Dawn Rink
<b>S E P T 27</b>	Jacob Thornton	Russ Bringe	Volunteer Needed	Stephanie Lubinsky Joe Noth	Pat Martin	Mike Martin	Carolyn Hackett
	Chance Brandau	Dave Bringe			Brian Mueller	Jen Strangstalien	Patti & Chad Brandau

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>
Rachael Temp	Jordan Thompson	Dawn Rink	Lydia Pagliaro
		Alexander Rudy	Ruth Jones
<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>
Gail Dent	Gayle Johnson	Ashton Rudy	Dorothy Hoch
	Emersen Strangstalien		Ruth Jostad
<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>
Greg Britton	Matt Pagliaro	Arlene Prichett	Alex Pedretti
	Beulah Sanders	Hadley Given	Eric Theisen
<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>
Teagan Yahnke	Jesse Fiers	Connie Lau	Aaron Balow
	Rodney Sutherland	Hannah Wegner	Jason Ruhbusch
	Rochelle Thompson		
<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>	
Angela Kinsman	Kaden Casberg	James Hansen	Kim Booth
		David Johnson	
<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	
Casey Clark	Diane Jostad	Morgan Jostad	
	Emily Jostad	Mark Sanders	
<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	
Rayna Hendrickson	Kimberly Noel	Stan Schwier	
Hannah Scholze		Lila Sutherland	



If we've missed your birthday in the newsletter, it is because we don't have it in our computer system. Please call the church office (526-3701) to help us update our records so we can all celebrate with you on your special day.

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### Lutheran World Relief Kits – Please start gathering these items:

#### School Kit:

- Four 70-sheet notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper approximately 8" X 10½"; no loose-leaf paper
- One 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- One pencil sharpener
- One blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- Five unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers; secure together with a rubber band
- Five ballpoint pens (no gel ink); secure together with a rubber band
- One box of 16 or 24 crayons
- One 2½" eraser
- One sturdy drawstring backpack-style cloth bag approximately 14" X 17" with shoulder straps (no standard backpacks)

#### Personal Care Kit:

- One light- to medium-weight, bath-size towel (approximately 52" X 27" or smaller), dark color recommended
- Two bath-size bars (4 to 5 oz.) of soap, any brand, in original wrapping
- One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging\*
- One sturdy comb, remove packaging
- One metal nail clippers (with or without attached file), remove packaging

#### Baby Care Kit:

- Two lightweight cotton t-shirts
- Two long- or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet)
- Two receiving blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel, or crocheted or knitted with lightweight yarn, up to 52" square
- Four cloth diapers, flat fold preferred
- One jacket, sweater or sweatshirt with a hood, or include a baby cap
- Two pairs of socks
- One hand towel, dark color recommended
- Two bath-size bars (4 to 5 oz.) of gentle soap, in original wrapping
- Two diaper pins or large safety pins

#### Soap:

- No one likes to look dirty. A brand new bar of soap lets someone present him- or herself with dignity, keep hands clean and stay healthy. Those simple things are some of the very building blocks to success.
- Send us soap and we will see it gets to people in need. LWR accepts new bars of any brand, in its original wrapping. Bath-size bars (4 to 5 oz.) are highly preferred.

**Bring to church before September 15**

**NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.**

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Year to date budget as of

General Fund Income: \$ 77,938.71

General Fund Expenses: \$ 86,640.01

General Fund Net Income: -- \$ 7,637.88



**NEW HALFWAY CHOIR OPPORTUNITIES**

In order to allow more people to participate in the Halfway Choir, we are excited to offer short term choir opportunities throughout the year. Choir opportunities will vary in time, length, and commitment. Some opportunities may be for a season, like Christmas or Easter, and some may be only for one or two rehearsals. Choir opportunities will also vary in participants. Some may be mixed choir, some may be women's choir, and some may be multigenerational—open to all ages. Some may be instrumental or mixed vocal and instrumental opportunities. Skill level will also vary so that even those with no choir experience will feel comfortable participating. You can choose to participate in just one opportunity or all of them- it is completely up to you! We hope that this new program will allow more people to share their musical gifts with Halfway Creek Lutheran.

The choir opportunities will be led by Lynn Wegner and other various volunteers throughout the year. We are thankful that Brian Mueller, Carolyn Hackett, and Mandi Horstman have agreed to help lead various opportunities throughout the year. Please contact Lynn Wegner at [lwegner2005@yahoo.com](mailto:lwegner2005@yahoo.com) or 526-3110 with any questions.

**CHOIR FOR REFORMATION SUNDAY—OCTOBER 25TH**

Are you age 12 or older? Do you like to sing? Join us and sing praises on Reformation Sunday with the Halfway Choir! Rehearsals will start Sunday, September 27 at

9:15am in the sanctuary. We will sing at the 8am service on Sunday, October 25. No long term commitments, just 5 rehearsals! If you are interested or have

questions, please contact Brian Mueller at [choirbri@yahoo.com](mailto:choirbri@yahoo.com) or 507-429-7368.

**NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.**

**CONVERSATION AND CELEBRATION—OCTOBER 24**

Please join us on Saturday, October 24 from 9:00-12:00 for Conversation and Celebration of who we are and what God is calling us to be as a congregation. Our focus this year will be on “what’s

next” as we look at where God continues to lead us as a congregation. Team members are strongly encouraged to attend so please mark this on your calendars now.

Also, you do not need to be a part of a team to join us. All are welcome and we would love to have you as a part of the morning.

**HOLMEN’S HOPE—WE SERVE SEPTEMBER 30**

Once again we will reach out to our community at the Holmen's Hope meal.

We will prepare and serve the meal on September 30th. Milk and desserts are needed for this meal. Please watch for sign up sheets to be passed around during church.

This is a big event for HCLC as we serve 160-200 of our neighbors. We visit old friends, make new friends and have great laughs in both the kitchen and dining area. A huge shout out to our garden team for providing green beans and squash. Thank-You!

If you have not helped with our Holmen’s Hope meal, please consider joining us. Kids/youth receive community service hours for helping out. We always need milk and cookie servers.

Dawn Bandoli 498-0774  
[squeeze1@hotmail.com](mailto:squeeze1@hotmail.com)

**THE LUTHERAN COURSE—OCTOBER 4-NOVEMBER 8**

Are you interested in learning more about the Lutheran faith? Have questions but haven’t had a chance to ask them? Wonder what all this talk about God’s grace means? Join us for a six week session on the basics of the Lutheran faith. We will meet in the fellowship hall at 11:30 a.m. on Sundays starting October 4th and ending November 8th.

**TRUNK-OR-TREAT**

We will be hosting our second annual Trunk-or-Treat in October. More info to come on this fun event in the weeks to come!!!



**FESTIVAL FOODS AND KWIK TRIP SCRIP CARDS**

When you purchase these cards, a percentage of your purchase price stays at HCLC. The Festival Foods

(3%) and Kwik Trip (10%) Scrip program are an ongoing source of income for our Building Project.

The cards are available each week after our worship services in “The Back Pew.”

**FELLOWSHIP HOUR**

Fellowship Hour has been a huge success this past year and we will continue this ministry. There will be sign up sheets being passed around church.

There will continue to be two separate coffee hours, one at 9:00 am (upstairs) and one at 11:30 am (downstairs). We do need families to volunteer to help with this and you can help in two ways: prepare

and serve the coffee and treats or make the treats. You can certainly do both as well! We will have sign ups at church and during Halfway Hodgepodge on September 14<sup>th</sup>.



## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES-AUGUST 2015

Minutes of Halfway Creek Lutheran Church Vision Board Meeting August 13, 2015

David Gates, Marna Holley, Brian Mueller, Bob Bandoli, Susan Chase, Syndey Craig, Joanne Nichols, Shelly Vander Linden, Pastor Jean Pagliaro

David Gates called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm

Pastor Jean led us in a devotion about “Reclaiming the C Word: Daring to Be Church Again”, by Kelly Fryer.

Carolyn Hackett presented the Second Century Committee update. There will be a meeting with the architect to discuss options concerning the elevator, which under its current configuration can fit a gurney, but cannot fit a casket, due to the turning radius. The building project is currently running under budget. The Vision Board thanks the members of the Second Century Committee for their diligence, and the numerous volunteers and others who have donated time and materials to the building project. Change Order #26 for (34.714.97) [deduct], and Change Order #27 for \$1,550.66 (mechanical venting of the elevator equipment room) were presented for approval. Brian Mueller made a motion to approve. Marna Holley seconded. Motion approved. The following owner direct purchases were submitted for approval: Concrete \$1,224.00, Reimburse to Pastor Jean for desk shipping \$450.00, Wisconsin Building Supply \$10,682.00, DJG Sales \$600.00, Kendall Doors \$3,699.54, Wettstein Brothers Electric \$9,102.00. Marna Holley made a motion to approve. Bob Bandoli seconded. Motion approved. Brad Kortbein, the architect, has agreed to not demand his final payment. There will be \$825.00 transferred from the building fund to dedicated funds to reimburse the fund for a payment to Krause Construction.

The minutes of the June meeting were submitted for approval. Joanne Nichols made a motion to approve. Bob Bandoli seconded. Motion approved.

Bob Bandoli presented the finance team report. It was reluctantly necessary to borrow \$2,000 from dedicated funds to cover general fund expenses. As of August 13, the general fund was - \$1,000, but that includes payroll, which will run Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, so there is one Sunday of offerings to cover the shortfall. Bob urged the Vision Board to inform members that we need to consider the mortgage payment when considering our monetary offering for each month. The Vision Board will discuss this further at the September meeting, so we can present a monthly number to the congregation concerning the mortgage payment.

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### PARISH NURSES

Does an “apple a day keep the doctor away”?

By: Paula Przywojski, Registered Dietitian



"An apple a day keeps the doctor away" originated in Wales in the 19th century. Sadly eating apples doesn't guarantee good health, but they do have nutritional value and potential health benefits. Apples contain no fat, sodium or cholesterol and are a good source of fiber. Apples have a low calorie count of approximately 80 in a medium apple with a large sized apple going for approximately 140 calories. As with all fruit, apples are made up of all carbohydrates. These carbohydrates are complex carbohydrates that can give you a sustained energy boost. The majority of the fiber comes from eating the peel. Pectin, found in high levels in apples, is a type of soluble fiber that works to maintain a healthy digestive system. It can also reduce “bad” cholesterol and glucose levels as well as blood pressure. A recent study revealed that eating only 1 serving of fruit per day lowered risk of heart disease by 40%.

An apple also has many great nutrients that keep your body healthy, and these include vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Antioxidants are chemicals found mainly in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Apples are rich in isoflavones and phenolics. These “fighting” chemicals help neutralize free-radical, or “bad cells” in our bodies. It is so important to eat the whole fruit vs taking a vitamin or mineral supplement. You will not get the important fiber part of the fruit from taking supplements or by drinking juice. We also know that the actual color of the fruit has great health benefits. The red color of the apple, known as anthocyanin, provides part of this antioxidant affect.

An apple won't replace your toothbrush, but biting and chewing an apple stimulates the production of saliva in your mouth, reducing tooth decay by lowering the levels of bacteria. So, with all of the wonderful health benefits of an apple, why wouldn't we “eat an apple a day to keep the doctor away.” Here in the coulee region we are fortunate to have locally grown apples close by. Here is a recipe for a different take on salsa. This works well with baked chips, served with pork or roast chicken, or as a side dish.

#### Fresh Apple Salsa

Cooking Light: October 2010

Yield: 12 servings

Serving Size: ¼ cup

#### Ingredients:

2 cups diced apples-any crisp variety works well  
 ½ cup diced red bell pepper  
 1/3 cup fresh lime juice  
 ¼ cup dices red onion  
 ¼ cup minced fresh cilantro  
 1 tablespoon honey (optional)  
 ¼ teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon black pepper  
 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced

#### Nutritional Information: per ¼ cup serving

Calories: 21  
 Fat: 0 grams  
 Cholesterol: 0 grams  
 Carbohydrates: 6 grams  
 Sodium: 50 milligrams  
 Protein: 0 grams

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION—SEPTEMBER 13 @ 10:00AM**

**DUCK RACES @ 10:30AM**



Halfway Creek Lutheran Church Sunday School is open to all children age 2 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This year we are extremely excited to have 80 children enrolled!!! We are looking forward to a terrific year of fun and learning in our new classrooms!

You and your children are invited to join us at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 13, 2015 for registration. This will be a chance for us to meet you and for our teachers to share some of the plans for the year. The children will select a duck that sparks their faith. Pastor Jean will be there to encourage us as well. We will gather in the sanctuary for music at 10:20 a.m. and finish the morning with duck races at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School affirms the home as the center of biblical guidance. Parents are the most important people in a child's life, and learning about God starts in the home. Teaching children about God is a seven-day-a-week effort, not something that can be done just an hour or two on Sunday morning. We pledge to do our best to support you in your child's spiritual education, and stand ready to help you at any time.

### **Noisy Offering for Sunday School curriculum – August 30, September 6 and September 13**

Sunday School is not part of the church's general budget, so we will be doing noisy offerings to cover the cost of this year's bibles, curriculum and materials (\$1,400.00)

This year we are continuing our Spark curriculum. From time to time, when appropriate for the lesson or the season, we may have snacks or taste foods related to the story. Please let us know if your child has any allergies or other dietary restrictions. Because of this and out of fairness to other children, we ask that your child not bring food or drink into the classroom.

Some of the things you can do to support the best Sunday School experience for your child are:

#### **Encourage Regular Attendance**

Sunday school starts each week at 9:15 a.m. Please help your child to be on time and attend as often as possible. Consistency and continuity are extremely important for your child during these years. To provide the best learning experience, we teach in units of study that build from week to week through the month, and it's best for the child to be able to experience each week's lesson, if possible. We prepare carefully each week to begin meaningful teaching from the very beginning of the class, and your child's arrival on time helps the whole class to get the most out of the session.

#### **Pray**

We promise to join you in praying for you and your child. We believe that prayer is an effective and powerful force to help protect your child and help him develop to his highest spiritual potential. We would much appreciate your prayers for us and the class as well.

In addition, we encourage your child to develop the habit of a daily quiet time with God, which will help provide a firm foundation for his future life.

#### **Bring Bible and Offering**

Please encourage your child to bring their Bible and an offering each week. We will actively use the Bible each Sunday in class. The Sunday School offering supports the Sunday School. We also use the children's offering to help them develop good habits of stewardship, as we discuss how the money is used to provide services and ministry at our church and support missions around the world.

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

**VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES-AUGUST 2015—CONT.**

Pastor Jean is considering scheduling her Sabbatical from the first week of April to the first week of July in 2016. She is considering a number of possibilities on how to utilize her sabbatical time. Layna Klich, daughter of Erinmolly and Adam Klich, will be baptized on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and her parents will be accepted as new members. Noah Hanson, son of Kelly and Chad Hanson, will be baptized on a date to be determined and his parents will be accepted as new members. We welcome them in Christian love and fellowship! Hodge Podge is set for September 20<sup>th</sup> after the 10:30am service. There will be only one service that Sunday. September 13<sup>th</sup> will be Sunday School registration after the 9am service. There is a healing service on August 16<sup>th</sup>. A new support group, "Walking Together in Faith", will meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month at 9:15am. The first meeting will be August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:15am. The Fall Adult Information Class will meet for 6-7 weeks at 9:15am on Sundays. Start date will be announced.

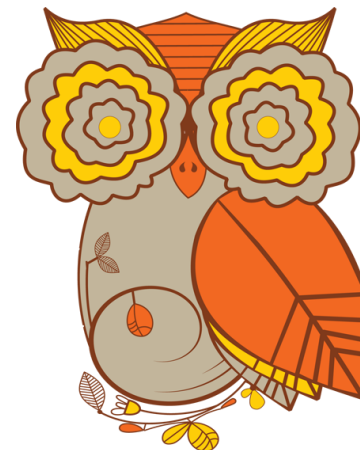
Bob Bandoli is awaiting insurance quotes. The Vision Board will discuss them at the September meeting.

The Vision Board web page will be a static page with names of Vision Board members, and will direct members to the minutes printed in the newsletter.

Lynn will present a t-shirt idea at the September meeting.

The All-Team Conversation and Celebration will tentatively take place Saturday, October 24. We will discuss the theme at the Vision Board meeting in September, so come with ideas. Possible theme is "Now What?"

Bob Bandoli made a motion to adjourn. Brian Mueller seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.



## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### FAITH AND FITNESS TEAM WINTER CHALLENGE

We are looking for committee members to create a winter scavenger hunt. Our first meeting will be Wednesday, September 16 at 6:00. The idea is similar to Checkpoint MN. Check it out at <http://checkpointmn.com/>. Basically we would create 12-24 checkpoints around our local area that individuals, families, and friends would try to get to over an 8 week period. Checkpoints may be public locations that involve hiking, snow shoeing, etc., or a business that would encourage family togetherness, recreational activities, or spiritual uplifting. Each checkpoint would have a sign that would have the new HCLC logo, the sponsoring business/organization name, and an inspirational message or scripture verse.

The purpose of this challenge would be to lift spirits, get families and friends out and active, and give individuals ideas of things to do in the winter. HCLC would be reaching out to the community and partnering with area businesses and organizations through this challenge. Businesses would gain additional traffic and could even offer incentives for Challenge participants.

We are looking for people who'd be interested in getting this challenge organized. We need the following talents and interests:

**Idea people** (Where should checkpoints be? What businesses may want to partner with us? What items could be given away?)

**Web/IT background** (How do people record their checkpoints? Where do people gather the information about this challenge?)

**Community connections** (How do we connect with businesses and community members to get sponsorships and give away items? How do we promote this challenge?)

**Graphics** (What do our signs and informational materials look like?)

We will meet **Wednesday, September 16** from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at church. Please contact Kristi Johnson at [kristi-johnson@yahoo.com](mailto:kristi-johnson@yahoo.com) or 608-317-1113, if you're interested in joining this group.

### WELCA NEWS

Thanks to everyone who provided salads and worked for the salad luncheon. We had about 65 ladies enjoy the event. A special thanks to Hannah Scholze for her program on church records.

A box has been placed on the back counter in the church basement for Lutheran World Relief school kit, health kit, and layette items (see next page for details).

-- Ruth Scholze  
[escholze@centurytel.net](mailto:escholze@centurytel.net)



## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### LA CROSSE AREA SYNOD

Over the past year I, Amy Noel, have had the opportunity to serve on the Mission Support Committee of the La-Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA. In June, I represented HCLC at Synod Assembly where there was worship, fellowship, celebration and some business. I have learned a lot about the Synod and the work it does to support our congregation and the many ministries we support. I wanted to take this opportunity to educate you.

The La Crosse Area Synod is a geographic grouping of congregations and is one of 65 synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. There is a total of 38,100 baptized members and 74 churches, partner camps, nursing homes, and Lutheran Campus Ministries of La Crosse making up the La Crosse Area Synod. The locations our ministries serve include counties in south western Wisconsin and south eastern Minnesota. I've included an article about the synod.

### Article from Bishop James Arends (published in March 2015 in Coulee Courier – LaCrosse Area Synod Quarterly Publication)

#### On Our Behalf

Every now and then someone asks, "What does the synod do for us?" Since I know that those congregation members who ask are, themselves, a part of the synod, I prefer to understand the question as, "How do we use our synod office to serve on our behalf?" And this I can answer.

The first action is simple. Each month our office sends 55% of the mission support dollars received from our congregations on to the Churchwide offices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our officers and employees there put our dollars to use in global mission work, starting congregations, raising up pastors and other church leaders, speaking out on behalf of our membership for the causes of justice and peace throughout the world, creating faith based resources for congregations to use in teaching and serving and in worship, and in leading and guiding our church to follow our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The second action is an honor. Pastor Libby Howe and I are honored to "be the presence" of our La Crosse Area Synod reaching beyond our congregation's door. We become our synod's presence at ecumenical prayer breakfasts, at community services praying for needs throughout our region and the world, applauding faithful service in Christ's name, and sitting down to plan joint action to be Christ's healing presence in this corner of God's world. We become our synod's presence on regional projects and churchwide committees.

But the third action is where most of our time is spent. Pastor Howe and I, working with our staff, help congregations find new pastors, work with congregations in turmoil, provide spiritual leadership to congregations through preaching and teaching, provide coaching for pastors and congregational leaders, serve on the committees of our synod to coordinate our synod's work for our congregations and for our mission. We coordinate the annual Synod Assembly where direction is set for the Synod's work. We are now entering our spring work of visiting individually with each of our synod's pastors for mutual support and encouragement and prayer. The list goes on. And we are honored to serve on your behalf. Let's talk about God's work in our synod and beyond,

*Jim Arends, Bishop*