



## CHICAGO GRADUATION 2006

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod diakonia graduation was held on Saturday, June 24 at St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran church in Chicago. There were 15 members of this year's graduating class, with students graduating from the program in Aurora, Chicago (West Lakeview), River Forest, and Schaumburg. The lessons of the day all dealt with being called to do God's work. Rev. Dr. Donald B. Myrom preached on this theme, and urged the graduates and those in the congregation to consider their own call. Especially touching was a tribute to David Oestreich, who would have graduated this year from the West Lakeview program. David was a member of St. Luke's and attended classes there. He died in 2005. His classmates presented Rev. David Abrahamson and the congregation of St. Luke's with a plaque in honor of David.

By Melanie Chavin, 2002 graduate

## HELLO FROM THE EDITOR!

Congratulations to everyone who recently graduated from the various Diakonia sites.

May God bless each one of you! If you have news or information for this newsletter, please feel free to e-mail it to me ([mjmouw@uic.edu](mailto:mjmouw@uic.edu)).

By Mary Mouw



## NEWS ABOUT US

Rob Sorensen, 2001 graduate, is considering seminary.

Karen Stetins, a 2004 graduate, and Dennis Waugh, 2006 graduate, have both been accepted as candidates for the Metro Chicago Synod of the ELCA.

Rich Beaderstadt, 2004 graduate, has a new job.

Jennifer Fisher, 2004 graduate, received provisional acceptance to the seminary and has begun candidacy. She will begin classes in the fall.

Ronn Brower, 2005 graduate, was accepted into the chaplaincy program at Northwest Community Hospital.

Jackie Good, 2001 graduate, sprained her ankle.

Nicole Macaluso, second year River Forest, moved.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

Daughter of Dionne Dundas (first year Rockford) is having a difficult pregnancy with twins.

Neill Noel's sister with medical concerns. Neill is a second year student at West Lakeview.



Pastor Mary Konopka, Executive Director of Diakonia has medical problems.

## **NORTHERN ILLINOIS CRE (Congregational Resourcing Event)**

The CRE was good for diakonia! Several of us estimated that the overall attendance was about 1/3 less than last year. The display areas were slower than last year. However, several people stopped by and learned about



diakonia. I did talk to three people who seemed very interested. The forums were well attended. The first one had six people attending and generated serious

interest in two people. The second had about 15 attendees and I believe will generate at least 3 students with at least 2 more to give us serious consideration. We continue to increase interest in the program. More people have heard about diakonia than I've seen before. The assembly itself was interesting in that the hunger group had resolutions about world hunger. They brought attention to the efforts of the Synod to the attendees.

By Ronn Brower, 2005 graduate

## **MILWAUKEE ASSEMBLY**

Rebecca Dahlstrom and Mike Bennett took turns at the Diakonia booth at Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly June 1 - 3. Though there was no opportunity to present a workshop, and our booth was off the beaten path, we were able to have good



conversations with several people interested in Diakonia. Six students are now enrolled for the class year beginning in September, and

instructors are in place for all six courses. Rebecca, Mike, and Amy Reumann of the Greater Milwaukee Synod office have had our heads together regarding administrative details, and have even started preliminary planning for a second Greater Milwaukee site for 2007 - 2008.

by Mike Bennett, 2005 graduate

## **BISHOP WOLLERSHEIM ATTENDS CLASS!**

Bishop Gary Wollersheim stopped by the diakonia classes in Moline and Rockford in May. Bishop Wollersheim spoke to the students of both classes in informal question and answer sessions. The students enjoyed their time with the bishop and recognized the support he has for the program.



## DIAKONIA EXPANSION IN FLORIDA/BAHAMAS

The Florida/Bahamas synod is having the biggest diakonia start up ever. Originally, classes were planned at just one site, Tampa. With everything coming together and incredible support from the bishop, pastors, and former diakonia graduates, the synod is now planning to start up in four sites in the fall: Jacksonville, Miami, Tampa, and Naples. The Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa sites all report 6 students ready to start in the fall. The Naples is a recent inspiration and could be a 2007 start. The synod is also considering offering classes in Spanish in future years.

Pastor Mary Konopka traveled to Florida recently to hold a training session for the program. She met with the diakonia steering committee and teachers to talk about the program. Pr. Konopka is the Executive Director for the diakonia program. Pr. Konopka is located in the Southeastern Pennsylvania synod and teaches classes there.

By Rebecca Dahlstrom

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 15, 2006 2 pm– Northern Illinois synod graduation, Alpine Rockford.
- Sept. 16, 2006-Barbecue at Ray and Laura Bebee’s home in West Chicago.
- January 20, 2007 - Northern Illinios retreat
- June 23, 2007 - Metro Chicago Synod Graduation, St. Mark's Aurora
- July 14, 2007 - Northern Illinois Synod Graduation, St. Barnabas, Cary

## COVENANT CLUSTER GATHERING

Doug Liston of the Northern Illinois Synod's Diakonia Program attended the Covenant Cluster consultation on continuing education in Leavenworth, Kansas during March. Members of the consultation represented many of the lay and



continuing education programs in regions four, five and six of the ELCA as well as the seminaries of those regions (Luther Seminary, LSTC, and Trinity Seminary). The main thrust of the consultation was to familiarize all the participants with the variety of education programs available across the Cluster area and to form networks among the programs that would assist everyone in spreading God's word. The Diakonia Program was the only lay education program in attendance that spans multiple synods and also was the fastest growing. While several synods had developed their own program, Diakonia's standardized courses, low cost and history of success was intriguing to those synods who were attending to find out more information about starting lay education programs of their own.

By Doug Liston 2005 graduate