



The Nebraska District *Ablaze!* Update

July 17, 2008

Recruit — Educate — Invite

The Nebraska District, in response to the opportunities for new mission work God is placing before us, joyfully supports *Fan into Flame* to help provide resources for witnessing opportunities in the communities of Nebraska and throughout the world.

"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest."

John 4:35b

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Congregations in the Nebraska District are learning more about *Fan into Flame* and the unique opportunity it provides to support mission work at home and around the world. Many church leaders are interested in participating, but don't know where to begin. There are three easy steps any congregation can follow to implement an appeal.

RECRUIT — It only takes a small committee of dedicated lay leaders to plan and carry out an appeal. No matter what size your congregation is, a handful of enthusiastic lay leaders can gather resources, develop a plan, and begin the steps necessary to share *Fan into Flame* with the entire congregation. Grace, Norfolk, formed its committee by recruiting willing members of the existing stewardship and evangelism committees. Next, they opened the *Fan into Flame* committee up to those in the congregation who felt they had the God-given gifts to serve in this way.

EDUCATE — Having a pastor and a committee that knows about *Fan into Flame* is great, but it's just as important to tell the entire congregation about this unique mission opportunity. The next step is to educate the congregational members on what *Ablaze!* and *Fan into Flame* are all about.

Education can be as simple as placing *Ablaze!* facts or bulletin inserts in the bulletin for six or more weeks, inserting brochures in congregation members' mailboxes or mailing them with the newsletters, printing articles in the newsletters, or including information with another church mailing. Pastors or lay leaders can talk about *Ablaze!* for a few minutes every Sunday for a month or more, and congregation members can be encouraged to relate faith-sharing stories with the congregation either verbally or in writing.

There are a number of resources already developed and available to be used for congregational education. Visit the LCMS *Ablaze!* website at www.lcms.org/ablaze to find these resources.

Immanuel, Tilden, used the *Ablaze!* Moments DVD, viewing one segment

before the worship service and one segment following the worship service for three weeks. Faith, Lincoln, is preparing to go through the 50 Days *Ablaze!* Bible study series this fall prior to their appeal.

INVITE — The final step is to invite participation in *Fan into Flame* by the congregation and individuals. Congregations are encouraged to consider a pledge or goal of 10% of last year's offerings/budget over the next 5 years. At Good Shepherd, Gretna, the voters approved *Fan into Flame* to be a part of their fall capital campaign. At First Trinity, Bloomfield, congregation members attended cottage meetings and made individual pledges toward the congregational goal. Gifts of over \$34,000 were pledged toward a \$15,000 goal. Lord of Life, Elkhorn, invited members to participate through cottage meetings and a commitment Sunday. Members responded with pledges and gifts of more than \$60,000 on a \$20,000 goal.

Through the power of God's Spirit, He is empowering the baptized to share Christ's love in word and deed. We thank God for the hearts that will be touched with the Gospel message through *Fan into Flame*.

Please discuss and decide when and how your congregation plans to be involved, and contact Andrea Essling at the District Office, Andrea.Essling@lcms.org or 888-643-2961, to share the information with her.

Campaign Update

Commitments to date from individuals and congregations in Nebraska for *Fan into Flame* are \$1,946,854 as a result of 333 gifts.

National gifts and commitments to date total \$32.2 million.