



September 2004
The Nebraska Lutheran
REPORTER

Information of interest for Lutherans in the Nebraska District of
The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
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FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . This summer I attended a picnic where God was being thanked in prayer for two faithful servants who were retiring when clouds appeared in the sky in the shape of a cross. We picnic-goers oohed and aahed, and then began to converse about God's greatest gift, Jesus, Who gave His life on the cross. Everyone knows the special days in September are Labor Day (September 5) and the First Day of Fall (September 21). But what about September 14? September 14 is Holy Cross Day. Pages 112 and 113 of Lutheran Worship offer Bible readings and worship propers for Holy Cross Day.

Helena, the mother of Constantine, first Roman Emperor to profess the Christian faith, went to Israel to find places significant to Christians. Having located close together what she believed to be the sites of the Crucifixion and of the Burial, she had built over them the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was dedicated on 14 September 335. September 14 can be a day for recognizing the cross as a symbol of triumph, as a sign of Christ's victory over death, and a reminder of His promise, "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

On this Holy Cross Day we can be reminded the cross is not just a piece of jewelry or a decorative fixture in home and church. The cross is God's method for the salvation of the world. The cross tells us we are not just people who make mistakes, we are people who sin. We do not need to be improved, we need to be saved.

Through this rough and despised tool of torture and shame, this instrument of the death sentence, God put sin to death and fashioned salvation in the nail-pierced body of his Son, Jesus Christ. Martin Luther echoed St. Paul as he taught the "theology of the cross" rather than the prevailing "theology of glory." Luther preached the cross as God's descent into a world of sinners -- God coming to us as servant to save and redeem us from sin, to free us from death's hellish grip, to free us from the need to make our way into God's favor. And we continue to "preach Christ crucified!" (1 Corinthians 1:23a) . . . President Russ Sommerfeld

CONGREGATION TREASURERS WILL BE "EQUIPPED TO SERVE" . . . Do you have questions regarding payroll, tax forms, legal issues, insurance, worker benefit plans, etc. that you encounter in your role as congregational treasurer? If so, plan on attending the Congregation Treasurers' Workshop at the Immanuel Family Life Center in Columbus on October 9. Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is sponsoring the workshop, which will feature speakers on a variety of topics relevant to your job as treasurer in your congregation. Part of the day will also include a question and answer time with the speakers. This will be a wonderful opportunity for God's servants to enjoy a time together growing in knowledge in their service to the Lord in their congregations. Registration information has been mailed to each congregational treasurer and is available on the District website at www.ndlcms.org or by calling Connie Borchers at the District Office at 1-888-643-2961.

CPH WAREHOUSE SALE . . . Concordia Publishing House brings its Warehouse Sale -- the largest sale of the year -- to the campus of Concordia University Nebraska in Seward. The sale will be open Friday, October 22, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, October 23, from 9 a.m. to noon. During this time, excess inventory from Concordia Publishing House, including books for children and adults, teaching resources, and more, is offered at deep discounts. CPH Warehouse Sale is located in the Janzow Campus Center on the Concordia University campus in Seward. For more information, call 1-402-643-7405.

HOPE IN THE MIDST . . . Children from Nebraska whose summer plans were disrupted by the devastating storms in May of 2004 gathered July 17-18 at Carol Joy Holling Camp near Ashland for two days of summer camp activities. This camp, sponsored by Nebraska Lutheran Disaster Relief (NLDR) and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, offered an opportunity for fun and activities "that will help in healing the symptoms associated with storm-related trauma," according to Rev. Roger Kruger, NLDR Director. NLDR is a cooperative venture between the ELCA Nebraska Synod, LCMS Nebraska District, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Thrivent and Orphan Grain Train.

CAMPUS MINISTRY COMMISSIONING . . . Stacey Swan, Campus Ministry Coordinator for the Nebraska District in Omaha, will be commissioned in services at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 26, at Pacific Hills, Omaha. A reception for Stacey will also be held that day. All are invited to join with Stacey and the members of Pacific Hills for this special day. If you know a student who is attending college in Omaha, please contact Stacey at campusministry@pacifichills-lcms.org to share their contact information.

NEW LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES DIRECTOR . . . Greg E. Lewis has been selected as Executive Director of Lutheran Hour Ministries, effective September 1. Lewis was named to the post July 22 during the International Lutheran Laymen's League's annual convention in Rapid City, S.D. In accepting his new position Lewis commented, "I look forward to working with the volunteers and staff of the International Lutheran Laymen's League and its Lutheran Hour Ministries in `Bringing Christ to the Nations - and the Nations to the Church.' "

"THAT ALL MAY WORSHIP" . . . This conference is designed to teach faith communities how to identify and remove barriers to a full life of faith for people with disabilities. "That All May Worship" will build awareness for accessibility in places of worship and encourage people with disabilities, along with religious leaders, partnering organizations, and interested community members, to plan improved access -- both physical and attitudinal -- in congregations. Being held at Westside Community Center in Omaha on October 7, this conference is sponsored in part by Mosaic, a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS. To register, visit www.mosaicinfo.org/tamw, or call Meri Sue Pepper at 1-877-366-7242. The registration fee is \$15.00.

AN AFTERNOON WITH GARRISON KEILLOR . . . Garrison Keillor, host of A Prairie Home Companion, will perform Sunday, October 24, to benefit Nebraska's Lutheran camps, including Camp Luther in Schuyler. A donation of \$25 per ticket will allow guests to spend an afternoon at the Omaha Civic Auditorium with Keillor. Doors open at noon and Keillor will begin his performance at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are available from Camp Luther by calling 1-402-352-5655 or emailing campluther@campluther.org, or by visiting the event website at www.keillorevent.com.

LABORERS FOR THE HARVEST . . . Do you know someone the Lord is leading to be a pastor, deaconess, or other full-time church worker? Have you felt led yourself? Rev. Kyle Castens, Admissions Counselor from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will be traveling throughout the Nebraska District visiting various sites between September 27 and October 1. Rev. Castens would enjoy talking with children, youth, or adults of any age about being laborers in the Lord's harvest. No appointment is necessary and meetings are confidential. A list of sites and times is available on the District website at www.ndlcms.org.

FALL MISSION FESTIVAL . . . Trinity, Grand Island, will host a fall mission festival September 25-26 with guest speaker Rev. John Reehl, missionary to Baltic countries and Russia. Call the church office at 1-308-382-0753 for more information.

CAMP LUTHER FALL WORK WEEKEND . . . Camp Luther will hold its fall work weekend September 17-19. Church groups, families, and friends are invited to Camp Luther to help paint some of the cabins, repair roofs, and remodel some bathrooms, as well as to do trail work, collect wood and paint benches. There is some way for every age and size to help. Lodging and meals are provided for the weekend, or come just for the day.

EIGHT COMPLETE OLD TESTAMENT COURSE IN LINCOLN . . . Eight participants completed an Old Testament course in Lincoln taught by Chaplain Wes Baumeister of Concordia University. The course was offered by the Lay Leadership Program of the Nebraska District in response to student requests. For more information on this program or the courses being offered, contact Rev. Marvin Bergman at mbergman@cune.edu or Julie Roebke at the District Office, julier@ndlcms.org or 1-888-643-2961.

COMING EVENTS

Orphan Grain Train Convention, Lutheran High Northeast, NorfolkSept. 10-11
Circuit Counselors' Conference, St. Benedict Center, SchuylerSept. 13-14
Educational Seminar for Pastors, Zion, AinsworthSept. 19-21
LWML South Convention, Adams County Fairgrounds, HastingsSept. 24-25
New Workers' Orientation, Concordia University, SewardSept. 27-28
Church Musicians' Workshop and Hymn Sing, Zion, ImperialOct. 9-10
All Professional Church Workers' Conference, King of Kings, OmahaOct. 18-20
National Lutherans For Life Convention, Cincinnati, OhioNov. 12-14

ANNIVERSARIES

Good Shepherd, Gretna, 25th, September 19. All are invited to join them for an open house and guest speaker, Rev. Wes "Bo" Baumeister, at the 10:30 a.m. service, followed by a luncheon at 12:30. Contact the church office at 1-402-332-3345 for more information.

Our Redeemer, Wahoo, 40th, September 26, with a special worship service at 10:00 a.m. with former pastors Rev. Ralph Sackschewsky and Rev. Rick Pettey, followed by a catered meal. Contact the church office at 1-402-443-4450 for more information.

St. Peter, Scribner, 120th, October 10. Anniversary celebration and mission festival at 10:00 a.m. with Rev. Robert Backhus, son of the congregation, preaching. A potluck dinner will follow.

Immanuel, Lincoln, 95th, October 17. Former vicar Rev. Randy McHone will preach at the 8:00 and 10:45 a.m. services. A potluck dinner will follow the second service.

Zion, Grant, 80th, October 31, with District President Russ Sommerfeld preaching at the 10:00 a.m. mission service and the 2:00 p.m. Reformation service, with a noon meal served between services.

Call Information

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Martin Schmidt (StL'82), senior, Trinity, Grand Island, to senior, Prince of Peace, Topeka, Kan.

Rev. Carl Stenzel (StL'01), Christ, St. Paul, to Calvary, Portland, Ore.

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Vincent Harman (StL'95), Christ, Yuma, Ariz., to Peace, Waverly.

Rev. Clint Poppe (StL'98), senior, Good Shepherd, Lincoln, to Zion, Hopkins, Minn.

CORRECTION:

The August 2004 Reporter stated in "Status Change" Rev. Michael Chaffee (StL'83) senior, Holy Savior, Lincoln, to removed from LCMS clergy roster effective July 2. It should have read "resigned" from LCMS clergy roster. We apologize for this error.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

Rev. James Rasmussen (StL'04) as pastor, St. John, Omaha, August 1 (ordination also).

Rev. Robert Wiest (StL'04) as pastor, Our Redeemer, Staplehurst, August 1 (ordination also).

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Chris Olsen (S'99), teacher, Seattle Lutheran HS, Wash., to teacher, WOLSA.

Judy Ripke (S'77), teacher, Hope, Colo., to teacher, St. John, Seward.

CALLS DECLINED

Larry Biel (S'75), DCE, Pacific Hills, Omaha, to DCE, Christ, Norfolk.

James Dulas (RF'91), band director, Lutheran High School, Mayer, Minn., to band director, Lincoln Lutheran Jr/Sr High School.

Lyle Ziems (S'89), teacher, Lincoln Lutheran Jr/Sr High School, to Concordia High School, Omaha.

PLACEMENTS

Joshua Oberg (S'04) as teacher, Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk.

Rebecca Oberg (S'03) as teacher, Christ, Norfolk.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Maxine Fiala (S'69) teacher, St. John, Seward, to emeritus.

See next page . . .

Prayer Partners Create Loving Relationships

"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel." Philippians 1:4

Is your congregation looking for a new way to **create relationships** among members and others in your church community? Have you ever thought about **creating prayer partners**?



Four years ago, Our Redeemer in rural Staplehurst decided to **pair each school child with an adult** from the congregation, usually someone without school-age children. Each adult and child received a letter indicating who their prayer partner was, when his or her birthday and baptismal anniversary are, and *encouragement to remember each other in their daily prayers.*

That's it! Each year, prayer partners remain the same, with those whose students graduated partnering with incoming preschoolers. This helps create wonderful relationships between the prayer partners and their entire families. Currently, 115 members of Our Redeemer are connected to a prayer partner.

While the church/day school connection offers the perfect arrangement for prayer partners, this ministry can **take place in any congregation.** By simply *pairing school-aged children with adults* who do not have school-aged children, any congregation can be blessed by the prayer and fellowship that results from this program.

Our Redeemer held their first **Prayer Partner Dinner** this spring to give those involved in this ministry a chance for meaningful fellowship and a time to *"celebrate the blessings God gives us in prayer,"* according to then-principal JoAn Walling. The Parents' Association sponsored the dinner, setting up and decorating the gym and providing the food, as a thank you to the prayer partners for the gift of time they give to pray for each other, the congregation, and the school. After dinner, the school children performed and sang a number of songs for those in attendance.

Another blessing of the evening was seeing **students** from the school **who are not members** of the congregation, along with their parents, *side-by-side with members* of Our Redeemer. The students are connected with adult members of the congregation through prayer, creating a natural fellowship opportunity. This dinner provided a wonderful opportunity for **fellowship for all** who were there and *fostered fellowship among members and non-members alike.*

REACH OUT

**AND
REJOICE!**

If you would like to know more about the prayer partner program at Our Redeemer, contact Mr. John Garske at 1-402-535-2251 or Pastor Robert Wiest at 1-402-535-2625.