



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



Information of interest for Lutherans in the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
PO Box 407, 152 South Columbia, Seward NE 68434
Phone: 1-888-643-2961 ♦ Fax 1-402-643-2990 ♦ Website: www.ndlcms.org

January 2005

NEW LOOK FOR THE REPORTER . . .

The Nebraska District is pleased to be able to offer you the *Nebraska Lutheran Reporter* in this new, enlarged format. The new layout will allow more room for sharing news from across the District and make reading that news easier. Comments and news items are always welcome. If you have any comments or suggestions, you may contact Nichole Hetz at the District Office, nicholeh@ndlcms.org or 1-888-643-2961.

OUTSTANDING LUTHERAN EDUCATOR AWARD . . .

Paul Leckband, principal and executive director of Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk, was awarded the Outstanding Lutheran Educator Award for 2004 by the Nebraska District LCMS at the All Professional Church Worker Conference in Omaha on October 19. By receiving this award, Leckband, who has served in his current position at Lutheran High Northeast since 1997, was recognized by his peers as a respected and dedicated servant for Lutheran education in the Norfolk area. Three other Lutheran

educators in the Nebraska District were nominated for this award –



Keith Dirks of Trinity in Lincoln, **Kim Franzen** of Immanuel in Columbus, and **Stanley Wehling** of St. Paul in Ogallala.

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . Epiphany Light!

January 6 signals the “Season of Light” for Christians. While the world around us stores the twinkling Christmas lights until next year, we Christians are given more light. The light that dawns on us reveals more and more of who Baby Jesus in the manger truly is. This light begins with the star that led the Magi to Jesus and reaches brilliance when Jesus shined bright as the sun, standing between Moses and Elijah transfigured on a mountain. From January 6 to February 6, the Word of God gives us Epiphany, the manifestation of light upon the identity of our Savior Jesus Christ. Our hearts will burn with the power of the Holy Spirit granting and affirming the identity of Jesus as the one and only Savior of humankind.



It has long been a tradition to use this Epiphany season as a time to witness of Christ and invite others to our church’s special proclamations on the suffering and death of Christ during Lent. Epiphany is mission season. So be on the watch this Epiphany season to give the light of Christ to those whom God would place in your path, and invite them to join you at church to hear the life-changing account of Jesus’ Passion.

. . . President Russ Sommerfeld

CAMP LUTHER SUMMER STAFF . . .

Camp Luther near Schuyler is looking for people to be part of its summer ministry staff. Openings include: cabin leader, horse wrangler, and kitchen or maintenance workers. If you are considering being a junior servant, horse wrangler, or counselor-in-training at Camp Luther this summer, plan on attending an informative retreat February 18-19. Participants will learn and grow in their faith, as well as find out what it means to work at Camp Luther. Visit the Camp Luther website, www.camluther.org, for more information.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE COURSE IN NORFOLK . . .

A course focusing on the key doctrines of the church taught by the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions is being offered by the Lay Leadership Program of the Nebraska District. Classes will meet at Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk on January 8 and 22, February 5 and 19. The instructor is Dr. David Meyer of Concordia University. Tuition for the course is \$200. For more information, contact coordinator Arlen Ahlers at 1-402-329-6574, or Julie Roebke at the District Office, julier@ndlcms.org or 1-888-643-2961.



The mission of the Nebraska District is to resource congregations, leaders, and related organizations in their mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION COURSE IN SEWARD . . . A

course exploring Reformation principles of interpreting the Bible and exegetical study of a text is being offered by the Lay Leadership Program of the Nebraska District. Classes will meet at Concordia University, Seward, on January 8 and 22, February 5 and 19. The instructor is Dr. Kenneth Block of Concordia University. Tuition for the course is \$200. For more information, contact Marvin Bergman at mbergman@cune.edu, or Julie Roebke at the District Office, julier@ndlcms.org or 1-888-643-2961.

RETREAT FOR WIVES OF PASTORS . . . Wives of pastors, as well as widows and wives of retired pastors in our District, will have an opportunity to spend two days in a retreat setting on April 29 and 30 in Lincoln. This **Retreat for Wives of Pastors - 2005** will offer opportunities for prayer, Bible study, singing, quiet time, fellowship, and discussion groups on a variety of topics. As a congregation, please prayerfully consider joining in this exciting endeavor by supporting and encouraging your pastor's wife to attend this retreat. Watch for more information in upcoming issues of the *Reporter* and on the District website, www.ndlcms.org. An informational letter will be sent to each congregation in January. For more information, contact Sue Kohlwey at the District Office, suek@ndlcms.org or 1-888-643-2961.

As a congregation, please prayerfully consider joining in this exciting endeavor by supporting and encouraging your pastor's wife to attend this retreat. Watch for more information in upcoming issues of the *Reporter* and on the District website, www.ndlcms.org. An informational letter will be sent to each congregation in January. For more information, contact Sue Kohlwey at the District Office, suek@ndlcms.org or 1-888-643-2961.



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AWARDS . . .



Concordia University at Seward recognized alumni during Homecoming weekend. Awards presented were: Young Alumnus Award to Jeffrey Stout, Coral Springs, Fla.; Church Leadership in Outreach Award to Lois Voeltz, Glendale, Ariz.; Lifetime Service Award to Melvin and Arlene Lillich, Deshler, Neb.; Lay Worker Alumna of the Year to Corine Schleif, Phoenix, Ariz.; Church Worker Alumnus of the Year to Ben Herbrich, Hollis Hills, N.Y.; Friend of Concordia Award to Robert Reuter, Charlotte, N.C.; and Honorary Alumni Award to C.W. and Ellie Allerheiligen, Marysville, Kan.

CALLED TO GLORY . . .

Rev. Harold Malotky, pastor emeritus, departed this life on Thursday, November 4. During his ministry he served parishes in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Nebraska, including the Nebraska congregations of First Trinity, Beatrice, and Immanuel, Plymouth; St. John, Waco; Peace, Waco; and St. Paul, Utica. Letters of condolence may be written to Mrs. Selma Malotky, 600 Indiana Dr., Utica, NE, 68456.

THE LUTHERAN INSTITUTE ON AGING AND FAMILY SEMINARS . . .

The Lutheran Institute on Aging and Family is offering workshops to all church professionals, lay leaders, and single parents. **"Single Parents,"** to be presented January 26, will discuss the hidden mission field of single parents, as well as outreach strategies to this largely unchurched group.

"Environmental Influences on Family Relations: The Proliferation of Pornography and Implications for Society, the Church, and Families," to be presented January 27-28, will review the problem of pornography and implications for families, the church, and society. Both workshops will be presented from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Thom Leadership Education Center on the campus of Concordia University, Seward. The cost to attend the workshops is **\$35 per day** -- \$40 per day for registrations after January 15. More information and registration forms are available by contacting the Lutheran Institute on Aging and Family at 1-800-535-5494 ext. 7432 or sbergman@cune.edu.

LET IT SHINE: MISSION LIGHTS . . . Are the short days and dark evenings of winter getting you down? Are you looking for something to cut through the darkness and light up your life? Join fellow believers at one of the District-sponsored listening posts in January. Under the theme, *"Let it Shine, Let it Shine, Let it Shine: Mission Lights Across Nebraska,"* these listening posts won't make the daylight last longer, but they will explore ways your life can be brightened by God shining His light through you. The world around us is a dark place for all those who don't know Christ as their Savior. Come and discuss ways God can use you to be that "Mission Light" to shine for those who don't know the Good News of Jesus Christ. The meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. and will end at 8:30 p.m. More information is available on the District website, www.ndlcms.org/news/communications/Ablaze.

January 11: Heartland Lutheran High School, Grand Island

January 12: Lutheran High School Northeast, Norfolk

January 13: St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Omaha

January 18: Trinity Lutheran Church, Lexington

January 25: Messiah Lutheran Church, Lincoln



News items and ministry stories for the *Reporter* are always welcome. The deadline for submission for the February 2005 *Reporter* is **Monday, January 3**. Please submit items to Reporter@ndlcms.org or PO Box 407, Seward, NE 68434.

BOARD SUMMARY . . . The Nebraska District Board of Directors, at their meeting December 3, took the following actions:

- ◆ Approved the constitution and bylaws of Cristo Cordero de Dios, Grand Island, creating the first Hispanic LCMS congregation in the Nebraska District.
- ◆ Approved the constitutions and bylaws of St. John's, Lyons; Good Shepherd, Gretna; St. Paul's, Bertrand; and Zion (Worms), St. Libory.
- ◆ Ratified LCEF loans awarded to Zion, Hastings; St. Paul, Ogallala; and Zion, Omaha.
- ◆ Approved the election of Delmer Toebben to the Lutheran Ministry Foundation Board of Directors.
- ◆ Granted permission to President Russ Sommerfeld to participate in the LCMS World Mission visit to Sudan in 2005, and appointed First Vice-President Clint Poppe to serve as acting District President during the time President Sommerfeld is out of the country.
- ◆ Approved the operating and capital budgets for the 2005 fiscal year, which include the continued responsible stewardship of the gifts of God's people and specific intentional opportunities for stewardship and mission outreach by Nebraska District congregations.
- ◆ Approved the formation of a joint task force with the Iowa West District to examine the formation of a joint chaplaincy program in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area.
- ◆ Approved the filling of a full-time church worker health position for the Nebraska District.
- ◆ Accepted the January 31, 2003, and January 15, 2002, audit report of the Nebraska District LCMS.



DISTRICT RECONCILERS APPOINTED . . . The Nebraska District Board appointed District Reconcilers for a six year term from a list of nominees offered by the Circuit Counselors. Those appointed who will receive training in January are Rev. Carl Pullmann, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, North Platte; Rev. Mark Rockenbach, First Trinity Lutheran Church, Beatrice; Mrs. Cindy L. Prater, Trinity Lutheran Church, Elgin; and Mr. Michael Onnen, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Davenport.



CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS DECLINED:

- Rev. Brad Birtell** (StL'92), St. John, Columbus, to St. Stephens, Hickory, N.C.
- Rev. Forrest Brashier, Jr.** (FtW'02), Solid Rock, Trussville, Ala., to St. John, Ord.
- Rev. Michael Damery** (StL'98), Mt. Calvary, Decatur, Ill., to St. Peter, Deshler.
- Rev. Jose Flores** (FtW'96), Zion+Peace, Omaha, to Bethany, Wichita, Kan.
- Rev. Richard Harre** (StL'93), Zion, Garland, to St. John, Pilger.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS:

- Rev. Jon Sollberger** (FtW'02) as pastor, St. Peter, Orchard, December 5.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

- Dean Raabe** (S'70) candidate, Texas District, to principal, Bread of Life, Omaha.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS:

- Kristen King** (S'01) teacher, Beautiful Savior, Omaha, to non-candidate status.
- Sara Linde** (S'02) Texas District to non-candidate, Nebraska District.
- Kara Pingel** (M'99) Missouri District, to non-candidate, Nebraska District.
- Colleen Simpson** (S'87) Missouri District to non-candidate, Nebraska District.
- Ryan Voelker** (S'01) non-candidate status to candidate status.

PLACEMENTS:

- Terri Kohtz** (S CQ'04) to head teacher, Mt. Calvary, Omaha.
- Randa Schultz** (S CQ'04) to teacher, Trinity, Grand Island.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Pacific Hills, Omaha**, 50th, June 11-12.
Trinity, Lexington, 75th, June 12.
Zion School, Bancroft, 125th, June 12.
Zion, Shelton, 120th, August 14, with President Russ Sommerfeld preaching.
St. Paul, Bancroft, 100th, September 11, with President Russ Sommerfeld preaching.

Ministry Anniversaries



COMING EVENTS

Epiphany Lessons and Carols, St. Paul, Beatrice	January 4
Men's Woodcutting Retreat, Camp Luther, Schuyler	January 7-8
Men's Woodcutting Retreat, Camp Luther, Schuyler	February 4-5
Epiphany Lecture Series, St. Paul, Beatrice	February 4-5
Nebraska District LLL Convention, Hastings	March 13-14
Spring Pastors' Conference, North Platte	April 4-5
Jr. High Retreat, Camp Comeca, Cozad	April 8-9
Principals' Conference, The Leadership Center, Aurora	April 14-15
Jr. High Retreat, Camp Luther, Schuyler	April 15-16
Child In Our Hands Conference, Bethany, Overland Park, Kan.....	April 15-16
Retreat for Wives of Pastors, Downtown Holiday Inn, Lincoln.....	April 29-30
Prairie Fire '05, Concordia University, Seward	August 6

LET IT SHINE, LET IT SHINE, LET IT SHINE

"I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 49:6

Very few of us today experience total darkness. This world seems full of lights – **streetlights** line our roads, **florescent lights** shine at work or in stores, **overhead lights** and **lamps** illumine our tasks at home. We have invented **light bulbs**, **flashlights**, **headlights**, and more to ensure we never have to be in the dark.

However, God tells us there are those who spend their lives in darkness. *"See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples,"* says the Lord in Isaiah 60:2. This darkness is a darkness of sin and separation from the Savior. In Matthew 5, God calls His people to shine His light into this darkness, *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Following Christmas, the church moves into the season of **Epiphany**, or the manifestation of our Lord. This is the time we have set aside to celebrate the appearance of the **Light of the World** in human form. What a wonderful opportunity to focus on ways He can use each of us to shine His light of love to those in the darkened world around us. God is using the congregations and members of the Nebraska District to be that light to the darkened world. How can He use you this year?

Consider the "**Mission Lights**" these congregations have been to their communities.



MATTHEW 5:16

More information on these stories available at www.ndlcms.org

- ◆ Congregations in nearby communities joined together to offer **free bottled water** to those who attended the community Fourth of July celebration, labeling each bottle with a Bible verse and church contact information.
- ◆ Two congregations and many members from across the District **volunteered countless hours** and dollars to help members of nearby communities ravaged by storms.
- ◆ Congregational members invited the community into their fellowship hall each month for a **free meal** and an evening filled with **family fun**.
- ◆ One pastor in rural western Nebraska poured the **waters of Holy Baptism** on an extended family of over twenty people in one day.
- ◆ A circuit joined together to develop and establish an **English Language Learners class** for Hispanic immigrants in their communities.
- ◆ A preschool class and their families provided **1715 pictures of Jesus and 182 pounds of materials** to teach little children in Kenya about Jesus.
- ◆ A congregation offered a **cup of coffee and time to pray** with anyone who entered their parking lot on Wednesday mornings.
- ◆ Congregation members in a community nursing home **introduced fellow residents to their pastor**, who had the joy of ministering to and baptizing many of them.

The Lord tells us, *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."* (1 Peter 2:9) Is there someone around you who is living in the darkness of sin? Is there a way **you can show them the Light of Christ?**