



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



Information of Interest for Lutherans in the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

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September 2006

LAY LEADERSHIP CLASSES TO

BEGIN . . . The Lay Leadership Program sponsored by the Nebraska District is offering three courses in three locations across the District this fall.

- *History and Theology of the Old Testament* will be taught at Trinity, Lexington, by Pastor Dean Hanson on September 9 & 23 and October 7 & 21.
- *History of the Church's Mission* will be taught by Dr. Leon Rosenthal at Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk on September 9, 16, & 30 and October 7.
- *History and Theology of the Old Testament* will be taught at Concordia University, Seward, by Pastor Wes Baumeister on September 9 & 23 and October 14 & 28.

For more information or to register for any of these classes, contact Kathy Melton at the District Office at 888-643-2961 or kathym@ndlcms.org.

CHURCH MUSICIAN WORKSHOP

AND HYMN FESTIVAL . . . Zion Lutheran Church in Imperial is hosting a one-day workshop for church musicians on Saturday, October 7. It will be followed by an area hymn festival and mission rally on Sunday, October 8. The clinician for the workshop and organist for the hymn sing will be Dr. Steven Hoffman, cantor for Christ the King Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The workshop will also include concurrent theological sessions for LCMS pastors and laymen. Professor Harold Senkbeil of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne will conduct three sessions regarding theology in sacred music. He and Dr. Hoffman will conclude with a combined session. Pastor Senkbeil is also the mission rally speaker and will be the commentator for the hymn sing. Contact the Zion church office at 308-882-5655 for more information.



FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . September is traditionally a time to emphasize Christian education in our Nebraska District congregations and schools. God's Old Testament people believed that all truth came from God. We Christians continue to teach,

The
FEAR
of the
LORD
is the beginning
of
KNOWLEDGE.
PROVERBS 1:7

believe, and confess that "*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" (Proverbs 1:7) God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. As you think about Christian education, I submit this little story to you.

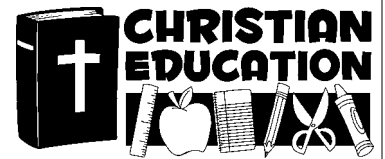
The telephone rang and Mrs. Waverly hurriedly picked it up. "Hello ... yes ... oh, you are Johnny's teacher," she said. "I have been meaning to call you! Johnny won't be coming to school this year. He is much too busy with Sunday school, youth group, church youth choir, confirmation class, and attending church to come to school. We also have family devotions and many other interests. There just isn't time left for math, English, geography, reading, and spelling."

"Yes, I know school is important and you are a good teacher and doing a good job. But to tell you the truth, Johnny didn't much like school last year. There were too many sports activities and they interfered with his many church activities."

"Am I going to make him come to school? No! I want him to make his own decisions about his education. I don't want to force him into math or reading or social studies unless he really thinks they are important."

While the story is over the top, it does remind us that just as education to gain knowledge is important, so Christian education in the Lord's Word and His merciful ways through Jesus is even more important.

How wonderful it is when the fondest childhood memories are hearing Bible stories at home and learning about the Lord God in a Sunday school classroom or at the feet of a pastor who grounds listeners in the doctrines of God's Word and shares the love of Jesus. What a joy it is when the best adult discussions are in a Bible study setting where the Lord changes hearts with His Word. Christian education gives us truth and life from God!



Rev. Russ Sommerfeld

NEW WORKER ORIENTATION . . . All pastors, vicars, and DCEs new to the Nebraska District since last September are encouraged to attend the New Worker Orientation sponsored by the Nebraska District at Concordia, Seward, on September 25-26. Details have been mailed to all new workers and information is also available on the District website at www.ndlcms.org.

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.

STATE FAIR WORSHIP . . . Those planning to attend the Nebraska State Fair this year in Lincoln are invited to attend the worship service sponsored by the Nebraska District Lutheran Laymen's League. Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour Speaker, will share God's Word on Sunday morning, September 3, beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Open Air Auditorium.



SEE THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES . . . This one-day workshop is designed for those who know a few stories from the Bible but have trouble fitting them all together, and for those who are interested in "Seeing Through the Scriptures" from creation to Christ. Faith, Hastings, is offering this study from Crossways International on Saturday, September 23, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The cost for tuition and materials is \$15. Contact the church office at 402-462-5044 to register or for more information.

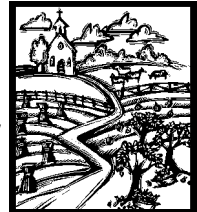


"HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER" . . . Camp Luther will be hosting two Nebraska District junior high retreats this fall under the theme, "Hook, Line, and Sinker." The retreats are planned for October 13-14 and October 20-21, with a special concert featuring Dave Schmidt on October 20. More information on these retreats is available from Camp Luther at 402-352-5655 or by visiting www.ndlcms.org or www.camluther.org.

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN CONVENTION . . . The Orphan Grain Train annual convention will be September 29-30 at Lutheran High School Northeast in Norfolk. Speakers will address a wide range of Orphan Grain Train projects and activities, including hurricane relief efforts on the Gulf Coast; tsunami relief efforts in Asia and India; and the expansion of Orphan Grain Train's Russian orphanage ministry. Dedication of the new Orphan Grain Train headquarters building is also planned for the same weekend. Registration information is available on the Orphan Grain Train website, www.ogt.org.

Lutheran Education in the Nebraska District
38 Early Childhood Centers ✎ **41 Elementary Schools**
4 High Schools 📖 **1 University**
5,846 Students ✝ **443 Teachers**

RURAL MINISTRY SEMINAR . . . Through a regional partnership with area circuits and congregations, a rural ministry seminar will be offered to interested church workers and laity on October 1 and 2 at Beautiful Savior, North Platte. This workshop is designed to give participants encouragement and tools for use in rural ministry and will be led by a team from the Saint Paul Institute for Education in Concordia, Missouri. Registration materials and more information have been mailed to church offices. Contact Carol Oetting at the District Office, 888-643-2961 or carolo@ndlcms.org, or Pastor Jeff Ernstmeyer at Our Redeemer, Elwood, at 308-785-2875 for more information.



ATTENTION COLLEGE STUDENTS . . . The campus ministries in the Nebraska District would like to help college students, especially freshmen, get connected to Christian fellowship and fun. Students attending a college or university in Nebraska are encouraged to send their contact information, including name, ^{College} address, phone number, email ^{Bound} address, and college attending, to missions@ndlcms.org. Visit www.ndlcms.org, for more information.



CALLED TO GLORY . . . Rev. Henry Niermann, Jr. was called to heaven on April 5, 2006. Pastor Niermann served Nebraska congregations in Upland, Omaha, and Bancroft during his time in ministry. . . . Edna Pieper departed this life on August 8. She served schools in Iowa, Indiana, and at St. John, Seward, where she served for 31 years.

COMING EVENTS

LLL State Fair Worship Service, Open Air Auditorium, State Fairgrounds, Lincoln	September 3
National Youth Gathering Information Meeting, Christ, O'Neill	September 10
National Youth Gathering Information Meeting, Concordia University, Seward	September 16
National Youth Gathering Information Meeting, Beautiful Savior, North Platte	September 17
"A Formula for Concord," Ainsworth Educational Experience, Zion, Ainsworth	September 17-19
Nebraska District LWML South Convention, Sandhills Convention Center, North Platte	September 22-23
Lutheran Hour Ministries 75 th Anniversary Celebration, Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk	September 24
New Worker Orientation, Concordia University, Seward	September 25-26
Orphan Grain Train International Convention, Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk	September 29-30
Church Musicians' Workshop and Hymn Sing, Zion, Imperial	October 7-8
Fall Pastors' Conference, Divots Conference Center, Norfolk	October 16-17
New Teacher Workshop, District Office, Seward	October 18
Teachers' Conference, Faith, Lincoln	October 19-20

News items and ministry stories for the Reporter are always welcome. The deadline for submission for the October 2006 Reporter is Friday, September 1. Please submit items to Reporter@ndlcms.org or PO Box 407, Seward, NE 68434.

THE EMERGING EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SUDAN

“And a great number of people (in Antioch) were brought to the Lord ... a great number of people were taught.” (Acts 11:24b, 26b)

Even as God blessed His early Christian Church in Antioch, so He is blessing the emerging Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan (ELCS). Great numbers of Sudanese people are being brought to the Lord by the Holy Spirit and taught in the Word what it means to be Lutheran Christians who confess Christ and His Gospel.

Newly ordained Sudanese American pastor and missionary-at-large to African immigrants in Nebraska, Rev. John Deang of Lincoln and President Russ Sommerfeld recently visited congregations, pastors, evangelists, deaconesses, and deacons of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan, which the Lord blessed with growth in Sudan during the civil war.

Rev. Deang, a native of the Upper Nile of Sudan, was deployed by the Nebraska District to Sudan to assist the ELCS. While in Sudan, Rev. Deang also visited emerging congregations. After 21 years of war, peace has come to Sudan allowing Sudanese to return to their homeland from refugee camps. LCMS World Mission and the Sudanese Lutheran Mission Society of Sudanese Americans have helped Lutheran congregations to form in refugee camps and in Sudan.



Nebraska Sudanese Pastor John Deang in Sudan

Nebraska District President Russ Sommerfeld joined

Rev. Deang in Sudan July 11 to July 24. President Sommerfeld traveled to Yambio, in southern Sudan, for the installation of Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa as Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan, the ordination of two pastors, commissioning of four deaconesses and two deacons, as well as the dedication of the new brick church building during a 6½ hour worship service. What a celebration!

Officials from the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Kenya, Lutheran Heritage Foundation, LCMS World Mission, Concordia Theological Seminary of Fort Wayne, Concordia Lutheran Ministries of Pittsburgh, and others also joined in this celebration service.



The cows of Malakal

President Sommerfeld, Pastor Deang, Bishop Elisa, and Pastors Ken Greinke and Claude Houge of LCMS World Mission then traveled to Malakal in southeast Sudan, the original home of many Sudanese Americans in Nebraska. Malakal is in wonderful cattle and corn country along the White Nile River. It is becoming crowded with returning refugees and God is growing His congregations.

Many people of Sudan are of the Nuer tribe, but the land in this area is also shared by the Shilluk and Dinka tribes. A wood frame church with mud walls and a metal roof has been established in this area and a nice plot of ground has been secured to set up a compound for a church, school, and medical clinic to aid those in this region who were injured by land mines during the civil war.

Bishop Elisa, President Sommerfeld, Pastors Deang, Greinke, and Houge discussed congregational, school, and communications projects with the evangelists and congregations in Malakal. Projects are being considered by the ELCS and LCMS World Mission. Mission partner opportunities will be communicated to Nebraska District congregations and schools.

The Nebraska District at its Convention in June of 2006 resolved to partner in mission with the ELCS through LCMS World Missions. Watch for mission partner opportunities!



Evangelist Simon Tor Jal under the frame for the church in Malakal

ANNIVERSARIES

St. Mark, Omaha, 50th, September 17, with an organ recital at 2:00 p.m. October 1 will feature festive morning services with Rev. James Gullen, followed at 2:00 p.m. with a festival of hymns and songs, and a 5:00 p.m. banquet at Legacy Hall. Call 402-391-6148 for more information.

Peace, Grand Island, 30th, September 24, with President Russ Sommerfeld preaching at the morning services, followed by a potluck dinner and a celebration program.

St. Paul, Falls City, 125th, October 14-15. Saturday will include a Wissmann Family concert and fellowship time. There will be a morning worship service on Sunday with President Russ Sommerfeld and LCMS First Vice President Dr. William Diekelman speaking, followed by a noon dinner and an afternoon celebration.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED:

Rev. Adrian Hanft (StL'96), candidate status, New London, Wis., to associate, Our Savior, Norfolk.

Rev. Craig Niemeier (StL'98), Mt. Calvary, Bayard, and St. Paul, Bridgeport, to Zion (Worms), St. Libory.

CALLS DECLINED:

Rev. Michael Awe (StL'89), Immanuel, Tilden, to St. John, Ellinwood, Kan.

Rev. Tim Heupel (FtW'78), associate, Beautiful Savior, Omaha, to senior, Trinity, Fremont.

Rev. Jerome Leckband (FtW'00), Trinity, Foster, to assistant, Zion, Kearney.

Rev. Jon Sollberger (FtW'02), St. Peter, Orchard, to St. Paul, Havre, and Zion, Chinook, Mont.

Rev. Jason Zobel (StL'97), Shepherd of Peace, Braidwood, Ill., to Good Shepherd, Milford.

STATUS CHANGE:

Rev. Charles Borcharding (Spg'65), Faith of Our Fathers, Roca, to emeritus status, effective August 31.

Rev. Robert Hedtke (Spg'73), senior, St. Paul, West Point, to candidate status, effective July 30.

Rev. Keith Kiihne (StL'62), First Trinity, Altona, to emeritus status, effective July 31.

Rev. Luke Russert (FtW'84), non-candidate status to candidate status, effective July 1.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS:

Rev. Brent Smith (StL'01) as Regional Director-Eurasia, LCMS World Mission, St. Louis, July 12.

Rev. Randall Smith (FtW'06) as pastor, St. Peter, Hampton, July 9 (ordination also).

Rev. Robert Swearer (StL'83) as senior pastor, Holy Savior, Lincoln, August 6.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED:

Susan Kleber (S'75), principal, Immanuel, Columbus, to teacher, Holy Cross, Wichita, Kan.

David Meyer (S'95), teacher, Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk, to teacher, West Michigan High School, Kentwood, Mich.

CALLS DECLINED:

Kevin Janssen (S'04), teacher, Trinity, Fremont, to teacher, St. John, Seward.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS:

Travis Barta (S'04), DCE, First, Papillion, to non-candidate status.



OPERATION HURRICANE RELIEF UPDATE

A COINCIDENCE? -- The Nebraska District, holding its first district convention in 1882 at St. John Lutheran Church in Logan, near Hooper, decided to respond to an appeal delivered by the Synod's President to **help a new mission church and school in New Orleans, Louisiana**. The name of that church? *St. Paul's Lutheran Church*. Now, over a century later, this same church, a historic black Lutheran church, is **one of four churches the Nebraska District is sponsoring** through Operation Hurricane Relief.

St. Paul's was hit hard by Katrina, sustaining property damage to their church, fellowship center, and education building. Over half of their members were displaced, with many deciding not to return or still in the process of returning. The church leaders are determined, however, that their **ministry of 125 years, started with support from the Nebraska District, will continue**.



Pastor James Ertl reports that the reconstruction of their church building is nearing completion. Repairs continue, including work on their stained glass windows. The Fellowship Center completely lost its roof during Katrina and that now is being replaced. Visible progress is being made and that is encouraging to all.

Individual families of St. Paul's are also being prayed for and helped. The Nebraska District's *Family to Family* ministry is making a difference for the members of St. Paul's, and it is greatly appreciated. The ministry is designed to primarily give emotional and spiritual help gained through the building of relationships and prayers of the sponsoring group. Over 20 families are being sponsored. However, **there are still families that need a sponsor** and District members are encouraged to prayerfully consider sponsoring a family through their organization or family.

FALL ACTION TEAM CAMPAIGN TO BEGIN -- Coordinators at hurricane disaster relief sites in both Louisiana and Texas report busy summers, but there is even a *greater need for teams this fall*. Camps now offer air conditioned sleeping units and tents are no longer used for sleeping arrangements. It's not too late for individuals or groups to make plans to go down and help this fall or winter.

For information on these and other opportunities to be involved with Operation Hurricane Relief, contact Larry Oetting at the Nebraska District Office by calling 888-643-2961 or emailing larryo@ndlcms.org. Please remember in your prayers all those affected and all those serving.