



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

July 2008

REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST . . .

Pastors and lay leaders from rural and small town congregations are invited to participate in a conference that will help share common ministry experiences and embrace change leading toward being in mission in rural and small town communities. The conference, led by the Saint Paul Institute for Education (SPIFE), will be held at Mahoney State Park, Ashland, on November 6-8. Call SPIFE for more information or to register at 888-463-5127.



CALLED TO GLORY . . . Erna Bernthal,

widow of Rev. Erwin Bernthal, departed this life on May 8. Rev. Bernthal served Nebraska congregations in Schuyler and Wayne.

LAY LEADERSHIP CLASSES . . . The Lay Leadership Program of the Nebraska District is exploring possibilities of offering classes in Omaha, Seward, Norfolk, and Holdrege. The four foundational first-year classes are:

- History/Theology of the Old Testament,
- History/Theology of the New Testament,
- The Lutheran Confessions, and
- Interpreting the Bible.

Second year classes build on these courses and focus on lay ministries, such as visitation, outreach, assimilation, teaching the faith, small groups, and caring ministries. One may enroll in any ministry course.

Courses are delivered in two ways: on site and through the Internet, which includes meetings with a called church worker. Tuition is \$150 for an on-site course and \$75 for an Internet course, in addition to course texts.

If considering the possibility of enrolling at any of the four locations, or if more information is desired, please contact Kathy Melton at the District Office (888-643-2961 or kathym@ndlcms.org) or program coordinator Marvin Bergman (402-643-3724 or marv.bergman@cune.edu).

ORGAN RECITAL SERIES . . . Concordia University, Seward, has a year-long organ recital series planned to celebrate the installation of the new Casavant Freres Opus 3868 organ on campus. All events will take place in the Heine Recital Hall in the Music Building. For more information on these events, contact the Concordia Music Department at 402-643-7282.

Dedicatory Recital and Hymn Festival, September 13 at 7:00 p.m. and September 14 at 3:00 p.m.; **Concordia Alumni Recital**, October 5 at 2:00 p.m.; **“Organ Plus . . .” Music for Organ with Instruments and Voices**, January 25 at 3:00 p.m.; and **Felix Hell Visiting Artist Concert**, March 21 at 7:00 p.m. and March 22 at 3:00 p.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . Appointments from God!

“Where are you going?” asked Joanne as Tom abruptly opened the car door and jumped out.

Tom’s reply trailed off as he closed the car door, “I have an appointment from God!” Joanne puzzled over Tom’s words as she waited in the car in the parking lot. Ten minutes passed by. Finally, Tom returned.

Joanne asked, “So, are you going to tell me about your appointment from God?”

Tom quickly responded, “I just had to go back and invite Reed from the plumbing department to come to church. I have talked with Reed several times about Jesus. He has always been interested. Well, when I was in asking him about that part I needed for our bathroom sink, I was in a hurry and slipped out of the store without keeping the appointment God had made for me. I couldn’t leave without inviting him to church. Reed accepted my invitation, and we pick him up for church tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.”

“So how long have you been talking to Reed about Jesus?” queried Joanne.

“Oh, I suppose it has been about a year. He really appreciated the time I brought him that prayer card when his father was sick,” Tom responded.

Christian outreach through the building of relationships is the result of appointments that God makes for us. The Lord picks out people with whom He wants you and me to share the person and saving actions of Jesus. This is the way it has always been. In John 1:40-42 we read, “Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.”

In Acts 8:1 and 4 we are amazed that, “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria . . . Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.”

God has appointments for you to relationally speak of Jesus so that people can be gathered into His church on earth and eternally in heaven. Watch for your next appointment from God!

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld



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.

Will Your Congregation be Involved in *Fan into Flame*?

What is *Fan into Flame*? How can my congregation be involved? What will *Fan into Flame* look like in my congregation? How do we get started?

These are just some of the questions congregations are asking about their participation in *Fan into Flame* during 2008, the year designated by the Nebraska District Board of Directors for District participation. Congregations that have not yet considered if or how they will participate are strongly encouraged to give this opportunity prayerful attention this summer and begin preparing for fall appeals.

What is *Fan into Flame*?

Fan into Flame is the invitation for individuals and congregations to help provide funds for *Ablaze!* projects that spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ in their communities, in Nebraska, in North America, and around the world. Through *Ablaze!* education and increased mission awareness, congregations will be given the opportunity to respond to the needs of sharing the love of Jesus with the unchurched and unbelieving in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

How can my congregation be involved?

District congregations are encouraged to make a decision this summer about their participation in *Fan into Flame*.

The target date for all congregations to complete their appeals is by Advent of 2008. Once a decision to participate has been made, a small team of volunteers can plan, organize, and conduct a congregational appeal. Each local appeal is meant to be crisp and mission-focused. Early planning will help ensure enough time is given to *Fan into Flame* in your congregation. Individuals who wish to be involved, even if their congregation chooses not to be, may contact the District Office for information on individual giving opportunities.

What will *Fan into Flame* look like in my congregation?

Nebraska District congregations are encouraged to join other congregations from around Nebraska and across Synod in supporting LCMS mission efforts, both nearby and around the world. The first step in starting a congregational appeal is to determine the type of appeal your

congregation will undertake. There are four basic appeals, each of which includes *Ablaze!* education and commitment Sundays. These flexible plans can be taken individually, in various combinations, or altered to fit each situation:

- Personal contacts or every member visits
- Cottage meetings
- Commitment Sundays with publicity
- Congregational pledge

What makes this campaign different from others?

Congregations that participate will receive back 15% net of the gifts they provide through their appeal. This money will be returned to the congregation to be used for local mission outreach projects. Another 15% net will be sent to the Nebraska District to support its mission plan. LCMS

World Mission will receive 20% net for national missions and 50% net for international mission work. A portion of the international money will be designated for work in Sudan.

How do we get started?

There are circuit coordinators ready to provide resources, guidance, support, and encouragement as congregations

explore and prepare for *Fan into Flame*. Someone from the congregation is encouraged to contact the circuit coordinator and set up a time for a small planning committee to meet to gather more information. Once the congregation decides to move ahead with a congregational appeal, the circuit coordinator will provide the planning committee with all of the needed resources.

Much more information about *Ablaze!* and *Fan into Flame* is available on the District website, www.ndlcms.org. Here congregations can find appeal resources, a PowerPoint presentation to introduce *Fan into Flame* to their members, Frequently Asked Questions, ideas for local outreach projects, bi-monthly newsletters, and much more. Additional information is also available by contacting Campaign Coordinator Andrea Essling (aessling@ccsfundraising.com) or Nichole Hetz (nicholeh@ndlcms.org) at the District Office, 888-643-2961.



Media Library

Contact Kathy Melton at 888-643-2961 or kathym@ndlcms.org to request becoming custodian of one or more of these titles.

All Good Things	Beyond Words	Bon Voyage and Shalom	But Not for Lunch
Circle of Responsibility	Dark Journey	Dreams Die	Enter Aunt Jenny
Every Moment a Gift	Fall and Rise of Linda McCoy	False Witness	The Gathering Dark
How Shall We Then Live	The Hunger Next Door	The Last Rodeo	Little Boy of Summer

News items and ministry stories for the *Reporter* are always welcome. The deadline for submission for the August 2008 *Reporter* is **Tuesday, July 1**. Please submit items to Reporter@ndlcms.org or PO Box 407, Seward, NE 68434.

COMING EVENTS

LCMS Worship Conference , Concordia University, Seward	July 22-25
Prairie Fire '08 , Concordia University, Seward	August 2
New Worker Orientation , Concordia University, Seward	September 5
Nebraska District Fiscal Conference , Concordia, Seward	September 6
Orphan Grain Train Convention , Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk	September 19-20
New Teacher Workshop , District Office, Seward	September 26
Nebraska South LWML Convention , Adams County Fairgrounds, Hastings	September 26-27
Circuit Counselors/Vice Presidents Retreat , St. Benedict Center, Schuyler	October 6-7
Wives of Pastors Retreat , The Leadership Center, Aurora	October 10-11
Music Workshop and Hymn Festival , Zion, Imperial	October 11-12
Teachers' Conference , Trinity, Fremont	October 23-24
Fall Pastors' Conference , Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island	October 27-28
Heartland Rural Ministry Conference , Mahoney State Park, Ashland	November 6-8
District Youth Gathering , Holiday Inn Convention Center, Omaha	November 21-23

ANNIVERSARIES

- Immanuel, Beemer**, 140th, July 13. Rev. Clint Poppe will preach at the 10:30 a.m. worship service, followed by a noon meal and afternoon program.
- Zion, Red Cloud**, 75th, August 24. Former pastor Rev. Daniel Praeuner will preach at the 10:00 a.m. service. Former pastor Rev. Donald Poock will preach during the afternoon program.
- St. John, Wakefield**, 100th, September 7. Rev. Ronald Holling will preach at the 10:30 a.m. worship service, followed by a noon meal and afternoon program.
- Peace, Waco**, 100th, September 7. Rev. Roger Schlechte and Rev. Lloyd Stuhr will be guest speakers at the 10:00 a.m. worship service, followed by an 11:30 a.m. lunch and festival of music service at 2:00 p.m.
- Peace, McCook**, 100th, September 21. Rev. Heath Curtis will be the guest speaker at the worship service, followed by a meal at the McCook Community Building. Contact the church office at 308-345-2595 for more information.
- Trinity, Schuyler**, 75th, November 9. President Russ Sommerfeld will preach at the morning service.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Corby Osten (S'04), teacher, Lutheran South Academy, Houston, Texas, to teacher, Lincoln Lutheran Middle/Senior High School, Lincoln.

CALLS DECLINED

Cory Emily (RF'03), teacher, Bethany, Overland Park, Kan., to principal/teacher, St. John, Battle Creek.

Katrina Kramer (RF'07), teacher, Heartland Lutheran High School, Grand Island, to teacher, Christ Our Savior, Evansville, Ill.

Jannese Steider (S'93), teacher, St. Paul, Omaha, to teacher, Immanuel, Hooper.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Wendy Borcharding (RF'93), reinstated to the roster as a candidate.

Amanda Geidel (S'96), candidate, to resigned from the roster.

Robin Keilig (S'95), non-candidate status, to candidate status.

Robert Saeger (S'73), principal/teacher, Immanuel, Polk, to emeritus status.

Amy Voss (S'92), non-candidate status, to candidate status.

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. James DeLoach (StL'91), Immanuel, Louisville, to senior pastor, Zion, Kearney.

Rev. Ryan Matthias (StL'04), associate pastor, Trinity, Davenport, Iowa, to chaplain, Concordia University, Seward.

Rev. James Witt (StL'00), sole pastor, Trinity, Blue Hill, to visitation pastor, Trinity, Blue Hill.

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. John Burger (StL'90), candidate, to missionary-at-large, Family Shield Ministries, St. Louis, Mo.

Rev. Shawn Kitzing (StL'00), Immanuel, Loup City, to Emmanuel, Britton, Mich.

Rev. Waldemar Vinovskis (StL'92), Concordia, Macungie, Pa., to associate pastor, Pacific Hills, Omaha.

STATUS CHANGE

Rev. Frank Brink (StLCq'94), senior pastor, Mount Olive, Norfolk, to emeritus status effective June 1.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Michael Moreno (FtW'90) as missionary, Board for Mission Services, St. Louis, May 18.

LATE PLACEMENT

Joshua Lowe, Greenfield, Mo., placed at Trinity, Blue Hill, from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

MISSION FIELD ... NEBRASKA!



During 2007, the Nebraska District celebrated 125 years of work in the Lord's mission field. Throughout 2008 we will look to the future and the ministry opportunities the Lord is continually placing before us. During this year, the *Nebraska Lutheran Reporter* will include "follow-up" articles on the ministries featured in the series of anniversary articles published last year. These past articles may be reviewed on the District website at <http://www.ndlcms.org/news/communications/Reporter/archive.html>.

"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." These words of Jesus from John 4:35b were the theme of the 2006 Nebraska District Convention and set the mission vision of the District for the next three years.

As congregations in Nebraska heeded Jesus' words and looked at the mission fields surrounding their church and community, some began to explore opportunities to plant new churches. Today, there are a number of new church starts that are actively engaged in ministry or making plans to begin ministry in the fall.

Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Omaha, joined the Nebraska District as a congregation at the 2003 District Convention. During its five years of existence, this congregation has proclaimed the Word of God and shared the gifts of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper with those in the Papillion and Omaha areas. A daughter church of First Lutheran in Papillion, Lamb of God moved to a new ministry facility in Omaha in September of 2007.

1C, a daughter church of Peace in Columbus, is a unique church plant in a number of ways. First, the name usually catches people's attention. Many think it is a misprint or don't realize it's the name of a new church.



According to their website, www.1cwhatever.com, "Often, the name of a church isn't personal. 1C can mean: 1Creator, 1Christ, 1Counselor, 1Community, 1st Century, 1Confession, 1Creed, 1st Commandment, 1Church: you can determine what 1C means to you!"

The Lord is blessing this ministry by bringing together the unchurched and disconnected in Columbus to regularly attend the weekly fellowship meetings. Public meetings began on January 13, 2008, and as of June 1, they are averaging 160 people who gather each week to spend time in the study of God's Word and fellowship. He is also blessing the stewardship of those involved with this mission in that all funds used to plant this church and sustain its ministry have been donated without the mission incurring any debt.

Two other mission starts are currently working toward launch dates in September of 2008. **Word of Life**, a church plant of St. Paul in Malcolm, continues to meet as a launch team for Bible study and organizational

meetings. Through a partnership with Concordia University, Seward, this mission church plans to launch in space leased from Concordia in the new Town Center area of the Fallbrook development in northwest Lincoln. Because of current and future population growth in this area of Lincoln, this church start plans to connect with the community and build relationships with those who live and work in this area, all with the prayer of sharing the hope they have in Jesus with those who are disconnected from the church.

A new mission congregation is also in its early stages in the community of Seward. A launch team currently gathers in Seward, and they are planning to begin meeting publicly in September. God is also opening up mission possibilities still to be explored in the Nebraska communities of Elm Creek and Sutherland, as well as ethnic mission possibilities in Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, Norfolk, North Platte, Crete, and others.

The 245 congregations of the Nebraska District have been and continue to be involved in these mission starts in a number of ways. Many congregations and individuals remember these mission starts in their prayers. Others offer gifts of support, both financial and through useful services or goods. Finally, the mission and ministry offerings sent on to the District from congregational budgets help provide needed support for these and other mission opportunities across Nebraska. Congregational or individual gifts given through *Fan into Flame* will also contribute to the planting of new churches, schools, and missions in the Nebraska District.

Jesus was indeed talking to the people of Nebraska when He said, "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." What a blessing that He has given District congregations and members eyes to see the harvest fields around them, willing hands to work in these fields, and mission hearts to be actively engaged in building relationships and sharing the love of Jesus with those who don't yet have eternal life through His saving gift of salvation.



For more information on these mission starts or to visit about mission opportunities in your community, contact Rev. Rich Boring, Nebraska District Missions and Outreach Executive, at richb@ndlcms.org or 888-643-2961.