



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



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

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November 2008

“FULL OF GRACE – SEASONED WITH SALT” . . . is the theme of the 2009



Nebraska District Convention to be held June 4-6 on the campus of Concordia University, Seward. Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church—

Missouri Synod, will be the synodical representative. Rev. Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus, president of Concordia University Irvine in California, will be the convention essayist.

Convention Delegate Information Forms have been mailed to all congregations. This form must be completed, certified by at least two officers of the congregation, and returned to the District Office by **January 31** for the congregation's pastoral and lay delegates to District Convention to be eligible to participate and vote.

Congregations are encouraged to address this matter as soon as possible and return the form to the District Office as soon as it is completed. Dual congregations are considered one congregation and allowed one pastoral and one lay delegate combined.

Nomination Packets were sent to all congregations in October. This information allows each congregation to nominate individuals to serve as various Nebraska District officers. Completed forms must be returned to the Secretary of the District, Rev. Roland Jank, Jr., 7301 N. 28th Ave., Omaha, NE 68112, by **February 1** to be valid. For more information, contact your pastor or congregational chairman.

Overtures to the Convention may be submitted by congregations, circuits, church worker conferences, committees, and the Board of Directors of the Nebraska District. These calls for action must be received in the District Office no later than **January 29**.

Contact the District Office at 888-643-2961 or info@ndlcms.org with questions.

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . In God We Trust!

In 1861, when our nation was trembling in the crisis of its Civil War, the Secretary of the Treasury wrote to the director of the mint at Philadelphia saying, “No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. I recommend that the trust of our people in God be declared on our coins. Please prepare a motto to express national recognition of and trust in God.” The first motto was “God, our Trust.” It was soon changed to “In God We Trust.”



Have times changed? Trust seems to be at a very low ebb today. Little attention is given to the motto “In God We Trust” on our money in midst of current crises. Even trust within Christian congregations can be low. Relationships between pastor and people, as well as people with people, are often strained. What is happening to us?

When Paul and his missionary partners wrote of trust to the Corinthian Christians, they said, “*So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

Trust and faithfulness are tightly intertwined. And the faithfulness that breeds trust is the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Never does He waver in His commitment to us. He sacrificed His perfect life for our imperfect lives. He died our death to pay for our evil. He arose from death and is even now at God's right hand speaking for His Christians. Jesus can be trusted. He is always faithful.

It is His faithfulness flowing through us for one another that can build trust among us!



Encourage one another and build up each other....

1 Thessalonians 5:11, NRSV

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF INGATHERING . . . will be November 3-7 in Grand Island, Lincoln, and Omaha from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Goods packed for LWR should be sorted and labeled according to kind, packed in strong cartons secured with packing tape, and addressed for Lutheran World Relief. Boxes should not exceed 40 pounds and should be marked with the name and address of the sending church. For locations and information on what to donate, visit the District website at www.ndlcms.org, call Dave Roseland at 800-456-1092 or Betsy Buschkemper at 402-291-6665, or email Betsy at buschkemper@hotmail.com.

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.

CALLED TO GLORY . . . Rev. Donald Boettcher, Neligh, was called to the Lord's side on September 22. Pastor Boettcher first served the congregations of Grace (Burton), Springview, and Immanuel (Jamison), Newport, as a lay minister, then as a pastor following his ordination until his retirement.

EQUIPPING TO SHARE . . . A Lutheran Hour Ministries **Equipping to Share** workshop is a four-hour training session that teaches Christians how to relate their faith to those they interact with on a daily basis. Participants learn how to identify "mission moments" (situations where the Gospel can quickly and easily be shared). They then learn how to share their faith in an effective and non-threatening way. Churches wishing to host a workshop next spring should contact LHM for more information by calling 800-944-3450, ext. 4144, or send an e-mail to sarah.guldalian@lhm.org.

LIVING NATIVITY . . . Holy Savior, Lincoln, is offering the community of Lincoln and other visitors the opportunity to experience ancient Bethlehem and the awe of that first Christmas at their living nativity, "Drawn to the Light," on December 11 and 12 from 6 – 9 p.m. at Holy Savior (4710 North 10th Street). For more information, contact the church office at 402-434-3325.



LLL MEN'S RETREAT . . .

Camp Luther, Schuyler, is hosting an LLL Men's Retreat on November 21-22. Attendees will participate in Lutheran Hour Ministries' "Men's Ministry Network," as well as fun and fellowship. Find more information and a registration form at www.campoluther.org or call the camp office at 402-352-5655.



TWO "TEACHERS OF THE YEAR" IN NEBRASKA . . . Two Lutheran teachers in the Nebraska District were chosen "Teacher of the Year" by their local Walmarts. **Lisa Knoepfel**, teacher at Trinity, Fremont, and **Beverly Duensing**, teacher at St. Paul, Beatrice, were both nominated by former students and given the award by Walmart for their outstanding service and dedication. Thanks be to God for the wonderful teachers in all of Nebraska's Lutheran schools.



Congregations Across Nebraska Join In *Fan into Flame*

"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:13-14)

Praise and thanksgiving to God, who has moved the hearts of pastors and leaders in more than 40 congregations of the Nebraska District to participate or to commit to partner in **Fan into Flame**, the opportunity to provide support gifts for Ablaze! outreach projects.

Congregations that have already participated in **Fan into Flame** tell of how the Holy Spirit used the outreach and mission education components to set the hearts of the members Ablaze!, creating a passion throughout the congregation for reaching the lost with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

St. John, Tecumseh, accepted the invitation to be a pilot congregation in the District, and is finishing up their congregational appeal. Pastor John Diener and the congregation's leadership shared their experience in this way:

The key to our congregation's ready acceptance and mission zeal for this appeal was the Holy Spirit working through the startling fact that every minute 83 people die in the world not knowing Jesus Christ. This message cut to the heart of our congregation and provided them with a sense of urgency found in the heart of Jesus who came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Throughout the appeal, Pastor Diener used various means to highlight the value of "every minute" in sermons and other communications.

The Fan into Flame appeal kickoff was a Friendship Sunday and picnic. Our members, along with many personally invited, currently unchurched visitors, heard of the friendship we share in Christ Jesus and the mission appeal that day. The following week was Testimonial Sunday, where our leaders who gave early gifts shared their faith, their commitment, and the sense of urgency to make a difference

through gifts that will provide international, national, district, and local opportunities to share the Good News. These testimonials helped bring this appeal to a personal level for our members.

Every worship service during the appeal had a Fan into Flame "minute" following the sermon to show the Fan into Flame video clips, make the campaign announcement provided in the information packet, and provide appeal details. Our monthly newsletter, weekly bulletin, and information table overflowed with information about the Fan into Flame appeal.

Despite the thought that \$15,000 may be too aggressive a goal, the power of the Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of our people to provide a generous response of \$56,270 (375% of our goal), with \$23,360 sent through initial gifts.

Congregations that have not started planning their involvement in **Fan into Flame** have the opportunity to use the remainder of this fall and winter to begin Ablaze! education, while creating a planning committee and beginning work on an appeal for early 2009. Professional consultation help is available for congregations that get started before the end of 2008.

A **Congregation Goal Agreement** and other resources for congregations that plan to participate but have not started their appeals are available at www.ndlcms.org. Participating congregations are urged to complete this agreement and return a signed copy to the District Office as soon as possible.

For more information on **Fan into Flame**, contact Andrea Essling at the Nebraska District Office at 888-643-2961 or Andrea.Essling@lcms.org.

COMING EVENTS

Heartland Rural Ministry Conference , Mahoney State Park, Ashland	November 6-8
Church/School Secretary Workshop , Concordia University, Seward	November 11
District Youth Gathering , Holiday Inn Convention Center, Omaha	November 21-23
Junior High Retreat , Camp Luther, Schuyler	March 13-14, 2009
Junior High Retreat , Camp Comeca, Cozad	April 24-25, 2009
Nebraska District Convention , Concordia University, Seward	June 4-6, 2009

ANNIVERSARIES

Trinity, Schuyler, 75th, November 9. President Russ Sommerfeld will preach at the morning service.
Faith, Humboldt, 60th, November 16. A special worship service will be held at 10:00 a.m., followed by a noon meal and mission festival at the church.
Zion, Scotia, 125th, August 9, 2009.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Thomas Volker (StL'97), associate, Peace, Columbus, to Mount Zion and St. James, Minneapolis, Minn.

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Michael Awe (StL'89), Immanuel, Tilden, to senior, Trinity, Grand Island.

Rev. Daniel Grams (FtW'02), Holy Trinity, Garfield, N.J., to associate, Pacific Hills, Omaha.

Rev. John Herfurth (StL'82), Trinity, Indianapolis, Ind., to senior, Immanuel, Columbus.

Rev. Jerome Leckband (FtW'00), Trinity, Foster, to St. Paul, Brownstown, Ind.



COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Haley Kindrex (S'05), candidate, to teacher, Lambs of Christ, Crete.

Kristen Mueller (S'02), non-candidate, to candidate, to teacher, Zion, Kearney.

Scott Seevers (S'89), candidate, to vice president of enrollment management, student services, and athletics, Concordia University, Seward.

Lisa Splittgerber (S'00), candidate, to teacher, Zion, Kearney.

Heidi Stockmeyer (AA'06), teacher, Christ the Vine, Herculaneum, Mo., to teacher, St. John, Columbus.

CALLS DECLINED

Hank Rausch (RF'70), executive director, Camp Luther, Schuyler, to executive director, Northern California Lutheran Outdoor Ministry, California-Nevada-Hawaii District.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Jane Bunnett (S'64), teacher, Emmanuel, York, to emeritus.

Amy Upchurch (S'99), candidate, South Wisconsin District, to candidate, Nebraska District.

David Werner (S'73), non-candidate, Minnesota South District, to non-candidate, Nebraska District.

PLACEMENT

Lauren Hanneman (S'08), teacher, St. Paul, Omaha.

Media Library

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

<i>Yeshua</i>	Ripples of Darkness Part I (2 copies)
The Bread of Sacrifice Part I (2 copies)	Ripples of Darkness Part II (2 copies)
The Bread of Sacrifice Part II (2 copies)	The Voice and the Light Part I (2 copies)
The Land and the Promise Part I (2 copies)	The Voice and the Light Part II (2 copies)
The Land and the Promise Part II (2 copies)	The Land and the Promise/The Promise Takes Root
The Promise Takes Root Part I (2 copies)	Ripples of Darkness
The Promise Takes Root Part II (2 copies)	Voice and the Light/Bread of Sacrifice

News items and ministry stories for the Reporter are always welcome. The deadline for submission for the December 2008 Reporter is **Monday, November 3**. Please submit items to Reporter@ndlcms.org or PO Box 407, Seward, NE 68434.

THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY



During 2007, the Nebraska District celebrated 125 years of work in the Lord's mission field. Throughout 2008 we look to the future and the ministry opportunities the Lord is continually placing before us. During the 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>.

"The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health."

Psalm 41:3 (ESV)

Hospital chaplaincy is largely a ministry of presence and prayer. We strive to support patients in their understanding of:

- hope and joy,
- ultimate meaning and value, and
- sense of purpose in living

in their relationship to their faith community, in exploring options and in making health care decisions with reverence of the gift of life, and in knowing peace in dying.

Hospital chaplaincy is a specialized ministry that seeks to provide spiritual support for patients and their families. Chaplains work to listen carefully to the patient's story. Anton Boisen developed the concept of the "living human document." This concept was derived from his practical, clinical experience as a chaplain. Connecting the human story with the divine story is a spiritual care objective that many patients find to be helpful and meaningful.

Finding a way to be with patients, their friends, and family can be a challenge. When patients enter the hospital, they are often entering a land in which they have very little freedom or control. To provide good spiritual care, the chaplain tries to be flexible to the needs of the patient. This approach helps the patient to know and exercise freedom and control on an important level of life.

The chaplain listens to the patient express their needs and hopes, and also witnesses the personal reserves of strength that are accessible to the patient. To me, it is always amazing the resources that people manifest in the face of life-altering conditions and life-threatening illnesses. One patient has experienced continual losses in health and increasing limitations in lifestyle. His courage and resiliency in spirit is amazing to me. He does not consider himself to be courageous — he says he simply "deals with whatever life brings." To me, his life is a marvelous display of glorifying God's creation.



HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY
MINISTRY

One woman who had lived and battled with cancer for over 20 years felt torn about leaving those who would survive her. Her Christian faith was a tremendous resource to her and she liked to discuss Scripture that pertained to struggles in this life and to what heaven is like. She shared her own vision of heaven with me. For her, it was a place where we would be completely free to relate intimately with each other, where conflicts in needs would not challenge that experience, and where interpersonal communication would always be clear, understandable, and appreciated.

Hospital ministry affords many opportunities for chaplains to accompany people on their journey approaching the end of life. In accompanying people who are dying, we seek to support them by being there with them emotionally and spiritually. Some find it to be very helpful to devote some time to life review, to reconsider their identity by clarifying what is meaningful to them at present, to contemplate any needs for reconciliation of past events or relationships, and to reflect on and share what their beliefs are about what happens after death. These intimate conversations can be very powerful and profound.



It is a blessed privilege for me to serve as a hospital chaplain. I have come to deeply respect and revere just how well God knows His way around this hospital, throughout different health care disciplines, and in the lives of those we serve.

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38, 39)

What a powerful promise.

What a penetrating truth of the cross.

Submitted by Chaplain James Wonnacott, M. Div., BCC
Faith Regional Health Services
Norfolk, Nebraska