



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



Information of Interest for Lutherans in the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
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June 2009

FULL OF GRACE – SEASONED WITH SALT . . . The District Convention will take place at Concordia University in Seward on June 4-6. The Convention will provide an opportunity for the delegates to rejoice in what the Lord has done and continues to do in the Nebraska District, as well as to help set the mission focus for the District for the next three years.

Business items include elections for district president, vice presidents, and various District Board of Directors and committee members. Resolutions defining the ministry direction for the District will also be voted on.

Election results and other Convention news will be available on the District website, www.ndlcms.org, on Saturday, June 6. The July/August edition of the *Nebraska Lutheran Reporter* will be a combined, larger issue to cover all of the Convention news, and will be in congregations in late July. There will be no July *Reporter* delivered to church offices in June.



CALLED TO GLORY . . . Elinor Harms, wife of Rev. Robert Harms, Grand Island, departed this life on April 11. Pastor Harms has served the Nebraska congregations of St. Paul, Bridgeport; Mt. Calvary, Bayard; Zion, Pierce; Zion, Hastings; and Trinity, Grand Island. . . . **Herbert Garske**, teacher emeritus from Seward, was called to glory on April 17. During his teaching ministry he served the LCMS on the Commission on Worship, the Commission on Confirmation, and as a doctrinal reviewer of worship and educational materials, as well as chief organist for two synodical conventions. . . . **Rev. Alfred Hinz**, pastor emeritus from Laurel, received his crown of life on May 5. During his ministry, Rev. Hinz served Nebraska congregations in Valley, Bridgeport, Newcastle, Ponca, and Martinsburg.



FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . Make Every Effort!

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1-6)



Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
Ephesians 4:3

Mention of the name Hans Christian Anderson brings to mind fairy tales the likes of *The Little Mermaid*, *Thumbelina*, *The Ugly Duckling*, and *The Red Shoes*. But Hans Christian Anderson was only one of two poets and storytellers beloved by the children of Denmark. The other was Bernhardt Severin Ingemann, who not only enchanted the imaginations of children, but also wrote a hymn that graces the pages of our Lutheran hymnals.

Ingemann loved the “oneness” of God’s Word in Ephesians 4:1-6. From this Word he penned the hymn “Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow.” This hymn is nicknamed “The One Church.” When times are tough and challenges abundant, the Christian church needs more than ever the “oneness” given by God. And God calls upon His Christians to make every effort to keep the unity He has given.

Ingemann’s hymn describes Christians as a “pilgrim band,” singing songs of expectation, marching to the Promised Land, God clearing for them the darkness, gleaming and burning the guiding light, with brother clasping the hand of brother, and stepping fearless through the night.

God gives us “ones!” One body! One Spirit! One hope! One faith! One baptism! One God and Father of all! The Holy Spirit bids us to “make every effort” to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Efforts towards harmony in God’s Oneness include being humble, gentle, patient, and bearing with one another in love. Those are not just nice words, they are strong words from God! They are words of power in us and in our relationships.

*Onward, therefore, pilgrim brothers,
Onward, with the cross our aid!
Bear its shame, and fight its battle,
Till we rest beneath its shade.
Soon shall come the great awaking,
Soon the rending of the tomb;
Then the scatt’ring of all shadows,
And the end of toil and gloom.*

one LORD,
one Faith,
one Baptism....
EPHESIANS 4:5

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.

2009 PLACEMENT REPORT

GRADUATES PLACED IN NEBRASKA (if married, spouse's name is in parentheses):

Hyannis, Swede Valley (Ashby)	Andrew Safarik (Johanna), Seward, Neb. (StL)
Lincoln, Word of Life	Larry Oetting (Kitty), Lincoln, Neb. (StL)
McCook, Peace	Thomas Albertson (Charlene), Fort Collins, Colo. (StL)
Merna, Immanuel	Ryan Loeslie , Warren, Minn. (FtW)
Omaha, Pacific Hills (associate)	Matthew Schneider (Robin), Peoria, Ill. (StL)
Schuyler, Trinity and Immanuel	William Mattfeld (Marilyn), Schuyler, Neb. (StL)
Sterling, Immanuel	Elmer Smith (Bonnie), Lincoln, Neb. (StL)
Superior, Centennial	Brian Earl , Lincoln, Neb. (StL)
Wilcox, St. John	Melvin Mertens (Eileen), Sterling, Colo. (StL)

VICARS ASSIGNED TO NEBRASKA

Arapahoe, Trinity	James Moshier (Renee), Riverton, Wyo. (FtW)
Chambers, St. Paul	Terry Makelin (Mary), Norfolk, Neb. (StL)
Columbus, 1C	David Ficken , Aurora, Ill. (StL)
Grand Island, Trinity	Joshua Leigeber , Cullman, Ala. (StL)
Gretna, Good Shepherd	Michael Feldmann (Jessica), Perryville, Mo. (StL)
Imperial, Zion	Sean Hansen (Rebecca), Lodi, Ohio (FtW)
Neligh/Elgin, Grace/Trinity	Paul Shupe , Cheyenne, Wyo. (FtW)
Omaha, Sudanese Evangelical	Peter Bur , Omaha, Neb. (StL)
Osmond, Immanuel	Chet Scherbarth (Beth), Lincoln, Neb. (StL)
Spencer/Lynch, Immanuel/Christ	Harrison Goodman (Lisa), Champaign, Ill. (FtW)

DEACONESS PLACED IN NEBRASKA

Fremont, Good Shepherd	Jessica Koenig (Michael), Chester, Ill. (StL)
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NEBRASKA GRADUATES PLACED

Mark Duer , Lincoln	Our Redeemer, Cushing, Okla. (FtW)
Peter Jurchen , Beaver Crossing	Hope (associate), Des Moines, Iowa (StL)
Andrew Schermbeck , Elk Creek	St. Paul, Chicago, Ill. (StL)

FISCAL CONFERENCES . . . Everyone in the Nebraska District – pastors, principals, congregational chairmen and treasurers, and interested lay people – are invited to join the District Board of Directors and staff for one of three one-day Fiscal Conferences in August. Conferences will be held August 8 at Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk; August 15 at Peace, Grand Island; and August 22 at Lincoln Lutheran Middle & High School, Lincoln. Each of these conferences will share the same information on the opportunities in God's mission fields, and discussions on fiscal realities and solutions for engaging these opportunities.

Registration materials will be mailed to church offices and made available on the District website, www.ndlcms.org, in late June.



MINISTRY CONTINUES . . . The ministry of Zion+Peace Lutheran Church and School in Omaha continues, nearly three years after the congregation and school closed its doors.

School equipment and materials from Zion+Peace have been distributed to Lutheran schools of the Nebraska District to continue educating and enriching the lives of students in these Christ-centered settings.

The availability of these materials was announced to the attendees at the Administrators' Conference in April, and schools in the Nebraska District are blessed to be able to use these things in their school ministries.

It is through God's goodness that these resources are now able to help enhance the Lutheran education experience for students across the District. The seeds that were planted during the ministry of Zion+Peace are continuing to bear fruit.



SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION GRANTS . . . The Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition announces an opportunity for faith-based and community-based groups to apply for grants of \$1,000 - \$3,000 to implement suicide awareness and prevention practices. This opportunity was made possible through an award to the Coalition by the KIM Foundation and is administered by Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska. For more information and to access and submit the application, go to www.suicideprevention.nebraska.edu.

COMING EVENTS

Nebraska District LCMS Convention, Concordia University, Seward.....	June 4-6
Midwest National Lutheran Funding Academy, Concordia Jr/Sr High School, Omaha	June 8-10
Christian Women's Conference, Midland Lutheran College, Fremont	July 24-25
Lutherans For Life National Conference, St. Louis, Missouri	July 24-25
Nebraska District Youth Leadership Retreat, Peace, Grand Island	July 31-August 1
Nebraska District Fiscal Conference, Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk.....	August 8
Nebraska District Fiscal Conference, Peace, Grand Island	August 15
Nebraska District Fiscal Conference, Lincoln Lutheran Middle & High School, Lincoln	August 22
New Worker Orientation, Concordia University, Seward.....	September 14-15
Orphan Grain Train Convention, Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk.....	September 18-19
Circuit Counselors' Conference, St. Benedict Center, Schuyler	October 12-13
Junior High Retreat, Camp Luther, Schuyler.....	October 16-17
Teachers' Conference, Christ, Norfolk.....	October 22-23
Pastors' Conference, Sandhills Convention Center, North Platte	October 26-27

ANNIVERSARIES

Bethany, Omaha, 70th, June 7, 14, 21, and 28. Special guest preachers during the June worship services include: Rev. Kenneth Holdorf on June 7, Rev. Martin Greunke on June 14, Rev. Wallace Vinovskis on June 21, and Rev. J. Brad Urbach on June 28.

St. John, Hooper, 140th, June 14. Rev. Jeff Ernstmeyer will be the guest preacher at the 10:00 a.m. worship service with noon lunch to follow at the Hooper Auditorium.

Zion St. John, Wisner, 40th, June 14. Rev. James Wright, former pastor, will be the guest speaker at the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Noon meal and afternoon program to follow.

St. John School, Seward, 125th, July 5. Dr. David Peter will be the guest preacher at the 9:00 a.m. worship service in the Concordia University Arena. Alumni activities are planned throughout the weekend.

Immanuel, Lincoln, 100th, July 12. Gary Thies will speak during the education hour at 9:15 a.m., and a noon potluck will follow. On October 18, Dr. Wallace Schulz will be the guest preacher, with a catered dinner to follow. Dinner reservations may be made by calling 402-261-5211 or emailing lindabeth66@yahoo.com.

Zion, Scotia, 125th, August 2. A special 9:30 a.m. outdoor service with guest preacher Rev. Russ Sommerfeld will be held at the farmstead where the congregation first met. On August 9, Rev. Jeff Ernstmeyer will be the guest preacher at the 10:30 a.m. service, followed by a catered dinner and program.

St. John, Waco, 135th, August 30. A special 9:00 a.m. worship service will be followed by fellowship and dinner.

St. Peter, Scribner, 125th, September 6. Rev. Warren Woerth, son of the congregation, will speak at the 10:00 a.m. worship, followed by dinner and an afternoon program.

St. Peter, Gresham, 100th, September 13. Rev. Timothy Jenks, former pastor, will be the guest preacher at the 10:30 a.m. service, followed by a catered noon meal and a 2:30 p.m. service with Rev. Timothy Prince, former pastor, as the guest preacher.

St. John (Ash Creek), McCook, 125th, September 20.

Christ, Lincoln, 60th, October 18. A special worship service will be held at 10:30 a.m.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Jeff Ernstmeyer (StL'03), Our Redeemer, Elwood, to senior pastor, Our Redeemer, North Platte.

Rev. Andrew Wehling (StL'93), Grace, Liberal, Kan., to Zion, Hastings.

Media Library

Media titles will no longer be listed in the *Reporter*. All remaining media library titles will be available at no cost to the delegates and guests at the Nebraska District Convention June 4-6. After that time, all remaining items will be removed from the District Office. Contact Carol Oetting at 888-643-2961 or carolo@ndlcms.org with questions.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Craig Oldenburg (RF'82), candidate, to executive director, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Northern California, Ben Lamond, Calif.

Benjamin Vineyard (S'06), DCE, Mt. Calvary, Holdrege, to minister of Christian growth, Trinity, Mission, Kan.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Karen Jensen (ME'02), non-candidate status to candidate status.

Tamra Jurchen (SP'69), candidate status to non-candidate status.

Cindy Meyers, (S'97), non-candidate status to non-candidate status.

Rebecca Oberg (S'03), candidate status to removed from roster.

Mary Oldenburg, (RF'83/P'08), DCE/teacher, Concordia University, Seward, to non-candidate status.

Timothy Oliver (S'79), non-candidate status to candidate status.

GOD'S MATH IN HIS MISSION FIELD

Have you attempted to help a child or grandchild with a mathematics assignment and said, "Wow! Math is the same as it was when I was in school?" God's math is different than human math. He loves multiplication. When Jesus told His parable about the sower, He announced, "Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." (Mark 4:8) Jesus also clearly informed His disciples, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me... This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." (John 15:4,8)

The Lord's multiplication math is at work in the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In 2004 and again in 2007, the LCMS in convention was moved to embrace a mission outreach focus to share the love of Jesus in North America and out into the world. It was given the name *Ablaze!* to remind us of the hearts burning within people when the Scriptures are opened to them to know Jesus as the one true Savior of humanity. (Luke 24:32) Our Synod of churches and professional workers in convention also embraced a special offering to enhance this focus on Christian mission outreach called *Fan into Flame*.



Fan into Flame is a multiplication offering. Gifts given from congregations and individuals through the power of the Holy Spirit to *Fan into Flame* have a multiplying impact in local congregations, which receive 15% net of their gifts for local outreach. Another 15% net comes to the Nebraska District for new, specifically identified outreach opportunities. Yet another 20% net is for new national outreach by the Synod. The final 50% net is for international mission outreach with our thirty partner Lutheran churches and into new mission fields. The administrative and consultative costs of managing the *Fan into Flame* campaign is 10% of its total.

The Nebraska District has been blessed to pass on generous gifts for *Fan into Flame* from congregations and individuals. During 2008-2009, congregations have pledged and given \$1,248,772 and individuals have pledged and given \$2,072,000. As cash gifts have been received by *Fan into Flame*, to date the Nebraska District has received \$36,424.68 from congregations and \$99,877.46 from individual gifts, for a total of \$136,302.14. THANKS BE TO GOD!

Plans are now being developed to put these generous and special gifts to use in partnership with the Synod's *Ablaze!* outreach movement through mission projects that embrace the God-given opportunities for the Nebraska District strategic plan. This flow of generous gifts will multiply God's work through His Word and His gifts of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to:

1. Renew District Congregations and Schools

The revitalization process aids congregations and schools in identifying their values for ministry to help them develop a mission plan. *Fan into Flame* gifts will help provide financial resources to support revitalization for 80 District congregations and schools by 2017, train professional church workers to serve in the identified mission fields, provide stewardship education, train biblical peacemakers, and provide other revitalization resources. Money has already been used to provide resources for the first learning community of congregations as they prepare to undertake the Transforming Congregations process. This pilot group for congregational renewal is at work testing the model. A peacemakers' conference is also being planned.

2. Plant New Churches and Schools

Nearly half of Nebraska's population is not regularly attending any church, with others worshipping at non-Christian churches. New mission starts and schools are needed to minister where population shifts have changed the community makeup or where various ethnic groups have located. *Fan into Flame* gifts will be used to provide funding for new mission starts through a mission loan/repayment process that allows the same money to be loaned out time after time to start new ministries. Funding may also be available for Genesis Studies to initiate new schools.

3. Provide Lutheran School and Church Worker Scholarships

The Nebraska District has a long and rich heritage of Christian education. As our Lord blesses *Fan into Flame*, the Nebraska District will provide scholarship money to Anglo, African American, Native American, and ethnic immigrant students to attend Lutheran schools in the district, as well as training church workers and church planters at synodical universities and seminaries. Work has begun on creating a fund to administer these dollars, which will allow more students to have a Christ-centered education.

4. Plant and Support Ethnic Ministries

The Lord is bringing people from around the world to Nebraska, creating a mission field on our doorstep. With God's blessings, support of ethnic ministries will lead to planting at least one new ethnic mission congregation or school each year. Ethnic ministry opportunities include: Hispanic, African immigrant, Asian, and Muslim ministries.

As committed partners in the mission field of Sudan through the coordination of LCMS World Mission, a portion of the "LCMS World Mission – Ends of the Earth" gifts gathered from Nebraska congregations and individuals will also be designated for work with the emerging Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan.

To find out more about participating in *Fan into Flame*, visit www.ndlcms.org.