



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

October 2009

COMPENSATION AND BENEFIT GUIDELINES AVAILABLE ONLINE . . .

The 2010 Nebraska District Compensation and Benefit Guidelines are available online for congregational and school officers to review as part of their budget process. A printable PDF is available from the Nebraska District website, www.ndlcms.org. Questions regarding the guidelines may be directed to District Treasurer Paul Pettit at 888-643-2961 or paulp@ndlcms.org.

H1N1 FLU RESOURCES . . . LCMS

World Relief and Human Care Director of Disaster Response Rev. Glenn Merritt is directing school administrators and congregational leaders to important information online regarding the H1N1 flu virus. Merritt identifies two central sources of information to help prepare for the upcoming flu season. The first is the federal government's CDC website, <http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu>, which includes regularly updated news and guidelines about the H1N1 flu virus. The other is the LCMS World Relief and Human Care website, <http://www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/dnews/>, where H1N1 flu resources for congregations are posted under "Flu Outbreak Impact."

OMAHA REFORMATION SERVICE . . .

A Reformation Festival service will be offered at Pacific Hills, 90th and Pacific, Omaha, co-sponsored by the Omaha North Circuit, on Sunday, October 25, at 2:30 p.m. Rev. Russ Sommerfeld, Nebraska District president, will be the preacher. The service will include the special music of Mount Olive and Pacific Hills Sanctuary Choirs under the direction of Barbara Fremder, M.M., and Omaha Brass under the direction of Joel Edwards. Everyone is invited to attend.



FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . Generosity—a Gift from God!

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)



After Sunday school, a little girl told her teacher that it was her father's birthday. She went on to say that she was giving her father a fishing lure for his birthday. The teacher asked, "Where did you get the money for such a nice gift?"

The little girl happily announced, "My daddy gave me the money." To be sure, that father would be delighted with the fishing lure from his sweet daughter, although he had paid for it. Our Father in heaven delights in the gifts we return to Him for His mission and ministry, even though He provided them all to us to give. Our generosity is the result of His generosity!

October is a time of prayerful discernment and decision making for many congregations in the Nebraska District LCMS. Churches are reviewing the mission and ministry God has entrusted to them. They are also seeking the Lord's will for how they utilize the offerings to the Lord given by their members to support this mission and ministry.

An important aspect of their considerations will be how to lovingly support the ministry of their pastor, other professional church workers, and staff with compensation and benefits. In addition, they are praying over how they will support the common services and mission of their Nebraska District and their Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Finally, many are also pondering their support for a specific missionary or project in Nebraska; for an LCMS university or seminary; or on the international mission field.

And as they do, their generosity will be the result of God's generosity in providing all things for life, as well as the sacrificial gift of His Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity unto the certainty of eternal life.

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld



CLERGY APPRECIATION MONTH . . . October is national Clergy Appreciation Month. Don't forget to show appreciation to the pastors and their families in your church, both those who are serving and those who have retired. For more information and ideas on honoring these servants of the Lord, visit www.parsonage.org/cam.

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.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL SECRETARY WORKSHOP . . .

Church and school secretaries in the District are invited to gather at Concordia University, Seward, on Tuesday, November 3, for the Church and School Secretary Workshop. This year's workshop, under the theme "Encouraged in Heart and United in Love," will be a day spent being encouraged and uniting with others under the cross of Christ, along with a time for networking, idea-sharing on newsletters and bulletins, a discussion on responding to conflict biblically, and a time to meet the District Office staff. Registration materials were mailed to church and school offices in mid-September and are available on the District website, www.ndlcms.org.



CALLED TO GLORY . . . Herman Glaess, teacher emeritus, Lincoln, departed this life on August 8. He served the Church for many years as an educator, both as a teacher in the classroom and instructor at the college level. . . . **Luella Kovac**, widow of Rev. John Kovac, Sr., Seward, was carried to Jesus' side on August 12. Prior to her marriage to Pastor Kovac, who served congregations in Pennsylvania, Kansas, and Nebraska, Luella served at Concordia Teachers College and in the mission department of the LCMS. . . . **Rev. Edwin Cook**, pastor emeritus, Lexington, was called to his heavenly home on August 31. He retired to Lexington, and over the years served seven different congregations in the area until 2004. . . . **Allard Warneke**, teacher emeritus, Juniata, received his crown of life on September 1. During his teaching ministry, he served the Nebraska schools of St. Paul, Ogallala, and Zion, Hastings.

LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKENDS . . . are planned in the area this fall and early next spring. Couples are encouraged to consider this opportunity to nurture their marriage and appreciate the blessings God gives through marriage. To learn more about these weekends, contact Dayle and Terri Mautz at 402-540-8508 or dtmautz@yahoo.com, or Vern and Karen Harrington at 712-533-6221 or giblem@frontiernet.net. Choose from the following dates and locations: October 2-4 in Omaha; November 20-22 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; February 12-14 in Lincoln; or March 5-7 in LeMars, Iowa.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY . . .

Concordia University, Nebraska admissions counselors will be traveling to high schools and college fairs across Nebraska to meet with students and answer questions about attending Concordia. Interested students are also invited to attend a scheduled Visit Day on campus to learn more. 2009 Visit Days will be October 9, November 6, and December 4. Contact the Concordia Admissions Office at 800-535-5494, ext. 7233, to plan for a visit, for more information on travel schedules, or to speak with an admissions counselor.



CPH WAREHOUSE SALE . . . Concordia Publishing House will bring its warehouse sale—the largest of the year—to the Janzow Campus Center on the campus of Concordia University, Seward. The sale is open Friday, October 23, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, October 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Excess inventory will be offered at deep discounts, including books for children and adults, teaching resources, and more.

Your Congregation's Help is Needed!

As one of 247 congregations of the Nebraska District, your congregation is an important part of the ministry taking place in Nebraska and throughout the LCMS. The Nebraska District is a **team of congregations joined in a common mission** to resource congregations, leaders, and related organizations in their mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world.

District congregations provide funds to carry out work jointly that cannot be accomplished alone. Some of these services are required by the Synod and the State of Nebraska, such as providing a superintendent for our Lutheran schools, maintaining the roster and overseeing the call process for professional church workers, and providing ecclesiastical supervision. Others are special services to assist ministries and provide guidance for church worker health, missions, fiscal responsibilities, communications, and planned giving.

Additionally, the Nebraska District Board of Directors annually submits to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod a specified portion of the congregational gifts received, regardless of the total amount. In 2008, this portion was \$1.35 million – a commitment that will be fulfilled in the same amount again in 2009.

Gifts from congregations to the Nebraska District have declined in both 2008 and 2009, making it difficult to carry out both District services and support of the Synod. *This shortfall threatens the structure for ministry at both levels.*

Congregations around the Nebraska District, as well as individual church members and professional church workers, are very generous with their designated gifts for individual missionaries, mission projects, universities and seminaries, and LCMS relief efforts. God be praised! However, undesignated congregational gifts for the District and Synod's services continue to decline.

Your congregation's help is needed! Prayers of gratitude are offered for the gifts that are being provided toward required and elective services, as well as for assisting ministries and missions. *The Synod and District call upon the congregations to prayerfully consider making gifts to the Lord to provide for the ministry work of the Synod and District.*

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld
Nebraska District President

COMING EVENTS

Circuit Counselors' Conference , St. Benedict Center, Schuyler	October 12-13
Junior High Retreat , Camp Luther, Schuyler.....	October 16-17
Teachers' Conference , Trinity, Grand Island	October 22-23
Pastors' Conference , Sandhills Convention Center, North Platte	October 26-27
Church/School Secretary Workshop , Concordia University, Seward	November 3
LLL Men's Network Retreat , Camp Luther.....	November 20-21
Synod Structure and Governance Regional Gathering , Grand Hyatt, Denver	December 4-5
Nebraska LLL Convention , Heartland Lutheran High School, Grand Island	April 9-11, 2010
School Administrators' Conference/DCE Retreat , The Leadership Center, Aurora.....	April 22-23, 2010
Synodical Convention , George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, Texas.....	July 10-17, 2010
International Lutheran Laymen's League Convention , Qwest Center, Omaha.....	July 21-25, 2010

ANNIVERSARIES

Christ, Lincoln, 60th, October 10, 18, 24, and 25. On October 10 there will be a 5:00 p.m. potluck and tour of facilities. On October 18 there will be services at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. for the dedication of new facilities. October 24 will feature an Orphan Grain Train fish feed from 4:30-6:00 p.m., with Gary Thies speaking at 6:00 p.m. Celebration services will be held on October 25 at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m., with Gary Thies speaking, followed by a mission festival.

Immanuel, Lincoln, 100th, October 18. Dr. Wallace Schulz will be the guest preacher at the 8:00 and 10:45 a.m. services, with a catered dinner to follow. Dinner reservations may be made by calling 402-474-6275 or emailing lindabeth66@yahoo.com.

St. Peter's, Humphrey, 125th, November 1. President Russ Sommerfeld will be the guest preacher at a special 2:00 p.m. anniversary service.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. David Dobbertien (FtW'96), emeritus, to interim, St. Peter, Hampton.

Rev. Aaron Pingel (StL'03), Christ, Falls City, to Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis, S.D.

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Kenton Birtell (StL'95), Mount Calvary, Holdrege, to senior, Our Redeemer, North Platte, and Peace/English, Rock Rapids, Iowa.

Rev. Luke Schnake (FtW'78), senior, Christ, Lincoln, to senior, St. Michael/Concordia University, Portland, Ore.

STATUS CHANGE

Rev. David Dobbertien (FtW'96), St. Paul, Ogallala, to emeritus, effective July 31.

Rev. Carl Groh (StL'89), St. Peter, North Bend, to emeritus, effective August 16.

Rev. Kris Rebentisch (StL'88), candidate to non-candidate, effective April 7.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Kurtis Busskohl (StL'06) as principal/religion instructor, Heartland Lutheran High School, Grand Island, August 9.

Rev. David Dobbertien (FtW'96) as interim pastor, St. Peter, Hampton, August 30.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rachel Pfothauer (S'04), teacher, Faith, Lincoln, to teacher, St. John, Ellisville, MO.

Jeffrey Schoettlin (S'02), teacher, Lutheran High School West, Rocky River, Ohio, to teacher, Lincoln Lutheran Middle & High School, Lincoln.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Carrie Carey (IV'01), non-candidate, Pacific Southwest, to non-candidate, Nebraska.

Melanie Dehning (S'81), candidate to non-candidate.

Linda Gillam (S'74), candidate, Mid-South, to candidate, Nebraska.

Mary Voelker (S'70), candidate, Texas, to candidate, Nebraska.

PLACEMENT

Frances Bailey (MQ'09), teacher, Lincoln Lutheran Middle & High School, Lincoln.

Peter Baye (S'09), teacher, Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha.

Melissa Mann (S'09), preschool teacher, Lambs of Christ, Crete.

Sarah Maxon (SCQ'09), teacher, Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha.

Mariel Nuckols (S'09), teacher, Lincoln Lutheran Middle & High School, Lincoln.

Christine Otte (S'09), DCE, Our Savior, Norfolk.

Amy Schwarting (SCQ'09), teacher, Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha.

Loren VanDenBerg (MQ'09), teacher, Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha.

Jesse Wisroth (S'09), teacher, Lincoln Lutheran Middle & High School, Lincoln.

HOW MINISTRY IS FUNDED

The following article, written by LCMS President Rev. Gerald Kieschnick, was printed in the September 2009 *President's Leadership News*, and reprinted here by permission of The Office of the President of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

With the economy in the news, it's not surprising that at conventions I often was asked about the Synod's finances. What might be surprising, though, is that our country's economic woes may have less to do with the Synod's finances than the way our national and international work is funded.

Each year about \$1.4 billion are received in the offering plates of our congregations. Of that amount, approximately 5 percent, or \$70 million, is forwarded by congregations to the 35 district offices for the work carried out through the districts and national Synod. The districts, in turn, decide how much to forward to the national office.

This year, the total pledged by the 35 district offices to the national and international work of the Synod totals some \$19 million – less than 1.5 percent of what originally was placed into the offering plates by the people of God in our congregations.

The Synod's Board of Directors allocates this \$19 million in *unrestricted* (or *undesigned*) dollars to the program boards and other agencies of the Synod for their national and international work. This fiscal year, the Board of Directors adopted a balanced budget of \$81 million. Quite obviously, the \$19 million in unrestricted monies received from Sunday-morning offerings is not nearly enough to meet this budget for our joint work of mission and ministry. This leaves a balance of \$62 million that must be raised from direct gifts.

This is why you and I, as members of LCMS congregations, receive letters and phone calls requesting direct, *designated* gifts for the work of the Synod's program boards (e.g., for missions and human care). Similar requests are received on behalf of our seminaries, universities, and other underfunded ministries.

A related question I often receive is why the Synod through its national budget does not fully fund our seminaries and universities. The hard facts are that the combined budgets of our seminaries alone total \$36 million. With only \$19 million in total *undesigned* funds, simple math tells us that even if *all* of the *undesigned* dollars forwarded to the Synod were to be given to the seminaries, these dollars would fund only about half of their budgetary needs. And, there would be nothing left for any of the other work assigned by the congregations of the Synod to our other agencies and ministries.



Leaving the Synod's boards, officers, and other agencies with no option but to generate their own financial support is an obvious shift from the way the Synod funded its ministries in the past. In 1973, for example, the Synod received \$24 million in *undesigned* gifts for its collective work. Adjusted for inflation, the \$19 million received today is the equivalent of only about \$5 million in 1973 dollars. The *undesigned* financial support received this way just does not begin to accomplish as much today as it did in the past.

What's more, some of our congregations give nothing to support mission and ministry on the district and national levels – not one thin dime! In some cases, most congregation members are not even aware of this fact. In other cases, congregation members and pastors state various reasons for this non-support. But as members of the Synod, these congregations have the same rights and privileges—for example, voting at conventions and calling church workers trained at our schools—as congregations that do contribute to our joint work.

Along with rights and privileges come duties and responsibilities, one of which is to support the organization to which one belongs. This is true of every organization of which one is a part. It is true also in our Synod. If you are a member of a congregation that is not contributing to the joint work of our district and national Synod, I invite you fraternally and evangelically, prayerfully and carefully, to reconsider this decision. We truly can do more together than we can apart.

That said, I do thank sincerely all who are faithful in their support of the national and international work we do together in the LCMS.

During these difficult economic times and in the days ahead, we continue to rely on our gracious God to provide for the work of His kingdom. I give thanks to God for your partnership in His ministry of reconciliation of the world through Christ and for our role as His ambassadors of that reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

Nebraska District Ministry Dollars

Received from Congregations

Fiscal year ending
January 31, 2009 \$2,752,946

Current fiscal year
(6 months) \$1,190,827

Committed to Synod

Fiscal year ending
January 31, 2009 \$1,350,000

Current fiscal year
(6 months) \$613,512