



# Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



Information of Interest for Lutherans in the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod  
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February 2010

## CONGREGATION STATISTICAL REPORTS . . .

Congregation statistical reports have been mailed out and are to be returned by February 28. Please make two copies of the completed form, mail the original to St. Louis, and mail a copy to the District Office. If you have not already done so, please complete and submit this form immediately to keep District and Synod records up to date. Contact Kim Hofer at the District Office at [kimh@ndlcms.org](mailto:kimh@ndlcms.org) or 888-643-2961 with any questions.



## NEBRASKA LLL CONVENTION . . .

The Nebraska District LLL Convention will be held April 9-11 at Heartland Lutheran High School in Grand Island. Mick Onnen, president of the International Lutheran Laymen's League and member of St. Peter in Davenport, will speak on Friday night, while new LLL executive director Bruce Wurdeman will be there throughout the weekend to share the future plans of Lutheran Hour Ministries. Registration information will be made available in the Winter 2010 *Nebraska Lutheran Layman*.

## ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE ALUMNI DESCENDANT SCHOLARSHIPS . . .

Financial aid is available from the St. John's College Alumni Association for students attending one of the colleges, universities, or seminaries of the LCMS who are direct descendants of an alumnus of St. John's College, Winfield, Kansas. Scholarship guidelines and application forms are available at [www.stjohnsalumni.org](http://www.stjohnsalumni.org) and applications will be accepted until April 1, 2010. Contact the Alumni Association Office at 620-221-1572 or [sjcaa1@cox.net](mailto:sjcaa1@cox.net) with questions or for more information.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

### Renewed Minds – Transformed Lives

*"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."* (Philippians 4:8)

American author and humorist Mark Twain once remarked, "What a wee little part of a person's life are his acts and his words! His real life is led in his head, and is known to none but himself. All day long, the mill of his brain is grinding, and his thoughts, not those other things, are his history."

The daily battle of human life is fought in the war for the mind. Satan and the world want to control our thoughts. God calls to us to fill our thoughts with what is **true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy**. What occupies your thoughts? If you could put a meter on your mind to measure repeated thoughts, what thoughts would come in first, second, and third?

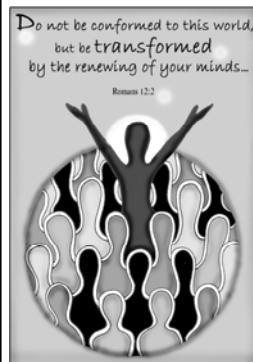
I have always been intrigued by the phrase that we so often use, "I have changed my mind." It almost sounds like we removed our brain and replaced it with another. I am even more fascinated with what God the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the Roman Christians: *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* (Romans 12:2a)

God is telling us that He can change our minds. Our lives are transformed by the renewing of our minds. And God does the renewing. Our thoughts are renewed when they are filled with His **truth** from His Word in the flesh of Jesus, His **noble** actions of mercy in Jesus, His **righteousness** given to us by the righteous life of Jesus, His **purity** in the perfect life Jesus lived to cover our imperfect lives, His **lovely** undeserved love in Jesus, His **admirable** reputation of forgiveness from Jesus, His **excellence** in the salvation provided by Jesus, and His **praiseworthiness** for His eternal plan of rescue by Jesus.

It is Jesus who renews our minds and thereby transforms our lives. Jesus wins the war of the minds and gives us gracious thoughts in spite of the evil and injustices we experience.

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld

WHATEVER IS *true.*  
WHATEVER IS *honorable.*  
WHATEVER IS *just.*  
WHATEVER IS *pure...*  
IF THERE IS ANYTHING  
*worthy of praise.*  
THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS.  
PHILIPPIANS 4:8, NRSV



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.

**BOARD SUMMARY** . . . The Nebraska District Board of Directors took the following action at its December 11 meeting:

- Approved constitution and bylaw revisions for the following congregations: The Rock, Seward; Trinity, Madison; Faith, Hastings; and Zion, Harbine.
- Accepted the action taken by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Nebraska Program for Messiah, Lincoln, and Mount Calvary, Omaha.
- Affirmed the housing allowance resolution for Minister of the Gospel employees of the Nebraska District.
- Ratified the 2010 District participation plan for Concordia Health Plans worker choice options.
- Authorized the lease of the District-owned property at 44<sup>th</sup> Street and Grover in Omaha (formerly Zion+Peace Lutheran Church) to Beautiful Savior, LaVista, to initiate a satellite ministry.
- Approved a 2010 capital budget of \$45,100.
- Approved the 2010 Nebraska District mission and ministry operating expense budget of \$3,979,610, a reduction of \$292,569 from the 2009 budget. Reductions included no staff compensation increases, reduction of three full-time District staff to part-time, and reduction of Synod support by \$138,000.
- Approved a District-wide appeal for gifts by Issues, Etc. Radio in May 2010 to fulfill the 2009 District Convention resolution to encourage District congregations to consider financial and other support for this program.
- Considered the New Mission Start Committee recommendations for grant funding for Lamb of God, Omaha, and Word of Life, Lincoln, and provided reduced new mission grant support in accordance with the decreased financial support from District congregations.
- Conducted board development in-service on Synod and state-required service, elective ministry services, and District partnerships.

**SYNODICAL CONVENTION VOTING DELEGATES** . . . The following have been named as voting delegates from the Nebraska District circuits to the Synodical Convention in July:

**AINSWORTH:** Rev. Georg Williams, Ainsworth; Paul Carlson, O'Neill

**BEATRICE:** Rev. Timothy Wagner, Beatrice; Peggy Beyer, Daykin

**COLUMBUS:** Rev. Patrick Sparling, Columbus; Andrew Stadler, Columbus

**DESHLER:** Rev. B.J. Fouts, Hebron; Marvin Baden, Deshler

**FALLS CITY:** Rev. Jon Rathjen, Auburn; David Knorr, Humboldt

**FREMONT:** Rev. Timothy Gierke, Fremont; Ron Hilgenkamp, Arlington

**GRAND ISLAND:** Rev. Craig Niemeier, St. Libory; Dorian Watt, Wood River

**HASTINGS:** Rev. Gregory Volzke, Juniata; Loren Uden, Hastings

**HOLDREGE:** Rev. Jeff Ernstmeyer, Elwood; Verle Hennings, Funk

**KEARNEY:** Rev. Michael Gruhn, Lexington; Harvey Shrader, Ravenna

**LINCOLN NORTH:** Rev. Craig Whitson, Malcolm; Bruce Ritter, Lincoln

**LINCOLN SOUTH:** Rev. Jeffrey Bloom, Lincoln; Matt Phillips, Lincoln

**MCCOOK:** Rev. Greg Stuckwisch, Wauneta; Don Banks, Imperial

**NORFOLK:** Rev. Michael Awe, Tilden; Kent Warneke, Norfolk

**OMAHA NORTH:** Rev. Roland Jank, Jr., Omaha; Donald Werner, Omaha

**OMAHA SOUTH:** Rev. Karl Ziegler, Bellevue; Ron Coleman, Bellevue

**OMAHA WEST:** Rev. Mark Hannemann, Omaha; Steven Trusty, Council Bluffs

**PLAINVIEW:** Rev. David Kuhfal, Neligh; Kevin Fry, Ewing

**SEWARD:** Rev. Richard Harre, Garland; Rodney Hiebenthal, Milford

**WAYNE:** Rev. Terry Kenitz, Ponca; Warren Cook, Wayne

**WEST POINT:** Rev. Philip Hale, Bancroft; Ron Butterfield, Stanton

**WESTERN SANDHILLS:** Rev. Jon Dickmader, Brule; Glenn Van Velson, North Platte

**YORK:** Rev. Kurt Letcher, Polk; Gilbert Naber, Waco

**Non-voting delegates include:**

Nebraska District President: Rev. Russ Sommerfeld, Seward

Official District Staff Representative: Rev. Mark Rockenbach, Seward

District Board of Directors: Virginia Von Seggern, Orchard

Concordia University President: Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, Seward

Concordia Faculty Representative: Dr. Andrew Langewisch, Seward

Concordia Board of Regents: Fred Ohlde, Hortonville, Wis.

Advisory Ordained Minister Delegate: Rev. James Hoke, Lincoln

Advisory Commissioned Minister Delegates: Don Bader, Omaha; Robert Brauer, Utica;

Merv Dehning, Lincoln; Paul Leckband, Norfolk.



#### 2010 SYNODICAL CONVENTION

Delegates will meet in convention July 10-17 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston under the theme **“One People: Forgiven.”**

The convention, which serves as the principal legislative assembly for the church body, offers the opportunity for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information for delegates and visitors.

Delegates will spend the first two business days of the convention determining which of the proposals from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance will best prepare the LCMS to carry out its mission in the years ahead.

## FAITH AND WITNESS COURSE IN GREATER OMAHA

... *Growing in Faith and Witness*, a class of the Nebraska District Lay Leadership Training Program, will be offered at Beautiful Savior, LaVista, on February 13 and 27, March 13 and 27. Instructors are: Pastor William Moorhead, Pacific Hills, Omaha; Pastor Tim Heupel, Beautiful Savior, LaVista; Director of Outreach Vern Nemitz, Divine Shepherd, Omaha; and evangelist/church planter Jerry Steger, 1C, Columbus. For more information, contact Marvin Bergman at [marv.bergman@cune.edu](mailto:marv.bergman@cune.edu) or 402-643-3724.



## COMING EVENTS

<b>Blessed Are the Peacemakers Seminar</b> , Zion, Imperial .....	February 6
<b>Blessed Are the Peacemakers Seminar</b> , Trinity, Auburn .....	February 13
<b>Blessed Are the Peacemakers Seminar</b> , St. Paul, Utica .....	February 20
<b>Blessed Are the Peacemakers Seminar</b> , Holy Savior, Lincoln.....	March 20
<b>Nebraska LLL Convention</b> , Heartland Lutheran High School, Grand Island.....	April 9-11
<b>Spring Pastors' Conference</b> , Holiday Inn, Lincoln .....	April 19-21
<b>School Administrators' Conference/DCE Retreat</b> , The Leadership Center, Aurora.....	April 22-23
<b>LWML North District Convention</b> , King of Kings, Omaha .....	June 4-5
<b>Synodical Convention</b> , George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, Texas.....	July 10-17
<b>International Lutheran Laymen's League Convention</b> , Qwest Center, Omaha.....	July 21-25
<b>Prairie Fire</b> , Qwest Center, Omaha.....	July 24
<b>LWML South District Convention</b> , Ramada Inn, Kearney .....	September 24-25
<b>Teachers' Conference</b> , Christ Lutheran School and Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk.....	October 21-22
<b>Reconciler Training</b> , The Leadership Center, Aurora.....	November 7-13

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Zion, Shelton**, 125<sup>th</sup>, June 13. There will be a 10:00 a.m. worship service and 2:00 p.m. anniversary program.  
**St. John, Oxford**, 125<sup>th</sup>, August 15. There will be a morning service followed by lunch and afternoon program.

## CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

### COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

#### CALLS ACCEPTED

**Don Bader** (S'76), candidate to "LivingH2O" Lutheran Campus Ministry Coordinator, Pacific Hills, Omaha.

#### OTHER TRANSACTIONS

**Mindy Irvine** (SCQ'07), candidate, Southeastern District, to non-candidate, Nebraska District.

### ORDAINED MINISTERS

#### CALLS ACCEPTED

**Rev. Duane Duley** (FtW'80), Zion, Rapid City, S.D., to senior, Holy Cross, Kearney.

**Rev. Paul Dunbar** (StL'01), associate, Faith, Hastings, to senior, Faith, Hastings.

**Rev. Marcel Kohlmeyer** (StL'05), St. Paul, Ireton, Iowa, to St. Peter, Orchard.

**Rev. Michael Meyer** (StL'06), associate, Trinity, Fremont, to The Rock, Seward.

**Rev. Paul Warneke** (FtW'96), St. John, Curtis, to Zion, Hastings.

**Rev. Aaron Witt** (StL'00), Zion, McHenry, Ill., to Christ, Columbus.

#### CALLS DECLINED

**Rev. Clint Poppe** (StL'98), senior, Good Shepherd, Lincoln, to Trinity, Colby, Kan.

**Rev. Benjamin Squires** (StL'00), associate, Immanuel, Brookfield, Wisc., to associate, Peace, Columbus.

**Rev. Duane Voorman** (FtW'83), senior, Trinity, Lincoln, to St. Peter, Middleburg, Fla.

#### STATUS CHANGE

**Rev. Wade Mattsfield** (StL'99), St. John (Kramer), Crete, to candidate status effective November 23, 2009.

#### ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

**Rev. Paul Dunbar** (StL'01) as senior pastor, Faith, Hastings, January 3.

# WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The Nebraska District will begin a new fiscal year on February 1 with a reduced mission and ministry budget due to declining offerings from the congregations. This means available funds to provide services to congregations and schools are limited.

The Nebraska District Board of Directors will meet for a planning retreat March 5-6 to discuss and re-examine the District's strategic plan, along with mission and ministry goals. To aid with this planning, everyone in the District is encouraged to complete the following survey. Your input will indicate the services you are looking to the District Office to provide and will help the Board allocate the limited financial resources in order to serve the congregations and schools in the best possible way.

Please complete this survey and mail to the District Office at PO Box 407, Seward, NE, 68434 by Monday, March 1, or complete the survey online on the District website at [www.ndlcms.org](http://www.ndlcms.org). Thank you for your time and your input.

I am a:  lay member  
 church worker

The following resources and ministries are currently offered through the Nebraska District Office. Check all those you feel should continue to be offered during 2010. Please make any comments you feel would be helpful.

- Ablaze! resources and contact information
- African immigrant ministry
- Help with the calling process (pastor/teacher/DCE, etc.)
- Campus ministry
- Church worker care and counseling (personal/family/ministry)
- Church worker difficulties consultation
- Conferences and workshops
- Conflict resolution (reconciliation) assistance/mediation
- Congregational difficulties consultation
- Endowment fund development/guidance
- Financial/Benefit advice
- Fiscal conferences
- Gift planning/estate planning services
- Guest speaker/preacher (mission festivals/staff in-service, etc.)
- Lay leadership education
- LCEF loan/investment opportunities
- LCEF services
- Mission trip scholarships
- Native American ministry
- New mission start facilitation
- Outreach/Mission resources or ideas
- Parish education resources (Sunday/weekday school, vacation Bible school, Bible studies, small group, Confirmation)
- District publications (print/email/website)
- Reconciliation training
- Resources from LCMS World Mission on missionaries/mission service opportunities
- Revitalization for congregations
- Sandhills ministry support
- Scholarships/Student aid for church worker students
- Oversight/Resources for Lutheran schools
- Biblical stewardship resources
- Support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan
- Youth ministry

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please rate the five areas you feel are most important in support of the ministry of your congregation.

- Ablaze! resources and contact information
- African immigrant ministry
- Help with the calling process (pastor/teacher/DCE, etc.)
- Campus ministry
- Church worker care and counseling (personal/family/ministry)
- Church worker difficulties consultation
- Conferences and workshops
- Conflict resolution (reconciliation) assistance/mediation
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- LCEF loan/investment opportunities
- LCEF services
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- Native American ministry
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What other ministry resources would you like to see the Nebraska District offer your congregation?

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Other Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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