



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



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

DID YOU KNOW? . . . The Nebraska District is not a building, but 247 congregations joined together in one mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world. **YOU** are part of the Nebraska District, and your congregation supports ministry in the District through its mission and ministry gifts, as well as individual gifts. Please prayerfully consider your congregation's participation in this new year. Find more about the ministry at www.ndlcms.org.



GRACE PLACE LUTHERAN RETREATS . . .

Grace Place Lutheran Retreats is a recognized service organization of the LCMS. The goal of Grace Place Lutheran Retreats is to offer preventative wellness skills, attitudes, and resources to professional church workers and their spouses, so they can experience and live the abundant lives to which Jesus called them. Various donors generously support Grace Place and its ministry, which keeps the costs down for attendees. Congregations are encouraged to consider sending one or more church workers to be refreshed and renewed in ministry this year. For more information, contact Grace Place Lutheran Retreats at 314-842-3077 or visit www.graceplaceretreats.org.



Pastors/Educators

June 21-25 — Snowmass, Colo.
(registration: \$360)

Pastors/Educators

July 26-30 — Trego, Wis.
(registration: \$225 if Thrivent member)

Single Clergy/Educators

September 1-5 — Snowmass, Colo.
(registration: \$360)

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

Receiving More Than We Give!

Have you ever given a gift and received more than you gave? The Wise Men did!

"When they [the Magi] saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh." Matthew 2:10-11



At Christmas we sing of the shepherds from the hills around Bethlehem running through the darkness to see the newborn Jesus. An angel announced His birth to them, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:11-12)

On January 6 we sing of mysterious Magi who came to adore the child Jesus. Much of what is associated with the Magi is from early church traditions. Many have assumed there were three, since they brought three gifts, but the Bible doesn't number them. They are called Magi from the Latinized form of the Greek word "magoi," brought from the Persian language into English.

By the 3rd century they were viewed as three kings. By the 6th century they were given names: Bithisarea, Melichior, and Gathaspa. A 14th century Armenian tradition identified them as Balthasar, King of Arabia; Melchior, King of Persia; and Gaspar, King of India.

What do we really know of the Magi? And more importantly, what does the visit of the Magi to the child Jesus mean for us? We know they were men from the east who saw signs in the stars. Their journey was one of trust that they would find a newborn king. And God led them by a star not to a palace, but a house. There Mary nestled the King in her arms. They fell to their knees with precious gifts fit for royalty.

The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh seem to predict the future for the child Jesus, speaking of His offices of king, priest, and savior. Gold speaks of His kingship; frankincense was a spice used in the priestly duties; and myrrh was an embalming ointment anticipating His death. The Magi would receive more than they gave. Jesus is the King who offers His very life as the sacrifice for all people from every culture, tribe, and language. So, we, too, bow before Him and receive His gifts of life, salvation, and eternity.



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.

FINANCIAL AID FOR NEBRASKA STUDENTS . . . Nebraska

District financial support is available to anyone preparing for full-time service in the church. Applicants must be enrolled at a Concordia University System school or Concordia Seminary at Fort Wayne or St. Louis, demonstrate financial need, and have completed their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The Concordia University System consists of the 10 LCMS-operated universities located in Ann Arbor, Mich.; Austin, Texas; Bronxville, N.Y.; Irvine, Calif.; Mequon, Wis.; Portland, Ore.; River Forest, Ill.; St. Paul, Minn.; Selma, Ala.; and Seward, Neb. Application forms may be printed from the District website at www.ndlcms.org/education/education/aid.html or requested from the universities and seminaries. The deadline for completing the application process is **May 1** for the first semester and **December 1** for the second semester. **Only one application is needed per academic year.**

Other Scholarships . . . The LWML North provides scholarships for students preparing for careers in full-time church work on the basis of residence in the LWML North region, financial need, and full-time enrollment in the Concordia Education System. The Nebraska District Student Aid Committee administers these grants, and the application is the same as the District Aid Application Form. Forms may be obtained from the District website at www.ndlcms.org/education/education/aid.html or from the financial aid offices of the universities and seminaries, with **May 1** and **December 1** deadlines.

The **LWML South** offers assistance to students from the LWML South region who are going into full-time church work. Information and applications may be obtained from the student's local LWML society, at www.lwmlnesouth.org, or from Elaine Royuk; 334 N 1st St.; Seward, NE 68434 or 402-646-9024. Completed applications are due **June 3**.

The Nebraska District Lutheran Laymen's League (**LLL**) is again providing scholarships for students studying for full-time church work, including pastor, DCE, DCM, deaconess, liturgical arts, and education. Applicants for the 2010-2011 school year are now available. For applications contact: Dr. Marvin Swan; PO Box 863; Grant, NE 69140, mmswan@gpcom.net, or 308-352-6504. Application deadline is **May 22**.

The **Gil and Blondie Vogt Scholarship Fund** is designed to assist Nebraska students preparing for LCMS church vocations at any LCMS university or seminary. Requests for information or applications should be sent to Pat Hofer at hofpat@gmail.com or 402-334-0320. Application deadline is **April 15**.

LCEF NAMES NEW PRESIDENT . . . Richard Robertson of Peachtree City, Georgia, will succeed Merle Freitag as president of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) beginning January 14. Active in his own congregation, home district, and LCEF on a national level, Robertson brings experience and commitment to his new position in support of the LCEF mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a servant partner of the LCMS, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future.



ATTENTION UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL ALUMNI! . . .

The University Lutheran Chapel continues its ministry to students on the UNL campus, and alumni can be an important part of that ministry. The Chapel staff wants to know where alumni are in order to share with them how God is touching students' lives. Please email the chapel at alumni@lutheranchapel.org with your name and address. Watch for more information on the ministry of the Chapel to be shared through upcoming alumni newsletters, and keep this important ministry in your prayers. Visit www.lutheranchapel.org to learn more.



WHAT A WAY . . . The *What A Way* initiative of the LCMS focuses on three areas of church work – **encouraging** others with special gifts to pursue or continue in church work, **exploring** more information about church work careers and ways to serve God in the church, and **embracing** the call of church work while remaining happy and healthy. Resources are available in each of these areas, many without charge. Visit the *What A Way* website at www.whataway.org for more information.

AT EASE . . . Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) has developed a new program to offer quality behavioral health services that focus on the needs of individuals who serve our country in the armed forces. *At Ease* is a trauma treatment and therapeutic support program that serves active military, veterans, and their loved ones affected by untreated trauma reactions and post-traumatic stress disorder. The program places emphasis on helping military personnel and their loved ones cope with the effects of deployment and the uncertainty of war. For more information, to receive a brochure, or to make referrals, call the LFS Bellevue location at 402-292-9105 or email AtEase@lfsneb.org. LFS is a recognized service organization of the LCMS and its services are supported in part by the congregations of the Nebraska District LCMS.

LUTHERAN BOWLING TOURNAMENT . . .

The 61st Annual Lutheran Bowling Tournament sponsored by the Nebraska Lutheran Laymen's League will be held weekends in February and March at Blue Valley Bowl in Hebron. Hosted by Trinity, Hebron, this bowling tournament is open to all Lutherans. Bowlers interested in participating should call Dale Klaumann at 402-768-6689.



COMING EVENTS

Nebraska LLL Convention, Heartland Lutheran High School, Grand Island April 9-11
Spring Pastors' Conference, Holiday Inn, Lincoln April 19-21
School Administrators' Conference/DCE Retreat, The Leadership Center, Aurora April 22-23
LWML North District Convention, King of Kings, Omaha June 4-5
Synodical Convention, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, Texas July 10-17
International Lutheran Laymen's League Convention, Qwest Center, Omaha July 21-25
Teachers' Conference, Christ Lutheran School and Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk October 21-22

ANNIVERSARIES

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

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED (correction)

Stacy Leimbach (S'96), non-candidate status, to teacher, Trinity Lutheran School, Lincoln.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Jana Inglehart (SCQ'01), teacher, Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Preschool, Winnebago, to candidate status.

PRAIRIE FIRE 2010 . . . *Prairie Fire 2010* will be held on **Saturday, July 24**, in conjunction with the International Lutheran Laymen's League Convention at the Qwest Center in Omaha. More information on this very special opportunity will be made available in the months ahead through the *Reporter* and the District website, www.ndlcms.org.



ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Timothy Marshall (StL'97), associate, Emmanuel, York, to associate, Woodbury, Woodbury, Minn.

Rev. Rick Mensing (StL'83), Ascension, Tucson, Ariz., to senior, Messiah, Lincoln.

Rev. Robert Wiest (StL'04), Our Redeemer, Staplehurst, to senior, Our Redeemer, North Platte.

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Randal Jeppesen (FtW'88), Trinity, Medford, and Trinity, Chelsea, Wis., to St. Peter, Orchard.

Rev. Andrew Wehling (StL'93), Grace, Liberal, Kan., to Trinity, Madison.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Tim Lawson (StL'06) as associate pastor, Divine Shepherd, Omaha, November 22.

LEARN TO LIVE A LIFESTYLE OF RECONCILIATION

Due to sinful human nature, conflict can occur between family, friends, co-workers, and even people at church. The Nebraska District is offering two opportunities for anyone to learn more about biblical reconciliation practices. A day-long Peacemaker Seminar is a great introduction to reconciliation ministry. The week-long training will build upon the techniques and practices learned in the one-day seminar. Contact the Nebraska District Office at 888-643-2961 or visit www.ndlcms.org for registration forms or for more information.

PEACEMAKER SEMINARS SCHEDULED . . . A day-long "Blessed Are the Peacemakers" seminar will present how God's ministry of reconciliation is meant to be lived in every day life. Everyone is invited to attend one of the upcoming seminars to learn practical ways to practice personal peacemaking in family, business, and church. Zion, Imperial, will host the first workshop in 2010 on Saturday, February 6, with registrations due January 22. Seminars are also planned in Auburn, Grand Island, Lincoln, North Platte, Omaha, Seward, Tilden, and Utica, with dates coming soon.

RECONCILER TRAINING . . . The Nebraska District, in partnership with Ambassadors of Reconciliation (AOR), is offering Church Reconciler Training in 2010. This training will equip pastors and laity to apply biblical approaches to conflict. Participants will learn reconciler techniques such as coaching, mediating, arbitrating, and setting up their own congregational reconciling ministry. This training will help establish lifestyles of reconciliation that will give God glory within the church and community. The registration fee includes professional instructors from AOR, six nights' lodging, meals, and program materials. Participants attend a full week of training at The Leadership Center in Aurora beginning on November 7 with dinner and concluding at 11:30 a.m. on November 13. Grants are available to registrants from Nebraska District congregations on a first-come, first-serve basis.

WALKING TOGETHER LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

A SHARED MINISTRY OF OMAHA LCMS CONGREGATIONS

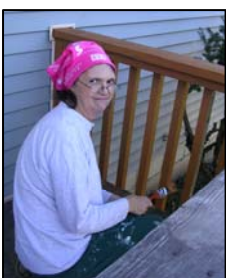
Walking Together Lutheran Ministries (WTLM), a shared ministry of Omaha LCMS congregations, has as its goal coordinating projects and ministries of outreach and human care among the congregations of Omaha, including outreach to ethnic groups and service to the economically disadvantaged. **Walking Together Lutheran Ministries** sponsored its first two service events in the metro area on Saturday and Sunday, November 7 and 8.

On Saturday, November 7, volunteers gathered to assist in a project to help repair the home of a disabled pastor, the Rev. Steven Herfkens, with materials furnished through the Omaha branches of Thrivent. Paul Heitman from Lastime Roofing Company did the “on the roof” work. A big thank you is due to this Christian roofer for his services. Volunteers helped with “on the ground” projects such as disposing of shingles, staining the front porch, working on the garage, and constructing a dam in the driveway to divert rain water from entering the garage.



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“Rake It Out” was a project to recruit volunteers to rake leaves from the yards of elderly and disabled persons. Homes that needed raking were provided both from the shut-in lists of congregations and from the City of Omaha. Volunteers gathered for a devotional send-off on Sunday, November 8, at St. Mark, Omaha. Volunteers represented 16 congregations, the Tree of Life Center, and Living H₂O Campus Ministry. More than 400 volunteers went to over 140 homes, where they raked and bagged leaves. Each resident was presented with a large print Bible, a pamphlet with a Gospel presentation, and a certificate that could be redeemed for a free “Children’s Bible” for a child or children that need to know about Jesus. Again, Thrivent participated by furnishing the leaf bags.



Another on-going program developed by **Walking Together Lutheran Ministries** provides English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, computer familiarization classes, and citizenship preparation classes at the Tree of Life Center, 40th and Q Streets, in Omaha. Several

hundred people have participated in the ESL classes, and more than a half-dozen individuals have become U.S. citizens after completing the citizenship preparation classes. As time goes on, WTLM hopes to expand these classes to other parts of the city, and add classes in other areas of concern and interest to those newly arriving in the United States, including financial management and other practical courses. In all of these courses, there is a Christian witness component.



A “Ministry Plan Task Force” with representatives from the LCMS congregations has been meeting to suggest other programs of outreach and human care to the Board of Directors. In the near future, these ideas will be implemented. One very exciting idea is for WTLM to sponsor an evening at an Omaha Royals baseball game. There will be opportunity for Christian witness from the players, as well as a Christian concert at the conclusion of the game. The intent will be for LCMS church members to invite their unchurched friends and neighbors to this game.

The Lord is using the partnership between these Omaha congregations and members to carry His Gospel to the people in the Omaha communities. Please remember this new ministry in your prayers. To volunteer, contact the WTLM office at the number below.

Walking Together Lutheran Ministries has incorporated with the State of Nebraska, is in the process of applying for its 501(c)(3) (non-profit) status with the Internal Revenue Service, and plans to become a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS.

Offices are at Cross Lutheran Church in Omaha. The mailing address is PO Box 9082, Omaha, NE 68109-0082, and the phone number is 402-345-1037.

Eleven LCMS members serving as the initial Board of Directors are:

- Don Bader (Pacific Hills/H₂O Living Water)
- Rev. Stephen Bartelt (Zion)
- Sandy Hannemann (Divine Shepherd)
- Vern Nemitz (Divine Shepherd)
- Paul Pettit (Nebraska District)
- Rev. Wendell Stavig (St. John)
- Jennifer Stoner (Pilgrim)
- Donna Taylor (Bethany)
- Carol Williams (Beautiful Savior)
- Doug Wilshusen (Zion)
- Scott Wollberg (Beautiful Savior)