



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



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

TOP TEN REASONS TO ATTEND DISASTER VOLUNTEER CERTIFICATION TRAINING . . .

1. It will be required by 2011
2. Be trained by the best
3. Become part of a special team
4. Great, homemade food
5. Christmas at Concordia
6. It's so rewarding
7. Local training location is easy to find
8. Get connected to serve better
9. Reasonable registration fee of \$10
10. Meet your state disaster response coordinators

Everyone is invited to be trained as a certified disaster volunteer at this one-day training seminar on December 4 in Seward. Registrations were mailed to every church office or may be printed from the Nebraska District website at www.ndlcms.org. The registration deadline is November 15. Contact Nichole Hetz at 888-643-2961 or nicholeh@ndlcms.org for more information.



WORSHIP CONFERENCE. . . The Nebraska District will host a "Theological Conference on Worship" for pastors, commissioned workers, and lay leaders February 24-26, 2011, at the Younes Conference Centre in Kearney. Pastors will meet for the Spring Pastors' Conference beginning on Thursday, February 24. Those attending only the worship conference will join them at noon on Friday, February 25, with the group meeting together until noon on Saturday, February 26.



Registration materials will be mailed to church offices and made available electronically in early January of 2011. Contact Nichole Hetz for more information at 888-643-2961 or nicholeh@ndlcms.org.

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . . R & R

As Mary Lou and Wanda sat down for their weekly cup of coffee, Wanda started the conversation by saying, "I am certainly enjoying the emphasis on biblical peacemaking at church. Using confession and forgiveness has brought a new calm to my family."

Mary Lou responded, "Pastor's sermons and the conversations about biblical peacemaking at our women's Bible study and education board meeting have sure changed how we relate to each other as Christians."

"Hey, Tom, do you have some time to help me Saturday morning?" asked Jim.

"What do you need?" Tom replied.

"We are doing free oil changes for widows in town at the church parking lot, and the ladies are hosting coffee and rolls. Pastor is offering a devotional. The guys at the parts store are donating oil and filters. This is part of our church's emphasis on serving the community."

"Sure, I can help, Jim."

"Great! We will gather for prayer before we start at 8:30 a.m."

Reconciliation and Revitalization, or "**R & R**" are going into motion among churches around the Nebraska District of the LCMS. In a world where conflict is too easily avoided, begrudged, or turned into litigation, we Christians have the opportunity to use the Word of God to reconcile through biblical peacemaking. After all, "*...this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Our churches also have the privilege of being servants in their communities by displaying the compassion of Christ and speaking of the salvation and life He gives through His life, death, and resurrection. We can have the joy of being revitalized by the Lord in our servant roles in the community. Jesus said, "*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*" (Matthew 5:14-16)

Your Nebraska District staff cherishes opportunities of assisting congregations, schools, missions, and ministries in "**R & R**."

Reconciliation and Revitalization have become the focal points of "resourcing" by your District staff. God bless your participation in "**R & R**."

Rev. Russ Sommerfeld

Therefore, if anyone is in
CHRIST
any one
he is a new
CREATION
the old has gone, the new has
COME!
Christ
2 Corinthians 5:17



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.

SEMINARY REPRESENTATIVE TO VISIT NEBRASKA . . .

Rev. Kyle Castens, admissions director for Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is visiting the Nebraska District to meet with prospective students and their family members as they seek to learn more about seminary preparation and the Concordia Seminary community. Contact each location for more information, or contact Rev. Castens directly at the seminary admissions office at 314-505-7224 or castensk@csl.edu.



November 1, 4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, Waverly - 402-786-2345

November 2, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

King of Kings Lutheran Church, Omaha - 402-333-6464

November 2, 4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Christ Lutheran Church, Norfolk - 402-371-1210

November 3, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Columbus - 402-564-0502

November 3, 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.

November 4, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Concordia University, Seward - 402-643-3651

November 4, 4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Messiah Lutheran Church, Lincoln - 402-489-3024

November 5, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Lincoln Lutheran High School, Lincoln - 402-467-5404

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW CHRISTIANS CAN RESPOND TO ISLAM? . . .

Concordia Publishing House provides multiple resources to assist in better understanding the Christian perspective on Islam. Visit www.cph.org and search for "Islam" to find books, Bible studies, and DVD resources that cover the Islamic faith, Muslims, and other related topics. Materials may also be ordered by calling 800-325-3040.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

INGATHERING . . . will be November 1-5 in Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln, North Platte, Norfolk, Omaha, Scottsbluff, and Sidney from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Accepted items are quilts and blankets, school kits, health kits, sewing kits, cotton or cotton blend fabrics, layettes, and wrapped bars of new soap. 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. More information, including drop-off location addresses, is available at <http://www.lwr.org/beinvolved/pack.asp>, or contact Stephanie Lusienki at stephanie@nebraskasynod.org or 402-896-5311.

CONGREGATIONS RECEIVE BALLOTS FOR AMENDMENTS . . .

The official ballots for two proposed amendments to the constitution of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod were mailed to LCMS congregations September 15. The amendments were adopted by delegates to the Synod's 64th Regular Convention, but to take effect the amendments must be approved by two-thirds of LCMS congregations. The deadline for all ballots to be received in the office of the LCMS secretary is March 15, 2011.

JOURNEY
Romans 8:35-39
Nebraska/Iowa West District Gathering 2011

Plan soon... Text friends... Be there
...for students in 9th-12th grade, 2011

JOURNEY
Nov. 18-20, 2011
Embassy Suites, La Vista, NE
Registration \$115/person
Rooms \$115/4-persons

<http://www.NEYOUTH.org>

Rev. Bill Yonker - keynote speaker
Arden James - Illusionist
z11Band - Gathering Band

News items and ministry stories for the Reporter are always welcome. The deadline for submission for the December 2010 Reporter is **Monday, November 1**. Please submit items to Reporter@ndlcms.org or PO Box 407, Seward, NE 68434.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE . . .

LCEF has begun a new partnership with MissionInsite to bring congregations the next generation of demographic tools that combine updated census data, marketing research data, and religious data to give you a complete and comprehensive look at the people in your community. MissionInsite offers user-ready reports containing comprehensive data for population, households, and families in the study area, as well as age, income, ethnicity, generational, and lifestyle information. To learn more, contact the Nebraska District LCEF office at 888-643-2961.



DISTRICT FINANCIAL AID DEADLINE . . .



The deadline for students to apply for Nebraska District financial aid for the second semester of the 2010-2011 school year is December 1, 2010. This deadline is for new applications and for those who did not apply prior to the May 1, 2010, deadline. The deadline for the first semester of the 2011-2012 school year will be May 1, 2011. Guidelines and applications are available on the District website at www.ndlcms.org/education/education/aid.html.

LIVING THE CHOCOLATE LIFE . . . is the theme of the Women's Weekend Retreat on November 12-13 at Camp Luther, Schuyler. Led by Deb Burma, Christian speaker and author, participants will discover that no matter the "flavor" of their days, they can savor the rich "indulgence" of God's endless supply of grace in Christ. Contact the Camp Luther office at 402-352-5655 for more information or to register.



COMING EVENTS

- Reconciler Training**, The Leadership Center, Aurora..... November 7-13
- Women's Retreat**, Camp Luther, Schuyler..... November 12-14
- LHM Men's NetWork Retreat**, Camp Luther, Schuyler November 19-20
- LHM Men's NetWork Retreat**, Sullivan Hills Lutheran Camp, Lodgepole..... November 20-21
- Disaster Volunteer Certification Training**, Lied Senior Center, Seward..... December 4
- Pastors' Conference**, Younes Convention Centre, Kearney February 24-26, 2011
- Theological Conference on Worship**, Younes Convention Centre, Kearney February 25-26, 2011
- Nebraska District LLL Convention**, Divots Convention Center, Norfolk..... March 25-26, 2011

ANNIVERSARIES

First Trinity, Beatrice, 135th, Nov. 7, with a 9:15 a.m. worship service with President Russ Sommerfeld preaching.
Immanuel, Butte, 120th, Nov. 24, with Rev. Wesley "Bo" Baumeister as guest speaker at the 5:30 p.m. worship service, followed by a potluck supper.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Penny Robbins (RF'87), candidate status to non-candidate status.
Holly Strudthoff (CQS'90), teacher, Trinity, Fremont, to non-candidate status.

CALLED TO GLORY . . . Constance Ore, commissioned minister emeritus, Seward, was called to glory on September 16. Connie served as director of music at St. John, Seward, where she was organist, choir director, and junior high music teacher.



ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Michael Stock (StL'07), Trinity, Campbell and Calvary (Rosemont), Blue Hill, to Pella, Waupun, Wis.

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Wes Baumeister (StL'98), senior pastor, Trinity, Ironwood, Mich., to Our Redeemer, Staplehurst.

Rev. Barry Williams (StL'03), St. John, Madison, to St. John, Ord.

STATUS CHANGE

Rev. Roger Kruger (StL'68), Lutheran Family Services, to emeritus status effective July 21.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

Rev. David Whan (FtW'10) as pastor, Bethlehem, Pleasant Dale, September 12 (ordination also).

PLACEMENTS

Adam Salinas (FtW'10) as pastor, Golgotha, Wausa.

SETTING A COURSE THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Why has God placed and sustained your congregation in your community?

There may be many reasons to consider, but, without exception, each and every congregation is a “city on a hill.” These beacons of God’s Light and True Word are to shine into the dark, sinful world around us so “that they (men) may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

Sometimes we put our light under that bowl, shining it for ourselves inside our walls, but not letting the “light of the world” shine for all to see.

It may be hard to change our behaviors on our own, but through God’s Word, prayer, and fellow believers walking with us, our congregations can continue to be that “light of the world,” sharing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ with those outside the church walls who do not know Him as their Savior.

The Revitalization and Reconciliation Process offered to congregations in the Nebraska District is designed to walk alongside Lutheran churches as they discover the changing mission field around them and the ways God would have them connect with their community, all for the purpose of building the Kingdom of God.

There are four main stages in the process, and the pastors of three Nebraska congregations in the midst of revitalization have offered to share their experiences and those of their congregations as they have walked through the process.

Learning Community

The pastors of the participating congregations read common books on mission and ministry and gather once a month to discuss what they’ve been reading, and its application to their ministries, as well as share ideas and encourage one another.

“The Learning Community gets me thinking of things in a different way, giving me ideas for outreach ministry and the confidence to move forward, purposefully looking to share Jesus with everyone I meet.”

“The connection the Learning Community gives me with the other pastors in the group, as well as the staff of the District Office, has been a blessing to me and my congregation. I learn so much about ministry and gain new insights every time we meet.”

“All of the pastors in the Learning Community are in different places in their ministry, but we all share the same mission of proclaiming Christ to a lost world.”

Consultation Weekend

When the congregation is ready, it takes part in a Consultation Weekend, at which time a team of outside church workers come to observe and visit the congregation. Through a series of interviews and meetings, the team listens to the congregation, and from what they learn and hear they write five “prescriptions” that can help shift the congregation’s focus to see the changing community around them.

“The congregational members spoke about it positively and with lots of energy, and the weekend created anticipation about future ministry among the people.”

“The weekend made us ask the question, ‘Is this really what God wants us to do?’ and now we are more hopeful that this process will help us reach more people with the Word of God than we would have without having gone through the process.”

Coaching

Once the congregation accepts the prescriptions, the pastor is paired with a fellow District pastor trained as a coach to walk alongside him as he works to lead the congregation down this new ministry path.

“My ministry has only benefitted from the blessing of one-on-one coaching with an experienced and mission-minded coach. My eyes have been opened to look at ministry in a whole new way.”

“I believe God has used my coach and the entire learning community to help me grow in my ministry by their modeling and teaching.”

Envisioning Day

Throughout the process, the members of the congregation are learning about the community around them: who lives there, what they do, what they believe, and much more. Taking what they have learned about the mission field God has place them in, they spend a day envisioning how to reach out to the community in ways that will let their “light shine before men.”

“Our Envisioning Day helped people start dreaming about ways God can use them to reach people in their community. It helped them focus on how to move forward with ministry.”

“The work we did in preparation for our Envisioning Day was good for the congregation to get to know their community and created excitement for getting out into the community to share the love of Jesus.”

As these pastors lead their congregations through the process of revitalizing their ministry into what God would have it be for today, they share the following thoughts:

“This process has helped us to set a course that will make a difference in this community and in God’s Kingdom. It is significant in the life of the congregation, and people in the congregation are getting to know one another and are working with one another as they never have before.”

“Revitalization has taught me how to connect what is in my head and heart to being relational in my ministry.”

“Those who are working with our congregation during this process genuinely care about our congregation and listen to us, doing what is best for our congregation, and helping us to make the best choices, too.”

The Nebraska District expresses a heartfelt “Thank You” to the congregations in the District that are part of the Revitalizing Congregations pilot program. These eight congregations and their pastors are walking through a process designed to help Lutheran congregations focus on who they are in Christ Jesus and what this means as they look to take the saving message of the Gospel to the people of their communities. While each of these congregations was and remains a strong church with faithful members and a caring ministry, they have voluntarily undertaken this process to prayerfully examine how God can better use them to build His kingdom in their changing neighborhoods. For more information, contact Rev. Rich Boring at the Nebraska District Office at richb@ndlcms.org.