



Nebraska Lutheran Reporter



Information of Interest for Lutherans in the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
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October 2011

YOUTH INVITED TO JOURNEY . . .

High school youth are invited to register soon for the 2011 Youth Gathering November 18-20 at the Embassy Suites Convention Center in LaVista. Youth

from Nebraska, Iowa West, and South Dakota continue to register for the



weekend that promises to show participants the *Journey* Jesus took for them and the *Journey* on which He guides them each day. High school youth are encouraged to register for this time of worship, praise, study and fellowship. Registration packets were mailed to church offices in August and registration is now open. It's not too late for youth leaders to organize their youth and get them registered. Early registrations are due by October 1 and all registrations must be received by October 31. More information is available at www.neyouth.org.

NEVADA SHOOTING VICTIM HAS TIES TO NEBRASKA . . .

One of the four people shot to death September 6 at a restaurant in Carson City, Nev., has ties to northeast Nebraska. A lone gunman shot and killed four and injured seven others.

Three of the victims were Nevada National Guard members,



including **Sgt. 1st Class Christian Riege**, 38, of Carson City. He is the son of retired pastor Rev. Lynn Riege and his wife, Cheryl, of Page, Neb. Rev. Riege formerly served as the pastor at St. John Lutheran Church of rural Pierce before retiring in 2010. His wife taught at several area schools, including Lutheran High Northeast in Norfolk.

FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here! 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 people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
(2 Corinthians 5:16-21)



Has anyone ever called you a plenipotentiary? A plenipotentiary is an ambassador. When God inspired Paul to write his second letter to the Corinthians, the Corinthian Christians were called ambassadors of reconciliation. So, too, we who are Christians are ambassadors of reconciliation.

Perhaps your history classes taught you about famous United States ambassadors. You might know of Adlai Stevenson, Andrew Mellon, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., and Joseph P. Kennedy. Our nation's current ambassador to the United Nations is Susan Rice, who formerly served on the staff of the National Security Council and as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs.

Ambassadors never represent themselves. Rather, they represent their nation. Likewise, we Christians do not represent ourselves in the midst of dispute or conflict. We are Christ's ambassadors in the midst of disagreements. As such, we no longer regard anyone from a worldly point of view. As ambassadors of reconciliation, we see people through the eyes of Christ who had no sin and became sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ambassadors of reconciliation represent Christ by seeing conflict as an opportunity to glorify Him. We go about reconciliation Jesus' way by seeing our own sin before pointing out another's sin, showing another his or her sin out of love, and then being reconciled in Christ's forgiveness. We are therefore Christ's plenipotentiaries, as though God were making His appeal through us!



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.

THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP . . . will be the theme of the Fall Pastors' Conference to be held October 24-26 at the Embassy Suites Convention Center in LaVista. Facilitated by Rev. Mark Rockenbach, this conference will feature speakers Rev. Dr. Joel Biermann of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and Rev. Wayne Knolhoff of the LCMS International Office. Wednesday will offer a look at the fiscal realities facing the Nebraska District, followed by an open forum time for participants to ask questions, offer solutions, and to share insights. Registration materials have been emailed or mailed to all pastors and are available on the District website at www.ndlcms.org.



QUILT COLLECTION . . . The Lutheran Hour Ministries Reformation Rally will be held November 4, 2012, at the Walz Human Performance Center on the campus of Concordia University Nebraska in Seward. Rev. Greg Seltz, Lutheran Hour Speaker, will be the preacher. In conjunction with the rally, the LLL is endeavoring to undertake a massive collection of quilts for Orphan Grain Train, with a goal of collecting 3,000 quilts. While the rally is more than a year away, they are encouraging individuals and organizations that wish to donate to begin making quilts. Questions may be directed to rally co-chair LaVerl Merz at 402-489-7689 or lkmerz@windstream.net.

RECONCILIATION MINISTRY PASTORATE . . .

Ambassadors of Reconciliation (AOR) will be offering a new advanced training course that is designed to prepare gifted and experienced pastors and other professional church workers to restore conflicted congregations, schools and organizations. The advanced five-day training will take place January 30-February 3, 2012, in Aurora, Colorado. The registration is estimated to be approximately \$700 for instruction and materials. Pre-requisite training and experience are needed to attend the RMP training. Those who have attended the five-day reconciliation training hosted by the Nebraska District would qualify for this advance training. Contact AOR for more information. Learn more about RMP at <http://www.hisaor.org/web-content/images/rmpsummary7-8-11.pdf> or scan the box above with your smart phone barcode scanner app to go directly to the website.



IS YOUR FAMILY PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY? . . .



Do you have funds set aside that can be used for the unexpected? The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) offers an investment tool that helps to meet the needs of your family during those surprising times. The Family Emergency StewardAccount® provides opportunity for investment growth and convenient access to funds. To learn more, contact the Nebraska District office today at 1-888-643-2961.

BOARD SUMMARY . . . The Nebraska District Board of Directors took the following action at its September 2 meeting:

- Accepted the loan action taken by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Nebraska Program for Messiah, Lincoln; Trinity, Grand Island; Holy Savior, Lincoln; and Zion, Kearney.
- Decided to continue participation in worker choice for District employees in the Concordia Health Plan for 2012.
- Chose the LCMS Internal Audit Department to conduct the audit of the Nebraska District LCMS for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2012.
- Approved evaluating capital improvement priorities with the Sandhills Lutheran Ministry Board for a grant.
- Created a Board Governance Committee, a Board Finance Committee, and a Board Investment Committee.
- Appointed Rev. Rob Wiest of Our Redeemer, North Platte, to fill the vacant Region A pastor position on the District Stewardship Committee.
- Recognized Paul Pettit for his 20 years of service to the Nebraska District as treasurer and LCEF vice president.

OMAHA REFORMATION FESTIVAL . . .

The Omaha North Circuit is hosting a Reformation Festival Worship Service at Pacific Hills Lutheran Church, 90th and Pacific, Omaha, at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 30, with Dr. Alan Harre, president emeritus of Valparaiso University, preaching. Music will be provided by the joint choirs of Mount Olive and Pacific Hills, along with the Omaha Brass. All are invited to attend.

REGIONAL MARRIAGE CONFERENCE . . .

King of Kings, Omaha, is sponsoring a Marriage Tune-Up Conference on November 11 and 12, 2011. This weekend conference will give participants the unique chance to work on and celebrate their marriage in a relaxed atmosphere filled with laughter, insight, and interaction with their spouse. Childcare is available on a limited basis, and all registrations must be received by November 6. Register online at www.kingofkingsomaha.org, or call the church office at 402-333-6464 for more information.



COMING EVENTS

Educators' Conference , Christ, Lincoln	October 20-21
District Regional Gathering , Holy Cross, Kearney	October 22
District Regional Gathering , Beautiful Savior, LaVista	October 23
Fall Pastors' Conference , Embassy Suites Convention Center, LaVista.....	October 24-26
District Regional Gathering , Our Savior, Norfolk.....	November 6
District Regional Gathering , Christ, Lincoln	November 12
High School Youth Gathering , Embassy Suites Convention Center, LaVista	November 18-20
Regional DCE Conference , Beautiful Savior, LaVista	March 22-24, 2012
Spring Pastors' Conference , Younes Convention Centre, Kearney.....	April 16-17, 2012
Nebraska District LCMS Convention , Concordia University Nebraska, Seward	June 8-9, 2012
LWML Nebraska District North Convention , Lutheran High Northeast, Norfolk	June 29-July 1, 2012
Lutheran Hour Ministries' Reformation Rally , Concordia University Nebraska, Seward.....	November 4, 2012

ANNIVERSARIES

Our Savior, Norfolk, 50th, January 7-8, 2012, with President Russ Sommerfeld preaching at 5:30 p.m., 8:00, 9:15, and 10:30 a.m. services.
Beautiful Savior, LaVista, 50th, January 8, 2012.

CALLS IN THE DISTRICT

ORDAINED MINISTERS

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Jason Taylor (StL'04), Zion, New Palestine, Ind., to senior pastor, Holy Savior, Lincoln.
Rev. Brad Birtell (StL'92), St. John, Columbus, to Holy Cross, Emma, Mo.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Peter Gatkuoth (StL-EIIT) as pastor, Sudanese Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mission, Omaha, August 14.
Rev. Andrew Kennell (StL'02) as pastor, Our Redeemer, Staplehurst, August 21.

CAMP LUTHER WOMEN'S WEEKEND RETREAT . . .

Whether you prefer to sip a strong cup of Joe, slurp a steamer, or savor an espresso, prepare to take a break from the daily grind for a real pick-me-up! Women are invited to be filled to the brim as they get away to be grounded in God's Word at the Camp Luther Women's Retreat,



**Women's
Retreat**

"Sipping, Slurping, and Savoring His Good News." The retreat, featuring speaker Deb Burma, will be November 4-5 at Camp Luther near Schuyler. Find more information and register at www.campluther.org or call 402-352-5655. The cost per person is \$45.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS ACCEPTED

Sarah Bretschneider (S'04), teacher, St. John, Battle Creek, to teacher, Zion, Pierce.
Natasha Onnen (S'06), teacher, Zion, Hastings, to teacher, St. John, Battle Creek.
Nicholas Onnen (S'06), teacher, Zion, Hastings, to head teacher, St. John, Battle Creek.

CALLS DECLINED

Terry Baughman (MQ'92), candidate, Michigan District, to assistant to the pastor and DCE, Trinity, Grand Island.

OTHER TRANSACTIONS

Jessica Feldmann (CH'02), deaconess, Good Shepherd, Fremont, to non-candidate.
Peter Grothaus (S'85), candidate to non-candidate.
Phillip Hesterman (S'84), teacher, Trinity, Grand Island, to non-candidate.
Julie Korte (S'91), candidate to resigned from roster.
M'Leigh Olson (S'10), teacher, Immanuel, Columbus to non-candidate.
Kathleen Kuhn (SP'66), teacher, Immanuel, Columbus, to emeritus.
Amy Cloeter-Schmidt (S'00), teacher, St. Paul, Ann Arbor, Mich., to non-candidate, Nebraska District.
Lisa Splittgerber (S'00) teacher, Zion, Kearney, to non-candidate.
Dawn Stacy (S'88), teacher, Zion, Pierce, to non-candidate.

PLACEMENTS:

Angela Fick (S'11) to teacher, Immanuel, Polk.
Lori Gedwillo (CQS'11) to teacher, Concordia Jr./Sr. High, Omaha.
Sarah Masters (CQS'10) to teacher, St. John, Battle Creek.
Lori Plummer (CQS'11) to teacher, Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha.

TALKIN' ABOUT THE GOOD LIFE . . . YOU are invited to take part in a conversation about the people in your community and how your congregation can use foundational Lutheran teachings to build relationships with those who are unsaved or unconnected with the church. Nebraska District Board of Directors and staff members are making visits around the District to listen to lay leaders and church workers talk about the challenges and needs facing their ministry. Make plans now to attend one of these gatherings and engage in open, honest conversation about what's happening in your congregation and community. There is no cost to attend, but participants are encouraged to register to ensure adequate space and materials. Find more information and an online registration form at www.ndlcms.org. The gathering schedule follows:

Holy Cross, Kearney (3315 11th Ave.)
Saturday, October 22, 9:00 a.m. – noon
RSVP by October 14

Our Savior, Norfolk (2500 W Norfolk Ave.)
Sunday, November 6, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
RSVP by October 28

Beautiful Savior, LaVista (7706 South 96th St.)
Sunday, October 23, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
RSVP by October 14

Christ, Lincoln (4325 Sumner St.)
Saturday, November 12, 9:00 a.m. – noon
RSVP by October 28



God wants His people to live the "good life," and through His grace and mercy He gives His children the best life of all – eternal life with Him. Secure in that gift, He instructs them to live lives of witness for Him, sharing His Gospel and His love through Jesus with others. Paul encouraged the Galatians in their "good life" when he said "Let us not become weary in doing *good*. . . Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do *good* to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (Gal. 6:9-10)

This is an encouragement for today as well, and these words will serve as the text for the 2012 Nebraska District Convention to be held June 8-9 on the campus of Concordia University Nebraska in Seward. The convention schedule has been rearranged to fit all of the business of the District into two days beginning at noon on Friday, June 8, and ending by 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 9. A tentative schedule will be posted online soon.

Make plans now to attend and hear more about the "good life" and what it means as the congregations and schools of the Nebraska District engage their mission fields. More information will be available on the District website, www.ndlcms.org, as it becomes available. Registration materials will be sent out in early spring 2012.

Nominations – The Call for Nominations form was printed in the August and September issues of the *Nebraska Lutheran Reporter* and is available online. The deadline for returning this form is October 15. Nomination packets for District President, Vice Presidents, and Board of Director members were mailed to each church office in September. Completed forms must be returned to the Secretary of the District, Rev. Roland Jank, Jr., 7301 North 28th Ave., Omaha, NE 68112, by **January 31, 2012** to be valid. For more information, contact your pastor, congregational chairman or the District Office.

Voting Delegate Information – Delegate Information Forms were mailed to each church office in September. This form must be completed, certified by at least two officers of the congregation, and returned to the District Office by **January 31, 2012**, for the congregation's pastoral and lay delegates to be eligible to participate and vote at District Convention. Due to changes in the election process for Synodical President, these delegates will also be involved in that process in 2013, and completed and returned forms are necessary for eligibility. Congregations are encouraged to address this matter as soon as possible and return the form to the District Office as soon as it is completed. Dual congregations are considered one congregation and are allowed one pastoral and one lay delegate combined.

Overtures – Overtures, or calls for action, for the convention assembly to consider may be submitted by congregations, circuits, church worker conferences, committees, and the Board of Directors of the Nebraska District. These overtures must be received in the District Office no later than **January 16, 2012**.

Contact the District Office at 888-643-2961, ext. 1003, or info@ndlcms.org with questions.