

Date: March 12, 2012
To: All Pastors of the Nebraska District
From: President Russell L. Sommerfeld
Re: **SPRING PASTORS' CONFERENCE – APRIL 16-17, 2012**



Greetings to you! Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Following is information for our Spring Pastors' Conference. Feel free to contact the District Office with any questions you might have.

Date and Location: The conference will be Monday and Tuesday, April 16 & 17, at the Younes Conference Center, 416 Talmadge Road, Kearney (directly behind the Holiday Inn – see map). The opening worship on Monday will be at Zion Lutheran Church, 2421 Avenue C, Kearney, phone 308-234-3410.

Presenter: The presenter for this conference will be Rev. Herbert C. Mueller, LCMS First Vice President, St. Louis. He will be presenting and will be discussing the Koinonia Project. Please find with this registration information a memo from Rev. Mueller about the conference topic and presentations. You can also print out for review from the District website the "Koinonia" Project Concept Paper and the report from the LCMS Task Force for Synodical Harmony.

Theme: Our theme for this conference is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod "Koinonia Project."

The "Koinonia Project" is an initiative by the Office of the President of the LCMS designed to foster theological discussion under the Word of God so that we, as a Synod of church workers and congregations, understand more clearly our unity in Christ and are drawn by God's Spirit into greater concord in our teaching and greater harmony in our life together as God's people. These three aspects of our fellowship, our life together in the Gospel, namely unity, concord, and harmony, were identified as essential by the Task Force for Synodical Harmony appointed by the Board of Directors and the Council of Presidents in response to 2007 Synod Resolution 4-01A. Here's how the Task Force sought to define them clearly:

Unity: *The oneness that all believers in Christ have with each other through Spirit-given faith in Jesus created through the means of grace. "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4). This unity cannot be seen by human eyes, but we confess it by faith: "I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church" (Nicene Creed).*

Concord: *The oneness that believers in Christ seek to manifest and express in their confession of the Gospel and "all its articles" (FC SD X, 31). The church's unity as confessed in the Creed is a "given." Concord in doctrine and confession is a goal that we "strive to maintain" (Ephesians 4:3) by God's grace on the basis of his Word. St. Paul urges the Christians at Corinth—and us—to speak the same thing, to avoid divisions, and to be perfectly united in the same mind and judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10-11). The Book of Concord sets forth what we in the LCMS continue to affirm without qualification as a "single, universally accepted, certain, and common form of doctrine," drawn from the Word of God, that bears faithful witness to the oneness of doctrine and confession that serves as the basis for true concord in the church.*

Harmony: *The oneness that believers in Christ seek to manifest and express in their life together as God's people. Paul urges those who are united in Christ and who seek to manifest that unity through concord in doctrine and confession to be eager to maintain this unity "in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). He reminds the Christians at Corinth that Christ-like attitudes and behavior are crucial to their efforts to maintain doctrinal concord (1 Corinthians 13). Above all, says Paul in Colossians, "put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:14). "Paul urges that there be love in the church to preserve harmony... lest the church disintegrate into various schisms and lest enmities, factions, and heresies arise from such schisms" (Ap. IV, 232).*

The Nebraska District – LCMS presidium is committed to testing and implementing the “Koinonia Project” in the District. At the conference you will learn more about a test “Koinonia Study Group” that has been formed and begun to meet. Suggested plans for implementing the Koinonia Project in the Nebraska District will also be presented for your input.

Registration Information: Attached are the agenda, registration form, lodging information, and a small map. Please return the registration form and full payment **by Monday, April 2**. The current *Handbook* of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod states, “All ordained and commissioned ministers on the district rosters are expected to attend meetings of their official conference or present a valid excuse.” Bylaw 4.8.2.(d)

The Nebraska District is now offering online registration through its own electronic payment provider. To register online with a credit card, follow the “online registration” link on the conference information page, <http://www.ndlcms.org/news/conferences/pastors/index.html>. Complete the personal information form and when you submit this form, you will be directed to the secure online payment site. Complete your registration by entering your credit card payment information. No online registration will be valid until credit card payment is made with the exception of emeritus pastors. Questions about online registration may be directed to Nichole Hetz at the District Office at nicholeh@ndlcms.org.

MORE INFORMATION:

- **CONFERENCE FEE:** The conference fee of **\$75.00** is due with the registration form. This fee includes registration, breaks, meals, and speaker costs.
- **CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellations and requests for refunds must be made in writing – postmarked, emailed, or faxed – no later than April 2, 2012. Written requests for refunds received after April 2 and before April 16 will be refunded 50% of the registration fee. Important: **Refund requests on or after April 16 will only be considered at the discretion of the District President.**
- **MEALS:** Lunch and dinner on Monday will be provided at the conference center. No meals will be provided at the conference on Tuesday. President Sommerfeld will host a hospitality room on Monday evening for fellowship and refreshments.
- **HOTEL/MOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:** Please make your own lodging arrangements. Participants are responsible for their own lodging expenses. Included here you will find a lodging information sheet. The guaranteed room rate at the *Hampton Inn and Wingate Inn* is **\$84.95** for a standard room with 1-2 guests. The guaranteed room rate at the *Fairfield Inn* is **\$94.95** for a standard room with 1-2 guests. Suites are also available at the *Fairfield Inn* for \$149.95 and *Wingate Inn* for \$139.95. We have a reserved block of rooms at each hotel for the evenings of April 15 and 16. If you wish to reserve a room in this block, reservations must be made before the cut-off date of **March 29, 2012**, at which time any remaining rooms will be released. When making your reservation, please ask for the **Nebraska District LCMS – 2012 Pastors Retreat** special rate. Pastors are responsible for any necessary tax-exempt documentation upon check-in.
- **SPOUSE REGISTRATION:** Complete the spouse registration part of the form if your wife is attending. There will be a **\$30.00** registration/participation fee for your wife to attend the conference, and she is welcome to attend any of the sessions. Also, **no childcare will be available** at this conference. **Parents must supervise children attending the conference at all times** to eliminate disruption of conference sessions.

Your cooperation in returning the registration form by **April 2**, along with payment in full, is appreciated. I look forward to seeing you at the conference and pray for safe travel and the Spirit's guidance on our conference. Special blessings to you and yours.