

BY THE WORD



We are an association of congregations and individuals, free in Christ, accountable to one another, rooted in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations.

*Volume 3, Issue 1
1st Quarter 2004*

LCMC CONTINUES TO EXPAND; NEARS 100TH CONGREGATION

by Bill Sullivan, National Service Coordinator

With the addition of new congregations in Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, South Dakota and Nebraska, the association has now grown to 94 congregations. The size of the new congregations runs from 300 members to 3,000 members. In addition, with this being "congregational meeting season", there are a number of congregations that have votes scheduled on joining LCMC. It is anticipated that we will surpass the 100 congregation mark by early spring.

In addition to the congregations that have joined, I have been in a number of states to talk with congregations who want more information about LCMC. Recent trips have taken me to New York and North Carolina. Trips to Arizona and Maryland are scheduled in the next several weeks as congregations around the country are finding out about us and want to know more.

Word of mouth is the primary way people are finding out about us. But the Board of Trustees is considering another mass mailing to every ELCA congregation and is also contemplating other means to get our message before concerned confessional Lutherans around the country.

Several new mission congregations are also being formed. There are folks in Nebraska, Minnesota and

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**April 24-25
Trustees Meeting**
*Lutheran Church of the Master
Omaha, NE*

**April 25 - 27, 2004
Leadership Conference**
*Lied Conference Center
Nebraska City, Nebraska*

**June 13 - 16, 2004
Pressin' On for Christ
Youth Gathering**
*Lutheran Church of the Cross
Altoona, IA*

**July 15-16
Trustees Meeting**
*Hilton Garden Inn
Eagan, MN*

**October 2-3
Trustees Meeting**
*Atonement Lutheran Church
Fargo, ND*

**Oct 3 - 5, 2004
National Convention**
*Atonement Lutheran Church
Fargo, North Dakota*

**December 2-3
Trustees Meeting**
*Hilton Garden Inn
Eagan, MN*

**Lutheran Congregations
in Mission for Christ**

LCMC INSURANCE COST INCREASE BELOW NATIONAL AVERAGE

by Bill Sullivan, National Service Coordinator

At a recent meeting in Shoreview, Minnesota, Gayle McCann and her team from Johnson McCann Benefits outlined the renewal rates for the LCMC/WA health insurance through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

The national average for most group health plans for 2004 is about 15%. The increases we will see will be a little below the national average for most of our plan participants. Most of our plan participants will see a 12.9% increase. That is the increase for the "CMM with Copay" plan. The "CMM with Deductible" participants will see a 13.9% increase. The plan participants on the most expensive plan, "Aware Gold", will see a 22% increase. Unfortunately, this is a time of health care. Fortunately, most of our plan participants are on either CMM with Co-pay or CMM with deductible, so the impact is minimized.

Our plan is an excellent plan. Participants have indicated they are well pleased with the coverage. If you've been thinking about switching your coverage you may contact Britt Osterhues at Johnson McCann Benefits in St. Paul, Minnesota. The toll free number is 651-486-2186.

TRUSTEES APPROVE ADDITIONAL FUNDS

At its February meeting, the LCMC Board of Trustees acted on a recommendation from Fred Jensen to approve three additional funds to be made available to participants in the LCMC Pension Plan. Jensen's recommendation came at the request of new plan participants and allows more choice and flexibility in investments. With the trustees action, the newly approved funds now available are New Perspective, Amcap, Capital World Growth and Income.

You may contact Fred Jensen for assistance with pension fund questions at (866) 938-8270.

LCMC Expands - cont'd from page 1

Texas working on incorporating congregations. The Minnesota congregations would be in the metropolitan Twin Cities area. One would be a traditional mission start and one would be a multiple point "house church" with a "circuit riding pastor."

God continues to bless our young association with vibrant congregations committed to the "Great Commission." And the word is getting out in Lutheran circles that there is a centrist, confessional, biblical association that Lutheran congregations can call "home."



Staff, Board of Trustees

National Service Coordinator: Rev. William Sullivan - wsullivan@ameritech.net
Dir. of Operations/Financial Sec'y: Sharon McFadyen - lcmcadmin@sbcglobal.net

7000 Sheldon Road (734)-207-5400
Canton, MI 48187 Toll Free: 866-720-LCMC (5262)

LCMC Board of Trustees:

Rev. Dale Wolf, *Chairman*
Rev. Larry Lindstrom, *Vice Chairman*
Mrs. Debra Adams Lingen, *Secretary*
John Chatelain, Esq., *Treasurer*
The Hon. G. Barry Anderson
Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt
Mrs. Lenae Rasmussen
Mr. Dennis Sandmann

You may obtain individual contact information by phoning the National Offices of LCMC:
(734)-207-5400

Toll Free: 866-720-LCMC (5262)

or by e-mailing to:
lcmcbord@wordalone.org

BY THE WORD

NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 3, Issue 1

EDITOR: Deb Lingen; DESIGN: Jan Larson
CONTRIBUTORS: Paul Braafladt, John Chatelain, Dale Wolf, Cher Clay, Bob Herbon, Roger Lindler, Deb Lingen, Sarah MacFadyen, Esther Nance, Bill Sullivan, Amy Williams

PUBLISHED BY: LCMC
HEADQUARTERS: 7000 Sheldon Rd,
Canton, MI 48187
PHONE: Toll Free (866) 720-5266
WEB SITE: www.lcmc.net

• • •
"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast." ...
Ephesians 2:8-9

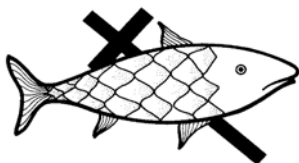
From Dale's Desk:

A Message from the Chairman:

It is a privilege to serve you as Chair of the Board of Trustees of LCMC. One of the incredible aspects of this new association is the level of commitment and ability found in its members and congregations. I leave every board meeting amazed at the variety of gifts assembled. The only explanation is that God has been moving in the selection of servant leadership for LCMC. In addition, I have been so impressed with the members of other boards and task forces, district and congregational leaders. God be praised for the work he is doing.

LCMC is an "association of congregations." Because of this, nearly all of the leadership given outside of our congregations is volunteer. I wish to thank each and every one of you who have given of your time and talents, both to our association and its districts. I also rejoice in the fine work of Bill Sullivan, our National Service Coordinator and Sharon McFadyen, our administrative assistant. These two servants have managed to provide information to countless individuals and congregations. They have connected the members of our association in ways that have furthered the mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ we all share.

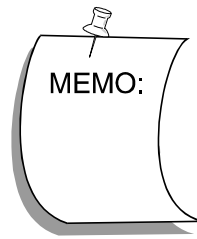
All of this said, in my first note to you in our LCMC newsletter, I am pleased to inform you that the health of LCMC is very, very good. I believe God has anointed this association. Perhaps the greatest testimony of this is that we are not defining ourselves by what or who we are not. Rather, we are being defined by who we are - better yet, by what God is doing in the ministry of our congregations.



Some of you have heard me say that as a leader in LCMC I have come to realize that the greatest contribution I can

-- see "Dale's Desk" - page 11

Sound Beginning to 2004



As 2003 ended, Christ's little innovation in church structure, this amorphous looking thing called LCMC, was in excellent financial health. Like the widow at Zarepath in Sidon, who acted upon her faith in the Lord, our association had experienced a quiet daily miracle. Our "jar of flour" had not been used up and our "jug of oil" had not run dry. LCMC ended 2003 with its bills paid and money in the bank.

Total revenue for the year exceeded budgeted revenues. Higher operating costs than expected would have been troubling except for the fact that National Service Coordinator, William Sullivan, moved from part time to full time in mid-year. His travel expenses also increased. The growth in the number of member congregations and people wanting information about LCMC made these increases necessary. Rising operating expenses under such circumstances are not only to be expected but are, in my opinion, an indicator of a bright future for the association.

Autonomous congregations are the strength of LCMC. Therefore we encourage them to channel benevolence directly whenever possible. I am pleased to note, however, that the LCMC board made disbursements of \$25,000 from restricted funds in 2003. It is worthy of reminder that no administrative costs are charged against dollars given for new mission churches and seminarians. So feel free to make use of these opportunities for gifting.

We continue to owe a debt of gratitude to St. Michael Lutheran Church in Canton for providing the "home office" free of rent. Kudos go to Financial Secretary and Director of Operations, Sharon MacFadyen, for her dedication in performing the various administrative duties.

What a thrill it has been for us to watch the growth of LCMC from nothing but a dream to a fully functional institution, now fast approaching 100 member congregations, in roughly four years. Projecting such a growth trend through 2004 and beyond suggests an

-- see "Treasurer" - page 11



Would You Like to Go to . . . Iowa?

LCMC Youth Can't Wait for "Pressing On"

The 2nd Annual LCMC National Youth Gathering is scheduled for June 13-16, 2004 at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Altoona, Iowa. LCC was gracious enough to host this event for a second year!. Last year the event was attended by youth from several churches in Michigan, Nebraska, Iowa, and North Dakota. This year's theme is "Pressing On" (Phil. 3:13). The LCMC website has information as well as a registration form for the event.

Since there is no better advertising for an event than actual participant enthusiasm, below is a response to the question "Would you like to go back to Iowa again this year?" from one of the youth who attended last year:

"Would you like to go back to Iowa for another LCMC Youth Gathering?" When I was asked this question, I was ecstatic and just about screamed, "Of course, I would love to go back!"

The LCMC Youth Gathering was the most amazing and most spiritually powerful event I have ever been to. There was a band playing praise and worship songs every time we gathered, and there were three feature bands as well. There were 5 speakers that who spoke about different topics related to the theme of the week: 1 Timothy 4:12. These speakers touched my heart so deeply, that I am still using what they talked about in my life today.



We also broke up into small groups, which were made up of people from each of the churches there. We had the opportunity to discuss what the speaker had said and how it would relate to our own lives. We also played some small group games just to break the ice! There were also break out groups where you could hear about different topics like, other religions, sex, and the devil.

We spent one afternoon at Adventureland, an amusement park very near the church and one evening there was a campfire to enjoy. But the most amazing thing to me, was meeting all the other Christian youth. Sometimes it feels like I am the only one going through difficult times - like my church is the only one around still worshipping and praising God. Going to the LCMC Youth Gathering reminded me that there are so many other Christian youth going through the same sort of things that I am going through.



I know that everyone from our group had a great time, and I hope to see more people there this year. I will definitely be in Iowa!! Won't you join us too?

*~ Sarah MacFadyen
St. Michael Lutheran Church
Canton, MI*

ATONEMENT - FARGO: Destination 2004

by Rev. Becky Lee, Associate Pastor, Atonement Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND

Ed. Note: This is another in the series of articles profiling the churches of LCMC. Atonement will host the LCMC 2004 National Gathering in October. If you would like to submit a profile of your congregation, contact the editor.

I would like to introduce my self and my congregation. My name is Becky Lee and I began my call as associate pastor at Atonement Lutheran in Fargo, ND, just four years ago this week. When I first met my boss and our senior pastor, Dale Wolf, for our initial interview he kept repeating the fact that, "You know Becky, if you come to Atonement you really have to love kids." He wasn't certain how I felt about kids since I'm a single woman just over 50 with no children. I kept assuring him, "Dale, I really do love kids." Dale's warning about children is true for anyone who is thinking about becoming a part of the Atonement family, "You really do have to love kids."

Atonement is a very young congregation, both in its own age and the age of its members. Just over thirty years ago, we began as a few families worshipping at a local bowling alley on the very southern edge of Fargo. Today we are a congregation of about 1500 in the center of the growth area of the city. Over five hundred of our members are under the age of 18. Another five hundred are between the ages of 18 and 40, and only about 60 members make up the over 65 group.

It was approximately eight years ago when our leadership saw a need and seized a ministry opportunity in our community. They started a small Christian daycare at Atonement. Since the vision of childcare was first formed, this opportunity has grown into a thriving ministry that we call Children's Weekday Ministries (CWM). CWM includes daycare, pre-school and after-school care to about 180 children each week. The children range in age from six weeks to fifth grade. The best part of this ministry is the smiles, and hugs, and getting to teach children about Jesus each and every day. You see, only about 25% of the kids in our daycare belong to Atonement. Some belong to other churches, but many have no church at all.

Atonement's mission statement says we will "Offer Jesus Christ, a life of discipleship, and a faith community to all people." We take this statement very seriously. From the newest infant to the oldest senior, we are about the mission of making disciples. The greatest challenge of any congregation, young or old, is growing in faith and discipleship.

We like to think that we begin each week accepting this challenge in all four of our Sunday worship services; two quite traditional, two very contemporary. We also believe that growth in faith and discipleship begins by actively involving everyone in God's Word. That is why you may not get a hymnal at the door, but you will be handed a Bible. On Wednesday evening we share in family worship called "The Potter's Wheel." In Potter's Wheel we have praise time, creative teaching for everyone,



One of three Atonement's three praise bands, leading contemporary worship in "The ARK" - the church's multi-purpose gymnasium.

“March Madness” -- LCMC-LM Style



Buck a Month Club is emphasis for LCMC Men’s Organization

by Bill Lane, LCMC-LM President

What is a dollar bill worth today? Not too much you think. In some places, for a dollar, you can buy a bottle of water or a "Coke." The "buck" has almost become obsolete in our times. However, God has a use for the dollar we so routinely take for granted.

Does your congregation have an active, viable Lutheran Men organization? Do you have a **BAM** (Buck A Month) Club? Potentially a \$12 per year gift to Lutheran Men could mean well over \$100,000 for the Mission Loan Fund. Our future growth depends on Mission Starts and we certainly need to support this not only with our time and prayers, but also with our "bucks." The BAM emphasis has been in March, but of course it’s never too late to participate.

Another area we can be a fundraiser is the **Committee of 100**. This requires an annual contribution of at least \$100. It is different from the Buck-A-Month Club in that the monies raised are for the Mission Gift Fund. A small amount (10%) is used for administrative costs (postage, supplies, etc.). The Committee of 100 emphasis will be in September. Plans are that email will be used as much as possible to save on costs. Speaking for the LCMC-LM, thanks for what you have done and many, many thanks for what you will do.

HAVE YOU CAUGHT THE VISION?

Will you be a Key Man for LCMC-LM in YOUR Congregation?

One goal of LCMC-LM is that every man in an LCMC congregation gives \$12 per year to the Mission Loan Fund. If there are 100 congregations in LCMC, and there were an average of 100 men per congregation, then that would mean \$120,000 per year. The Mission Loan Fund would quickly grow, and since funds loaned out keep coming back, many mission congregations could be helped in a relative short period of time.

The key is the "Key Man" of each congregation. The "Key Man" is to publicize, contact, and encourage every man to give \$12 a year. Why \$12? There were 12 Disciples. The \$12 is to remind us that Jesus called us to be his disciples in the world today. There were 12 Tribes of Israel. They were called to be God's People, even as today the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to be God's People. There are 12 months in a year, and \$1 a month is an achievable goal for just about everyone.

If you are willing to be the Key Man in your congregation, email Pastor Roger Lindler at rogerlindler@yahoo.com.



LCMC-LM ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

There have been some changes in our officers for 2004. Harold Lewis chose not to assume the office of president so he could work on a foundation for LCMC. Bill Lane (St. Paul's, Gaffney, SC), formerly our vice president, agreed to move from vice president to president. Cliff Riddle (The Harbor, Hilton Head, SC) agreed to serve as vice president. The other officers stay the same: secretary, Phil Shoner (California); treasurer, Pat Lukasik (St. Michael's, Canton, MI); pastoral advisor, Roger Lindler, (St. Paul's, Gaffney, SC). These interim officers will serve until the October LCMC-LM national meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the LCMC convention at Fargo, ND.

From Baptist to Lutheran: One Pastor's Story

by Bob Herbon

In October, 2003, a tall, black man strolled into St. Michael Lutheran Church in Canton, Michigan, for the LCMC convention, dressed in a cowboy hat and boots. This man was William C. Scott, II - a pastor from Ft. Worth, Texas.

Two months before the convention, LCMC did something that was the answer to a prayer for Scott; something the ELCA failed in its ability to do. In August, 2003, Will Scott - ordained as a Baptist minister - became a member of the LCMC clergy list. He became a Lutheran pastor, without being forced to be reordained. "I was not able to consent to the ramifications of reordination," Scott explained. "To do so would have been to declare my entire past ministry invalid, and to turn my back on the people who produced me as a called servant of God and a minister of Christ."

William Scott's religious background began in the Roman Catholic church, where he served as an altar boy. "Latin liturgy, the whole nine yards!" said Scott. Ordained through the National Baptist Convention, he served a number of different denominations before coming to Community of Hope Lutheran Church (ELCA) - Fort Worth, Texas, as Minister of Outreach and Education. His huge passion is multicultural ministry, and he has been working to start a mission congregation in Fort Worth.

Why the change to Lutheranism?

"What makes Lutheranism special," said Pr. Scott, "is its understanding of Christ as Head of His Church. You struggle with how to pull it off - and sometimes you want Him to be the Head, and sometimes you don't - but that's just our sinful nature. Many pastors desire autonomy and authority over their congregations and Jesus can get put on the back burner very easily. If we follow Luther's advice and visit our Baptism daily, we offer ourselves a better opportunity to overcome our insubordinations against Christ and against God Almighty. There is no truer exposition of the scriptures on the planet than the Confessions. What else is there, but Lutheranism?"

But why not stay with the ELCA, since you were already serving an ELCA congregation?

"I began serving Community of Hope in 1997 as a supply pastor and I quickly discovered how difficult it is for some of our churches to get Pastors. Community of Hope lifted me up as an 'Ordained Candidate for Lutheran Ministry Coming from Another Denomination.' The ELCA immediately began my candidacy with actions contrary to minority involvement and extremely demeaning attitudes. The assistant

to the Bishop even stated that there were 'no Black males in the Dallas - Ft. Worth area qualified to become Lutheran pastors.' Black Lutheran leadership in the ELCA did not receive such attitudes very well, and extremely ugly political battles ensued between them and the Synod leadership. I found myself caught in the middle.

"To make a long story short, the Synod chose to be non-supportive and remained non-involved in the ministry at Community of Hope. Black leadership became upset with me, because I refused to become a part of their counter-racist agenda. My candidacy eventually fizzled from lack of support."

Scott began to look at LCMC as a viable option for becoming a Lutheran pastor in 2003. But, having been through the proverbial sausage grinder with his previous experience with a Lutheran review panel, he was at once hopeful and cautiously pessimistic.

In August, 2003, the Ministry Committee of the Great Lakes District met after one of their gatherings in Van Buren, Ohio, to review Scott's qualifications for being a Lutheran minister.

"When I went before the ELCA Theological Review Panel, there were no theological questions asked of me. The questions were all concerning social issues. I left that panel thinking agreement had been reached and that the Holy Spirit had done a good work, only to learn two months later than one man on the panel had the ability to re-write everything that was stated,





NORTHWEST GATHERS

"A NEW BEGINNING: THEN AND NOW"

- by Paul Braafladt, District Coordinator

NEWS FROM NORTHERN IDAHO

It happened on Sunday, January 18, 2004. At its annual meeting American Lutheran congregation in Kellogg, Idaho, voted to end its relationship with the ELCA! This important vote was the culmination of several recent years of education, discussion and debate. The vote was 56 to 23 or 71% voting to leave the ELCA.

Some explanation is in order since this vote did not carry the encouragement or support of the pastor. In fact, it was recognized beforehand that the pastor would likely and purposely be called out of the congregation to another ELCA congregation. This was confirmed by Bishop Martin Wells well ahead of the annual meeting. He did not want the pastor to continue to serve the congregation in the event ALC voted to leave the ELCA. It is expected that this will now happen.

That makes this vote a rarity! When's the last time you heard of a congregation voting to leave the ELCA without the direct leadership and support of its pastor? It's no secret at American Lutheran congregation that without the steady calm leadership of Robin Lake this vote would never have passed. (Robin is a former member of the LCMC Board.) Thank God for such people in Kellogg and wherever they are in the Lord's vineyard!

NWN COMMITTEE FORMED TO DRAW UP DISTRICT BYLAWS

The Northwest Network (NWN) has set its sights on becoming the Northwest District of the LCMC. Much of the preliminary work has been done. The writing of bylaws remains.

With this in mind the NWN established a Documents Committee at their recent convention in Walla Walla, November 7-8. The members of the committee are as follows: Robin Lake (Chair), Pastor David Shine (St. Paul's Lutheran Church, St. Maries, ID) and Louise Strander (Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Burien, WA). Paul Braafladt, NWN Coordinator, is assisting.

So what's happening? By snail-mail, e-mail and telephone the work is going forward. It is hoped that the committee members will sit down together for the first time by or before the end of March to begin the final draft of bylaws. When the assignment is completed, the Northwest Network will schedule a convention to officially adopt all necessary documents, officially elect those that need electing to leadership according to the bylaws and launch a much needed Ministry Committee. When will this happen? God willing, we will convene together in the spring soon after Easter or in the month of May. Stay tuned!

LATE BREAKING NEWS!

The Northwest Network will become the Northwest District of the LCMC at its "Constituting Convention" which has now been set for Saturday, May 15th, 2004. (The place is for this event is yet to be determined.) A "Celebration Convention" of the new Northwest District will be held in the fall, date place and time to be determined by a newly elected District Council on or soon after May 15th.

Easter



BLESSINGSTO ALL!

Thanks be to God.

Great Lakes District

by Bob Herbon, GLD Coordinator

The next planned Gathering is April 17th, to be held at Zion Lutheran Church - Ottawa Lake, Michigan. Contact the LCMC office for more details.



PEACE LUTHERAN HAS A NEW HOME

"A Land of Our Own"

- by Esther Nance

Praise God! Peace Lutheran has a new home. Thank you all for your prayers and support, which helped make it possible for us to have "a land of our own" at last. There has been much progress in our mission church on the beautiful Gulf of Mexico this year, and we have great hopes for 2004. God has blessed Peace with growth in membership, and willing hands to serve in various ways as needed.

Our journey began last spring when Peace extended a call to Rev. Michael Bonham to serve as our pastor. In July, Pr. Bonham, Mrs. Barbara Bonham, and Mrs. Esther Nance attended the Augsburg Lutheran Churches (ALC) convention in Audubon, IA. At "The Gathering Place for Confessional Lutherans," they met many new friends in ALC and LCMC and heard the powerful preaching and teaching of God's Word "Augsburg style." Inspired by this mutual conversation and consolation, they decided to work purposely at finding a permanent home in the area. The local theater was nice for the "snow-birds," but it didn't help Peace Lutheran's efforts to reach out to the native members of the community.

On August 10, 2003, Mrs. Lenae Rasmussen came to visit and install Pr. Bonham. Our retired pastor, CH (COL) Jim Hansen and his wife, attended the service, and all three of the organist's daughters and their families attended. Some visitors came for the first time, and a few "regular visitors" who own vacation property in the area also attended, which made for a nice little crowd. Later that week God gave us a real miracle, a chance to buy 10 acres of land and a house that could serve as a new home for Peace. Scared, but realizing that the location on the Foley Beach Expressway was perfect for us and the price was right (\$225,000), we made an offer. To our delight, it was accepted. Another offer was made a few days later for \$375,000, but our offer for the full purchase price had already been accepted. Praise God!

With a \$10,000 loan from LCMC, and loans from ALC members, \$80,000 was raised for the down payment. We closed on the purchase of the property October 10, 2003—biting off a little more than we can handle on a monthly basis—trusting in God to provide new members

and inspire other LCMC churches to designate part of their benevolence funds in 2004 to help us.

We held our first worship service in the new building on November 30. In preparation for this event, a few things were changed right away. The folks who moved south to retire were temporarily "fully employed" volunteers, carrying out a seemingly endless list of "little things" and clean up work to transform our metal building into a new home for Peace Lutheran.

God truly provided us with a miracle, even though we weren't sure how we were going to pay for it. We realized, however, that the opportunity God provided was an absolute miracle and if we didn't trust God enough to provide for us "somehow" after we closed, we would lose the opportunity for an ideal permanent location to reach local residents, and vacationers. So, we leaped out in faith and accepted the challenge; and thus far, God has graciously provided the needed gifts and tithes to help us make it through the first three months of this glorious journey with the Lord, and blessed us with new members. We're trusting that He will continue to provide for us one day at a time.

Peace is growing as we reach out to "new families" in the area, and disaffected Christians in the area who are looking for a new church home. We are sure that God is providing the most important part of all--His Word and a Pastor to preach the Living Word to us every week.

We ask now for your prayers and support to further our evangelical efforts among the disaffected and the unchurched in the Gulf of Mexico, and we thank you for your continued interest and support. We are very grateful for our Augsburg and LCMC friends in Christ. With your help, and the ongoing gifts and encouragement of the "snowbirds" who join us in the winter, we know God is blessing us and will continue to guide us in his mission to the world.

You are all welcome to come and visit us any time of the year. Please send our fellowship chair, Mrs. Esther Nance, an email at esthern@gulftel.com or give her a call at 251-987-5396, if you plan to be in the area so we can give you a proper Southern welcome. All God's children are welcome to God's Service at Peace Lutheran—come and see!

Mrs. Mike (Esther) Nance is the fellowship chair and Treasurer of Peace Lutheran Church, 8250 Roscoe Road, Gulf Shores, AL 36542. Peace is a charter member of Augsburg Lutheran Churches and LCMC.

HOPE LUTHERAN:

A Story of Hope & Promise Because of Him ...

-- by Pastor Cher Clay.

Greetings and a hearty wish for abundant blessings on you and your congregations! The kindness of your gifts throughout last year to Hope Lutheran in Platteville has been so wonderful that I hardly know where to begin with thanks and praise.

Hope Lutheran continues to worship together. We are meeting in an elder care facility just outside of town that is known as The Lyghthouse. The Lyghthouse is owned and operated by a lovely woman named Roxanne Lyght. She has been quite generous with us, allowing us to meet on Sundays and to have a Bible study on Thursdays and all for the exorbitant fee of \$0.00! The residents share worship with us which has allowed us to count them proudly into our membership.

Hope celebrated its first birthday on June 9, 2003. We are proud to announce that, and so it is that we thank you once again for helping us stay afloat ... to grow spiritually and to continue to share the gospel in various and sundry ways.

Below, right, is a picture of a young girl in our congregation. Valerie is a 10-year old Special Ed student who was adopted by one of our member families. When I came to Hope Lutheran, Valerie's communication skills were negligible and the school system declared that she would never be a whole lot different ... she would never be able to read or write. The picture you see is Valerie receiving the Girl Scout God and Family Award which she earned due to exhaustive study and tutoring by her mother, and prayerful support of the congregation. She recited the 10 Commandments for the congregation and told everyone what they meant. Valerie was the only child in her troop to earn (or even show an interest in) this particular award. We are so proud of Valerie (who by the way reads from the children's Bible often at worship and has learned to write.)

Without the help and commitment—spiritual and financial—of those of you in Augsburg Lutheran Churches and LCMC, our ministry would have been a much harder struggle. We thank you and love you, and we praise God for your love and concern.



Notes from the Heartland

- by Amy Williams & Deb Lingen



The Heartland District council covered a wide range of topics at its meeting the end of January. An area of particular concern continues to be support of mission efforts in Haiti. A list of needs was compiled so an appeal could be made for tangible assistance, particularly men's suits for the local pastors, other articles of clothing, electronic devices, and cash donations.

Seminary education was a topic of discussion, since Heartland has one LCMC student already attending seminary at Luther College, and several others interested in pursuing ministry. The Heartland team leaders focused on specific ways to support these people.

Tecumseh Community Lutheran Church has been meeting weekly on Sunday evenings, served by Pastors Edi Bickford and Doyle Karst. Plans are now in place for Harold Bickford to begin conducting worship services on Sunday morning. A list of furnishings needed for the church is available; if you are able to help you may contact Amy Williams at 712-764-4391.

Glen Peterson, pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Humboldt, SD updated the council on that mission start. Things are progressing well.

At this meeting, the Heartland District also established a restricted mission fund. It is designated to assist mission churches who are working with the Heartland District Mission Team. Contact John Chatelain, chairman of the team, for information: 402-333-8488.



Valerie proudly shows her Girl Scout God and Family Award.

Do you have something to share? -- If you, your congregation or a ministry group you belong to is involved in something new and exciting, we'd love to hear about it. Or, if you would like your congregation to be profiled in our series on LCMC churches, let us know. Contact Deb Lingen, editor, at ddalingen@netscape.net, or 402-597-3362. We'd like to tell your story!

Pastor's Story - continued from page 7

to his own satisfaction and my candidacy chair had no authority to challenge what he had written.

"The LCMC Panel not only asked me theological questions, they examined - **with** me - my concerns, nurtured me through my questions by validating their relevance, and patiently listened as I struggled to express what I knew and understood to be particular Lutheran doctrine - even though I did not necessarily have the exact Lutheran terminology, or those certain 'insider expressions' to easily communicate it. Besides that, it did not take them two months to reach their conclusions!"

In fact, the Great Lakes District Ministry Committee approved Scott that very afternoon.

"LCMC examined me, my history and accomplishments in the ELCA, my education and my theology... and then acted in Faith as they believed themselves led to do in the Lord for the good of LCMC, for the good of Lutheranism, and for the good of the body of Christ."

"I pray that as LCMC moves forward, it will not soon forget what it accomplished, particularly for minorities, urban at-risk and rural ministries, in the process of recognizing my ordination and I pray that it will always be able to respond to others, regardless of ethnicity, in the same exercise of faith that I have enjoyed in becoming a recognized pastor in this ministry."

Dale's Desk - continued from page 3

make to LCMC is to ensure the health and vitality of Atonement, the congregation I serve as Senior Pastor. And so it is with you. As I talk to pastors and members of LCMC congregations, I know you are working hard. "Well done, good and faithful steward." May we forever be united in our mission "to make disciples of all nations." I will pray for you and your ministry.

God is Good,
Dale Wolf

Atonement - continued from page 4

followed by faith and community formation for children called "Potter's Kids", and a Potter's teaching time for the adults led by the pastors.

Faith and discipleship formation doesn't end with worship; it continues in service, fellowship and study. During the past year we have offered the ALPHA course and have had over 150 people participate. Alpha is a great program for faith development and development of small groups, because along with so many other churches, we have become very aware of the necessity of small groups for the development of not only faith and discipleship, but also community. Currently, about 60 small groups of children, youth, teens and adults meet at Atonement. These groups include, bulletin folders, Atoners (exercise class), basketball teams (we are blessed with a full size gym), quilters, softball teams, volleyball teams, couples under thirty, couples over thirty, prayer people, baby boomers, men's and women's Bible studies, guys who fix things, retired folks, pre-school moms, mission trip groupies, contemporary bands, vocal and bell choirs, youth bible study, teen music groups, visitation ministers and the list goes on.

If you come to Atonement, you really have to love kids; God's Kids. We look forward to sharing our church and our love for God's kids when we host all of you at the next LCMC National Convention in October. Welcome to Atonement!

Treasurer - continued from page 4

increasing need for operating cash. If you have not been contributing to our general fund, please consider doing so now. If you are presently contributing, please consider a slight increase, if possible, as we anticipate LCMC's growing monetary needs.

May God continue to bless, guide and inspire our little "Fellowship of the King".

Forever yours,
John C. Chatelain, LCMC Treasurer

Pray for Haitians!

Many of you may remember that Pr. Revenel Benoit spoke eloquently to us at our national convention, sharing his passion to bring Jesus to his people who are suffering due to the voodoo religion, political unrest, lack of education, and terrible poverty. As a result of his inspiring witness, several LCMC congregations have entered into mission partnerships with Lutherans in Haiti under Pr. Benoit's leadership.

The political situation remains grave and the people need your prayers. If you are moved to provide tangible support, you may work through the Heartland District (see page 10 for contact information) or send it directly to:

HAITI LUTHERAN MINISTRY & MISSION FUNDS
ATT'N: PAUL A. KLENNER
PO BOX 14275
SANTA ROSA, CA 95402

Register now for the . . .

LCMC Leadership Conference
April 25-27, 2004
Nebraska City, Nebraska

Be Strong and Courageous!
(Joshua 1:5-9)

Come for fellowship, support, worship, good conversation, discussion of current theological and practical issues--and even a little free time for fun! The planning group for this event is the LCMC Ministry Board: Mike Williams, Kathy Sukke, Mark Vander Tuig, Bob Nordvall, Dave Drum and Kip Tyler. Your input will help shape our association. Information is available on the LCMC web site, or you may contact the LCMC National Office.