

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.

1st Quarter 2006

"Equipping the Saints" April 23-25, Bloomington, Minnesota

LCMC's 4th Annual Leadership Conference will be held from Sunday, April 23 through Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at the Homewood Suites by Hilton Hotel in Bloomington, MN.

The event will feature a number of LCMC leaders sharing thoughts and ideas about how we can effectively equip members of our congregations for their ministries in the body of Christ.

The theme verses for the event are from the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking in truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."
Ephesians 4:11-16 (NASB)



Featured speakers will be Dan Scharhorst, Randy Upgren, Jeff Nellermoe and Paul Spaulding. Dale Wolf, chair of the LCMC Board of Trustees will bring an update on the state of the association. Dave Drum and Bob Nordvall will lead devotions on Monday and Tuesday mornings. Tony Stoutenburg will bring the message at the opening service on Sunday evening and April Dietz will preach at the closing worship service.

The location of the event, the Homewood Suites by Hilton in Bloomington, Minnesota is directly across the street from the Mall of America. Room rates include a hot breakfast each morning and dinner Monday evening. Room rates also include transportation to and from the airport and free shuttle service to and from the Mall of America.

More information about the event can be found at the LCMC website: www.lcmc.net

**Lutheran Congregations
in Mission for Christ**

Kirk Dean Appointed Interim Treasurer

The LCMC board of trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Kirk Dean as the association's new treasurer and member of the board of trustees. Kirk attended his first trustee meeting in January and is working closely with Sharon MacFadyen, LCMC's Director of Operations and Financial Secretary. He has been appointed to serve until the annual gathering in Albuquerque, at which time the national body will once again hold elections for the treasurer's position, a 3-year term.

Kirk's professional, educational, and personal history is impressive. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College as well as the National Trust School - Northwestern University, Chicago, and Pacific Coast Banking School, University of Washington, Seattle. After 35 years of uninterrupted service, Kirk retired from Wells Fargo Banks in November of '04 as Regional President - North Dakota/Western Minnesota. In that

position he was responsible for the oversight of 36 banking locations with \$2.6 billion in assets and 538 employees.

Kirk's past and present volunteer affiliations include serving in leadership positions on the boards of several institutions, including a public utility, the YMCA, the Mt. Rushmore National Memorial Society, the Chamber of Commerce, the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute Foundation, Chapel In the Hills Stavkirk in Rapid City, SD, the Northern Lights Council of Boy Scouts, the Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota, and the Advisory Board of North Dakota State University School of Business. He also currently serves as Secretary of the church council at Atonement Lutheran Church, Fargo, N.D.

Kirk and his wife Stephanie have been married for 35 years. They have three adult children and thoroughly enjoy their five young grandchildren.

"I truly am enthused and humbled to have the opportunity to serve in this position and the involvement it brings with the very dedicated and committed LCMC board. These are exciting and challenging times for our new church body so it will be challenging for me to contribute to the momentum that has already been created by the members of this association," said Dean.



LCMC
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

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BY THE WORD

NEWSLETTER

1st Quarter 2006 -

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"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

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Does ministry happen by design or by default? People in the Church have argued over that question for centuries. They point to the huge difference between the two. Ministering by design means using the brains God gave us to plan, to anticipate, and to focus our efforts toward meaningful goals. It means setting a course and working to carry things through. On the other hand, ministry by default means allowing circumstances to dictate how plans might change. We are open to whatever each new day brings us, so we may drop everything at some point and make an entirely new plan. The contrast between the two is sharp and clear; one approach is more "proactive," while the other is more "reactive."

But as the work in this association has unfolded, your Board members have found that both approaches to ministry are necessary at different times. There have been moments when people in our association have had to take charge of things. As Board members, we work to help shape the future of LCMC, and we hope that our efforts are making a difference. At other times, we have encountered situations that none of us could have foreseen. The growth of the association, for instance, continues to bring great joy-as well as new challenges. Our international partnerships give us a clearer sense of God's presence around the world, but they also leave us wondering how best to connect to one another. In moments like that, what we need to do is step back and pray for God's guidance. We also are learning to be patient and watch to see what God has in mind for us. We don't want to get out in front of God's guidance. The Bible speaks about this combination of design and default. In Proverbs, we hear the writer tell us to commit our plans to the Lord, and then our path will be established. (Proverbs 16:3). That verse reminds us that it is important to plan and to think through how we can use the gifts God has given us. But it's equally important to commit those plans to the Lord. We need to pray and ask that God might show us where our plans need to be modified, changed, or even dropped completely. Then, the writer tells us, our path will be established. But it will not be you and I who establish the path. God will show us what needs to happen, and how we can be part of it.

So are we doing ministry by design or by default? The best answer is, "Yes." We are making plans and setting the course for LCMC's future. We are figuring out how to use the talents and abilities God has given us. But we are also working to remain open to the Spirit's guidance as our future unfolds. I pray that this combination will draw us closer to God and make us more faithful servants in His name.

- Rev. Larry Lindstrom, Vice Chair, LCMC Board of Trustees

REQUEST FOR INFO FROM DISTRICTS GOES OUT

At their January meeting, LCMC's trustees discussed how best to facilitate communication among districts as well as between districts and the national association. While there is an annual polling of member congregations, there has been nothing specifically requested of district leadership.

As a result of the discussion, the trustees took action directing Rev. Dale Wolf, chair of the association, to compose a letter to leaders of all LCMC districts soliciting statistical information on their membership, including a request for:

- √ a list of member congregations;

- √ a list of the names of clergy each district has requested to be added to the LCMC list of clergy;
- √ a complete listing of the positions of district leadership and the names and contact information of the individuals holding those positions; and
- √ any known dates of district conferences of events.

The information gathered also will be used to update LCMC's records, including the information we post to the association's web site. Cooperation from district leaders would be greatly appreciated.

"All Things New" Takes Shape in New Mexico

The planning team at Faith Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico has been busy finalizing plans for the 2006 Annual Gathering of the association. "All Things New" is the theme for the yearly event that features inspiring messages, a variety of breakout sessions, opportunities to network and fellowship as well as opportunities to explore and enjoy Albuquerque and perhaps take in its annual International Balloon Fiesta.

Information about housing can now be found at the LCMC website, www.lcmc.net. It also has been sent recently to all member congregations. Rates quoted at the website are good through Wednesday night, October 4th. The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta begins on Friday, October 6th.

Those wishing to stay over for an extra couple days to take in the balloon fiesta will need to call now to make reservations for the extra nights. Rates go up at all Albuquerque hotels for the event but those who book rooms now will get a lower price than those who book room six months from now.

Featured speakers at the 2006 event will be Rev. John Ortberg, bestselling author and pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California and Rev. Enrique Estrada from Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church in Monterrey, Mexico.

Those in attendance will be treated to a Spirit of the Southwest Fiesta on Tuesday night, October 3rd. The fiesta will feature an authentic southwest menu and a live mariachi band during dinner.

Districts will have opportunity to gather at various spots throughout Albuquerque on Monday night and explore some of the local sights and attractions that afternoon.

Congregations are encouraged to send delegates to tend to the business of the association but any interested members of the association are welcome and encouraged to attend the event that focuses primarily on learning, networking and fellowship.



LCMC Trustees Meet with EFCA Leader

Prior to their January board meeting, LCMC trustees Barry Anderson, David Chancellor, and Debra Lingen, and Service Coordinator Bill Sullivan visited the Minneapolis headquarters of the Evangelical Free Church in America (EFCA) and met with its president, Dr. William J. Hamel. Why visit the EFCA? Mainly, because it is practically the only "mainline" denomination which is growing in America. A primary goal was to learn how the EFCA was organized and to bring back any good ideas which we might use within LCMC.

Trustee David Chancellor notes our similarities in background: "The EFCA was formed in the 1950's, having roots in the free church movement which came to America from Norway and Sweden as a reaction to the state sponsored hierarchical churches found in Scandinavia. In other words, the EFCA is a successful American 'mainline' evangelical denomination with some Lutheran and Reformed roots." In addition, there are similarities in vision, mission, and structure. It is heartening to know that the EFCA has navigated familiar challenges, and has grown to some 1300 congregations, with outreach in 45 countries. They are successfully dealing with how their churches, districts, and the national body relate to each other. They have also built a highly successful training program for church planters, and have indicated a willingness to share that with LCMC.

As trustee Chancellor observed, "I was encouraged to learn that LCMC and EFCA are organized almost exactly alike. So to the critics of LCMC who insist we need more control and hierarchy to be successful, I say you're wrong. The EFCA, with its emphasis on multiplying healthy congregations, averages a successful new church start every week! If within LCMC, we stay focused on our priorities of scripture, evangelism, and our core Lutheran confessions, there is no reason why we won't be successful as well."

Good News on LCMC Benefit Plan Rates

In a January 26 meeting with the team from Johnson/McCann Benefits in St. Paul, Minnesota, the LCMC Board of Trustees learned that on average the medical rates for plan participants in 2006 would actually decrease slightly from 2005 rates. Continued favorable claims history and a variety of other factors contributed to the rate decrease.

In other business the board approved a change in providers for life and long term disability insurance. The switch to Mutual of Omaha will also result in lower premiums with no change in coverages.

New premiums and changes will take place in May of 2006. All congregations who are participating in the plans will get notification from Johnson/McCann in the near future. Congregations that want to find out more about participation in the plans can contact Britt Osterhues at Johnson, McCann via their toll-free number: (800) 497-3424.

LCMC Welcomes New Churches

Slowly but surely, LCMC continues to grow. Nine new congregations joined LCMC in January and February of 2006. The association saw the addition of congregations on both coasts as well as the addition of congregations from north to south throughout the midsections of the country.

Christ Lutheran Church in West Covina, California and **St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church** in Peabody, Massachusetts, congregations from the southwest and northeast respectively, became partners in our fellowship from the far opposite ends of the country.

Congregations from the north central area included **Marshall Lutheran Church** in Marshall, North Dakota; **Lands Lutheran Church of**

Moe in Hudson, South Dakota; **Word of God Lutheran Church** in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota and **St. Paul Lutheran Church** in Osceola, Nebraska.

Two new mission congregations have also been formed in that area of the country. They are **Church of the Living Word** in Hampton, Iowa and **Faith Lutheran Church of Powell**, Wyoming. **St. Paul Lutheran Church** in Hondo, Texas became the newest congregation from the Lone Star State of Texas in January.

We thank God for the addition of these new congregations and look forward to getting to know them in the years ahead. If you wish to send messages of welcome, contact information may be found at www.lcmc.net.

Response to Fund Appeal Brings Cautious Optimism

Many of LCMC's members responded positively to the fundraising appeal sent in December. As a result, January was a very good month financially for the association. Thank you! We all benefit from the generous response to our needs.

While trying to maintain a positive outlook, it is also important to note that, unfortunately, the upward trend year over year did not extend into February. And, we can expect that unless the trend reverses itself we will once again be in a position of having to make an appeal for additional support.

We have wonderful growth opportunities, but those often come with increased travel and communications expenses. Please help us by remembering the association in your prayers and including the LCMC general fund in your regular benevolence.

Comments? Suggestions? News to share? We want to hear from you - submissions are welcome! Contact Deb Lingen at ddalingen@netscape.net or 402-597-3362

Minnesota Mission Congregation supports congregation in India

Lutheran Community of Grace (LCOG), a mission congregation of LCMC and a member of the CrossAlone district of LCMC, raised approximately \$1400 to purchase a motorcycle for a Lutheran fellowship in Orissa, India.

"We first learned of the need of this fellowship through Curt Rosen, President of World Encounter, a short-term mission support organization with contacts in the state of Orissa, India," noted LCOG president Robert Gjengdahl. After learning about the Indian congregation, known formally as the Orissa Evangelical Fellowship, and also becoming aware that the most immediate short-term need was for transportation assistance, LCOG raised \$1400 in less than three weeks to help.

Because the Orissa Evangelical Fellowship is actually fourteen different gatherings of Lutherans in India, and because the leader of OEF, LCMS trained pastor Pramod Nag, rides "the circuit" helping each of his congregations, the decision was made to buy a motorcycle in India to help Pastor Pramod and his lay preachers as they spread the Gospel in a part of India that is difficult to reach and difficult to evangelize.

Pastor Pramod immediately put the motorcycle to use and expressed his thanks to both the congregation and the association.

Lutheran Community of Grace, organized approximately two years ago, worships in Hopkins, Minnesota, three times per month, and is actively seeking a more permanent location in the Twin Cities and is also seeking to call a full or part-time pastor. For further information on the congregation or the CrossAlone district, see www.crossalone.us

- G. Barry Anderson, Trustee



Rev.Pramod Nag with his new wheels.

New Publication for CrossAlone: "The Lutheran Hedgehog"

The Lutheran Hedgehog is a new newsletter published by the CrossAlone District of LCMC, with its first issue produced in January-February 2006. An ancient Greek poet wrote: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." The Lutheran Hedgehog is published to promote and proclaim the "one big thing" Lutherans know: the centrality, efficacy, and sufficiency of the cross of Jesus Christ. The newsletter offers national and international religious news, thought-provoking articles, educational materials, and a grounding in confessional Lutheran theology. Information and subscriptions may be received by calling 952-442-4134, or by writing: The Lutheran Hedgehog, PO Box 27598, Golden Valley, MN 55427-0598. You may also view the online version of the Hedgehog at: www.CrossAlone.us.

- Rev. Mark Richardson
Bethesda Lutheran, Dresser, WI



The LCMC congregations of the Great Lakes District met at Zion Lutheran Church in Ottawa Lake, Michigan on Saturday, January 28th, 2006. Each congregation gave an update about their respective ministries, followed by a very helpful discussion about the purpose of the district. Representatives decided to meet quarterly, with each congregation of the district hosting, in round-robin fashion, a gathering that they plan. Our next gathering will be April 29th at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Farmersville, Ohio. A picnic will be hosted by St. Michael Lutheran Church, Canton, Michigan sometime in July.

The highlight of the gathering was the ordination and installation of Ron Winslow to serve as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Ottawa Lake, Michigan. Ron has ministered in several Lutheran congregations over the years in various capacities. He founded the Toledo-area Order of St. Luke and has served as a lay leader for many years in Via De Cristo. Ron was intrigued by the LCMC "contract pastor" designation. He approached the GLD ministry committee and asked for help getting some training to serve as a contract pastor in the LCMC. After two years of course work in Lutheran Confessions and History, preaching, and scripture studies, Ron interviewed with Zion Lutheran Church and received a call to serve as their contract pastor. Rev. Mark Gibbs of



The installation of Pastor Ron Winslow at Zion Lutheran Church: (L to R): Rev. John Fults, Rev. Vern DeVantier, Rev. Mark Gibbs, Karen Winslow, Ron Winslow, Dwight Gililand, President of Zion, Rev. Bill Sullivan, Rev. George Mornhinweg.



LCMC pastors at the installation : (L to R): Rev. John Fults, Faith, Detroit, MI - Rev. Vern DeVantier, Retired, Blissfield, MI - Rev. George Mornhinweg, Retired, Farmersville, OH - Pastor Ron Winslow, Zion, Ottawa Lake, MI - Rev. William Sullivan, LCMC Office, Canton, MI - Rev. Mark Gibbs, St. Michael, Ottawa Lake, MI

St. Michael Lutheran Church presided at the ordination and Rev. William Sullivan was the preacher. Rev. George Morningweg, Rev. Vern DeVantier, and Rev. John Fults also participated in the service along with Dwight Gililand, Barbara Holtz, Mary Jo Gililand, and Karen Winslow from Zion Lutheran Church. All in all, it was a great celebration! Congratulations, Pastor Ron!

Participants in the he Great Lakes District are: Faith Lutheran - Detroit, MI; St. Michael Lutheran - Canton, MI; St. Michael Lutheran - Ottawa Lake, MI; Zion Lutheran - Ottawa Lake, MI; St. Andrews Lutheran - Farmersville, OH; and Grace Lutheran - West Carrollton, OH.

- Rev. Mark Gibbs
St Michael Lutheran Church
Ottawa Lake, MI



Heartland Council Meets

Rev. Doyle Karst, pastor of St. John Lutheran Church - Sterling, NE and chairman of the Heartland District, reports that the Heartland District was very productive at its March 11 meeting.

Rev. John Hansen, pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Mitchell, SD, was affirmed to fill the seat being vacated by Rev. Tom Sahl of Zion Lutheran Church, Hartford, SD.

The council then turned its attention to specific plans for the Heartland House of Studies (HHS). Rev. Kip Tyler, Rev. Paul Spaulding, Rev. Glen Peterson, and Merlin Saathoff will serve on the first HHS board of directors, with the Heartland chair, Rev. Doyle Karst, as an ex officio member. The council approved the outline and texts for a course in New Testament Greek to be led by Rev. Kip Tyler this Fall, and reviewed preliminary plans for a second course, Church History, that is in the works.

Council members also appointed a task force to flesh out a job description for a Heartland District coordinator; the description will be presented for approval at the next quarterly district council meeting, May 13th. Heartland churches will be asked to determine whether they are able to support this as a paid position

Other business included preparing topics for the Heartland convention June 10th. Morningside Lutheran Church will host the June 10th gathering.

St. Paul – Osceola Hosts Concert by Trinity Youth

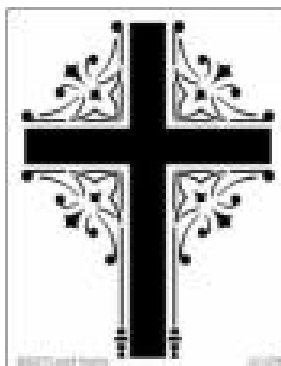
A recent cooperative venture between two LCMC churches in the Heartland District was a great success, according to organizers and those who attended the youth event February 12th. Members of St. Paul Lutheran Church issued an open invitation to the community of Osceola, NE and its surrounding areas, and the result was a full church. The draw? Pizza and ice cream sundaes followed by **3N1**, the high school singing group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbus, NE. St. Paul and Trinity are LCMC churches that belong to the Heartland District.

Louise Wheeler, president of St. Paul's Spirit Guided Women of the Word, reports that member Betsy Johnson spearheaded the project and got great cooperation and assistance from other WOW members of the congregation. She also praised the kids of **3N1**, calling them an "enthusiastic group of young people that did a really great job!"

3N1 Director Cindy White explained that 28 students representing 5 high schools in and around Columbus comprise the group of instrumental and vocal musicians. The group, which has been in existence for over 8 years, consists mainly of members of Trinity, but has welcomed a few ecumenical members. To participate, parents must sign a commitment form. The group leads two worship services a month, in addition to the commitment to regular rehearsals and other performances.

3N1 previously has performed at other LCMC youth events, including a Heartland District all-nighter sponsored by St. John Lutheran in Sterling, NE, and the national youth gathering at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Altoona, IA two years ago.

According to White, she encourages the kids to use these performances as opportunities to reach out and look for people to make as new friends among all different ages. At events like the one sponsored by St. Paul's there is a special opportunity to witness, perhaps to unchurched members of the community who may have been drawn in for the food and music. "These are opportunities for kingdom building," she said. "I tell the kids there are all kinds of stories about what God can do." Besides, according to St. Paul member Bill Peterson, "It was just a really fun night!"



"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

- Philippians 4:19

LCMC Congregations Gather in Texas

On February 6, 2006, Zion Lutheran Church in Kerrville, TX hosted an initial meeting of LCMC congregations from Texas and the surrounding area. Over 130 individuals attended the day long event including individuals from seven LCMC congregations in Texas, from six other Lutheran congregations in the area that are interested in LCMC, and six individuals from LCMC congregations in Monterrey Mexico. The Texas LCMC congregations that were represented included:

- ◆ St. Paul - Bulverde, TX
- ◆ St. Paul - El Paso, TX
- ◆ St. Paul - Hondo, TX
- ◆ Zion - Kerrville, TX
- ◆ Lutheran Church of the Risen Lord - Odessa, TX
- ◆ Trinity Lutheran - Stonewall, TX
- ◆ Our Saviour's - Victoria, TX.

Mexico LCMC congregations represented were:

- ◆ Mighty Fortress - Apodaca , NL
- ◆ Spirit of Faith - Apodaca, NL
- ◆ Spirit of Joy - Monterrey, NL

The day was spent in worship and fellowship and included a presentation regarding missions in Nicaragua by Rev. Michael Birnbaum, Executive Director of International Service Learning. It was truly an inspiring day and included breakout groups to establish a framework of support between congregations in areas of leadership, women's ministries, youth ministries, men's ministries, and music ministry.



Fellowship time at Texas LCMC gathering

Rev. Bobby Leggett from Bulverde was elected Service Coordinator of the yet-to-be-named area; his task will be to help get the group organized for mission. The group set a very attainable goal of starting at least one new church in the area this year. Representatives from each of the LCMC congregations in Texas will continue to meet to plan future worship and fellowship together and determine what structure is necessary to help support each other in time of need.

It was a glorious day of God's people praising Him and working together in mission!

- David Weden
Zion Lutheran Church, Kerrville, TX



Rev. David Chancellor (standing), Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Kerrville, TX and LCMC Board Member, speaking with Rev. Michael Birnbaum (seated on front row), Executive Director of International Service Learning, during the leadership breakout.



Worshiping and singing God's praises during Texas LCMC gathering.

Northwest District Gathers this Spring

May 5-6, 2006

American Lutheran Church
Kellogg, Idaho

"**COME AND SEE**" is the theme of this coming convention. And there are sub-themes as well--

**COME AND SEE: Jesus... Who I Am...
Who We Are... What We Are Doing...**

The convention will begin with worship on Friday evening and end with a communion service on Saturday afternoon. Between these two services will be a variety of presentations around the themes above.

Our keynote speaker will be **the Honorable Barry Anderson** of the Minnesota Supreme Court and member of the LCMC Board of Trustees. His topic is **Who We Are** (in the LCMC). If anyone knows, Barry Anderson knows!

Preaching Friday night will be Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt. On Saturday Pastor David Herwick of Burien, WA, will lead the Bible Study. Pastor David Shine of St. Maries, ID, will be the liturgist at both worship services. Candy Pugh of St. Maries, ID will take charge of displays from various churches that illustrate **What We Are Doing** here in the Northwest.

The final plenary session will feature a panel discussion with Barry Anderson, Bill Sullivan and the six members of the NW District Council. This hour should be very instructive, indeed a rare opportunity, especially for persons who are inquiring about Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

A mailing will soon go out to Northwest persons. If you would like to receive a registration form, please contact the registrar: LAWANNA WATTS, Box 50, Pinehurst, ID 83850; Phone: (208) 682-2153 (day) or (208) 682-3576 (eve) or Email at: wattse@usamedia.tv

Registration is \$30 per person and includes breakfast and lunch on May 6th. Ample motel information will accompany the registration form. Kellogg is located a little over an hour east of Spokane, Washington, on highway I-90. This is the second annual convention of the Northwest District which now stretches from Naselle, Washington (near the Pacific ocean) to Kellogg, Idaho in the Western Rockies. We invite you to come, especially friends and visitors!

- Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt
Chair, Northwest District, LCMC

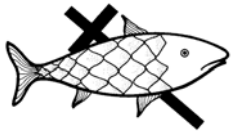
Sharing Christ with Our Mormon Friends

Salt Lake Theological Seminary has developed some wonderful training programs to help Christians share their faith with their Mormon friends, neighbors and co-workers.

The first of these, Bridges: Helping Mormons Discover God's Grace, is a 5-part video program designed for adults. It looks at the history and theology of the Mormon Church from its founding to the present day, providing a context for the beliefs and social structure of modern Latter-day Saints. The program teaches effective ways to talk to Mormons without argument or confrontation about the Jesus of traditional Christianity. People who have taken this course call it a wonderful experience. As one instructor says "I've just finished teaching a class to over 100 people and the response was phenomenal! Over a third of the people who came have family members who are Mormon and they now have a way to reach them for Christ."

The second program, Grounded: Relating to Your Mormon Friends in Truth and Love, is designed specifically for teenagers and young adults. Based on the same relational approach as Bridges, this exciting, fast-paced youth training program impacts the lives of Christian youth challenged in their faith by their Mormon friends. This 5-week, DVD based program features fascinating interviews with young people from both LDS and traditional Christian backgrounds. Young Mormon openly share their hearts regarding their faith, their church, and their personal challenges. Christian youth from a variety of church backgrounds talk about their insecurities when discussing their faith with their LDS friends and tell about the successes and failures they've had trying to argue their beliefs. Experienced youth leaders and Seminary professors deliver solid answers to some of the hard questions young Mormons often challenge their traditional Christian friends to consider: who is God, why are we here on earth, who is Jesus Christ, and how can we be saved?

Both programs are available from Salt Lake Theological Seminary for use in small group settings in your local church. For more information on prices and ordering, contact the seminary at 801 581-1900 or visit their website at www.slts.edu. - David Pascoe, AVP - SLTS



Evangelical/Renewal District Members Work and Play at 2nd Summit in Utah

The following is a short recap of our Evangelical-Renewal District meeting Chris posted on the ERD listserv:

Hi Everyone!

Just a couple of things:

First, the ERD Summit, at Good Shepherd, Sandy Utah, was excellent. We opened with dinner and worship on Monday night (the young adult band from Good Shepherd is amazing!) and then Paul Spaulding led a very well done presentation on ministry in post-modern America. As a 32-year-old, I played the inevitable role of deconstruction in order to prove what Paul said was all "true"! :) It was a great discussion we all shared.

Tuesday morning we had a roundtable discussion of church planting strategies and got some really good information on the newest LCMC/ERD church, Lifesong Lutheran, in Newbury Park, CA. Rich Gregory, the church planter at Lifesong, was with us, and we're all excited for what the future holds at Lifesong. Rich also converted from snowboarding to skiing while in Utah!

We then had discussion on a seminary extension of Salt Lake Theological Seminary in Monterrey, Mexico. This is going to be a huge opportunity for LCMC and for our brothers and sisters in Mexico as it develops.

Lunch and some skiing in the afternoon followed, and then we returned to Good Shepherd for dinner and some informal discussion and fellowship in the evening (as well as some rock climbing in the youth room).

Next year's gathering will again be at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Sandy, Utah, and the following year it will be in Monterrey. One of our goals is for member churches to help pay the cost of all of our church planters (7 total, for now!) so they can all attend.

God bless,
Chris Magnell
Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Cross, LCMC
Chaplain (1LT) 118th CD, Des Moines, IA

WOW! Women of the Word, We Need You!

Do you have questions about Women of the Word? Are you helping shape the women's ministry in your church? In your district? Are you interested in helping build ties among LCMC women's organizations on a national level?

Boy, do we want to hear from you! Some of the most frequently asked questions are about how joining LCMC impacts the ministries of the women. Keeping in mind that LCMC is an association of churches based on freedom and responsibility, there are no national "requirements" for Women of the Word groups. What we can offer is to help provide answers to some of the most common questions, to facilitate communication among members, and to assist as a clearinghouse for sharing information

and resources.

Our intent over the next few months is to pull together some basic information and resources and make them available on the LCMC website. We would also like to provide this information in printed form for those who do not have internet access. In brainstorming sessions at national gatherings and among various women in leadership, we identified the following areas of interest for WOW:

- a regular column in the LCMC quarterly newsletter
- a WOW link on the LCMC web site with:
 - Sample statements of purpose /governing docs;
 - Contact information;
 - Resources for Bible studies, perhaps including

how and where to find them, how to know if you're "on the right track", and reviews / suggestions for bible studies used by other LCMC WOW groups;

- Ideas for benevolence and outreach projects
- Information on retreats
- WOW breakouts at the LCMC annual gathering.

There may be other areas not yet identified. **We strongly invite and encourage your input in this process. Please pass this on to interested people in your congregation.** Comments or suggestions will be most welcome-- please contact: Deb Lingen
ddalingen@netscape.net
402-597-3362.

Together, we can do this!

"Reclaim" Offers New Hymnal

"Reclaim" is the new name for the WordAlone Hymnal Task Force. We are now independent from WordAlone but pursuing the same task, namely, to provide optional worship resources appropriate to our Lutheran heritage and needs.

To reclaim our rich heritage we have gone to the taproot of all Lutheran liturgies, the 1888 Common Service. Why reinvent the wheel by trying to create something chic and politically correct? Almost all Lutherans in America -- Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Slovaks, Germans (including Missouri and Wisconsin synods) -- adopted the Common Service more than a century ago. It has been the "grand-daddy" of all our liturgies since. Naturally we have updated the language, and we will eventually be offering four musical settings.

While much of the liturgical war has been fought over music, the real issues have to do with the words, and whether we are going to continue to adopt Roman

Catholic rituals as our liturgical standard, to say nothing of politically correct, gender neutral language.

Our committee is working with a top-notch design firm to produce a quality hymnal. A 100-page transitional book with worship liturgies, along with hymns and other resources is being developed first. The liturgies will be for communion, baptism, wedding, funeral, and the graveside. There will be 30 to 40 favorite hymns people have chosen, along with Luther's Small Catechism. We are calling it Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home (LHCH). The full hymnal, with 600 hymns, the liturgies, music settings, prayers, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession will follow next year.

The transitional book will be distributed at the spring WordAlone Convention, April 30 through May 2, 2006, at Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, Minn. If printed in time, we will have copies at the LCMC leader-

ship conference and the LCMC board of trustees meeting in April.

Our aim is to reclaim our heritage, future, purpose, and passion as Christians. We have reclaimed the exhortation, or admonition, to the Lord's Supper. We have reclaimed the office of both keys in the confession and the absolution. We are reclaiming the direction in worship, as being from God to us, not us to God. We are not the "actors," but the "audience." We are reclaiming the great teaching hymns of the church. In this reclamation we have eliminated the offertory, which has created theological mischief. Gifts will be received during a hymn.

All this is a grass roots movement, inviting your support and help in developing this hymnal. Contributions may be sent to: RECLAIM, c/o Bob Amundson, treasurer, 23665 610th Ave., Chokio, MN 56221

- *Pastor Norman P. Olsen, retired*

Prayer Shawl Ministry Offers Comfort, Solace

Looking for a way to reach out in Christian compassion to someone who is going through a difficult time? Several LCMC congregations have found that creating a prayer or comfort shawl ministry has been a great answer, and a blessing in itself.

The shawls may be knitted, crocheted, or woven, made of various patterns in any color of the rainbow. The crafting may be done alone or in the fellowship of a group, and it also offers the opportunity to teach the art of knitting or crocheting to other willing hands. The key is to pray for the receiver as you begin, to pray as you work on the shawl, and to offer it to the receiver with a prayer. Shawls may be given to someone who is seriously ill, receiving



medical treatments, dealing with the loss of a loved one, adjusting to a move into a care facility, welcoming a new baby, as a bridal shower gift, or just to show concern.

Patterns, prayers, and other suggestions for how to start this ministry are easily found at several sites on the internet. LCMC members will want to be discerning since not all come from a traditional Christian perspective. The overwhelming evidence, however, is that thousands of people have been blessed by prayer shawl ministry when it is done to glorify God and the focus is on the Lord's work in our lives.



East European Missions Network Opportunities

Dear Friend of East European Missions Network,
Grace to you in Jesus' name!

As we look ahead to the summer of 2006, plans are taking shape for our Bible Retreat Institute in Ustron, Poland. Our first BRI was last summer, and it was a wonderful time of encouragement and teaching for many young Christians and future leaders from Poland, Czech Republic and Latvia. We taught on key subjects that focused on ministry, apologetics and discipleship. The students were so hungry, and are eagerly looking forward to our expanded plans for summer 2006! Planned by EEMN in conjunction with the Center for Mission and Evangelism in Dziegielow, Poland and Jasia Gazda of Rainbow Harvest International, this strategic event is touching lives and bearing fruit.

Now, this summer we're preparing for twice as many students. We are praying for the 100 students that will be coming from across Eastern Europe and possibly Ukraine and Russia...young Christians and future leaders who are in turn ministering to the youth of their respective countries. The team is coming together ... and invitations are beginning to go out to the young people who will attend. Pray with us that the Lord will enable all to come with no hindrances

Would you help? We have available Bible Retreat Institute Scholarship Brochures for 2006, as well as a bulletin insert for use in your church and a five-minute DVD video overview that can be used in morning worship or other settings to share the message and invite people to get involved. Each person that contributes will receive a picture and thank you from their student this summer, as well as tax deductible receipt. With the increased number of people, that means a lot of scholarship funds are needed. But, what an opportunity for investment in ministry and changed lives that will ripple forward for generations to come. Any help you and your congregation can give toward this end would be greatly appreciated! If we can supply additional information or answer any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor Bill Moberly, Director
East European Missions Network
9072 Lyndale Ave. South, Bloomington, MN 55420
952-881-3554 / eemn@usfamily.net / www.eemn.org

With your help, more youth leaders can reach a new generation in Central Europe for Jesus Christ. Your sponsorship will provide for students to attend the 2006 Bible Retreat Institute in Ustron, Poland, where 100 youth leaders from Central Europe will join with Bible teachers, ministry leaders and short-term missionaries for mentorship, ministry training, and encouragement. Here are two stories that illustrate how you can make a difference by supporting this vital ministry:



Eva Undas grew up in a Christian family in Poland and in her teen years participated in Jasia Gazda's Sunday School teacher's training. It was then that she committed her life to serving Christ in ministry. She now serves as a Sunday School teacher, youth leader, musician, and full-time student.

"I'm so grateful that you supported me financially to come to the Bible Retreat Institute. I feel that each day I become closer and closer to Him. Now I am full of God's power. I am ready to lead youth camps with my friends. I am refreshed and renewed. God bless you! I know that He is the One who moves the heart of people. Let His will be done in your life!" says Eva.

"After my schooling I want to be an Old Testament teacher in a Bible School. I believe I'm called to work with Christians, helping them to know the truth about God, His word, and themselves. The time at



the BRI surpassed all my expectations! The atmosphere, people, workshops, lectures were so wonderful. Thank you so much! Without your help it would be impossible to be here." These words are from Bartek Cieslar, who attended the Polish Lutheran Bible School in Dziegielow, Poland and now is a seminary student in Warsaw, Poland. He serves with Rainbow Harvest International Ministry as a youth worker during his training.



World Encounter Outreach Team will Minister with LCMC Churches in India

For a life-transforming experience, join World Encounter, in association with LCMC, on a short-term outreach to India October 26 - November 11, 2006. Orissa Evangelical Fellowship (OEF), an LCMC association of churches in India, has invited congregations in the US to encourage them in their efforts to share the Good News with the unreached people of India. They have asked the team to conduct a two-day leadership conference, to visit and minister in the village churches, and to learn about the needs and opportunities facing them in India.

Christian faith, as it is lived out in the small villages of Orissa, is challenging in many ways that are difficult to relate to in the US. Most of the OEF members live in dirt-road villages surrounded by rice paddies. Small groups of believers worship in homes and thatch roofed churches. They live out a simple faith expressed through practical dependence on the protection and provision of God. And in the midst of overt opposition to the Gospel, are deeply committed to reaching their Hindu neighbors and families with the Good News that has transformed their lives.

The people of Orissa are predominately tribal/animists and Hindus who worship spirits, trees, rocks, and other objects of nature. Sometimes Christian converts are not allowed to use the village wells, buy firewood, or buy rice and flour in the village store. In effect, village leaders often try to harass and drive Christians out of their village. A decision to follow Christ is clearly made "for the glory that will be revealed", rather than any temporal gain.

Average wages for a village pastor are \$50 a month. OEF pastors are not able to provide for their families on the offerings from local fellowships alone. All are either bi-vocational Christian workers or rely on additional income from spouses. None have autos and only two pastors, including OEF president, Pastor Promod Nag, has a motorcycle. With limited means he travels to the villages to support the eighteen pastors and churches, and to initiate work in new villages.

The OEF vision is focused on church planting, discipleship, and leadership development. To help them realize that vision OEF has invited members of LCMC congregations in the US to partner with them. As in most of India, the believers in Orissa warmly receive guests with overwhelming hospitality. You will be challenged and encouraged as you meet the people and witness the amazing events God is using to spread the Gospel. You may never look at "church" the same way again!

Opportunities to learn about Indian culture are also provided in short visits to cultural sights, Hindu shrines, and through visits with Hindu families and community leaders. A day-trip to the Taj Mahal will conclude the journey.

Give God a fresh chance to grip your heart and mind with the things so close to His own. Make plans now to join the outreach team to Orissa. Experience a powerful, life-transforming outreach opportunity.

For more information contact World Encounter at 651-484-3010 or by email at missions@worldencounter.org

- Rev. Curt Rosen, World Encounter

Pastor Curt Rosen is founder and president of World Encounter, a cross-cultural training and sending ministry for short-term teams. He has over thirty years of experience in short-term missions and cross-cultural ministry around the world. His passion is to help people discover a bigger world and their God-given destiny to serve the least - the last - the lost for Jesus Christ.

He leads several teams each year to work with different ministries throughout India. On behalf of LCMC he visited the Orissa Evangelical Fellowship churches this past November to learn about the challenges they face in ministry, and how they might be encouraged as LCMC international members.

Nicaragua in Summertime!

No, not our summer but theirs, which is now. Pastor Carell Foss, his wife Bonnie, and I made that discovery between Feb 4 and 12, just past. We were there at the invitation of Pavel Guevara, the President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nicaragua. We were also there due to the generosity of International Service and Learning (ISL), a notable humanitarian organization headed by a Lutheran pastor, Michael Birnbaum of Alice, Texas.

90 to 95 degrees means hot and sometimes humid. But that didn't dampen the spirits of these Nicaraguan Lutherans, some of whom are pictured above. We were welcomed



with open arms! We ate at their tables and slept in their beds. We worshipped together and we engaged in important topics such as the Church, the gifts of the Spirit, the importance of the Scriptures, our mutual subtraction of hierarchical structure, and our new freedom in the LCMC. Call it an epiphany! The light

went on in our heads and hearts as we learned how much like us these Nicaraguan Lutherans are.

In all we visited eight scattered congregations (house churches) in four days, about half their total number. They were memorable days and nights. I have a hunch that this was not the last time we will see these faithful people who have little of this world's goods but much of God's grace.

And here is a teaser. If you come to Albuquerque in October, you'll hear and see much more about these Lutheran neighbors to the south.

- - *Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt,
LCMC Trustee*

ALL ABOARD FOR CENTRAL AMERICA!

International Service Learning : April 22 - 30 (9 days) or April 22 - May 5 (two weeks)

Pastor Michael Birnbaum, Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran, Alice, and Executive Director of International Service Learning, will be leading a group of Lutherans and their friends on an educational/tour/mission trip to Costa Rica and Nicaragua. We'll be flying out of Houston. We'll visit our orphanage on Ometepe Island, Central American Lutheran Missions, and The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nicaragua. We'll enjoy the spectacular scenery of Central America ---waterfalls, volcanoes, tropical beaches, amazing wildlife, river tours, coffee tours, world class shopping, sight seeing, and much more. We'll be visiting with our mission partners and experiencing interesting field seminars on issues effecting those ministries and the members of those congregations. Those desiring to work on a light construction project and other project options will need to take the 14 day trip.

The cost is \$1685 for the 9 day trip and \$1985 for the 14 day trip and is considerably less than other Central America trips currently available from other Lutheran programs. Price includes airfare from Houston, two meals a day, housing, private transport, professional guides, seminars, translators, entrance fees, tourist tour costs, tips. Does not include passport costs and departure tax. This trip cost is based on airfare costs as of 11-1-05. Deduct \$300 if purchasing your own airfare.

Contact Laurie@ISLonline.org or Laurie at Immanuel church office-361-664-6691

A Pastor's Letter, in the Aftermath of Katrina

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

-- NKJV, 2 Cor 12:9

In a January letter to the congregation of Peace Lutheran, an LCMC church in Gulf Shores, Alabama, Pastor Mike Bonham reflected on what he and his flock had experienced in the last year:

It's that time of the year when you tend to sit back in your free time and think about the previous year. Now if only I had the free time! The year 2005 was an interesting year for us if nothing else. Hurricanes, turbulent forces in our association, struggles in individual lives of the members of the congregation, all this was coming at us in winds stronger than any hurricane. What was a defining moment this past year?

Here we sit now with 31 members and we have seen the struggle of life. With the devastation of hurricane Katrina came the responsibility to help in some way. **Little did we realize that we would serve as a focal point of aid for Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).** I can remember praying, "Lord, how are we going to accomplish this. We don't have a clue about how to respond in a disaster." I felt we were working in weakness. Where would the resources come to do anything? If we simply responded by looking at our situation from the world's way, we would have walked off, looking for greener pastures.

We are confronted each day with going the world's way or God's way. When we choose God's way, to admit our weakness,

our inabilities, and our sin of pride, we see grace reign. It is God's way of grace that produces the miracles of hearts changed by grace. It is in the Holy Trinity with it's bonds of love that extend to us, that we are able to engage in the spiritual warfare or respond to the physical needs of others.

So, what happened? **We saw a pouring out among the congregations of LCMC and their friends in Christ.** We saw not only congregations of LCMC respond with money and supplies, but also they were opening themselves up to their community. Congregations of other denominations and individuals trusted us with their resources in reaching out to Katrina victims. **We were asked in some way to oversee approximately \$30,000 in financial aid in addition to 35,000 pounds of supplies.**

"There can be a fundamental gulf of gracelessness in a human heart which neither our love nor our courage can bridge."

- Mrs. Patrick Campbell
British actor (1865-1940)
My Life and Some Letters,
ch. 19 (1922)

It is because there is a gulf of gracelessness in the heart that we need God the most. It is only through the grace and love of God that we can love the unlovable and show the unlovable that they too are loved. If we were to think

about it, we are the unlovable. In our weakness God has revealed he has a plan for us.

As we continue in our journey together, **we can rest assured God will continue to have a purpose for us in his plan** in reaching out to our community. It will not be because we have answers, or resources, or even the best youth program. It will be because God is working through our weakness.

May God continue to bless you,
- Pastor Mike

Rev. Bonham also included the following information:

Ever wonder how large the network was of congregations helping to relieve the pain Katrina left in its wake? A few of them were:

- ◆ St. Andrews, Farmersville, OH
- ◆ Atonement, Fargo, ND
- ◆ Grace Church, Hayward, WI
- ◆ LCMC, Canton, MI
(Central Offices)
- ◆ Old Zion Lutheran,
Philadelphia, PA
- ◆ Our Savior's, Audubon, IA
- ◆ Redeemer, Estherville, IA
- ◆ St. Michael, Canton, MI
- ◆ St. Michael, Ottawa Lake, MI
- ◆ St. Paul, Gaffney, SC
- ◆ St. Paul, Niceville, FL

There were numerous individuals and other organizations who trusted us to use their treasures to reach out in the name of Jesus for so many in need.

Thanks be to God!



These are photos taken in September by a couple who helped deliver supplies. You will see damage and some of the efforts that occurred in Biloxi, MS. Most of our supplies went to Waveland, MS, where the devastation was the greatest. To this day there are still people living in tents. Katrina did more direct damage in this area than even New Orleans.

Our area suffered a category three hurricane damage level. We have recovered fairly well. The fact is we are still recovering from Hurricane Ivan, a year before Katrina. It is estimated that it will be at least 8 years before the Waveland area recovers economically.

*Blessings,
Pastor Michael Bonham
Peace Lutheran, Gulf Shores, AL*



Mark Your Calendar!

April 23 - 25	LCMC Leadership Conference, Bloomington, MN
April 25 - 26	Board of Trustees Meeting, Eagan, MN
May 5 - 6	Northwest District Gathering, Kellogg, ID
July 12- 14	Board of Trustees Meeting, Eagan, MN <i>(Note change of date)</i>
July 7 - 11	EDGE! - LCMC Youth invited to Youth Encounter, Nashville, TN
July 13 - 14	Board of Trustees Meeting, Eagan, MN
September 30	Board of Trustees Meeting, Albuquerque, NM <i>(Note change of date)</i>
October 1 - 4	LCMC Annual Gathering & Convention, Albuquerque, NM
November 12 - 14	Board of Trustees Meeting, Eagan, MN <i>(Note change of date)</i>

