

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 2, Issue 2
June 2003

"IN CHRIST, A NEW CREATION"

Call to convene in Canton based on II Cor 5:16-21

Charged with planning the organization's annual convention, the LCMC Board of Trustees is pleased and excited to announce the theme and speakers for the fall gathering to be held at St. Michael Lutheran Church, Canton, MI. "In Christ, a New Creation" has been chosen, based on II Cor 5:16-21. Reconciliation is an important theme and activities planned for this convention will give LCMC members and their guests an opportunity to explore the richness of these passages within the context of faithfulness to the Scriptures.

In keeping with the chosen text, "ambassadors for Christ" who will make presentations include Pastor Revenel Benoit, president of the Evangelical Lutheran church of Haiti and Reverend Gerrit Wolfaardt, National Director of Veritas College in the USA. Both men have been active in mission development, a cornerstone of LCMC. Bible studies will be led by Pastor David Mann, of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church, LCMC's largest congregation.

In addition to the business sessions, the agenda will also include opening worship, a banquet, an opportunity to attend "A.D., the Musical", breakouts on timely topics, and time for fellowship. Districts will be invited to update the assembly, and elections will be held.

Great Lakes District and members of St. Michael Lutheran Church will host the gathering. Information and registration material will be mailed later this summer and will also be available on the LCMC web site. You may contact the national office for information.

Articles on Pastor Benoit and Rev. Wolfaardt and their ministries begin on pages 2 & 3 of this newsletter.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

July 20-21
Augsburg District Convention
Our Savior's, Audubon, IA

July 27-30
LCMC Youth Event:
"Taking it to the Streets"
Altoona, IA

August 2
Heartland District
Women of the Word (WOW!)
"Faith & Friendship Festival"

September 20th
Women's "Autumn Re-charge"
Heartland Women
hosted by Lutheran Church of
the Master - Omaha

Oct. 5-7
LCMC National Convention
St. Michael, Canton, MI

Lutheran Congregations
in Mission for Christ

CHRIST TRIUMPHS OVER VOODOO

Pastor Revenel Benoit: The Story of How Faith Transformed a Life and is Changing a Country

Pastor Revenel Benoit, the President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, has expressed his pleasure at being invited to address the LCMC convention in October. According to Pr. Benoit, "This is a unique opportunity to get to know that Mission organization and to share with them what the ELCH is doing in the country of Haiti. For the past six months in office as president of the ELCH I have been looking for opportunities to have fellowship with various Lutheran Churches in addition to the Missouri Synod. As a result, all nine ELCH District Presidents are excited and look forward to establishing some kind of relationship with the LCMC."

Pastor Benoit will speak on new mission opportunities in Haiti through the ELCH and will also address the larger issue of missions in the context of a Voodooism environment (about 70% of the population practice Voodoo). Pastor Benoit, whose story is outlined briefly below, will share in greater detail his determined effort to bring Christ's beautiful message of reconciliation to the people in Haiti.



Pastor Benoit and his family, standing outside the mission church in Gonaives, Haiti.

Revenel Benoit (ben-wa) grew up in Gonaives, Haiti, the son of a Voodoo priestess. He was to become a Voodoo priest himself but at the age of 16, a Christian radio program led him to visit with a Catholic priest. As a result of that meeting he became a Christian. When he got home that day his mother announced her gods had told her he had converted to Christianity and she threw him out. He lived on the street several months until he eventually found his way to Florida, where he got a job with a contractor. One of his bosses saw that he was on fire with his faith and wanted to become a pastor. This man paid his way through Concordia Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Shortly after Rev. Benoit graduated his benefactor died.

Revenel felt compelled to return to his native Haiti and preach the Good News to those who live in the darkness of Voodoo. Shocked, his friends in the US questioned his decision. His answer was simply "I have to do it to serve God."

Rev. Benoit returned to his home about ten years ago. He immediately began going door to door, inviting people to his church on Sunday - the church he knew he would build. The mission has since grown to a main congregation and 21 satellite churches with lay pastors in the surrounding villages. It includes at least a dozen Christian primary schools, many of which have feeding programs supported by churches in the US. The education is good, and in the abject poverty of the country the simple meals are all some of the children get to eat for the day. With something in their stomachs they do much better with their studies.

cont'd page 3- Benoit



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BY THE WORD

NEWSLETTER
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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

Benoit - from page 2

One of Pr. Benoit's first projects was a pig program through Lutheran World Relief. Poverty and hunger are rampant in Haiti, so he arranged for 1000 pigs to be given to rural families with the condition that when the pig farrowed, one of them would go back to the church so another family might get one. Pigs can live off the land and are free-range in Haiti. The pigs provide the family with meat and a little income from the sale of the extra, as well as the sale of the extra farrows.

He and his wife then started a computer school with old machines from the States. In addition to training people who desperately need skills, it provides the mission income. The computer school now shares facilities with a secretarial school. Other projects to help fund the mission include a successful bakery and, because nearly all construction in the country is cement blocks, a cement block business begun with a donated block-making machine.

The mission effort now includes a boys shelter for street kids and a home for the elderly where the people are shown God's love and are cared for materially as funding is available. These people would otherwise be on the street. Pr. Benoit has laid the foundation for a new church that will seat at least 2000. On the same property he plans to start a home for street girls. He hopes to build a hospital and dreams of more training opportunities for his street kids, as well as many other projects.

To spread the Word, there is an FM radio station broadcasting the Christian message from a 100 watt transmitter. A TV station is now broadcasting from a large antenna recently moved from the church roof a mountain top 4 miles out of town, allowing the coverage to extend beyond the district. In the first six months since initially increasing the broadcast range, Pr. Benoit reports that over 125 Voodoo priests have converted to Christianity around his district, drawn by very powerful very powerful locally produced programming that appeals to and captivates their attention. This year Pr. Benoit and his supporters hope to put a much larger transmitter on the air from the same antenna, raising the effective radiated power from 600 to 40 thousand watts. The equipment is in place and just needs a bit of engineering to finish hooking it together and test it.

As president of the ELCH, Rev. Benoit has convinced its members to plan for self-sufficiency. He values the assistance of volunteers. He says "It's not money. It's human resources. You could give me a million dollars and I and my staff could never put the TV station together. We need people who can come down here and teach and show the people how to do better for themselves." Money helps, but people are essential to the mission. Most importantly, he asks that people pray for him and the mission often, trusting that God will guide them in their work.

You are invited to hear more of Pastor Benoit's compelling story of the the Holy Spirit at work in Haiti in Canton this fall.

John Gebuhr, a member of Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha, worked with Pr. Benoit, his congregation, and Church of the Master to obtain and install the donated satellite dish. John has become an active participant the mission efforts in Haiti and contributed many details for this article.

Radical Racist to Committed Christian

*Rev. Gerrit Wolfaardt to address LCMC
Convention on Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and
Remaining Faithful to the Gospel*

by Barry Anderson

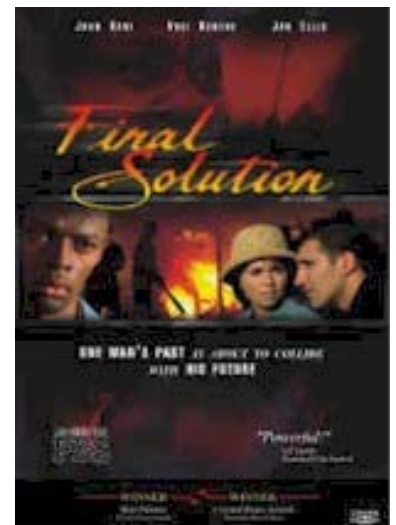
We are pleased to announce that as part of the Third Annual National Convention of Lutheran Congregations and Mission for Christ, Rev. Gerrit Wolfaardt will be speaking and preaching and will be joining LCMC members and guests on Sunday, October 5, 2003 and Monday, October 6, 2003. Rev. Wolfaardt will discuss, in part, his personal experiences of reconciliation of faith and reconciliation.

A white South African native, Rev. Wolfaardt has a remarkable personal story of a journey from racist to peacemaker. His role model for resolving the racial conflict in his country was Adolf Hitler, and his solution-- with the backing of rogue elements within the South African military-- was intended to be genocide.

Instead, Rev. Wolfaardt's story becomes one of forgiveness and reconciliation, with a dramatic turn to his life. Gerrit has preached and taught in 27 countries, including a recent visit to Cuba.

So dramatic was his experience that it has become the subject of an award winning film, "Final Solution," which has already aired on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) nationwide and is now in general release and widely available. (For further information on the movie, please see the [website www.finalsolution-the-movie.com](http://www.finalsolution-the-movie.com)).

While we would be delighted to have Rev. Wolfaardt as our guest to discuss forgiveness, reconciliation, and the change only the Gospel can make, LCMC convention attendees have



cont'd page 4- **Wolfaardt**

IRS Grants Group Exemption

- by Barry Anderson

The Internal Revenue Service has granted group exemption status to Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. LCMC organizations choosing to take advantage of this group exemption status can advise donors that contributions to those organizations are deductible for tax purposes if those contributions otherwise qualify as deductible.

Several explanatory notes are in order: First, LCMC organizations who desire to come under the LCMC group exemption must formally elect to do so. Second, there are some requirements and conditions that must be met by LCMC organizations to qualify for the group exemption. LCMC organizations interested in group exemption status should contact National Service Coordinator Bill Sullivan for further information.

There is no requirement that LCMC organizations use the group exemption; some LCMC organizations may choose to file for separate tax exempt status and have already done so.

FROM THE DESK OF . . .

SHARON MCFADYEN,
LCMC's DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

It seems hard to believe that June is nearly past. So much done, so much left yet to do! The transition of operations to our Canton office is well under way.

One of the biggest investments has been the new server. After careful deliberation, the choice of purchasing a Dell server was made. This server was chosen for its current capabilities and vast expandability in the future. The server has arrived in Canton and we are well on our way to establishing the links and transfers of the website and the listserv to the Canton office. The complete transition will hopefully be completed no later than June 30, 2003.

With a few minor exceptions, all of the financial records and responsibilities have also been transferred to Canton. We anticipate that by the end of June, we will be able to assert that there are no exceptions.

Wolfaardt - from page 3

another reason for listening with intense interest to what Rev. Wolfaardt has to say.

Gerrit is now an ordained minister in the Anglican Mission in America (AmiA) and is the National Director of Veritas College in the USA. Veritas College operates in 20 countries around the world, empowering churches to train their own leadership through the study of Scriptures. The curriculum has been translated into more than 10 languages and is used as a powerful training tool to raise up church leadership from Romania to Africa and the Middle East, to England and the USA.

In addition to his other responsibilities he is part of a group of leaders in the Anglican Mission in America (AmiA) grappling with leadership development issues in the emerging Mission in America. Anglican archbishops from Asia and Africa have ordained several former or current Episcopal priests as "missionary bishops" to the United States, seeking to reverse the collapse of the Episcopal Church USA and to return the focus of the Anglican church in America to the proclamation of the Gospel and away from divisive political and social issues.

The significance to LCMC of this development is that, as described by Rev. Wolfaardt, the Anglican Mission in America is organized along non-geographic lines to reduce conflict with authoritarian bishops and to give congregations choices as to where to belong.

Of course, LCMC has, for a variety of reasons, emphasized congregational autonomy and has provided for the creation of non-geographic districts to which our congregations can choose to belong. Not only are we looking forward to hearing from Rev. Wolfaardt about his personal experiences, about the efforts of the Anglican Mission in America to restore the Gospel to the Episcopal Church, but he is interested in our development as well.

The national convention of LCMC is open to all who wish to attend, listen and participate in worship and education. Only the business sessions are limited to voting participation by delegates.

This is only a part of the promise of an exciting and fascinating National Convention. We hope that congregations will send delegates and we hope that many guests and friends of LCMC will join us as well.

LCMC Professional Leadership Conference Declared Great Success

Attendees enthusiastically, unanimously agree to hold conference in same location next April

- by Bob Herbon, Jr. , Living Stones Lutheran Fellowship - Warren, Michigan

Maybe this was a misnamed conference. It should probably just be "Leadership Conference," rather than "Professional Leadership Conference," or maybe they were just being generous: my wife, Marie, and I may be leaders in our congregation, but not professional ones! In any case, we never felt out of place.

The conference was sponsored by the LCMC Ministry Board. The setting was the marvelous Lied Conference Center in Nebraska City, Nebraska. If Nebraska City is not well-known to you, at least one aspect of it is nationally-known: it is the home of Arbor Day, founded in the 1870's by J. Sterling Morton. The Lied Center is appropriately surrounded by many trees, some labeled for the curious, and paths through nearby wooded areas. Again, speaking of misnaming, the conference was as much a retreat, as the planning allowed for a free Monday afternoon. Several of the participants utilized the nearby golf course during the free time, some jogged; Marie and I visited some of the Arbor Day - related places in the area.

With Pr. Dale Wolf unable to attend the conference because of the death of his father, Pr. Kip Tyler, Lutheran Church of the Master - Omaha, NE, gave a report from the Ministry Board of LCMC on the Ministry Standards under development. Two of the main concerns of LCMC are finding and training its professional leaders. Some of the possibilities for schooling include the Baptist Bethel College & Seminary, with a Lutheran track, the Master's Institute, Houses of Study (perhaps regionalized by district), and existing Lutheran seminaries. For pastors seeking to be rostered in LCMC, there would be a colloquy process through districts such as ALD and ERD; however, a national process would be required for persons/congregations not part of a district. Most of the colloquy questions for LCMC were adapted from a similar listing from the Augsburg Lutheran District.

Prs. Chris Magnell & Mark Vander Tuig, Lutheran Church of the Cross - Altoona, IA, gave a presentation on the LCMC Strategic Planning Team, and as an exercise (as well as to provide additional input) the conference participants were asked to answer the same questions as were submitted to the LCMC congregations. Pr. Mark discussed strategic planning for congregations as well.

By the time this article was written, Pr. Steve Ernst had been ordained and installed at City on a Hill Lutheran Church - Manhattan Beach, CA, a new mission church in the LCMC. After serving as a youth minister at another Lutheran church, mission-planting gifts were observed in him by a mentoring pastor, and he was encouraged to start a new congregation. In the final seminar on Mission Starts, Pr. Steve gave a "case study" of how City on a Hill was established, including the challenging part of finding a location to begin.

For us, not only was the time spent excellent for bringing information back to our congregation, but also a time to meet new people as well as fellowship with old acquaintances. We sang, prayed, and worshiped together. We met people from large congregations and small, pastors from single as well as multi-point parishes, and people from congregations in LCMC alone, LCMC and ELCA, and even from ELCA and non-ELCA congregations, just seeking information. We hope they liked what they saw!

One interesting aspect was the final day, when we celebrated Holy Communion. Jarl Iverson, from Atone-ment Lutheran Church - Fargo, ND, had provided the music throughout the conference, accompanying our singing on both keyboard and guitar. Jarl had brought the bread and wine for the elements, and suggested we gather in a circle and commune each other. When the circle was formed, all the pastors deferred to a very surprised Jarl, who said the Words of Institution before the communion. In a day when some are beginning to rewrite who can and who cannot preside at communion, it was refreshing to see so many pastors step back and allow our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to preside at His own Supper!

Statement of Purpose Adopted by Great Lakes District

Group makes plans to host national convention

- by Bob Herbon, GLD Coordinator

The churches of LCMC's Great Lakes District met on Saturday, May 10, at Zion Lutheran Church in Ottawa Lake, Michigan. This was our third gathering!

We adopted our Statement of Purpose (*at right*). We also firmed up plans for serving as hosts at LCMC's national convention October 5-7 at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Canton, Michigan. District members will provide "people and goods;" volunteers can serve as ushers, and congregations will send along refreshments for the convention's break times.

Pastor Bill Sullivan, LCMC's National Service Coordinator, gave us an update about the LCMC and some of the activities, including the Professional Leadership Conference held in late April in Nebraska. He also told us about the decision by Sola Scriptura Lutheran Church (a mission start-up church in Flint, Michigan) to cease worshipping on Sunday but continue to meet on Wednesdays for Bible study.

We also set the date for our next district gathering: Saturday, August 9. St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Farmersville, Ohio, will be the host congregation, but the meeting will be held at Van Buren State Park near Findlay, Ohio. That way travel will be less burdensome for everyone.

Of course, we had a great time of worship, Bible study, and fellowship!

Christ is our unity!



"Let the heart of those
who seek the Lord be
glad!"

(1 Chronicles 16:10b)

Great Lakes District Statement of Purpose (adopted 10 May, 2003)

The Great Lakes District of LCMC consists of LCMC congregations who vote to join for the purpose of fellowship and mutual support.

As member congregations of LCMC, we all have subscribed to the LCMC Statement of Faith.

Our Purpose:

1. To assemble/gather periodically for Christian fellowship, both socially and spiritually, and to host guest speakers on issues of interest.
2. Seek to get the word out on LCMC thus encouraging non-LCMC congregations/individuals to learn more about membership in or participation with LCMC and GLD.
3. Provide information on resources to assist pastors and lay leaders in educating the members of their LCMC congregations in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran confessional witness to the Scriptures, and what LCMC is and believes.
4. Identify, encourage, and support individuals who are interested in becoming LCMC pastors.
5. Provide a screening committee for colloquizing* of non-LCMC pastors.
6. Sponsor professional development opportunities for GLD pastors and lay leaders.
7. Help coordinate and facilitate support of current LCMC mission congregations and establishment of new ones.
8. Organize youth-related gatherings/activities to encourage education and spiritual growth of our young people.
9. Promote mission events/activities which give member congregations opportunities to participate in outreach, domestically and internationally.

* An interview, background review and affirmation of confessional beliefs for non-LCMC-rostered clergy

A continuing series profiling LCMC congregations:

Meet . . .

UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

- by Jim Rogers, Pastor

United Lutheran Church is a small, rural congregation with a history dating back to 1888 in politically conservative North Central Washington. Waterville is an economically struggling town of 1100 people who live and die on a wheat growing economy. The local retail businesses have lost to neighboring Wenatchee, 25 miles away, a population of 25,000.

Members of United in Waterville, Washington voted 69-3 in favor of leaving the ELCA on its first ballot in December, 2002.

Many of the members expressed their regret over the hasty consent in 1961 when American Lutherans merged. They agreed with Dr. Preuss when he said, "When you start to call them bishops, they will start to act like bishops." Until CCM passed, there was little awareness about the issues of priesthood. Waterville tended to be isolated from church politics. The 1987 merger came with no resistance.

Pastor Jim Rogers was elected to the synod council in 1995. He brought back to the congregation rumblings of discontent mainly from representatives of Word Alone. He used his monthly newsletter to inform the congregation of the issues regarding CCM. The Lutheran Commentator and F.O.C.L. were valuable resources to help balance the political correctness of the ELCA and the Lutheran Magazine.

Discontent about the direction of the ELCA grew. Members of our church felt that our church would be swept up in the political movement of the church. United was simply an old ALC church that looked suspiciously at central control, priests and lack of member representation in government. Mike Grande, the president of the congregation during these years until the time of the vote, said, "When you take the Bible away and center your beliefs on culture, you might as well read Shakespeare."

Grande said, "The ELCA has become more concerned about worldliness and political correctness than the teachings of the Bible."

United council members voted in the spring of 2002 to bring the congregation to a vote by the end of the year. The congregation held several forums. The council task force circulated notebooks throughout the congregation containing a balanced overview of the issues regarding CCM, homosexuality, representative vote and church ownership.

Many of the members were concerned about the power of bishops in the Episcopalian system of government. Pastor Jim Rogers insisted that the church is built on Christ, and a pastor is a member of the laity with a special call to preach and teach the Gospel. Rogers said, "We have a fundamental trust in the Word of God. Our efforts to separate ourselves from the ELCA are efforts to restore Lutheran trust in Word Alone. We are staying in the Lutheran Church; the ELCA has left the Lutheran Church."

Ken Willms, our newly elected president of the congregation, presided over the final vote in March, 2003. The vote was successful - more than 90% of the congregation.

Willms, a life-long member of the Lutheran Church in Waterville, has seen the mergers of 1961 and 1987. He said many of the members disliked the idea of the 1961 merger, but went along anyway. Ten years after the merger, ALC district congregations started calling their presiding pastors, bishops. Willms said the congregation thought that was too Catholic. Willms said, "Lutheran conformity to the historic episcopate in order to satisfy the Episcopalians is a big mistake."

Genevieve Jett, a member of the council task force at United to lead the congregation to a vote, said, "It is not just the priesthood that upsets Lutherans." Jett is a life-long Lutheran originally from North Dakota and a member of United. "Our family belonged to the Free Church in Sharon where Lutherans are independent. "In the post ELCA church, we are essentially without representation at church-wide and synod assemblies. The new CCM agreement has little to do with mission and more to do with setting the foundations for a merger."

Jett said she has listened to many people in the church. "They are relieved the vote is over, and we are free from the ELCA."

EPIPHANY GROUP ORGANIZES IN SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA

- by Kathy Sandmann, Epiphany Group Secretary

The Epiphany Group is unique in that it is both a chapter of the WordAlone Network and a district of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. The group, which has been meeting monthly for almost two years, formalized its structure with the adoption of a constitution and election of officers in March 2003. Representing over two hundred individuals as well as congregations in thirty five Southwestern Minnesota communities, our geographic district has chosen to focus on education. We are doing this in several different ways:

- ◆ Members within the district are developing educational materials which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the fundamental teaching of the Christian/Lutheran church. These Christian educational resources will feature materials for Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, confirmation classes, new member instruction, and adult education. All curriculums are designed to be affordable, reusable, and practical.
- ◆ We are also preparing and distributing materials that truthfully and boldly declare the departures of the church from Christian values and understandings upon which our faith is founded. Currently, booklets are available that offer easy-to-understand explanations of CCM, LCMC, and the sexuality issue.
- ◆ Finally, we are committed to taking every opportunity to publicly speak out to instruct and inform people of the church about the theological and doctrinal positions expressed in Scripture. We have held several informational meetings in the last two years, with attendance of 300 to 400 people at each.

A web site is up and running at www.epiphanygroup.net. Check it out for more information on the educational materials that are currently available. The location of monthly meetings varies, but all meetings are opened to the public, and we invite anyone interested in learning more about the Epiphany Group to join us. Specific dates, times and locations of meetings are available on the web site. Reproducible copies of the booklets are available by contacting Kathy Sandmann at stpaul_lutheran@hotmail.com.



Fellowship, Mutual Support Spur Formation of Hybrid

Northwest Network Created

- by Paul Braafladt, Coordinator

On March 29, 2003, members from several LCMC congregations in the Pacific Northwest gathered in Ellensburg, Washington. Ostensibly, our purpose was to spend the day finalizing new Northwest District Bylaws. That didn't happen. What did occur was a decision to put plans for a Northwest District on hold and to launch a less formal relationship between LCMC and LCMC/ELCA congregations, a "Northwest Network" (NWN).

The focus of the new Network is based on the need for fellowship and mutual support. If you scan a U. S. map, the landmass of Idaho, Oregon and Washington, when taken together, make fellowship needs even more apparent among nine scattered congregations in the three states.

What will happen? To begin, two or three things will occur. The first will be a visitation of these congregations by myself and one other person. The first visitation has already been scheduled for the American Lutheran Church in Kellogg, Idaho on June 29th. Other such visits will follow. My goal is to complete these visits by Thanksgiving. During these visits, my hope is to meet with the pastors, congregational leaders and members in general. No doubt the format will differ from place to place. But the message will be the same. It will be to lift high the cross and our hope in the Savior and to hold up the LCMC as the Lord's answer to many of our ecclesial prayers. I expect questions, discussion and the opportunity to encourage members to attend the coming annual LCMC convention in October.

Our group talked about many ideas to foster fellowship and support. One more such idea will pick up steam in the summer months. My hope is to gather a small committee, if only by internet, from the Northwest Network to plan for at least one full day together in late October when we can take time to further develop mutual support and fellowship opportunities and celebrate together in a

cont'd page 8- NW Network

TO the Editor --

-- FROM the Editor

Friends: The following e-mail message arrived after I posted an invitation to contribute material to our newsletter on LCMCTalk:

Deb,

I don't know if this is news worthy, but it may be.

My name is April Dietz (nee Eisenhauer). I am beginning my Greek studies next month and full classes in September at Luther Seminary in the M.Div. program. I'm LCMC (only) from St. John Lutheran in Sterling, NE. My husband Mark Dietz, from Auburn, NE, and I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on May 10. We also were married on May 10 at St. John. Mark is working for Honeywell in Minneapolis as a Computer Engineer.

We're currently looking into any church in the Twin Cities that we may attend during our time at Seminary and/or any church or agency that would be a good fit for contextual education while I'm at Seminary. In addition, we're looking toward the future and researching possibilities for internship opportunities in 2-3 years. Our contact information is:

Mark and April Dietz
1588-C Eustis St. #112
Lauderdale, MN 55108
651-644-5404
aeisenha@luthersem.edu

Mainly, we're really looking for any support (especially congregational) in the Twin Cities area-- support for an LCMC seminarian and family. We moved up here on June 1 and are living on campus at the above address.

In response to my follow-up, a line April wrote stuck out: "Prayer is the support we need!"

Newsworthy? You bet-- on a variety of levels:

April's note is a personal appeal, but it also serves as a reminder of where we have come from. This association was founded in part on the premise that seminarians opposing the Historic Episcopate need a "safe haven." It also reminds us of another reason LCMC was founded: because, outside the ELCA, ordination of women has not been an option.

This is in part why we exist-- and April, a seminarian and a young woman, has now asked for our support. Being faithful and true to our principals isn't always easy. A refresher on why we've chosen LCMC may help strengthen our

resolve and renew our enthusiasm for the work ahead, focusing on sharing God's gift of grace.

Hearing from April also reminds us we need to work and pray even harder about how and where we will train pastors and lay leadership. Our future as an association may well depend on how well we resolve those questions. There are no LCMC seminaries, but we're already working on some good options. Many people-- district teams, individuals, the LCMC Ministry Board, even your board of trustees -- have been in prayer and thoughtful conversation about this crucial issue. Many are working on fresh ways to approach this challenge. How we do it, how open we are to thinking beyond traditional seminary training, and how we communicate with each other about it, will be key to our growth.

And, though April didn't make an appeal for financial assistance, her e-mail is also an opportunity to consider what gifts we might be willing to share. Training to be a pastor is an expensive proposition, and to that end LCMC has a seminary debt relief fund that is an opportunity to help relieve some of that burden after the fact. If individuals or congregations can identify deserving individuals and assist with gifts for students still in school so much the better.

So, April, the answer is yes. This is newsworthy. You have followed your conscience and declared yourself an LCMC seminarian. We're delighted! You've asked for and you deserve our fullest support, in whatever manner we can offer it, for now at the beginning of your theological education and throughout our lives together in Christ's service.

So how about it, friends? What can you do to support April -- and all the other seminarians we hope will follow?

NW Network - from page 7

joyful Reformation worship service.

Not least is the need to develop a Network Newsletter. One issue was sent out last spring thanks to Louise Strander from Our Saviour's Lutheran (OSLC) in Burien, WA. More will be needed in the future to publicize and inform about the Northwest Network and about all aspects of the LCMC!

I'll close this article by recognizing the service of David Livermore and thanking him for being the interim chair of the Northwest District. David will continue to handle NWN finances as bookkeeper of OSLC. I was elected to a two year term as "Coordinator" of the Northwest Network, LCMC.

Ed. Note: You may contact Paul at pbraafladt@mindspring.com

City on a Hill Lights Up --for Sure!

- by Pastor David Drum



On Sunday, June 1, Steve Ernst became the fourth pastor ordained into LCMC. His call is to be the mission developer for City on a Hill. Ordainers included Bill Sullivan, National Service Coordinator of LCMC, and David Drum, representing the Evangelical-Renewal District, which City on a Hill has joined. City on a Hill's worship team was joined by

a worship team from Resurrection Lutheran Church in providing the music for the service.

One of the tender and joyful moments of the service came during the installation, when Steve was asked, "...Do you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?" Steve responded spontaneously and enthusiastically, "Sure!" So when the congregation was asked, "Will you, people of God at City on a Hill Lutheran Church, receive Steve as your Pastor...?" they also responded, "Sure!"

City on a Hill is meeting in the community center for the town of Manhattan Beach, in the South Bay area of Los Angeles. After a couple of preview services, designed to generate feedback and get the word out, weekly worship commenced on Easter Sunday. CoaH has been averaging 40-50 people per Sunday, and has begun small groups already. CoaH advertises itself as a relational church, and this identity has already taken root, as evidenced by the high percentage (approx. 80-90%) of people staying for 30 to 45 minutes after service just to enjoy fellowship with one another, followed by a significant number of people who then regularly go to lunch together on Sundays.

The community center is an ideal location, immediately adjacent to a walking path that goes through the center of Manhattan Beach. CoaH has been handing out free water bottles to walkers as a way of being a blessing and getting the word out about the community. A weekly e-newsletter began recently.

Church of the Cross gears up for Youth !

- by Pastor Chris Magnell

Final preparations are under way for "Takin' It to the Streets" - the 2003 LCMC Youth Gathering. It is the first youth gathering for LCMC and plans are going well! We will have around 100 youth join us and get together to worship the Lord, share in Bible study and growth in faith! While they are

there, the youth will also experience Adventureland Amusement Park, Underground worship and concerts by the Pool Boys and Swen and Dean.



Registration is only \$100.00 for the gathering, per youth. While there is no official registration deadline, churches will want to make hotel reservations as soon as possible, and late registrants may not get their T-Shirts until well after the gathering (since we need t shirt sizes to order them).

For information on registration, or general questions about the gathering, call Chris Magnell at Lutheran Church of the Cross, 515-967-4818, or email him at cmagnell@aol.com.

Steve began working as a youth director at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Torrance in 1992. He and his wife Ginnette were married in 1994, and now have two children, Ezekiel (3) and Nathan (1). Steve graduated from Talbot School of Theology at Biola University with an M.A. in Christian education in 1996, and then went on to receive his M.Div. degree from Fuller Seminary in 2002. In 1999 Steve's responsibilities shifted from youth director to teaching minister. Steve has been mentored in Lutheran theological education by Pastor Paul Spaulding of Resurrection Lutheran Church in nearby Redondo Beach, Steve's home church.

City on a Hill is supported in part by Evangelical-Renewal District congregations, as well as other LCMC friends. For more information, visit the website at www.coahsb.org, or contact Steve at Steve@coahsb.org.



SHARING AND CARING . . .

Please add these concerns to your prayers:

For April and Mark Dietz, as they begin a new life as one, and as April begins her seminary training. Surround them with care and love, and strengthen them both for the Lord's service . . . For those congregations moving toward a vote to join LCMC, that they might find fellowship in this association . . . For those congregations moving toward a vote to sever ties with the ELCA, that they might discern God's will, and in the process treat each other with respect and Christian love, working to heal any hurts and disagreements . . . Special blessings for the members of United Lutheran Church in Waterville, WA, as they move into a new phase of congregational life together in the LCMC . . . For those who are in harm's way, that the Lord protect them and give them strength and courage to carry out their assignments . . . For strength, comfort, and healing for all those suffering from natural disasters-- those who have lost loved ones, those who have been injured, those who have lost their homes or businesses, crops or livestock, to fires, floods, or tornadoes. Thank God for the firefighters, police, relief workers, and all others who work to bring relief . . . Safe travel for everyone answering the ALD call to assemble at Our Savior's in Audubon July 20-22 . . . For the youth gathering at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Altoona, that their experience together might inspire them to take their faith "to the streets" . . . For Pastor Benoit and the mission in Haiti, for the joint Mexico Mission team from Lutheran Church of the Master and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Humboldt, SD and for all those who work in the mission fields . . . Wisdom and guidance, enthusiasm and passion for the leadership of the congregations, districts, networks, and individual members of LCMC.

Thy will be done, Lord.