

October 2014

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### **ALSO INCLUDED...**

Church Musicians Workshop  
Parish Paper



## Calendar of Events

- October 4 — Church Musicians Workshop, St. John, Storm Lake  
October 6-7 — New Worker Orientation, Camp Okoboji  
October 7-8 — Leadership Retreat, Camp Okoboji  
October 23-24 — Iowa Districts East and West Teachers Conference, Urbandale  
October 25-26 — District Jr. Youth Gathering, West Des Moines

## ORDAINED MINISTERS

### CALLS RECEIVED

Rev. Todd Bunge, Hawarden, to Hartley, IA.  
Rev. Timothy Geitz, Le Mars, to First, Missoula, MT.  
Rev. Bruce Lesemann, St. John, Storm Lake, to Messiah, Sterling, IL.  
Rev. Joseph Meyer, Peoria, IL, to Gloria Dei, Urbandale.

### CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Christopher Maronde, Deloit/Kiron, to Lincoln, NE.  
Rev. Patrick O'Neal, Associate, Immanuel, Spirit Lake, to Senior Pastor, Immanuel, Spirit Lake.  
Rev. Joseph Seifert, Algona, to Cheney, KS.  
Rev. William Weiss, Lidderdale, to Trinity, Des Moines.

### CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Scott Jensen, Mapleton, to Luther Memorial, River Falls, WI.  
Rev. Christopher Maronde, Deloit/Kiron, to Hartley.  
Rev. Dr. Steve Turner, Algona, to Redeemer, Willmar, MN.

## COMMISSIONED MINISTER

### CALL ACCEPTED

Emily Woelfel, St. Paul, Fort Dodge, to Oshkosh, WI.



### Looking Ahead...

November 1...IOWAY Banquet, Carroll  
November 8...Treasurer Workshop, Carroll  
November 27-28...Thanksgiving, District Office Closed

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iowaDistrictWest](http://www.youtube.com/user/iowaDistrictWest)

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**Please note:** The inclusion of items from outside sources in *The Monthly* is for information purposes only. Inclusion of such items does not constitute District endorsement.



## Planting Together

October 2014

409 Kenyon Road, Suite B — Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501  
515-576-7666 Fax 515-576-2323 [www.idwlcms.org](http://www.idwlcms.org)  
Contact email: [sue.light@idwlcms.org](mailto:sue.light@idwlcms.org)

The mission of Iowa District West is **Connecting, Resourcing, Optimizing, Partnering** and **Serving** with the member congregations for the extension of the Gospel within our communities, throughout the District, and into all the world.

### So Much to be Happy About



As the Harvest for 2014 is upon us in Iowa, we have so much to be happy about! The Lord tells us so clearly in 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Be JOYFUL always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus!" 2014 has been a very unusual year. The corn and beans were never under the usual July and August draught. We have had so much rain...and it's now so easy to say, "Boy, I wish the prices were better...I hope the rain stops...we are now going to have wet crops!" It's so easy to see the negative side of things, but we have so much to be happy about. We will have an abundant harvest...the Lord has given this to us, and we have so much to be happy about!

The greatest JOY in this life is knowing where our real home is...this world is NOT our home! Our greatest JOY is knowing that if we believe in Jesus with our whole heart, we don't have to say, "I hope we'll be in heaven"...we KNOW FOR CERTAIN...not by what we have done, but by what Jesus did for us on the cross. That's the most important gift and the greatest "harvest" of all.

Yes, the harvest is important and the farms are important, however, all these things will pass away, and in the "big picture" of life they really don't mean much. The only thing that really means something is the Lord Jesus and His love for us! The real "planting" in our lives should be telling more and more people about Jesus...in our family, in our community, in our Nation and in lands of darkness where they never have heard HIS name. That's what we are really doing here on earth and why we take a breath! Planting seeds for the "real harvest"! We are all real missionaries!

Gary Thies, Mission Development Counselor  
712-882-1029 or [gary.thies@idwlcms.org](mailto:gary.thies@idwlcms.org)

### **Wanted: District prayer partners for missions!**

We're recruiting people around the District who are willing to regularly pray for the mission efforts of our District and congregations. Prayers will be solicited from the pastors and shared with the prayer partners on a regular basis. These are prayers strictly for the mission efforts within IDW and not those for healing, safety, comfort, etc. for which we regularly pray in worship. If you're willing or have questions, please contact Rev. Mark Gerken at 515-570-2331 or [Mark.Gerken@idwlcms.org](mailto:Mark.Gerken@idwlcms.org).

### **Depression**

Notice all the talk about depression following Robin Williams' suicide? Is it prominent in your area? Perhaps your congregation could seize the opportunity for mercy ministry. A great **FREE** Lutheran resource is available at [www.darkmyroad.org/the-book](http://www.darkmyroad.org/the-book).

### **October is Clergy Appreciation Month**

Clergy Appreciation Month is a special time that congregations set aside each year to honor their pastor(s) and his family for their hard work and sacrificial dedication. You might consider a special service of affirmation, a potluck event, or planting a tree in their honor. The sky is the limit! It is usually scheduled in October, but can be held at any time that is convenient for the church. For additional ideas, download details from Focus on the Family's Clergy Appreciation Month Planning Guide at <http://thrivingpastor.org/clergy-appreciation-guide>.

### **Chaplain services**

Did you know Chaplain Steve Benson (Sioux City, 712-212-5482) and Chaplain Jim Brammeier (Des Moines, 515-707-9195) are ready to complement your ministry by visiting members or others when hospitalized in those metro areas? Other chaplains in surrounding areas are William Otte (Mayo Clinic, [wotte@gmail.com](mailto:wotte@gmail.com), 507-255-5780), and Mike Musick (Iowa City, [ideuichaplain@live.com](mailto:ideuichaplain@live.com), 319-558-9083).

### **News from Camp Okoboji**

- ◆ Crisp cool air, vibrant fall colors and a scenic lake all combine for a perfect setting. Camp Okoboji is a great place to retreat during the fall months! Call Kellie (712-337-3325) and see what is available for weekends or during the week!
- ◆ Omelet experts agree that Camp Okoboji's Omelet Brunches are awesome! Planning to be in the area? Stop in for a real treat. The November 2 Brunch will support J.O.Y. Camp which caters to special need campers.

### **District Calendar**

October 4...Musicians Workshop, St. John, Storm Lake  
October 6-7...New Worker Orientation, Camp Okoboji  
October 7-8...District Leadership Retreat, Camp Okoboji  
October 23-24...IDE & IDW Teachers Conference, Urbandale  
October 25-26...District Jr. Youth Gathering, West Des Moines

For more information on Iowa District West activities, view *The Monthly* at <http://www.idwlcms.org/publications.php>.

Dear Sports Fans,

In the final game of his 2003 season, high school football star Nate Haasis set the conference record for passing yards in a career. But the final drive felt fishy to Nate. It seemed too easy. His worries were confirmed when it came out that his coach and the opposing coach had made a deal to ensure that Nate would set the record. The opposing coach said that he had his defenders put their arms in their jerseys to prevent them from tackling.

Hearing this, Nate sent a letter to the head of the conference saying, "I would like to preserve the integrity and sportsmanship of a great conference for future athletes," and asking that his final pass not count towards his total. His request was granted and his name was removed from the record books.

Sara Tucholsky had just hit her first ever homerun in an important NCAA conference game. But in her excitement she missed first base. Realizing her error she turned around to touch the base, and as she did, she tore a ligament in her knee. Unable to run, the umpires told her that if her teammates or coaches helped her around the bases, she'd be out. And if she couldn't run any further, her hit would be ruled a single. So the defense picked her up and carried her the rest of the way.

These stories on good sportsmanship are heart-warming. The integrity of a young man, who could have had his name forever in the record books and immortalized in the eyes of many, requests that his last touchdown be removed from the record books because some good intentioned coaches interfered with the task at hand and robbed him of the joy and accomplishment of reaching his goal legitimately. Who would have ever known? Only those immediately involved. Sara Tucholsky received a gift from the opposing team as they carried her around the bases and was granted her first homerun. Other teams may have figured "too bad." It is one less run we need to make up and all is fair in a game. If you can't run the bases, it is not our fault. Yet, they acted selflessly and bore her burden courageously. They lived as the Apostle Paul sets forth these words in his letter to the Philippians: ***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves"*** (Philippians 2:3).

All too often we see and hear the stories of athletes gone wild. On the field of competition, in 2004, an excessive celebration rule is adopted by the NFL and the NCAA. Taunting and celebration are both offenses in the NFL; as a result, gaudy displays are often frowned upon. If the league views the act as highly offensive, large fines and even suspensions can be issued. In 2006 the NFL, in an effort to cut down on

celebrations, amended its rules to include an automatic 15-yard penalty against any player who leaves his feet or uses a prop, like a towel, or more specifically the football. The penalty is called as "excessive celebration," and the yardage is charged against the offending player's team when that team kicks off to the opposing team.

College football, governed by the NCAA, also penalizes excessive celebrations with a 15-yard penalty. If a player's actions are considered "unsportsmanlike conduct" the result is a dead-ball foul; a flagrant "unsportsmanlike conduct" foul requires player ejection. If a player's non-football-related act (e.g. taunting or cursing) causes an opponent to physically retaliate, it is considered fighting and both players are ejected.

It saddens this sports fan to think that such rules need to be regulated. These behaviors seem to be considered normal in the spirit of competition. Gone are the days of old when there was no need for such rules as past players governed their own actions. Mickey Mantle said, "After I hit a homerun I had a habit of running the bases with my head down. I figured the pitcher already felt bad enough without me showing him up rounding the bases."

We however tout our accomplishments or our favorite player's accomplishments in life. In baseball we esteem those who are possessors of the Gold Glove awards. We envy those possessors of the Super Bowl championship ring. We brag about our favorite players and have at our finger tips their various statistics of ERAs, RBIs, batting averages, or touchdown passes completed. We fail to heed John's warning in 1 John 2:16 which says, ***"For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world."***

The creator of the universe however does none of those things. He who caused the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the mute to speak, and healed many with diseased bodies or possessed by demons who are cast out draws no attention to these things. Jesus, who would have the right to brag about all His accomplishments, draws no attention to Himself by those things. Even when the disciples were impressed with their abilities to do the same thing, Jesus says in Luke 10:19-20, ***"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*** They were not to be distracted by their accomplishments, but they were to rejoice over the fact that their names are written in heaven.

Jesus does not focus on His miracles. He does not do them in an effort to get followers for Himself. He does them so that He may reach the people with the Gospel. In Philippians 2:5-11, *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Jesus was not exalted because He healed many who were sick. He was not exalted because He turned water into wine or fed 5000 men, not counting women and children, with a boy’s lunch of fish and bread. He was not exalted because He could walk on the water or command the wind and the waves to be still. He was exalted because He was obedient to the Father’s will of redeeming all mankind. He was exalted for humbling Himself and emptying Himself by taking on the form of a servant, for He came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. He was exalted for considering others more than Himself and for dying in our behalf.

My fellow sports fans, as we continue to play in this serious game of life, let us show ourselves as those touched by Jesus. Let us demonstrate good sportsmanship like the opposing team that carried Sara around the bases as we “bear one another’s burden, serve one another in love, forgive each other as God in Christ has forgiven us. Let us consider others more important than ourselves and fulfill the law of love by helping our neighbor in need. Let us be like Nate and not be concerned about our own accomplishments, but instead consider the integrity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by drawing all men to Him who demonstrates the prime example of Good Sportsmanship, for when He hung in agony on Calvary’s cross Jesus spoke words of love and forgiveness for His tormentors.

Your Fellow Good Sport,  
Chaplain Steven K. Benson

The Good Shepherd Hour can be heard on KSCJ-1360 (Sioux City) at 8 am; KLEM-1419 (Le Mars) at 8 am; KAYL-101.7 (Storm Lake) at 8:30 am; and KVFD-1400 (Fort Dodge) at 8 am.

## THE LAMPLIGHTER



**THEME: “Good Sportsmanship”**

**OCTOBER 2014**

***“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others”*** (Philippians 2:3-4).

*A Publication of: The Lutheran Service Auxiliary  
4505 Applewood Ave  
Sioux City, Iowa 51106*

Next meeting is at Hope Lutheran Church – South  
Sioux City, Nebraska on November 5, 2014

**NEWS FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER**  
***Iowa District West Congregations' Mission Receipts***



<b>For the Fiscal Period Ending August 2014</b>	
Anticipated Amount	\$ 145,000
Actual Receipts	\$ 127,720
<b>Fiscal Year-to-Date Receipts</b>	
Anticipated Amount	\$1,015,000
Actual Receipts	\$962,315
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$ (52,685)
<b>Use of Mission Receipts</b>	
Remitted to Synod (47%)	\$ 452,245
Balance for District programs/operations	\$ 510,070
Total Receipts	\$ 962,315
<b>Mission Receipts Compared With Last Year</b>	
Year-to-date 2014	\$962,315
Year-to-date 2013	\$1,029,191
Over (under) last year	\$(66,876)

**Lutheran Church Extension Fund**

The mission of Lutheran Church Extension Fund is to provide opportunity to make funds and services available in support of the Great Commission through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

As of August 2014, 978 investments in Iowa District West totaled \$32,816,320. These investments are providing opportunity for 36 loans totaling \$9,007,948 plus commitments totaling \$453,886. LCEF puts invested dollars to work in mission and ministry right here in Iowa District West.

If you are interested in investing in the ministry of LCEF or if you have questions on the loans and services provided to our congregations, please contact Carole White. **Come, Join the Ministry!**

Pastors and Church Secretaries: How about including a brief note about LCEF in your church newsletter or bulletin? Please use the following short paragraph—thank you!

**Don't Leave Your Belongings Behind**

No matter how often you change jobs or careers, don't leave behind your work-sponsored retirement plan. Take time to roll over your 403b, 401K, Keogh or personal IRAs and invest them with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF). IRAs invested with LCEF work for the church now, but will be there when you are ready to retire. Get rates and details at [www.lcef.org](http://www.lcef.org) or call 800-843-5233.

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. Neither LCEF nor its representatives give legal, accounting or tax advice.

## Stewardship Spark / Monthly Mission Moment

Did you know that your congregational mission dollars support the District budget in a variety of missions, programs, projects, and activities? This month the part of the budget that is highlighted is administration/support services focusing on technology. The District budget provides \$10,000 for this account. This includes all computer hardware, software, training, internet, and LCMS technology assessment of \$1,900. To save costs, District purchases Microsoft software through the Charity Open License Discount program (Microsoft Windows and Office Professional which also is available to churches for \$80 a license per computer).

### The 39th Regular Convention of Iowa District West, LCMS

Planning your budget for 2015? Remember to budget for the District Convention scheduled for June 21-23, 2015 at Camp Okoboji. Tentatively, there will be NO rate increase for the convention assessment: calculate \$60 per congregation and 18¢ per communicant member. Invoices will be sent mid-January 2015 with the receipt vouchers mailing. In IDW we are blessed to have Camp Okoboji host the District Convention which allows us to keep assessment rates extremely low compared to other districts.

### Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer Workshop

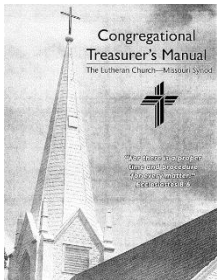
Plan now to attend the workshop on Saturday, November 8 at St. Paul, Carroll from 9 am to 3 pm. Cost will be \$25 per congregation which includes materials (one Congregational Treasurer's Manual per church) and lunch. Any individuals within the church having financial responsibilities should attend. The guest speaker will be Mr. Bob Joy, CPA. He has a wealth of knowledge with almost 25 years of financial experience. Bob owns an accounting firm and is the financial manager for a large church.



A second workshop is tentatively planned for January 24, 2015 at Timothy, Council Bluffs. The guest speaker will be Mr. Paul Pettit, CPA and Business Manager & Treasurer for the Nebraska District for over 25 years.

Thanks to Carole White and Lutheran Church Extension Fund for providing lunch. Any questions contact Roger Curtis at the District office or email [roger.curtis@idwlcms.org](mailto:roger.curtis@idwlcms.org). The brochure/registration form is available online.

### Congregational Treasurer's Manuals



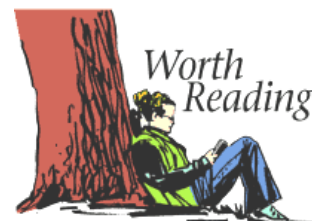
Congregational Treasurer's Manuals and CDs have been ordered and are expected to arrive mid-October. If you would like to purchase a book (Volume 1 only), the cost is \$10.00 plus shipping. This resource is also on the LCMS website at [www.lcms.org/ctm](http://www.lcms.org/ctm). The manuals will be available at the annual Treasurer Workshop (Saturday, November 8 in Carroll and Saturday, January 24 in Council Bluffs). These manuals are extremely helpful tools for staff, treasurers, and church councils to better understand the many aspects of the congregation's business needs.

### Taxes and Ministers

The 2014-2015 edition of TAXES AND MINISTERS, a 32-page document, will be available soon at [www.lcms.org/churchoffice](http://www.lcms.org/churchoffice) (scroll down to Financial Matters).

This booklet, designed for ordained and commissioned ministers of the LCMS, includes:

- ❖ The IRS's definition of minister
- ❖ Employment status: W-2 or 1099
- ❖ Housing/parsonage allowance
- ❖ Reporting income and expenses
- ❖ Paying federal and state taxes
- ❖ Social Security taxes
- ❖ Tax-favored savings plans



## Free Stewardship Resource

The Circuit Visitors are distributing this fall to each pastor a terrific stewardship program called “Empowered by Grace for Faithful Stewardship” from Stewardship Advisors. Also on the CD are a year of material to use each month in your congregation. Hopefully every congregation will use this material to engage congregation members in a greater understanding of biblical truths. Resources include Bible studies, newsletter articles, devotions, email messages, and more. Valued at over \$100, this resource is made available to you from the Stewardship Committee and paid for from LCEF operating results.

## Compensation & Benefit Recommendations

When planning budgets this fall for professional church workers, remember to review the Compensation and Benefit Recommendations for Professional Church Workers 2013-2015 that were approved at the last District convention. They are online under the stewardship link ([www.idwlcms.org/stewardship.php](http://www.idwlcms.org/stewardship.php)) on the right side of the page.



## Register to File W-2 Forms Online

Fall has arrived which means it's time to start thinking about end of year “to dos.” The Social Security Service now offers your church the ability to go to a website, complete W-2 Forms online, and submit them electronically to SSA. This is a great convenience for many churches since it means no more filling out and mailing paper forms to SSA. W-2 Online even prepares the W-3 for you and allows you to print copies of the W-2s suitable for distribution to your employees.

A simple registration process is required. You will receive a PIN (Personal Identification Number) immediately and a password about two weeks later. You can register online at [www.ssa.gov/employer](http://www.ssa.gov/employer) or call 800-772-6270.

Electronic filing has several advantages: the deadline is March 31 (not February 28), you will receive an electronic receipt for proof of filing, you have the ability to track the status of your receipt, and best of all it is free! Pass this information on to the individual who prepares the church's W-2 Forms.

## National Save for Retirement Week

National Save for Retirement Week is an effort to raise public awareness about the importance of saving for retirement. No matter what the worker's age or income, saving for retirement is not an option, it is a necessity! National Save for Retirement Week is October 19-25 celebrating the theme “Small Steps, Big Changes.” The week provides an opportunity for employees to reflect on their personal retirement goals and determine if they are on target to reach those goals. Even though Concordia Plan Services retirement program changed July 1, 2014, employers can still provide retirement support and distribute copies of the Salary Deferral Agreement (available at [www.concordiaplans.org](http://www.concordiaplans.org) under Resources/Forms). For more information, go to [www.retirementweek.org](http://www.retirementweek.org).

## Be Well Serve Well

The Concordia Health Plan Be Well Rewards program offers a menu of healthy activities and wellness programs that not only helps you (and your spouse) set and reach your health and wellness goals, but also rewards you with points you can convert to cash. CHP members (and their enrolled spouses) can **each** earn up to 250 points (\$250) during the program period (January 1- November 30, 2014)

One of the many activities is “track 30 minutes of physical activity three times a week.” Continue your physical activity by signing up for the Iowa Healthiest State Walk on October 8, 2014. The Healthiest State Initiative is a privately-led public initiative intended to inspire Iowans and their communities throughout the state to improve their health and happiness. To achieve our goal, individuals, families, businesses, faith-based organizations, not-for-profits and the public sector will unite in a community-focused effort to make Iowa the healthiest state in the nation by 2016. Be part of the movement by walking one kilometer (.62 miles or roughly 12 minutes). Join me and sign up today! To learn more, go to [www.iowahealthieststate.com](http://www.iowahealthieststate.com) and/or [www.facebook.com/HealthiestIowa](http://www.facebook.com/HealthiestIowa).



## Congregational Treasurer's Manual

The Congregational Treasurer's Manual is an indispensable resource for treasurers and staff of congregations throughout the Synod. Topics in the manual include:

### Employment Issues

- Ministers of the Gospel
- Housing (Parsonage) Allowance
- Lay Employees
- Concordia Plans
- Tax-favored Savings Plans
- Business Expenses
- Payroll and other Information Returns
- Tax Exempt Status
- Lutheran Schools/Early Childhood Centers
- Contributions by Donors
- Unrelated Business Income
- Tax and Compliance Issues



### Administering the Organization

- Organizing and Incorporating
- Responsibilities of Financial Officers
- Synod Purchasing Agreements
- Automated Systems
- Risk Management and Insurance

### Accounting and Finance

- Internal Control
- Budgeting
- Chart of Accounts
- Bookkeeping
- Financial Statement Reporting

## Taxes and Ministers 2014-2015 Edition

The Congregational Treasurer's Manual (volume 1) will be provided (one complimentary manual & CD per church). Attendees will also receive a copy of the revised document, "Taxes and Ministers." This handout, which highlights portions of the treasurer's manual, includes the following information:

- The IRS's Definition of Minister
- Employment Status: W-2 or 1099
- Housing/Parsonage Allowance
- Reporting Income and Expenses
- Paying Federal and State Taxes
- Social Security Taxes
- Tax-Favored Savings Plan

### Questions?

Call Roger Curtis at  
515.576.7666 or  
email [Roger.Curtis@idwlcms.org](mailto:Roger.Curtis@idwlcms.org).



**Plan now to attend the workshop in  
November 2014, January 2015, or both!**

Iowa District West, LCMS  
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515.576.7666

[www.idwlcms.org](http://www.idwlcms.org) ♦ [roger.curtis@idwlcms.org](mailto:roger.curtis@idwlcms.org)  
[www.lcms.org/ctm](http://www.lcms.org/ctm)

# 2014-2015 Iowa District West Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer Workshop

*"Where your treasure is, there will  
your heart be also" Luke 12:34*

**Choose from one of two sessions:**

**Saturday  
Nov. 8, 2014  
9 am to  
3 pm**

**Saturday  
Jan 24, 2015  
9 am to  
3 pm**

**St. Paul  
1844 Highland Dr  
Carroll**

**Timothy  
3112 W Broadway  
Council Bluffs**

## What are the Topics?

Experts who work with congregational financial issues will discuss key topics, including:

- IRS Reporting Requirements
- Congregational Treasurer's Manual
  - ♦ *Ministers Tax Status*
  - ♦ *Housing Allowance*
  - ♦ *Payroll*
  - ♦ *Employee vs. Outside Contractor Status*
  - ♦ *Contributions by Donors*
  - ♦ *Business Expenses*
  - ♦ *Guide for Financial Review Committee*
  - ♦ *Clergy Tax Issues*
  - ♦ *Treasurer Job Description Discussion*
- Other concerns by those in attendance

## Who should attend the Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer Workshop?

- Bookkeepers
- Office Managers
- Pastors
- Persons within the church who have financial responsibilities
- Financial Secretaries
- Stewardship Leaders
- Treasurers

*It is ideal if both pastor and financial team (treasurer/financial officer) attend.*

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness' has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

## Why Attend?

**Practical help.** This workshop provides simple, straightforward help relating to clergy tax and church treasurer issues. **Bottom line:** You get the tools you need to put an end to costly mistakes!

**Guest speakers:** Robert Joy will be the presenter in November. He is a CPA specializing in clergy taxes and has many years of experience of handling finances in the church. In January, Paul Pettit, Treasurer/Business Manager for the Nebraska District and practicing CPA, will be the speaker.

## What is the Cost?

**Cost is \$25 per congregation** (any number of members may attend).

A light lunch is provided by Lutheran Church Extension Fund ([www.LCEFuppermidwest.org](http://www.LCEFuppermidwest.org)) and Carole White.

## How Do I Register?

Complete the registration form or go online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/treasurer\\_workshop](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/treasurer_workshop). Please register at least one week prior to workshop.

## Please register me/us for the Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer Workshop

November 8, 2014 Carroll or  January 24, 2015 Council Bluffs or  both workshops



Please mail with a check  
for \$25 payable to:  
**Iowa District West**  
**409 Kenyon Road**  
**Suite B**  
**Fort Dodge, IA 50501**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Church/City: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Software \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Co. \_\_\_\_\_

Does your church follow the District Compensation Recommendations?  Yes  No

Topics or questions you would like addressed at workshop: \_\_\_\_\_

Fort Dodge, IA 50501

You may also register online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/treasurer\\_workshop](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/treasurer_workshop)



## What is Happening At Your Camp?

1531 Edgewood Drive  
Milford, IA 51351  
712-337-3325

Email: [camp@campokoboji.org](mailto:camp@campokoboji.org)  
Web site: [www.campokoboji.org](http://www.campokoboji.org)

### Our Promise of Jesus at the Lake

A friendly, safe, refreshing and relaxing Christian experience.  
An excellent value for you and your family

#### Calendar:

October 3-5

October 5

October 6-7

October 7-8

October 10-11

November 2

Fall Volunteer Weekend

Omelet Brunch

IDW New Worker Orientation

IDW Board of Directors Leadership Retreat

Women's Fall Retreat

Omelet Brunch: In Support of J.O.Y. Camp

**Fall at Camp Okoboji.** Crisp cool air, vibrant fall colors and a scenic lake all combine for a perfect setting. Camp Okoboji is a great place to retreat during the fall months! Call Kellie (712-337-3325) for information on what is available for weekends or during the week!

**Omelet Brunches:** Omelet experts agree that Camp Okoboji's Omelet Brunches are awesome! Planning to be in the area? Stop in for a real treat! The Nov. 2 Brunch will support J.O.Y. Camp which caters to special need campers.



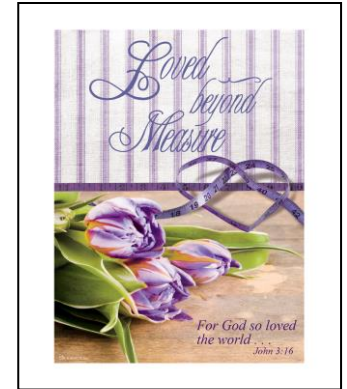
#### **Volunteer Weekend: Oct. 3-5**

All volunteers, youth groups and their leaders are welcome to come and help once again! For your hard work; we will provide meals (including the Omelet Brunch on Sunday), lodging, campfire devotions and time for fun. The "To Do List" includes items for people of all ages and abilities.

**There's a lot to do! Call ahead to sign up for a specific project!**

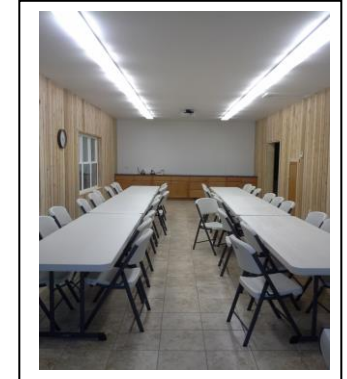
#### **Women's Fall Retreat: Oct. 10-11**

DCE Christine Eid from Crossview Lutheran Church in Edina, MN will lead this inspirational and relaxing retreat. Her 30 years in parish ministry gives her great insights and stories in youth, family and women's ministry. Chris graduated from Valparaiso University and earned her Masters Degree from Concordia University, St Paul, MN. Brochures and information are available from Camp and on our website.



#### **New Meeting & Dining Room Unveiled**

The Ginny DeWall Dining Hall now offers a private and intimate space for meetings and/or meals. The area previously housed the summer kitchen staff (in a cramped and rustic setting). It has been renovated with panoramic windows, a 9 ft high ceiling, service counter and a projector system. **It is available for your small group event!**



#### **Other Ginny DeWall Dining Hall News: Time to Finish the Outside!**

Funding is needed for siding, soffits, eave repairs, insulation and other minor finishing items. Let's see if we can get this completed before the snow flies!

Memo your gift GDDH (Ginny DeWall Dining Hall). **Thank you!**



#### **FACEBOOK!**

"LIKE" us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/CampOkoboji-LCMS](http://www.facebook.com/CampOkoboji-LCMS)). Watch for upcoming events. See pictures of events and more!

#### **Camp Staff Contact Information**

Executive Director: Doug Kading - [doug@campokoboji.org](mailto:doug@campokoboji.org)

Office Director: Kellie Jones - [kellie@campokoboji.org](mailto:kellie@campokoboji.org)

Program Director: Lori Gamble - [lori@campokoboji.org](mailto:lori@campokoboji.org)

Ministry Advancement Director: Paul Golke - [paul@campokoboji.org](mailto:paul@campokoboji.org)

Financial Director: Karrie Mullenburg - [karrie@campokoboji.org](mailto:karrie@campokoboji.org)



# !AMIGOS EN CRISTO!

News from the IDW Hispanic Ministry of **Missionary/**  
**Pastor Daniel Vogel** in Denison, Iowa

Iowa District  
 West, LCMS

Year 10, Issue 10  
 Oct. 2014



## THE INSTALLATION OF PASTOR ERIC MOELLER:



My last official work as pastor of the Hispanic ministry at Storm Lake was to organize the Installation of the Rev. Dr. Eric Moeller as the new Hispanic pastor. He will also work as a full time Chaplain at the Tyson Foods pork plant in Storm Lake. What an honor this special service was on a beautiful day in August! Eighteen pastors were present, locally as well as from Des Moines, Minneapolis and Chicago. Few have had the chance to see a special installation for an ethnic ministry or especially a bilingual service. We were honored to have Iowa District West President Paul Sieveking present to do the Installation ceremony. I had the privilege of doing the Spanish translation of the service. The preacher of the service was Pastor Alex

Merlo of San Pablo (St. Paul) Lutheran in Aurora, Illinois. He is a good friend of Pastor Moeller. Pastors from the Storm Lake, Denison, and Des Moines areas and members of their churches came to show their support for this special ministry. Pastor Moeller has had a unique background of experiences in the mission field, university teaching and congregational service to prepare him for this special ministry. He is married to Miracelia and they have three children. Please pray for Pastor Moeller, his family, and his ministry.

## THE FUTURE OF OUR MINISTRY

**AMONG HISPANICS:** The picture at the right is the latest photo of our four pastors serving to share the Gospel with Hispanic immigrants in Iowa District West. This picture was taken on August 17 at the Installation of Pastor Eric Moeller at Grace Lutheran in Storm Lake. Pictured left to right: myself (Pastor Vogel), Pastor Eric Moeller, Pastor Alex Merlo of Chicago (the visiting preacher of the special service), Pastor Lincon Guerra serving in Des Moines, and Pastor Henry Witte serving in Sioux City. We have a wonderful future as we minister to the Hispanic communities in western Iowa with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Please follow the work of each of these ministries on the monthly IDW website.





## A NEW MISSION FIELD:

Last month I wrote about meeting Pastor Gabriel Deng through his wife Sara who works at Tyson. They are members of a Sudanese ministry that has begun worshipping at Zion in Denison. Pastor Gabriel is a Lutheran pastor and is consulting with Iowa District West to become certified as an LCMS pastor. I am pictured with Pastor Gabriel and some of his leaders. Please keep him and his ministry group in your prayers.



## A SPECIAL VISIT TO MISSION CENTRAL

In August I had the privilege to host Pastor Alex Merlo of Aurora, Illinois (near Chicago). He came to Iowa to preach for the Installation of Pastor Eric Moeller in Storm Lake. On his way back to Chicago I took him to Mission Central to see this special mission center and to hear about the work that is being done there to promote missions. Pastor Alex had never heard about this special place and Director Gary Thies (pictured at left) was kind enough to give us a tour on a busy day. May more of our pastors come to visit this special place.



## MY TYSON CHAPLAINCY AT THE PLANT IN DENISON: "Religious Diversity"

My work at Tyson continues to bring me into contact with folks from all over the world. It also connects me with Christians from around the world. As I reported above we are supporting the new Sudanese ministry in Denison. I also visit with many Christians of the Denison Hispanic churches. Amazingly, Denison has 14 Hispanic churches! Denison is seen as a mission field by Christian denominations around the Midwest. At Tyson we certainly have many faiths represented from Christian to Islam and more.

## TO CONTACT ME

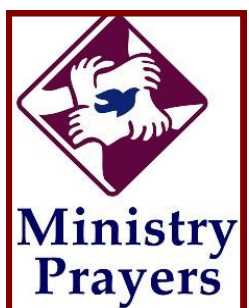
**Rev. Daniel Vogel**  
32678 Aspen Ave.  
Manning, IA 51455  
712-653-2354 or

**Cell: 712-309-1292**

or Email me at:

[Dan.Vogel@idwlcms.org](mailto:Dan.Vogel@idwlcms.org)

\* Please forward this newsletter to a friend from [www.idwlcms.org](http://www.idwlcms.org)



**PLEASE PRAY:** + In thanksgiving for the August 17 installation of Pastor Eric Moeller to serve our mission in Storm Lake, and prayers for his ministry there. + For the process of incorporating and affiliating with the State and the District for our mission in Denison. + For outreach and the growth of new leaders. + For my work as Chaplain at Tyson in Denison and the opportunity there to meet many special people from all over the world. + For our ongoing efforts to organize a Pro-Life Hispanic group in Denison. + ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who monthly support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and in our other three Hispanic missions.***

IOWA EAST & WEST  
LCEF



For more information on LCEF loans, investments, and services, please contact:

**Carole L. White** LCEF  
V.P. Iowa East & West  
1150 Home Park Blvd #7  
Waterloo, IA 50702

Toll Free Phone:  
1-877-439-5233  
carole.white@lcef.org



**Rev. Bob Riggert**  
Director of Customer  
Services  
bob.riggert@ialcef.org



**Ruth Gerken**  
Promotions Director  
Iowa East & West  
ruth.gerken@ialcef.org



**Lutheran Church Extension Fund**  
> where investments build ministry

October 2014

**You + LCEF =  
Empowered  
Ministries**

**ConnectPLUS  
for NEW  
Investors**



### The Secret is Out

One of the best-kept secrets of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is that you can invest directly in ministry efforts in the United States and across the world. Because we seek to expand the opportunities to serve established and new ministries, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is offering an investment just for NEW partners.\*

The new ConnectPLUS\* investment will help fund loans and ministry support services, and features:

- Opportunity to empower ministries
- 3% fixed rate on the first \$5,000
- Second-tier rate on balances over \$5,000
- \$500 minimum to open
- Two-year term
- Additional investments of at least \$25 allowed

ConnectPLUS is available to individuals 18 and older who have not had an LCEF investment in the past 24 months. Offer subject to change.

Join with the tens of thousands of LCEF investors helping LCMS Lutherans in their vital witness and mercy work among people around the world. Invest with ConnectPLUS today!

Invest in ministry today by visiting [lcef.org](http://lcef.org) or calling 800-843-5233.

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization, therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. ConnectPLUS is not available to investors in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

*For more information about eligibility and to get an application, call 800-843-5233 or visit [lcef.org](http://lcef.org).*



However, traditions which hide Christ or direct our hearts away from Christ are to be examined and avoided. Our salvation is in Christ and not in the tradition.

Lutheran  
Church  
Extension  
Fund



## GOLDEN TREASURE TRUTHS

By Rev. Bob Riggert

*“I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. . . . circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee. . . . But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ” (Philippians 3:4-7).*

**Tradition!  
Tradition!**

The musical “Fiddler on the Roof” has a powerful scene where Tevye laments the changes in his country and family singing, “Tradition! Tradition!” Tevye assumes traditions can protect his family and way of life. During a period of his life Saul’s song was also “Tradition!” Saul reflected on his credentials with the church at Philippi. Saul persecuted Christians to defend the traditions. Saul felt that Stephen and others who spoke of the resurrected Jesus and the freedom from the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament had to be silenced.

Saul was the one who was silenced as Jesus spoke to him on the way to Damascus. Saul sees the Light of Jesus, hears the Good News of his Savior, is baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, and is chosen and empowered to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul lives in the grace of His Lord Jesus Christ. Paul willing gives up his former life and celebrates the new life in Christ.

We may still sing our “tradition” choruses. Many traditions are helpful and appropriate. Family traditions unite and strengthen the family. Traditions in the church which bring the family of God together at the cross of Jesus to worship Him are always important. However, traditions which hide Christ or direct our hearts away from Christ are to be examined and avoided. Our salvation is in Christ and not in the tradition.

Being a Lutheran Church Extension Fund investor is a tradition in some families. Seeing the stewardship example of grandparents or parents, children continue to support the mission of the church through their LCEF investments. Some families are starting a new tradition with the ConnectPLUS opportunity to bring special blessings to new investors. Others are enrolling children in the Young Investor (Y.I.) Club to help them grow as stewards who save and share. While LCEF traditions bring valuable lessons and new opportunities, the mission of LCEF is much bigger than the tradition. LCEF shares the Good News of Jesus through the church ministries that are supported.

Reflection: What traditions are enjoyed by your family? What traditions in the church are helpful to seeing the Savior? Have you seen any traditions which have distracted us from seeing Jesus? What stewardship traditions are you passing on to the next generations?

Prayer: Forgive us Lord for seeking salvation in ourselves—who we are, what we know, what we’ve accomplished. The Truth is that our only hope is in You and Your sacrifice. Help us to build our lives and continue to build Your church on the Truth rather than tradition. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Carole White, District Vice-President ([carole.white@lcef.org](mailto:carole.white@lcef.org))

Rev. Bob Riggert, Director of Customer Services ([bob.riggert@lcef.org](mailto:bob.riggert@lcef.org))

Ruth Gerken, Promotions Director ([ruth.gerken@lcef.org](mailto:ruth.gerken@lcef.org))

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### Joy In Salvation

Recently the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in Iowa District West (IDW) was privileged to share operating results with all congregations in IDW. Each congregation received dollars equal to the approximate baptized membership of their congregation to bless their mission vision. Encouragement was given to look at their community and beyond in how to share the Good News of our resurrected Lord.

These mission grants are possible because of the support and trust of LCEF investors. Praise God for the many congregations, organizations and individuals who continue to be blessed through their LCEF investments and who are a blessing to the mission of the church! More than 80% of LCMS ministries, at home and abroad, have been supported by LCEF investors at one time or another. The mission grant makes it possible for 100% of IDW congregations to receive LCEF support.

Leading up to the 2015 Iowa District West “Joy In Salvation” District Convention we will be sharing the stories of how congregations used their funds to impact their communities. Whether it was a new outreach, an ongoing ministry, a ministry with Circuit or District as a partner we want to share the ideas that it may be an encouragement to others. The following chart shows what has been shared with us so far. Share your story along with pictures to [ruth.gerken@lcef.org](mailto:ruth.gerken@lcef.org).

*Luke 15:7, 10, 24 "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent ...<sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents, ...<sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate."*

### Joy in Salvation efforts in IDW

Town	Congregation	Mission target	Mission Partners	Mission Impact
Adel	Faith	Community, particularly men	IDW, groups in congregation	Started a Holy Smokers group to serve community dinners
Anita	Holy Cross	Operation Barnabas	Cass County Iowa	Helping military families
Atlantic	Zion	Youth	Camp Okoboji	Youth to attend Camp Okoboji
Burt	St. John's	Blind and visually impaired	Sunday School, Lutheran Braille workers in Yucaipa, CA	Giving blind opportunity to read God's Word & Participate in Bible studies
Des Moines	Hope	Hispanic community in Des Moines area	Pastor Guerra and the Hispanic ministry	Help with praise team needs and/or purchase of Bibles for new members

(continued on next page)

Lutheran  
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Luke 15:7, 10, 24

*"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent ...<sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents, ...<sup>24</sup> For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate."*

**Lutheran  
Church  
Extension  
Fund**



Joy In Salvation (continued)

Town	Congregation	Mission target	Mission Partners	Mission Impact
<b>Glidden</b>	Peace	Lower income families in need of heating assistance	City of Glidden	\$50 assistance per family who qualify as low income. Will help 5.5 families
<b>Hartley</b>	St. Paul's	School children & parade attendees	LWML, LYF	Handed out water in parade. Plus supported KIDS Backpack program where students receive food over weekend or holiday
<b>Ireton</b>	St. Paul's	Purchased 300 TV ads in weeks leading up to Easter	Le Mars & Sioux City circuits, IDW, Mission Central	Invited viewers to visit a local LCMS congregation
<b>Marcus</b>	Trinity	Children in community for Vacation Bible School	Volunteers	Children & volunteers inspired by the Word of God
<b>Shenandoah</b>	Trinity	Purchase supplies for annual fish boil with proceeds going to Orphan Grain Train		Church becomes more visible + Orphan Grain Train projects are impacted
<b>Spencer</b>	Christ the King	Those impacted by natural disasters	Circuit Congregations	Helped to outfit LERT trailer
<b>Webster City</b>	St. Paul	Lao community in Webster City	IDW	Trained Laotian deacon

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# Mission Opportunities

A newsletter of resources, events, and ideas to help God's people passionately, intentionally, and faithfully extend the Gospel within our communities, throughout the District, and into all the world!

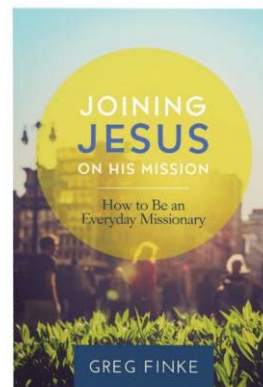
**October 2014**



**The harvest** – This time of year in the state of Iowa means a lot of activity centered around bringing in the harvest. May these ideas, resources and events assist you in leading your congregation to be passionate, intentional and faithful in gathering the spiritual harvest year-round. Just remember, before harvest time there's a lot of work in cultivating, planting, caring, and preparing before the harvest can be gathered! If I can help, pray, listen or encourage – just give me a call (or text, e-mail, etc.!).

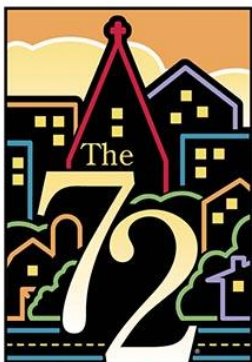
## Resources

- **Joining Jesus on His Mission** – Written by an LCMS pastor, this is an excellent resource for helping your people understand what it means to live on mission in their everyday life! Copies available from the District office for \$10.
- **Chaplain services** – Did you know Chaplain Steve Benson (Sioux City, 712-212-5482) and Chaplain Jim Brammeier (Des Moines, 515-707-9195) are ready to complement your ministry by visiting members or others when hospitalized in those metro areas? Other chaplains in surrounding areas are William Otte (Mayo Clinic, [wmotte@gmail.com](mailto:wmotte@gmail.com), 507-255-5780), and Mike Musick (Iowa City, [ideuichaplain@live.com](mailto:ideuichaplain@live.com), 319-558-9083).
- **'The 72'** – A resource of the LCMS has almost 30 teams



equipped to help congregations in their community outreach and their work to retain inactive members. Teams usually spend 2-3 weeks on site. For more info, go to [www.lcms.org/the72](http://www.lcms.org/the72).

- **Pastoral Support Network** – Concordia Plan Services has launched this new resource for church workers **and their families** to receive the support they need when personal or professional challenges infringe on their well-being. To learn more, visit [www.concordiaplans.org](http://www.concordiaplans.org), click on "Health and Wellness."
- **Worker-Priest?** – More of our congregations and workers will be exploring this model in the future. Go to [www.lcms.org/rstm](http://www.lcms.org/rstm) and view a recent webinar, "Transitioning to a Worker-Priest Model" that might generate good discussion in your home or among your leadership!



**STANDING TOGETHER**  
*in the Mission Field*

## Events

- **Courageous Men Conference** will be hosted by Gloria Dei, Urbandale on Saturday, October 25 from 8 am-1 pm. See the poster for more information.
- **National Mission Conference** sponsored by LCMS National Rural and Small Town Mission is being held in Kansas City November 6-8. Our own Rev. Ray Smith, part-time executive assistant for rural missions, is one of the presenters! Go to [www.lcms.org/rstm](http://www.lcms.org/rstm) for more information. Though the registration deadline was September 15, you still might be able to attend.
- **Best Practices for Ministry Conference**, February 26-28, 2015, Phoenix, AZ, a free conference for those who love the local church, the unchurched and the LCMS. It's a compendium of just what the title says. Go to [www.bestpracticesforministry.net](http://www.bestpracticesforministry.net). District scholarships available!
- **Orientation to Church Planting** – DON'T assume we're talking about planting a daughter congregation! It might mean a mercy ministry, an organized presence of members in a nearby community or something similar. Church Planting has been proven to be the most effective means for reaching the unchurched. One-day introductory workshops for pastors are scheduled in IDW at locations to be determined on January 29 and 30. Be watching for more information!



## Ideas

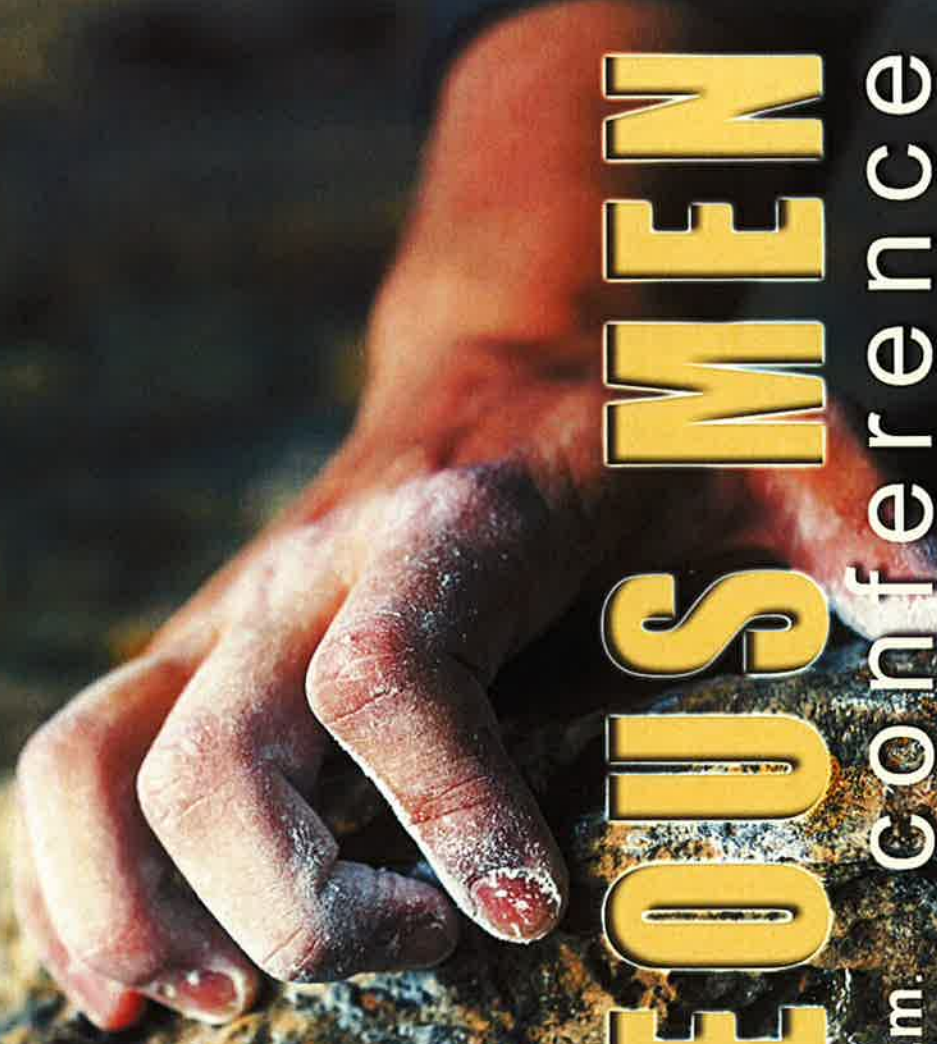
- **IDW Mission Prayer Partners** – You should have received information and an insert for recruiting individuals to regularly receive prayer requests and pray for the mission efforts of our congregations. Go to [www.iowamissions.org](http://www.iowamissions.org) to sign up or print the insert!
- **What have others tried?** – That's one of the most common questions I hear. Go to [www.iowamissions.org](http://www.iowamissions.org) and peruse the list of past efforts under "Mission Grants." After you pray, explore, and plan for your next outreach ministry, download a mission grant application and submit it by March 1.
- **Links to intriguing articles** - great discussion starters!
  - <http://www.unseminary.com/8-reasons-people-arent-listening-to-your-announcements/>
  - <http://www.centerforusmissions.com/Blog/tabid/240/EntryId/48/Do-Your-Best-and-Take-a-Nap.aspx>
  - <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/682-5-ways-to-connect-with-millennials>



God's richest blessings and, remember, you're living in His mercy and grace!

Rev. Mark Gerken, Executive Assistant for Missions and Human Care  
[mark.gerken@idwlcms.org](mailto:mark.gerken@idwlcms.org) or 515-570-2331

Being the men God has called us to be!

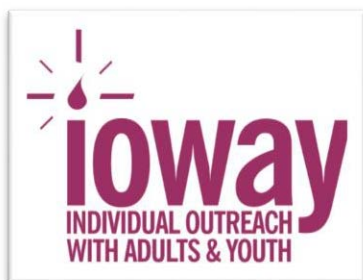


# COURAGEOUS MEN

Saturday, Oct. 25 | 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. **conference**

Free! Register today at [www.gdlc.info](http://www.gdlc.info)

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
8301 Aurora Ave. | Urbandale, Iowa 50322



## Judea and Samaria

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Where is your Judea? Your Samaria? Are you reaching out to them? Five members of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Polk City, had an amazing experience from July 27-August 2 as they reached out to God’s people in Glen Haven, Colorado.

Pastor Mark Schwalenberg shared, “A little over a year ago an excessive amount of rain in the Rocky Mountains caused a disastrous flood in the community of Estes Park and the surrounding area, especially the town of Glen Haven, CO. Most of the homes in the Glen Haven community are built on mountainsides, and some were built along the creeks and rivers that flow through this community. Most of those homes no longer exist. The town of Glen Haven was all but destroyed. The people who lived in the mountain homes had to be airlifted out because the local roads that followed the rivers and creeks were washed away. It took six months to replace the primary road in its dirt form only.

“Most of the area is basically unincorporated which means financial aid to rebuild is basically non-existent. The only paid person on staff is the backhoe driver because he’s a skilled professional. After a year of cleanup, rebuilding is finally taking place. The overwhelming majority of people helping with rebuilding / reconstruction are volunteers.

“On July 27, 2014 a group of three teens and two adults traveled from Polk City, IA to Glen Haven, CO. We were blessed to stay with a very caring Christian woman whose contribution to the rebuilding effort is providing free housing to groups in a very beautiful mountain home. The only problem with this environment - the local bear did visit our house one night and trash the woman’s bird feeders.

“We worked four of five days removing debris, landscaping, and planting seeds. It was hard work (especially at 7,500' elevation). Even after a year of hard work by many volunteer groups, plenty of unskilled work/clean up remains. The growing challenge now is the need for skilled (professional) volunteers/teams. The people of the Glen Haven community were extremely grateful and genuinely moved by the love and compassion shown by all the volunteer groups, including ours. Clearly, this is one of those great opportunities to show the love of Jesus in a very real and tangible way.”



L to R: Christian Burgland, Pastor Mark Schwalenberg, Taylor McCombs, Vicky Schultz, Brianne Schultz

## Reaching out to Samaria (Amazing Gifts of Love for Pilger)



There are many people and churches who gave generously for the disaster relief in Pilger NE. One of these is Immanuel Lutheran in Schleswig. Their first was a gift of \$3,700 from the Mission Board and two door offerings. It was combined with gifts from Trinity Lutheran in Jefferson resulting in the down payment for a house for a family of six.



Doris Nahnsen, Immanuel Lutheran, Schleswig shared, "A fundraising event was organized by Immanuel of Schleswig, St. Paul of Ida Grove and the Triple Parish of Soldier, Hanover & Ricketts. On August 2, ten brave souls were out in the field at 7 AM picking sweet corn for the event. The Schleswig City Park was the scene of an old fashioned picnic with pork, hamburgers, hotdogs and sweet corn grilled by the Pork & Beef Producers. Approximately 200 were served and \$4,401 was raised. All proceeds from this event are going to help rebuild St. John's Lutheran Church in Pilger, NE."



Pictured are scenes from the day's events and the presentation of the check to the president of St. John Lutheran Church in Pilger. One check was for \$4,401 for the rebuilding of the church. The second check, on behalf of wonderful Iowa District West donors, was for Pastor and Mrs. Makelin for \$2,500. Their home was completely destroyed in the tornado.

## More Care and Love for Pilger

At 7 AM on a bright sunny Saturday morning, a team of happy workers from Trinity Lutheran Church in Jefferson headed to Pilger, NE. Vehicles and a 7' x 14' trailer were loaded with



furniture, appliances, food and supplies for families who suffered losses in the Pilger tornado. Their main focus was to help Diane and her family as she prepared to move into a house she previously purchased after losing her rented home, vehicle, second job and all possessions.

The team included Pastor Tim and Christine Jones and family, George and Laurie Walker, Ruth Goshon, Sarah Erickson, Lynn and Ellie Menz and Jim Osterson. (Diane is in orange at back of photo.)

The “Extreme Makeover” consisted of ripping up 50 year old carpet from four rooms, purchasing new carpet in Norfolk, NE, installing the carpet, deep cleaning the kitchen, installing a toilet in the basement, washing windows, trimming brush and eating pizza. Everyone worked hard discovering they had muscles they were not previously aware of and feeling great that they were able to help Diane and her family start to reclaim their lives. Diane is amazing and very grateful for the help and love she received.

After “calling it a day,” Diane went with part of the team to show the devastation of Pilger. One amazing thing was that the town had basically become a corn field. Why? The grain bins were blown away and the corn scattered throughout the town. Corn is growing where houses had been. Life continued!



Rebuilding progress is slow. There are so many things to deal with: insurance, FEMA, rebuild, don't rebuild, move to a different town, etc. To add to the issues, Pilger has been declared a flood plain so now any rebuilding requires large amounts of dirt to build at a certain level; and, of course, that is an additional expense.

Thank you to all of you who have prayed for the people who suffered losses in the tornado and for your wonderful donations. Currently, a total of nearly \$40,000 has been donated for the relief work in Pilger, NE and Rock Rapids, IA. Iowa District West donors have truly been God's hands and feet in this time of need.

God's Blessings!  
Ellie Menz  
IOWAY Director  
LERT District Disaster Response Coordinator



## **“CHRISTMAS IN AUGUST” AT ZION LUTHERAN SCHOOL IN DENISON, IOWA**

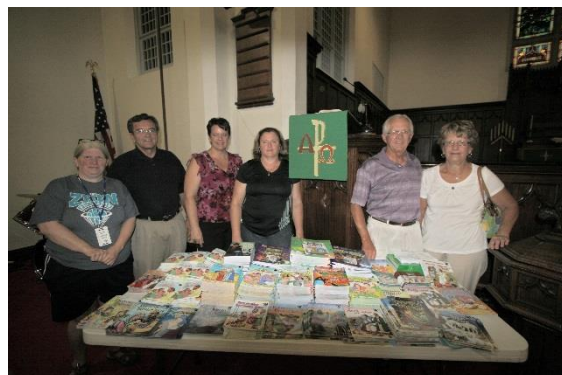
On August 27, 2014, a wonderful miracle happened at Zion Lutheran School at Denison, Iowa.

Through the amazing efforts of the Honorable Missionary Dr. Elizabeth Pittman, the representative of Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis, Missouri, a special contact was made with Old Missionary Gary Thies at Mission Central.

Elizabeth made it known that Concordia Publishing House had an inventory of special Christian “Arch Books” available that could be utilized as a MISSION AND STEWARDSHIP OUTREACH!

When this information was digested, contact was made with Principal Tammy Langfield and Rev. Kurt Kaiser of Zion Lutheran Church and School at Denison. They were so pleased and indicated that they and the nearly 120 students of the school would welcome these books if some of them could be provided in Spanish. In this community, over 50% of the students are Hispanic. These books would be such a blessing for the entire community. The students are going out into the offices and businesses of the entire community and providing these messages of Jesus and HIS love and will deliver these new Christian Books to many families. This special order of books was shipped to Mission Central and then presented at a Chapel Program at Zion School on August 27, 2014.

Here you see several Hispanic students holding some of the books, and the huge supply of these precious new books on the table. Pictured also are staff and special missionaries at Zion. THANK YOU, ELIZABETH, AND ALL OF OUR MISSIONARY FRIENDS AT CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE!



## **TWO NEW MISSIONARY FAMILIES MEET AT MISSION CENTRAL FOR PRAYER**

Saturday, August 23, was a day that found two of our newest Missionaries able to spend time together with their families, and the families are part of the new missionaries that God is sending out as a part of the new group of missionaries that attended the Missionary Orientation of June of 2014.

The Rev. James Sharp Family, who are now living in Denison, Iowa made the trip to be with Michael and Beth Ritzman and their family. The Sharp family and their four children have been called to open up new work in Uruguay in South America and will be living in the capital city of Montevideo!

Michael and Beth Ritzman and their five children have been called to be the missionaries and business managers in the highlands of Papua, New Guinea.

After a tour of Mission Central, the families gathered in the Prayer Chapel and had a final prayer to send them off. Here you see the two families and their children!



### **AMAZING “NOT NORMAL” MISSIONARIES ARRIVE FROM CORTEZ, COLORADO**

Who would come all the way from Cortez, Colorado to visit this place in the middle of “nowhere”? Cortez is located approximately 13 hours from Mission Central. Certainly only someone who is NOT NORMAL would even make the effort to stop here!

And yet, that’s the kind of special people whom God sends to HIS place called MISSION CENTRAL! Many, many years ago, a much younger Missionary Gary spoke at the church in Cortez, Colorado, and this couple took supporting missionaries very personally. They didn't say, like “normal people”...“Boy, the congregation ought to do something”.....THEY DID SOMETHING THEMSELVES! For over 10 years this couple has prayed for and supported their very own missionary. Just recently they “adopted” the Rev. James Sharp Family, our newest Missionaries going to Uruguay in South America to open new work there!

Ralph and Lisa Wegner are truly special people that God has placed in our lives here at Mission Central, and what a JOY to have them stay overnight on August 30, 2014.



Here you see Ralph and Lisa, and also the Sharp Family they are praying for and supporting! We couldn't continue if the Lord didn't put people like Missionaries Ralph and Lisa Wegner in our path in this journey we call “serving HIM.”



Mission Central – LCMS World Mission

40718 Highway E16  
Mapleton, IA 51034  
712-882-1029

Gary Thies  
[gary.thies@lcms.org](mailto:gary.thies@lcms.org)  
[www.missioncentral.us](http://www.missioncentral.us)

**MISSION CENTRAL EVENTS  
PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

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Dennis and Monta Denow  
Thailand & Asia  
**Friday, October 10, 2014**  
1:30 PM

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Rev. James and Angela Sharp family  
Uruguay, South America  
**Thursday, October 16, 2014**  
1 PM



Rev. Matt and Heather Ruesch family  
Puerto Rico  
**Thursday, October 16, 2014**  
1:30 PM

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Robin McCoy  
Thailand  
**Tuesday, October 28, 2014**  
1 PM





Georgia Witt

Kenya – East Africa

**Saturday, November 1, 2014**

1 PM



Kristin Matasovsky

South Africa

**Saturday, December 6, 2014**

1 PM



Mission Central-LCMS World Mission

40718 Highway E 16  
Mapleton, Iowa 51034  
Phone: 712-882-1029

[gary.thies@lcms.org](mailto:gary.thies@lcms.org)  
[www.missioncentral.us](http://www.missioncentral.us)

# HISPANIC OUTREACH IN SIOUXLAND

Rev. Henry and Ruthie Witte  
 1013 South Newton Street  
 Sioux City, IA 51106  
 712-202-4751  
[Henry.Witte@idwlcms.org](mailto:Henry.Witte@idwlcms.org)



*“conquer evil with good” Romans 12:21*

From our perspective we may think that evil is overcoming the “good” in this world. We see less people attending church and more anti-Christian teachings promoted in our own nation and communities. We see all kinds of evil around us and the worship of the false god “money.” What can we do about it? We can take the “good” that God has given us and use it to overcome evil.

Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, seemed to be losing to evil when He hung on a cross, but in His resurrection He defeated evil. He defeated evil with a great act of love. He defeated sin, death, and the devil with His loving sacrifice that paid for all of our sins. He freed us from the power of sin, death, and the devil so that we are not overcome by evil, but we can defeat evil with His love and power.

Thus we seek to do “good” to others and even return to them “good” for any evil that they may bring our way. We seek to share a message of a loving Savior who overcame evil with “good” for our sakes. We seek to give them a freedom from evil with the freeing message of the Gospel, proclaimed in Word and Sacrament.

We may not approve of how an immigrant arrived in our country. We may not approve of their religious beliefs. We may not agree with all that they do. But we can bring to them the love of Christ and through His Word change their hearts and lives. Some may come under the judgment of our earthly authorities, but all can be forgiven by our heavenly judge. In that “justification by faith” the great “goodness” of God overcomes the evil and sin in their lives. May God grant us faith and perseverance in doing this “good” to all people.

We are thankful for the 20 English students at St. Paul’s and for the 40 plus students at Hope. May God help us to share our knowledge of English and of His Gospel in these classes.

Our group of Hispanic senior citizens continues to help make quilts and package Mercy Meals at Faith. They are thankful for the opportunity to help others with their time and talents.

In August I participated in an anniversary service commemorating the first Lutheran church building in the Nebraska territory and the oldest church building of any denomination now standing in Nebraska. It was built in 1860 and served as a church and court house during its

history. It now is only opened for special events and the yearly service. Of course, this building in Dakota City, Nebraska is really only an instrument to what really was important and significant, that is the preaching and teaching of the Gospel. As these early Lutherans served the immigrants at their time, may God also help us to serve the immigrants in our age.

# EYES on Youth Ministry

## Educating Youth, Encouraging Servants

I was following my regular morning schedule at home. And then, in a moment, I understood that this was not going to be a regular morning. I went into a storage area in our basement and knelt down for something. Water! Not deep water submerging the floor, but definitely puddles all around getting everything on the floor very wet. I knew that it had rained extremely hard the night before (although at the time I didn't realize that we had received over 8" of rain in my neighborhood in less than a day), but it still was a surprise to me. We had never had water in the basement before. At first, I thought that it might be contained to one area, but the more I moved things away, the more my wife and I explored, the clearer the impact this water would have on our life would become.

Water, not only in the unfinished storage area of our basement but flowing over into our finished family room and a finished bedroom located nearby; carpeting, furniture, all the little debris of daily living all soaking wet. Contact with the water had changed everything. My plans and goals for that day, contact with water had suddenly changed them. No longer was I going to be a few minutes late, I was taking a vacation day and shifting all of my appointments. Even my perspective of value was changed. It wouldn't bother me to get rid of the old stereo we didn't play or the computer that nobody really used. At least the family pictures were safely dry inside a plastic tote.

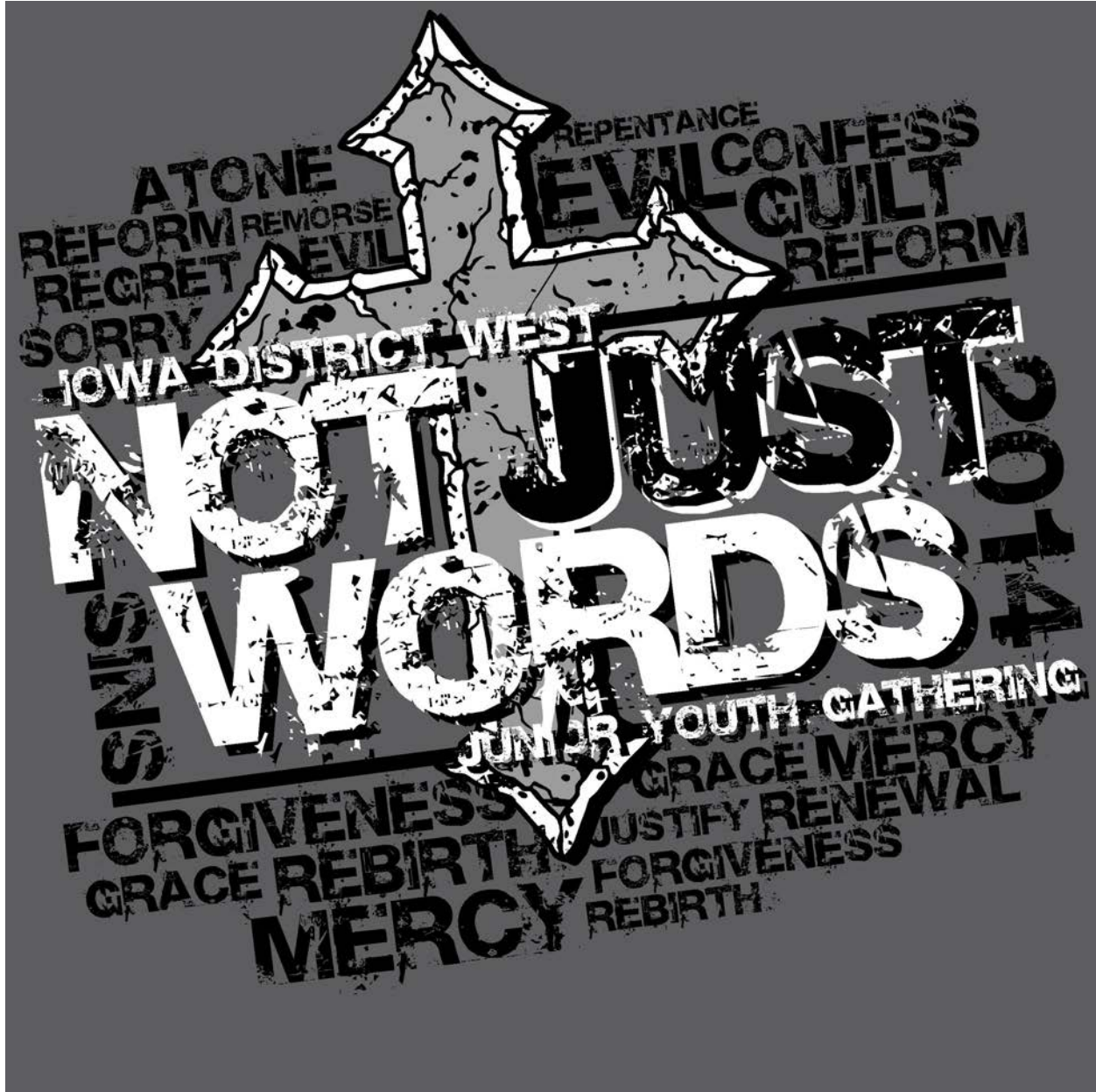
While contact with the water in our basement caused a sense of dread in me; I was reminded that contact with another source of water gives me hope. As I focused more and more on the problems this water caused, I suddenly found myself thinking about the effect a different water had upon me and my life. Contact with the water of Baptism changes everything in my life. My plans and goals, contact with Baptismal water had changed them. What is important to me is not the success or power that the world around me craves, but the desire to serve and to love even as I have been served and loved. Even my perspective of value was changed. The accumulation of things that make up our lives, what the world would consider gain, I could join with Paul in saying, *"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"* (Philippians 3:7-8).

Disappointments; there are a few. We lost to water damage the bassinet that my wife slept in as an infant and that our children used. And the truth is that sin and sickness still cause hurts and pains even for baptized children of God in this world. *"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 15:57).

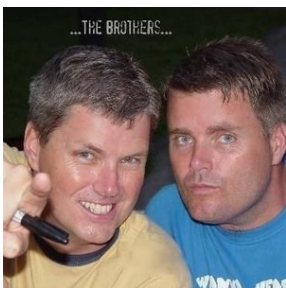
Please remember the registration deadlines for our District youth gatherings. Registrations for the Junior Youth Gathering, *Not Just Words*, in Des Moines are due by September 20. Registrations for the Senior Youth Gathering, *Collide*, in Omaha are due by October 17. More information can be found on the District web site or by email at [steve.hayden@idwlcms.org](mailto:steve.hayden@idwlcms.org).

Pastor Steven Hayden, Executive Assistant for Youth  
[steve.hayden@idwlcms.org](mailto:steve.hayden@idwlcms.org)

# Iowa District West Junior Youth Gathering



**Sheraton Hotel — West Des Moines, Iowa  
October 25-26, 2014**



*“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your  
sins may be blotted out.”*  
Acts 3:19

Music By:  
Swen and Dean

Keynote Speaker:  
DCE Scotte Hansen



**2014 LCMS District  
Youth Gathering - Omaha**  
hosted by the Nebraska District

# COLLIDE

... no longer the same

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,  
he is a new creation; the old has gone,  
the new has come!

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

**The 211 Band**



**Service with Friends**



**"These Guys"**



**Engaging Speakers**



**Nov. 21-23, 2014**

**ELEMENTS**

<http://www.NEYouth.org>



## Disciples Live Thankful Lives Even in the Midst of Trouble

The world is full of heartache. Heartaches of all kinds: financial difficulties, health problems, broken relationships, job stresses. You can name more. Look around you, and often you can see hurt in people's eyes. More often, people learn to mask their hurt and present a "happy face." The apostle Paul had plenty of heartaches, too. He was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, without a home of his own, in danger from the elements, from enemies, and, sadly, in danger from enemies of the Gospel. He suffered from hunger, the cold, and lack of clothing. He felt the pressure of concern for the new churches he established and served. (See 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.)

Surely Paul had a right to complain, not just to those who brought these calamities upon him, but to God Who allowed them! So we might think, anyway. Not so! Paul boasted in his weakness in the circumstances over which he had no control, for he knew God was in control. "That is why," Paul said, "for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Paul taught the new Christian disciples to depend on God for all their needs: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). That two-word phrase in the middle is easy to miss: "with thanksgiving." And why should you not pray with thanksgiving, knowing you have a gracious God Who delights to bless you! Why should you not pray with thanksgiving, knowing you have a God Who has spared not even His own Son (Romans 8:32)! Should you lose all, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you can still pray with thanksgiving that nothing can separate you from your Savior (Romans 8:38-39).

Marin Luther in his hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" said it this way,  
*The Word they still shall let remain Nor any thanks have for it;  
 He's by our side upon the plain With His good gifts and Spirit.  
 And take they our life, Goods, fame, child and wife,  
 Though these all be gone, Our victory has been won;  
 The Kingdom ours remaineth.*

Disciples of Christ can live thankful lives, even in the midst of trouble. That thanksgiving overflows to various aspects of the disciple's life. It shows itself in worship, in service, in sacrificial giving and living, and in the love a believer has for God and for others.

Often as the Stewardship Executive of Iowa District West, I hear words of despair from individuals about their congregation and I hear similar words from congregations where particularly the financial matters are troublesome. Pastors spend hours on end concerned about the financial future of their congregation and thus for themselves and their families. At such times is it very difficult to even pray “with thanksgiving” letting the requests of the people known to God. Unfortunately I believe this is a cultural thing because we live in a world of plenty and a history especially in the Church of great supply and therefore when God’s people find themselves in need and want, they are more likely to complain than to rejoice in their circumstance. I never saw that when I spent time in Kenya, Africa. There the people in their poverty continued to thank God in whatever circumstance they faced.

From those who are in real need and from the Apostle Paul, all disciples of the Living Lord can learn a great lesson of thanksgiving to God in all circumstances. Because the Savior lived and died for the whole world, and because He rose again assuring all who believe in Him will experience the greatest and most plenteous gift of eternal life with Him in heaven, modern day disciples can live lives of thanksgiving in all circumstances. It therefore behooves God’s pastors and people to rejoice in the mercies of God rather than to find reason for complaint. God grant the people of Iowa District West such a spiritual attitude.

As your Executive Assistant in the area of Christian Stewardship/Discipleship in Iowa District West, I would like to help you or your congregations find the thankful heart and ministry of the Gospel so that all our members grow in thankful lives with joyful service in their discipleship and in the area of Christian financial stewardship. Please contact me for more information.

Rev. Phill Andreasen  
Executive Assistant for Stewardship  
[Phill.Andreasen@idwlcms.org](mailto:Phill.Andreasen@idwlcms.org)  
712-330-0472

## Clinician Biography



### Rev. Stephen Starke

Stephen Paul Starke was born in 1955 in Bay City, Michigan. He graduated from Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1975 and from Concordia University Chicago in 1977. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana in May of 1983. Pastor Starke was installed in March of 2000 as pastor at St. John Lutheran Church-Amelith in Bay City, Michigan where he

continues to serve as pastor. Poet and pastor, Rev. Starke, is a key leader in historic Lutheran Hymnody with well over 100 hymn texts to his credit. "O Sing of Christ" was published in 2005 by Concordia Publishing House. This volume contains text and melody for more than 120 hymns covering the entire Church year. It includes Scripture references and full indices of topics, meters, tunes, and more.

### Kevin Hildebrand



Kevin Hildebrand is Kantor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he oversees the church music life of the seminary and Kramer Chapel. He also serves in the same capacity at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, where he also directs the Youth Choir. Music.

### Dr. J. Gordon Christensen



Dr. J. Gordon Christensen is organist and director of music at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs.

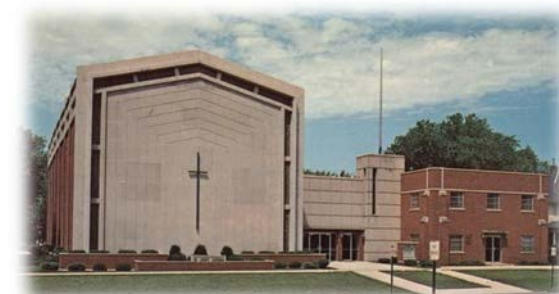
St. John Lutheran Church  
402 Lake Ave.  
Storm Lake, Iowa 50588

St. John Lutheran Church  
402 Lake Ave.  
Storm Lake, Iowa 50588

Rev. Bruce Lesemann, Host Pastor  
Suzanne Winterhof, Host Organist  
Rev. Stephen Starke, Clinician  
Dr. J. Gordon Christensen, Clinician

## Church Musician Workshop

Saturday, October 4, 2014  
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



# Church Musicians Workshop Schedule

**Saturday, October 4, 2014**  
**St. John Lutheran Church**  
**Storm Lake, Iowa**

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.

**Registration/Coffee, juice and rolls**

9:00-9:15 a.m.

**Opening Devotion**

Rev. Bruce H. Lesemann, host pastor  
Suzanne Winterhof, host organist

9:15 - 10:30 a.m.

**Significance of the "WORD SUNG"  
in Lutheran Worship"**

10:30 - 10:45 a.m.

**Break**

10:45 - 11:55 a.m.

**A. Discernment in Anthem, Hymn,  
and Psalmody Selection**

**B. Skills at the Console:**

**Registration, Introductions, Intonations,  
Tempo, Text Interpretation**

12:00 - 12:50 p.m.

**Lunch**

Mark Babcock, representing  
American Guild of Organists, speaker

1:00 - 2:15 p.m.

**Teaching/Learning the "SUNG WORD":  
Chanting, Psalmody, Liturgy,  
(Matins, Divine Service II, Vespers)**

2:15 - 2:30 p.m.

**Break**

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

**Closing Worship Service**

**Chanted Matins with Psalmody (Anglican chant)**  
Introducing newly commissioned for the workshop  
Hymn Concertato "Light of Light, O Sole-Begotten"

## Description of Sessions:

### Session I

Rev. Stephen Starke

#### **The Importance of the "WORD SUNG" in Lutheran Worship**

This session will discuss the purpose of hymns, chanted Psalmody and liturgy, and anthems in worship:

- Presence of the Divine in lives
- Instructional; scriptural, catechetical
- Statement of confession
- Mission outreach
- Beauty

### Session II

#### **Concurrent Session A**

Rev. Stephen Starke

#### **"Discernment in Hymn, Anthem, Psalmody, and Liturgy Selection"**

This session will offer suggestions, insights, tools, and "how-to's" for selecting anthems, hymns, Psalm settings and liturgies appropriate for use in Lutheran worship.

#### **Concurrent Session B**

Dr. J. Gordon Christensen

#### **"Skills at the Console"**

This session will include discussion and demonstration of the organist's leadership role of accompanying hymnody, Psalmody, and liturgy.

### Session III

Rev. Stephen Starke/Dr. J. Gordon Christensen

#### **"Teaching/Learning the "WORD SUNG": Chanting, Psalmody, Liturgy, Hymns"**

Prepare *Matins* and "Light of Light, O Sole-Begotten" for SESSION IV worship service. Explore *Divine Service II, Vespers, Gregorian* and *Anglican* chant.

#### **Session IV: Closing Worship Service ~ Matins**

Worship service. *Matins*, chanted with Psalmody (Anglican chant), hymns, and introduction of hymn concertato commissioned for the Iowa District West church musicians workshop, October, 2014.

Rev. Paul Sieveking, Preacher

Rev. Stephen P. Starke, Liturgist

Dr. J. Gordon Christensen, Organist

## Registration:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Single registration:----- \$45.00

Two or more from same congregation: \$35.00/registrant

Registration includes:

- Luncheon; refreshments
- Copy of commissioned;  
"Light of Light, O Sole-Begotten"
- Four chorale octavo scores; two organ chorale preludes
- Samples of Anglican chant
- Outline of session presentations
- Bibliographies: Choral and organ repertoire
- Educational and catechetical resources

Checks should be made out to:

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

**Mail registration form and enclosed check  
or money order to:**

**Church Musicians Workshop  
St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
402 Lake Ave.  
Storm Lake, Iowa 50588**

**(Suggest registration by September 24.)**

# THE PARISH PAPER

## IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller and Cynthia Woolever - [www.TheParishPaper.com](http://www.TheParishPaper.com)

October 2014 - Volume 22, Number 10

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### How Can We Prevent Suicide?

Matthew Warren, 27, took his life after a long battle with mental illness. Even with medical care and spiritual support from his parents, Rick and Kay Warren, he was not able to overcome his depression. Rick Warren, founder of Saddleback Church and author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, has shared how he and his wife tried to cope with their loss: "Behind every publicly successful ministry, there is private pain. Pain is God's megaphone." Warren also said, "We mistakenly think that the world is impressed by how we handle prosperity, but the fact is the world is impressed by how we handle adversity."

#### Rising Suicide Rates

More than 30,000 Americans commit suicide every year. These deaths exceed the number from homicide and motor vehicle accidents. Over the past ten years, suicide rates have increased and the rate change appears to be specific to certain age groups. Although the rates remained stable for those under thirty-five and over sixty-five years old, the rates rose substantially for persons between thirty-five and sixty-four years of age.<sup>1</sup>

While stress associated with the recent economic downturn could play a role in this increase, researchers have also found a "cohort effect" that suggests people born thirty-five to sixty-four years ago are at greater risk for suicide—a risk that continues throughout their lives.

Outside of the growing number of suicides among middle-age persons, two of the highest at-risk groups for suicide are youth (particularly LGBTQ-identified youth) and veterans. Finally, the widespread use of opiate pain medications provides at-risk individuals an easily accessible and low-pain-level suicide method through intentional overdose.

#### Risk Factors and Warning Signs

The effectiveness of suicide prevention rests on our deeper understanding of how and why suicide occurs.<sup>2</sup>

**Risk factors.** Identifying risk factors gives family members, friends, and health-care providers important information in order to detect and assist individuals who need care. Risk factors are things that make it more likely that people will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. Some risk factors are individual (mental disorders, genetic or personality traits), some are family (violence, dysfunction), and some are community-related (availability and quality of mental health services).

Nine out of ten people who die by suicide had a mental disorder at the time of their death. Unfortunately, their disorder had not been recognized, diagnosed, or appropriately treated.

Among those who take their own life, depression is more common than any other disorder. Major depression, a serious emotional and biological disease, is different from the normal human response to loss or disappointment. Although the symptoms of major depression may be subtle to observers, the person who suffers from the disease experiences changes in thoughts, feelings, behavior, mood, and physical health. Some of these significant shifts include changes in sleep, appetite, energy level, self-esteem, interests, and concentration.



WHEN I'M DEPRESSED, I NEED TO BE IN CHURCH...  
TO HEAR ENCOURAGING WORDS, SING SONGS OF HOPE,  
AND MAYBE EVEN LAUGH AT YOUR CHOICE OF TIES!

**Warning signs.** Warning signs tell of an immediate danger of suicide and apply only to individuals at a specific time. Typical warning signs that indicate someone is seriously considering suicide include threatening or seeking to hurt or kill oneself, hopelessness, increasing alcohol or drug use, dramatic mood changes, and efforts to put personal affairs in order. In addition, the risk of suicide increases when someone experiences a tipping point—the loss of an important relationship, financial or medical problems, physical or emotional pain.

### Reducing the Risks

Because depression is a significant risk factor, any action, intervention, or policy that lessens the number of people suffering from depression will result in reducing the suicide rate. The same is true for factors associated with drug and alcohol abuse.

*Equipping pastoral leaders.* Many people go to their pastor before they go to a health-care professional. Training and supporting pastors and lay leaders to recognize symptoms and helping to ensure that they have up-to-date information on community mental health providers are critical.

*Spiritual support and friendship.* Several studies show that a belief in a loving God, along with participation in a church whose members care for one another, leads to positive mental health, including lower rates of depression.<sup>3</sup> Because anyone can struggle with these challenges, churches can debunk the myth that depression or mental illness is a sign of spiritual weakness.

*Reducing the stigma of mental illness.* In any given year, an estimated twenty-five million American adults experience major depression but less than half will receive treatment. In every congregation, attending adults who are not dealing with depression or mental illness themselves often know someone who is—a family member, friend, or coworker. People suffering from depression or other mental problems are less likely to attend religious services and when they do attend, are not as likely to be part of a small group. Finding ways to welcome and include everyone is the goal. For example, 22,000 churches have a Celebrate Recovery small-group ministry (<http://www.celebraterecovery.com/>).

*Advocacy for community mental health care.* Members and pastors can advocate for greater accessibility and improved quality in the treatment of mental illness in their community. Congregations can be part of this conversation by understanding the availability of services around them and contacting

government officials to petition that change happen in their community and nationwide.

### Responding to Warning Signs

When you suspect that someone is considering suicide, take it seriously. At least half of those who attempt suicide tell someone else about their intention. First, express your concern for them, and then ask if they're thinking about suicide. The idea that people attempt suicide for attention is a myth, and sometimes an individual will not tell anyone their plans without prompting. Try to find out where they are in the ideation process. Are they just thinking about suicide, or do they know how they're going to do it? Do they already have the means ready at home? Listen without judgment and do not try to argue, reason, plead, or preach. Also, maintain focus on them; comparing struggles of your own or others nullifies their feelings and may cause them to shut down.

Encourage them to get professional help immediately and if they will let you, take them to a walk-in clinic, doctor, or emergency room. Do not leave them alone and, if necessary, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

### Not the End of a Story

After her son's death, Kay Warren found comfort in the phrase "God is not helpless among the ruins."<sup>4</sup> She describes the essence of her faith as "living with hope in the face of mystery." She says that faith won't survive without hope, and hope won't survive without the realization that some mysteries will not be answered. She believes "if you can embrace both, you can have a vibrant faith." When faced with this tragedy, people of faith claim there is more to this story than how it ends.

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1. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6217a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6217a1\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6217a1.htm?s_cid=mm6217a1_w).

2. "Understanding Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide," Suicide Prevention Resource Center, <http://www.sprc.org/sites/sprc.org/files/library/RandPPPrimerFormattedfinal.pdf>.

3. "Gratitude to God, Self-Rated Health, and Depressive Symptoms," N. Krause, R. Hayward, D. Bruce, and C. Woolever, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2014) 53(2):341-55.

4. "Kay Warren: A Year of Grieving Dangerously," *Christianity Today* (March 2014).