



THE LUTHERAN WITNESS™

VOL.128 NO.8 AUGUST 2009



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IN DETROIT

16

DCEs: BY MY SIDE

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SHARP EDGES

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Providing Missouri Synod laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal growth in faith, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective.

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS™

VOL. 128

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ON THE WEB

Find more information about our church at lcms.org. For up-to-date Synod news, including stories about the 2009 LLL and LWML conventions, visit the online site of *Reporter*, our sister publication, at lcms.org/reporter. At lcms.org/witness this month, find these Web-exclusive items:

- 25 Ways toward an Interwoven Ministry
- From School to Church: a First-Person Perspective
- In Detroit: Congregations and Individuals—Partners in the Field
- Summer Worship—an Exciting Adventure!

TO THE READER

The magazine you hold in your hands is just one way we communicate today. Yes, print remains a significant means of communication (in spite of numerous premature obituaries); yet new tools increasingly play important roles in the ways in which we hold conversations with one another. Just consider the options we have: the Internet and e-mail, text messaging, and a myriad of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

The LCMS recently joined both Facebook and Twitter in order to reach more people with news and information about Synod resources, event announcements, and ways to get more involved. Our posts will supplement our LCMS print publications and enable our “friends” and “followers” the opportunity for a more personal connection with the church. We invite you to join us online at www.facebook.com/theLCMS and www.twitter.com/theLCMS.

James H. Heine, Editor
The Lutheran Witness

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Singing Our Mother into Eternity

Mom loves music! If there was any message imprinted on my family, it was this. My mother sang around the house just for fun. She had grown up on music. For every birthday, she (and Dad, while he was alive) would join in a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday" over the phone to whichever child or grandchild was marking the day. Our childhood trips to her parents' home in Detroit were always marked by music, especially the old Victrola in Grandpa's basement ringing out with strains of Glenn Miller tunes or (our special favorite) "Let's Remember Pearl Harbor."

Mom sang in school. By the time she was in high school, she was part of the "Bethany Trio," a group of friends who participated actively in Walther League and who sang at many church gatherings around Detroit during the late '30s and early '40s. Choir rehearsal was a given for her, even while we were growing up.

So it was fitting that Mom's deathbed became a place for music. Pancreatic cancer was the doctor's diagnosis. She looked at it more as a "distant early warning" from God to be prepared for His final call. One of her earnest requests from the Lord was to be able to remain in the home where she and Dad had spent their last years. With the powerful and loving hand of God, the caring support of neighbors, and the magnificent assistance of hospice, that desire was fulfilled.

When I arrived at the house on a Sunday a week before her death, I found that my brother had been unable to fulfill one of Mom's requests: to read to her the words of "My Course Is Run" (TLH 599). Somehow, I found the strength to read it to her.

Several times during the following days we came together around Mom's bed with the words of some of her favorite hymns: "Beautiful Savior," "A Mighty Fortress," "For All the Saints," "Now the Light Has Gone Away."

The death rattle started Saturday afternoon. Having served as a pastor, I knew the sound from being at other deathbeds. We had hoped the end would come quickly,

but the hours dragged on. Finally, around 10 p.m., we decided to get some rest. I awoke at 1:15 a.m., and the rattle was worse. I went into Mom's room and grabbed her old *Lutheran Hymnal*. "My Course Is Run" was the first hymn I sang to her. Then I turned the hymnal one page earlier to "Who Knows When Death May Overtake Me" and sang all 11 verses of that powerful hymn.

As she struggled for each breath, I turned one page earlier to "For Me to Live Is Jesus." Then I noticed that Mom had written on the inside back cover of her hymnal her "Favorite Funeral Hymns." I had already sung two of the three, and the only one remaining was 521, "What God Ordains Is Always Good."

My voice was trembling as I reached the second-last verse:

*What God ordains is always
good.
Though I the cup am drinking
Which savors now of
bitterness,
I take it without shrinking.*

A cynic might say it was my singing that killed my mother. But it was at that moment that the rattling stopped. I called the

rest of the family into her room, and Mom went calmly and peacefully into the presence of her Savior. My brother and his wife joined Connie, my wife, and me in singing the last stanza:

*What God ordains is always good.
This truth remains unshaken.
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
I shall not be forsaken.
I fear no harm, For with His arm
He shall embrace and shield me;
So to my God I yield me.*

And to our God we yielded our mother, singing her into the eternal chorus, where the singing goes on forever: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Rev. 5:12 NIV).

Dr. Mark G. Press is director of the Oswald Hoffmann School of Christian Outreach at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.

**I fear no harm, For with His arm
He shall embrace and shield me;
So to my God I yield me.**

Hack *The Shack*?

I am very thankful that Rev. Borst spent hours discussing *The Shack* with his members and did not leave them without guidance (May *Lutheran Witness*). This is a healthy pastoral response to such a popular book.

However, I am very concerned that he has underestimated the negative impact this book will have on believers and unbelievers alike. In that regard I have four, admittedly lengthy, questions.

What percentage of the readers of *The Shack* will allow themselves to be guided in their understanding of it by faithful pastors who are trained to discern the heresies that are contained in the book and acknowledged by Rev. Borst?

God's willingness to interact with humans. His death and resurrection for our justification is not what is most important (entire book).

What would be the spiritual state of those who believe these heresies?

What percentage of its readers who end up in that state is acceptable in order for us to back this as a modern novel worthy of consideration?

Call me a hack if you will, but I would prefer to attack a book that, in my estimation, will lead the majority of its readers away from Jesus as the only means of salvation.

Rev. Terry Forke
Billings, Mont.



Readers of *The Shack* must be reminded that along with the profound metaphors it offers, virtually every theological heresy begins with a misconception of the nature of God, and *The Shack* is no exception.

Rodger Dierker
Palos Verdes, Calif.

What percentage of its readers will put down the book believing the following heresies? God goes by different names in different religions but is the same god (pp. 31 and 181). The Bible is a means for the "intelligentsia" of the church to maintain control of people's access to God (p. 65). That God does not punish sin (p. 119), nor does He want us to be sorry for it, nor does He want to forgive us for it (pp. 184 and 206). God did not create the authority of parents, government, and the Church for the sake of order in the world; they are only means for people to maintain control of others (p. 179). The Scriptures are not necessary because the Holy Spirit prefers to speak directly to us (pp. 195 and 198). The primary function of Jesus is to demonstrate

I highly value Pastor Borst's ability and initiative to share his timely insights. The subject of *The Shack* has also come up in conversation with people I have talked with. No one hesitated to elaborate on the many points they liked, but rarely could anyone identify the book's doctrinal deviations. This reinforced the point that laypeople need the continual shepherding of their pastors to help cultivate discernment in matters of faith and practice. Readers of *The Shack* must be reminded that along with the profound metaphors it offers, virtually every theological heresy begins with a misconception of the nature of God, and *The Shack* is no exception.

Rodger Dierker
Palos Verdes, Calif.

With regard to Pastor Borst's review of *The Shack*, I think it's worth noting that the most vehement theological criticisms ("hacking") of *The Shack* have come from Reformed theologians and pastors. This is because several main tenets of Calvinism are specifically targeted by *Shack* author William P. Young: election to damnation (p. 163); limited atonement (p. 192); irresistible grace (p. 225); finite human nature not being capable of the infinity of the godhead (p. 113); and a more recent and controversial Reformed teaching, "functional hierarchy" in the Trinitarian relationship between the Father and the Son (p. 122). On every one of these issues, Orthodox Lutheranism would likewise find biblical opposition to Calvinism. For this reason, and also on account of the ambiguity and poetic license we allow literature of this sort, I was inclined to minimize the remaining doctrinal problems or tensions in *The Shack*. Rather, I tried to show how the book could be and should be read within an orthodox understanding of the biblical truth. But however forcefully or gently we might offer constructive criticisms of Young's doctrines, we should also receive and reflect upon the challenge he implies for our communities of faith: Will wounded sinners who come into our midst be welcomed and received with the kind of redemptive love exhibited by Papa, Jesus, and Sarayu? Will they find healing (sanctification) for their souls among us? If not, who would blame them for thinking we are just another human institution and not the Church?

Rev. Doyle Theimer
Kingwood, Texas

Thank you for the article by Rev. Steve Borst on William Young's book, *The Shack*. The book was refreshing and brought about lots of conversation about our traditional view of the Trinity within my circle of friends. Rev. Borst's

take on the book was excellent and is indeed needed today in our Synod.

*Karol Selle
Rosholt, Wis.*

Hack *The Shack*? Read the book but would not recommend it. I would rather re-read the Book of Job.

*Frank D. Herold
Lower Burrell, Pa.*

I enjoyed the article by Rev. Steven Borst about *The Shack*, written by William P. Young. Our Sunday Morning Ladies Bible Study plans to tackle this book in the fall. Would it be possible to get a copy of Pastor Borst's study guide?

*Mary Noel
Kyle, Texas*

Rev. Borst reports that the response to his story has been amazing, so much so that he is no longer able to keep up with requests to lead Bible studies about The Shack. As an alternative, he has created a study guide CD. For more information about the CD, or a copy, contact Borst at ilcspastor@yahoo.com. —Ed.

(continued on page 27)



Official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through the Board for Communication Services, Dennis A. Clauss, chairman; David L. Strand, executive director.

Staff: David L. Strand, interim executive editor; James H. Heine, editor; Vicky Schaeffer, senior designer; Robert Sexton, marketing manager and advertising sales; Jim Stange, production coordinator; Carla Dubbelde, editorial manager, district editions; Karen Higgins, editorial assistant; editorial office: 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 314-996-1202.

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Published 11 times per year by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968. Individual subscription \$22.00 per year. Organized congregation subscriptions and district editions offered at reduced rate if submitted through local churches.

To subscribe, renew, or to give a gift subscription, call Concordia Publishing House at 1-800-325-3381.

For subscription information or address changes, e-mail: cphorder@cph.org

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1-888-THE LCMS (843-5267) www.lcms.org
e-mail: LUTHERAN.WITNESS@lcms.org

Member: Associated Church Press
Evangelical Press Association
August 2009 (ISSN: 0024-757X) Vol. 128, No. 8

Back to School

6 THE LUTHERAN WITNESS



**A 'seamless ministry' between church
and school unites a congregation
in outreach to its community.**



Opposite: Immanuel Lutheran School fourth-grader Natalie Ciaccio. National Lutheran School Accreditation Commissioner Eva Fronk presents Immanuel's Glenn Steinbrenner and Rev. Ron Weidler with NLSA's Exemplary Status Award.

that decision was not a unanimous one," notes Weidler. Nonetheless, Immanuel Lutheran Preschool opened in 1989; in 1993, a kindergarten was added. By the time Weidler accepted the call to be senior pastor in 1996, the congregation had just voted to try once again to start a grade-school ministry.

The church was also growing. "In 1996 our average worship attendance was 320," Weidler says. "We ended 2008 with an average attendance of 640."

Immanuel's leaders watched the trends closely. In 2003, the congregation voted to add a Family Life Center, which included a gymnasium, an institutional kitchen, and a middle-school wing.

But things did not go as planned. "A small group of neighbors did not want us to build," Weidler says. "They complained that our new facilities would be too large, too tall, built on insufficient land, etc., etc." In an effort to stop construction, the group sued the congregation, the Synod, the city of Batavia, and Weidler personally.

"It was a frustrating and trying time, to say the least," Weidler says. "But our Lord promises *All things work together for the good of those who love God*. In a very real way, that lawsuit brought everyone at Immanuel together for mutual help and defense."

Brown agrees. "We needed to expand our facilities for our ministry," she says. "We were united in taking the path we did."

Immanuel's Family Life Center was completed and dedicated in 2005.

Larry Fass, who joined Immanuel four years ago, says that today the

As the 286 preschool and grade-school students of Immanuel Lutheran School, Batavia, Ill., arrive each morning, they are met by Principal Glenn Steinbrenner and one of the church's three pastors. On this particular day in late May, the church's senior pastor, Rev. Ronald (Ron) Weidler, welcomes each student by name. If a child is celebrating a birthday, Weidler knows it and adds a hearty "Happy Birthday!"

Between waves of students, principal and pastor chat about school events, students, upcoming challenges, and other topics. Their conversation is punctuated with laughter. They are relaxed yet attentive to one another.

A similar relationship prevails between congregation members and school families, who report that mutual respect guides every aspect of their shared ministry. "We work together at

so many different levels," notes Chris Brown, a congregation member for 18 years and a current school-board member. "I really think of all of us as 'church families.'"

From Challenges to Blessings

Given the school's history, it's significant that today Immanuel is considered "a model or a pattern worth imitating" by the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) Commission. Founded in 1882, Immanuel attempted to establish a school in the early 1900s and again in the 1950s, but both ventures failed.

When the church relocated in 1986 so it could have room to grow, the congregation again evaluated adding a school and voted to do so.

"Because of the historical failures at trying to conduct a school ministry,



Rev. Ron Weidler (right) often joins Principal Glenn Steinbrenner as he greets children in the morning.

property conflict is truly in the past. "The focus now for Immanuel: Be a good neighbor," he says.

Leading the Way to a Seamless Ministry

When granting the school NLSA's Exemplary Status Award for the 2009–2010 academic year, evaluators made special note of the "seamless team ministry" of Immanuel's pastoral and educational staffs.

Terry Schmidt, associate director of schools for the LCMS Board for District and Congregational Services, notes that the exemplary status is reserved for schools that exceed the required accreditation standards. Just two other schools (out of more than 2,000 eligible institutions)—Trinity Lutheran School, Elkhart, Ind., and Good Shepherd Lutheran School, Collinsville, Ill.—were granted exemplary status for the current academic year.

"One of Immanuel's evaluators remarked that teamwork was 'dripping from the rafters,'" Schmidt says. "If we had this in all of our congregations that support a school, our school sys-

tem would be even better than it is."

"I would hope that a seamless ministry would be the goal for every congregation with a school," Weidler says. "Yet, it's not something you can just pray or wish into existence. . . . God has blessed us in recent years so that it has become a reality for us."

Reed Sander, Northern Illinois District mission facilitator for schools, says that Steinbrenner and Weidler model seamless ministry because they both focus on overall congregational ministry.

"Steinbrenner has a responsibility as ministry director of the school while considering the wellbeing of the congregation as a whole," Sander says. "Pastor Weidler is consistently active in the school ministry—he is always active and visible at the school and its functions."

Bev Jass, who has belonged to Immanuel for more than 23 years and served on the school board for 6 years, says the attitudes of Immanuel's leaders are a big influence.

"You see the school staff involved in the church, serving on boards and committees and volunteering their time," Jass says. "That means a lot to the congregation."

Jass also appreciates that school events are announced at the end of

church services and that a combined newsletter is sent to all Immanuel households.

"Even if you don't have children in the school, you know exactly what is being taught, and you hear about every opportunity to be involved," she says, adding that she and her husband, Bob, participate in nearly everything the school does, from fund-raisers to basketball games.

For Elvin Harms, vice president of the congregation and a member for 29 years, it comes down to one word: *unity*.

"Church and school are not separate by any means," he says. "This is Immanuel."

Lessons in Outreach

Steinbrenner is grateful that all three pastors give their unconditional support to the school.

"There is no other ministry of the church where individuals have the same amount of exposure to the Gospel message," he says. "The congregation and pastors must view this ministry as a priority."

Sander notes that an effective Lutheran school is never an "add on" to a church: it is "part of" the church.

"Whenever a school is seen in



When granting the school NLSA's Exemplary Status Award for the 2009–2010 academic year, evaluators made special note of the 'seamless team ministry' of Immanuel's pastoral and educational staffs.



separation from the church, it loses its effectiveness as a ministry," he says.

Brown knows the importance of teamwork from her involvement in Immanuel's Stephen Ministry, a system for training and organizing laypeople to provide one-to-one Christian care to congregation members and the community. She reports that Steinbrenner is just as educated about Stephen Ministry as she is.

"If he sees a need, he has the information and has built the relationships where he can offer parents and family

members Immanuel's Stephen Ministry as a resource," she says.

Corrinne Ellis and her family came to Immanuel for the school and stayed for the church.

"I love how everyone at school and church work or volunteer to the best of their abilities—not for the glorification of themselves but for the glorification of God," she says. "We aren't perfect Christians, as Pastor Weidler often says, but we work hard for our community doing the best that we can."

Above: Immanuel third-graders Kayla Siemann and Anna Baermann measure ingredients while packing meals for Feed My Starving Children during Lutheran Schools Week. The entire school helped to pack 34,456 meals, enough to feed 84 children for one year.

Below: Alison and Lauren Greenwood share Thanksgiving dinner at Immanuel with their grandmother Pat Delagrange. Immanuel students prepared the meal as a gift to church and community members.

'I think that the LCMS's *Ablaze!* emphasis encouraged us to focus on reaching beyond our walls.'

—Dan Gatz,
Chairman of the
Board of Trustees





**'Church and school
are not separate
by any means.
This is Immanuel.'**

—Elvin Harms



Above: Immanuel members Joan Kline and Phyllis Dabbert lend a hand at the Batavia Interfaith Food Pantry. Right: Immanuel members stand on a Hart to Hearts project.

For Jass, the school makes the church stronger. "It's good for everyone, and that strength seems to permeate everything else," she says. "Our outreach into the community is a wonderful witness, and through it we've gained active, strong members."

Lisa Baermann and her husband are members and parents of four children: a recent graduate, two grade-schoolers, and one soon-to-be Immanuel preschooler. She notes that serving the community is a priority for Immanuel—and members actively seek opportunities to do so.

"During Lutheran Schools Week, our students and congregation members volunteer at a nearby Feed My Starving Children site, assembling meals to be shipped to poverty-stricken areas around the world," she says. "In the fall, students cook a Thanksgiving meal for older people in our church and community, and each month individuals and families prepare weekend meals for Lazarus House, the homeless shelter that serves our Tri-City area."

Immanuel volunteers have even done simple kindnesses such as handing out bottled water at a busy neighborhood bike-path intersection. "It

seemed like the right thing to do on such a hot day," Harms says.

"I think that the LCMS's *Ablaze!* emphasis encouraged us to focus on reaching beyond our walls," says Dan Gatz, chairman of Immanuel's Board of Trustees.

Harms says additional inspiration came from reading *The Present Future* by Reggie McNeal.

"The book outlines how the church should gird itself for the future," Harms says. "It said that one way to do this is to connect with the community and find out what the needs are."

And connect they did: Immanuel invited Batavia's aldermen and mayor to an administrative council meeting. After being astounded by the question, "What can we do to help?" the mayor shared his concerns about the city and promised to find a way for Immanuel to pitch in.

"As a result, we were put in touch with the city compliance officer, who contacts our group directly when our help is needed," Harms says. Thus, the "Hart to Hearts" outreach program was launched (*Hart* refers to the street that borders the church/school campus).

"City Hall gives us names of individuals in town whose properties have fallen out of compliance with various codes," Weidler says. "Usually, this is due to old age, poverty, or the physical inability to do the work needed to keep up their home."

Gatz, who acts as the liaison between the city and Hart to Hearts, says volunteers come from both the church and school—and there's a waiting list. "We have a wonderful volunteer pool, from people who have never swung a hammer to skilled tradesmen," he says. "They all work together quite well to solve the residents' problems and bring their houses up to code." And, Gatz notes, they all work with servants' hearts.

"We don't promote the church—there's no sign in the front yard, we don't wear matching T-shirts," he says. "But if the opportunity arises, we're there to tell them who we are and why we're there."

"We hope to expand our presence," Harms says. "We'll continue to keep our eyes and ears open for the opportunity to show Christ's love wherever we can."

Hart to Hearts' finished projects include deck repair, siding restoration, installation of a stairway and landing, and landscaping cleanup. Hoping to reduce or even eliminate the cost of materials and supplies, Gatz negotiated with a "big box" home-improvement center for a corporate sponsorship before Immanuel began its first project nearly a year ago. The sponsorship fell through—which, Gatz feels, is likely due to the economy—but store employees remain helpful.

"We have our own contact who helps us estimate materials and project

needs," Gatz says. "We do get a contractor discount, as well as discounts on big-ticket items."

And the Immanuel community continues its unwavering support.

"As projects come up and needs arise, we find that different people step forward to do what they can," Gatz says. "I put an announcement in last weekend's bulletin that we needed an ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] toilet for a resident, and that same Sunday a member approached me and asked who he should make the check out to."

A Partnership for the Future

The last Sunday in May sees Immanuel's 8 a.m. service moved to the gymnasium and incorporating the eighth-grade graduation ceremony. Immanuel has seen 43 students graduate thus far; there are 24 in this graduating class alone. Weidler and Steinbrenner look on from the stage as two graduates speak about what Immanuel means to them.

"Immanuel is more than an ordinary school," says Zoe Balgemann. "Every person I've met here has changed my life for the better. It's not just a building; it's a family."

"Thanks to Immanuel, I have the tools to be a Christian—whatever I do in life," Nate Harms remarks. "I'll miss coming here every day."

Before Steinbrenner hands out the diplomas, he thanks the faculty, staff, and the school board for their faithful work. Applause and cheers fill the gymnasium. Then, one by one, students rise and accept their diplomas as friends, relatives, congregation members, and guests look on, knowing that Immanuel has many reasons to feel blessed.

Diane Strzelecki is an editor-at-large for *The Lutheran Witness*.

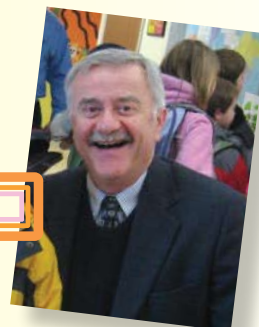
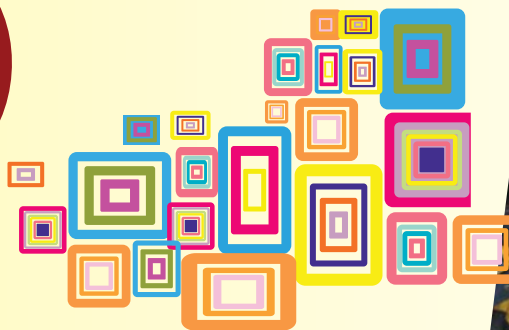
She is a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Palatine, Ill.



Lutheran schools by the numbers

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Early childhood centers | 1,406 |
| Elementary schools | 986 |
| High schools | 108 |
| Students Enrolled | |
| Early childhood | 131,363 |
| Grades K–8 | 120,684 |
| Grades 9–12 | 18,867 |

Source: LCMS District and Congregational Services, School Ministry Department, 2008–2009 school year.



Words to remember

As part of a presentation last March to the National Lutheran Administrators Conference, Rev. Ron Weidler, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Batavia, Ill., listed a series of steps that enhance the ministry efforts of a congregation. At the conclusion of his presentation, Weidler reminded his audience that good leaders practice . . .

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| The 6 most important words | I admit I made a mistake. |
| The 5 most important words | You did a great job! |
| The 4 most important words | What is your opinion? |
| The 3 most important words | If you please. |
| The 2 most important words | Thank you. |
| The 1 most important word | We. |
| The least important word | I. |

For an expanded version of Weidler's presentation, visit lcms.org/witness and click on the link for this story. —D.S.

Transitions in Detroit

From the old, the new arises.



'It was difficult because we were there since 1887. We were very concerned. We had two buildings that might not be able to be used, that nobody would want. You don't like to abandon something or destroy it after it's been there for so long.'

—Elmer Engel

'It was more than we were asking for: We prayed for a place to have a sanctuary. We never thought God would bless us with this huge and beautiful church.'

—Teresita Rodriguez



The quotes above describe an intersection of two Lutheran congregations in inner-city Detroit. One reflects history: the growth of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through 19th-century German immigration. Another is historic because it reflects a 21st-century pattern of immigration—and the advent of additional ethnicity and languages in the Missouri Synod.

They came together at 1450 McKinstry Street, where the church and school buildings that housed Bethlehem Lutheran Church are now home to *Iglesia Luterana Pan de Vida* and the ministries of LATINO (Lutheran Action Team Improving Native Outreach). Like all stories of faith, there is joy and sadness, history and the future, dying and rising.

Two years ago, both congregations had to deal with decisions about their past and their future.

In late 2007, the 11 members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church made a difficult decision: They would close the congregation and put the church and school up for sale. More than 120 years earlier, their community, about three miles southwest of downtown Detroit, teemed with German immigrant families. Gradually, ensuing generations grew up, married, and moved to the suburbs.

In the meantime, the area experienced another immigrant wave. The community came to be known as Mexicantown, a first stop for Spanish-speaking immigrants in Detroit.

The little Bethlehem congregation worshiped in a cavernous sanctuary

that was home to 2,000 members in the 1920s. Their three-story school building—with four bowling alleys in the basement, six classrooms on the first floor, and a second-floor gymnasium-auditorium and kitchen—was used infrequently as membership dwindled.

"Bethlehem was one of the first churches on the west side of Detroit," remarks Elmer Engel, who was treasurer of the small group. "We served the community well. It was a big place in the '20s and '30s and '40s and '50s. Then people moved away and got older and went to newer churches."

One vacancy pastor would say he served a congregation with 100 percent attendance every Sunday. It was true, Engel says. "You know, everybody showed up unless they were sick in bed. We had good attendance, but very small."

By then, everyone was commuting to Bethlehem from other parts of the metropolitan area.

"We had a number who spent their whole lives there," Engel says about Bethlehem. "They were baptized and confirmed and married there, and this was just their church home. So when you brought up the idea that we couldn't keep going the way we were, they reluctantly accepted it because they knew they couldn't do much."

Seeking a New Home

About the same time, a small Spanish-speaking congregation, *Iglesia Luterana Pan de Vida* (Bread of Life Lutheran Church) was contemplating a purchase offer on its storefront building. The congregation was the outgrowth of mission work begun by Deaconess Teresita Rodriguez and later assisted by Rev. Gregory Lorenz.

"I was the only Spanish-speaking Lutheran in the area," Rodriguez says, remembering her call from Lutheran City Ministries in 1996 to work

Left and above: Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Top right: The April 27, 2008, service of rededication and ministry transition.



among the immigrant families in Mexicantown. In 1999, the Michigan District called her as missionary-at-large to Hispanic people. She offered programs such as piano and guitar lessons, ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction, and parenting classes—all ways to address family and individual needs. She intentionally used the programs to meet people and engage them in conversations about Jesus.

Yet, Rodriguez says she was not alone: “We have been able to do what we are doing here because of the mission heart of the people in the suburbs.”

Referring to volunteers from Lutheran churches in metropolitan Detroit, Rodriguez adds this: “These people, who don’t speak Spanish, have a heart for the mission, and they came here to help me with music lessons and English classes.”

Those community activities were opportunities to serve in practical ways, teach about Lutherans, and, especially, to close with devotions, the Word of God, and prayer in Spanish. That led to Bible classes and theological instruction for lay leaders. The efforts in Mexicantown gave birth to the small Spanish-speaking congregation.

Lorenz began working with the ministry in late 2000—not long after he was called as associate pastor to St. Peter Lutheran Church in nearby Macomb. Mission among Spanish-speaking people was on his heart after 10 years as an evangelistic missionary and church planter in Guatemala.

In 2002, Rodriguez, Lorenz, and others formed a mission society named LATINO (Lutheran Action Team Improving Native Outreach), with a specific focus on Hispanic people. In January 2005, LATINO called Lorenz to serve full time as executive director in a team ministry with Rodriguez as mission director. Concurrently, St. Peter also deployed Lorenz full time for this mission work. While *Pan de Vida* was a focus, LATINO also worked with the district and area congregations in Hispanic outreach in other parts of Michigan.

The mission operated from a storefront. With low ceilings, it was multipurpose space, hosting meetings, classes, and worship. During the week, a movable divider would

‘It is amazing to see how God can do things that are more than we ask. Last year was the best year. It has been a wonderful thing. What they have done has been a blessing to the community.

—Teresita Rodriguez

slide in front of the altar and create a receptionist’s area.

“It was a space that, for Hispanics, was not really sacred space,” observes Lorenz. “It was almost a barrier to outreach and evangelism. Our members would invite people. They would walk into the storefront and look around and wonder, ‘This is church?’”

So when a doctor approached the mission about buying its building, Rodriguez and Lorenz talked and prayed—and concluded the Lord was leading them to sell.

“We knew Bethlehem was for sale, but we said there was no way we could afford it,” Lorenz recalls. However, late in 2007, he had an invitation to preach at Bethlehem and brought *Pan de Vida* members along, and after services they made an offer—about 30 percent of the asking price—on the buildings.



Previous page (top): Rev. Greg Lorenz (left), Deaconess Teresita Rodriguez, Bethlehem Lutheran Church president Arthur Hoffeins, and church treasurer Elmer Engel at the transfer of the property.

Below: Formed in 2002, the LATINO Mission Society reaches out to the Hispanic residents of Detroit's Mexicantown.

At right: Confirmation at Pan de Vida.

"Two days later, the president of the congregation called and said they were interested," recalls Lorenz. "That was when we really just absolutely knew, and it was confirmed for us, that this was a God thing. There was no way we could do it on our own."

Confirmation came in other ways, too. Unable to get permits for his project, the doctor backed out of his purchase of the storefront, and the Hispanic congregation had to look for another funding source. *Pan de Vida* and LATINO sought and received help from the Michigan District.

"We tried to keep it up as best we could," Engel says about Bethlehem's property. "So we were pleased when Pastor Lorenz's group decided that they would be interested in taking the buildings on. We thought that if nobody wants them, we would have to tear them down; we didn't want to leave them empty."

Gracious Gifts and New Life

Over the years, the members of Bethlehem had put money aside to keep the buildings going, Engel explains. "We had to distribute the funds we had, so we gave them back to the district, and they set up an endowment for this new group to use for the next three years." (Bethlehem's members were generous in other ways, too, making gifts to our two LCMS seminaries, Concordia University, Ann Arbor, LCMS World Relief, and several Detroit congregations.)

The transfer took place on April 27, 2008, with a Service of Rededication and Ministry Transition. Hymns were accompanied on the pipe organ, played by Elaine Pauli, who was



baptized and confirmed at Bethlehem and taught for a time at the school. Rev. Roosevelt Gray, director of mission services for the Michigan District, preached the English sermon.

"My whole theme was about that transition, and I reminded them that it was a wonderful thing they were doing," Gray recalls. "The Hispanic community would hear the Gospel in their own language, and this will be a lasting legacy for this community."

In a rite based on the Apostles' Creed, members of Bethlehem symbolically turned the congregation's items over to members of *Pan de Vida*: the Bible, the altar paraments, the processional cross, the keys to the church, and the endowment.

"It was a great service," remarks Engel. "They had a lot of people there. You know, we hadn't had that many folks in the church in a long time."

Then the worship continued in Spanish, with a message from Lorenz and singing accompanied by a mariachi band. The transition was followed by a reaffirmation of the ministry of Rodriguez and Lorenz.

"God has really blessed us in this first year," Lorenz says. "He has blessed us with a beautiful mission field."

The school building has become a community center. Maybury Elementary School with 650 students (90 percent Hispanic) is across the street. *Pan de Vida*—which has added *en Belén* (at Bethlehem) to its name—

has partnered with the school to offer music and art classes and after-school study programs. A Mexican folklore dance group uses the auditorium for dance rehearsals, and Sphinx, a community organization emphasizing classical music, offers music lessons and music-theory classes. Another community group, Summer in the City, provides activities for elementary students and volunteer experiences for high school students.

Pan de Vida hosted Vacation Bible School and an Epiphany party for children in the congregation and community. Volunteers teach several levels of English classes, and women from three suburban congregations teach sewing classes for both adults and children. Another group has begun a Szuma (Brazilian) dance class.

Just as Rodriguez did when she began her ministry in Mexicantown, all the activities include devotions and prayer time in Spanish.

"Everybody here knows they are a missionary in one way or another," she says. "I have a strong belief that in our Baptism we are all called to serve God in mission. Everyone who comes through our front door is sent by God to serve or be served. We always keep that in mind."

Roland Lovstad is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Perryville, Mo., and an editor-at-large for *The Lutheran Witness*.



Earlier this summer, LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick recognized the 50th anniversary of the office of director of Christian education by proclaiming June 26 as National LCMS Director of Christian Education Day.

Kieschnick's proclamation noted that 'Congregations and parochial schools benefit from the services of directors of Christian education who are called and commissioned as lifespan education leaders prepared for team ministry in a congregational setting.'

The full text of the proclamation can be read on the President's Office section of our LCMS Web site: lcms.org/?602.

DCEs: By My Side

A veteran pastor celebrates
50 years of DCE ministry

I write this to raise a *Te Deum* for the ministry of directors of Christian education. God's grace in their ministry has blessed our Synod for 50 years.

Through four decades I've had a director of Christian education—a "DCE"—by my side in ministry. Without exception, each has brought his or her own set of blessings to the congregations I have served as pastor. Though mine is only one pastor's story of life with a DCE, it has been repeated with variations many times over the past half century.

Back in the 1970s (and earlier) some teachers functioned in the role of DCE. Eventually, many found their way into DCE certification. By my side at Grace Church in Eugene, Ore., were two such teachers: Bob Fossum and Dan Raguse. They brought music to our ministry with the obligatory guitars. (DCEs seem to come with guitars.) Bob and Dan even formed a country-western group, the Chitlins, that entertained and witnessed throughout the Northwest. I recall school chapels

filled with laughter as we improvised dramas on Bible stories, knowing where we were to end up but never sure how we'd get there. They were two of the most creative Christian servants I've ever known. Over the years, both contributed to national youth gatherings.

Bob still serves as a DCE in Aloha, Ore. Dan, also still in Oregon, produces educational media.

In the 1980s and '90s, I was blessed to have three DCEs by my side at Cross View Lutheran Church in Edina, Minn. Paul Krentz and I worked together for 10 years there. Paul was our first staff addition. I've never seen a church leader work harder. Paul's love for people and his deep, personal faith made him a strong servant leader. He put a wide array of educational programs into place. And, yes, he had a guitar and a voice that enriched our worship services. Paul moved on to become a ministry specialist in the LCMS Texas District.

DCE Lisa Keyne led Cross View Lutheran in its outreach and adult-education ministries while I was there.

She brought contagious enthusiasm and excellence to her work. With us for only a short time, she was as productive as any DCE I've seen. She went on to direct the DCE program at Concordia University Nebraska and then to serve in administrative posts in higher education.

DCE Lyle Heggemeier was at my side in Edina also. In our time together, he had a great heart for outreach and formidable skills in administration that compensated for my lack of the same. He stayed on in the pastoral vacancy when I left to teach at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, providing continuity in the transition. He's done that three or four times in his ministry. Lyle still serves as a DCE in Rochester, N.Y.

Still another DCE by my side at Cross View was Audrey Duensing-Werner. Once again, a creative spirit and boundless energy brought freshness to children's ministries and to our life together as a church. And her voice! When she sang in worship, we were transfixed. Audrey still serves as a DCE in Topeka, Kan.

DCEs—a gift to ministry: Woodbury Lutheran Church DCE Lindsey Burken (center) works with youth on a service project.



DCE ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began when the Synod’s 1959 convention encouraged congregations ‘to establish the office of “director of Christian education” in order to provide additional leadership for the education program of the congregation.’ In a second resolution, the convention granted eligible DCEs ‘all the rights and privileges’ pertaining to teachers, stating that they should be considered as such.

Then since 2000 four DCEs have served by my side here at Woodbury Lutheran Church in Woodbury, Minn. Actually, at this time all four are serving together. Derek Broten, Joel Symmank, Lindsey Burken, and Stacy Winter differ from each other in many ways. Their gifts extend across our congregation’s varied youth ministries and continue to expand and diversify. Derek focuses on youth community outreach and is now enrolled in the Specific Ministry Pastor program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He will coordinate our Saturday worship community. Joel works with senior high youth and has expanded his responsibilities to include coordinating worship and music in one of our worship venues. Lindsey works with junior high youth and has a great heart for ministry with teenage girls. She spends her spare time pursuing graduate work in adolescent studies at the University of Minnesota.

Stacy brings amazing administrative and communica-

tion gifts to our youth ministry. These four are part of a church staff that includes pastors, a vicar, teachers, and lay workers—a team committed to sharing the love and Good News of Jesus Christ in our homes, church, community, and world.

A Little History

DCE ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod began when the Synod’s 1959 convention encouraged congregations “to establish the office of ‘director of Christian education’ in order to provide additional leadership for the education program of the congregation.” In a second resolution, the convention granted eligible DCEs “all the rights and privileges” pertaining to teachers, stating that they should be considered as such.

Directors of religious education had appeared in large urban churches of other denominations as early as a century

ago. One program that revealed the value of trained youth-ministry leaders was a joint effort of Valparaiso University, the Synod's Board for Young People's Work, and the Lutheran Laymen's League. They established the Youth Leadership Training Program at Valparaiso. Graduates of the program began working in LCMS congregations, highlighting the value of specialists in youth ministry. Among them was Rich Bimler, who would later serve as executive director of Synod's Board for Youth Ministry.

Synod's first DCEs often worked with pastors in churches that did not have day schools but needed leadership in Sunday School, youth, or music ministries. Churches with day schools often continued to use teachers to assist with other education and youth ministries.

In 1962, the Synod in convention authorized two of its colleges (Concordia, River Forest, Ill., and Concordia,

small groups, or adult education. The number of directors of Christian education certified in the LCMS is approaching 1,800. Almost 700 of those are serving in congregational settings today.

DCEs connect with one another via a national organization, a national DCE conference every three years, and, in many LCMS districts, via regular professional conferences.

Actually, a continuous line of resources and communication has been provided over the years. Founded in 1999, KINDLE (the Karpenko Institute for Nurturing and Developing Leadership Excellence) provides a year-long process designed to enhance the servant leadership of DCEs at several levels of experience.

Dr. Bill Karpenko, for whom KINDLE is named, directed the DCE program at Concordia University Nebraska. In retirement, Karpenko continues to influence DCE ministry.



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Seward, Neb.) to begin specific training programs for DCEs leading to dual certification as both teachers and DCEs. That dual certification is still offered as an option at some of our Synod's universities today.

In 1969, the Synod's Board for Higher Education commissioned Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn., to begin a training program for DCEs that did not require teacher certification. Concordia College, Portland, Ore., and Concordia College, Irvine, Calif., began programs in 1977, with Concordia, Austin, Texas, adding its DCE program in 1999. These six universities still train Synod's DCEs today.

In 1999, an important definition of DCE ministry was offered at an annual DCE summit: "A director of Christian education is a synodically certified, called, and commissioned lifespan educational leader prepared for team ministry in a congregational setting."

DCE Ministry Today

Defining a DCE as "a lifespan educational leader" captures well DCE ministry today. While many are generalists who work with children, youth, and adults, an increasing number of DCEs specialize in ministries focused on youth,

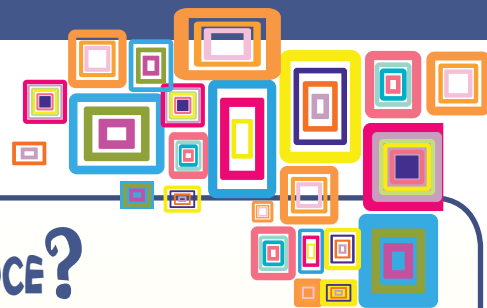
With a team of veteran DCEs, he's looking at the career paths open to DCEs in the future. "Karp" sees a brightening future for directors of education. "Relationships with their senior pastor and with other staff are still the most significant factors impacting a DCE today," he says. He sees those relationships as increasingly healthy. He also sees more women entering DCE ministry and staying on even through their child-rearing years.

"Gratefully, we now see DCEs serving into their 30th and 40th years," Karpenko adds.

Dr. LeRoy Wilke, a former congregational DCE, directed the DCE program at Concordia University, St. Paul, and went on to serve as executive director of Synod's Board for District and Congregational Services. Wilke notes the diversity of hats DCEs wear from setting to setting. He appreciates how the ministry of the DCE has broadened beyond its initial focus on youth.

"As the LCMS and its DCEs get older, we will see a greater focus on adult education and ministry with seniors," Wilke says.

With enrollment in the church worker programs at our universities decreasing, Wilke joins others in considering our seminaries as future training centers for specialized minis-



tries that complement the pastoral office.

Dr. Steve Arnold, another former congregational DCE and director of the DCE program at Concordia, St. Paul, likes where DCE ministry is heading. "We have an opportunity today to do some reframing of the ministry toward greater lifespan education," he explains. "We can help each person live out their calling at every step, right up to the end-of-life planning." He suggests that the DCE ministry of Word and service may mark it more as the work of a deacon, not unlike the first deacons of the early church.

In talking to the veterans, one senses a deep love for DCE ministry and a desire to conserve and improve the profession for the future. Reminiscent of the apostle Paul and his missional traveling companions, and of Luther and his colleague, Philipp Melancthon, the pastor/DCE relationship is a treasure in our church. DCE ministry reminds us pastors that we were never meant to be Lone Rangers. The work of servant leadership has always been a team effort, multiplying the number of God's people invited, trained, and affirmed in ministry.

For me, my life and ministry have been enriched by the DCEs at my side. The parade of guitar-playing, marker-wielding, messy-officed, Frisbee-tossing, texting, and tweeting servant leaders has reinvigorated my heart for ministry again and again.

I know those descriptions perpetuate DCE stereotypes, but to some extent they explain why DCEs have so captured the hearts of our churches. As they celebrate 50 years of service in the LCMS, may our directors of Christian education continue to know our encouragement, gratitude, and respect.

Dr. Dean Nadasdy is senior pastor of Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury, Minn., and the Synod's fourth vice president.



For another perspective on DCE ministry, see the Reporter commentary by Dr. Bill Karpenko at lcms.org/reporter. Karpenko served in DCE-type positions in the 1960s and spent more than three decades in Lutheran higher education—as a DCE program director for 21 of those years. —Ed.

What is a DCE?

On its Web site, Concordia University Texas (concordia.edu) offers a helpful description of a DCE. Here is an abbreviated version:

A director of Christian education (DCE) is a synodically certified, called, and commissioned life-span educational leader prepared for team ministry in a congregational setting.

- In this setting, a DCE is
- a called minister of the Gospel;
 - a trained parish-education specialist;
 - a team minister who works with the pastor, staff, and lay leaders of the congregation;
 - a teacher of the faith; and
 - a trainer of the laity for service.

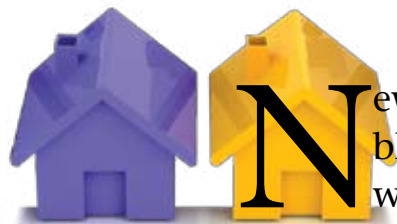
DCEs serve in a variety ways, not only in youth ministry, but also in family ministry, cross-cultural ministry, and outdoor ministry, to name a few. In order to meet the demands of the job, many skills are required of a DCE:

- Enjoyment in working for and with other people
- Good organizational and administrative skills
- Ability to recruit and involve others in ministry opportunities
- Initiative, creativity, and flexibility
- A willing spirit to serve the Lord, His Church, and others in mission and ministry.



DCE Amy Schweim serves Immanuel Lutheran Church in Puyallup, Wash., as its director of children's ministry. Here she confers with Kirk Hinman, director of Immanuel's evangelism team. A mother of three, Schweim has served Immanuel since 1995. In addition to children's ministry, she focuses on music ministry and social (homeless) ministry. She also is active at the district level and serves on various community boards. "Working together with Amy has been a real highlight of my ministry," says Rev. John Biermann, pastor of Immanuel. "She is a team player who has a passion for reaching God's people with God's hope."

Our Gay Neighbors



New neighbors just moved in down the block. As we have done in the past, my wife and I walked over to welcome them to the neighborhood and invite them to our Labor Day block party.

Before inviting them, I had not considered the possibility of their being a gay couple, but they were, and they graciously accepted the invitation, bringing their dish-to-pass as we all did. They were pleasant, enjoyable men to have among us. Moreover, they had begun to make the home improvements that the previous owners had neglected for years. They were thoughtful and considerate, and I found myself liking them.

This is not the first time we have had gay neighbors. In the three decades we have lived here, there have been two other gay couples on the block. There may be more in the future.

As a hospital chaplain in the 1980s, I visited gay men who were suffering from AIDS. Because treatment then was virtually unknown, they all died. In ministering to them, I discovered that calling into question their disordered sexual lifestyle was perceived as little more than condemnation if they were not also open to seeing Christ as their Savior. Our new neighbors were not visibly ill, as so many of my patients had been; yet, would their response be similar if I broached the subject of their lifestyle?

Gay men and lesbian women may be members of a Christian congregation, having been persuaded by those who value diversity more than truth not to see their sexual orientation and its acting-out as being in conflict with God's ordered creation. Churches that support homosexuality claim that reading Bible texts that speak against homosexuality involves a misinterpretation of texts. These churches claim that such biblical texts are only speaking against homosexuality when practiced in the worship of pagan gods. Leviticus 18, however, is not concerned with pagan worship practices but with the integrity and survival of the family in Israel, for it was threatened most radically by disordered sexual relationships such as incest and homosexuality. A study of Leviticus and other passages makes clear that a homosexual orientation is a part of the corruption of sinful human nature.

As natural as it may feel to those who claim a homosexual orientation, acting it out is sin. Biblical moral prohibitions such as those against disordered sexual behavior do not change with time. The Word of God says for all time, "You [as a man] shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination" (Lev. 18:22 ESV). The New Testament repeats the prohibition in Rom. 1:26–27.

The argument is sometimes made that we are all sinners and that homosexual sins are no different from all other sins in God's eyes, therefore lessening the severity and urgency of sins of sexual behavior. However, even God makes a distinction: "Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" (1 Cor. 6:18–19).

Although it is true that in the judgment on the Last Day sin is sin, it is also true that the Day of Judgment has not yet come. In this life, some sins are more damaging than others to the community and to individuals. This is a warning from God that calls for repentance and a re-ordering of life.

The claim has been made that homosexuality is genetically predisposed and therefore natural to some, although no reliable studies have actually demonstrated a gene for this. Even if this were true, the response to a genetically disordered and addictive sexual behavior would be treatment, not indulgence. Some psychiatrists have suggested also that homosexuality may be a form of arrested early development leading to confusion of sexual identity. In some cases, they say, it may be a result of early sexual abuse by an older male.

It may or may not be that a homosexual orientation can be reversed, but the choice to act it out or not is still

an option. The one who bears the burden of a homosexual orientation ought to be supported by us in living a life of daily repentance and chastity as we are all called to do in Christ.

Some years ago, as an observer in the midst of the AIDS epidemic, I attended a three-day weekend retreat with 30 gay men who came to find healing for their disordered homosexual orientation. A local congregation, under the auspices of Exodus International, hosted the retreat. Led by former gay men, these men had become Christians and were trying to support one another in finding a better way to live with their burden of homosexuality. Many testified to their addictive behavior, shed tears of remorse, and took the first steps toward freedom and delivery through faith in Christ.

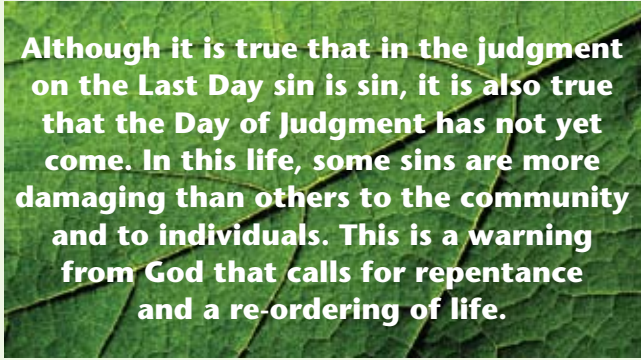
The question for those of us who are Christians and heterosexual is this: "How should we respond to those we meet at work or in our neighborhood who are gay? What sort of witness can we give and how should we go about it?" The value of tolerance in our culture today increasingly allows us to live together in peace rather than attack one another because of our differences. There is great virtue in that, but tolerance alone is not a good solution for those who need help, support, and healing of their disordered lives. Neither is approval of homo-

sexual behavior appropriate among Christians since it does a disservice to homosexuals and supports sinful behavior. Hostility toward homosexuals is surely not an appropriate response from Christians. Christians are called first of all to learn how to love all sinners as God loves all of us as sinners. Our sins may not be the same as the sins of others, but the love and forgiveness of God

at work in us is what all of us need.

How, then, ought we to respond? We must first work toward building a rapport with the gay or lesbian person since our calling is to speak the truth in love. It is no easy calling to live in witness to the Christian life in this world, but Christ lives in us as the world's only hope. We will most likely be rejected for our witness. Nevertheless, without giving approval for homosexual behavior, we need to reach out to others who need Christ's forgiveness and renewal of life. It may be that Christ will work through us to help others find healing, as we have all experienced it in Christ in other ways.

Dr. Richard C. Eyer is the retired director of pastoral care for Columbia Hospital, Milwaukee, Wis., and emeritus professor and director of the Concordia Bioethics Institute at Concordia University Wisconsin. He is the author of *Marriage Is Like Dancing* (CPH, 2007). Earlier this summer, his reflection "Living Together before Marriage" appeared in the June/July online edition of *The Lutheran Witness*.



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Note: The "official notices" are published for a single purpose only: giving notice of a result, namely, changes in the Synod's membership rosters by the addition or deletion of the names of individuals and congregations. It is not always appropriate that reasons for the changes be identified in the published notices. Since a change can occur for any of a variety of reasons, no assumptions may be made merely from the fact that a change has occurred.—Ed.

Official Notices— From the Districts

REV. BENJAMIN L. HARJU, former pastor of St. John, Hastings, and St. Paul, Oakland, Iowa, resigned from the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, effective April 1, 2009. He is, therefore, no longer eligible for a call.—Rev. Paul G. Sievekink, President, LCMS Iowa District West.

REV. DANIEL RITTER, Burnsville, Minn., was appointed circuit counselor of the Hennepin South Circuit, replacing REV. DENNIS STARR, who resigned the position.—Dr. Lane R. Seitz, President, LCMS Minnesota South District.

REV. WILLIAM MARLER was appointed circuit counselor of the Springfield Circuit, effective Jan. 10, replacing REV. JOHN GERLACH, now deceased. DONNA CALVIN, KATHERINE DOROH, KELLY FINNEY, ANNE TINETTI, JEROME WACHTER, REGINA RUSSO, and JESSICA SKEEN were removed from the Ministers of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, no longer eligible for a call.—Rev. Ray G. Mirly, President, LCMS Missouri District.

RICHARD L. BULTEMEYER resigned from the Ministers of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, effective April 15. He is, therefore, no longer eligible for a call.—Dr. Gerhard C. Michael Jr., President, LCMS Florida-Georgia District.

REV. STEVEN BIELENBERG, Willmar, Minn., was appointed circuit counselor for the Montevideo Circuit, replacing REV. RANDALL MORITZ.—Rev. Donald J. Fondow, LCMS Minnesota North District.

Official Notices— Colloquies

DOUGLAS SELETZKY, Berea, Ohio; PHILIP J. MEYER, Chubbuck, Idaho; PHILIP SANG REY, Ridgefield Park, N.J.; and JAMES FOLZ, Stevens Point, Wis., have completed all requirements for the Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. William R. Diekelman, Chairman, Colloquy Committee, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

KIMBERLY CHAISSON, Cypress, Texas; VICTORIA C. FONG, Houston, Texas; SCHEERY L. RENKEN-GOEKLER, Edmond, Okla.; THOMAS CRENSHAW, Temecula, Calif.; JONATHAN KAMIN, Cheney, Kan.; STEPHANIE B. KIEL, Clemmons, N.C.; CECILY M. CHANDLER, Fort Wayne, Ind.; CHARMAIN GANTT, St. Charles, Mo.; JEFF THORMAN, McKinney, Texas; GARNET M. ADAMS, Marengo, Ill.; EDWARD R. AMEY, Santa Clara, Calif.; BILL HONECK, Cypress, Texas; PAMELA C. RASMUSSEN, Houston, Texas; TAYLOR T. SMITH, Tomball, Texas; NATHAN T. MERCIER, Lake Forest, Calif.; TERRI M. THOMAS, Clinton Township, Mich.; BOBBETTE M. LOFTON,

Long Beach, Calif.; and CHRIS NORDSTROM, Irvine, Calif., have submitted their applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through CUEnet. Correspondence regarding their applications should be directed within four weeks after publication of this notice to Dr. William R. Diekelman, Chairman, Colloquy Committee, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

DIANA ORR, Cypress, Calif.; KRISTEN THORNTON, Las Vegas, Nev.; and JAMIE MURRAY, Las Vegas, Nev., have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Becky Peters, Director Colloquy Program, Concordia University, Irvine, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine, CA 92612-3203.

NANCY E. BOWMAN, Chicago, Ill., and JODENE M. SHEA, Orlando, Fla., have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Mark A. Waldron, Director of Teacher Colloquy, Concordia University Chicago, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest, IL 60305-1499.

LISA MARSHALL, Holt, Mich.; ANDREA SALO, Redford, Mich.; and JANICE POELLET, Williamston, Mich., have completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Kevin Brandon, Dean, School of Education, Concordia University, 4090 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2797.

JEFFREY L. SPANGENBERG, Roseburg, Ore., has completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Norman Metzler, Director, Colloquy Program, Concordia University, 2811 N.E. Holman St., Portland, OR 97211.

ROBERT MC EWIN, Tomball, Texas, has completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Jim McConnell, Dean, College of Education, Assistant Colloquy Program Director, Concordia University Texas, 11400 Concordia University Drive, Austin, TX 78726.

DAWN COOKSEY, Kirkwood, Mo., has completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Brian L. Friedrich, President and CEO, Concordia University Nebraska, 800 N. Columbia Ave., Seward, NE 68434-1599.

Official Notices— Requests for Reinstatement

MICHAEL A. NICOL, Wapakoneta, Ohio, has applied for reinstatement to the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. JASON D. CROWDER, Warrenton, Mo.; JULAINE KAMMATH, Aurora, Ill.; KAREN KROTZ, Carrollton, Ill.; GARY LYVERE, Hemlock, Mich.; and KAREN HARTMAN WEST, Fugay Varina, N.C., have applied for reinstatement to the Ministers of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Correspondence regarding these applications should be directed to the undersigned for receipt no later than Sept. 5.—Dr. Raymond L. Hartwig, Secretary, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

Notice to Promote to Continuing Level (Tenure)

The Board of Regents of Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, N.Y., approved KATHRYN GALCHUTT, associate professor of history, and ANDRZEJ WLODARCZYK, professor of business, for continuing appointment at its meeting on May 8. Patrice Sullivan, Assistant to the Dean of College, Concordia College, 171 White Plains Road, Bronxville, NY 10708; 914-337-9300, ext. 2127; patrice.sullivan@concordia-ny.edu.

Positions—Call for Nominations

The Lutheran Witness welcomes notices for positions available at affiliated entities and Recognized Service Organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., Aug. 20 for the October issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.

The LCMS Board for Communication Services (BCS), St. Louis, seeks nominations and applications for **director of News and Information Services**.

This position reports to the executive director of Communications and is responsible for:

- serving as executive editor of the Synod's official periodicals, *The Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter*, and their corresponding Web sites (lcms.org/witness and lcms.org/reporter);
- overseeing the gathering and dissemination of news and information to the church and its publics;
- supervising the News and Information Services division of the BCS, including the Editorial Services unit;
- developing and maintaining relationships with significant professionals and groups involved in news and information both within and outside the Synod; and
- taking on projects and assignments at the behest of the executive director.

Nominees and applicants must have a minimum of five years practical experience in a communications field; a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a field related to communications; considerable skill in written and oral communications; above-average knowledge of electronic communications, including social media; familiarity with the business end of print communications (advertising, marketing, promotion, circulation); thorough knowledge of LCMS theology and practice (formal theological education preferred); and a wide-ranging knowledge of the Synod, including its history and current structure.

Nominees and applicants must be active members of an LCMS congregation and be faithful to the Holy Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions and supportive of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and policies.

Compensation is commensurate with the substantial responsibilities and expectations of this job.

Submit nominations or applications (application is available through <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/LCMS/application.pdf>) no later than Aug. 21 to David Fiedler, Interim Director, LCMS Human Resources, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122; david.fiedler@lcms.org, or fax 314-996-1121.

Positions

Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, seeks experienced **Lutheran teachers** (infant/toddler through eighth grade) as freelance curriculum writers for the development of its completely new day-school religion curriculum. Have you developed successful concepts, lesson plans, approaches, and activities that can be shared with other teachers? Contact Rodney Rathmann at rodney.rathmann@cph.org or 314-268-1084 if you are interested in sharing your gifts and creativity to make a difference in the lives of students and their families by sharing the Gospel.

Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM), St. Louis, seeks to fill the position of **division director for United States Ministries**. Qualified candidate will be an experienced manager to direct the development, production, implementation, and distribution of U.S. Ministries Gospel outreach programs. This involves surveying the unchurched target audience; developing vision and ministry program plans; staying current on media trends; measuring program performance; supporting fundraising efforts; and providing churches with outreach programming and training. The director will serve as an integral part of the senior LHM leadership team. Some travel is required.

Qualifications:

- bachelor's degree in mass communication, marketing, education, theology, business; advanced degree preferred;
- five-plus years of experience in a senior management role with a large, diverse staff;
- creative vision to develop and implement effective new programs and strategic mission plans;
- acts with Christian integrity, and is a member in good standing of an LCMS or Lutheran Church—Canada congregation; and
- mass-media programming background with experience in direct marketing, radio, TV, and Internet technology preferred.

CEO for Lutheran Foundation of Texas

The Lutheran Foundation of Texas (LFOT), Austin, Texas, seeks to fill the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This LCMS servant leader works with a nine-member Board of Directors and is accountable for growing and developing all aspects of the ministry of LFOT, including planned giving, trust administration, investments, donor relations, and staff development. Send e-mail inquiries or information to Dick Tesauro, Chair of the Search Committee, at: RnJTesauro@mail.com.

Send resume with cover letter to Jackie O'Guin, Human Resources, Lutheran Hour Ministries, 660 Mason Ridge Center Drive, St. Louis, MO 63141-8557; fax: 314-317-4291; lhmjobs@lhm.org. For more information, visit the Jobs page at the LHM Web site at www.lhm.org.

Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM), St. Louis, seeks an experienced manager and fund-raiser for the LHM leadership team as **division director of Ministry Advancement**. This individual will serve as the most senior development officer and also oversee the functions of corporate communications and donor relations. The director's primary objective is to build, over time, an advancement program that will ensure LHM's long-term success and institutional integrity.

Qualifications:

- bachelor's degree required; advanced degree and professional certification desirable;
- previous experience as a senior development/advancement officer;
- 10-plus years of professional development experience in progressively responsible positions;
- acts with Christian integrity, and is a member in good standing of an LCMS or Lutheran Church—Canada congregation;
- demonstrated ability to instill a spirit of teamwork and enthusiasm in staff;
- excellent writing and speaking skills, and ability to articulate and to nurture the organization's vision and mission;
- leadership characteristics and strong, effective executive presence; and
- flexibility in hours and ability to travel.

Send nominations or resume with cover letter to Jackie O'Guin, Human Resources, Lutheran Hour Ministries, 660 Mason Ridge Center Drive, St. Louis, MO 63141-8557; fax: 314-317-4291; lhmjobs@lhm.org. For more information, visit the Jobs page at the LHM Web site at www.LHM.org.

The following institutions of the Concordia University System (CUS) are seeking candidates for positions described below:

Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, N.Y., seeks to fill the following faculty positions: **Nursing, both full- and part-time.**

Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., seeks to fill the following faculty position: **Mathematics and Chemistry/Physics.**

Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., seeks to fill the following faculty positions: **Communication with emphasis in Journalism; Foundations, Social Policy, and Research; School Research; School Law; Instructional Design and Technology; Sociology.**

Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas, seeks to fill the following faculty positions: **Healthcare Administration/Director of Program; Music.**

Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis., seeks to fill the following faculty position: **Theology.**

For more information about these and other CUS positions, including complete job descriptions, qualifications, and application process, visit <http://www.lcms.org/cusjobs> and click on "Positions Available at Our Campuses."

Anniversaries

The Lutheran Witness *welcomes notices of no more than 50 words from LCMS congregations about their upcoming "milestone" anniversaries. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., Aug. 20 for the October issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.*

Correction: Christ (Pipe Lake), Comstock, Wis., celebrated its 125th anniversary on July 19, not its 100th anniversary, as printed in June/July issue of *The Lutheran Witness*.

Mount Olive, Sebastopol, Calif., will celebrate its 55th anniversary with the ordination and installation of its new pastor, Rev. Vincent Shaw, a 2009 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., at 1:30 p.m., Aug. 1. Rev. Shaw and his family will be welcomed at the annual church picnic after his first worship service on Aug. 2.

St. Paul's, Beach, N.D., will celebrate its 100th anniversary at 5 p.m., Aug. 2. Festivities include a multimedia presentation of the congregation's history, catered meal, and worship service, with North Dakota District President James Baneck as guest preacher. Contact the church office at 701-872-4700.

Christ, Wathena, Kan., will celebrate its 125th anniversary Aug. 9. A fellowship meal with homemade ice cream will follow the morning worship service. Contact the church office at 785-989-3348 or Pastor Bryan Jones at 816-244-7342 or indybdj@hotmail.com.

St. John, Black River Falls, Wis., will celebrate its 100th anniversary with worship at 10:30 a.m. and other festivities on Aug. 9. Former Pastor Donald Neuendorf will be guest preacher. A complimentary noon meal will be served. Contact the church office at 715-284-7003 or skaczmarick@centurytel.net.

Immanuel, (Hermansberg) Bremen, Kan., will celebrate its 140th anniversary with a 10 a.m. service on Aug. 9. Kansas District President Keith Kohlmeier will be guest speaker. (A thank offering will be collected for Children's Christian Concern Society.) A potluck will be served after the service.

First, Spirit Lake, Idaho, will celebrate its 100th anniversary with special services at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Aug. 16. Each service will be followed by a fellowship brunch/lunch. Contact the church office at 208-623-5252.

Trinity, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, will celebrate its 125th anniversary at 10 a.m. on Aug. 16 with a special worship service, followed by a Trinity family reunion picnic. Former pastor Rev. Richard Thompson will preach. Contact the church office at 319-366-1569 or churchoffice@trinitycr.org.

Benediction, Milwaukee, Wis., will celebrate its 50th anniversary celebration with a 9 a.m. worship service on Aug. 16, followed by a luncheon. For reservations, contact the church office at 414-463-9158 or visit www.benediction-lcms.org.

Christ, Rochester, Minn., will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a 10 a.m. special worship service on Aug. 30. Guest speakers include Rev. James Markworth and congregational son Rev. David Markworth. Historical displays, sharing festival, and a noon meal will follow. Contact the church office at 507-289-0271 or secretary@christrochester.org.

First English, Centerville, S.D., will celebrate its 75th anniversary at an 11 a.m. special worship service on Sept. 6, with a catered meal to follow. Contact the church office at 605-563-2904 or visit www.firstenglishcenterville.org.

St. Peter, Gresham, Neb., will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Sept. 13. Rev. Timothy Jenks, former pastor, will be guest preacher at the 10:30 a.m. service, followed by a catered noon meal. Rev. Timothy Prince, former pastor, will be guest preacher at the 2:30 p.m. service.

First Trinity, Wellsville, N.Y., will celebrate its 150th anniversary at a 10:30 a.m. special worship service Sept. 13, followed by a free catered dinner. Dr. Arnold Kromphardt will be the guest preacher. Contact the church office at 585-593-3311 or firsttrinitywellsville@msn.com.

Trinity, Albany, Texas, will celebrate its 100th anniversary at the 5 p.m. service on Sept. 13, with Rev. James Linderman to preach and a meal after the service. The church continues its celebration on Oct. 10–11, with Rev. Kenneth Hennings as guest preacher. Contact the church office at 325-762-2557.

Christ, Augusta, Mo., will celebrate its 150th anniversary at the 10 a.m. worship service, Sept. 13, followed by a noon meal. Former pastor, Rev. Frank Starr, will preach at the 2 p.m. service. Contact the church office at 636-228-4642 or visit www.clcagustamo.org.

Zion, Brainerd, Minn., will celebrate its 125th anniversary at the 9 a.m. celebration service on Sept. 13, with a pig roast to follow at Lum Park. Contact the church office at zionspt@brainerd.net or visit www.zionbrainerd.org.

St. John's, Arlington, Minn., will celebrate its 150th anniversary on Sept. 20 with special services and a catered meal. Pastor Weseloh, Pastor Koehler, and Pastor Vollrath will be the speakers. Photos and remembrances may be submitted. Contact church office at 507-964-2400 or bdpostal@myclearwave.net.

Salem, Blue Island, Ill., will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Sept. 27. At the 9 a.m. service, Northern Illinois District President Dan Gilbert will deliver the message. At 2 p.m., Rev. Ken Klaus, Lutheran Hour speaker, will be guest preacher. A banquet will be held at the Double Tree Hotel in Alsip. Contact the church office at 708-388-1830.

Bethesda, Hot Springs, S.D., will celebrate its 90th anniversary at the 9 a.m. worship service on Sept. 27. Rev. Robert Nowak will be guest speaker. A program and potluck will follow the service. Contact the church office at 605-745-4834.

Zion, Lincoln, Mo., will celebrate its 150th anniversary at the 10:30 a.m. service on Sept. 27, with a luncheon to follow, and at the 2 p.m. special anniversary service with Missouri District President Ray Mirly to preach. An Oct. 4 organ recital by Dr. William McCandless also will be part of the celebration. Contact the church office at 660-547-3502.

St. Paul's, Draper, S.D., will celebrate its 100th anniversary at 10 a.m. on Oct. 4, beginning with breakfast rolls and coffee and a special worship service at 11 a.m. A catered dinner will be served at noon, with a parade and program to follow. Contact the church office at 605-669-2406.

St. John, Ray, Mich., will celebrate its 125th anniversary at the 10:30 a.m. divine worship service on Oct. 11. Rev. Chris Siefferlien will be guest pastor. A meal and a program will follow. Contact the church office at 586-749-5286 or e-mail sjlutheran@comcast.net.

Trinity, West Chicago, Ill., will celebrate its 125th anniversary on Oct. 11 with a brunch at 11 a.m., followed by a worship service at 2 p.m., with Rev. Tony Davison as guest speaker. Refreshments will be served at 3:30 p.m. Contact the church office at 630-231-1175 or visit www.trinitywc.com.

In Memoriam

Obituary information is provided by district offices to the Synod's Office of Rosters and Statistics. Any questions about content should be referred, therefore, to the appropriate district office.—Ed.

ORDAINED

HENDERSON, SAMUEL CLEMENS;

Sept. 26, 1924, Mexia, Texas, to April 1, 2009, Tampa, Fla.; son of Rev. William Sr. and Annie (Childs) Henderson; colloquy 1986. Served 1986–1987. Ministry/parish: Omaha, Neb., retired 1999. Survivors: sons: Aaron, Antoine; daughters: Tonetta, Florence Garcia, Aleta. Memorial service: April 7, 2009, Tampa, Fla.; interment: April 7, 2009, Bushnell, Fla.

HINZ, FREDERICK CARL; May 15, 1926,

Mason City, Iowa, to April 4, 2009, Fredericksburg, Va.; son of Carl and Helen (Schroth) Hinz; graduated St. Louis, 1950. Served 1952–1988. Ministries/parishes: Brooklyn, Maspeth, N.Y.; Atlantic District circuit counselor 1988–1991; retired 1988. Preceded in death by his wife, Ester (Keekley) Hinz. Survivors: Lucille (Freed) Hinz; step-daughters: Kathryn Henkin, Mary Steinke, Carolyn Bernot, Barbara Swetman. Funeral:

An Old Lutheran?



My husband teases me about being “an old Lutheran.” In this day of universal informality, lots of decency and manners seem to have gone out of style, even in church. Perhaps it is the floor plan of our church, but I can’t help but notice that people don’t seem to observe what was once known as proper etiquette when it comes to their late entrances to the worship service. What is considered proper now? Am I just an old-fashioned Lutheran?

Before we sat down to answer your question, we checked with the staff of our LCMS Commission on Worship. Yes, they acknowledged, things often are more

casual today, as with so many aspects of our life. Yet, they reminded us, out of respect for the service and consideration for other worshipers, it’s still good to observe some “old-fashioned” guidelines when one enters a church after the service has begun.

What are those guidelines?

In his *Usher Handbook* (Augsburg, 1990), Ralph R. Van Loon notes that, traditionally, latecomers never enter the nave during times of silence, prayer, or while the lessons or the Gospel are being read. Instead, appropriate times to quietly find a seat—or be ushered to a seat—include the Prelude, the day’s announcements, a hymn, or a liturgical song.

Van Loon wrote his book as a help for ushers. But his advice is a good reminder for all of us. The goal, of course, is to accommodate and welcome those of us who have arrived late while disturbing our fellow worshipers as little as possible.

Send your questions to Q & A, *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295. Please include your name and address. All questions will be considered but none can be answered individually.

April 14, 2009, Fredericksburg, Va.; interment: April 18, 2009, Milwaukee, Wis.

MC MILLER, ROBERT JAMES; July 19, 1930, Stevens Point, Wis., to March 31, 2009, Sun City, Ariz.; son of Eugene and Olga (Bobert) Mc Miller; graduated St. Louis, 1955. Served 1955–1971. Ministries/parishes: Pierce, Neb.; Sterling, Ill.; Park Falls, Okauchee, Wis.; retired 2000. Preceded in death by his daughter, Lynn Mc Miller. Survivors: Joanne (Braun) Mc Miller; sons: James, David, Rev. Daniel; daughter: Rebecca Farrar. Funeral: April 7, 2009, Elm Grove, Wis.; interment: April 7, 2009, Oconomowoc, Wis.

ROSEN, EDGAR ROLAND; June 20, 1922, Des Moines, Iowa, to April 1, 2009, Staunton, Va.; son of Erik and Esther (Scott) Rosen; graduated Springfield, 1963. Served 1963–1987. Ministries/parishes: Eagle Grove, Lidderdale, Iowa; Cleveland, Tenn.; Elizabethtown, Ky.; Indiana District circuit counselor 1974–1978; retired 1987. Preceded in death by his daughter, Karen Rosen. Survivors: Barbara (Graham) Rosen; sons: Scott, Joel. Funeral: April 8, 2009, Waynesboro, Va.; interment: April 8, 2009, Crimora, Va.

COMMISSIONED

BORKENHAGEN, MARTIN HUGO DAVID; May 20, 1923, Adell, Wis., to March 22, 2009, San Jose, Calif.; son of Richard and Emma (Spieker) Borkenhagen; graduated River Forest, 1945. Served 1945–1986. Schools/ministries: Wauscon, Cleveland, Ohio; Pontiac, Sawyer, Mich.; Paramus, N.J.; San Jose,

Richmond, Calif.; retired 1986. Survivors: Eleanor (Heyne) Borkenhagen; daughters: Susan Bethke, Roxann Gallaher, Jennifer James. Funeral: March 28, 2009, Cupertino, Calif.; interment: March 28, 2009, San Jose, Calif.

GARSKE, HERBERT EMIL; Dec. 29, 1920, Chicago, Ill., to April 17, 2009, Seward, Neb.; son of Emil and Adeline (Noffke) Garske; graduated River Forest, 1942. Served 1943–1986. Schools/ministries: Houston, Texas; Ann Arbor, Mich.; retired 1986. Survivors: Evelyn (Bahr) Garske; sons: John, Randall, Mark. Funeral and interment: April 20, 2009, Staplehurst, Neb.

SCHULZ, DELPHIN L. DR.; Jan. 22, 1926, Faribault, Minn., to Dec. 27, 2008, St. Louis, Mo.; son of William and Dora (Wegner) Schulz; colloquy 1951. Served 1952–1991. Schools/ministries: Alexandria, St. Paul, Minn.; Detroit, Mich.; retired 1991. Survivor: Lois (Bohl) Schulz. Memorial service: Jan. 3, 2009, Bel Nor, Mo.; cremation.

WUNDERLICH, ERNEST OTTO; Feb. 11, 1916, Saxony, Germany, to March 20, 2009, Hendersonville, N.C.; son of Otto and Martha (Gerber) Wunderlich; graduated River Forest, 1940. Served 1941–1981. Schools/ministries: Ellisville, Mo.; Matteson, Ill.; retired 1981. Preceded in death by his daughter, Linda Wunderlich. Survivors: Helene (Jirgal) Wunderlich; sons: Robert, Kenneth; daughter: Carole Stevenson. Funeral and interment: March 28, 2009, Hendersonville, N.C.

Facing Death



I was diagnosed several months ago with a terminal illness. I think I'm over the initial shock of hearing that news. I have wonderful family support, and I know heaven is waiting for me, but I'm still scared. I've heard people talk about dying a "good death" or "dying well." What does that mean, and how can I do it?

Yes, heaven is waiting for you. This affirmation gives witness to your faith and is the

source of great comfort and strength. On your journey through your illness, you may also experience a variety of other thoughts and emotions. Know that our Lord understands these and walks with you through them.

The phrases "good death" and "dying well" might be troubling to some (how can death be "good"?), but properly understood, they do address important issues. Most often, they mean to die at peace, with one's wishes around the dying process fulfilled (e.g., little or no pain, surrounded by loved ones). Toward that end, I encourage you to consider certain tasks to "get your house in order." Addressing these might seem overwhelming, but it will be a gift to your loved ones when they find themselves facing decisions when the time comes.

The tasks include preparing, or updating, your will, as well as an Advance Directive for Health Care, in which you indicate your wishes concerning medical treatment should you become unable to make decisions. Talk with your pastor about the hymns and Scripture readings you would like for your funeral. So there are no "surprises" for those who will be responsible for your financial affairs, organize information about your bank accounts and life-insurance policies. You might also prepare a written summary that includes practical items such as the names of your auto mechanic and other service people, where you keep grocery coupons, how often you mow the lawn, etc.

A practice gaining popularity is to develop an "ethical will"—perhaps videotaped—in which you lay out the values, dreams, and hopes you have for your life and for your loved ones.

For Christians, the essence of "dying well" means dying in the faith of our Baptism. At that time, as St. Paul says, you were "united with Him in a death like His" in order that you might be "united with Him in His resurrection." Availing yourself of His body and blood regularly around the table with your fellow believers is a sign and seal that not even death can separate you from God's love.

Dr. William B. Knippa is pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas, and a licensed psychologist.

Send your questions to Family Counselor, *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295. Please include your name and address.

'O Sleeper, Awake!'

My husband's beloved grandmother was called to her eternal home at the age of 101 (while holding her pastor's hand). During her funeral service, our 5-year-old son, Jack, became restless.

First, he asked to take off his shirt because he was hot. Then he was hungry. When he said he was sleepy, I suggested he rest his head on my arm. He did, but after a short while he complained in a loud whisper, "I'm trying to sleep, but the pastor keeps waking me up!"

Kristin Johnson
Chaska, Minn.

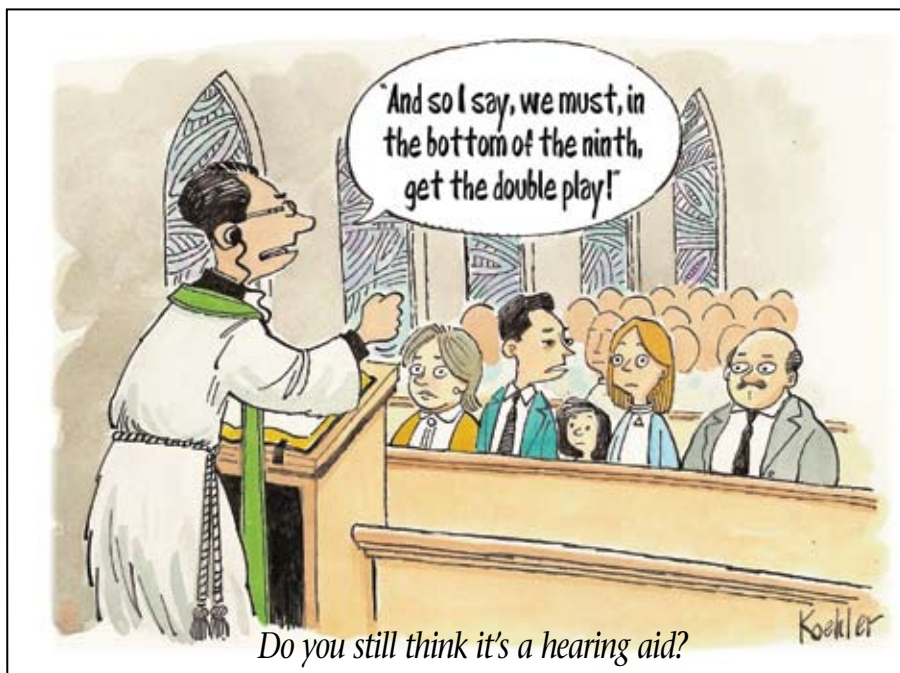
Just Checking!

The youngest child in the family was asked to say grace at dinner one night. "Dear God," he intoned. "Thank You for these pancakes . . ."

When he concluded, his mother asked, "Jason, why did you thank God for pancakes when we're having chicken?"

Smiling, Jason replied, "I thought I'd see if He was paying attention tonight."

Philip Schuppel
Davis, W.Va.



Free Car Wash

Just in time for the 10 a.m. Sunday morning service, a big storm blew into town. The sky looked menacing. Thunder cracked, and the wind whipped tree limbs to and fro. The pews were filled with anxious worshippers.

As the pastor began his sermon, the clouds unleashed their contents and a del-

uge slammed against the church windows. The pastor never missed a beat. "Now just look at that," he commented calmly. "We sit here all dry and comfortable, and the good Lord is out there washing our cars. Isn't He wonderful!"

George Kottwitz
Trinity Lutheran Church
Edwardsville, Ill.

LETTERS

(continued from page 5)

Our magnificent faith

I appreciate Dr. Karl Barth's response to my April *Witness* article, "Reservations on the Resurrection?" and I certainly agree that the Gospel writers did a *much* finer job of recall than did my students in the illustration provided! The point, again, was simply to demonstrate that, in terms of the human dimension, people seeing the same thing will report it differently.

Certainly, too, we accept the Resurrection on faith, as Dr. Barth concludes, but let's not ignore proofs. Ours is never a blind faith—as is the case in all other world religions—but a faith magnificently supported by

historical, archaeological, and geographical proofs. That's the glorious advantage of Christianity.

Dr. Paul L. Maier
Kalamazoo, Mich.

Finding unsurpassed peace

I just finished reading the Lifeline story, "Fixed on Eternity," in the May *Lutheran Witness*. It left me feeling aggravated at those who use or abuse drugs, sad for the baby's situation, but finally joyful for knowing that a precious child is with our Lord and Savior for eternity. Oh, that one day his mom would seek to know Him, too, to be reunited with her boy.

As a mom of four and grandma of four, I always make having my child baptized into the family of God the first thing I do. The peace of knowing He has my child is unsurpassed, especially during those times when children "test their wings."

Mrs. Valerie Brown
Ontario, Calif.

Read more letters to the editor at lcms.org/witness. We welcome letters that comment on articles in *The Lutheran Witness*. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Send letters to "Letters," c/o *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; or send them via e-mail to lutheran.witness@lcms.org. Please include your name, postal address, and telephone number. Letters without this information cannot be considered for publication.

Sharp Edges

Our old barbecue grill was as rusted as an old wreck in a junkyard. So my wife and I spent the early part of April shopping for a new gas grill. When we found one that met our needs, the grill's big box barely fit in the trunk of our car.

I was apprehensive as I imagined all the parts that needed to be put together. Opening the box, I saw a sheet of paper that read in capital letters, "BE CAREFUL OF SHARP EDGES."

I crumpled the paper, tossed it on the floor, and started to pull the pieces of the grill out of the box. I was relieved that most of the grill was assembled already.

After a while, my wife checked on my progress. With a big, confident smile I said, "I'll have pork chops sizzling in no time."

She smiled but said nothing. I could tell she was looking at my hands. "Can I get you some Band-Aids?" she asked. Glancing at my hands, I saw several cuts and scrapes. I remembered the crumpled piece of paper on the floor.

As with most of my life, I don't like to think about sharp edges, only the smooth ones. But when a bill that is higher than expected comes in the mail, I cry, "Ouch!" I hear from a friend who has just been told he has cancer. Another friend has lost his job. News reports tell about bombings in Baghdad, where my nephew is a soldier. All are sharp edges.

Read Psalm 140. The psalmist is probably a king. Make a list of the "sharp edges" the psalmist has encountered.

How do the people in the list plan to harm the psalmist? How does the psalmist believe he can be saved?

Psalm 62 is also written by a king, most likely King David. What does verse 3 indicate about the king's strength, his vulnerability?

How do the forces against the king try to overcome him?

Where does the king look for rest from his enemies?

What reasons does he give for putting his trust there?

In verse 12, what will every person experience from God?

St. Paul tells about his "sharp edges" in 2 Cor. 6:3–10. Read those verses and make a list of Paul's trials.

Obviously, Paul experienced many hardships in his life. Now make a list of his "smooth edges."

Discuss these two lists.

Read John 19. What are the physical "sharp edges" that Jesus suffered?

What final suffering did Jesus take for us when He gave up His last breath?

What does this mean for us when we deal with hardships and trials?

God does not take away all the "sharp edges" of our lives. By faith, we can move forward, knowing that God has taken away the sharpest edge of all—the eternal death we deserve because of our sin. Christ's saving work is making our way smooth with His constant love and grace.

Rev. Thomas E. Engel is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Louisville, Ky.





Convention Reflections

At one convention, . . . I got a question I don't recall having been asked before: 'If you could change one thing in the LCMS, what would it be?'

Beginning with North Dakota in January and ending in July with Central Illinois, the Synod's 35 districts met in convention this year, as they do every three years. Please allow me to share some reflections on these gatherings.

I like to kid about going to North Dakota in January, but the weather was rather pleasant this time around. Instead of being 40 below zero, which it was the week before the convention, I was greeted there with a balmy 30 degrees above zero—yet with snow piled high and deep everywhere! (It was even balmier in Springfield, Ill., in July, but not all that bad. It was only in the 80s.)

One of the highlights of the convention season for me is the opportunity to worship with the pastors, commissioned ministers, and lay leaders of our congregations. There is great joy in worshipping together with several hundred Christian brothers and sisters who so exuberantly praise our gracious God in word and song.

My joy is compounded when I join those hundreds of fellow Christians at the table of our Lord, being fed with His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins and expressing the unity in Christ and the unity of confession that we share with one another. These truly are gifts of our gracious God for which we constantly and joyfully thank Him!

Interesting, though not surprising, is the variety of liturgical formats, instruments, choral presentations, and hymns or songs used in convention worship. Some services were beautifully traditional. Others were less traditional and included contemporary elements. In all of these services, however, the spirit of God was evident in the exuberant singing, fervent praying, and powerful preaching that were the order of the day.

Another highlight of district conventions for me is the question-and-answer session held at each gathering. While the questions submitted by delegates are gathered in writing by the district president or his designee, I insist on not seeing them in advance or having any hint at their content. This presents me with the opportunity—and challenge—of being prepared to respond extemporaneously to a wide variety of questions about our Synod's positions, perspectives, challenges, opportunities, and relationships.

Typically, I receive questions about the financial condition of the Synod, higher education, the Synod's work in missions and human care, inter-Christian relationships, Communion administration, the role of women in the church, and the pros and cons of alternative worship styles. At one convention, though, I got a question I don't recall

having been asked before: "If you could change one thing in the LCMS, what would it be?"

After a few seconds of reflection, I answered something like this: If I could change anything in the LCMS, it would be the climate of distrust that that has existed among us for many years.

While Holy Scripture does not address directly the matter of trust between human beings, it does teach us, as Martin Luther explained, to fear, love, and trust in God above all things. This leads us down a path of love, respect, and, dare I say, trust of others whom He also has called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified.

Luther wrote in his explanation to the Eighth Commandment that we should defend and speak well of our neighbor and put the best construction on everything. It grieves my spirit when I hear or read words that at best misrepresent the words or actions of others or, at worst, are slanderous toward others—either way, dishonoring the Eighth Commandment. Many of these words are harmful to the reputation of individual pastors, teachers, or lay people. To say the least, a spirit of distrust also conveys a non-helpful perception of our Synod, internally and externally.

There is a strong relationship between trust and Christian unity. The greater our unity, the greater our trust. I read often the words of Eph. 4:1–6, where Paul writes, "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

As the Spirit of God moves and works among us through Word and Sacrament, may our love for one another and our confidence in His Word result in a growing spirit of trust in our Synod.

Jerry Kieschnick
John 3:16–17

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Christ, in Time . . . for Eternity!
e-mail: president@lcms.org
Web page: www.lcms.org/president