





## From the Board...

— Kip Tyler

### Together in Mission and Ministry

I thank God for allowing me to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of LCMC. It has been an honor and I continue to be amazed at God's activity among us. I was one of the early members, so I have watched this group of God's people grow and flourish as we strive faithfully to follow where the Lord leads us. The focus on being together in mission for Jesus Christ around the world fills my heart and soul.

I have met great people as I go out and talk about LCMC. Some are hurting—others frustrated, excited, tired, confused and perplexed—but all have a common

denominator: they are committed to Christ and desire to be faithful confessional believers. Lutherans are a fun bunch when their hearts, souls and minds are focused on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus!

Speaking of getting together, I love our gatherings. I repeat: *I love our gatherings*. I can't wait to join with brothers and sisters I have known a long time, those I have met in our LCMC journey together, and those I meet for the first time. I love joining other Lutherans to worship, laugh, eat and learn. I hope to see you in Des Moines in October! To see what is going on at this year's gathering, see the articles in this newsletter or check out the LCMC website.

Speaking of the LCMC website, you should check out our new site. It is awesome! As a Board we are committed to help congregations network with each other, to support and encourage each other, and to join together in ministry and mission. We are seeking new and innovative ways to accomplish this, and the new website format is an example.

— continued on page 6

This newsletter is a publication of LCMC, an association of churches and individuals.

Inclusion of articles is intended to provide information and does not imply official endorsement.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect an official position of the Association or its board of trustees.

We welcome comments, suggestions for stories, and submissions from our members. See contact information below.



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BY THE WORD

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter  
2011

Newsletter

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



## TREASURER'S REPORT

— Kirk Dean,  
Treasurer

**M**y treasurer's report to membership again reflects very positive results for LCMC through the month of July. Contributions have continued to exceed expenses almost every month this year. Thank you for your generous consideration of LCMC! Your support has allowed the Board to support our growth as an association and to fund new needs and programs we have identified.

Beginning August 1, additional part-time staff will be on board to provide assistance to Sharon, our Director of Operations.

We are also very excited to have funded major changes and improvements to our website, which will greatly aid our ability to communicate with member congregations.

Most importantly, your support has given us opportunities for funding the real MISSION of LCMC in North America and elsewhere.

We have another very exciting piece of financial news to report: Thrivent Financial for Lutherans once again has made a grant award to LCMC, this time in the amount of \$72,500!

We have used past grants from Thrivent for valuable programming support of our fall Annual Gatherings, spring Leadership meetings, and youth gatherings.

Whenever you have the opportunity, please acknowledge Thrivent and express appreciation to them for their wonderful support of LCMC programs.



 **Thrivent Financial**  
for Lutherans®

## Today's Word: *Orientation*

We hear a lot about **orientation** in this culture. It is a word that does not appear in the Bible (*ESV, KJV or NIV.*)

The word **orient** means east; as a verb it originally meant to face east. Later, it came to mean to get one's bearings, to know the directions—an important ability for travellers without maps, compasses or highways.

Webster defines **orientation** as “a general or lasting direction of thought, inclination, or interest.” Inclination. Hmmm. The *ESV* uses the words “*incline*” or “*inclined*” 37 times. Thirty of those talk of “*inclining one's ear.*” One's orientation, then, is the direction one faces, and what one pays attention to.

As Christians, we know Scripture teaches us that we are in bondage to sin; we cannot free ourselves. Sin is the only natural human orientation Scripture knows, and it ensnares all of us.

But, the Hebrew word for repent, *shūb*, means “to turn around.” To turn to God, in other words, is to **re-orient** ourselves—to turn and face Him instead of our own sinful orientations. That is something we can do only by the grace of God through His Holy Spirit, who “*calls, enlightens, gathers and sanctifies.*”

As people on a mission, we must remember we are never finished, complete or perfected in this life. We live like Janus, the two-faced Roman god, facing two directions at once: toward our own bondage **and** toward the one who frees us from it at the same time. *Simul iustus et peccator*—simultaneously saint and sinner.

Only as we grasp how lost and disoriented we ourselves are—but for the grace of God—can we really reach out in love to others in their disorientations.

— Tony Stoutenburg



# Groundbreaking at Prairie Faith

— *Tawnia Miller*

June 12 marked a new beginning as Prairie Faith celebrated the groundbreaking of a much-needed church addition that will double the overall church facility. Council members took turns digging a ceremonial shovel full of dirt at the location of the new addition.

The addition, to be built on the north and east sides of the existing church, will include an expanded lobby, a large multi-purpose room, an updated kitchen, handicap accessible restrooms and two offices.

Construction is scheduled to be complete by the end of the year. The festivities concluded with a potluck luncheon in the church basement. ♦



## From the Board, continued from page 2. . .

I pray the Lord will continue to bless you where you serve. If our paths cross, please say hello and I will try and do the same.

In Christ,

Kip Tyler, *Senior Pastor*  
*Lutheran Church of the Master, Omaha, NE*  
*Member, LCMC Board of Trustees* ♦

## Annual Gathering, continued from page 1...

Tuesday morning's Bible study leader is Dr. David Preus, former president of the American Lutheran Church. Our keynote will be given by Pastor T.J. Anderson.

Wednesday morning, our Bible study will be offered by Pastor Carl Billings of Discover Church in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. Our keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba, who currently serves as the Missions Director for the North American Lutheran Church. Gemechis is a dynamic and passionate speaker, carries a leadership role with the church in Ethiopia and has a tremendous heart for evangelism.

Preaching at our closing worship service is Pastor Jaynan Clark, former Executive Director of Word Alone Ministries and an LCMC pastor.

Special guests at our gathering will include:

- Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa, president of the Evangelical Ethiopian Church Mekane Yesus
- Pastor Jon Benito, the president of the Nicaraguan church, LCMC;
- Pastor John Dovich of Lutheran Vietnamese Ministries; and
- Other international leaders.

On Tuesday night, *Awaken* will present a dramatic mime presentation of the life and ministry of Jesus that you won't want to miss.

As always, our Gathering will include a wide variety of breakout sessions on topics that are of interest to all of us—pastors, leaders and members of our churches alike.

Make sure you set aside these dates for our gathering in Des Moines! Join together with others for a time of encouragement, inspiration and challenge as we continue to be Lutheran congregations in mission for Christ. ♦

*See page 12 for the schedule of events and  
info about the keynote speakers  
for the Annual Gathering*



# GETTING TO KNOW. . .

## *Living Word Lutheran Church*

Milbank, South Dakota



**L**iving Word Lutheran Church was organized as a result of 95 people meeting in August 2010 to discuss the Holy Spirit's guidance. When two votes taken by our former congregation to leave the ELCA narrowly failed to pass, we knew we had to take a stand to uphold our faith. One year later, we have over 300 baptized members. Many members of neighboring ELCA congregations in South Dakota and Minnesota have joined with us. Living Word joined LCMC and the Augustana District, and called Rev. N. Craig Werling as pastor. The women of the congregation organized into Circles and are part of LCMC Women of the Word.

We worshipped for the first three months at the Milbank Visitor Center, then rented space at the Whetstone Mall on Highway 12 and began worship there on November 28, 2011. Attendance is often over 200, with 312 attending the Easter service (we used every available chair and every inch of space!). We have about 40 children, pre-school through high school, in the Sunday School, and have to be creative to find space for classes. Confirmation classes meet at the pastors home, and our first class of four was confirmed on May 1st.

Congregation president Ardell Nelson says: "This is the most exciting church I have ever belonged to. I can hardly wait for Sunday morning worship, everyone seems so happy and friendly and willing

to serve Christ. The congregation of the Living Word has a hunger for the Word of God!"

All of the glory and honor for what has been accomplished and the success that we have enjoyed most certainly belongs to God! I pray that our search for the TRUTH remains strong and our focus will always remain on God and His Word.

The conflict over God's Word and the stand taken by those who left ELCA congregations to form Living Word has been a powerful witness in Milbank and throughout the area. God used a painful process and what some might consider a "failed" vote to teach us what is truly important and what it means to discern His will and follow it. We are reminded that the Church is God's people gathered around Word and Sacrament, and not a building or human institution.

God strengthened our faith and blessed us beyond measure as we learned to trust in Him and His plan for us, our congregation, and our mission as His faithful disciples. We continue to seek His will for us as we prayerfully begin a building project, study and proclaim His Word, and seek to be His good and faithful disciple servants. ♦

*For more information, visit our website at:*  
**[www.livingwordmilbank.com](http://www.livingwordmilbank.com)**  
*or email Pastor Craig at:* **[rewerl@itcmilbank.com](mailto:rewerl@itcmilbank.com)**

*— Submitted by Pastor Craig Werling 7*

# TWO NEW MISSIONS IN BUDAPEST

— Pastor Scott Ryll

Two years ago, Pastor György Aradi had the desire to extend Hungarian hospitality to foreigners, especially Lutherans, who were living in Budapest without a church home. This is how the English Service at Fasor Lutheran was born. It has grown to a regular attendance of 40. Our vision now is to form an International Lutheran Congregation, and in time, for it to become fully independent.



Fasor Lutheran Church

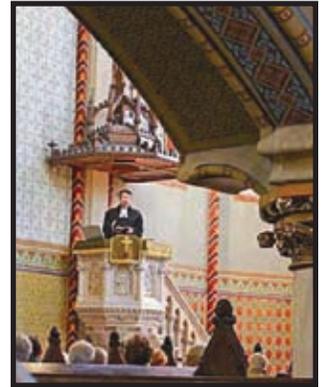
The first step for Fasor has been to extend a call for their first full-time native English-speaking pastor to extend pastoral ministry among its members and to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus to the larger international community of Budapest. In December I accepted that call, and by the grace of God I desire to transform this service into a congregation actively engaged in mission among those who sojourn in Budapest—for work, as displaced refugees or whatever other reason.

This call has led me into a relationship with East European Missions Network (EEMN) and onto the roster of LCMC. The call has grown to include my wife Cecilia, who was formerly a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hungary and who is now an RN, Parish Nurse and Parish Nurse Trainer. She will build Hungary's first Parish Nursing Program to promote wellness, disease prevention, health education and a healthy life of faith.



Liza, Cecilia, Scott & Levi Ryll

As a missionary in Hungary with EEMN, I invite you to rejoice with us! God is doing incredible things in Budapest. Just think—30 years ago the English Speaking Service would have been impossible under communism, and 10 years ago most would have questioned forming a congregation in English rather than German. Today, Fasor is impacting the lives of its members who come from Scandinavia, Africa, Indonesia and the four corners of the world. Now



Fasor Lutheran interior

God has given us the marching order to reach out to literally thousands of Budapest's international community with the love of Jesus, so that when they go home they can bring the Gospel to others. I praise God that the current Service has grown out of Fasor's love for others and reflects their passion to build up God's people and their earnest desire to reach the unchurched.

As Pastor of the English Speaking Lutheran Mission at Fasor, I ask you to pray for us. Please take our petitions before the Living Lord and ask Him to :

- Remove all the snares of the Enemy who would see us fail.
- Help the service blossom into a congregation united in Christ with a passion for the unchurched and fruitful in reaching them.
- Help our children, Liza and Levi, to make a successful transition into their new Hungarian school.
- Give me safe and fruitful travels to visit with congregations and share the vision and ministry to which God has called me.
- Complete this work and provide for our needs from the abundance that He has given His children, so we can labor together in His harvest fields.

## Budapest, continued from page 8. . .

It is also as a pastor at Fazor that I ask you to share your petitions with me, knowing that I will hold them up, and in time, include them in the prayers of the church in Budapest. (You can post them at [www.fontandtomb.com/pray/](http://www.fontandtomb.com/pray/), or email them to [prayers@fontandtomb.com](mailto:prayers@fontandtomb.com).)

As a new addition to the roster of LCMC, I boldly ask for your help. I have been saying for awhile now, to anyone who will listen, that it is good to be here! So many congregations are coming together to get back to the basics of ministry and mission. Won't you please consider getting to know our ministry better and putting a face to mission?

This is a mission church plant, and while God has handed me the vision, I cannot execute it without your support. My wife and I simply will not be able to complete this work without the generous support of God's people. Please prayerfully consider partnering with us in mission by compassionately funding the work of the Gospel in Budapest among people you've never met, but for whom our Lord died, rose and is certainly coming back for.

One last thing, I look forward to shaking to meeting all of you at the Annual Gathering in Iowa in October; it really is good to be here!

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*"For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.*

*The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

— 1 Peter 4:6-11 (ESV)



Above: Fazor Sunday School children

Below: Lunchtime for Fazor school children



For more information about our two unique ministries and how to become a Mission Partner with us, please visit my website at:

**[www.fontandtomb.com](http://www.fontandtomb.com)**

If you are interested in having me come to visit your congregation in person, or if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail at:

**[scott@fontandtomb.com](mailto:scott@fontandtomb.com)**

or by phone at (618) 402-0064. ♦

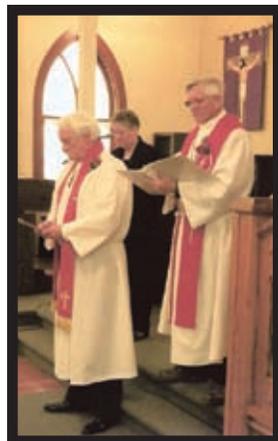
Has your church sponsored a short-term missions trip?

We'd love to hear about it!

Send to:

[joyminion@gmail.com](mailto:joyminion@gmail.com)

# ORDINATIONS / INSTALLATIONS



*l-r: Pastor Roger Godfredsen, Irene Zimmerman and Pastor Rusty Bailey*

## Rev. Roger Godfredsen

was ordained and installed at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Stately, MN, on March 20, 2011. Taking part in the service were Irene Zimmerman, Council President, and Council members Don Wellner, Allan Stark, Mark Wellner, Joyce Graff and Natalie Stark. Rev. Ernest (Rusty) Bailey, officiated.

Roger graduated in October 2010 from Beyond the River Academy, one of its first three graduates. Previously, he was a financial consultant and estate planner. Roger has a band called Ovation, and enjoys working with special needs adults at Joy Camp every year. Roger and his wife Vickie Ann have four grown daughters. ♦

—Submitted by Pastor Rusty Bailey



*l-r: Eileen Stokkeland, Pastor Bryce Formwalt and Jon Johnson*

## Rev. Bryce Formwalt

was installed as pastor at Prairie Faith, Glenfield, ND, on June 12 2011. Joining him for the installation service were Jon

Johnson, Council President, and Eileen Stokkeland, Council Vice President and Call Committee Chair. Pastor Bryce's wife, Lisa, and sons Cole (8) and Simon (6) were also welcomed to the community.

Pastor Bryce was raised in northeast Iowa. He graduated from Wartburg College in Waverly, IA, before attending seminary in Gettysburg, PA. His first call was to Springboro, Ohio, where he served for five years. Before moving to Glenfield, the Formwalt family served in ministry in Johnsbury, IL, for four years. ♦

—Submitted by Tawnia Miller



Pastors Michael and Martha Hanson with their two sons, Charlie and Arnold.

## Rev. Michael Hanson

was installed at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Morris, MN, on May 22, 2011. Pastor Norman Olsen presided over the service.

Michael received his B.A. in theology at Texas Lutheran University and his M.Div. from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, in 2006. He was ordained on July 30, 2006. Michael served as pastor of Clarkfield Lutheran Church and as Chaplain at Glenwood Retirement Village and Minnewaska Lutheran Home. He is a long-time member of WordAlone, and is now a rostered pastor in LCMC, Augustana District. ♦

—Submitted by Diane Lesmeister



*l-r: Pastors William Beck, Mark Vander Tuig, Dennis Whalen and Garry Seefeldt*

## Rev. Dennis Whalen

was ordained at Lighthouse Lutheran Church, Freedom, PA, on May 22, 2011. Pastor

William Beck, LCMC Mission Developer, presided at the service. Other participants included Pastors Tom Smith, Chuck Horstman, Mark Vander Tuig and Garry Seefeldt. Dennis' son, Julian, served as Acolyte.

A second-career minister, Dennis was formerly an entrepreneur and business executive with a computer technology company. He joined LCMC because "other bodies appeared to be divided on the authority of Holy Scripture, addressing God as Father, human sexuality and other issues. LCMC was necessary for my own theological integrity." Dennis and his wife, Julie, have 6 children. ♦

—Submitted by William Beck

# NEW MINISTRY WORKSHOP

— MARK VANDER TUIG

## WHEN:

October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## WHAT:

A workshop pastors and leaders from each of our new ministries. A “new ministry” is a congregation that has formed in the last five years. This includes congregations that have:

1. Formed as the result of church planting efforts
2. Formed as the result of a failed vote to leave the ELCA
3. Formed by gathering people from more than one other church
4. Formed as a offshoot, or offspring of an established church

## WHO:

We want to gather the pastor and at least one team member of the new ministry. It is hoped that by spending this time together with other leaders, networking will take place and needed resources will become clearer.

## WHERE:

**Des Moines, Iowa**

The New Ministry Workshop will immediately follow the conclusion of our Annual Gathering. We will meet at Zion Lutheran Church in the Des Moines area. Transportation will be provided from the convention area hotels to the church on Wednesday and Thursday. Attendance at the Annual Gathering is not required, but we do encourage people to attend both the Gathering and the Workshop, if possible.

## WHY:

1. To discern how this association can best support, encourage and develop the new ministries we have and to create systems by which we can continue to plant and develop new ministries as a means of primary evangelism.
2. To discover what resources might be most helpful for both the congregation and for its leadership.

3. To establish our new ministries on the solid ground of the Great Commission.

## HOW:

The Board of Trustees has set aside funds to help support this event. If you would like to apply for scholarship funding to offset travel or housing, please contact Cathy at [cathy@lcmc.net](mailto:cathy@lcmc.net) for information.

## REGISTRATION:

Registration for the Workshop is separate from the Annual Gathering. Please go to our website and fill out the registration form that is found on our home page under New Ministry Workshop.

## GOALS:

1. Networking
2. Resource discovery and development
3. Creation of systems to facilitate planting churches
4. Formation of a culture of church planting
5. Support and encouragement for the leaders

Bring the following information to the Workshop:

**We are currently:**

- Organizing
- Meeting in a house
- Meeting in a storefront/school/rented space
- Meeting in our own building

**We have an average weekly attendance of**

\_\_\_\_\_.

**We formed:**

- As the result of church planting efforts
- As the result of a failed vote to leave the ELCA
- By gathering people from more than one other church
- As a offshoot or offspring of an established church

**The one thing I hope to get out of this gathering:**

\_\_\_\_\_.

# TENTATIVE GATHERING SCHEDULE

## Keynote Speakers

### Greg Ogden

*is the Executive Pastor of the Grow Ministry at Christ Church in Oak Brook, IL. He served as director of the Doctor of Ministry Program and as an associate professor at Fuller Theological Seminary (1998-2002). Prior to that, he served in pastoral ministry for 24 years.*



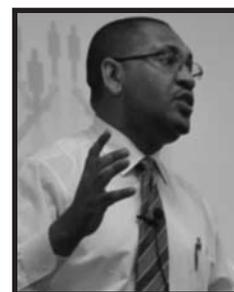
### T. J. Anderson

*has served in full-time ministry for over 30 years. He is committed to helping the church reclaim the foundations of discipleship. He believes it is time for the church to step up and engage in the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to the world.*



### GemechisBuba

*is the Missions Director of the North American Lutheran Church. Originally from Ethiopia, he has served in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, Germany, England, Norway, Sweden, and the U.S.*



### Sunday, October 2

- 4:00 pm Registration
- 5:30 pm Dinner at Polk County Conventions Complex (The Plex)
- 7:00 pm Opening Worship:  
**Rev. Bill Bohline**
- 8:30 pm Dessert and Fellowship

### Monday, October 3

- Breakfast at Hotels
- 8:00 am Registration
- 8:30 am Singing and Bible Study:  
**Rev. Elisha Ashley**
- 9:00 am Opening and Welcome
- 9:15 am Introduction of Board and Staff
- 9:30 am Keynote Speaker:  
**Rev. Greg Ogden**
- 10:30 am Break
- 11:00 am Keynote Speaker:  
**Rev. Greg Ogden**
- 12:00 pm Lunch at The Plex
- 1:30 pm Singing
- 1:45 pm Introduction of District Leaders/New Congregations and Pastors/Seminarians
- 2:15 pm State of the Association
- 3:15 pm Opening Business Session
- 3:45 pm Introduction to Breakouts
- 4:00 pm Break
- 4:30 pm Breakouts 1
- 5:30 pm Area Caucuses
- 6:00 pm District Gatherings for Dinner at The Plex or area restaurants

### Tuesday, October 4

- Breakfast at Hotels
- 8:30 am Singing and Bible Study:  
**Dr. David Preus**
- 9:00 am Keynote Speaker:  
**Rev. T. J. Anderson**
- 10:00 am Break
- 10:30 am Keynote Speaker:  
**Rev. T. J. Anderson**
- 12:00 pm Lunch at The Plex
- 1:15 pm Singing
- 1:30 pm International Focus
- 1:45 pm Business/Anniversaries/Milestones
- 2:30 pm Breakouts 2
- 3:30 pm Break
- 4:15 pm Breakouts 3
- 5:15 pm Move back into Session
- 5:30 pm Area Caucuses and Election of Board Members
- 6:00 pm Evening out in Des Moines

### Wednesday, October 5

- Breakfast at Hotels
- 8:30 am Singing and Bible Study:  
**Rev. Carl Billings**
- 9:00 am Keynote Speaker:  
**Rev. Dr. Gemechis Buba**
- 10:00 am Break
- 10:30 am Closing Worship Service with Holy Communion:  
**Rev. Jaynan Clark**

To register online or get more information about the Gathering, please visit our website:

[www.lcmc.net](http://www.lcmc.net)

Have Questions? Contact Sharon for more information: [sharon@lcmc.net](mailto:sharon@lcmc.net)



# Lutheran Men

*Be a Disciple for the Lord*

## **Mission Capital Loan Fund** **Buck-a-Month Club (B-A-M)**

### **Basis**

This is based on Jesus calling all of us to be disciples in the world today. There were 12 tribes of Israel, Jesus had the 12 disciples and there are 12 months in a year. Every man in your congregation is urged to give an achievable goal of \$1 per month or \$12 per year given at one time. Every man in your congregation can become a member of the “Buck a Month Club”.

### **Goal**

The goal is to have 100 congregations each have 100 members commit to giving \$12 per year. This would raise \$120,000 each year to support new mission congregations in LCMC. The Mission Loan Fund would grow quickly, and since funds loaned out keep coming back, many mission congregations could be helped.

## **Mission Gift Fund** **For Non-Capital Needs**

### **Basis**

This fund is supported by the “Committee of 100.” This committee never meets. The funds raised are distributed as outright gifts to mission congregations for start-up office equipment or non-capital needs the congregations may have.

### **Goal**

The goal is to have each LCMC congregation have a “Committee of 100” for those members who contribute \$100 per year for this purpose. All funds are handled by the LCMC national office. All fund requests are evaluated by the Grant Request Committee composed of lay members.

**See Brochure in your  
Gathering Packet**

## **Grant Request Committee**

### **Dan Gorell**

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Email: dgorell@aol.com

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402-333-4444  
kip.tyler@churchofthemaster.com

### **President**

#### **Perry Petersen**

Cell: 712-490-4950  
Home: 712-943-3745  
E-mail: perry@aol.com

### **Vice-Chairman**

#### **Jim Kresge**

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### **Secretary**

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Home: 515-434-2075  
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### **Treasurer**

#### **Barry Brown**

Email: bbrowns@bellsouth.net

### **Promotional Secretary**

#### **Keith Aho**

Cell: 218-666-5438  
Home: 218-666-3757  
aho@accessmn.com  
keith.carol.aho@gmail.com

## **Key Man Concept**

The Key Man concept was originated to have a person in the congregation take the leadership role for organizing the group of men in the congregation who wish to be disciples of the Lord by donating to either the Buck-A-Month Club or the C-100 Club. The key man is to relieve the Pastors of the responsibility of promoting Lutheran Men. The key man organizes dates to hold the annual appeal, give short temple talks telling the congregation about Lutheran Men, and writing short articles to place in the Sunday bulletins or monthly newsletters relating to the progress of donations and number of disciples donating.

— Submitted by Perry Petersen

**For more information, please contact Keith Aho, promotional secretary:**

**aho2accessmn.com or 218-6665438**

**www.LCMC.net/ministries/lutheranmen**

**M**ore than 60 confessional Lutherans from Wisconsin and Upper Michigan gathered at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Tomah, Wisconsin, on Saturday, July 23. They shared stories and discussed the possibility of starting a geographic district of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).

After rousing congregational singing led by the Gloria Dei worship team, Rev. Mary Bope of Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church in Waupaca, Wisconsin, shared a devotion. She reminded those in attendance to be joyful, and quoted Anne Lamott: “laughter is carbonated holiness.”

The next hour was an open microphone session allowing those present to share their stories about how they and their congregations came to be in LCMC, the blessings they’ve seen and the challenges they still face in their ministry. At the end of the session, the pastors present were asked to stand, and those present applauded to thank them for staying true to their call.

Pastor Tony Stoutenburg of Grace Lutheran in Hayward, Wisconsin, then led a session about districts. He described what they are, what they aren’t, what they can do and what they cannot do.

The ideas of what a district can do include:

- Church planting,
- Collegial events for pastors,
- Educational events for pastors and lay leaders,
- Youth events,
- Women’s events, and
- Men’s events

Districts can also:

- Assist congregations with conflict situations,
- Help congregations with the call process,
- Provide an endorsement process for pastors, and
- Develop a network of supply pastors.

Rev. Martha Uecker Nelson of Hosanna! Lutheran Church in St. Charles, Illinois, was introduced. Rev. Nelson is the current representative on the LCMC Board of Trustees representing parts of the upper Midwest, including Upper Michigan and Wisconsin.

Lunch (provided by the folks at Gloria Dei) was an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones while browsing materials from Sola Publishing on display in the fellowship hall.

Following lunch, Sue McKenzie (a former LCMC Trustee) of Grace Lutheran Church in Hayward, Wisconsin, directed those present to break into groups to brainstorm what priorities would be relating to the function and structure of a geographic district. The groups then returned to share those ideas and discuss them as a large group.

At the end of discussion, the group appointed a six-person steering committee to develop a proposal for a geographic district to present to congregations this fall. Committee members include Tony Stoutenburg, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Hayward, WI; Jayme Silber, education coordinator for Grace Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, WI; Steve Cowen, pastor of Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Iron Mountain, MI; Mark Sabin, pastor of Scandinavia Lutheran and Farmington Lutheran Church, Waupaca, WI; Doreen Jeffers, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Pella, WI; and Dean Kallenbach, member of Faith Lutheran Mission Church of Eau Claire, WI. The committee will meet via email, phone or video conference to iron out initial details of a district before bringing it back before the 50+ LCMC congregations in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

The convocation closed with a prayer by Rev. Dean Wheeler of Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church in Waupaca, Wisconsin, and more congregational music led by the worship team.

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## Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

— Pastor Bill Duffey,  
Peace Lutheran Church, Belgrade, Montana

*“Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” — Ephesians 5:15-19 (NRSV)*

**T**hese verses have been helpful in my life, especially in the last several years.

*“Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time because the days are evil.”*

When God appeared to Solomon in a dream at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:5), God said to Solomon, “Ask what I should give you.” Solomon replied in verse nine: “Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?”

This continues to be our struggle to this day—how do we, as God’s people, have true wisdom to discern between good and evil? We who have been rescued from evil by God’s own doing through His Son’s death on the Cross continue to do battle against the forces of evil in this world.

It would be foolish of us to think that we can discern for ourselves what God’s will is for us, or to think that we can manipulate God’s Word to fit our own thoughts, our own wishes, and our own desires without an honest understanding that God means what He says, that one day Christ will return to judge the world.

Paul says, “...*be filled with the Spirit.*” We are filled with the Spirit at Baptism, and the Spirit’s work is to sanctify us and to keep us in The Faith. Paul also gives us some suggestions of how this is accomplished: we should address one another “...*in psalms and hymns*

*and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”*

Martin Luther writes: “Our songs and psalms sorely vex and grieve the devil...” (*Table Talk* (619) p.294.)

Music has become a vital part of my life, especially since 2000 when I acquired my first mandolin. Yes, I have Acoustical Strings Acquisition Syndrome, for I now have two mandolins, two six-string guitars, two 12-string guitars, one mountain dulcimer, one uke, one banjo and one stand-up bass. Three of those instruments occupy space in my church office, and yes, I do play them—as Martin says, music drives the devil away.

I am not sure what people take home from a Worship Service, but I am confident that if the music in the service carried the message of God’s Word to them, that throughout the next week those psalms, hymns and spiritual songs were sung in their hearts and perhaps in the shower, as they drove to work, and as they lay down to sleep.

Every day we are confronted by a world in rebellion against God’s Word and God’s ways. In our struggle against this rebellion let us wisely rely on God’s Word to help us discern between good and evil. Let us allow God’s Holy Spirit to guide us toward sanctification, keeping us in The Faith with the help of psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with our hearts. ♦ 15

BY THE WORD

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**October 5-6**

**New Ministry Workshop**

*Zion Lutheran Church  
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