



From the Board...

— Kip Tyler

Relationships

At the last LCMC Board of Trustees meeting, we were prayerfully discussing how we do ecumenical relations as an association of congregations. The following is an informational piece we drafted at that meeting and presented to the Gathering later in the week.

“In ecumenical relations LCMC is unique in that such relationships do not come top down but are lived out and arise from our congregations. We confess our belief in the holy Christian Church through the creeds, and believe the unity in Christ’s Church comes from faith in Christ alone and is brought to fruition through the Holy Spirit. The interaction of our congregations with other

Christian congregations of other denominations through joint mission, ministry and leadership is how this is lived out. We believe in such relationships there is not a need to change who we are theologically or pragmatically, but to simply live out the Great Commission together. We encourage our congregations to relate with other Christian congregations.”

LCMC is ten years old now. Some of us have been around for a long time, while others of us are new. It is important for us to continue such conversations about who we are in the mission of Jesus Christ in this association. It is also critical for LCMC congregations to embrace this mission to make Christ known and join with other Christian congregations in that mission.

I pray this letter finds you well and I look forward to our next time together.

In Christ,

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

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

4th 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

MISSION CHURCH GROWS: FAMILY OF FAITH'S FIRST YEAR

—Barb Brodbeck

Family of Faith Lutheran Church is ready to do God's work for another year! One year old on Sept. 12, our congregation gathers for worship, Bible study and fellowship at the Tiffin Mall in Tiffin, Ohio.



When entering the store-front church, eyes are immediately drawn to the 10-foot wooden cross

hanging on the distant wall, a symbol of God's saving power. The cross was constructed by a church member who also built the altar and lectern.

Our congregation began with a team of several couples who had a vision to start a Lutheran Bible-based church to serve folks in the Tiffin, Findlay and Fostoria, Ohio, region. This vision team made "cottage visits" to area homes to share their dreams. God's hand certainly was leading! At the first worship, over 100 people attended. Several weeks later, we called a full-time pastor, Dr. Rev. Mark Brodbeck, to serve as our spiritual leader. To further the support and growth of this new congregation, an LCMC congregation in Maumee, Ohio, committed to a financial gift. What a blessing!

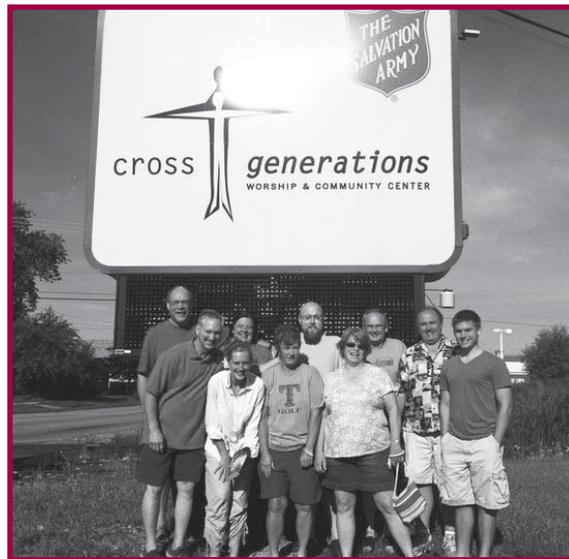
Our emphasis is God's Word. A Bible is placed on every seat in the worship area. Our mission statement reads: "Connecting people to Jesus, to God's Word, and each other." Simple, and to the point!

We give much attention to inspiring hearts to do mission. *Team Chicago*, an eight-member group

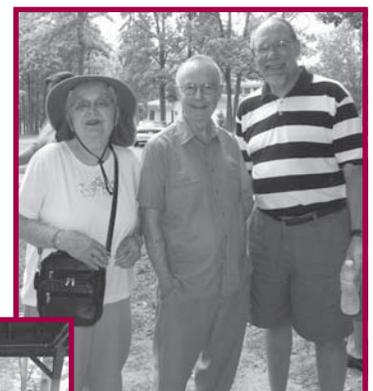
(including our pastor), went to Chicago in August to help a local Salvation Army and to assist a church with Vacation Bible School. The people on *Team Chicago* became quite attached to the youngsters at the Bible School as they lived out the words in the Scriptures, "Be doers of the Word."

Along with collecting food and other supplies each month for local ministries or food pantries, our November 2011 mission project has a new twist! Family of Faith is sponsoring what we call a "Blue Christmas." We energetically are collecting blue clothing, blue jump ropes, blue balls, blue toothbrushes, blue shampoo, blue socks, etc. Our church's sewing group, the "Comforters," are making blue blankets and quilts. There will be no "sad blues" for us, just joy and smiles as we share something blue with anyone in need.

Pastor Mark says, "Our church name fits us well. Family is what we are! Families must work together, and Jesus is the 'head' of the family. The first year working with this family of believers has been a joyful experience!" ♦



Team Chicago



Church picnic scenes. Pastor Brodbeck in striped shirt above.



TREASURER'S REPORT

— Kirk Dean,
Treasurer

The recently completed Annual Gathering appears to have been successful beyond expectations. But it was also our most expensive event to date, due to at least one factor: our need for a convention center location, rather than holding it at a member congregation facility. Our size now dictates this type of facility and the associated additional costs.

Another major expense associated with the Gathering is the audio/visual production, which allows for a more complete presentation for those in attendance—both at the site and for those participating through the simulcast. Thankfully, we were able to keep registration costs at a lower level due to the support of Thrivent. Their funding of the Gathering and the New Ministry workshop are very much appreciated.

Year to date, LCMC is experiencing a net surplus almost every month due to the generous benevolence of member congregations, and we undoubtedly will finish the year with a substantial reserve going into 2012. ♦

BOARD BUSINESS: A SYNOPSIS

— Rev. Martha Uecker Nelson,
Secretary, LCMC Board of Trustees

- Rev. Tyler was elected to the position of Board Chair.
- Rev. Becky Lee was elected to the position of Board Vice Chair.
- Rev. Martha Uecker Nelson was elected to the position of Board Secretary. ♦

Today's Word: *Bishop*

Bishop is the English version of the Greek word *episcopos*, or overseer. It was a title given to government officials in Athens, and was adopted by the church early on.

Some church traditions practice a 3-tiered ministry: deacons have a ministry of service, elders (*presbuteros* in Greek) are the parish pastors, and bishops have administrative and/or sacramental authority over the other two offices. The New Testament does not forbid structure, but it does not support such a division of pastor and bishop. 1 Timothy 3 has a list of qualifications for bishop (overseer) that is almost identical with the one for pastor (elder) in Titus 1. Titus 1:5-7 uses the two terms interchangeably (“*appoint elders in every town who are ... for an overseer must be...*”). In Acts 20:17-28, Paul tells the “*elders*” of Ephesus that “*the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.*”

The idea that bishops and a hierarchy are necessary seems to have come from the Emperor Constantine (ca.325 A.D.), who wanted control over the church and its teaching. The invention of the printing press, widespread literacy and a certain German monk helped break that control in the early 1500's.

Some argue bishops are necessary for the church to be Church, but history has shown this is not the case; lots of churches are Church without bishops. The office of bishop is one option to organize the institution that is the visible (earthly) church.

LCMC has chosen a different path. Since there is no one “New Testament model” that we can point to and claim to be “doing church right,” LCMC encourages congregations to structure themselves for mission and ministry as they see fit, looking to appropriate biblical and other examples. So our *presbuteros* **are** our *episcopos*, and we call them pastors. Oh, and the very important Priesthood of All Believers? That is a word for **another** day.

So, if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna put on my purple shirt and go to work. ♦
— Tony Stoutenburg



A Word from Mark...

— Mark Vander Tuig,
LCMC Service Coordinator

People of Prayer, Mission Minded, Getting Connected and Trained and Equipped. These four initiatives have been at the center of what I have been talking about over this first year of my work in LCMC, and it seems to me that we are catching the vision. But to be able to accomplish the call God has set upon us, we need also to “get connected.”

First of all, getting connected is simply a reminder that we were never meant to live out this life of a disciple alone. This faith in Christ Jesus is not a private matter—personal, intimate, involving, compelling and all-encompassing, yes—but private, no. We need each other, we were made for community and we are bound together in the Body of Christ.

Getting connected is also a call for time. We need to make time for each other. I know life gets busy and there are a million things that call for our attention, and sometimes we get so busy doing the necessary we forget to do the important.

Without spending some time with others who are also following Jesus, we can stop following altogether. It’s in times of isolation that things can go terribly wrong. Relationships get damaged, our thinking gets twisted and we begin to create God in our own image. Pastors and leaders of Christ’s church need to remain grounded in friendships and family, where we love each other enough so that we might be free to confess, forgive and tell one another the truth.

Getting connected is best when it happens naturally, but sometimes we have to be intentional. One of the ways our association is working at this is through the formation of districts. I recently invited all of our districts to send a person or two to a gathering in St. Charles, Illinois. The purpose of gathering is so that we can learn from each other about the role and purpose of a district, discuss how each might

be organized, and find ways to develop this function within LCMC to support and encourage pastors, leaders and congregations across the land.

At this point we have 14 districts that are formed or are forming, and more to come. Involvement in a district is voluntary, and about half of our congregations have joined a district—and that’s OK. But being isolated and alone is **not** OK, and joining a district is **not** the only answer.

I challenge all of us to get connected. Whether you are a member of a church, a leader at a church or a pastor, we need each other. Prayer teams, Bible study groups, text studies, friends, small groups and all parts of the local church—we all need each other in order for the Body of Christ to stand up, and more than that to march, so that not even the gates of hell can prevail against it! ♦

Annual Gathering, continued from page 1...

Finally, someone asked me at the convention how they could help support LCMC. My response has always been this—do your best to be a faithful witness to Jesus Christ in your location. That’s what we are all about.

We believe the local church is the front-line of ministry. It is great to get together, and I hope you will put Oct 7th, 2012, on your calendar—but our conventions only serve to strengthen and encourage you where the Lord has called you to be His witness.

*(This article first appeared in the November/December 2011 issue of **Connections** magazine. Reprinted by permission.)* ♦



ChapelNEXT at Ft. Carson

— Chaplain (Major) Glenn Palmer

“And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?” — Romans 10:14b

LCMC Pastors and Congregation Members,

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

As our God has blessed LCMC with fantastic growth, the need for the Shalom Ministry Team has also grown. Our ministry is a *free* resource available to all LCMC congregations by request from any pastor or congregation.

Shalom Ministry is now a full-time resource that offers assistance with:

- **Conflict Resolution**
- **Interim and Pulpit Supply**
- **Outreach and Education**

We have *never* turned down any request or charged for our services (other than travel expenses).

We ask for your prayers and financial support.

As you plan your 2012 benevolence and donations, please give prayerful consideration to include the Shalom Ministry Team in your 2012 giving. May our God bless you as you seek His will and direction.

Please contact us if you have questions or if we can be of service. ♦

Pastor Warren Baker, *Shalom Chair*
pastorwarrenrlc@yahoo.com
712-330-2018

Pastor Kent Wallace, *Shalom Vice Chair*
heartsdesireranch@juno.com
515-351-9451

Gifts may be sent to:

SHALOM MINISTRY TEAM
P.O. BOX 15
SPIRIT LAKE, IA 51360

ChapelNEXT at Fort Carson, Colorado, lives out the Great Commission by taking Jesus to soldiers and soldiers to Jesus. Located at Veteran’s Chapel in the heart of Fort Carson’s single soldier barracks, we focus on ministering to, witnessing to, and caring for soldiers and their families in a Biblically-solid worship and relationship-based environment.

God has placed a burden on our hearts to share the Gospel with both married and single soldiers, many from non-churched backgrounds. These soldiers and their families, far from home and dealing with the effects of war, are our mission focus. ChapelNEXT averages 85-100 at worship.

ChapelNEXT programs include:

- Dynamic, Word/Sacrament-focused, Christian Rock worship
- **Bible Bistro**—a bi-weekly lunchtime cook-out and Bible discussion
- **TNT-THU Night Together**—for single soldiers.
- **Point Blank Spirituality**—a paintball spiritual fitness retreat for soldiers/families, focusing on God and His care/leading during a time of war.
- **Grief Share**—a support group for Gold Star wives and mothers as help them cope with the loss of a spouse or child
- **Men, Meat & Movie Night**—a spiritual growth time for men over the grill/at the movies.
- **Chic, Chat & Chocolate**—a time for women to grow together spiritually over some great conversation, devotions and food
- **Navigating Life’s Rough Waters**—a white water rafting trip/spiritual fitness event focused on helping soldiers and families navigate deployments, reintegration, PTSD, relationships, etc.

God has placed a burden on our hearts for these young men and women who give so much for the sake of freedom. ♦

For more information, contact Chaplain Palmer at:
chapglenn@yahoo.com



GETTING TO KNOW . . .

Living Water Church

Sun Prairie, Wisconsin



*“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.”
— John 7:38*

Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Sounds like a nice, “sunny” place, and the residents here will tell you—it is! Sun Prairie is the largest suburb of Madison, the state capital. Far from being just a bedroom community, Sun Prairie at 30,000 people is a vibrant city. It is listed as one of the fastest growing communities in Wisconsin.

Right in the center of that growth, Living Water Church is nestled in a “traditional” neighborhood on the western edge of town between Madison and Sun Prairie. Originally surrounded by farm fields, the neighborhood has filled in. A large commercial development nearby has three major building projects underway, which means the world is coming to the doorstep of our church in a big way.

Well over 12 years ago, the first seeds that would grow into Living Water Church were planted when the ELCA, wanting to start a mission church in the area, hired Pastor Jon Gerdts. At the time, he was serving in Sioux City, Iowa. Pastor Jon, his wife Jocelyn and their four children headed east, and began putting together a plan. Pastor Jon spent months knocking on doors, inviting people to join the plan—God’s plan. The growing group held their first worship service on November 7th, 1999, on a Sunday evening at the local Catholic Church.

Calling themselves Living Water Lutheran Church, the group formally organized on December 3, 2000. They moved into a small warehouse/office facility nearby and continued their growth. Saving their pennies and pooling their gifts, they purchased land in a planned “traditional” neighborhood, meaning all the buildings were to be built in a style reminiscent to the 1930’s and 40’s. They held their first service in their new facility on May 1, 2005. The church is a landmark in the area with its tall steeple and classic lines.

Living Water Church voted to join LCMC in January of 2010, and Pastor Jon is still senior pastor. He heads a staff that features a full-time youth pastor, an administrator and ministries coordinator, and an administrative assistant, as well as a part-time worship pastor, a director of children’s ministries and a custodian.

And yes, things are still “sunny” in beautiful Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Come visit us anytime, just don’t forget your shades! ♦

*For more information, visit our website at:
www.livingwaterflows.com
or email Dick at:
dickhanson@livingwaterflows.com*

— Submitted by Dick Hanson 7

LUTHERAN NIGHT AT THE TWINS



Pastor Steve Kramer shown on Target Field scoreboard

Pastor Steve Kramer, Shepherd of the Valley Church, Afton, Minnesota, represented LCMC at “Lutheran Night” at the Twins game on August 22, 2011.

— Submitted by Zach Thompson

SEMINARY DEBT RELIEF FUND

Applications for the Seminary Debt Relief Fund will be accepted until February 1, 2012. The application form can be accessed beginning December 1 on the LCMC website (click Documents, Forms, Seminary Debt Relief Form). Grants are given to ordained pastors up to 5 years after completion of seminary and up to a maximum of \$5,000 per year, based on the fund's current balance and the applicant's need. Send completed applications to LCMC, 7000 Sheldon Road Canton, MI 48187.

**ARTICLE DEADLINE FOR
1ST QUARTER 2012 NEWSLETTER:**

FEBRUARY 3, 2011

Send to: joyminion@gmail.com

SHEPHERD OF THE FALLS IN LOCAL PARADE

Shepherd of the Falls Lutheran, American Falls, Idaho, built a float in August 2011. We entered it in our town parade, were featured in our local newspaper and got lots of positive comments.

We are a new LCMC congregation, and had two reasons for entering a float in the local parade:

we wanted our rural town to be aware that they had a choice for a Lutheran church, and we wanted to be visible for the unchurched. Our float theme was “Come Grow With Us,” which was similar to the Annual Gathering’s theme of Growing in Christ. Our theme was suggested by one of our junior high girls.

Photo courtesy of
Power County Press



ORDINATIONS / INSTALLATIONS



L-r: Pastors Bill Duffey, Bob Coughlin and Gib Botten. Front: Abigail Ross.

Rev. Robert Coughlin

was ordained and installed as co-pastor at Peace Lutheran Church (PLC), Belgrade, MT, on August 21, 2011. Pastor Bill Duffey presided at the ordination, and Pastor Gib Botten delivered the sermon. Pastor Bob will share pastoral duties with Pastor Bill.

Pastor Bob has served at PLC for 19 years as council member, worship leader, Sunday school teacher, youth leader, choir member and outreach team member. He also has been active in preaching and visitation ministries. Bob will continue as the Rocky Mountain regional coordinator for spiritual formation and prayer with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Bob and his wife, Dianne, have three children. ♦

—Submitted by Pastor Bob Coughlin



L-r: Pastors David Patterson, Kip Tyler and Mark Vander Tuig.
Photo courtesy of Patty Thompson.

Rev. David Patterson

was installed as pastor at Pioneer Lutheran Church, White, SD, on June 12 2011. Presiding at the service was Pastor Mark Vander Tuig, LCMC Service Coordinator. Pastor Kip Tyler, Lutheran Church of the Master, Omaha, NE, delivered the sermon.

Currently pursuing a master of theological studies, David holds degrees in library and information science, human services, biblical studies and cross-cultural ministries. He also serves on the faculty of the Institute of Lutheran Theology. David has been married to his wife, Penny, for 21 years. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking, barbecuing and writing historical fiction. ♦

—Submitted by Donna Weeks



Lydia, Anna, Luke and Pastor David Lathrop

Rev. J. David Lathrop

was installed at Hope Lutheran Church, Edgar, WI, on Sept. 18, 2011. Rev. Bill Christiansen conducted the service.

David received his B.A. in Biblical studies from Trinity Lutheran College, WA, and his masters degree from Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA. Before coming to Hope as its first full-time pastor, he pastored a church in eastern Ohio for 9 years. David and his wife, Lydia, have two children: Luke and Anna.

Hope Lutheran was formed on November 8, 2009, meeting in the local town hall before buying a building. The congregation now has 178 members, and plans to expand its facilities in 2012. ♦

—Submitted by Sondra Streckert

LCMC LUTHERAN MEN GRANT PRESENTATIONS

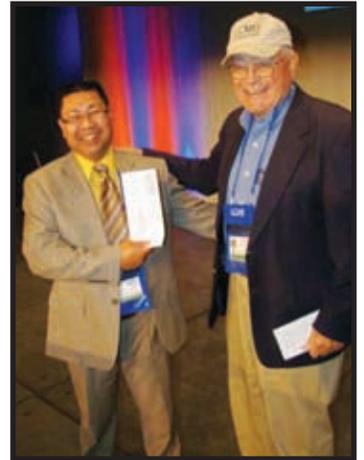
— PERRY PETERSEN



Perry Petersen,
LCMC-LM President



Hope Lutheran LCMC Church, Quincy, IL
Perry Petersen (on right) presents grant check to
Pastor Scott Mikkelson and two church members



Pastor Tom Lovan, Morningside
Lutheran Church Asian Ministry,
accepting Grant for Pastor
Samuel Chim of Cambodian
LCMC-Water Ministry, who was
unable to attend



Living Water Lutheran Church, Springboro, OH
L-r: Dale McCloud (Visitation Pastor), Pastor
Todd Kornahrens, Dr. Timothy Furry (Director
Outreach Ministries and Adult Education)



Radiant Church, Garden Grove, CA
Pastor Jeremey King receives
Grant from Perry Petersen



Peace Lutheran Church, Gulf Shores, AL
Pastor Michael Bonham (center) and
church member receive Grant

Photos
courtesy of
Keith Aho



GATHERING SCENES



Right: Mark
Vander Tuig
with Keith &
Carol Aho



2011 LCMC-LM BREAKOUT SESSION

—Perry Petersen
President, LCMC-LM

Lutheran Men (LM) had a great breakout session at the recent Gathering. About 50 men attended, and we had a great discussion on past accomplishments and plans for the future. We had record donations for both the Loan Fund and the Gift Fund, totaling \$30,769 so far this year. We had 15 new churches that contributed to Lutheran Men, both to the Loan Fund and the Gift Fund. We discussed taking out another CD for the Loan Fund to earn additional interest.

Five Grant Requests were approved this year, totaling \$15,245. This makes a total of 23 Grants to date, totaling \$50,745 for Mission churches to use to purchase non-capital items.

Our Goals are to reach 50 B-A-M members in each of 200 congregations giving \$12 per year, and having five members in those congregations belong to the Committee of 100 Club. This would raise \$120,000 for the Loan Fund and \$100,000 for the Gift Fund each year. Think of all the Mission Churches that could be started or built with those funds!

The five Grants given this year went to:

1. **Hope Lutheran Church, Quincy, IL.**
Pastor Scott Mikkelson.
2. **Peace Lutheran Church, Gulf Shores, AL.**
Pastor Michael Bonham.
3. **Cambodian LCMC-Well Ministry.**
Pastor Samuel Chim.
He was not able to attend, but the Grant was accepted by Pastor Tom Lavon of Morningside Lutheran Church where he interned. These funds will be used to dig new wells so members of the churches will have clean water to drink and for bathing.
4. **Living Water Lutheran Church, Springboro, OH.**
Pastor Todd Kornaherns.
5. **Radiant Church LCMC, Garden Grove, CA.**
Pastor Jeremy King.

The topic of Bible studies was discussed, and it was concluded that several of the Key Men chapters would like to have Bible study materials available to them. Pastor Kip Tyler volunteered to make some recommended studies available in the near future for the chapters who wished to use them.

It was called to our attention that some donations are not credited properly because they do not specify the fund to which they should be credited. Checks should be made out to LCMC-LM, with the fund specified: either Loan Fund or B-A-M, and either Gift Fund or Committee of 100. Use the format on the LM brochure each attendee received in the Gathering Packet.

A reminder to any mission church wishing to be considered for a Grant: all Grant Request Forms must be submitted to the Grant Committee prior to August 31 of the year requesting funds.

Please note the LCMC-LM cap I'm wearing in the photos on the opposite page. Each year the caps are offered for sale and always sell out. This project is part of the chapter project of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Garfield, MN. Caps can be ordered from Pastor David Gran at davidgran88@yahoo.com or by calling him at 330-834-2285.

Our thanks to Keith Aho, Promotional Secretary for LM, for providing all of the photos on the opposite page.

Remember, it is not too late for you or your congregation to donate to Lutheran Men for this year. Be sure to include LM in your benevolence or operational budget for 2012.

Have a happy holiday season, and blessings to all for the New Year! ♦

FAR ABOVE RUBIES

Reaching Teen Girls in the Name of Jesus

— Rebecca Meidinger

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.”

— Proverbs 31:10

Have you stepped into the world of a teenage girl lately? Teen girls are amazing—filled with vibrant hopes and dreams and desires. They excel in athletics, music, sports, and volunteerism. They express an urgency to serve the hungry and hurting in the world. Their hearts are filled with a compassion that we should all strive for. Teen girls inspire me.

Teen girls also deal with pressures that most of us can't imagine. 1 in 4 of them has an STD. 80% of those who have already had sex regret ever doing so. 1 in 3 of them will become pregnant by age 20. About half of them will see their parents divorce. Infertility due to STD's will be a growing concern for them, putting their dreams of motherhood at risk.

Body image causes a raging battle in the hearts, minds, and bodies of many teen girls. Bullying and gossip are no longer just in the lunch room—they're online, on cell phones, and graphic in nature. A growing number struggle with depression. Teen girls bring God's beauty and passion into a hurting world, and yet with so much hurt going on in their own lives, most of them can't see the innate, breathtaking beauty within themselves.

Somewhere between childhood and adolescence, the understanding of one's identity changes. Gets lost, actually. We live in a world where Satan steals, kills, and destroys identity. The role of the Church is to raise up young people to know their identity as sons and daughters of God, image-bearers of the King of Kings, and to so consistently teach and nurture young people in their God-given identity that they are able to stand strong against an enemy that is trying to tear them down.

Far Above Rubies is a one-day event for teen girls that does just this. We invite girls to spend an entire day exploring their true identity as daughters of God. We bring a powerful message to girls that their

identity is secure in Christ—created in God's image, knit together by His hand, freed by Jesus, and called by God to live full and abundant lives for His glory.



Far Above Rubies discusses topics relevant to the lives of teen girls: sexual purity, media and culture, healthy relationships, body image, modesty, pursuing dreams, making wise choices, and living as a Christ-follower in today's culture.

Far Above Rubies began at Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND, and God has grown this ministry to be able to travel to your community. Over the years, **Far Above Rubies** has ministered to the hearts of thousands of teen girls and their moms or adult female mentors.

Perhaps **Far Above Rubies** is the right fit for your congregation as you strive to minister to the hearts of teen girls in your community. Perhaps you're looking for ideas or resources to reach your teen girls. In whatever way is best for your community, we'd be honored to partner with you to build up teen girls in the name of Jesus. To learn more please visit:

www.rebeccaspeaks.org or
www.faraboverubiesministry.org ♦

The mission of **Far Above Rubies** is to bring teen girls the message of hope that their true identity lies in being a daughter of God, freed by Jesus, and to equip them to live in sexual purity and integrity, build healthy relationships, and pursue their dreams.

Rebecca Meidinger is director of Far Above Rubies. She is an experienced speaker with a background in youth ministry, outdoor camping ministry, and abstinence-until-marriage education. Her passion is to see teenagers grasp their true identity in Christ, and to equip them with knowledge, empowerment, and practical skills to build healthy relationships and live with sexual purity and integrity.



IT'S HARVEST TIME!

— Rev. Thomas Stenzel
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Lead, SD

In LCMC, each congregation is encouraged to develop direct relationships with missions, missionaries and mission agencies. The following is the account of how one church took the initiative to make that happen.

“So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send out more workers for his fields.”

— Matthew 9:38 (NLT)

So pray. Ask the Lord to send more workers into His fields. We are to ask, because the harvest is ripe. The fields have never been more ripe than they are now. So many are willing to hear the Good News of the kingdom of heaven. You can help them by your continued support of the workers.

At the 2010 Leader’s Conference in Omaha, I met Pastor Bob Mankaka and his family from Rochester, MN. We learned a little about the churches he planted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and elsewhere. I felt a burning desire to know more. I invited Pastor Bob and his wife, Paola, to visit our church in October 2010 to share “what it means to be in mission for Christ.”

Pastor Bob spoke of the huge mission of Christ in all of the world. We might see His mission next door, or across the street, or in a place we never thought of before. Christ’s mission brings us together as partners. He said, “There is such a huge field in the Democratic Republic of the Congo needing support. The Lord has been doing amazing things there, but how much more could be done if they had partners?” At this time, Shepherd of the Hills had just recently joined LCMC. I began to pray about how it would be possible to partner with those so far away.

My wife and I were able to visit with Pastor Bob in July 2011 at his home in Rochester. Previously, he had told me about each of the church leaders he worked with. One of these leaders was Maman Jeanne, a Congolese woman. The Lord told me to call Maman Jeanne when I was at Pastor Bob’s.

I called Maman Jeanne at a little after 4 p.m. in Rochester, 11 p.m. where she lived. Maman Jeanne and her women’s team had come back that day

from Gungu city. We had an amazing visit by phone. Afterward, she sent me an email telling me what that phone call had meant to her. She said, “It was such an indescribable joy to hear directly from you ... I came back from Gungu city that very day, my voice was almost gone and I could not believe my ears when Paola and Pastor Bob told me that you were ... [waiting] to talk to me. We all, the army of women here, call you our Moses. There is no doubt that God is surely using us in a powerful way in His kingdom, yet the women are suffering here in a way that the world out there has no idea about. From rape, to prostitution, to witchcraft, to exploitations, domestic abuse, torture, polygamy, premature marriages, lack of education [and] basic human rights, demonic possessions ... and many other hideous practices of darkness ... the work is huge here and the fields are ripe for harvest.”

She continued, “Pastor Bob has told us that LCMC is a mission-driven church as we are, too. Now with you, and the LCMC, we hope to reach more and rescue many more women who are dying without hope ... we have been praying a long time that somehow God would send us somebody, a partner ... so we could do more.”

Shepherd of the Hills sent Maman Jeanne’s church women a gift of support, which they used to start a women’s ministry fund called Shepherd Heals Women Fund. Maman Jeanne’s pastor, Norbert Atutungisa, said, “All churches in the Galilee Evangelical Mission and in the LCMC have been so encouraged ... [by you] and your huge vision for us.”

We at Shepherd of the Hills are very happy and blessed to be partners with them.

This condensed article originally appeared in the September 2011 issue of *Shepherd’s Fold*. To read the entire article, go to: <http://www.shepherdsearch.org/site/ks/newsletters.asp> ♦

LUTHERAN YOUTH ENCOUNTER

— Dr. Larry Dean Johnson

Lutheran Youth Encounter (YE) is pleased to partner with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ! Youth Encounter is an evangelical and orthodox Lutheran ministry that partners with Christian communities to strengthen their ministry to, with, and through young people. YE offers event, team, leadership and service resources. We invite you to get to know how the Lord works through our programs so our partnership may grow in ministry together.



Youth Encounter would love to have you participate in our upcoming programs and

services. YE ministry is designed to share Christ with youth around the world, while addressing issues of pain, sorrow and hopelessness with love, compassion and truth.

For the 2011-12 school year we are offering the following programs and services:

Event Ministry

- National summer youth event for grades 9-12
- Regional weekend school year events in hotels for grades 6-12
- Leadership training seminars at designated events
- Two-day local events for grades 6-12.

Team Ministry

- International and National traveling ministry Teams

Service Ministry

- Local meal-packing service events in partnership with Kids Against Hunger
- Customized international mission trips

We invite you to help YE to be as effective as possible for congregations, parents and young people. You, or someone you refer, can do this in several ways. If you are interested in any of the following opportunities, please contact us.

- Serve on a steering committee for a Zone or Quake
- Lead a workshop at a Zone or Quake
- Host a local Restoring the Promise two-day event
- Host a local meal-packing event
- Serve on a National or International team
- Promote an event to congregations in your area.

Youth Encounter is funded by services rendered, such as event registration fees, team member sponsors and team ministry offerings (75%), and by the generous donations of congregations and individuals (25%). The support of your congregation is critical to our continued ministry.

Please consider Youth Encounter in your stewardship.



This year our annual campaign, "Rooted in Christ," shares our story and identifies how you can participate.

Youth Encounter looks forward to serving you. Please check out our website at:

www.youthencounter.org.



Contact Youth Encounter's president, Dr. Larry Johnson, or any of his staff by email or by phone at:

info@youthencounter.org

800-659-6884

651-287-8440 ♦

A Very Personal Story

— Pastor Peter Menke,
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Greenville, Ohio

“The Word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the Glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” — John 1:14 (NIV)

Last June, my wife Connie and I were visiting her brother and his wife in Waynesboro, VA. This was a special visit: Tom had been diagnosed with stage four terminal cancer. He informed me he intended to sell one of his two Chrysler Crossfires on Ebay. I asked him what he wanted for the car, and he made me a very special deal—not quite a gift, but very close to it. I was thrilled.

Today, I drive that car with great care and love (I’m a real “car guy” and also like motorcycles and airplanes. For someone almost 79 years old, I suspect I should slow down a bit.) Truth be told, I probably would never have thought about owning a car like the Crossfire. Thanks to Tom’s love and generosity, the car became a reality.

To most people, Christmas 2011 will be much like any other Christmas. Gifts of shirts, ties, socks, a new coat, maybe a new watch or piece of jewelry, and a lot of other “stuff” that will get put away—and maybe used as Christmas gifts next year. (Oops, probably should not have said that.) Not for me! No, this year will be very special. Tom’s gift will be a reminder of his love and generosity.

For those of us who try to walk in the footprints of the Master, Christmas reminds us that God’s Word became human flesh in the person of His Son, Jesus of Nazareth. We call Him the Christ, the Redeemer, our precious Lord and Savior. This is the real definition of Christmas, the Gift of all gifts.

Jesus, God in human flesh, came to live among us—He walked with us. He taught us, preached to us, healed us and died for us.

What was this gift? I am just an old country preacher, and I admit I do not use many Greek words in my preaching. However, there is one I do use: *hilasterion*. I use it because it is one of the few

Greek words I can properly pronounce. The deeper meaning of the word is that Jesus has paid the debt for my sins. The word in English is *propitiation*.

Like you, I am guilty of sin. Therefore, I have no right to stand before my God and receive anything but condemnation and damnation—except that Jesus has paid my sin debt with His blood. Remember Luther’s great contribution to our understanding of God’s grace: *“There is no salvation without the shedding of the blood of the Lamb.”*

Jesus paid the price. Thus, all of us who believe in Jesus as the Son of God, the Savior, the Redeemer, have the greatest gift of all—the promise and hope of eternal life through Him. This is our salvation. This is God’s grace. This is Christmas!

As I write this short Christmas message, I thank my God for my salvation through His grace in Christ Jesus, my Lord. Yes, the word became flesh and lived among us. We call it the Incarnation—when God penetrated the stream of human history and became human flesh. This is unique in all of the world’s religions. This is the Christmas Story. I am grateful I am still able to stand each Sunday in my pulpit and proclaim that glorious message!

I also thank God for you, my precious brothers and sisters in the faith. Let us never waver or falter in doing that to which we have been called—to preach and teach that God, our Father, the Word, has come to earth and His name is Jesus. This is the Christmas Story. Let us proclaim that story with vigor and vitality, and pray it will melt hard hearts and bring many lost souls to His cross this Advent and Christmas season.

A very Merry Christmas and God’s richest blessings to all. Amen. ♦

BY THE WORD

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Leadership Conference

*Atonement Lutheran Church
Fargo, North Dakota*

July 5-8, 2012

Impact: National Youth Event

Nashville, Tennessee

