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# The NEWSLETTER

## *A Message from the Editor...*

The holidays are now part of the dim past. I do though, recollect the blitz. It came in so low that it lifted the hair on my head. Like a MIRV, dropping multiple warheads. But we dug in and worshiped the Christ child. We breathed easier knowing that our Savior had been born. The bombs fell all around. The economy went south, unemployment went up and atheists slammed us. However, we're still standing, moving forward and we must have a news letter so that we can share our blessings.

My blessings preceded the holidays. In October Kate and I cruised south to Albuquerque for the LCMC National Convention. What a blast! Well, maybe 'blast' doesn't properly describe our participation mode. But it may be effective in helping the reader to share in our experience. It was nothing like a football game or a square dance. Those activities are a blast but they're still confined by a set of prescribed moves. Decorum is necessary in a peaceful gathering.

I hope there's no misunderstanding at this point. Social rules were in place. Peace prevailed. We were the essence of the priesthood of believers. No elevated individual was directing us down a man made path. The only directions were provided by ushers.

Albuquerque is a beautiful place. The ochers, purples,

brown and grays of the southwest are very unique to those of us whose surroundings are presented in varying hues of green.

Anyway, this set the stage. We were at peace and when we entered the gathering we felt within us, freedom.

We answer only to our Lord and are free in Christ. And that's the blast. Being free in Christ is a blast.

The theme of the gathering was 'the cost of discipleship'. (see Matt. 16:24). This was carried through by the keynote speakers. They covered everything from 'trends in Christianity' (never thought statistics could be so interesting) to 'making disciples' to 'those who faced martyrdom'; from informational to moving. The breakout sessions were quite varied; from 'the Gospel in combat' to creative arts for children' to igniting a passion for missions'. I strongly urge people, if it's at all possible, to attend the next gathering in Fargo, North Dakota.

Due to a catastrophic failure with our computer this issue is definitely behind schedule. While we have replaced the computer, we lost ALL our e-mails and e-mail addresses. Since this is my first editorial experience I would appreciate feed-back. My e-mail is [tsp@blackfoot.net](mailto:tsp@blackfoot.net). Or write Sig Person Box 26 Paradise, Mt. 59856.

— Sig Person

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## “THE INVITATION”

“THE INVITATION” is the theme of the coming LCMC GATHERING/CONVENTION on October 4-7 at Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, N. Dakota. If you read Isaiah 55:1 and 10-13, you will quickly see the basis for this engaging

theme!

Featured speakers include Rev. Walter Kallestad, Senior Pastor of Community Church of Joy in Gendale, AZ, and Walter Wangerin. He is a retired and renowned Lutheran pastor, writer and lecturer from Valparaiso Indiana.

You may remember him from

the former ALC days when he wrote a regular column in the LUTHERAN magazine. The Bible study and Breakout session leaders have been chosen. You'll be hearing more about this annual LCMC family reunion. Here's one special feature to note. There will be an early bird discount for all those who sign up early.

— Paul Braafladt

## June '08 S. Africa Quilting Class

Dear Sponsors and Friends,

From the whole South Africa Quilt Team (Sew Sew Sisters) we give you a grateful "THANK YOU" for your financial support, prayers, donations and encouragement. It far exceeded our expectations and I credit my team of Lu Stocker, Shirley Schoenleber, Peggy Kanning, DorothyAnne Honeychurch, Brenda Hux, Mary Nieratko and Patty Markuson. Each brought her own unique talents and worked together as a team. We also had a lot of fun together and shared unexpected challenges.

Over a two week period we taught 20 women, 17 of whom had never used a sewing machine. We purchased 11 machines in SA and brought over 1200 pounds of fabric and supplies with us, thanks to British Airlines extra allowances. The women we taught were delightful and loved it – catching on quickly. It was common for them to break out in song or dance during classes. We grew to share a special love and they chose to also name themselves the Sew Sew Sisters. When their skills are honed, they will be able to market their creations.

Never did we dream that we would also have such a cultural experience. We were honored wherever we went. We were supported and honored by the chiefs of the Vendas as well as the Premier of the Northern



Province. We were special guests of the Parliament, of which our friend Dr Tshenuani Farsani is the Speaker. We were on television and interviewed for several newspapers. In an area of SA that is 97% black, we were noticed. All assured us this project will grow and bless their people. They are grateful. We also thank Tshenuani and Reginah Farsani for their invitation and hospitality. She will be in charge of this new venture for their people and we are setting up a fund for ongoing support. The plan is to start cluster groups in different villages and rural areas which will be led by the women we taught. These women then will teach others, who will venture out farther into the Venda area and beyond. Thank you all for being a part of this mission.

Sincerely,  
Carrie LeMaster & the Sew Sew Sisters

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### NW District Get-together CELEBRATION AND JOY!

For those of you who have not attended a district or national gathering, it's like a family reunion where the holy spirit is part of the family.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our annual NW District get-together this year. It's May 1st & 2nd in Kellogg, Idaho.

We are blessed and honored to have Pastor/Captain Chris Magnell as our keynote speaker. He served as an LCMC chaplain in Iraq and now serves as a pastor to Zion Lutheran in Des Moines, Iowa. After attending the Bible study he led in Albuquerque last fall we are certainly looking forward to hearing him speak again.

Plan to join us for some CELEBRATION AND JOY! (That's the theme for this year's meeting.)

— Kate Person

## LAWSUIT SETTLED

The lawsuit filed by Rev. Lenae Rasmussen has ended! Thanks be to God! "Ended" means "Dismissal with Prejudice" This is the legal term in the Minnesota courts that means the lawsuit against Rev. Bill Sullivan, the LCMC Coordinator, is now history. It can never be resurrected in any form or part again. There are no confidentiality stipulations.

Originally, this lawsuit was filed against the Board of Trustees and specifically against Bill

Sullivan, Pastor Dale Wolf and myself, Paul Braafladt. This occurred shortly after the 2007 LCMC Convention voted with a massive majority to investigate various charges against Lenae Rasmussen. A special five-member investigation team was formed that included Robin Lake of our Northwest District. Their findings resulted in the expulsion of both Revs. John and Lenae Rasmussen of the Augsburg District. Sometime later, the Minnesota court threw out all charges against the Board of Trustees, Dale and myself but not against Bill Sullivan.

Lenae demanded damages of up to 1.7 million dollars. This sum was negotiated downwards to \$4,000 by a State appointed negotiator working with both involved attorneys. Neither Bill nor Lenae were present during the negotiation meeting. The resulting check was written with two names on it, Lenae Rasmussen and her attorney's name as well. It can be cashed only when both sign it. For insight into this frivolous case, you may find meaning in the two signatures instead of one.

## Grace in Paradise

We're an LCMC Chapter in Plains/Paradise, Montana. If you haven't heard about us before now, it may be because we were 'that LCMC chapter'; wanderers in the wilderness. Recently, though, we've been blessed with our name-Grace Lutheran. Having a name has helped us focus and give us direction.

We've been a chapter for over two years and during that time we've had occasional services, regular Bible study and a picnic or two. We are now having worship once a month. We also had business cards made up; a real mark of permanence. Other than that we meet pray and laugh together. If you're ever passing through Paradise on the forth Sunday of the month please stop and worship with us.

Please remember Grace Lutheran in your prayers as the Lord reveals our mission to us.

— Sig Person

On December 21st, Living Word Lutheran Church of Moses Lake put on a Christmas program at Hearthstone Retirement Center in Moses Lake.

This is the second program that the church has held for the residents at Hearthstone. There was a combination of adult choir, instrumental, and children's music. Intermixed with the music were Bible readings that tell the Christmas story. The program ended with the entire congregation and audience singing "Silent Night" with battery operated candles, which were a gift to the residents.

Living Word Lutheran Church started a relationship with the residents at Hearthstone about two years ago with the Sunday school children visiting residents, doing mini performances, making simple arts and crafts, or playing games. The elderly residents really enjoy the company of children and it has been touching to see relationships form.

— Juli LeMaster



### **American Lutheran Church...**

is located in Kellogg, ID. Our congregation just celebrated it's 70th anniversary as a congregation. We are a charter member of LCMC. We have 267 confirmed and 484 baptized members in our congregation with an active Sunday school and Acolyte training program for our youth and ongoing adult bible study groups for both male and female members. Our Pastor is Michael Birnbaum who comes to us from his former congregation in Texas. Pastor Birnbaum has brought a very real sense of spiritual awakening to our congregation. He spends much of his time connected with his mission work. He is currently involved in Belize and Nicaragua in Central America and in Tanzania in Africa. We are very proud of his mission work which broadens our

horizons as a Congregation.

American Lutheran Church is committed to growth as a congregation. In connection with that growth we are doing a community outreach campaign with Pastor Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life as the central theme. We hope to bring people from our community together during the Lenten season in a small group study format. We are very excited about this campaign and extend an open invitation to all of you to join us for study and fellowship.

If you're ever in Kellogg on Sunday we offer an open invitation to join us at 10:00 A.M. for Worship and fellowship. You're also welcome to stop by our Church office located behind our Church at the corner of Division and Riverside in Kellogg Id. Office hours are 9:00 to 1:00 PM PST Monday through Friday. May God bless all of you.

— Gary Truitt



Well, here it is. The January 2009 edition of the Northwest District LCMC newsletter is finally out. Our goal was (and after an unforeseen hiatus in the fall of 2008 is once again) to produce a quarterly edition, delivered during March, June, September and December. This issue of "The NEWSLETTER" is, as past issues have been, a collaborative effort. It contains articles from across the Northwest District. Hopefully these articles will give you a little closer glimpse into the congregations that make up our district. Thanks to all who contributed, and to all who helped behind the scenes. We couldn't have done it without ya! You are greatly appreciated.

## The Pastor's Corner . . .

One of the things I like best about now being part of the Northwest District in general and living in the Silver Valley, specifically, is discovering that people here are every bit as down to earth and good hearted as the folks we left behind in my home state of Texas.

With that in mind I offer you the following:

### Old Cowboy's Advice for a New Year:

- Keep your fences horse-high, pig-tight & bull-strong.
- Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
- A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
- Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.
- Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
- Don't corner something that would normally run from you.
- It doesn't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
- You cannot unsay a cruel word.
- Every path has a few puddles.
- When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
- The best sermons are lived, not preached.
- Don't Judge folks by their relatives.
- Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- Always drink upstream from the herd
- If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. If you make quiet time with the Lord the first thing and last thing you do every day, the rest will take care of itself.

Have a blessed, Jesus-filled New Year!

-- Michael Birnbaum, Pastor, American Lutheran Church

*During the Summer of '08 Beth Halvorsen, a St Paul's (of St Maries, Idaho) member, was visited by her college roommate, Sheri, and her daughter Sadie, from Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Halvorsen's invited them to worship with them at St. Paul's on Sunday. After Sheri left for home, Beth phoned me to convey what a wonderful and unexpected blessing Sheri had experienced. I then asked if Sheri would be willing to write a brief remembrance for our newsletter. What follows is that remembrance.*

-- Pr Spike Shine

"Refreshing and soothing to my soul", were the words I uttered as we drove home from the beautiful Lutheran church that Sunday morning in April. It had been years since I had worshipped in a liturgical setting, as my home church endorses a very contemporary context.

I realized just how much I missed the beauty and richness that is offered in a service where the profound words of hymns are sung, the importance of the creeds are honored, and the reading of Scripture abounds. How stirring it was to watch congregants participate in the lighting of candles, engage in readings and singing, and partake in the holy sacrament of communion.

Here in this quaint logging town was a church that reflected the long held beliefs and practices of a community of Lutheran believers. And yet at the same time, the acknowledgement of life in the twenty-first century was aptly addressed. "Pastor Spike" (as the parishioners warmly called him) greeted everyone at the beginning of the service and encouraged comments from families who had struggled with illness, were returning from winter months spent in the south, or had participated in some notable event that week. There was a wonderful sense of the intimacy of a family. He then delivered a message that was relevant, challenging, humorous, and inspiring.

As I reflected later with my friends in Idaho, I realized that one of the highlights of my trip had been the Sunday morning we spent at the Lutheran church in St. Maries. I am genuinely grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the congregation for that brief time.

May God grant his richest blessings on Pastor David and his congregation.

Sheri Mellema

What's God up to at Our Saviour's in Burien?

Mark 1:29-39: Jesus has a remarkable public and private ministry. In private he ministers to his inner core of fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James and John. He heals Peter's mother-in-law and energizes her to be their deacon. Publicly Jesus heals the sick and demon-possessed.

Jesus prays and then says, "Let us go somewhere else..." And he leads the disciples on a whole new adventure. It was quite a trip.

Our Saviour's and the Herwick family have celebrated Christmas together 22 times. We have shared the Gospel and had a remarkable ministry both private and public. The congregation has become more centered on the Word of God: the spoken word, the written word and the living word, Jesus. It has been quite a trip.

And we prayed. As we grow older, what does Christ want us to do? What direction shall we take? Shall we simply close our doors as so many other churches are doing?

The answer came back: Let us go somewhere else.

The congregation voted to search for and then call a pastor with a heart for evangelism. That pastor was given the choice of (1) helping to build this congregation in a team ministry with Pastor Herwick or (2) starting a new congregation on our campus or elsewhere. We called Pastor Peter Lerseth. Pastor Lerseth comes from a whole family of pastors. He has 10 years of ordained experience. In addition to his Master of Divinity degree he is also a certified teacher. He chose the team ministry approach. It has been quite a trip.

Since God has called us to "go somewhere else," we have painted the apartments and church, built walls, and repaired glass, hired a manager for Musetta Manor, installed a movie screen, road sign, and concrete poured for a new sidewalk and handicap ramp. We baptized 3 adults, 5 children and welcomed 14 others by affirmation of faith. Multi-cultural ministries have begun, and the hand of fellowship has been extended to other churches and ministry groups, This Sunday we heard the first sounds coming from our band and two dozen of us joined together for a Super Bowl party.

We continue with many of our previous programs and have added Wednesdays Together and the Alpha course. A new web page is under construction: [YourChurchHome.com](http://YourChurchHome.com).

We follow Jesus as he leads us into new and exciting ministry.

It is quite a trip.

— David Herwick, Pastor, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church