

NORTHWEST LINK

an independent voice for Lutherans!



Welcome to the 2012 first edition of the LINK

Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers. I know your prayers affected the outcome of the challenges we faced in the last year. In fact what follows here will show how your prayers kept us going. They just really came in handy. My last medical go-round leads directly to a testimony of the greatness of our Heavenly Father.

Shortly before Kate and I left for the hospital in Seattle the local Missouri Synod pastor, Mark Nicolaus, called and asked if we had an LCMC pastor in Seattle. We said that we did but Pastor Braafladt was out of the area for awhile. "Is it ok if I send one of our guys up there?" he asked. That was the first hint that a miracle was unfolding.

It's a nine hour trip to Seattle from Paradise. It was dark when we left home and dark when we arrived in Seattle. I think there was a stretch of daylight around Moses Lake. If this was fiction, it might be easier to see a picture of dark, wet Seattle and the stress of trying to find a motel in an unfamiliar place.

However, we're finally there, holed up in a motel by the airport. The only one in a large area that would allow the dogs.

In the morning we're on the way to Virginia Mason. Thank God that we didn't have to be at the hospital at six in the morning. We're not big city people because driving around when every one else is doing the same thing is unnatural. And trying to keep track of the signs is more stress. I'm so glad that Kate is an excellent navigator. (and our miracle continues to unfold)

The Missouri pastor, Steve Olsen appeared in the waiting room just in time to pray with us before I departed through the swinging doors. An added bonus was that the surgical nurse who was there to lead me away joined with us. None of us had any doubt that the Holy Spirit was also very present.

After that I was oblivious to the passing of time but Kate wasn't. Her activities were limited, she went to the car which was in the parking garage. Those places are depressing at best and not meant to be a place to hang out. She sat in the car and talked to the dogs, Mercy and Tulie. Mercy offered a look which gave credence to her name. Tulie offered a big smile. Kate went back to the waiting room and, well, waited. She went back and forth for ten hours. On one of the times in the car, as the prospect of looking for a place to sleep continued to loom ahead she breathed a simple prayer ... 'Lord, I need a place to sleep tonight'. No specifics, she was too tired and concerned about me to be more specific.

There's our time and there's God's time.

When I got back to my room Pastor Olsen reappeared. He had been worrying about Kate and he came back to offer her the unoccupied parsonage at their church. Several months earlier there had been a fire in it and recently the repairs had been completed. Pastor Olsen had taken the bus to the hospital so that he could ride back with her to show her the way-and what she saw when she got there was a home. She had a home to bring me to, not just a motel room. Her prayer was answered with specifics she hadn't thought of. Two serenely beautiful sisters (Anita and Merlean) from the congregation added a homemaker's touch with new sheets, dishes and glasses. Kate watched them put the sheets on the bed after saying she would do it and being ignored. She watched in humility, exhaustion and gratitude while their competent, loving hands

Cont'd at "Sanctuary" on Page 2

Announcement ...

Rev. Dennis Reich has accepted the Call to serve Zion Lutheran Church in Kent, WA. Pastor Reich is an LCMC pastor from Iowa. He follows Pastor John Strand who faithfully and effectively served Zion Lutheran for many years. Pr Strand retired last September.

The Installation Service will be held Sunday, February 19 at 11 AM. Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt will preside at the Installation Service and Pastor Strand will preach. It promises to be a great day for members and friends of Zion Lutheran Church who recently left the ELCA and joined Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

Announcement ...

Dr. Emily Worthington has joined the staff of Living Word Lutheran Church in Puyallup, Washington as the Director of Youth and Family Ministries. She grew up in Grass Valley, California where she was home schooled by her parents. After graduating from high school she earned her BA from Sacramento State University and continued her education at Iowa State University where she earned her MA and PhD in Human Development and Family Studies with an additional focus on learning English as a second language. While in college she served as an organist and music director and is recognized for organizing two youth hand bell choirs. She may be reached at youth@livingwordlutheranchurch.org, or 253 229 5353, or 253 445 4102.

Award Received

Award of Commendation – Concordia Historical Institute, Department of Archives and History, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commends *Susanne M. McKenzie* for *Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ: The First Ten Years* (Organizational Histories), an insight-filled, passionate recounting of the first decade of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ as told through the many perspectives of people whose lives were deeply invested in this new church body.

The document is signed by L.E. Lumpe and Marvin A. Higgins, Director and Associate Director, respectively, of the Department of Archives and History.

Award of Commendation*“Sanctuary”*

turned the parsonage into a sanctuary.

Bonus!! It had a fenced yard. The dogs got to shed their leashes and just run. God had supplied a miracle with specifics.

By the time you finish reading this issue of the LINK you'll have read other testimonies of our Lord's hand in the lives of people and congregations. Hope you have a testimony for the next issue of the LINK.

~ Sig Person
Faithful Remnant
Paradise, Montana

Ed. – Recently, several people within LCMC were asked to consider the question, “What is your opinion of the use of titles?” Following are their responses from some of those people. How about you?

. . . a Rose by any other name . . .

I go by Tony Stoutenburg, Pastor.

I spent too long on the west coast to stand much on titles. I am just happy when unchurched people want to talk to me at all, so I do not care if they call me by my title.

The one I hate is "Reverend." Pastor is an office; I am honored to be called to it. Reverend is a descriptor of the person holding the title. I am not to be revered, nor am I particularly reverent.

But by the grace of God, I get to be called Tony Stoutenburg, pastor.

Tony Stoutenburg
Grace Lutheran Church
Hayward, Wisconsin



My situation, like that of other retired pastors, is a bit different from those in "Called" pastoral ministries. Perhaps that's a good place to begin.

Theologically, Lutherans have always insisted that being called "pastor" is dependent on being "Called" to be a pastor. If one is not Called to serve in a Word and Sacrament pastoral role, presumably by a congregation, technically and functionally that person is not a pastor. Historic practice among

Lutherans also applies this understanding to district presidents or bishops. It stands in sharp contrast to those church denominations where ordination rather Call is the deciding factor. Then add so called "historic episcopacy" to the pot and you can see why, once ordained with the episcopal magic touch, many pastors and priests consider themselves pastors and priests for life and forever. I remember one pastor friend who, it was kiddingly claimed, slept not in pajamas but in his clergy shirt and collar.

Now back to my situation. In theory, at least, when a pastor retires, functionally, he is no longer a pastor. For that reason when someone asks me, "What would you prefer to be called...pastor or Paul?" I usually answer, "Paul". Consistent with that, when sending emails, most often I refer to myself as "Paul". But quite often, especially around church people, folks call me "Pastor Braafladt". If I'm preaching or speaking at a church, there's a 99% chance it will be "Pastor Braafladt". Given my function that's fits just fine. In 2009 I preached at our Annual Gathering at the closing Communion Service. Though I wasn't aware of it, just behind me on a movie screen was my sermon title and the words, "Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt". That

was appropriate, too, as it is on formal occasions and in formal communications.

In other words for me this is a mixed bag. Fortunately, the New Testament doesn't prescribe pastoral garb or required pastoral style or titles. I am grateful to God that He allows us, each one, to be who we are whether lay persons or pastors. What tells the story is whether we are obedient to the call to believe in Jesus Christ and the call to serve Him with whatever gifts he gives us. Some of us, with the gifts we bring, are called to be pastors.

So take your pick. Claim the one you like:

Paul Braafladt...
Pastor Braafladt...
Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt



Jeanine's ordination bestowed upon her the title of reverend. We had to celebrate, of course; so we presented her with a purple, collar shirt and card. The card read something like this: "Jeanine, we're proud of you! But what do we call you? We figure the "Most Holy Right Reverend" will do." Smiley face, smiley face, smiley face!!!

She laughed, grinned and said, "Thank you. You honor me with

title and gifts. But just Jeannine will do.”

We looked upon our boss with esteem. Yet, she didn't want our accolades or a title. More than these, Jeanine needed our prayer, support, and friendship.

Titles—to some they're important, and to others nothing more than hullabaloo. What say you? For some, I think it depends on how the called sees him or herself: as one elevated, or one humble for the sake of the call. For me, the later is true.

American Lutheran Church honors me with the call and title of Pastor. I'm grateful. Still—for me—being a pastor is not about a designation; it's about representation. Serving is not about a title, but that of the call.

Like Jeanine, I hope to be known as a servant of the Lord. I'm called to teach, preach and comfort, and also to befriend. Truly, I'm honored to encourage others to live for the Lord. Still, I don't need an accolade; what I likewise appreciate is prayer, love, and friendship.

Serving as a pastor is an amazing responsibility. It says to some in the community, “This one has a unique role.” Yet, I often remind myself that this cannot go to my head. I stay grounded knowing

God doesn't call me “Pastor.” He knows me instead as his child and friend.

Outside the church, however, many people don't know who I represent. Most aren't aware that I serve as I do; probably because they can't identify me by what I wear. I seldom wear a collar. I mean, it's really, really rare.

Now, wearing one is just fine. Still—for me—it's not who I am. I'm an everyday Joe: blue jeans, sweaters, and a pair of leather shoes. Nevertheless, my not wearing a collar often makes life interesting, and real just the same.

I often snicker when people cuss and then realize I pastor a church. Oddly, folks tend to mutate into something they're not. Maybe it's because the reality of God's existence confronts them—not because of me, but because of who and what I represent.

Being real with people allows me to reach out and befriend. The way I see it, the collar's a barrier to be authentic in ways otherwise not possible. Some have a tendency to see status, and not the call for which the collar represents. It's for these reasons and more that I choose to represent myself just as I am.

At the end of the day, I hope to be known only as a child of God with a wonderful call. I'm not a “Most Holy Right Reverend;” I'm just a regular guy with a special role. And like you, I'm a servant of the Lord—one who needs prayer, love and support.

Whether I'm “Pastor” or “Jason”—either is fine. But really, being called a friend—that'll do! Being your friend: now that bestows upon me a title that I'd really like to have.

Jason Bonnicksen
American Lutheran Church
Kellogg, Idaho



No titles on name tags. From the beginning of LCMC, titles have been purposefully omitted on name tags at our two annual events. Several times we have been asked the question as to why this is. The simplest answer is that since we subscribe the belief that we are a “priesthood of all believers” our titles are not as important as they had been in the past. By choosing not to include titles, we are choosing to promote individuals and the value they bring to the organization without adding a layer of hierarchy through the use of titles.

Sharon MacFadyen
Director of Operations
LCMC



Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Jeannie Bergstrom Installed

My name is Jeannie Bergstrom and I would like to share with you how I came to be a Pastor in LCMC. I had belonged to the same little Lutheran congregation my whole life. When my husband, Larry, and I moved back to the community I grew up in we began attending my home church and we raised our three children in that congregation. I cared a lot for that church and I was proud to be an ELCA Lutheran.

When my husband retired from teaching, and then we sold the Ice Cream Shop/Restaurant two years later, we found we had more time to get involved in our congregation. Larry was serving on the council when our Pastor realized he could not spread himself thin enough to travel to the four churches that were part of the Prairie Lutheran Parish so it was decided each congregation would take care of their own church service one Sunday a month. That's when I had my first experience helping to conduct a service. I would do the sermon and my husband would do the rest of the service.

Then in the fall of 2007 our Pastor resigned to accept a position in Billings, Mt. I was approached by the council of my church and the council of a church in a neighboring community to do at least 2 church services a month. I accepted and it wasn't long before God had taken control of my heart. I started the Lutheran Pastoral Associate program (with the ELCA) in the fall of 2008, but then the Montana Synod meeting was held in Great Falls in June of 2009. I went as a first time delegate and I found out what the church that I had always been proud to be a member of was really up to. I soon found out that they had been busy for several years leading us away from what I thought our Lutheran church stood for and what I thought it meant to follow the Word of God.

What happened in the following year is the same story that has replayed in many communities. We easily passed our first vote to leave the ELCA in September but then the Synod office joined forces with the council members, who said they



Ingrid Aderhold, Jeannie Bergstrom, Warren Baker
at Grace Lutheran Church, Nashua, Montana

were opened minded but really had no intention of leaving the ELCA, and the struggle was on. The Bishop who previously had no concern that we had been without a Pastor for two years now could not do enough to keep us in the ELCA.

We attended our first LCMC Gathering held in Fargo in 2009. We were overwhelmed by the support given to us when we shared the struggle we were going through. That is when I first met Pastor Warren Baker and his wife Karen. Besides giving Larry and I a lot of support he also told me about the Beyond the River Academy. He also tried to convince me that because I was doing the work of a pastor I was a pastor. A hard thing for a life long Lutheran to accept when I thought I could not do anything within my home congregation without asking the permission of the Synod office.

My congregation had their second vote in May of 2010 and we missed having the 2/3 majority to leave the ELCA by 5 votes. There were 50 voting members at that second vote, 19 members walked away and formed Grace Lutheran and joined LCMC within a week of that vote. We now have 25 faithful members. We meet at the Senior Citizens building and are truly happy that God took us on this journey.

Cont'd on Page 6, "Bergstrom"



Ingrid Aderhold, Johnette Grefe, Warren Baker
at Medicine Lake Lutheran, Medicine Lake, MT



"Bergstrom"

In October of this year the council decided to check into the possibility of having me ordained even though I was still taking classes through BTRA. They contacted Pastor Baker and the wheels were set in motion. Pastor Baker told the council that this was exactly how it was suppose to work. It was up to the congregation to call their pastor whether it was one of their own members like myself or someone they may select from the LCMC Pastors roster.

Pastor Baker journeyed to Nashua, Montana to conduct the Ordination service on December 4. Pastor Ingrid Aderhold also came from Pierce, Idaho to help with the service. She is also a student with Beyond the River Academy. I was so pleased and honored to have them both come. My service took place in the morning and then we traveled to Medicine Lake for the ordination service of Johnette Grefe. It was a wonderful day!

I have so much to learn and I must admit that the journey isn't always easy, but I have met so many wonderful people through LCMC that my life has truly been enriched. I love my congregation and the strength they have shown to be part of this journey. We can only thank God for reaching out to us and guiding us along our way.

Jeannie Bergstrom
Grace Luthran Church
Nashua, Montana

Johnette Grefe Installed

While my ordination day, December 4, was an honor and a privilege for me, the real glory belongs to the Holy Spirit. As Martin Luther said in his explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith."

Luther's words pretty much say it all. Whatever of any worth I've said or accomplished is strictly because of the Holy Spirit.

Charles Hadden Spurgeon, the great English preacher of past years, when speaking to a group of prospective ministers, declared, "If God calls you to be a minister, don't stoop to be a king." Put that statement beside the words of Billy Graham, "There is no political office in all the world that could take me away from preaching the Gospel." I fully agree.

A pastor is a "voice calling in the wilderness," and we are living in wilderness times. A pastor is someone sent from God--not sent to tickle the ears of listeners; not sent just to impart information or impress people with fine-sounding words or persuasive ability. A pastor is sent to proclaim the most wonderful news ever told.

After almost three decades of preaching the Gospel, I can truthfully say the ministry is the highest calling and honor in all the world, plus the greatest responsibility. I am grateful to have a part in it. Thanks be to God!

Amen.

Johnette Grefe
Medicine Lake Lutheran Church
Medicine Lake, Montana



John 8:32 ... and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Women of the Word! Great News!

The Women of Bethany Lutheran Church in Bigfork, Montana are happy to announce that they are hosting the WOW Spring Fling on Saturday, April 28th! Save the date on your calendars and watch for more details as they become available!

Also: The committee*, which was assigned at Chester, is suggesting that we have the following officers to elect in Bigfork: **Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, Secretary/Treasurer and Communications Resource Person.** It is suggested that they be elected for two years, staggered terms. *Would you consider if you or someone else might be interested in any one of these offices? Please come to the gathering in Bigfork with any names that have agreed to run or contact me or another member of the committee ahead of time.* The committee has also been working on a policy statement. We will have a draft ready and emailed to you soon. We ask that you read it and come to Bigfork to make suggestions or comments so that we can adopt something at that gathering. ~ Kim Wiest, Conrad, Montana

**The committee assigned to build a policy statement and a ballot were elected from the Chester Fall WoW Gathering...one from each town represented: Karen Duffey, Belgrade; Diana Hoy, Great Falls; Beth Roen, Rudyard; Iva Kolstad, Ledger; Jodi Duncan, Cut Bank; Jeannie Fauerbach, Chester; and Kim Wiest, Conrad.*



Attendees at Denny Park Lutheran

ON THE WEST SIDE . . .

of the Cascade Mountains there are two monthly meetings of LCMC pastors in Western Washington.

One meeting occurs at Central Lutheran Church in Tacoma and draws pastors mainly from the South Puget Sound congregations. The second meeting is held at Denny Park Lutheran Church in Seattle for pastors in both LCMC and NALC N. Puget Sound congregations. These meetings last one to two hours and focus on Biblical texts for preaching and upon many other facets of common concern involving congregation life and ministry. This is a healthy new

development! Here is a fresh photo taken on Feb. 2, 2012 at Denny Park Lutheran in Seattle.

From left to right they are Pastor Grant Gard, Ret., Lyn and Pastor Francis Jeffery, Ret. (front row) , Pastor Jack Richards (Prince of Peace, Everett), Pastor Ron Fandrick (Elma), Pastor Victor Langford III, (St. Mark's, Seattle), Pastor Phil Lee, (Lutheran Ch. of the Resurrection, Seattle), Pastor Mark Bankson (Our Saviour's, Stanwood)

Photograph and text contributed by
Paul Braafladt
Seattle, Washington

Community of Joy (Lake Oswego, OR) Celebrates – Twice

It's our Birthday

On January 29, 2012 Community of Faith celebrates its 2nd Birthday as an LCMC congregation. Our history began in the Lake Oswego high school gymnasium, void of the beautiful altar, paraments, organ and liturgical art we left behind. Absent were many who chose not to come with us. Chairs were set up, worshippers gathered, songs were sung, inspirational messages were shared, and God through His Holy Spirit was there! Initially, a leader of our congregation, Dr. Roger Gehring, took the necessary steps to become certified as an LCMC pastor and served as our interim pastor and teacher. We soon brought an interim Pastor Gary Englert on staff to help with administrative and pastoral duties, while volunteers stepped back to allow him to lead. A very talented music team and choir emerged bringing a blend of traditional and contemporary music to our worship experience. The resources God has put in our midst is astounding!

The pieces of the organizational structure fell into place: a Constitution and Bylaws, Core Values, Mission and Vision Statements, List of Dreams. A website was created. A leadership Board was elected and with God's Grace and guidance, we set our dreams on doing God's Will in our community and beyond. A Call Committee was formed to begin the process of calling our Lead Pastor. With priorities to build a youth program, Colie Krueger from Wisconsin was hired as Youth Minister. It became clear she was 'from God' with her love of Jesus, and her passion for youth and ministry of service to the community. It wasn't long before she and the youth were gathering and distributing food and clothing for the homeless in downtown Portland.

God has been leading this church every step of its journey. A few months after we began, we were told the high school planned necessary repairs on their roof, and we needed to find another space. Timely, a phone call came from a pastor

of a neighboring church inviting us to share space in their beautiful facility. We soon realized their congregation carried the motto "a church that gives itself away". They gave us the sanctuary while they moved to the fellowship space. Humbly, we accepted and continue today as partners in ministry at the Stafford Center off I-205 in Tualatin. Another affirmation of Emanuel – God with us!



Dave and Holly Sorensen and children

Installation Celebration!

Now as we celebrate 2 years, we are blessed to announce our Lead Pastor Dave Sorensen is with us. **TO GOD BE THE GLORY!** Pastor Dave and his family come to Oregon from Horace, North Dakota. Prior to his serving Horace Lutheran, he was pastor of Shepherd of the Valley in Maple Valley, WA for 10 years. He has roots in Redmond, WA, attended LBI (where he met his lovely wife Holly) and PLU, then attended Luther Theological Seminary. Pastor Dave, Holly and their six children Hannah, Caleb, Ethan, Abby, Chloe, and Seth are anxious to be back in the beautiful NW (although this January they are getting a real taste of our rain.) While Pastor Dave and his son Caleb have been

Cont'd on Page 9 at "Celebration"

A Christmas Story for this day . . .

because, thankfully, every day contains elements of Christmas and Easter!

The angel Gabriel said to Mary, **"You will conceive in your womb and bear a son."**
Luke 1:31a

We don't know, when Mary first heard the announcement, whether she heard it as good news, or not. But that is what it was. It was the announcement of what was happening to her. We have come to call this good news, **"the gospel."** In this case, the Gospel according to Luke, as announced by the messenger Gabriel.

Pay close attention to what the gospel is not. It is not a description, commentary, invitation or command to do something. The message includes those things but they are not the main thing. The main thing is the news that God is doing something good to you and for you. This news always comes out of the blue, just as it did to Mary. It is new every day.

The angel did not say to Mary, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son and all you have to do is accept it." That would have been terrible, although too many preachers do exactly that. Another thing the angel did not say to Mary, was, "You have to make a decision for Jesus." That would have put the young woman in a terrible predicament. "Let's see, do I accept him or not? How do I know if I am really sincere in accepting or rejecting him?" That would have thrown Mary back onto herself, an impossible situation.

Another thing the angel did not say to Mary was, "open your mind to God's word" or "open your heart to Jesus." These are not the kinds of operations we are capable of performing on ourselves, nor could Mary. But you often hear preachers say things like that. They remind me of the comedian Red Skelton, who said he had written a book entitled "Brain Surgery Self Taught." It's impossible.

With God, all things are possible. The gospel is the good news of what God has done for you and is doing to you right now. He opens your ears to hear his word, just as Jesus opened the ears of the deaf man. If he did not, we would be deaf to his word. He is changing your heart, too. As he

rolled the stone away from the tomb, he is changing your heart of stone into a heart that can love and praise him.

The miracle of the gospel breaks through to us. It is new every day. It does not change, but it changes us.

And Mary said: **"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."** Luke 1:46

Merry Christmas to you and to yours.

John Fahning
New Hope, Minnesota
(Thanks, John! ~ R)



"Celebration"

with us since November, the rest of the family will be leaving North Dakota to join them late February.

Community of Faith plans a Big Celebration of Installation for Pastor Dave which will include Certification into the LCMC. This will take place sometime early March once the family is together. We want to encourage pastors and lay persons from our LCMC NW District to come and celebrate with us and welcome Pastor Dave into the 'NW fold'. The exact date has not been set, but an invitation to all churches will be forthcoming. YOU ARE INVITED! Check our website! (www.cofaith.net)

It is only through prayer, submission to God's Will, and a desire to share the Truth of God's Word with others that we are celebrating our two years this month. Our congregation has been blessed in numerous ways as we have plunged into this venture, trusting in His leading. He has brought to us a pastor/shepherd to continue the work of His Kingdom in this place! We celebrate with abundant JOY!

Jackie McClung
Community of Faith Church
Lake Oswego, Oregon

THE GREATNESS OF SMALL AND A SMILE

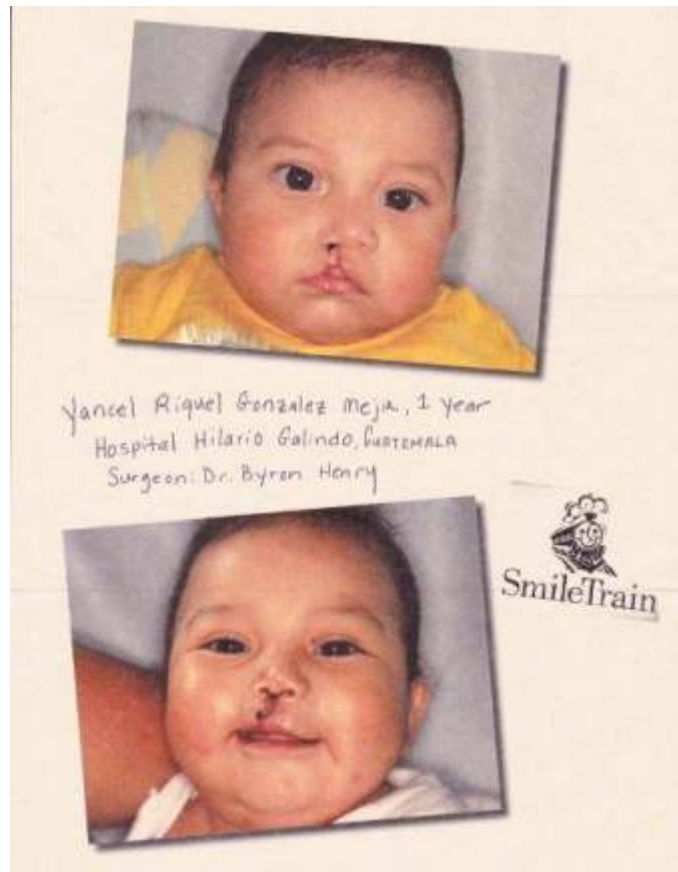
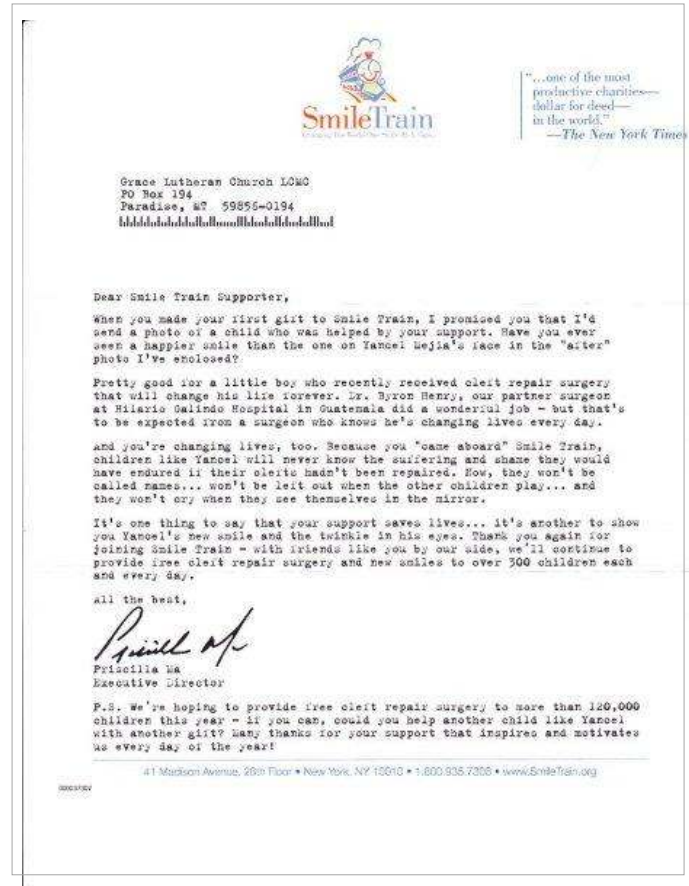
Are you a small LCMC congregation? Do you wonder what mission God has for you, or if there even is a mission? Think small!

Our congregation, Faithful Remnant Lutheran in Paradise, Montana has only 4 members. Being so small we don't have a pastor to support or a building to maintain. The Lord has led us to be part of several ministries. A few examples of how we have been blessed by God's plan for us.

We have been humbled to be a play a small part in helping individual missions: such as a focus on unchurched, help after natural disasters, and a mission in Mexico.

A small donation once a month to help a new LCMC congregation.

Helping plan Mark Vander Tuig's 'Montana Tour' in 2011.



Helping plan a Montana get together in 2010 and 2011.

A small bit of financial help for a pastor with health problems.

...and the small list grows bigger. In the fall of 2011 we were blessed to be able to donate enough to SMILE TRAIN to provide a complete cleft palate so a child could smile; a simple smile. Check out the pictures. What a wonder to behold, that smile.

We continue to meet regularly and we always have lots to consider. We believe that God has a plan for us right now and we are excited about the plan he has for us in the future.

With God's help and guidance, your small congregation will be well used.

Charlotte Slider
Faithful Remnant Lutheran
Paradise, Montana

Some Observations on Mark Vander Tuig's Summer 2011 Montana Visit

Bill Duffey serves as pastor of Peace Lutheran in Belgrade, Montana; and of New Hope Lutheran in Townsend, Montana. By the way, if you get a chance to hear him play guitar don't pass it up!

I have read the articles in the September, 2011 issue of The Northwest Link concerning Pastor Mark Vander Tuig's visit to Montana last June. It was good to read the different perspectives concerning his visit in the various locations he was able to travel to in such a short period of time.

My wife, Karen, and I wanted to hear Mark's presentation so we traveled to Melville Lutheran in Melville, Montana. It was a beautiful drive to a wonderful congregation on the east side of the Crazy Mountains - what a picture perfect location for a church.

I was impressed by Mark's enthusiasm and excitement concerning LCMC's future vision for outreach in mission and ministry, locally and globally.

When asked to comment on issues relating to the ELCA Pastor Mark, I believe, said something like, **"We are long past commenting on the ELCA. We are looking forward to our future mission and ministry in God's vast world and how we can do that best."** (Since it has seven months ago now since that meeting, please don't expect that to be a quote from Pastor Mark Vander Tuig, it is just a vague memory of what he may have said in response to those questions.)

Pastor Vander Tuig outlined four issues or points that we as members of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) ought to be concerned with.

Those are: being *People of Prayer*, being *Mission Minded People*, being *People who Get Connected*

with one another, and being *People who are Well Trained and Equipped* in our understanding of the Gospel's Message so that we can go out and proclaim that GOOD NEWS MESSAGE boldly.

Those are four issues that I believe we can all get behind and support in the life of our congregations as well in our own personal life. Pastor Mark also talked about those four issues at the LCMC Convention in Des Moines, Iowa in October, 2011. You can go online to www.lcmc.net, go to events and the Drop-down Menu gives you the option of going to the Annual Gathering and then to Presentations. I believe you will discover there a presentation by Pastor Vander Tuig that talks about those four issues or points more fully and accurately than I can.

The LCMC Newsletter has the following statement on the front page:

"We are an association of congregations and individuals, free in Christ, accountable to one another, rooted in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations."

I am sure you can see in that statement the elements of the Four Issues or Points that Pastor Mark mentioned we ought to be concerned with as congregational and as individual members of LCMC.

God's GRACE and PEACE be with you in this new year of 2012.

Bill Duffey
Peace Lutheran Church



Psalms 33:4 For the word of Jehovah is right; And all his work is done in faithfulness.

Proposed Changes to LCMC Bylaws

1/23/2012

LCMC continues to change and grow, but the clear consensus is that we not become something that we were never intended to be. There are times when it would be easier to fall back to that structure and institutional mindset that so many of us know so well, but that was no longer working, and is not the future. Everywhere the church is growing it is doing so through associations, movements, and initiative on the part of local churches.

I know that this is hard work. But it is really a call to grow up and take on the ministry that the Lord has given to each of our churches. A person asked at one of the many informational meetings I was doing, "who do we call when we have trouble?" My answer: First call on Jesus. Then let Him lead you into His Word, and if you still have trouble, call on a neighboring like-minded church. After that, try our website and look for resources. The point is: it is time to stop hoping that "someone else will do it" and start depending on Jesus and the body of Christ that He has established, and find a way.

There are some things that simply have to be done by the association that are beyond the congregation that we must do to maintain our integrity. There are some proposed by-law additions that will be reviewed at the next annual gathering of the Northwest District, April 27-28 at Richland Lutheran Church, Richland, Washington. They simply allow the Board of Trustees to call into action a "Pastoral Ministry Mediation Team" when a pastor has engaged in conduct unbecoming a pastor, has violated our ministry standards.

This proposed team is made up of two people elected at large from our association, and three

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.



others: a seasoned pastor, a psychologist and someone trained in personnel and "HR". This team, when called upon will deal with the situation after all other means have been exhausted (personal, congregational, district (if possible), and the Ministry Board). They will do their work face to face, in person and quickly. They will make a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

These by-law changes will be presented to the annual gathering next October 7-10 in Denver, Co for approval.

I am grateful that these kind of issues and concerns have come up so infrequently in an association of our size and numbers, but we must also find a way to answer Scripture's call to both love one another and to speak the truth, but also in love.

Mark Vander Tuig
Service Coordinator
LCMC



Zechariah 8:16-17 These are the things that ye shall do: speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah.

Isaiah 65:16 ... so that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.