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* *Planting Together* * - please share in your bulletin and/or newsletter

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MINISTRY PARTNERS

Camp Okoboji
Lutheran Family Service

ALSO INCLUDED...

Operation Barnabas
Ordination Anniversaries 2019
The Parish Paper
Reaching Rural America for Christ Newsletter



CALL RECEIVED

Rev. Larry Lemke, EM, Solon, to Trinity, Cedar Rapids.

CALL ACCEPTED

Rev. Dr. Bruce Pepper, Messiah, Downey, CA, to Bethany, Sioux City.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALL ACCEPTED

Russell Baumann, Certified Lay Minister, St. Paul, Carroll, to St. James, Montague, MI.

CHANGE OF STATUS

Kathleen Brammeier, Mt. Olive, Des Moines, to Emeritus, 5-31-2018.

TRANSFERRED OUT

Janice Schulz, Emeritus, Fort Dodge, to Northern Illinois District, 11-12-2018.

Calendar of Events

January 1...New Year's Day, District Office Closed

January 10...District Youth Committee and Circuit Youth Reps, District Office, Fort Dodge

January 12...Hinge Event, Good Shepherd, Fort Dodge

January 13...Hinge Event, First English, Spencer

January 17...District Education Committee, District Office, Fort Dodge

January 22...District Human Care Committee, St. Paul, Carroll

January 24...District Missions Committee, District Office, Fort Dodge

January 24...Principals Meeting, District Office, Fort Dodge

January 29...District Stewardship Committee, District Office, Fort Dodge

Follow Iowa District West on these social media websites.



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iowaWest](http://www.twitter.com/iowaWest)



[www.youtube.com/user/
iowaDistrictWest](http://www.youtube.com/user/iowaDistrictWest)

Iowa District West, LCMS
409 Kenyon Road, Suite B
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515.576.7666
sue@iowadistrictwest.org
www.idwlcms.org

Please note: The inclusion of items from outside sources in *The Messenger* is for information purposes only. Inclusion of such items does not constitute District endorsement.



Planting Together

January 2019

409 Kenyon Road, Suite B — Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501
515-576-7666 Fax 515-576-2323 www.idwlcms.org
Contact email: sue@iowadistrictwest.org

On a Mission to Support Christ's Mission!

We are All Missionaries



What a blessing that we are in the season of Epiphany, a time to reflect on the Shepherds and the Wisemen. Isn't it something that God chose the lowly shepherds to be HIS first missionaries? They were the very first people that the Lord chose to tell the world about our Savior Jesus! Not the most educated, but the lowest regarded people in the society of that day. The Lord does things much different than

we do, and in the book of Isaiah the Lord says, *"My ways are not your ways and my thoughts are not your thoughts."*

God didn't use the local people to see the star of Bethlehem, and to come and worship the Christ child. He used people from a far away country to follow the star and bring gifts for the Savior of the world.

God uses all kinds of NOT NORMAL people to accomplish HIS work...people with different backgrounds and gifts. If the Lord can use people like the shepherds and the wisemen, then HE CAN USE EACH ONE OF US AS HIS MISSIONARIES. When was the last time you told someone about Jesus?

Recently, I lost one of my dearest and best friends, a plumber and well man from York, Nebraska. Jerry was a very NOT NORMAL person. When he left the location of every job he worked on, he would always ask, "Do you know about Jesus?" He was one of the best missionaries I have ever met in my 76 years on this earth! I look forward to introducing Jerry to you, when we are in our real home!

Gary Thies, Mission Development Counselor
gary.thies@lcms.org

IDW Outreach to California Fires

Ellie Menz has been working to find the best way to reach out and help those in need in response to the damage done by the California fires. She has been in contact with Pastor Michael Meyer, LCMS Disaster Response Coordinator, and with the Disaster Response Coordinators in the California Nevada Hawaii District. If you wish to donate for the needs, please make your check payable to Iowa District West with "Disaster" in the memo and send to Iowa District West, 409 Kenyon Road, Suite B, Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501. If you have any questions contact Ellie at ellie@iowadistrictwest.org.

Hinge Events, held in partnership with Transforming Churches Network, are designed to assist congregations and individuals build bridges and relationships with those in their community. Two events are scheduled in the District: January 12 at Good Shepherd, Fort Dodge; and January 13 at First English, Spencer. Go to www.iowamissions.org to register.



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For more information on Iowa District West activities, view *The Messenger* at www.idwlcms.org/publications.php

Education, Youth, and Family Life

Rhonda Mohr, Assistant to the President

rhonda@iowadistrictwest.org

515-576-7666 office

515-573-0010 cell

Ten Tips for Building a Successful Volunteer Team



1. Pray before enlisting team members, and then pray for team members regularly.
2. Be interested in them personally, not just the job they can perform. It's all about relationships.
3. When a team member responds to an idea or responsibility negatively, don't assume the person's negative reaction is about you. Do not let negativity derail you, your team meetings, or your team.
4. Don't assume. Ask questions and be genuinely interested in the responses. Humble yourself. Serve your team and respond to their needs.
6. Ask their advice. Accept that you are not always right nor are your ideas always the best.
7. Praise publicly and correct privately. Praise often and correct sparingly.
8. Offer to help get the job done but overcome the temptation to take over.
9. State expectations clearly and seek needed clarification.
10. Remember—God made them in His image ... not yours.

(Taken from Outreach Magazine)



DATES TO REMEMBER IN 2019

Iowa District West Early Childhood Conference

August 2, 2019

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Urbandale

Lutheran Educators Association Convocation

“Opening Eyes, Minds, & Hearts

October 10-12, 2019 – St. Louis, Missouri

Junior Youth Gathering

“Come to the Table”

October 19-20 – Sheraton, West Des Moines

Senior Youth Gathering

“Foundations Prepared”

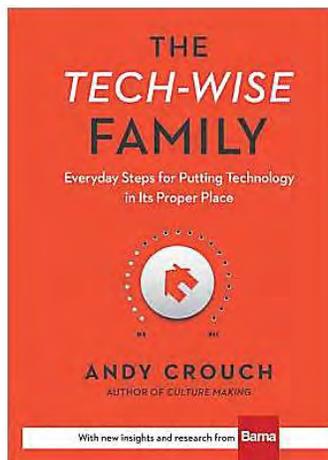
November 15-17 – Embassy Suites, Des Moines

Family Life Resources

Written by Dick Hardel and Deb Stehlin, these faith-sharing cards are designed for adults to have face-to-face and faith-to-faith time with children ages 3-11. There are 24 share cards in each of four areas: Memories, Growing Together, Actions & Feelings, and Wondering. This is a great baptismal gift to a family and an excellent resource for grandparents. Order at www.faithwellmt.com



Making conscientious choices about technology in our families is more than just using internet filters and determining screen time limits for our children. It's about developing wisdom, character, and courage in the way we use digital media rather than accepting technology's promises of ease, instant gratification, and the world's knowledge at our fingertips. And it's definitely not just about the kids.



Drawing on in-depth original research from the Barna Group, *The Tech-Wise Family* from author Andy Crouch shows readers that the choices we make about technology have consequences we may never have considered. He takes readers beyond the typical questions of what, where, and when and instead challenges them to answer provocative questions like:

Who do we want to be as a family?

How does our use of a particular technology move us closer or farther away from that goal? Anyone who has felt their family relationships suffer or their time slip away amid technology's distractions will find in this book a path forward to reclaiming their real life in a world of devices.

(This book can be found on Amazon.)

Family

BUSINESS MANAGER NEWS***Iowa District West Congregations' Mission Receipts***

For the Month Ending November 2018	
Anticipated Amount	\$125,000
Actual Receipts	\$127,178
Fiscal Year-to-Date Receipts	
Anticipated Amount	\$1,250,000
Actual Receipts	\$1,187,721
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$(62,279)
Use of Mission Receipts	
Remitted to Synod (50%)	\$625,000
Balance for District programs/operations	\$562,721
Total Receipts	\$1,187,721
Mission Receipts Compared With Last Year	
Month ending November 2018	\$1,187,721
Month ending November 2017	\$1,233,754
Over (under) last year	\$(46,033)

Stewardship Corner - Stewardship Advisors - www.stewardshipadvisors.org – 888.783.2790

LIKE THE SHEPHERDS, WE KNEEL IN HUMBLE ADORATION OF THE NEW-BORN KING AND THEN GO TO TELL THE GOOD NEWS.

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them” (Luke 2:20).



THROUGHOUT THIS NEW YEAR, MAY WE NO LONGER CONFORM TO THE PATTERN OF THE WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MINDS.

“ . . .to be renewed in the spirit of your minds” (Ephesians 4:23).



Stewardship Spark / Monthly Mission Moment

What is Iowa District West? Iowa District West is the Synod in this place. IDW is one of 35 districts in the LCMS. The District consists of 168 congregations in the western half of Iowa which includes 17 circuits, 58,957 baptized members, and 47,100 communicant members. It includes 194 pastors and 101 professional church workers. We all walk together to achieve the same mission. Your dedicated District staff encourages and assists to provide numerous services and resources that would not be accomplished if we were not in a partnership. Because of your monthly District and Synod support, we are able to serve in all the areas of mission/outreach, disaster relief, human care, education (40 early childhood/preschools, 8 elementary schools, family life), youth, stewardship/advancement, ecclesiastical administration, and leadership development. With your congregation's mission and ministry support, we will continue to work together to carry us forward for which we have been sent. We are on a mission to support you and Christ's mission!

IRS Increases 2019 Business Mileage Rate



Beginning January 1, 2019, the standard mileage rate used to reimburse workers' business miles under an accountable reimbursement arrangement will INCREASE 3 ½ cents to **58 cents per mile**. The accountable reimbursement is the most favorable because the congregation does not have to report the reimbursement as compensation paid to the employee on Form W-2. The employee should document the amount, time and place, business purpose, and business relationship. Employees should substantiate miles at least every 60 days. The standard medical and moving mileage rate will also INCREASE 2 cents to 20 cents per mile. The rate used for charitable deduction purposes, set by statute rather than IRS, remains unchanged at 14 cents per mile.

Churches may choose to reimburse a lower rate without any tax consequences. If the church chooses to reimburse at a rate higher than the IRS approved rates, the church must add the excess amount to the employee's taxable income. To read the complete IRS announcement, go online to www.irs.gov and search "2019 Mileage Rates" or the direct link is www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2019.

2019 Receipt Vouchers & Synod Convention Assessment

New vouchers for District mission and ministry support will be mailed in mid-January for remittances beginning February 1, 2019. Receipts for non-budgetary agencies (for example, Armed Forces, Camp Okoboji, Lutheran Family Service, Lutherans For Life) should be sent directly to the organization.

Included in the mid-January treasurer receipt voucher mailing will be the Synod Convention assessment. The official communicant count will be retrieved from The Lutheran Annual 2019 (2017 statistics). If no number was reported, District will estimate the communicant number. The Synod receives this information from the Congregation Statistics Report which is mailed annually in early January and is due February 28, 2019. It is important to report this information accurately and promptly so District has correct numbers for convention assessments and other statistical reporting. For more information on the national 67th Regular Convention go to www.lcms.org/convention.



Fiscal Year-End District Remittances

Final receipts for 2018 will be received and credited to congregations through January 25, 2019. The District's fiscal period ends January 31, 2019. We ask that all receipts be mailed before the deadline to ensure they will be credited to the correct fiscal period.

2019 Congregation Commitments

The 2019 Congregation Mission and Ministry Commitment forms have been sent to all 168 congregations. If your church has not yet completed the form or pledge, please do so by January 15. Your intention of support assists us in planning our budget. If you need another copy, print a copy online at www.idwlcms.org (under Ministry Areas click on Stewardship, Annual Mailing, and Commitment Form) or contact Sue@IowaDistrictWest.org.

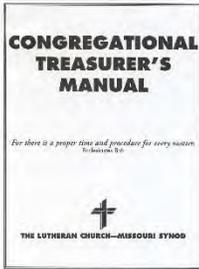


Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer Workshop



Plan now to attend the winter workshop on **Saturday, January 19, 2019** at Zion Lutheran Church, Humboldt from 9 am to 3 pm. Pastors and any individuals within the church having financial responsibilities should attend (especially if you have never been to a workshop before). The guest speaker will be Mr. Bob Joy, CPA. He has a wealth of knowledge and has nearly 30 years of financial experience. Bob owns his own accounting company specializing in clergy taxes and is the financial manager for a large church. Concordia Plan Services representative, Brad Peterson will share an overview of the Plans in the afternoon.

Thanks to LCEF for providing lunch. Program expenses are paid by the Brotherhood Mutual ministry partnership agreement funds. Any questions, contact Roger Curtis at the District office (515.576.7666 or Roger@IowaDistrictWest.org). The brochure is available online; to register go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/treasurer_wrkshp.



Congregational Treasurer's Manual

Congregational Treasurer's Manuals have been delivered to all Circuits. If treasurers have not received your manual, check with your pastor or Circuit Visitor. This year the entire manual (both Volumes 1 & 2) were printed. Thanks to LCEF for covering the costs of the manual. For quick reference, the document is on the LCMS website at: www.lcms.org/ctm. This manual is an extremely helpful tool for staff, treasurers, and church councils to better understand the many aspects of the congregation's business needs.

IRS Tax Help

Need tax assistance on the reporting requirements for forms 1099, 1096 as well as Forms W-2 and W-3? You may send your request for assistance to the email address mccirp@irs.gov or call 866.455.7438 to speak to a Customer Service Representative who can assist you with questions concerning information and wage reporting. To access IRS forms and publications, visit the website at www.irs.gov. To order forms and publications through the toll-free forms line, call 800.829.3676 between 7 am and 7 pm; allow 7-10 days for delivery.

Year-end Tax Forms – Independent Contractors

Now is a good time to make sure you have all the necessary W-9 forms from your payees. A W-9 form should be sent to all payees with whom you may have to issue a Form 1099 Misc for the calendar year. The payee then completes the W-9, showing you their name, address, taxpayer I.D. number, and their business structure, a corporation, partnership, sole proprietor, etc. They should then return the W-9 form to you. This is the information you use to prepare the Form 1099 Misc at the end of the year.

Nearly Every Ministry Must File Form 1099s. Generally, there are three requirements for issuing a year-end 1099 tax form. You must issue a Form 1099 Misc to:

- 1) Service providers (includes medical service providers, accountants, attorneys, snow removal, repair businesses)
- 2) Anyone to whom you have paid \$600 or more in a calendar year
- 3) Individual/Sole proprietor (anyone not incorporated)

In summary, a Form 1099 Misc needs to be sent to anyone who received \$600 or more in a calendar year. These forms must be provided to the payee by January 31 (note the IRS has moved up the filing date for Forms 1099-MISC reporting non-employee compensation in box 7). The reporting date to the IRS will now be the same as the due date for the forms to be issued to recipients, January 31.

Have you updated your job description lately?

The start of a new year is a good time to review job descriptions. Not only is it necessary in filling church positions, but it is helpful in carrying out annual performance appraisals. Just like the emergency flashlight needs a periodic battery check, job descriptions should also be kept up-to-date. It's smart to update job descriptions taking into account new staff responsibilities, changes in programs or technology, etc. Synod's website (www.lcms.org/churchoffice) has suggested position descriptions for a variety of staff and officer positions (each category has several descriptions).

Social Security Number Verification Service (SSNVS)

Sometimes the social security number or employer identification number is hard to read on the W-9 or W-4 tax forms. To verify the accuracy of the numbers, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/bsowelcome.htm and register to set up an account. This Business Services Online (BSO) is available at no cost to all employers to verify current or former employees for wage reporting purposes. Why should you verify the names and SSNs online? The BSO reports there are several good reasons:

- Correct names and SSNs on W-2 wage reports are the keys to the successful processing of your annual wage report submission.
- Receive immediate results online. It's faster and easier to use than submitting a paper request or using Social Security's telephone verification option.
- Results in more accurate wage reports.
- Saves processing costs and reduces the number of W-2c forms.
- Allows Social Security to give the proper credit to your employee's earnings record, which will be important information in determining their Social Security benefits in the future.

Substantiation of Contributions

A donor cannot claim a tax deduction for any single contribution of \$250 or more unless the donor obtains a written acknowledgement. Churches should print contribution statements shortly after the first of the year. If you receive non-cash contributions, the value of the item/property donated should not be stated in the acknowledgement, only a description. For complete details, consult the Congregational Treasurer's Manual, chapter 10, section 10.500.

Concordia Plan Services Tax Time Tips

The 2018 W-2 forms issued to your workers may require Plans information. The following tax tips apply:

1. The "Pension Plan" box needs to be checked for those workers enrolled in the Concordia Retirement Plan.
2. The instructions with the "2018 Cost of Group-Term Life Insurance" explain how to report the Taxable Income Amount on a worker's W-2. Remember to add the FICA amount to the lay worker's paycheck before year-end (if you haven't already). Refer to the Congregational Treasurer's Manual, Chapter 4, section 4.600 regarding Group-Term Life Insurance.
3. Until further notice, we currently are not required to record the cost of health care on the employee's W-2.
4. Remember to include the Vitality Wellness redeemed reward dollars on the W-2 since the noncash wage is subject to FICA/SECA plus state and federal taxes. Concordia Plan Services has mailed the reward report to all employers.
5. Remember to make sure salaries are reported on CPS benefits portal by December 31, 2018.

Is your church incorporated? Complete the Iowa Biennial Report Early in 2019

"Why Incorporation?" The LCMS Congregational Treasurer's Manual, Chapter 13, states: "Incorporation is a method by which individuals unite under a common purpose and thereby acquire certain advantages and protections. Every congregation of the Synod should be incorporated. The value of corporate status lies in the protection from legal liability it affords for the individuals who belong to the organization. Without this status, the members are individually responsible for acts of the organization that might cause injury to someone or for defaults by the organization such as on loans."

Is your church still incorporated or has the status expired? A simple way to verify is to search for your congregation at the Iowa Secretary of State website at www.sos.iowa.gov: click on "Search Databases" and "Business Entities" and enter your business (church) name. It should be active and list the current registered agent. A registered agent can be any staff, church leader, or attorney.

To keep your incorporation status active, you must complete a simple form from the Secretary of State office every other year. This biennial report will be sent to the church or registered agent soon after the first of the year and is due March 31, 2019. This form can be completed online in minutes. The Iowa Secretary of State office has more information about this topic under the Nonprofits heading. Their office can also be contacted Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at 515-281-5204 or email sos@sos.iowa.gov.

Completing W-2 Forms

A Form W-2 must be issued to any employee who received compensation from your church in 2018. The forms must be completed by January 31, 2019. Copies of all W-2 forms (copy A) along with the W-3 transmittal (summary) form must be submitted by January 31, 2019 to the Social Security Administration (SSA). It is a good idea to distribute W-2 forms early in January so employees have time to verify the information before sending the forms to the SSA. Some tips to consider:

- Be sure to add cents to all amounts (amounts are without a dollar sign and commas).
- Include in box 1 all wages paid to the employee during the year including: salary, taxable fringe benefits (Concordia Plans group term life insurance), Christmas gifts, and any other income or business expense reimbursements paid under a “non-accountable plan.” Taxable income should not include any housing allowance dollars, the value of the parsonage or any dollars sheltered from income tax by a congregational housing allowance resolution.
- Include in box 14 optional information such as housing allowance, although not required by the IRS.
- To reduce discrepancies, “proof” the amounts reported on W-2, W-3, and 941 forms. Be sure the amounts on Form W-3 are the total amounts on W-2 forms. Reconcile W-3 with your four quarterly 941 forms by comparing amounts reported for income tax withholding (box 2), Social Security and Medicare wages (boxes 3, 5, 7), Social Security and Medicare taxes (boxes 4 and 6). The IRS has added code DD to box 12 to report the cost of employer-sponsored health coverage. This is for your information only and currently is NOT mandatory and NOT taxable.

Churches must submit to the IRS Copy A of each 2018 1099-Misc form issued to self-employed people along with a 1096 transmittal form by January 31, 2019 (same date for paper or electronic filing). To review year-end tasks (if using QuickBooks) go to <https://community.intuit.com/browse/quickbooks-desktop-payroll-DIY-yearend>.

To learn more, consult the Congregational Treasurer’s Manual, chapter 7, section 7.350 and attend the Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer Workshop on Saturday, January 19 in Humboldt for help with completing forms.

Gifts to Church Workers

Monetary Christmas gifts to church workers from the congregation in most cases represent taxable income and not a tax-free gift. Be sure to report correctly on the recipients W-2 or 1099 the amount of these gifts. Also important to note – donations made by members for these gifts are not included as tax-deductible contributions recorded by the church office.

When a church collects a love offering and informs the congregation that their contributions will be receipted by the church, this requires the individual offerings to be treated as a single distribution by the church. This triggers the rule requiring distributions by employers to their employees to be treated as taxable compensation.

The exception is when members give their pastor or church staff a personal gift for special occasions or Christmas. These personal gifts may be treated as nontaxable gifts by the employee because they were not distributed by the employing church (more info under www.lcms.org/churchoffice Taxes & Ministers, page 12).

Selection of an Insurance Company

The start of a new year might be a good time to review your insurance policy. The selection of an insurance company, and specific coverages, should be an intentional process. Here are some suggestions that may help...

- Appoint an insurance committee that includes individuals who are capable of evaluating your insurance needs (such as an attorney, business professional, or insurance agent). The committee makes its recommendations to the church leadership for a final decision.
- Use an insurance company that is dedicated to the church market. These companies have acquired specialized knowledge of church risks, and can be of invaluable assistance in risk management, responding to claims, and in selecting appropriate coverages.
- Do not base decisions solely on price. Be wary of companies that do not specialize in the church market that offer lower premiums to attract business.
- Check out the A.M. Best Company ratings for insurers. It is recommended that insurance coverage is placed with a carrier that has an A.M. Best rating between A++ and A-. It also is a good idea to evaluate a company’s rating trend history over a period of several years.

The Congregational Treasurer’s Manual (www.lcms.org/ctm) has a complete chapter regarding insurance issues. The District’s group insurance partnership company, Brotherhood Mutual (www.brotherhoodmutual.com) also has a plethora of resources online.





Concordia Plan Services

Learn about what's happening in 2019

CPS wants ministries and members to be able to focus on what matters most to them – ministry, family, wellbeing. The benefits, programs and tools provided by CPS through your organizations are designed to do just that!

CPS also wants to help pastors, treasurers and those in benefits administrator roles understand their responsibilities as they relate to the Concordia Plans to keep the benefits running smoothly for themselves and those serving the ministry.

Come join your CPS representative, Brad Peterson, as he:

- Reviews CPS benefits and services,
- Discusses key administrative responsibilities for the year,
- Shares insights we've learned, and
- Covers what's new for 2019.

Learn more:
ConcordiaPlans.org

12042-1218

Please Join Us

Zion Lutheran Church
 1005 11th Ave N,
 Humboldt, IA 50548

Saturday, January 19, 2019
 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Questions?

Contact Roger Curtis at
515-576-7666, ext. 313 or
Roger@IowaDistrictWest.org



Carole White MBA

Iowa East & West
Districts Vice President
515-240-2229
Carole.White@lcef.org

LCEF National Office
10733 Sunset Office Drive
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63127

800-843-5233 | lcef.org



110 campers attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church 'Camp Creation II' in June 2018 at the Iowa School For the Deaf. The camp was funded in part by a \$1,000 LCEF Iowa District West grant.

LCEF Grant Helps Students Experience 'Camp Creation'

"It was an honor to receive a \$1,000 grant from Lutheran Church Extension Fund Iowa District West to support the Gospel outreach in Council Bluffs through our annual community-based 'Camp Creation,'" said Rev. Nathan Sherrill, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

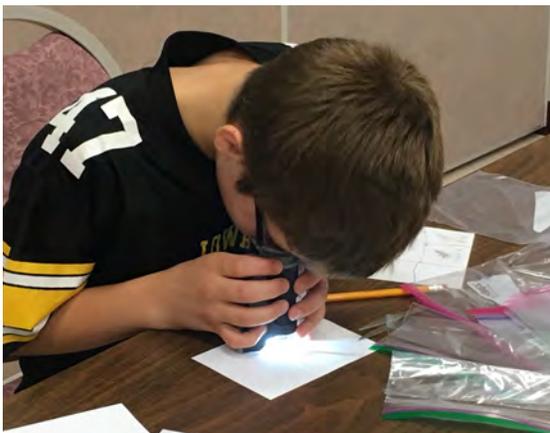
A Christian Worldview

Camp Creation II is a 3rd-8th grade summer camp hosted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church in cooperation with Iowa School for the Deaf and several other local and regional partners. CC II seeks to offer a thorough STEM educational experience conducted from a Christian worldview. Unique in this community, Camp Creation itself has been held for 10 years and continues to grow. This year, more than 110 campers took advantage of this summer series held over the course of two weeks (CC I and CC II) in June 2018.

According to Sherrill, a goal of Camp Creation is to show students and their families that science and Christianity go together. This can be contrary to the present opinion of our secular culture. Camp began with devotions and reflections on God's Word which propelled students into active investigation and study of God's created order and world. The church collaborated with two local science teachers and a math teacher from the public school. These teachers, who are passionate about their vocations and their faith, brought a professionalism to the task of discovery that students picked up on.

Discovery Through Science

Areas of emphasis this year included physical science, life science and math related to the sciences discussed. Students made roller coasters, studied a crime scene, tested materials, with microscopes, designed building





structures inside and out and played games that mimicked the activities of nocturnal animals. Each day had a challenge event that students participated in together that in some way applied their classroom learning.

In all, Camp Creation is about Jesus and His creation of the world and universe and His redemption of us through the cross. Studying what God has made, allows us to know more about Him, His mind and His heart for sinners. “A great compliment to Camp Creation, all the 7th graders attending this year said they wanted to return as 8th graders,” said Sherrill. “While it is not in the end about what is fun, it is important to offer the children education and the environment that applies to them and that they feel comfortable in.”

2019 LCEF Grant Application Deadline

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund is a nonprofit ministry of the Church; therefore, fiscal year end operating results are put right back into mission and ministry.

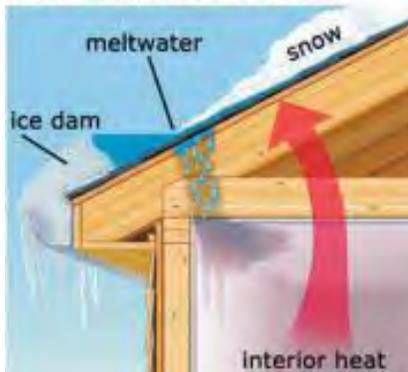
The application deadline for 2019 LCEF district outreach grants is January 31, 2019; learn more and apply at lcefcentral.org/grants. 2019 LCEF district grant recipients will be announced in the newsfeed at lcefcentral.org. LCEF is blessed by strong investors and faithful borrowers. Become a partner in ministry, learn more at lcef.org.

Preventing Ice Dams and Icicles

Ice dams are ridges of ice and icicles caused by melt water from further up the roof re-freezing lower on the roof. The “dam” created by the ridge of ice along the eaves can trap further melt water and result in significant leakage under and through the roofing, the roof structure, or the ceiling and walls below. Large icicles along the eaves can become a danger to people below if they fall.

The fundamental cause of ice dams is a result of part of the roof becomes warm enough to melt snow that is lying on the roof, the snow will melt and water will run down a sloped roof. If the water encounters a cold surface, the water turns to ice. Ice dams result from a difference in temperature on the roof surface where the upper part of the roof is warmer than the lower.

Ice Dam at Work



Common Causes

- Warm air entering space below roof membrane, causing warming and melting of snow. Air leakage through ceiling plane increases the temperature of an attic space or the underside of the roof membrane.
- Poor or insufficient insulation.
- Heat sources in attic.
- Poor ventilation.

Solutions

Air leakage—attic hatch, space conditioning ducts, plumbing stacks and penetrations, chimneys, electrical penetrations, light fixtures, recessed lights and perimeter walls are potential leak sources.

- Sealant/caulking can be used to fill small openings and gaps.
- Expanding polyurethane or acrylic foam should be used around openings no more than one inch in size.
- For large openings, drywall with taped joints should be used.

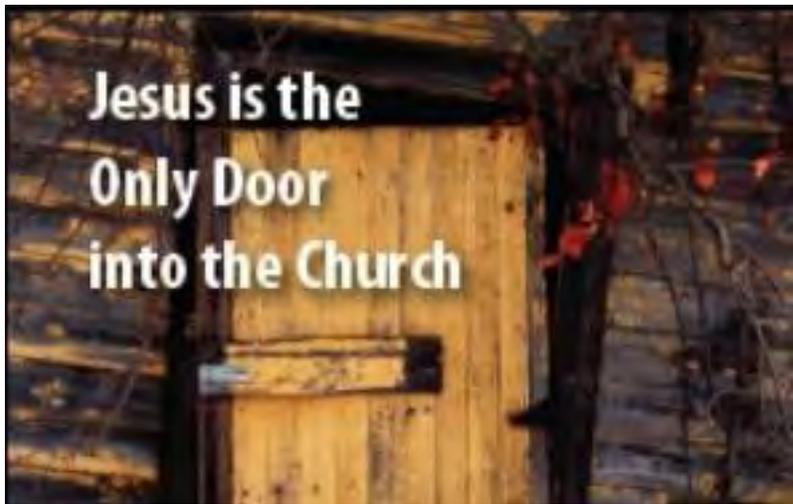
Insulation—the more insulation provided on the interior, the more unlikely enough snow will collect to cause melting. Depth of insulation depends on the climate, however it is recommended a minimum of R30 be provided below ventilated attic roof membranes, R35 below ventilated cathedral ceilings, and R40 below unventilated cathedral ceilings. These recommendations should be increased for very cold climates. (DOE Zone 6 or higher).

Heat sources in attic—air leakage from ducts placed in the attic can also act as a significant heat and moisture source, and cause both condensation and snow melting. If sources are already there, adding a significant amount of insulation and an airtight blanket around them will reduce the source of heat being introduced into the attic.

Ventilation—keeping the underside of the roof sheathing close to the exterior temperature is the best solution. This is achieved with good ventilation and good insulation acting together.

Waterproofing membrane—a self-sealing waterproofing membrane should be installed on the roof high enough to resist six to eight inches of water above the edge of the wall insulation.

LCEF’s Architectural Advisory Committee provides site and facility analyses and can assist with energy efficient projects. Visit lcef.org or contact your local [LCEF district vice president](#).



BUILDING BRIDGES TO YOUR COMMUNITY?

How can we connect with our community? A great place to start to be equipped is by attending a “Hinge Event.”

What is a “Hinge Event”? Hinge Events are gatherings of passionate people who are looking to become deliberate in their actions for reaching people with the love of Jesus Christ. Participants will learn how to:

- Open new doors to their community
- Discover practical ways to strengthen outreach to the local mission field of their community
- Connect with others on the same journey

There is no cost for IDW congregations to attend this event! Gather your team and prepare to begin the transformation journey at one of these upcoming Hinge

Saturday, Jan. 12 - Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fort Dodge 9am-3pm
Sunday, Jan. 13 - First English Lutheran Church, Spencer 1-5pm

Events:

To register go to www.iowamissions.org or contact Jill Davis at the District office (515-576-7666/ jill@iowadistrictwest.org).

More Than Giving: A Doxology Insight Conference

in Partnership with LCMS Stewardship Ministry

What is the conference about? Presenters will provide a sound biblical and theological foundation while offering practical solutions for churches large and small. This conference will equip you to develop healthy stewardship lifestyles among your member households and in your congregation as a whole.

Who should attend? Pastors, church administrators, Stewardship Board members, church leaders and interested laity. For best results, we encourage the pastor plus 2-4 members to attend!

Presenters: Rev. Heath Curtis, Coordinator for LCMS Stewardship, and Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador, Assistant Coordinator, are also parish pastors who love to preach the Good News of God's generosity toward us in Christ.



Where? [Camp Okoboji](#)

When? August 16-17, 2019

Cost? TBD, but will include program, materials, breaks and meals.

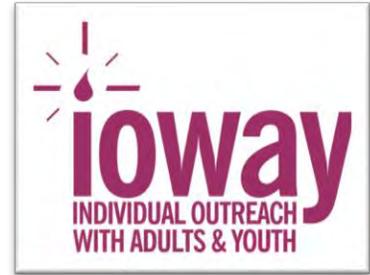
Schedule: Event check-in begins at 12 p.m. and the conference will start at 1 p.m. on Friday, August 16. The conference ends at 12 p.m. on August 17.



Be watching for more information!

Behind the Scenes

Anticipation! As I write this, I am excited that in 2 weeks I will be heading to Pasadena with a team of 28 to begin our adventure of decorating the only Christian float in the famous Rose Parade. As I deal with the numerous details of planning, even after doing this for 15 years, it is exciting to offer this mission opportunity to the team.



What goes into planning a Pasadena mission trip? What will the team be doing for a week in Pasadena? What are some of the “behind the scenes” events that make the IOWAY winter trip to Pasadena to decorate the Lutheran Hour and other floats a reality? Along with decorating floats, we spend a day on Skid Row. Skid Row is an area on the edge of downtown Los Angeles, CA where 8,000 homeless people live. This number is growing each year.



To make the Skid Row project a success, the “behind the scenes” events begin when many individuals and churches faithfully collect items for the homeless. They deliver the items to the district office or to my home. One room in our basement is a storehouse of health kits, underwear, hats, Bibles, coloring books, bracelets, quilts, bandages and many other items. Pictured is a bucket load of items on my husband’s tractor. The items made the trip from the basement to our van and then to the training meeting where they were sorted and packed into 28 suitcases.

The sorting and packing is what I call “organized chaos.” Pictured is part of this “organized chaos” at the training meeting in Jefferson. Speaking of training meetings, this year, I had two meetings and a conference call due to a snowstorm and the distance for people to travel.



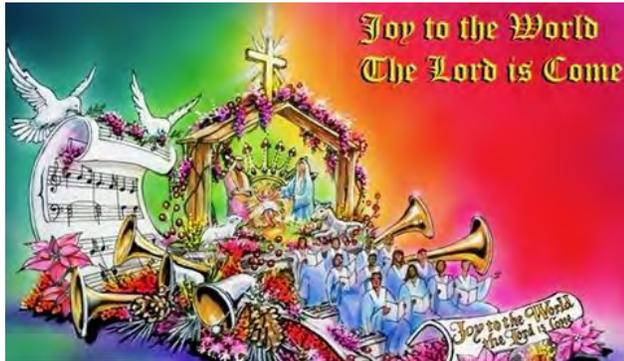
During the year, there are many things that need “behind the scenes” attention. Airline tickets for the Pasadena trip are high on the list. Unfortunately, the airline seats usually need to be reserved in February, before most people even decide to be part of the trip.

Then, there is the ground transportation. For those who have been part of this fabulous experience in the past, you no doubt remember all the rental cars and vans. Each vehicle had a driver, co-pilot, maps and a two-way. It was quite an adventure to be in the front vehicle and lead nine vehicles with the two-ways on the often 7 lanes of traffic. God is awesome and provided protection from any accidents! Had a few scary moments, like the time I needed to move a lane over for an exit. I understood from my passengers “Go! Go! Go!” so I did but they later said they were saying “No! No! No!” God is faithful. I am so thankful.

Three years ago, my husband suggested looking into getting a shuttle instead of renting all the vehicles. That has been a great way to travel. However, it does involve more “behind the scenes” planning. To make it work, I need to know 3 months in advance where we need to be, how long we will be there, where we will eat, where we will go to church along with addresses for each place.

Another factor in the planning is finding a hotel that is nice but not crazy expensive. That is a not-so-fun adventure. Two years ago, the float decorating company moved the operation to a new location 10 miles east of Pasadena. That made it necessary to change hotels and change routes to and from our work location.

There is so much more “behind the scenes” involved with this trip that space will not allow to be said. I am sure God will make it special for everyone who participates. “Behind the scenes” is



essential for the trip to work so it must continue. Pictured is the artist’s version of the 2019 float. The only Christian float in the parade will proclaim the love of Jesus to literally millions who see it as it goes down Colorado Boulevard and the millions who will see it televised nationally and internationally. Thanks to everyone who works “behind the scenes” to make the trip a once in a lifetime experience.

Join IOWAY on Facebook! “Like” our page and stay updated on IOWAY.

<https://www.facebook.com/iowaymissions>

Ellie Menz – IOWAY Coordinator

515-370-1159

ellie@iowadistrictwest.org

www.idwlcms.org

807 W. South Street, Jefferson IA 50129

MISSION CENTRAL EVENTS PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Mark and Megan Mantey

Uganda East Africa

Saturday, February 9, 2019

1 PM



Rev. David & Shelee Warner

Spain

Saturday, February 9, 2019

1:30 PM

Dr. Martin and Marie Dicke

Papua New Guinea

Saturday, June 1, 2019

1 PM



Rev. Charles and Connie Cortright

St. Petersburg, Russia

Saturday, June 22, 2019

1 PM



Mission Central-LCMS World Mission

40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034
Phone: 712-882-1029

Gary Thies - gary.thies@lcms.org
Rev. Brent Smith - brent.smith@lcms.org
www.missioncentral.us



!AMIGOS EN CRISTO!
 News from ***La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo***: Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
Vacancy Pastor Daniel Vogel, Denison, Iowa

Iowa District
West, LCMS

JANUARY
2019



FAREWELL TO THE GRILLS

Pastor Willie Grills led his farewell service at Amigos en Cristo on November 25. He was installed on December 9 at St. Paul Lutheran in Mattoon, Illinois. We thank him for his ministry to our Hispanic congregations in Denison and Storm Lake. We pray for him and his wife, Angelica and their two boys, Gus and Roland, as they adjust to a new life in Mattoon.



SERVING AMIGOS EN CRISTO AND GRACE IN STORM LAKE

With Pastor Grill's departure, I will be serving the Hispanic vacancies in both the Denison and Storm Lake churches. We pray the Lord will guide our ministries in faithful growth and service during this time of change. With a new year ahead, we will be meeting to discuss the future that God may have for our special ministries. We are so grateful for the support we have received, both from our District office in Fort Dodge as well as from so many churches that are praying for our outreach into area Hispanic communities.

In 2019 we will be celebrating 20 years since our District called our first Hispanic missionary, Rev. Paul Brink who was serving in Barquisimeto, Venezuela as a missionary. By God's grace we now have four Hispanic ministries located in Denison, Storm Lake, Sioux City, and Des Moines. Please continue to pray for our ministry outreach and feel free to call me if I can help to tell the story of God's work among Hispanic immigrants.

ADVENT POSADA

Can we worship at your house? How many can you fit in your living room? Each year our Hispanic churches in Denison and Storm Lake continue the tradition of 'Posadas,' home Advent devotions and fellowship in preparation for Christmas. The tradition comes from the Christmas story of Jose and Mary pleading for a place to stay in Bethlehem. Each week during the Advent season, we meet in different members homes to sing and the study the Good News of the Christmas story. It is a popular evening in which we also meet friends and neighbors of our members. And of course there is plenty of good food and fellowship. At right is a photo of our first Posada in Denison at the home of Domingo and Marbella Mendoza.



PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT our church in 2019. For our mission friends, financial support checks can be sent to: Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church, 1004 1st Avenue South, Denison, Iowa, 51442. We thank you and your church for your mission hearts!



THE TRADITION CONTINUES

For many years our Hispanic churches in Storm Lake, Denison and Sioux City have held a joint Thanksgiving worship service and dinner in Odebolt, midway between the towns. The picture at right is the group gathered this past November. Pastors Grills and Witte led the service and despite some confusion about time and place that limited the Storm Lake group it was a blessed event with worship, food, and fellowship. Our special thanks to Trinity, Odebolt.



CAPS OF LOVE in Denison and Storm Lake

The ladies sewing circle at Zion, Manning treated our ministry with the blessing of embroidered winter caps (gorras). At left is the group from Denison that gathered for a picture of thanksgiving. We will be warmed this winter in body and soul!

THANKS FOR YOUR CHOICE DOLLARS FROM THRIVENT AND ALL THE SUPPORT IN 2018: We continue to be blessed by Choice dollars and other donations generously given to our church this past year. If you have any questions on how you can support our Hispanic ministry with Choice dollars please contact your local Thrivent Financial representative or call Thrivent at 800-847-4836. We thank all who have shared their love with us in the past year! God bless you all!

TO CONTACT ME:
Rev. Daniel Vogel
 32678 Aspen Ave.
 Manning, Iowa 51455
 Home: 712-653-2354
Cell: 712-309-1292
 Email:
daniel.vogel@ziondenison.org



PLEASE PRAY: + For Amigos en Cristo and Grace Hispanic in Storm Lake as together we pray God's will during the pastoral vacancy, for a permanent pastor and the ongoing ministry to the Hispanic communities in Denison and Storm Lake. + For families in both Denison & Storm Lake that they will remain faithful during this transition period. + For the blessings that God has provided this past year and for those that He will grant in the New Year of 2019 for all of our District Hispanic ministries. + *In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and Storm Lake and in our other two missions in Sioux City and Des Moines.*

HISPANIC OUTREACH IN SIOUXLAND

Rev. Henry and Ruthie Witte
 1013 South Newton Street
 Sioux City, IA 51106
 712-202-4751
 handrwitte@gmail.com



January 2019

***Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation,
 the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17***

People celebrate a new year hoping for a new beginning and a better life. People move to other areas or immigrate to other nations in hope that the new place will give them a better life. People change jobs or professions hope for a better life. People may hope that these kinds of changes will improve their behavior or relationships. Yet, we have experienced that a change in time or place or activity do not necessarily make us better people. A more profound change needs to take place.

Jesus offers a big change, a new life. He changes us from the inside out. He forgives our past mistakes and frees us from the weight of guilt and shame. He gives us His Holy Spirit to change our hearts and minds and thus give us a new life. This life with Jesus is the change that helps us to live in harmony with others, to serve others, and to be at peace with ourselves. Jesus gives us that true new beginning of a life with Him in His love and power. He offers this change to all people and uses us to proclaim it. May He help us to share it with the immigrants who seek a change but do not know the real change that He has to offer.

We ended our English classes December 17 with a Christmas potluck dinner, songs, crafts, games, and the story of our Savior's birth. We plan to begin classes again the third week of January. We invited the children of our English students and the children of our members to a birthday party for Jesus. We acted out the story of the first Christmas with a posada (Mary and Joseph going door to door seeking a place to stay). We had a good celebration with songs, crafts, and a birthday cake.

The Sunday before Thanksgiving we celebrated a joint service with the members of our Hispanic congregations. We enjoyed a meal and fellowship afterwards.

One of our English teachers received a donation from the company where she works to buy books for the children of our English students. The children were very happy and thankful for this special gift.

During October and November several members of the Hispanic Outreach Committee were able to visit several congregations in our area explaining the goals and needs of this ministry and inviting the congregations to share in this outreach. We plan to have a meeting with representatives of these congregations to discuss this work together and to jointly reach out to the Hispanics in our respective areas.

Please pray for our sharing of the life-changing Gospel.

Please pray that we have the resource for another worker in this outreach.

Please pray that all immigrants may have that new life in Christ.



Joint Hispanic service at Trinity, Odebolt, Iowa November 18, 2018



Celebrating Jesus' Birth - December 2018

Children enjoying their new books.



“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.’ ... And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11a).

When You Wish Upon a Star!

Of course, you know where our title for this devotion comes from: *Pinocchio*. It’s the title of a song made famous – by all things – a cricket. Now you have to give Walt Disney a lot of credit. He was able to make a cricket a very loveable and famous creature.

But did you know that it was Carlo Collodi who wrote the original story in his children’s book *The Adventures of Pinocchio*? He wrote the story in 1881 as a weekly magazine series. However, his story was so popular and the demand was so great that Collodi compiled it and completed it as a single book in 1883. In the original telling of the story, the cricket was a very minor unnamed character.

Now I’m going to venture a guess and say that you had absolutely no idea about any of that. I’m also going to say that you might be surprised to know the original story was that popular because you’d never heard about it before now. And I’m going to even guess that maybe some of you might have been singing the now famous Jiminy Cricket song, “When You Wish Upon a Star,” with a reminiscent grin on your face.

This month, as Christians, we observe and celebrate a very important festival called Epiphany. And much like the aforementioned Pinocchio story, the original telling of the Magi traveling from the East by following a star to lead them to the “King of the Jews” has been altered and changed a bit. The Magi or wise men saw a star and wished for a chance to worship their long-awaited Savior.

What do I mean? Well, we read the account of the Wise Men in St. Matthew’s Gospel. It is the original writing and telling of the story of how they saw and followed a star and wished to see the Christ-child who was born. However, in the original version of this marvelous true story, Matthew writes that they arrived at the place and went into the house and saw Jesus with Mary.

A house! Not at the manger. A Child! No longer an infant. All of our nativity sets that are so beautiful have Mary and Joseph, Jesus, shepherds, and three Wise Men. However, we know that the Magi don’t appear until quite a while afterwards. But at the birth of the Savior of the world, even wise men traveled to see this thing that caused the angels of heaven to praise God!

Did you know that artists from the Renaissance Era depicted the Magi worshiping Jesus at a house? So what happened? Well, much like Jiminy Cricket, a transformation takes place. Christians are so excited with the news of a Savior that was born for Jew and Gentile that they combine the stories. In time a popular joining of two separate stories become one.

However, the truth is quite plain:

*When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you*

That’s the sentiment of the now popular Disney version of the story of Pinocchio. And it certainly echoes the desire of you and me and all humanity today. We look at the star that our Almighty God provided to lead wise Christian men and women to the true Light of the world; a Light no darkness can overcome (*John 1:5*).

We celebrate Epiphany (which means: “Suddenly bring to light; to reveal”) and our true wish has come true! We see the light of our Savior Jesus in our sin-darkened lives; and we, like wise men, humbly bow down and worship Him. Our heart’s desire to be forgiven and right with God has come to us.

The important thing is that the Wise Men recognized that Jesus was born for the forgiveness of their sins. And the important thing

for us is that we recognize that Jesus was born for the forgiveness of our sins. That Light of the world was born to die on a cross and remove those sins from us.

The bright star from long ago has made our dreams come true.
For that star leads us like wise men and women to our Savior and we have received the gift of Salvation!

Thanks be to God in Jesus, our Epiphany King!

Prayer: O Morning Star, how fair and bright!
You shine with God's own truth and light,
Aglow with grace and mercy!
Of Jacob's race, King David's Son,
Our Lord and master, You have won
Our hearts to serve You only!
Lowly, holy! Great and glorious,
All victorious, Rich in blessing!
Rule and might o'er all possessing! Amen! *(LSB 395:1)*

Pastor Michael Awe
Hope Lutheran, South Sioux City, NE

THE LAMPLIGHTER



Theme: "When You Wish Upon a Star"

January 2019

*A Publication of The Lutheran Service Auxiliary
Sioux City, Iowa*

The Good Shepherd Hour airs every Sunday
morning on the following radio stations:

KSCJ – 1360 AM & 94.9 FM Sioux City at 8 a.m.

KLEM – 1410 AM & 96.9 FM Le Mars at 8 a.m.

KAYL – 101.7 FM Storm Lake at 8:30 a.m.

KVFD – 1400 AM Fort Dodge at 8 a.m.

What's Happening At Your Camp?



Exciting News!

Meet Camp's Newest Staff Member



Greetings in Christ! I am Izaak Wendorff, Camp Okoboji's new Assistant to the Ministry Director. I am originally from Winthrop, Minnesota where I was raised by my parents along with my 3 older brothers and 1 younger sister. There are 7 of us Wendorffs, nicknamed "The 7 Dorffs."

I recently completed my undergrad studies at Concordia University - Nebraska in Director of Christian Education & Elementary Education. During that time, I discovered a passion for the mission and ministry of the Church, to bring others the Gospel and rich gifts of Sacrament as revealed in Scripture.

I have roots in outdoor ministry at Camp Omega in Waterville, Minnesota where I have served as a counselor two summers and Programming Staff for two summers. During this time, I have discovered the incredible spiritual and personal influence that camp has had on me and many others. It truly is a unique place where one is able to retreat from the normal routine, grow in the faith in Christ, develop Christ-like humility & servant-leadership, and have fun! I am excited to join this ministry in Iowa District West and Camp Okoboji

Kellie Jones Named New Camp Director!

Executive Director Kirk Warnke is pleased to announce that Interim Camp Director Kellie Jones has accepted the position as fulltime Camp Director. Kellie will oversee the areas of facilities and office.

Kellie has been employed by Camp Okoboji since 1996. She started as a cook in the kitchen, then served as bookkeeper, and most recently as Office Director. She is looking forward to serving Camp and beyond in this new role.



Upcoming Winter Events

- January 19 Camp Board of Directors and
Auxiliary meeting
- January 20 Youth Sunday Fun-Day
- January 25-27 9th Annual Family Ice Fishing
Retreat
- January 27 Omelet Brunch
- February 15-16 CHAOS
- February 17 Youth Sunday Fun-Day

Summer Camp Schedule

May 21-24	Continuing Education Workshop
May 31-June 2	Kids Kamp
June 3-7	Day Camp 1
June 6-9	Joy Camp 1
June 9-15	Okoboji Girls Sports Camp
June 10-14	Day Camp 2
June 16-22	Minneboji
June 17-21	Day Camp 3
June 23-29	Cub Week 1
June 24-28	Day Camp 4
June 30-July 5	July 4th Family Retreat
July 1-5	Day Camp 5
July 7-13	Junior High Week
July 8-12	Day Camp 6
July 11-14	Joy Camp 2
July 14-20	Cub Week 2
July 15-19	Day Camp 7
July 21-27	Youth Week
July 22-26	Day Camp 8
July 28-August 2	Family Retreat 1
July 29-August 2	Day Camp 9
August 4-10	Family Retreat 2
August 5-9	Day Camp 10
August 9-11	Hispanic Family Retreat

New Monthly Event!

Youth Sunday Fun-Day!

Once a month, January through April, Camp will host a youth event from 5-7 PM. The event will include praise and worship, games, and a light meal. This event is for ALL 7th-12th graders. Cost is \$5 per person to cover food costs. We request that you call the Friday before so we have enough food. However, walk-ins will not be turned away. Area pastors and camp staff will be leading! Come join the fun!

C.H.A.O.S 2019

Christians Hyped About Our Savior

Dates have been set!

February 15-16, 2019

Snow Date of March 1-2, 2019

For those in Grades 6-8 and their adult chaperones!

DCE Tim Kightlinger will be our Bible Study Leader

Register online

www.campokoboji.org



2019 Camp Theme



Lutheran Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

Administrative Office
409 Kenyon Road
Suite C
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-573-3138
info@LFSiowa.org
www.LFSiowa.org

Welcome to Southwest Iowa...Sue Shields, LMHC

LFS is delighted to introduce the newest member of the LFS counseling ministry team, Sue Shields, LMHC.

Sue will be providing mental health and marriage counseling to families in southwest Iowa through a newly located office at Timothy Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs, and at satellite sites in neighboring communities.

As a licensed mental health counselor, Sue specializes in helping individuals who struggle with anxiety, depression, anger management, bipolar disorder, emotional disturbance, life transitions, self-esteem, stress and more. Other specialties include pre-marital counseling and marriage counseling.

"I became a therapist so that I could help others and be a healing presence for them during their most difficult personal circumstances," shared Sue.

When asked why she chose to join the Lutheran Family Service team, she

said, "God put LFS in my path. Lutheran Family Service has a reputation for providing high quality, compassionate, and Christian-centered therapy and I also get to work with people of similar faith. That faith means that each day I believe that God will be with me and help me to always act with others best interests at heart." If you or someone you know is in

need of mental health or marriage counseling, the Lutheran Family Service team is ready to help.

Visit LutheranFamilyService.org to learn more about mental health resources available through LFS. To schedule an appointment with Sue, call LFS at 712-276-9000.

Welcome, Sue!



Meet New LFS Board Member, Rev. Ron Miller

Rev. Ron Miller of Edwards, Illinois recently joined the Board of Directors of LFS.

Rev. Miller is familiar with LFS ministry as he previously served as pastor at Trinity Lutheran in Des Moines and is originally from Fort Dodge. In fact, his father served as the Treasurer of the board of the Lutheran Home Finding Society (same organization as LFS, name changed over time) for many years.

LFS is now licensed to provide pregnancy counseling and adoption service in the state of Illinois. Welcome, Rev. Miller!



Operation Barnabas

A network of care

Why Do Some Serve?

I remember the event vividly. President Lyndon Johnson was addressing the nation on live television. It was July 1965. President Johnson announced, “Today I have ordered to Vietnam the air mobile division and 50,000 additional troops that will raise our fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 almost immediately.” I was seven years old.

Ten years later in 1975, I was seventeen years old and the war in Vietnam was still ongoing. This war made an indelible impression on me during my grade school years. I watched Walter Cronkite report the latest events of the war every evening while our family ate dinner.

The young men who fought and died in Vietnam were mostly draftees. They had no choice. They served in a far-away country to defeat a vile communist ideology so that I may live in freedom and peace. Because they served for me, I felt a deep conviction that I needed to serve for the children growing up behind me.

Every veteran can tell his own unique story as to why he served. Regardless of the reasons, all nonetheless were willing to put on the uniform of our nation and defend our freedoms and cherished way of life.

This new year of 2019 is a wonderful opportunity to commit ourselves to the ministry of Operation Barnabas. Let me ask you to think of Operation Barnabas in this simple way: Operation Barnabas = the Missouri Synod’s ministry to those who are military connected be they service men and women, veterans, or family.

I look forward to serving you in my new office as Task Force Commander in Iowa District West. Send me the name of somebody you love or know who is serving or has served in the armed forces. I will write a prayer for them and/or you. Visit me at keithlcms@gmail.com. I pray your new year is filled with rich and abundant blessings for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Born into the world to bring peace in the world and give to us eternal life in the throne room of heaven.

Lord God and Heavenly Father, in this new year of 2019, I especially ask for Your special blessings to be with those who wear our uniform and who serve in harm’s way in the far reaches of the globe. Keep them safe and comfort them in the saving knowledge and hope that is theirs in Your Son and our Savior Jesus Christ. I ask for your blessing to be upon their arms so that sin and evil may be defeated even as it was defeated at the cross and empty tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ in whose name always I pray. Amen.



Ordination Anniversaries – 2019

We share with the leadership of our congregations the names and ordination dates of Iowa District West pastors who will celebrate “special” ordination anniversaries in 2019. Congregations are encouraged to observe these ministry milestones with an appropriate celebration.

If we have erred or failed to include someone who is observing an anniversary this year, please contact Jill Davis at the District office.

We rejoice and give thanks to God with these gifts to His Church.

Five (5) Years

The Rev. Mark Resner, St. Paul, Whittemore	7/27/2014
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Ten (10) Years

The Rev. Edward Durand, Trinity, Van Meter	7/19/2009
The Rev. Michael Boothby, St. Paul, Ireton	7/26/2009
The Rev. John Rutz, Trinity, Creston	8/2/2009
The Rev. Nicholas Thackery, Good Shepherd, Fort Dodge	8/9/2009
The Rev. Eugene Krueger, Shepherd of the Valley, West Des Moines	8/30/2009

Fifteen (15) Years

The Rev. Jonathan Conner, Zion, Manning	6/13/2004
The Rev. Luke Timm, Living Faith, Clive	6/13/2004
The Rev. Martin Davis, Trinity, Anthon/St. Paul, Battle Creek	6/27/2004
The Rev. Mark Hansen, English, Larchwood/Peace, Rock Rapids	6/27/2004
The Rev. David Lyons, St. Paul, Schaller	8/1/2004
The Rev. Kevin Johnson, Holy Cross, Carlisle	8/22/2004

Twenty (20) Years

The Rev. David Schultz, Our Savior, Swea City	6/11/1999
The Rev. Gerald Bruhn, Lutheran Family Service, Sioux City	9/3/1999

Twenty-five (25) Years

The Rev. Randall Cormeny, St. John, Battle Creek	3/6/1994
The Rev. Scott Kozisek, St. Paul, Garner	6/19/1994
The Rev. Neil Hayen, Pasco, WA (Emeritus)	7/10/1994

Thirty (30) Years

The Rev. Richard Milbrandt, St. John, May City/St. Peter and Zion, Ocheyedan	6/18/1989
The Rev. Keith Schweitzer, Immanuel, Greenfield/Faith, Winterset	6/24/1989
The Rev. Bradley Ketcham, Grace, Storm Lake	6/25/1989
The Rev. Bruce Jackson, Lawton (Emeritus)	7/9/1989

The Rev. Allen Henderson, St. Paul, Fort Dodge	7/27/1989
The Rev. Timothy Phillips, Gloria Dei, Urbandale	7/30/1989

Thirty-five (35) Years

The Rev. George Clausen, Our Savior, Sheldon	1/8/1984
The Rev. Mark Heilman, Memorial, Ames	6/17/1984
The Rev. David Loeschen, Denison	6/17/1984
The Rev. Daniel Wagner, Zion, Paullina	8/12/1984
The Rev. Kurt Kaiser, Zion, Denison	11/25/1984

Forty (40) Years

The Rev. Lindsay Watkins, Trinity, Boone	5/27/1979
The Rev. Ray Ohlendorf, Marcus (Emeritus)	6/24/1979
The Rev. Carl Cloeter, Indianola (Emeritus)	7/29/1979

Fifty (50) Years

The Rev. John Schauer, Carroll (Emeritus)	6/22/1969
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Fifty-five (55) Years

The Rev. Kenneth Belz, Adel (Emeritus)	4/6/1964
The Rev. Lee Mentink, Le Mars (Emeritus)	6/21/1964

DEFINING CHURCH VITALITY: LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

Most pastors, laypersons, and denominational leaders develop a personal theory that says *one particular factor* is the key to congregational vitality. Each of those theories is correct and incorrect. Each “favorite factor” is important, but church vitality is a result of a long list of factors.

What Is the Church’s Macro Mission?

Looking at church vitality from the macro direction produces a list of classic, universal mission functions for churches of every size, in every generation, in every kind of community. From this perspective, all vital churches have the same mission. Theologians and church historians have summarized that macro mission with terms such as *Koinonia* (fellowship/relational/community), *Diaconia* (service), *Didache* (Bible teaching), *Kerygma* (proclamation), and *Leiturgia* (worship/communal prayer). We see this macro mission in the writings of theologians, the printed mission statements of denominations, and the preambles of local church constitutions. All of these documents are biblical, truthful statements of purpose.

Most church leaders and members feel adequately informed with the three verses in which Jesus answered the macro mission question: the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, and the Apostle Paul’s definitions of the church’s macro mission. Stated in those biblical ways, congregations accomplish that macro mission by doing three things: (a) transforming the quality of peoples’ lives by helping them strengthen their spiritual connection with God (Luke 10:27); (b) helping hurting people in the church, community, and across the world who have physical and emotional needs (Luke 10:27); and (c) encouraging more people to form a spiritual connection with God (Luke 10:29-37; Matthew 23:19-20).

What Is the Church’s Micro Mission?

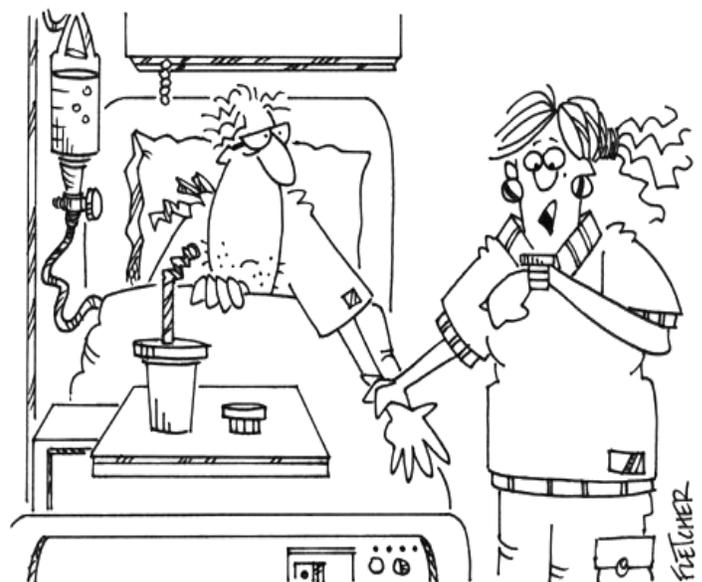
Why is the micro mission important? Books, journal articles, and blogs that answer this micro mission question tell us “how to do it” in small churches or megachurches, while other experts write about the mission

of churches located in urban or rural areas or other specific environments. Ultimately, congregations use dissimilar ways to accomplish Jesus’ mission and ministry in each community and generation.

A healthy congregational mission identity fits its size, fits its members, fits its resources, and meets the contemporary needs of people in its surrounding community. Most unhealthy congregations fall short—not by affirming something other than a biblically mandated macro mission—but by emphasizing a micro mission identity that does not fit that congregation, community, or generation.

What Is the Church’s Method Mission?

The church’s method mission tells people how to do worship, how to do evangelism, how to do member care, etc. Research indicates that healthy congregations deliver on the macro and micro mission with the following methods.



“JUDGING BY THE NUMBER OF VISITORS WHO SAID THEY LOVED YOU... YOU EITHER ATTEND A VERY AFFECTIONATE CHURCH, OR YOU’RE A LOT SICKER THAN I THOUGHT.”

- **Worship that honors God, spiritually enriches members, and retains young adult newcomers.** When a congregation loses its ability, especially with its worship music and preaching, to connect with the people in its community and generation, that failure predicts the end of all its mission accomplishments.
- **Children and youth church school classes and programs that retain parent newcomers.** If the congregation lacks Sunday school classes for children under high school age, it will probably die within a few years, unless it is located in a retirement community. Also, a strong youth ministry program is important to members of most congregations. These methods recognize the validity of the old adage “Kids go where kids are!” and they know that parents often follow.
- **Adult Sunday church school and other adult groups that give members and newcomers a sense of belonging.** Few people experience a strong sense of belonging and spiritual growth except through regular meetings with other church attendees in adult groups that focus on Bible study, prayer, service, recreation, or social interaction.
- **Adult new member involvement in groups and ministries that nourish faith development and growth in discipleship.** New members need to get into a group of some kind—choir, prayer group, Sunday school class, softball team, etc.—within the first six weeks after they join. They need to get into a ministry of some kind within six months after they join. Declining membership churches assimilate the 30 percent who are extroverted. Healthy churches figure out how to involve the other 70 percent, who wait for an invitation.
- **Concern and care for members during times of illness, loss, and other stress.** Some church leaders operate only in a “spiritual achiever” mode that recruits new members. Other leaders operate only in a “mending the broken” mode. Healthy congregations do both. They do not neglect caring about people.
- **Community service/benevolence/world missions that accomplish Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbors.** Jesus defined love of neighbor in a startling way. He said it should include people we do not know, not just people with whom we are acquainted.
- **Sharing faith, inviting others to church, and hospitality that accomplishes Jesus’ Great Commission to make disciples.** All human groups experience a natural centripetal force that pulls them toward taking care of each other instead of reaching out to others. Healthy churches counterbalance that with centrifugal force methods that reach out to not-yet-members in extroverted ways.
- **Atmosphere of faith, hope, and love that promotes the spiritual growth of members.** The absence or presence in congregational personality of the Apostle Paul’s three famous words predicts a great deal of what it can and will accomplish. A strong emphasis on the power of prayer is especially crucial. People who never talk with God do not often experience God’s presence, power, and guidance.
- **Organizational systems that motivate and involve members in our ministries.** Organizational structures that fit a congregation’s size increase its ministry effectiveness by enlarging the number of people involved in its ministries, reducing conflict, and increasing democratic decision making. Dysfunctional organizational structures often go unrecognized by church leaders because their defects have become invisible due to years of “we have always done it this way.”
- **Clergy and staff that motivate and equip members for involvement in ministries.** From the years when the Apostle Paul spun off start-up churches across the Roman Empire, clergy have played a key role in developing and sustaining the ministry of laity. Without this team effort, few congregations achieve their maximum potential in answering God’s call.
- **Financial stewardship that is part of members’ spiritual growth and adequately supports church ministries.** Financial giving is one of the prime methods by which people experience personal spiritual growth. Without encouragement from their church, the crab grass of self-centeredness crowds out the green growth of spiritual development. Eventually, low emphasis on stewardship stunts the congregation’s size.
- **Property and facilities that support present ministries and future goals.** Facilities are not everything, but inadequate parking, sanctuary seating, or classroom space short-circuits a congregation’s effectiveness.

The Bottom Line

Healthy, effective churches accurately answer the classic theological question, “What is the mission of the Church and how do we accomplish it?” They build on the biblical *macro mission*, apply it contextually with *micro mission* activities, and exhibit multiple *method mission* strengths.

On which of the above lists does your church need to focus more energy?

Herb Miller served as coeditor of *The Parish Paper* until 2012. This issue honors his substantial contribution to this ministry.

REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST



“... and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord...”

—Post-Communion Collect, Divine Service, *Lutheran Service Book*



Our “Life Together”

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To equip rural professional and lay leaders
- To support congregations in community engagement



Please Pray for These Important Dates

Jan. 24 – Webinar

“Rural Ministry Resources”

with Rev. Todd Kollbaum, director, and Amy Gerdts, coordinator, LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

1–2 p.m. CST

Feb. 21 – Webinar

“Reaching Young Women: LWML”

with Kaye Wolff, vice-president of Special Focus Ministries, LWML

1–2 p.m. CST

March 7 – Webinar

“Raising Young Leaders and Lutheran Youth Corps”

with Julianna Shults, DCE, program manager, Special Ministries-Lutheran Young Adult Corps (LCMS Youth Ministry)

1–2 p.m. CST

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

Immersed in Rural Life

Cows, hogs, trucks, dirt, tractors, mud — all things we would expect

to find on the farm. But what about high-tech computers, global positioning devices and industrial cheese making equipment? Participants of the LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission’s (RSTM) latest Rural Seminary Immersion experienced all this and more, including conversation with a lot of faithful folks and great food. On the heels of our 2018 national conference, LCMS RSTM was privileged to host our third immersion event in partnership with Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. We find that holding these events is especially important for the benefit of those who will be serving in rural and small-town congregations.

As you might know, more than 50 percent of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is made up of rural and small-town congregations. Each year at the Call Day services at both our seminaries, an average of 50 percent of the new calls are issued to men to serve in these congregations. Most of those called to serve do not have a background in rural and small towns; they are typically from more urban and suburban areas. To be sure, they are trained well by our seminaries to proclaim God’s Word, administer His Sacraments, teach, care and serve. Yet, we have found that because of the “culture shock,” these men often struggle to make the transition to RSTM or they simply don’t last that long in these congregations.

Additionally, many of these congregations come to see themselves as just a “first call” or less important than other, bigger congregations with “more to offer.” This simply isn’t and shouldn’t be the case. We at RSTM are endeavoring to break that cycle through these immersions as well as other training events. We want congregations to know and understand that they have a vital role to play in the Kingdom of God. Likewise, we



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We want to hear from you! If you have ideas for future issues, comments, or feedback on articles you've read in *Reaching Rural America for Christ*, please contact Amy Gerdts at the RSTM office.

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Support This Work

LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small-town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament.

Click the Give Now button to support the work of RSTM.

GIVE NOW

Thrivent members: Remember that RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!

want these men serving them to think of their new rural and small-town call much like C.F.W. Walther describes it when he said:

“When a place has been assigned to a Lutheran candidate of theology where he is to discharge the office of a Lutheran minister, that place ought to be to him the dearest, most beautiful, and most precious spot on earth. He should be unwilling to exchange it for a kingdom. Whether it is in a metropolis or in a small town, on a bleak prairie or in a clearing in the forest, in a flourishing settlement or in a desert, to him it should be a miniature paradise. Do not the blessed angels descend from heaven with great joy whenever the Father in heaven sends them to minister to those who are to be heirs of salvation? Why, then, should we poor sinners be unwilling to hurry after them with great joy to any place where we can lead other men, our fellow-sinners, to salvation?” (*Twentieth Evening Lecture*)

Imagine if pastor and parish together considered this ministry a great joy and were more than willing to “hurry after them with great joy.” This is why we spend time doing things like our seminarian immersion. It is through events such as this that we are able to focus on those subjects, which can help future pastors (and even current ones) decrease the learning curve and hit the ground running. **While we won't make them agriculture experts, we hope to expose them to those that are so that they may gain an understanding of how things work in a rural and small-town areas and how that affects the congregation's life together.** Through visits to working farms and dairies, we learn how agriculture has transformed over the years and what it takes to make it in that world. We see for ourselves the high-tech equipment and how it has changed the face of farming.



Chris Heins gives the men a close-up look at the silage feed of the cows.

In order to better understand leadership in town and country, we visited with agriculture industry leaders, local volunteer firemen, bank presidents and business owners. We learned about parish life from pastors of larger and smaller congregations and from those who shepherd in congregational partnerships. We talked to school leadership about what that dynamic means for the congregations. We worshipped, we ate, we prayed and we learned, all in an effort to better serve the rural and small-town congregations of the LCMS.

Pastor Todd Kollbaum

RSTM Events Update

Don't forget that Rural & Small Town Mission provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is **Rural Ministry Resources** on Jan. 24. **Reaching Young Women: LWML** will be on Feb. 21. Find past webinars in our archive. Watch for information on all our upcoming events!

Register for one our Engaging Your Community (EYC) or Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm.

These partner events offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to our wandering members and our communities with Christ's love. Online registration is available for both types of events. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you. Watch for 2019 National RSTM Conference announcements coming soon! To see our calendar, visit lcms.org/rstm. Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.