

unnoticed. Throughout the week you'll find Joyce at the church sewing away, as she makes one quilt after another. But the unique thing is, she is still using a treadle sewing machine at church as well as at home. She says, "I just feel more comfortable using them rather than the electric ones." Also, she feels the treadle machines are not as much trouble. She recently had to have it repaired and she was so happy she was able to get it fixed. Joyce is the only remaining charter member of the quilting group that started in 1977. She started sewing when she was in high school. After she was married, she did much sewing for her family. She has no idea how many quilts she has made...too many to count!



Joyce Blunk with her treadle sewing machine.

A normal day for Joyce starts with a two mile walk, regardless of the weather. She never got a driver's license, but this has not kept her from being very active and involved. She has volunteered at the nursing home for years. For the past few years she has been going to Orphan Grain Train on Tuesday mornings to help sort and pack clothes. She said she never turns the TV on because, "There's too much else to do!"

Joyce lost her husband, Donald, this past December after 66 years of marriage. Besides raising seven sons, she has had babysitting opportunities for many grandchildren and great grandchildren. She now has one great-great grandchild.

The sign by Kiron says, "Blessed with the Best." Joyce Blunk knows she's blessed BY the Best (God). We at St. John's feel blessed to have her in our church family!

Building Relationships

Bessie Fick is an Iowa District West missionary based at Memorial Lutheran Church to the international community at Iowa State University in Ames. She writes about a trip taken by her and many internationals to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ida Grove, October 11-12.

For the past three years St. Paul, Ida Grove has been inviting students from the international student ministry at Memorial Lutheran Church in Ames to spend a weekend with the congregation. The activities are organized by Pastor Don Winterrowd and the Discipleship Committee members. The internationals have a wonderful time getting to know a rural Iowa community and the members of the congregation. This year the group had an action packed experience. We visited Mission Central in Mapleton and were given a guided tour by Maxine Thies. The internationals had the opportunity to see some of the places around the world where we serve. Many wanted to send some momento of their country to display on the wall. Then the group went to lunch at Crawford County Park and enjoyed the bounty of nature. This was followed by a tour of the Battle Creek natural museum. It was an great chance for the internationals to see many native Iowa wildlife species up close. The group also observed a soybean harvest. We returned to Ida Grove and toured the GOMACO Trolley Company. We had an opportunity to view many of the castle structures such as the skate palace and were invited to the chalet where we saw many of the boat docks that are manufactured in Ida Grove. We also viewed the Orphan Grain Train Warehouse and learned about one of the church's service projects. We finished the evening with a potluck meal. The internationals were matched with their host families. The following morning the group met for Bible study, and the students shared about their families and home countries. We concluded our visit with the worship service.

The trips to Ida Grove have helped me to build relationships with the internationals, and I have had an opportunity to invite them to participate in Bible studies. Last year 9 of the 30 who participated in the trip attended Bible studies. This year we had 27 who participated in the tour. Everyone returned home tired but happy to have had the opportunity to share in the hospitality of a rural community. One Korean woman, Eunkyong, wrote, "I want to share that same hospitality in my country when I return." Some of those who participated have already begun attending Bible study, and we hope that others will become involved.

Deb from St. Paul, Ida Grove, wrote, "Hope you have recovered from the busy weekend here in Ida Grove? I wanted to let you know that we have been hearing great things from the host families and the congregation. Everyone feels that the weekend was very worthwhile and was definitely a 'two way street.' In a small town we sometimes forget about the needs and feelings of

people from other cultures since we have very little exposure to them. This weekend reminds us that we are all God's creation and we can communicate with each other through friendship and acceptance. Thank you for all you do to help bridge the cultural gap and for sharing the love of Christ with the internationals that come to ISU."

Ladies Aid of Trinity - Marcus



Trinity Lutheran Ladies Aid of rural Marcus (pictured above) celebrated their 100th Anniversary on October 5, 2008. The celebration began by observing LWML Sunday and recognizing 100 years in His service with the regular worship service. The celebration continued with area churches being invited to an afternoon of entertainment with singer/entertainer Elaine Peacock. We also heard a brief history of our Aid and how we are a mission based organization. The afternoon concluded with a dessert luncheon.

Recognitions



Jim Schroeder (right), gift planning counselor for the district, was recently recognized for his accomplishments in gift planning and received the 2008 Leadership Award for gifts to ministry from Terry Gerdts, Senior Vice President of Gift Planning Services for the LCMS Foundation.

14 He and other LCMS Foundation gift planning counselors from around the country met in St. Louis for continuing

education, stewardship training and spiritual refreshment. At an awards celebration, Jim was recognized for his accomplishments in gift planning and received the leadership award for gifts to ministry.

Jim has served Iowa District West for 20 years, linking Christians with giving opportunities in their local congregations, in the district and worldwide.

Three districts were honored at the November 23, 2008 LCEF Fall Leadership Conference for outstanding results for the year in investments, loans, and use of ministry services. Iowa District West received the award for districts with assets between \$25-\$50 million. IDW had a remarkable year by increasing its assets 29%, loans 18%, and investor payables 33%. Thanks to LCEF Vice President Carole White but especially to all the members and congregations of Iowa District West for supporting LCEF!



Pictured with Carole are President Paul and Sue Sieveking; Warren Puck, District Board chairman and former LCEF Board chairman; Ruth Gerken LCEF District Promotions; and Rev. Mark Gerken, District Mission Executive.

LCMS Servant Events Offers Record Number of Events for 2009

Over 100 Servant Events are planned for 2009! All kinds of events are available, from construction, human care, and outreach events to crisis, multicultural, and environmental events. There are also events especially for families, and for the first time in 2009, there will be an event just for young adults.

LCMS Servant Events give young people across the country the experience of learning that serving others can make a difference because of Jesus Christ. Since 1981, LCMS youth and adults have participated in more than 1,000 Servant Events and have made a difference in the lives of thousands

of others by contributing to the development of resources and facilities of Synodical camps, congregations, and other service agencies.



Doug Kading and Lori Gamble of Camp Okoboji in Milford, Iowa attended the Servant Events Leadership Conference in November 2008. Camp Okoboji will host "Junior Joy Camp" from June 26 to July 2.

Visit LCMS Servant Events online at www.lcms.org/youth for a complete listing of events and to search by type, date, and region of the country. For a free DVD about LCMS Servant Events, contact the LCMS Youth Ministry Office at youth.ministry@lcms.org or 1.800.248.1930 x1155.

Older Adult Ministry

by Rev. Dennis Angland, pastoral advisor, Older Adult Ministry Committee

Merle Freitag, President of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, will be the featured speaker at the Leading into the Future retreat to be held at St Paul Lutheran Church in Ankeny, IA from 6pm, Monday, May 4th through 12 noon, Tuesday, May 5th. Mr. Freitag is a gifted speaker. He has been the president of LCEF since 1998. Previously he served as Vice President of Finance for the American Red Cross, Comptroller of the Army and director of the Army budget. In addition to presentations made by Mr. Freitag, the retreat features time to relax and socialize. A limited number of rooms have been set aside at a lower rate at the Ankeny Heartland Inn, 201 SE Delaware Ave., Ankeny, IA 50021, phone number 515 964 8202. To receive the lower rate reservations must be made before April 4th. The retreat is sponsored by the Iowa District West Older Adult Ministry Committee.

ILSTO raises ...

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awarded to those with the greatest need from throughout IDE and IDW.

The school officials and program directors are to be commended for their work on

the tuition organization. "They worked very hard and spent a lot of time and effort on this project," Torkelson said. "And once they reached their own goals, they still worked to get donations in an attempt to achieve the whole goal."

Lois mentioned that 167 donors contributed to the ILSTO in 2008 up from 44 donors in 2007. Gifts ranged from two at \$50 to one of \$45,000. The most popular gift was \$1,000, with 56 donors contributing that amount. The second most frequent gift was \$2,000, with 17 donors gifting that number. In all, 83 donors contributed between \$1,000 and \$2,000, which made up 50 percent of the total donors. The third most popular gift was the \$500 range, 36 of them. "Gifts of all size make this program successful," Warnholz said.

Money raised in the 2007 fundraising campaign was used to fund tuition grants for 176 families representing 290 students in the current academic year to the tune of more than \$142,000. Every student who qualified to receive money, about 20 percent of the Lutheran student population, received a grant.

Torkelson mentioned that while the state law requires that they award 90 percent of the funds raised, we attempt to reach the 100 percent mark. This can be accomplished through Thrivent Matching Gift and Employee/Corporation matching gift programs. Over \$14,400 was raised in this manner.

Warnholz pointed out that almost \$165,000 more was raised this year, which is an increase of 116 percent. That means that over one quarter of a million dollars will be available for tuition assistance in the next academic year. She also stated that 75% of the 2007 donors contributed in 2008 with increased donations of 36 percent.

"Our goal is to help those who have the greatest need," added Torkelson. Information regarding the application process for ILSTO Funds will appear soon. The application deadline for these funds for the 2009-2010 school year will be April 1, 2009.

Everyone is Looking for Jesus

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who are not looking for Jesus...the unfaithful members, the unchurched, the lost.

"Let us go." With these words Jesus invites us into His mission. Let us go somewhere else...to nearby villages and towns, to those in distant lands. Let us go where we can...in our homes, among our families, friends and neighbors...because everyone is looking for Jesus!

The Gospel assures us...Jesus is looking for everyone!



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Gift Annuities - Enjoy cash payments today. Strengthen ministry tomorrow!

In these times of economic uncertainty and low interest rates a gift annuity with the LCMS Foundation is a good alternative. You can establish a gift annuity with as little as \$5,000. This transfer entitles you to a lifetime of regular, fixed payments from the Foundation. If you wish, you may name a second person to receive these payments after your death. At the death of the second income recipient (if one was designated), your gift annuity's remaining value goes to the LCMS ministry or ministries that you designate. This could be your local congregation, Iowa District West, Camp Okoboji, Mission Central, LWML, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Lutheran Family Service or any of your other favorite LCMS ministries. The amount of your payments is determined when you establish your gift annuity. Your payments are based on your gift amount, your age, and the age of your second beneficiary if you named one. A Gift Annuity is especially appropriate for those who place high value on payment security. Gift Annuities offer several tax advantages and high payout rates, particularly for donors at older ages. Your annual cash payment may be divided into frequencies including monthly, quarterly, or bi-annually.

Here is an example of how a gift annuity can be used in a personal gift plan. John and Helen are life long members of a congregation in Iowa District West. They recently contacted

me for a personal visit to learn more about gift annuities. In my visit with them I learned they were interested in a gift annuity for part of their retirement savings because of the regular fixed payments. They also wanted to make a gift to their local congregation, Iowa District West, LWML, Camp Okoboji, Lutheran Family Service, Lutheran Hour Ministries, and Mission Central. After much prayer and deliberation they decided to establish a gift annuity with \$50,000. They were both 80 years old so their gift annuity has a payout rate of 6.1%. The total annual payment will be \$3,050. They also will receive a partial income tax deduction for establishing their gift annuity. Their gift annuity has allowed them to enjoy high cash payments during their lives and make a wonderful gift to their favorite ministries in the future. What a blessing.

Example single life rates are:

- Age 65 - 5.3%
- Age 70 - 5.7%
- Age 80 - 7.1%
- Age 90 - 9.5%

Example two life rates are:

- Ages 65/65 - 4.9%
- Ages 70/70 - 5.2%
- Ages 80/80 - 6.1%
- Ages 90/90 - 8.3%

For more rate information and a gift annuity application contact Jim Schroeder.

ILSTO raises \$307,000 in 2008

More financial assistance than ever before will be available to families who send their children to Lutheran elementary schools next school year thanks to the approximately \$307,000 raised in 2008 through the Iowa Lutheran School Tuition Organization.

According to Dewey Torkelson and Lois Warnholz, program managers for Iowa District West and Iowa District East of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, while the fund fell short of its goal of \$480,000, District and school officials were very pleased with the \$307,110.10. "We raised a little more than 64 percent of our total goal," they said.

The ILSTO was established as a result of legislation signed in June of 2006 by the former Gov. Tom Vilsack. That legislation, which is called the Educational Opportunities Act, allowed Lutheran schools to establish a school tuition organization (STO) with huge tax incentives. This enables persons who

percent tax credit on contributions made to the fund and then additional federal deductions usually apply.

This is the third year that the state legislation enabled STOs to raise funds and the state has dictated each year how many tax credits were allowed to be distributed, and thus how much funds could be raised. This is the second year for the Iowa Lutheran School Tuition Organization. In their first year ILSTO raised \$162,369 which was about 47% of its goal.

About 95% of the total contributions were designated to a particular Lutheran elementary school in Iowa. Those funds will be allowed to be used for assistance from their particular schools as long as they have families that meet income requirements to qualify for the tuition grants.

The remaining dollars, about \$20,000, were placed in an unrestricted fund that will be

