



President Paul Sieveking

A new heart

Max Lucado asked, “What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you?” What if, for just one day, you and Jesus would trade places. What if He would wake up in your bed, walk in your shoes, live in your house, work where you work? Nothing else about your life changes. Your circumstances remain exactly as they are—all of your personal problems, your health issues and family matters. It all remains exactly as it is. What if, for one day, Jesus lived your life ... with His heart so that His attitude adjusts yours, His priorities govern your actions, His passions drive your decisions, and His love directs your behavior?

What would your life be like? Would other people notice a change? Would your family see something new? Would your co-workers, your friends, and even your enemies? Would you treat them the same? What transformation would this heart exchange have on your stress level? Your mood swings? Your temper? Your patience? Would you look at life differently? Would you still do what you are doing? If Jesus took over your heart, would everything change? Would anything change?

God wants to change your heart, transform your heart, give you a new heart that is like Jesus’ heart.

His heart is pure. He faced all the temptations we face, but St. John

wrote, “In Him there is no sin,” not one sinful thought, desire, word, or deed!

His heart is peaceful. His disciples worried when they couldn’t possibly feed a crowd with just five loaves and two fish, but Jesus looked up to heaven, gave thanks and fed the 5,000. They cried out in fear in the midst of a storm, but Jesus slept through it. Peter drew his sword to fight the soldiers who had come to arrest Jesus, but Jesus reached out His hand to heal the man. When all of them forsook Him and fled, when the soldiers beat Him, mocked Him, nailed Him to the cross, He was at peace and prayed, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.”

His heart is focused. During His earthly life, there was so much to do, but His heart was focused on one thing. He could have led a revolution and become a national hero ... or a great doctor and healed every disease. He could have been another famous rabbi attracting crowds of disciples. But from the day when He was just 13 years old in the temple courts, He knew He had to be about His Father’s business. He had one ultimate aim: the cross of Calvary. He told His disciples over and over, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost ... the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” He chose to be a Servant; He chose to be our Savior. He was so focused, His final words were, “It is finished!” He had completed the assignment His Father had given Him. He had paid the price for the sin of the world.

Our hearts seem so far from His. He could say these words to us, “You hypocrites, Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: These people honor me with their

lips, but their hearts are far from me.” His heart is pure, but ours are corrupted with greed and lust, and from our hearts come all kinds of evil. His heart is peaceful, but ours are heavy, filled with all kinds of hassles and worries and fears. His heart is focused on His mission, and ours seem to have Attention Deficit Disorder. His heart is spiritual, and ours are set on earthly things. Our hearts are miles from His. How could we ever hope to become more like Him ... or have a heart like His?

But the Good News is, you already have the heart of Christ. St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Crucified with Christ in Holy Baptism!

Then, why do you still sin? Why do you worry? Why are you so distracted and impatient? Why are you still so enamored with earthly things rather than spiritual?

Years ago, when electricity first came to Iowa, there was a frugal old woman who was among the first to have it in her home. A few weeks after she hooked up, a meter reader stopped to ask if the electricity was working. He noticed that the meter detected hardly any usage. He wondered whether she was using her power. She assured him everything was working fine. She said, “Every night when the sun goes down, I turn on my lights ... long enough to light my candles, then I turn them off again.” She was hooked up to the power, but she didn’t use it! Her home was connected, but her life wasn’t changed.

Don’t we make the same mistake? We are connected to Jesus, but our lives aren’t changed. We

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EDUCATION



Rev. Bob Riggert
Executive Assistant

Keys to the future

The 140 early childhood educators and partners who gathered in August at the Iowa District West Early Childhood Conference were given keys. They were given key rings that affirmed “You are a KEY to a child’s future.” The key holders gave them a more important engraved message: “Christ is THE KEY.”

The attendees also were introduced to the KEY values for early childhood ministry in Iowa District West. Responding to the introduction of universal preschool and other changes in this realm of education, the Iowa District West Early Childhood Cabinet and Christian Education Committee presented a list of six key values to inform preschool directors, education committees, and congregations



faced with the changing dynamics. The values also are applicable to other areas of Christian education.

- **Christ:** Faith development permeates the atmosphere of the early childhood classroom, and Christ is shared with the children with the words and deeds of the staff.
- **Children:** Each child is celebrated as a child of God in a safe and secure environment. The curriculum is age-appropriate and engaging.
- **Excellence:** Appropriate state standards are met and exceeded. The staff is professionally trained and works in an enriching setting.
- **Family:** Parents are active partners in Christian education. The gifts of the family of the church are utilized.
- **Congregation:** The mission of the early childhood ministry supports the mission of the congregation. The early childhood ministry is celebrated and supported by the congregation.
- **Mission:** The center is an integral part of the congregation’s outreach to the community. Pastoral and professional care is offered to children and families.

Professor Judy Ripke, keynote presenter, reminded the attendees that literacy enrichment is a key component of early childhood education. She encouraged the educators to also equip families to share in literacy experiences. As parents share books with little children, they also



are privileged to share the stories of Jesus. A sectional also challenged the educators to connect with congregation and community.

Iowa District West has 50 early childhood ministries. Through the district’s Christian Education Committee and Early Childhood Cabinet, these ministries are resourced and supported. Deb Fink, director of the Zion, Manning, preschool, and Rev. Ray Smith, pastor of First Lutheran, Missouri Valley, currently serve on the cabinet. Congregations exploring this ministry or facing significant transitions in this ministry are invited to contact the district office.



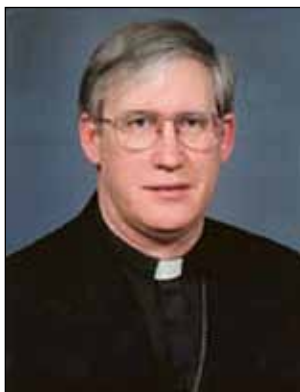
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Rev. Mark Gerken
Executive Assistant

What if ...?

Many congregations have a vacation Bible school (VBS), but what if congregations tried the same thing year-round? What if they geared the ministry not for their own children, but for those in the community who don't attend church? What if the children came —followed by their parents? Here's the story of one congregation, Concordia, Sioux City, which wasn't afraid to try something with the financial support of an *Ablaze!* grant, made possible by your mission gifts! Pastor Kenneth Schmidt (pictured below) shares the story.



"I suppose I really should have the kids in Sunday school." How many times have you heard an unchurched parent say something like that? But, unfortunately, we know what usually happens—nothing.

To bring the children to Sunday school, which many parents know is the right thing to do, puts the pressure on them. It means chang-

ing their Sunday morning routine. It means going to church themselves, because, after all, how can you just drop your children off at the church door on Sunday morning and not go in yourself? And they're not ready for that—at least not yet.

Welcome to Wednesday Bible club where children ages 4 to 10 hear Bible stories, sing Jesus songs, make crafts, and finish the evening with a light supper. During the past



six months, 20 children from 14 families have participated in the Bible Club, with weekly attendance ranging from six to 14. Of the 14 families, nine come to us with no church home. Of the 20 children, more than half are not yet baptized, more than half had not heard the saving Word of the Gospel, and more than half did not know "Jesus Loves Me This I Know." But now that's changing!

As time goes by, parents who initially dropped their children off at the door are now joining in the activities. Some stay to listen to the Bible story and hear the children sing. Some help with craft time. Some help cook supper. During Lenten season, many of the families joined us at our Lenten suppers and, yes, a few even stayed for worship.

While many activities at church and Sunday school go "on vacation" during the summer months, the families and volunteers voted overwhelmingly to keep the Bible Club



going through the summer so we wouldn't "get out of the habit."

And there's more! First, this year the members of Concordia decided to hold the annual church picnic on a Wednesday evening following Bible Club with the hopes the Bible Club families would join us for an evening of food, fellowship, and hymn singing—and many of them did! And second, recently a grandmother of one of the Bible Club children, who has been unchurched herself since she was a young child, began adult instruction class.

Pastor Schmidt and the members of Concordia are discovering the joy of bringing in the spiritual harvest as they allow the Holy Spirit to work through them! What if your congregation decided to do something to reach those not currently involved with a local congregation? What if you tried something you'd never done before? What if God brought growth to the seed of the Word that was planted? What if? Give me a call, and let's start praying and planning to bring in the harvest!

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MISSION SNAPSHOT



Pat
Monroe

The congregation appears like many others in Iowa District West. The members are gathered for worship, thirsting for God's Word of love and hope, to experience those precious words of promise again—God forgives your sins, His body and blood given for you, and God abides with you today and always.

There's Geraldine, 80, leaning on her walker, nodding her head as the message is proclaimed; Don, in a motorized wheelchair in the center aisle, who just lost his wife of 51 years; Earl, the faithful elder who keeps things running smoothly.

But notice the differences! Missing is the sound of music. Lights flash to announce the start of church. Pastor welcomes the congregation, but we hear no words. We are deaf. We "hear" God's Word with our eyes, and we praise Him with our hands! This is our family where we pray together and sign songs, encourage one another in a life of thanksgiving for the Word of God proclaimed with hands.

We are the profoundly deaf, the hard of hearing, the deaf-blind, and our hearing family members. Our worship encompasses a language and a culture that we cherish. Our pastor, Rev. Dennis Konkel, understands that so well ... because he too is deaf.

Serving our district for eight years, Rev. Konkel is a blessing! Serving alongside him is Pat Monroe, lay missionary, and Deacon Patrick Sell. Pat helps with youth



From left are Rev. Konkel, Pat Monroe, and Deacon Patrick Sell.

classes, leadership and interpreter training, visits, and Bible study, as well as assisting Konkel as he travels sharing with congregations of Iowa District West what God is doing in deaf ministry. Deacon Sell (first deaf deacon in Iowa) helps with Word and Sacrament ministry through preaching, teaching, and new calls.

The district has five deaf worship locations (Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Ames, Council Bluffs, Sioux City) and numerous small-group ministries. Konkel does all regular pastoral duties, including officiating at weddings and funerals, counseling, and extensive leadership training.



But it's not just Rev. Konkel! He trains and equips deaf members to lead worship, teach Bible classes, and do shut-in and hospital calls. The LWML members involve themselves in local, district, and national activities. Youth classes happen at

the Iowa School for the Deaf. Bible studies are alive with deep discussion and application. Our deaf video blog is reaching the un-churched. Mission is our foremost priority, for 95 percent of the deaf still do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They may know of this man on the cross, but no one has told them that God's free gift of salvation comes through the cross. That's why the ministry has visible presence at most statewide and national deaf gatherings.

We also serve "hearing churches" with deaf needs and interpreted ministries. Lee Ann and Bob are thankful for the ministry's assistance in teaching their deaf son, Jacob, about Jesus. First seeing the Good News in fourth grade, Jacob's faith has grown strong through Sunday school and interpreted worship. Now confirmed and active at his "hearing church," this fall he will teach his peers at the deaf school.

Thanks for your mission gifts so we can learn and worship Jesus! And please pray for us! Pray for Ann in Sioux City as she shares Jesus with friends! Pray for Jon as he studies pre-seminary classes. Pray for those who need to know about Jesus!

Rev. Konkel and Pat are available for mission festivals and small-group presentations, sharing what God is doing through your prayers and mission gifts. Contact them at 712-435-9663 or dennis.konkel@idwlcms.org.

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Gary
Thies

Family Retreat

In more than 15 years, I have not had the privilege of speaking at a "Family Retreat," which are special groups that meet together at Camp Okoboji. This year truly was a blessing as each morning for an entire week, old Missionary Gary was able to share stories of mission miracles with all those in attendance from 9 a.m. to about 11:30 a.m. What a blessing to share stories each morning of what God is doing to reach out to people in the world today, here in our district and even around the world!

A week of mission education for folks who were "not normal," who wanted to hear stories, see pictures and hear about the new doors that God is opening in the world, and how God is using just "ordinary, unschooled everyday people" to get HIS work done! What a joy to work with special pastors and laypeople motivated for mission!



Pictured here is the entire committee who put together the activities for the week for Family Retreat II.



Bible Study Group

What a joy to welcome a special small-group Bible study to Mission Central at 7 p.m. during the week!

This year we have had more than 30 bus loads of folks who have spent days at Mission Central for mission education and tours. However, many, many folks don't think about coming in the evening for an evening tour and mission Bible study!

A very, very special group of "not normal" people came from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sioux City, Iowa, which is only a 45-minute drive from Mission Central. They came at 7 p.m. and stayed until about 9:30 p.m. and enjoyed a special "Mission Miracle Evening." A wonderful group of 16 people came, and it was an evening they will long remember.

Normal people would never think of coming in the evening to Mission Central, however, I could see immediately that this group fit perfectly the 1 Peter 2:9 qualification of being a "peculiar" people!

The evening tour of the museum and facilities was so much enjoyed by the entire group! It was amazing how the Lord blessed the evening, and the entire group saw some amazing pictures that absolutely "shocked" the group! Pictured above is the entire group from Sioux City by the lighted Mission Central sign.

Special missionary auction

It was such a blessing to share the message of mission and provide a "special mission report" for the members of Peace Lutheran Church at Rock Rapids, Iowa. This special group of mission-minded mission-

aries dedicated the entire Sunday on Aug. 2 to a wonderful mission festival.

In the afternoon, after the meal was served the entire congregation met together in the fellowship hall for a "mission auction," and the proceeds were to apply directly to two missionaries and their families' support! A good, good time was had by all as members of the congregation successfully bid on various mission items that were sold, including bells, plaques, blankets, pies, cookies, bars, and rolls.

Everyone was amazed at the "spirited bidding" that took place and, when the smoke had all cleared, God provided more than \$3,000 for the support of two missionary families! What a blessing to see what God can do to "raise up" just the right people at just the right time to support HIS missionaries, who have to raise 100 percent of their support! These mission-minded people were happy to have the privilege of supporting the missionaries!

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Ellie Menz

'Dad, how about going to Haiti?'

My name is Ellie Feilmeier and my dad is Rich. We are from Early, Iowa. I am 20 years old and a junior at Concordia University Nebraska in Seward, studying for my Lutheran teaching degree in Early Childhood Education. Dad is a speech-language pathologist. Since 2006, I have been a part of the summer IOWAY trips to Los Angeles (LA) and Tijuana, Mexico, with Ellie Menz. Summer 2008, I wasn't planning on going on the trip due to finances, but Immanuel Lutheran Church at Lone Rock, Iowa, granted me a scholarship to help sponsor me.

While in LA, I worked with Pastor S T Williams Jr. of St. Paul Lutheran Church, and he told me about his many mission trips to Haiti. As we talked, I felt God put Haiti on my heart. I kept in contact with Pastor Williams throughout the year, and asked if I could join the group to Haiti. I asked Dad if he would be interested in going on a mis-

sion trip. He said yes. It turned out that Pastor Williams was not going on a mission trip to Haiti this summer but gave me Tim Kaufmann's name, a DCE from Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Palatine, Ill. We contacted Tim, and he informed us that they had room for two more. Interestingly, without last year's financial support from Immanuel, Lone Rock, I wouldn't have gone to LA and talked with Pastor Williams about Haiti and would never have experienced this life-changing trip.

Walking off the plane in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, was like walking straight into a *National Geographic* magazine. It was unlike anything I've ever seen before. Extreme poverty was everywhere. Children ran through the garbage-filled streets barefoot and many of them without clothes. Roads were severely underdeveloped and unfinished which made our van ride from the capital, Port-au-Prince, to Les Cayes, a long four-and-a-half-hour drive.

Once we arrived at The Children of Israel's Orphanage in Les Cayes, we made our home in the guest quarters where we would be staying for 15 days. We unpacked our 28 suitcases full of supplies. We ate three meals a day, which we provided. The children in the orphanage

receive two meals a day, which is coveted by kids on the street. Many children from the community receive only five meals a week. Malnourishment is a huge and widespread concern in Haiti. The three main signs of malnourishment are cold hands, distended stomachs, and reddish hair. The natural hair color of the children in Haiti is black, but when they are malnourished their hair turns a light reddish color. I remember the first time I saw a child with red hair. It broke my heart to know the meaning of their hair color. Then I saw another child with red hair. And another, and another. Soon it became a common sight. It was sad to think that something so not normal, like malnourishment, became normal. The Haiti experience has given new meaning for Dad to our common American expression, "Let's eat. I'm starving." Most of us have no idea what true hunger feels like.

Usually 15 boys and 15 girls live at the orphanage, but three years ago they made a special exception. There is a river

behind the boy's orphanage, and one night a caretaker at the boy's orphanage heard crying outside the orphanage gates. She decided that if she still heard crying in the morning, she would check it out. She still heard the crying in the morning, so she went outside to find a newborn baby abandoned by the river with a few clothes bunched between his legs. The caretaker knew that she could not leave him, so she brought him in to the orphanage as their sweet number 16. They named him Moise, which means Moses, because they found him by the river.

Off the coast of Les Cayes is a small remote island of Ile-A-Vache. One of the projects we did the first week was to build 20 eight-foot school desks and benches for a newly constructed school on Ile-A-Vache. We built the benches at the orphanage compound and took them by boat to the island. We were greeted by locals from Ile-A-Vache where they carried the benches on their heads up the mountain to the school. Once all the pieces were

(Continued on Page H.)

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Carole
White

“How can you use a Wii to reach people for Jesus Christ?” That question was asked of the assembly at the Iowa District West District Convention at

Camp Okoboji last June.

The Wii game system crosses the generations as we saw evidenced at the convention. Not only did the young pages enjoy it, but many of the delegates of different ages got into the swing of things as they visited the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) booth that had a Wii system set up to try.

So what kind of event could you host that would reach out into your com-

munity for the young, for families, or for the mature adult? Iowa District West LCEF has available to your church for loan a Wii game system to be used at your next outreach event.

Simply contact Carole White to check on the availability of the game system.



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PARISH NURSE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On June 11, the World Health Organization signaled that a global pandemic of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus was under way.

H1N1 virus is a combination of swine and human flu viruses. The virus is transmitted from person to person. None of current cases had exposure to swine. Symptoms of Novel flu are similar to symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting. In adults, emergency warning signs include difficulty breathing, chest pain/pressure, abdominal pain, sudden dizziness, confusion, or severe vomiting.

The current novel influenza flu virus spreads the same way as seasonal flu. The viruses are spread by an ill person coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people can become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it such as door knobs or counters and then touching their mouth or nose. Wipe down surfaces in the home with household disinfectants according to directions on the product label. In most products, surfaces need to stay wet for four to 10 minutes.

Protect yourself and others by following these recommendations:

1. Avoid contact with ill persons.
2. Cover nose and mouth with tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing. Throw used tissues away.
3. After coughing or sneezing, wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand gel.
4. If you are ill, stay home. Don't go to work, school, or travel while ill.

People with H1N1 flu virus are potentially contagious as long as they have symptoms and possibly for up to seven days after they become ill. Younger children might be contagious longer than seven days.

Manufacturers expected to have vaccines for the H1N1 virus available around September or October. Check with your health care provider on when you should get influenza vaccines or if you are due for the pneumococcal vaccine.

May God bless our health and guide the researchers that develop the vaccines that keep us well. (Information obtained from Iowa Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control Web sites.)

*In His Service,
Darlene Rueter, RN
IDW Parish Nurse Rep
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CELEBRATIONS

A NEW HEART

(Continued from Page A.)

trust in Him for our salvation, but we resist any transformation. We still live in the darkness, even though He has called us into His wonderful light.

What if we lived in His light? What if every day we drew upon the power of our baptisms? Luther explained, "Baptism signifies that the old Adam in us should through daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and again, a new man daily come forth and arise who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever." A new person with a new heart—every day!

A pure heart: Every day we can pray with the penitent David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

A peaceful heart: Paul

told the Colossians, "As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."

A focused heart: He told the Ephesians "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightend (focused) in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you."

A spiritual heart: The psalmist said, "Delight yourself in the Lord ... and he will give you the desires of your heart."

What if, one day—every day—Jesus were to become you? What a transformation would take place in your life, in you! You would become—are more—like Jesus!

IOWAY

(Continued from Page F.)

carried to the top, the benches were fastened to the desks to make one unit.

Dad said, "The locals took a lot of pride in helping with the project and wanted to hammer the final nail in the desks to make it their own." Children gathered eagerly around the new desks and sat 10 to a bench when they were completed.

Vacation Bible school (VBS) was the focus for

the second week. Every day we performed a short skit and lesson. Day one was the birth of Jesus. More than 200 children attended. Other lessons included Jesus calming the storm, Jesus dying on the cross for our sins, and Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Children who attended VBS received a craft and a snack each day. The news spread that if you came to VBS you got a free craft and a

snack, so by Friday we had more than 500 children. Needless to say, we were a little outnumbered, but with God's help, we had enough supplies, snacks, and manpower to manage 500-plus kids!

Every day at VBS the children also were taught a memory verse. One day their verse was James 2:5—"Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith

and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him?" As I listened to the children echo the words in Haitian Creole back to the leader, it brought tears to my eyes. That verse is the one important thing they wanted the children to remember. Love Jesus and no matter how poor you are, you will inherit the kingdom of God. Your riches are not found here on earth, but in heaven with Jesus.

We congratulate

(October 2009)

Birthdays

- Oct. 4—Lola Radke, 90, St. Paul, Alta.
- Oct. 12—Lillian Morgan, 100, Zion, Ogden.
- Oct. 14—Irene Lee, 90, St. John, Charter Oak.
- Oct. 17—Hilda Andresen, 90, St. Paul, Ida Grove.
- Oct. 22—Hazel Briesch, 100, St. Paul, Sioux City.
- Oct. 27—Marvin Otto, 90, St. Paul, Alta.
- Oct. 27—Violet Schau, 90, St. Paul, Ida Grove.

Anniversaries

- Oct. 1—Mr. and Mrs. Leo Kuehnast, 65, Zion, Humboldt.
- Oct. 8—Fred and Marcella Ruhnke, 60, Good Shepherd, Fort Dodge.
- Oct. 11—John and Arlene Rank, 50, Zion, Denison.
- Oct. 16—Harry and Violet Hoffman, 60, Trinity, Jefferson.
- Oct. 16—Robert and Dolores Riedel, 60, Trinity, Algona.
- Oct. 18—Glen and Edrie Wellendorf, 50, Zion, Denison.
- Oct. 21—Arnold and Ladonna Brown, 60, St. John, Clarinda.
- Oct. 24—Bob and June Schwiebert, 55, St. Paul, Webster City.
- Oct. 25—Marlo and Norma Henningsen, 50, Zion, Denison.
- Oct. 30—LaVern and Jenny Sunderman, 60, St. John, Clarinda.

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