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# Lutheran Church Extension Fund



## Iowa News

APRIL 2009

### Peace Lutheran Church in Wall Lake

Peace Lutheran Church in Wall Lake recently celebrated its 125th anniversary (1882-2007). "We have had a strong tradition of raising money when there was a need and the congregation would respond positively," said Pastor Roger Carlisle. Over the years Peace devoted significant resources into estate planning and giving. "In 1997, we established an endowment fund which has been a real blessing in accomplishing ministry. For example, each year we have \$2,000 endowed for congregational youth ministry. However, in recent years, a focused annual stewardship emphasis that included a pledge Sunday was overlooked. The church budget was increasing and each month at the council meeting the focus seemed to turn on paying the bills. At times we had cash flow issues during summer months, even borrowing some money from LCEF to cover operating expenses," said Carlisle.



"In an effort to change this pattern, we pursued Consecrated Stewards and scheduled this emphasis in April of 2008. Rev. Bob Riggert, IDW Executive Assistant for Stewardship, worked with our congregation to that end.



The immediate result of Consecrated Stewards saw a pledged increase of 48 giving units within the congregation for which we give thanks. One of the most significant changes that I witnessed," said Carlisle, "is the change of *thought and language* by the leadership of the congregation." Instead of talking about giving money, leadership began talking about being 'consecrated stewards' as disciples of Jesus. "They kept referencing 'consecrated stewards' when utilizing talents and abilities within the congregation and in all areas of their lives. It changed the mindset of many of our members," continued Carlisle.

Throughout the year, Pastor Carlisle witnessed further evidence of spiritual growth and there was no longer a struggle to pay bills. "In fact, at

the end of 2008, we ended up with all bills and missions fulfilled, including an outstanding loan, and we were over \$15,000 in the black. A strong farm economy this year was a contributing factor, but without the stewardship emphasis, the church would not have benefited in the same way."

Peace' Board of Elders wanted to maintain the positive momentum and recommended to the council that a celebration and follow up be observed in April, 2009 (one year later). Rev. Riggert will be returning for a two week refresher emphasis.

"The process is well organized and laid out. It does require several members of the congregation to help do the work of this 4 week emphasis but it is well worth the effort. While stewardship sermons and messages were constant throughout the years, Consecrated Stewards gives members a handle they can constantly relate to in their own stewardship life," continued Carlisle. "I am looking forward to seeing the Spirit's continued work in the members of Peace as they remain *Consecrated Stewards*."

Are you interested in Consecrated Stewards for your members? If so, contact Carole White.



"One of the strengths of the program at Peace was their use of the children's component. The children were very involved in the Consecrated Stewards process," said Rev. Bob Riggert