

Mission Opportunities

A newsletter of resources, events, and ideas to help God's people passionately, intentionally, and faithfully extend the Gospel within our communities, throughout the District, and into all the world!

April 2010



“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!” I suspect that traditional joyous greeting will be echoing throughout the congregations of IDW beginning the first weekend in April and continuing during the month. May the Lord guide all our professional church workers and laity as they proclaim the Good News of the resurrection and its meaning for us today and for eternity. May your ministries and members radiate that joy throughout the year as you live and serve in the local mission field!

Proclaim the resurrection to the ends of the earth – in English! If you have a “heart for service” and you can speak English, LCMS World Mission would love to talk to you about missionary service. More than 200 opportunities to serve in some 30 countries are available—for periods as short as ten days! Among those needed are music and early childhood teachers, doctors and nurses, computer and finance specialists, and agricultural and construction workers. But the largest number of openings are for those who can simply converse with people who want to practice their English skills: U.S. Lutherans who are willing to share their faith as they build relationships with people across the globe. For more information about mission service, go to www.lcmsworldmission.org/service or call LCMS World Mission at 800-433-3954 and ask to speak to a placement counselor.

Need training and encouragement to share your faith? Memorial, Ames will be hosting an evangelism training workshop, “Conversations of Grace,” on Saturday, April 17, 11:00 – 3:00. Participants will have an opportunity to also learn about cross-cultural witnessing as well as opportunities to witness on the ISU campus. For more information contact Brad Aldrich, Cross Pollination Ministries, at brad.aldrich@aol.com or Bessie Fick at bfick1@aol.com.



Assembling health kits for Haiti – an excellent opportunity to engage your congregation and others in the community in a mission project! Extend the love of Christ to a country and people in desperate need through this simple project. Go to http://www.lwml.org/human-care/disaster_relief/index.htm and search under Human Care and Disaster Relief for the February 21, 2010 memo which describes the hygiene kit and how to ship it.

Is there a need for Christian daycare in your local mission field? If so, you would benefit from attending the upcoming Open Arms conference in St. Paul, MN from April 21–May 1. You will receive excellent guidance and assistance in exploring the possibilities and suitability for your area from this Recognized Service Organization of Synod. For more information or to download a registration form, go to their website, <http://openarmsinstitute.com>. Some scholarship help is available.



Three frogs are sitting on a log. One decides to jump off. How many frogs are left on the log? (Give up?) Answer below.

The Ablaze! Partners network has recently been launched. The network identifies itself as “an online community of practice for Lutherans seeking to share the Good News of Jesus.” This new Web site aims to help Lutheran congregational leaders and church body staff become an online community promoting and discussing best practices to improve mission in five basic areas of congregational life: worship, discipleship, outreach, service, and church leadership. Go to <http://www.ablazepartners.net/> for all the details and resources.



Reaching Young Adults - Can Law and Gospel reach 18-30 year-olds effectively since our “feel good” culture has made Law a foreign concept? A fellow mission executive alerted me to a challenging article which I’d invite you to read and share your comments with me. Go to <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/communitylife/evangelism/thegospelforigens.html?start=1>

Just for Fun – As long as we’re talking about this younger generation (from my perspective!), here’s a brief survey from the Pew Research Center that lets you test yourself against characteristics of the Millennial generation -- those born since 1981. Try it out and see how you compare to this emerging generation. Go to: <http://pewresearch.org/millennials/quiz/intro.php>. (Disclaimer: I scored an 18 which is pretty low, but not as low as the typical boomer. Guess I need to spend more time playing video games and get a tattoo and piercing!)

Celebrating the victory,

Rev. Mark Gerken, Executive Assistant for Missions
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Answer: Three. Deciding to jump off is not the same as doing it. Call me today if you’d like help in not only deciding what the Lord is calling you to do, but receive encouragement and accountability to do it!

Sunday School Superintendents and Day School Principals – Each month we will be providing a devotion that you can utilize in your Sunday school opening or weekly chapel service. They will be written by our District missionaries to the Hispanics, Rev. Dan Vogel and Rev. Henry Witte. These devotions are in support of our two-year mission project that we are suggesting for our Sunday schools and day schools, *Amigos en Cristo*.



Rev. Mark Gerken, Executive Assistant for Missions

The Amigos en Cristo campaign is a two-year program with a goal to raise \$20,000 a year to provide scholarships for Hispanic children to attend Lutheran day schools and preschools in Iowa District West.

DISTRICT CHAPEL DEVOTION FOR **“AMIGOS EN CRISTO”**

APRIL 2010

Psalm 91:1-2 GOD IS OUR ETERNAL SHADE

Intro: Look at the many kinds of hats that we have to protect our heads. Do you know how to say “hat” in Spanish? You say “sombrero.” The word “sombra” in Spanish means “shade.” So a “sombrero” is a “shade maker.” That is one reason that we wear hats: to protect our heads from the sun or in other words to be a portable shade maker on top of our heads.

Now what is the best shade that we can find? We have hats, tents, umbrellas, bushes, trees, and roofs of many kinds. We grow, make, and build these things because shade is very important for our health. If we get too much sun and heat, we can become sick and faint or suffer from sunburn or skin cancer. Thus we need to find some way to have shade.

Even more important than shade from the sun, we need a special shade, which will protect us from evil and danger. We need to be protected from those who want to harm us, from those who want to lead us away from God, and from the evil that is within us. However, we cannot make this special shade. Only God can give it to us.

Psalm 91 says: “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” God is like a big hat or a big roof, but even better. He covers us and gives us the shade of His protection. He covers us to protect us from evil and harm. He is a shelter to keep us safe and secure in His love and care.

In order to be a perfect and never ending shelter, God sent His Son Jesus to this earth. Jesus fought against the evil one and took away our sins so that we could be under God’s shelter now and forever. Without Jesus we would have no protection, but He came to earth, died on the cross, and came back to life again so that we can always live in God’s shade of love, forgiveness, and life.

Many people don't know about this shade that God can give us. Many people think that God is angry with them for the wrong that they have done. Many think that God does not care about them or doesn't have time for them. There are many people in Latin America who have heard something about God or Jesus, but still don't live under His protection and love. We need to let them know and teach them about our wonderful God who is able to protect and shade all people in the world.

One way to do this is to help Hispanic children to attend a Lutheran grade school so that everyday they can learn more and more about God and His love. We are taking a special offering for this purpose. Our offerings at chapel for this year will go to help Hispanic children to attend one of our Lutheran schools, just like you do now. God wants all people to live under His care and so we do whatever is possible to share and teach His message to all. May God bless our offerings so that many can live under the shade and protection of His eternal love in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

