



Human Care

JUNE—2009

Iowa District West

“Grace Place” (Appreciating our Shepherds)

October is traditionally “Pastor Appreciation Month” in many church circles. But for Grace Place Retreat Ministries founder and Executive Director Dr. John Eckrich, appreciating our LCMS church workers and helping them “appreciate” in value and service to their ministries is a year-round mission.

“Pastors are very hesitant to ask their congregations for anything that could be seen as asking for something for themselves. But there’s a ripple effect; the congregation benefits too,” said Eckrich, who operated Grace Place on a part-time basis until 2007, when he retired from his medical practice to focus full time on the ministry. “We can’t give this gift (of retreat participation) to our pastors without generous donors who share our vision.” In 1999, Dr. Eckrich created that vision, building on the family retreats he and his wife, Kathy, coordinated at their congregation in St. Louis. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis provided grant money for the pilot retreat.

Today, Grace Place depends on grants and donations to make retreats affordable. Clergy couples pay \$300 for a week’s retreat, plus travel expenses. The actual week’s cost is about \$2,000 per couple. Lutheran businessman Gregg Smith supports this ministry commitment to “shepherding our shepherds.” “I see the challenges and the attrition in the ranks of our pastorates, and something preventative must be done,” said Smith, who is a LCMS member from Florida. “These retreats are faith-driven, Spirit-driven, renewing experiences.” Rupert Dunklau, a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Fremont, NE, and president of the Rupert Dunklau Foundation remarks, “I love my Savior. If my foundation can be of assistance to strengthen our clergy, that’s what I want to do.”

Camp Okoboji is planning to host a Grace Place Retreat in October of 2009. If your congregation would be interested in sending your clergy couple or professional church worker couple, contact Camp Okoboji for details. Don’t wait. Talk to your pastor about it. Don’t let him say that he’s too busy or that he just can’t take the time. It’s as much for your congregation as it is for him! To learn more about Grace Place, visit graceplaceretreats.org or call 314-842-3077.

Summer and “flip-flops” - Not such a good idea....(from LiveScience.com)

Podiatrists warn that flip-flops are responsible for more health problems than any other type of shoe. People who consistently wear flip-flops discover changes in their gait that can lead to sole, heel, and ankle problems. Scrunching one’s toes into a claw to keep the flip-flop on the foot while the heel lifted in the air actually stretches the plantar fascia, the connective tissue that runs from the heel to the toe, causing inflammation, pain along the sole, heel spurs, and even shin splints.

The researchers also found that the volunteers altered their gait by taking shorter strides and by turning their ankles inward to keep the flip-flop from falling off. This turning motion over time can cause long-term ankle and hip problems. Therefore, foot surgeons and doctors recommend the following: 1) Wear shoes with a heel and arch support; 2) Wear sandals that have heel straps or backs to keep the footwear secure and prevent toe clenching; 3) Limit flip-flop use to the beach or pool. Have a healthy summer!

Building Healthy Families (Notes from Lutheran Family Service)

In their “Couple Checkup Book,” Prepare/Enrich researchers report that healthy couples are able to agree on how to spend money; are satisfied with their decisions about savings; don’t have major debt or credit card problems; and make financial decisions together as a team. They are able to strategize a budget, pay bills, and control their spending habits in keeping within their financial limits.



Conversely, here are some symptoms of unhealthy couples: These couples disagree on how to spend money, even argue or fight about it. They are not happy about the way each or both saves (or doesn’t save) money. As a couple, they struggle with major debt, including credit card debt. Instead of working together to make a financial plan, or even make financial decisions, unhealthy couples so often “go it alone” and suffer consequences of being isolated from each other, unable to trust each other. How is it in your marriage? For assistance with these or other relationship concerns, call your closest LFS counselor.

Lutheran Family Service of Iowa has an office near you. Just call their toll free number: 1-800-622-7285.

**FOR YOUR QUESTIONS OR
COMMENTS, CONTACT:**

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Life Thoughts (from Lutherans For Life)

Did you know? There were more than 110,000 abortions last year in Spain, doubling their rate in the last 10 years...

Did you know? Repeat abortions on teenage girls in Britain have risen by nearly 70% (5900 teens had an abortion which was not their first in 2007). The British Pregnancy Advisory Service said it was good, however, that abortion had become more acceptable.

Here’s why taking a stand for Life matters:

In the United States, 3,287 unborn babies are killed through abortion every day.

Every day, women and men are left hurt and grieving due to an abortion decision.

On average, each abortion decision affects a circle of at least 10 other people.

A table prayer for you

Dear Lord,

Accept our gratitude for all the blessings You give,

Guide and direct our daily paths and teach us how to live.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest; may all these gifts to us be blest.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,

And His mercy endures forever. Amen.

