



The InSIDE Word

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A newsletter by and for Southern IL District-LCMS

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Presidential Activities February 2009

- 5 Individual Consultations
- 3 Meetings with Roger Sprengel
- 2 Congregational Meetings
- 4 District Meetings
- 5 Preaching/Speaking engagements
- 1 Presidential Visit
- 1 Issues Etc. Show
- 2.5 Days SID Convention
- 3.5 Days C.O.P.
- 2 Days Vacation

IT IS FINISHED!"

WORLD Magazine recently interviewed Bill Moyers, the PBS journalist, as one in a series of interviews with people who have "had remarkable careers" and are "still active and passionate about their callings" (WORLD, March 14, 2009, pp. 23ff). When they asked him whether he thought the crucifixion of Jesus had any basis in fact, he answered, "I have a strong suspicion that he was crucified, but there's no empirical evidence about it" (p. 25).

Then when editor Marvin Olasky asked him if he believed the resurrection of Jesus actually happened, Mr. Moyers responded, the resurrection "is part of my story and is therefore a necessary part of my faith, but I wouldn't dare suggest it is essential to anybody's faith who doesn't have my experience" (he was raised Southern Baptist, p. 25).

Contrast that approach to the apostolic proclamation in the Book of Acts – "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (2:32). "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (2:36). "Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead – by Him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (4:10-12).

The Apostles were absolutely convinced, not only that Christ had died on the cross, but that three days later God had also raised Him from the dead. Of that they were all witnesses. As John would later write, "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life..." (1 John 1:1), and as Peter would insist, "we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made know to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty..." (2 Peter 1:16). They had more than a suspicion He was crucified. They saw Him! They touched His risen and living body! They heard Him and looked on Him.

On this basis they urged whomever would listen to "repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus..." (Acts 3:19-20). This was something more than simply an experience they would not dare suggest to someone else. They had the empirical evidence. They were eyewitnesses to an event, to actual facts.

Indeed, the death and resurrection of Jesus are the central facts of history, the hinges on which everything else turns. Jesus is God in our flesh, carrying the weight of sin and death for us. He received the full load. He took it all. His dying words assure us, "it is finished" (John 19:30). Paid in full is the debt of our sin. "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree," Peter later wrote, "that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). All of that is finished, for us, in Him.

It really happened. Satan would love to turn the clock back, take it away, change it. But he cannot, for “it is finished.” Nor can anyone change the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. “The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree,” was the way they boldly proclaimed Him. “God exalted Him at His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:30-32). Because Jesus died and rose, the Apostles preached repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name. For everyone who realizes, “I am a sinner – I cannot change myself,” the death and resurrection of Jesus bring times of refreshing from God Himself, that God forgives also our sin, and that He gives us life in His name, all because of what Jesus has done.

Bill Moyers concluded his interview by saying, “Someone recently asked me what the moment was when I became a Christian. And I told them, I never did become a Christian. I can’t turn the other cheek. I can’t sell all my possessions and give them away. I can’t love my enemy. I am not a Christian because I can’t do what Jesus asks. But, I care deeply about that figure. He has instructed my faith; He looms large in my life. But I can’t do what He asks me to do, so I can’t legitimately claim to be a Christian” (p. 25).

Is that humility speaking? Or a form of doubt and uncertainty? We will allow God to have the last word. It appears, however, that because he is not sure of what Jesus has done by His death and resurrection, Moyers is left with his own works, his own deeds. And therefore he cannot count himself a Christian because he cannot “do what Jesus asks.”

Contrast this with the faith of a Martin Luther, who, commenting on Galatians 2:20, wrote, “Here you have the true meaning of justification described, together with an example of the certainty of faith. ‘I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me’ ... Now these words, ‘who loved me,’ are filled with faith. Anyone who can speak this brief pronoun ‘me’ in faith and apply it to himself as Paul did, will, like Paul, be the best of debaters against the Law. For He did not give a sheep or an ox or gold or silver for me. But He who was completely God gave everything He was, gave Himself for me—for me, I say, a miserable and accursed sinner. I am revived by this ‘giving’ of the Son of God into death, and I apply it to myself. This applying is the true power of faith” (Luther’s Works, volume 26, on Galatians 2:20).

It is not that we never doubt. We often do. It is not that we know our works can never measure up. They don’t. But when we doubt, when we despair of what we have done, we look to Jesus to see what He has done. “For me,” Paul says, “for me” Christ died and rose. His work was finished “for me!” With this sure hope, with this unshakeable confidence in Him, we live.

A blessed Holy Week and a joyous Easter to all!

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

ZION, BETHALTO—Entering self study process to prepare to call Senior Pastor

ST. JOHN, CHESTER— Calling Candidate as Assistant Pastor, exclusive request for Adam Filipek (St. Louis)

ZION, FARMERSVILLE—(Rev. Walter Byerley is serving)

CHRIST, FAIRFIELD—(Served by seminary students, and profs)

TRINITY, HARVEL—Called Rev. Stuart Rethwisch, Holy Cross, Wartburg. (Received)

TRINITY, NASHVILLE—Calling candidate as Associate Pastor/Principal, exclusive request for Russell Johnson, Fort Wayne

IMMANUEL, OKAWVILLE—Pastor Lloyd Helland on sick leave, will resign for health reasons. Pastor Darwin Schrader serving as interim.

ST. SALVATOR, VENEDY/ST. PETER, NEW MEMPHIS—Calling Seminary Graduate

SID PASTOR’S CALLS RECEIVED/ACCEPTED/RETURNED

Rev. Stuart Rethwisch of Holy Cross, Wartburg to Trinity, Harvel, IL. (Received)

Rev. Nathan Meador of Zion, Staunton to St. John’s, Plymouth, WI. (Received)

Rev. James Kress of Our Savior, Carmi to Redeemer, Englewood, FL. (Received)

PRAYER REQUESTS



For **Vicar Terrence O'Brien's father** who was taken to the hosp. unexpectedly on Jan. 20. Vicar O'Brien is at Our Redeemer, Golconda.

For the **Mission Efforts** going on in Harrisburg, Illinois.

For **Marian Martens**, former SID Treasurer, who is now under the care of Hospice.

For **Cathy Bevirt and Melissa Combs**, teachers at Holy Cross, Collinsville, for strength and courage while both are fighting cancer.

Please keep our brothers and sisters serving our country in your prayers

Active duty Chaplains from the SID: **Major Gregory Jans**, **CDR Gregory N. Todd**, and **LT. COL. David Wilshek**.

For **Khotsi Tswaedi**, son of Bishop David and Lucy Tswaedi, Southern Africa, in the U.S. Army, deployed to Iraq.

Lt. Commander Craig Muehler (brother of Cindy Nebel) US Navy Chaplain now serving in San Diego.

Lt. Carl Muehler (brother of Cindy Nebel) US Navy Chaplain now serving at Norfolk, VA.

Capt. Joshua Henschen (son of Ron and Ellen Henschen, teachers in Edwardsville) at Ft. Hood, TX.

Capt. Drew Ponivas (son of Nancy Ponivas, teacher at Zion, Bethalto) is stationed at Ft. Benning, GA..

MM1 John Ponivas (son of Nancy Ponivas, teacher at Zion, Bethalto) will be deployed for 6 months on the USS Albuquerque.

Lt. Col. Robin Schultze (daughter-in-law of Shirley Schwartzkopf) is now at Fort McNair, DC. as a National Defense University Nurse.

Sgt. Matthew Kasten (son of Steve and Marge Kasten, Hoyleton, IL.) U.S. Army has returned to Baghdad for 18 mo.

Capt. Anthony Skeesick (son of Pastor Dale and Kathy Skeesick, St. Peter, Prairietown) serving in the US Air Force has been deployed to Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. John Pepin (son-in-law of Pastor [Emeritus] and Lois Eckert) has returned from Iraq -Praise God.

A1C Steven Long (grandson of Pastor & Janet Kumm, Trinity, Millstadt) in now serving in the Air Force in Lake Hill, England.

Please call Donna at 618-234-4767 to add your prayer request, or update the information above.

PRAISE REPORTS:

Priase God and bless the twin daughters of Pastor and Laura Leistico of Evansville/Ruma. **Erin Rose Marie** and **Sophia Lorene** were born February 17.

Praise God and bless the birth of Eli Andrew Ponivas on February 16, grandson of Lynn and Nancy Ponivas, Zion, Bethalto.

Praise God and bless all the SID Convention Attendees for a rewarding convention.

PASTORS' ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED

The following pastors celebrated anniversaries of their ordination into the Holy Ministry in **February** and received certificates. If you, or someone you know had an anniversary (20, 25, 30, 35, etc.) during the month of **February** and their name is not on this list, please call Donna at the District Office so this can be taken care of right away. Thank you.

Rev. Erwin Kolb

60 years

Feb. 7, 2009

(No anniversaries in March)

Schools Calling for Teachers/Administrators

Bethalto, Zion	Early Childhood Director
Collinsville, Good Shepherd	designated Jasmine and Justine Biermann (CUW) Teachers – grade 1 and 7 Called Cory Emily (Kansas City, KS) 8 th grade/Asst. Prin.
Columbia, St. Paul	E.C. Director (part-time)
Evansville, Christ Our Savior LHS	Administrator
Godfrey, Faith	Principal / DCE
Hoffman, Trinity	Principal/Teacher
Jacob, Christ	Called Jeffery Wallace (St. Joseph, MI) Principal/Teacher
Nashville, Trinity/St. John	Request for Seminarian Russell Johnson , Associate Pastor/Principal
Prairietown, St. Peter	Principal / Teacher Teacher
St. John, Red Bud	Child Care Director
Steelville, St. Mark	Principal / Teacher
Troy, St. Paul	Administrator 7-8 th grade Teacher
Unity, East St. Louis	Teacher – grade 6

Mr. Terry Schmidt, formerly of the Southern Illinois District (Trinity, Edwardsville), was presented with an outreach award from the Lutheran Education Association in the chapel service at the International Center on March 3. Mr. Gary Spieler, principal at Zion, Belleville, presented the award.



Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School Choir helped to lead the chapel service at the International Center on March 3, 2009.



Rev. Mitchel Schuessler, formerly of Bethlehem – Ferrin and most recently of Immanuel – Altamont, IL, was installed on February 15 as Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Troy, Illinois by President Herbert



Mueller. Pastors assisting with the installation included (back row, left to right) Pastor Kirk Clayton, Zion-Mascoutah; Pastor Darwin Schrader, Interim Pastor at Immanuel-Okawville; Pastor Daniel Barbey, Immanuel-Mt. Olive; Pastor David Fielding, Hope-Granite City; Pastor James Hoppes, Emeritus, Collinsville; Chaplain Thomas Elbert, USAF, Scott AFB, Belleville; (front row, left to right) Pastor James Ritter, Vacancy Pastor at Troy; Pastor Schuessler; Pastor Leonard Laetsch, Hope-Highland; President Herbert

Bishop David Tswaedi speaking to the District Convention
February 20, 2009.



Bishop David Tswaedi preaching at Our Savior, Carbondale, March 1, 2009. Mr. Masibi and Bishop Tswaedi traveled around the Southern Illinois District preaching and speaking at various congregations and venues from February 22 through March 8 in order to strengthen, by God's grace, our mission partnership with the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa.



Bishop David Tswaedi preaching at St. John's in Chester, March 1, 2009.

Pastor Mark Willig, Bishop David Tswaedi, Mr. Mpolaise Masibi, Principal Chris Urquhart, President Herbert Mueller, at St. John's, Chester, March 1, 1009.



Southern Illinois District Pastoral Conference

Spring Session 2009 – A One Day Conference

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Camp Wartburg, Near Waterloo, Illinois

(5705 LRC Road, just off Maeystown Road 4 miles SW of Waterloo, just past Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wartburg)

A Theological Approach to Unity

Main Presenter – Rev. Matthew Harrison, Executive Director of LCMS World Relief/Human Care together with Pr. Herb Mueller

Main Conference Day - Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Conference will be held in the new dining hall at the top of the hill. Drive all the way through the camp, past the new dorms, to the new dining hall parking lot.

7:30 – 8:00 Registration & Refreshments (Confession/Absolution available)
8:00 – 8:45 Matins
8:45 – 9:00 Break (Confession/Absolution available)
9:00 – 10:30 Presentation (Session One) - “A Theological Approach to Unity”
10:30 – 11:00 Break (Confession/Absolution available)
11:00 – 12:30 Divine Service – Hosted by Trinity, Worden
12:30 – 1:30 Lunch
1:30 – 3:00 Presentation (Session Two)
3:00 – 3:30 Break (Confession/Absolution available)
3:30 – 4:00 District Business
4:00 – 5:00 Presentation (Session Three)
5:00 – 5:30 Q & A (and unfinished district business)
5:30 – 6:15 Vespers
6:15 – 7:00 Dinner
7:00 Gemuetlichkeit in the Dining Hall
Tuesday, late evening – Travel (if not spending the night)

Call Camp Wartburg (618.939.7715) to make arrangements to stay overnight at the Camp. You will need to bring your own bedding. There is also a Super 8 Motel in Waterloo, about 5 miles from Camp, located at 112 Warren Drive, just off IL-3 at the north end of Waterloo. Check it out on the internet (www.super8.com) or call 618.939.2020 to make your reservation. The conference will be held in the new dining hall, a first class facility with plenty of meeting and eating space.

Cost - \$40.00 registration fee for Pastors and Deaconesses and DCEs (same as last year)
\$16.00 for retired pastors, vicars and wives (cost of food)
(Please use registration form included in Pastors Packet.)

Volunteers are the “Beating Hearts” of Orphan Grain Train

If it weren't for volunteers, Orphan Grain Train would not continue as the viable force it is in meeting humanitarian needs. If it weren't for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, Orphan Grain Train (OGT) would have been a short term memory. In effect, volunteers are the “beating hearts” of OGT.

The Missouri-Illinois Division of OGT only took a year of operation before nearly 300 volunteers had made their mark on advancing the cause. That was more than a few years ago, and volunteers continue to flock to the former Concordia Seminary structure in south St. Louis each week.

High school students have been making OGT their service project as well as, couple's clubs, men's groups and ladies societies to meet the needs of people who long for the Gospel touch through OGT.

March could be a great month for new volunteers. Thresa Jacobsmeyer, who coordinates volunteers for the division, says there are plans for a “group of 10-15 young people from Wichita, Kansas coming to the center on Tuesday, March 17.” She adds that an official from the International Center of the LCMS has checked into a group of more than 50 volunteers descending on the division site in March as part of a work retreat.

There is always something to do on-premises. Clothing is sorted and cleaned, donated items are checked, non-perishable food is collected and prepared for distribution to local food pantries that foster Lutheran connections. Cosmetic upgrades include painting and yard work. When a shipment is prepared for overseas delivery, items must be packaged, loaded, and inventoried prior to shipment. All this—and much more—happens because of volunteers just like you!

There are costs to be met for shipping. It usually runs into several thousand dollars at bare minimum. This, too, is met due to the voluntary efforts of individuals

who may not be able to travel to St. Louis to physically participate. So they give from their hearts and wallets.

The OGT Missouri-Illinois Division Distribution Center is an attraction even beyond its historical significance. It is a short drive from the LCMS headquarters and the International LLL main office. Concordia Publishing House is a half-block away, The historic Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, started by C.F. W. Walther, stands across the street from the center (in fact, the center is the congregations former parish hall and former Concordia Seminary building. Downtown St. Louis and the Gateway Arch are minutes away.

But, far beyond all the historical importance and location of the site is the work that is accomplished each week thanks to dedicated volunteers.

To find out more about volunteering, contact Thresa Jacobsmeyer at 314-838-7150 or email to: Mrsjake4@sbcglobal.net

Bethlehem, Ferrin Sunday School Purchased 42 pairs of Shoes!

The Sunday School children from Bethlehem, Ferrin used the money from their 2008 offerings to purchase 42 pairs of athletic shoes. The shoes were donated to the St. Louis Children's Hosp. mobile health program called the Healthy Kids Express. The program provides health screenings to St. Louis area children. The van goes to schools—mainly in indigent areas—and gives vision, hearing, blood lead, anemia, scoliosis and dental exams and immunizations—all free of charge. The nurses on the van say that it breaks their heart to see kids come in the van in frigid weather wearing shoes with holes in the, shoes too small or too big for them or a boy wearing “Dora” shoes. They suggested having a supply of new athletic shoes in various sizes for 1st to 8th graders would be a great service project for the Sunday School.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & EVENTS IN AND FOR THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT 2009

MARCH

- 1-7 National Lutheran Schools Week
- 8 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 3:00 p.m.
- 9 Lutheran Older Adults Retreat Committee, 11:00 a.m.
- 12-14 LEA Administrators' Conference—Atlanta, GA
- 21 Board of Directors and all Boards Day of Orientation at Good Shepherd, Collinsville, 9:00 a.m.
- 26 Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), 6:30 p.m. at Zion, Belleville
- 29 District LLL Convention, St. John's, Red Bud, IL. 2:00 p.m.

APRIL

- 2 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 10 Good Friday—District Office Closed
- 12 Easter—Celebrate— HE IS RISEN INDEED
- 16 LWML District Board of Directors, 9:30 a.m.
- 21 Call Day at Concordia Theological Seminary— Ft. Wayne, 7:00 p.m.
- 22 Call Day at Concordia Seminary—St. Louis, 7:00 p.m.
- 23 Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), 6:30 p.m. at Zion, Belleville
- 28 SID Spring Pastor's Conference at Camp Wartburg—All Day

MAY

- 2 SID Student Aid Golf Benefit
- 4 Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9:00 a.m.
- 7 Prison Ministry Conference—Camp Wartburg
- 7 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 19 SID LLL Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 25 Memorial Holiday—District Office closed
- 28 Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), 6:30 p.m. at Zion, Belleville

JUNE

- 2 Pastor's Conference Committee Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 4 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 12-13 Senior H.S. Youth Gathering—Carlinville
- 17-19 All Illinois Administrators' Conference—Camp Wartburg
- 25 Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), 6:30 p.m. at Zion, Belleville