



Lutheran Retreat for Older Adults to be held at Pere Marquette

A Lutheran Retreat for Older Adults will be held Wednesday and Thursday, April 21-22, at Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton, Ill. The retreat is sponsored by Older Adult Ministry of the Southern Illinois District and Lutheran Senior Services "Older Adults Living Life to the Fullest."

Members of the district are invited to join others, 50 years and older, at this retreat for growth opportunities in faith, fellowship, and fun! The theme for the retreat is "Growing in Christ XII."

The keynote speaker is Dr. Reed Lessing, director of the Graduate School at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He is also the author of numerous journal articles, sermon studies, and a CTCR document and Bible study titled "A Lutheran Response to the Left Behind Series."

During the banquet on Wednesday evening, an interview with the famous reformer and pastor Dr. Martin Luther will be portrayed by Rev. John Lukomski and Lynn Lukomski. Rev. Lukomski is pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church in New Athens, Ill., and Trinity Lutheran Church in Darmstadt, Ill. Lynn is the principal at Immanuel Lutheran School in Okawville, Ill.



True mission efforts—Two brothers who are students at Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School in East St. Louis received Holy Baptism on Sunday, Feb. 14, at Unity Lutheran Church. Pictured are, in back, Vicar Willie Stallworth, and Christy Oberdeck (fourth-grade teacher) and, in front, Darnetta Jenkins with her two sons, Da'Marcus (fourth grade) and DaMonte (kindergarten).

Chaplain Douglas Nicely will be the plenary Bible study leader. He is the chief chaplain at Memorial Hospital in Belleville. He is also the voice on KFYO Radio (850 AM) for "In His Steps" and "Do You Have a Minute?"

The registration fee is \$89.50 and is due by April 14. Registration forms are available at the Southern Illinois District Web site at sidlcms.org. Send registration forms to Mary Preuss, 6823 Kensington Drive, Maryville, IL 62062; 618-288-9525.

To make reservations at Pere Marquette Lodge, call

618-786-2331 and mention you are with "A Lutheran Retreat for Older Adults."

SID Student Aid Golf Scramble

The sixth annual Bob Streuter Memorial Golf Scramble will take place on Saturday, May 1, at the Roland Barkau Golf Course in Okawville.

Bob Streuter was an avid golfer and served for four years on the Planning Committee for this tournament. Bob also was Southern Illinois District treasurer for six years and served on the district

Finance Committee.

Our heavenly Father
(Continued on Page B.)

EDITOR

Send news, articles, and photos:

Lois M. Engfehr
2408 Lebanon Ave.
Belleville, IL 62221

Or e-mail to:
sidlw@earthlink.net

June/July deadline:
April 15

Photos should be submitted in JPEG format with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi.



On Sunday, Jan. 24, Rev. Darwin Schrader was installed at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Okawville as its interim pastor. For this special occasion, Southern Illinois District President Herbert Mueller preached the sermon on "We Are Members in One Body" (1 Cor. 12:12-31) and also conducted the Rite of Installation.



On Dec. 13, 2009, Rev. Dean Spooner was installed as pastor of Our Savior, Carmi. Clergy participating in the installation are, from left, front row, Revs. Ryan Fehrmann, Grace, Paris, Ill.; Spooner; Kirk Horstmeyer, Immanuel, Evansville, Ind.; Vicar Matthew Tassey, Faith Lutheran Mission, Saline County; back row, Michael Kettner, Christ, Jacob; Theodore Mayes, Immanuel, Murphysboro; and Thomas Kramer, Hope, Mount Carmel.



On Dec. 13, 2009, Rev. Randall Moritz was installed as pastor of Zion, Pinckneyville, and Trinity, Conant. Clergy participating in the installation are, from left, front row, Revs. Leonard Laetsch, Hope, Highland; Moritz; David Wiest, Evansville, Ind.; Ron Jansen, vacancy pastor at Zion and Trinity; back row, John Taggatz, St. John, Baldwin; E. James Rivett, Our Redeemer, Golconda; Carl Miller, chaplain, Tamms Prison; Timothy Zechiel, St. Paul, Wine Hill and Immanuel, West Point; and District President Herbert Mueller.

GOLF SCRAMBLE

(Continued from Page A.) called Bob to his home in 2008 after a fight with cancer. Bob was a member of Immanuel, Murphysboro. The Planning Committee has dedicated this and future scrambles in honor of Bob Streuter.

Tee-off time on May 1 will be at 12:30 p.m. A light lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Once again the cost will remain at \$75 per player.

Registration forms will be sent to all past participants and to all congregations or by calling the district office at 618-234-4767. Information also can be found on the district Web site at www.sidlcms.org.



He Descended Into What?

by Herbert C. Mueller

Perhaps one of the strangest lines in the Apostles' Creed, at least to our modern ears, is the phrase, "He descended into hell." Not only are there many misconceptions of this teaching running around today, you also will find lots of people claiming to be Christian who deny even the existence of hell, much less Christ's going there for whatever reason.

As we continue our study of the creed, let's look at the last problem first. Scripture clearly teaches a number of times that hell was not intended for people but has been "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). God does not arbitrarily or capriciously damn people to hell, but unbelievers, by their rejection of Christ and of God's salvation, are caught up in the judgment prepared for Satan and his minions, who have ever been trying to corrupt and destroy what God made good.

Scripture often describes hell as a place of fire and torment, but the worst part about it is that God has withdrawn His love and grace. There is no more opportunity for repentance, no more chance of escape. There



Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.
District President

is no love in hell, but it is a place where, as Jesus says, "their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48). So, hell is very real, in the worldview of Scripture.

So, what was Jesus doing in His "descent into hell," which we confess in the creed? Some believe it simply means He went to the place of the dead. Others will opine that He went there to be further tortured by Satan in some way.

Biblically speaking, both of these approaches are wholly inadequate.

Christ's suffering was complete when He said, on the cross, "It is finished," and then died (John 19:30).

Nor did Jesus go there somehow to strike a bargain with the devil.

Actually, there is only one Scripture that direct-

ly refers to Jesus' descent into hell, but this Scripture is clear enough in what it says. In his first letter, Peter has been talking about Christians suffering for doing good. Then he explains, "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which [that is, having been killed and then made alive again by the Spirit] He went and preached [in this case, made proclamation] to the spirits in prison ..." (1 Peter 3:18-19).

Therefore, we believe that sometime after the suffering was over, after the death and burial, AND after Jesus was made alive again, but before He showed Himself as raised from the dead, Jesus went to make proclamation to the spirits in prison, that is, the devil and his angels in hell. What would Jesus have to say to them? Was He there to give anyone a second chance to repent? Definitely not. Scripture is clear here too.

Jesus descended into hell to proclaim His victory over sin, death, and hell. He was very much alive again, a fact which brings an end to all the devil's schemes. In one of our Easter hymns we sing: "The foe was triumphant when on Calvary the Lord of creation was nailed to

the tree. In Satan's domain did the hosts shout and jeer, for Jesus was slain, whom the evil ones fear. But short was their triumph; the Savior arose, and death, hell and Satan He vanquished, His foes. The conquering Lord lifts His banner on high; He lives, yes, He lives, and will nevermore die" (LSB 480, stanzas 2-3).

Imagine the scene: Christ has been killed on the cross. He's now dead and buried, gone forever, the devil thinks. Would there have been a victory party in hell? Then, early Sunday, there's a knock on the door. No, the door comes crashing in, and there is Jesus, alive in all His glory, loudly proclaiming His victory, clearly informing Satan of His destiny in the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14).

Are we imagining too much? This much is clear: by His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ has defeated the evil one for us. As long as we are in Christ by faith, we need never be afraid of being caught up in the devil's fate. We don't need the details, our confession

(Continued on Page E.)

Budgets and missions

by Roger Sprengel

So Where Does the Money Come from and Where Does It Go?

The Southern Illinois District Board of Directors set an annual budget each year (our fiscal year begins and ends on Jan. 15) based on the pledges from our 96 supporting congregations.

Congregational commitments to the district have decreased 7 percent during the past four years. Additional income is received through *Lutheran Witness* subscriptions, office rent, LCEF reimbursements, and the state of Illinois (prison chaplaincies).

The board of directors also determines the percentage of contributions that are sent to support our international church body, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The percentage was reduced to 27 percent for 2010 (a decrease of 1 percent from previous years).

So, here's what the budgeted expenses look like for the current fiscal year 2010:



Roger Sprengel
Schools and Executive Assistant

(Note: The Synod contribution is based on 27 percent of congregational commitments of \$935,000.)

District Missions—

Unity Lutheran School, Saline County mission start, campus ministries at SIUC and SIUE, prison ministries (26 locations), and mission board meetings.

District Services—

General office and support staff, salaries, travel, building utilities and maintenance, equipment, postage, stationery, and supplies.

Special Services—

The Lutheran Witness and Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

Mission Board Responsibilities

The Southern Illinois District Mission Board has a tremendous responsibility to oversee a significant number and variety of ministries throughout the district! Prison ministries alone account for 26 locations and 55 percent of the budget. Rev. James Rivett and Rev. Jeff Nehrt coordinate the prison ministry sites and report regularly to the board.

The latest effort is to establish a prison ministry task force to pray for and support this work. Many of our prison ministry sites and workers are volunteers who have a passion for proclaiming the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

The "Freed in Christ" program, directed by Deaconess Sandy Bowers, provides physical and spiritual support for prison inmates as they return to society (non-violent, no sex offenders). A total of 80 percent of the support for this program comes from grants and gifts!

As our mission school at Unity, East St. Louis, continues to grow, so does the efforts to provide funding for staff and programs. The district budget supplies only \$37,400 of the school's \$650,000 budget.

Many congregations and individuals, both in Southern Illinois and throughout our Synod,

give directly to Unity through additional support opportunities.

The mission board also attends to our campus ministries at both Southern Illinois University sites. The budget supports a full-time staff person at Carbondale and supports the staff at Trinity in serving the Edwardsville campus.

The board also assists congregations in beginning new church starts at strategic locations in the district. Your budgeted dollars are currently supplying a vicar at Our Redeemer, Golconda, serving a new church plant in the Eldorado/Harrisburg area. This is the ONLY Lutheran church in Saline County.

Notice that I haven't even mentioned the support that the Southern Illinois District (SID) gives to the Lutheran Church of South Africa (LCSA)! The SID and LCSA have been in partnership for more than 10 years. This past year, our South Africa Task Force sent the LCSA \$40,000 in financial support—NONE of which comes from our budget, but instead is raised through the efforts of the task force!

Last school year, more than \$181,000 was contributed directly to Unity

through congregations, schools, and individuals—

(Continued on Page E.)

Total Expenses	\$1,090,774	
District Missions	375,800	(35%)
LCMS (Synod)	252,450	(23%)
District Services	395,801	(36%)
Special Services	66,723	(6%)



'Freed in Christ' by Deaconess Sandra Bowers

Ask just about any Christian what "Freed in Christ" means, and they would no doubt talk about the freedom from sin, death, and the devil that Christ has won for us. However, for Deaconess Sandy Bowers, it means that and more.

"Freed in Christ" is a Southern Illinois District (SID) Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregation-based prisoner re-entry program designed to bring approved offenders back into the community following incarceration or in lieu of imprisonment. There are approximately 40,000 federal and state parolees in Illinois, about 4,000 of them released to Southern Illinois.

"Freed in Christ" teaches each ex-offender in the program about Christ's love for them. This Bible-based program, offered through local congregations, pastors, and volunteers, provides both spiritual and practical means for helping ex-offenders become successful members of their community.

The Southern Illinois District invites ex-offenders and their families into one of their 96 local churches and provides them with a three-person "Freed in Christ" volunteer support group.

This group prays with these Christian brothers and sisters, invites them to worship and church activities, and conducts a weekly, ready-made "Freed in Christ" Bible study with them. Within this spiritually nurturing setting, the support group helps them determine their needs, set attainable goals, and discover their God-given gifts.

While befriending and encouraging them, the support group also directs them toward local resources for food, clothing, transportation, education, and employment.

The SID also works with case managers from Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois to develop an overall plan to meet many of the ex-offender's re-entry needs. This may include counseling, re-integration with family, making referrals for any substance abuse difficulties, and any other support programs that will assist in enabling successful community life during the re-entry process.

Deaconess Bowers and the Prison Ministry of the Southern Illinois District believe that, with God's help, the recidivism rate in Illinois can be lowered. That begins by teaching ex-offenders right think-

ing, responsible behavior, and accountability for their words and actions. Combine that with role-modeling healthy relationships and behaviors, providing practical resources, and bringing God's words of hope and healing, they hope each participant may know what it truly means to be "Freed in Christ."

Deaconess Sandy Bowers is the director of "Freed in Christ" for the Southern Illinois District Prison Ministry.

'HE DESCENDED INTO WHAT?'

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says, but "it is enough if we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation and the jaws of hell" (Formula of Concord IX, Concordia: A Reader's Edition, p. 681).

Now that is some truly good news! Christ's victory in His resurrection from the dead becomes ours by faith. There's the comfort we celebrate on Easter, April 4 this year.

And because Easter is a season, next month, we'll return to the creed to consider: "The third day He rose again from the dead." A blessed Easter to all!

BUDGET & MISSIONS

(Continued from Page D.)

mostly in the SID. The total amount of gifts needed for the current school year has doubled as additional staff and a newly renovated facility have been added to the program serving 115 students.

Additional gifts have been made to the already stated missions within the Southern Illinois District through dedicated pledges and a generous bequest from the Marian Martens estate.

Almost \$50,000 in additional giving has been realized within the past six months and given directly to support these deserving mission opportunities previously mentioned!

God Provides

It is said that, "Man plans, God provides." It is with God's provision that these mission opportunities exist and have been supported through generous gifts by members throughout the Southern Illinois District.

When we look at our budget, well over half supports the direct work of missions in the district and throughout the Synod. In addition, our members have committed themselves to supporting these efforts over and above the regular budget. To God be all praise and glory!

NEWS

LWML scholarships available

The Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is offering scholarships to students from the Southern Illinois District who are preparing for full-time service in the church. If you hold membership in an LCMS Southern Illinois District congregation, you may apply for one of the following scholarships:

Mite Project Scholarships

One of LWML mite grants for the 2008-10 biennium is for seminary scholarships to become pastors. Four \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded in June 2010 for the 2010-11 academic year to four men preparing for the pastoral ministry.

Student Assistance Fund Scholarships

These scholarships are given to church workers who take graduate courses through a synodical school or to seminary students. If funds permit, scholarship money also may be provided to support undergraduate students in professional church worker programs in an LCMS college. The money in the Student Assistance Funds comes from interest earned from bequest monies, memorials, and joy gifts that have been invested in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

Application forms for all scholarships are available on the LWML Web site at www.sidlwml.org and by either e-mail or regular mail. Send e-mail requests for applications to danmicroth@charter.net. Send mail requests and a self-addressed envelope to:

Mickey Roth
110 Foxbrush Drive
Belleville, IL 62221

To be considered, the completed application must be returned by May 1.

District LLL to convene April 11

The District Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) convention is set for Sun-



day, April 11, at Messiah Lutheran Church, Carlyle.

The meeting begins at 2 p.m., followed by a presentation by Dr. Mark Larson, director of U.S. Ministries for Lutheran Hour Ministries. He oversees the production of "The Lutheran Hour®," "Para el Camino," and "Woman to Woman" radio programs, the ministry's print outreach materials, ministry fulfillment and

referral services, and the Men's NetWork, an online program to help congregations reconnect with men and build local men's ministries.

A supper will be served after the presentation, and students from Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School will provide the evening entertainment.

For more information, contact Jim Roeckman at jroeckman@yahoo.com.



St. John's Lutheran Church in Red Bud welcomed seven adults as communicant members through the Rite of Confirmation and 11 of their children as baptized members in a worship service on Transfiguration Sunday, Feb. 14. These adults completed an instruction course taught by St. John's pastors, Rev. Mark Nebel and Rev. Russell Koen. Pictured are, from left, front row, Jim Schluter, Jackie Schluter, Crystal Deterding, Amanda Falkenhain, and Kevin Roy; second row, Rev. Russell Koen and Rev. Mark Nebel. Not pictured are James and Amanda Liefer.



Messiah, Carlyle, hosts 'Rooted and Established in Love' conference

A conference titled "Rooted and Established in Love," with a focus on strengthening families, will be held April 24 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Carlyle. The conference will offer biblically sound counsel, anchoring homes in God's grace in Christ.

The conference is based on Eph. 3:16-19: "I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, being filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Speakers will address family worship and devotional life, prayer, setting godly relationship boundaries, discipline of children, raising unapologetically godly men and women, identifying roles after divorce and loss of spouse, and more.

Topics for every kind of family will be offered, including empty-nesters, young or old, whether struggling with parenting challenges or other spiritual issues, family, single, or widow(er). All will find topics geared toward helping build homes on

Christ the Savior. Participants will choose to hear four topics from a selection of 12.

The conference begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and concludes after closing devotions at 2:30 p.m.

The cost of registration is \$7 per participant and includes lunch. Babysitting will be provided at no charge. You may register by calling 618-594-3912 or by sending e-mail to carlylemic@sbcglobal.net. The registration deadline is April 17.

Concordia Publishing House will have a booth with family parenting and devotional resources available.

Messiah Lutheran Church is located at 1091 13th St., Carlyle, IL 62231; 618-594-3912; carlylemic@sbcglobal.net.

Send in your news

The Southern Illinois District Edition of *The Lutheran Witness* is designed for you—the pastor, teacher, layperson.

Send news about your congregation, school, or an individual's achievements to Editor, 2408 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221; or e-mail sidlw@earthlink.net. Photos must be 300 dpi and e-mailed separately.

Calendar of events

April

- 1—Maundy Thursday
- 2—Good Friday
- 4—Easter
- 7—Office and Personnel Committee, 4 p.m.
- 8—Youth Advisory Committee, 2 p.m.
- 8—Board for Congregational Support, 5:30 p.m.
- 11—District LLL Convention, Messiah, Carlyle, 2 p.m.
- 15—SID LWML Board of Directors, 9:30 a.m.
- 15—"See The Miracle" Pastors' Lunch at Unity School in East St. Louis.
- 15—Finance Committee meeting, 5 p.m.
- 17—SID Board of Directors, 9 a.m.
- 19—Fund Advisory Committee meeting, 4:30 p.m.
- 21-22—Lutheran Older Adult Retreat at Pere Marquette
- 22—Stewardship Advisory Committee, 4:30 p.m.
- 27—Call Day at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
- 28—Call Day at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.
- 6—Prison Ministry Workshop at Camp Wartburg.
- 6—S.A.M.T.F., 7 p.m.
- 7—Central Illinois District/Southern Illinois District Staff Meeting, Springfield, Ill.
- 8—Pastors Spring Conference and Day of Prayer, St. Paul, Columbia.
- 13—"See The Miracle" Lunch, Noon at Unity School in East St. Louis.
- 16—"See The Miracle" Sunday Dinner, 1 p.m. at Unity School in East St. Louis.
- 20—"See The Miracle" VIP Dinner (you must have an invitation) location TBA
- 21-24—Floor Committee meetings at the IC.
- 31—Holiday; district office closed.

June

- 1—Pastoral Conference Program Committee, 9 a.m.
- 3—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 12—Mission Board meeting, 9 a.m.

July

- 1—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 9-17—LCMS Convention, Houston, Texas
- 31—District Board of Directors, 9 a.m.

August

- 4—L.O.A. Advisory Committee, 6:30 p.m.
- 5—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 3—Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9 a.m.
- 5—Lutheran Older Adult Advisory Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m.

CHURCH/PEOPLE

Church/people news in Southern Illinois

Concordia University System colleges and universities are a special gift to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It has been said many times but it's worth repeating: A church body that teaches is a church body in mission!

April 18 has been designated as **Concordia Sunday**, a day to celebrate LCMS colleges and universities. They help prepare individuals to serve the church as pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education and outreach, deaconesses, lay ministers, and directors of family life ministry and parish music. They also prepare individuals to serve the community as Christian leaders in business, education, nursing, pharmacy, and numerous other professions.

LCMS congregations are encouraged to celebrate Concordia Sunday. This special day highlights the importance of a Christian education in a Lutheran context. It can encourage youth to consider serving in positions that benefit both the LCMS and society. It is also a special time for congregations to pray for the continued blessings of our heavenly Father for ongoing ministry that

proclaims Jesus Christ as the Lord of Life.

To request free materials to use in celebrating Concordia Sunday, contact the LCMS Board for University Education at 800-248-1930, ext. 1252; BUE.info@lcms.org; or visit the Web site at www.lcms.org/universities.

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At the International Lutheran Laymen's League convention in Greensboro, N.C., 30 men and women were honored as Lutheran Hour Ministries' Outstanding Ambassadors for 2009. This year the Southern Illinois District had the honor of having one of its members recognized.

Elmer Liefer, a member of **Trinity (Prairie), Red Bud**, was one of the recipients. Liefer was not able to attend the convention and received his recognition following a worship service at Trinity.

Paul Walther, Southern Illinois District Ministry Support leader, made the presentation.

Liefer has been active in the Lutheran Laymen's League and Lutheran Hour Ministries at Trinity for many years. He also served on the district board for several terms.

District leaders nominate ambassadors for this distinction in recognition

of their tireless efforts in promoting the programs of LHM and in building relationships with current and prospective supporters.

LHM Ambassador Consultant Roy Schmidt said, "It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the hard work of each of these Outstanding Ambassadors in building awareness of LHM, thanking donors and recruiting new support-

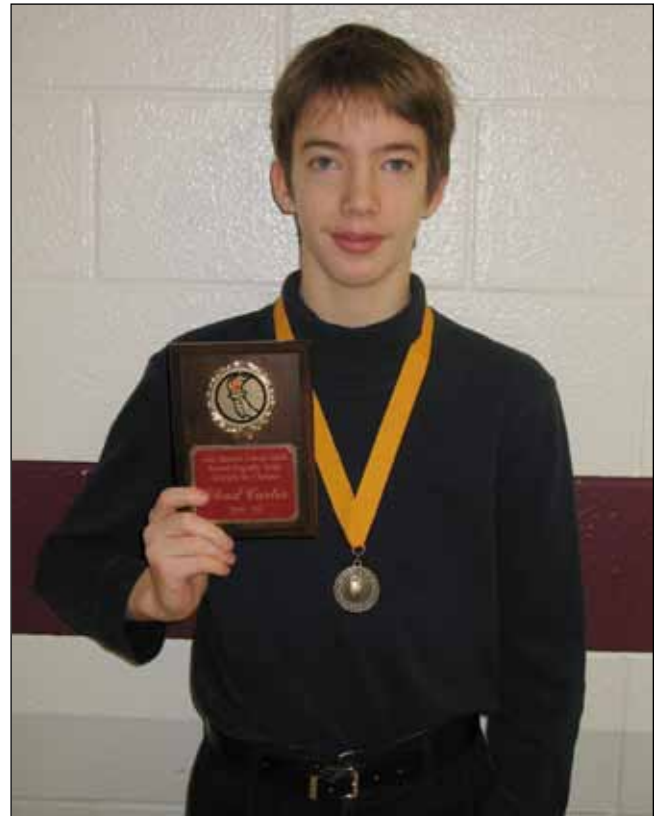
ers. They are a great blessing to our ministry and to the Body of Christ."

Each Outstanding Ambassador received a LHM mug and a certificate.

Easter blessings!

Christ is arisen! He is risen indeed! A blessed Easter to you and your family.

Lois Engfehr, Editor



School Champion of Geography Bee—Congratulations to Chad Carter for his accomplishment of winning the geography bee. Chad is a student at Good Shepherd Lutheran School in Collinsville. The geography bee is sponsored by the National Geographic Society. He is now waiting to see if he qualifies for the state geography bee.