



Blind leader to speak at mission-focused 150th anniversary event

As part of the congregation's 150th anniversary celebration, Zion Lutheran Church, Bethalto, will welcome Rev. David Andrus as guest preacher on Aug. 16 at worship services at 8, 9:30, and 11 a.m. The focus on the day's events is "Missions."



Rev. Andrus

Rev. Andrus is executive director of Lutheran Blind Mission. Andrus was born and raised in Wausau, Wis. At age 8, he contracted a rare disease

that took his eyesight by age 11.

With the encouragement of his parents, pastor, and other supportive people, he continued with his schooling. He learned that sight is not in one's eyes but in one's brain. With the use of touch, hearing, and past memories, Andrus developed the skill of visualizing his world in his mind through these other senses. This enabled him to not only adjust to blindness but to overcome it in unique ways.

Andrus is a 1981 graduate of Concordia College (now University), St. Paul, Minn. He received his master of divinity degree in 1985 from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He

previously served as pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Overland, Mo., from 1985 to 1998. He is a founder and past-chairman of the Lutheran Blind Mission Society, and has written numerous times for *Portals of Prayer*, Concordia Pulpit Resources, and Creative Worship for the Parish, in addition to being published in other synodical publications.

At a recent conference for the blind in Europe, Andrus was asked to speak on a theology of blindness. He noted that blindness is not a punishment of specific sins. It is simply part of this fallen world, a human condition that God can use in His

kingdom for His good. Rather than viewing blindness as a limitation, he chooses to see it as an asset—one that God can use to share His Word of forgiveness with others.

David and his wife, Debra, have two daughters, Victoria and Margaret. David enjoys woodworking and carpentry and has used these skills to make furniture and remodel each of their homes.

Please join Zion members as they celebrate the opportunities each Christian has to reach out to others in Christ's name through various missions. Zion Lutheran Church is located at 625 Church Drive (at the intersection of Highway 140 and Moreland Road) in Bethalto. For directions, see the church's Web site at www.zionbethalto.org and click on "Map/Directions" on the left side of the homepage.

For more information about the congregation's upcoming 150th anniversary events, please visit the Web site.



St. John's Lutheran Church, Red Bud, welcomed five new adult members through the Rite of Confirmation during a worship service on Sunday, May 10. Pictured, from left, are Bryon Rahn, Jeff Neff, Kellye Zeiger, Tina LaChance, Mark Keiser, and Rev. Mark Nebel, St. John's senior pastor.

EDITOR

Send news, articles, and photos:

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

Or e-mail to:
sidlw@earthlink.net

October deadline:
Aug. 15



Clergy participating in the ordination and installation of Rev. Arthur Eichhorn at St. Salvator and St. Peter's Lutheran churches at Venedy and New Memphis on May 17, included, from left, back row, Revs. Hans Trinklein, Olive Branch, Okawville; Paul Philp, admissions counselor, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Darwin Schrader, interim pastor, Immanuel, Okawville; Tim Mueller, St. John and St. Luke's Lutheran churches, New Minden and Covington; Tim Scharr, Trinity, Nashville; David Wollenburg, professor, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Perry Schefelker, Trinity, Centralia; front row, President Herbert Mueller; Josh Theilen, Trinity, Hoyleton; Eichhorn; Tim Seban, associate pastor, St. Paul, Des Peres, Mo.; David Fletcher, retiring pastor of St. Salvator and St. Peter's; and William Wilson, associate pastor, Timothy Lutheran Church, St. Louis.



Trinity Lutheran Church, Harvel, Ill., installed Rev. Scott Busacker, a 2009 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, as its pastor on Sunday, June 28. He was ordained at his home congregation in Minnesota earlier in June. President Herbert Mueller, front row, right, preached for the service and presided for the installation. Assisting pastors included, from left, Revs. Walter Byerley (emeritus) of Zion, Farmersville; Keith GeRue, Trinity, Girard (circuit counselor); James Norton, St. Paul, Nokomis (vacancy pastor); Busacker; William Gleason, vacancy pastor of Zion, Staunton; and Rodney Blomquist, Trinity, Taylorville, Ill. After the service, a meal was served by the members of Trinity.

Calls in the district

Calls Accepted

Scott Busacker, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to Trinity, Harvel (pastor).

Arthur Eichhorn, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to St. Salvator/St. Peter, Venedy/New Memphis (pastor).

Russell Johnson, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., to Trinity, Nashville (pastor/principal).

Trinity, Nokomis, VBS is success

Trinity Lutheran Church, Nokomis, held its vacation Bible school (VBS) June 1-5 with the theme "Dive In." The enrollment was 91 students, and the average daily attendance of registered students and visitors was 74.

Average attendance of all children and staff was 102, and 59 registered students had perfect attendance.

The VBS mission project was the Nokomis Ministerial Alliance Heat and Fuel Fund.



Peas, please— thank You, God!

by **Herbert C. Mueller**

Peas. I love 'em. Raw, right out of the garden, cooked, creamed, stir-fried, whatever. Sugar snap peas, plain old regular bush peas, I enjoy them all. Of course, peas are not that easy to grow in southern Illinois; I try to plant them the last week of February or first week of March. This year a cool, wet spring has been great for my peas.

I was thinking about all this last evening while picking and shelling (and eating many!) of my peas. It was delightful! Sitting on my deck, shucking peas, enjoying the cool evening air, watching the fire flies come out, all led me to reflect on the goodness of our Father God.

***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights ...”
(James 1:17).***

It's been so wet my backyard is a profusion of green with a number of spots of color. Everything seems amazing to me, from the hummingbird at the “red sallies” to the way God designed the pea pods. The peas are held secure until I squeeze the end in just the right way to pop it



Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.
District President

open and send them into the bowl. And how that hummingbird just hovers there, all I can say is “Wow!”

What's so special about peas? They are one more simple gift spilling out from our creator God's abundance of blessing.

Every good thing we have comes from His creative hand. We confess it Sunday after Sunday in the creed: “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

He designed it all, from the pod that holds my peas until I'm ready for them, to the hand-eye coordination that enables me to pick them, to the pleasure it gives me to eat them. Wherever you look, God is the Maker and Giver of all good things.

We are beginning this

month in this column a series of reflections on the Apostles Creed, that basic confession of faith so often connected with Holy Baptism. In fact, the Apostles Creed that has come down to us is based on a baptismal creed already in use in the city of Rome by A.D. 120. Early Christians were taught this creed in preparation for their Baptism. So we ought remember our Baptism each time we say it, for in Holy Baptism our Father has claimed us as His own and put His name on us.

God is our Father, who created us. He is the source of all things. He spoke the Word, “Let there be light,” and there it was! Even science acknowledges that our universe began with an explosion of light. The point for us is that we confess that God is the Maker of everything that exists.

What does this mean for us?

We are called to thank Him for all that we have received from Him. His Word and promise lead us to trust that He will provide for us. Everything we have comes from His Almighty hand. Yes, He uses other people to provide the things we need,

but He is behind it all. He puts His almighty power in service to His great love for us, His children. We look to Him and thank Him for every blessing, even the blessing of shelling and eating peas! We are His sons and daughters.

But wait a minute! Why then, if God is truly good and fully almighty, why is there suffering? Why do we experience pain? Physically, mentally, emotionally, what is happening when we are hurting? Has God abandoned us?

The short answer is that God can use even suffering to draw us closer to Himself so that we trust Him even more firmly, but of course there is much more to say. That's why we'll come back to this topic right here next month. Until then, God bless and keep you always in His hands.



The state of our Lutheran schools in the LCMS Southern Illinois District

by Roger Sprengel

The 2009-10 school year will soon be here for our students, families, teachers, and congregations throughout the district.

I had the pleasure during the past 10 months to visit all of our 40 Lutheran education sites in the Southern Illinois District—14 free-standing early childhood centers, 23 elementary schools, and three high schools.

I would like to share some thoughts, insights, and observations regarding the “State of Our Lutheran Schools.”

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has 2,500 schools (preschool-12th grade) with a total enrollment of 270,912. The Southern Illinois District represents about 1.5 percent of the number of schools and total enrollment. The “average” Lutheran school (enrollment) in the LCMS looks like this:



**Roger Sprengel
Schools and Executive
Assistant**

As you can see, our district Lutheran schools are smaller in enrollment and employ fewer teachers than the national average. Our classroom size (student-to-teacher ratio) is generally smaller. Half of our schools have single grades per classroom, and half of our schools have multi-graded classrooms (generally two grades per classroom).

A total of 52 percent of our district elementary schools are accredited through National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA)—slightly below the average.

A total of 100 percent

of our high schools are accredited, compared to about 60 percent nationally. None of our early childhood centers are accredited, compared to about 5 percent nationally.

Trends and Observations

I would like to share the following thoughts in regard to my observations of Lutheran education in our settings around the Southern Illinois District.

- **Dedicated Professional Church Workers**—Our schools and the congregations that operate them are blessed with effective and dedicated teachers, pastors, and support personnel. What a joy and blessing it is to experience the Christ-centered school climate and joy-filled ministries within our district! While we have many young teachers who are new to our district, the vast majority of our church work professionals are within five to 15 years of retirement. We must encourage our students

and youth to consider careers as church work professionals.

- **Rigorous Curriculum**—Our Lutheran schools continue to emphasize the importance of strong academic preparation and expectations of their students! School improvement plans, accreditation, state regulations, comparative test results, and comparison with public school counterparts help maintain quality educational programming. Many of our schools are using programs such as Saxon math and phonics and Shurley English to increase test scores and maintain strong academics. Many of our Lutheran school students consistently graduate as valedictorians, salutatorians, or Illinois State Scholars!

- **Technology**—I observed the use of Smartboards (interactive teaching/display boards) in at least 50 percent of our schools during this past school year. Our schools and professional church workers must continue to commit to learning new techniques and methods of instructional delivery in a technologically advanced culture!

- **Declining Enrollment, Declining Resources**—While our enrollments continue a slow but steady decline, the

(Continued on Page E.)

Average Lutheran School Enrollment

LCMS School Statistics	2008-09 LCMS	2008-09 SID
Early Childhood Center	52 students	29 students
Elementary (K-8)	133 students	106 students
Secondary (9-12)	216 students	120 students



LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

(Continued from Page D.)

resources needed to continue to provide for excellent Lutheran education also are declining! Many of our schools have become enrollment sensitive and need to maintain projected numbers of students in order to maintain staffing, salaries, and educational resources. As enrollment declines, schools and congregations experience difficulties in the delicate balance between tuition, congregational support, and staff salaries. Generally, congregations don't want to raise family tuition or congregational assessment and end up freezing salaries or cutting staff.

• Supporting Cast—I have been very pleased and impressed with the general perception of spiritual care and support for our Lutheran schools around the SID! Our congregational members, volunteers, retired workers, and pastors overwhelmingly support our efforts of Lutheran education and want to maintain and grow the programs in our schools. While this may fluctuate somewhat, it was not unusual for me to observe many pastors who are visible and directly involved in classroom teaching on a daily basis. Many retired workers and tireless volun-

teers are still involved in our schools and parishes and contribute tirelessly of their time, talent, and treasure.

What Next

I am anxious to receive and share information about the 2009-10 school year and once again visit our classrooms throughout the Southern Illinois District. Join me in your prayer and support of this important and precious work within your own congregation and throughout the district.

MEHLS receives \$300,000 matching grant

Metro-East Lutheran High School, Edwardsville, is pleased to announce that the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis has committed a matching grant of \$300,000 to the high school.

The specifications of the matching gift state that the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis will provide \$300,000 if the campaign is successful in raising \$300,000 in gifts from individual donors. The match is a dollar-for-dollar match, up to the maximum of \$10,000 per donor over the next two years.

“We are truly blessed by the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis,” commented Principal Dan Kostencki. “I know they gave serious and careful thought to our proposal, and in so doing

realized the need for significant capital improvements and renovation at Metro-East Lutheran High School.”

The “Building on the One Foundation” capital campaign calls for raising \$10 million for high-priority construction of additional classrooms, a multi-purpose fine arts center, renovations and the construction of additional athletic facilities, as well as the renovation of existing buildings and facilities.

Lutheran Foundation is committed to seeing the improved care of people in the greater St. Louis metropolitan region. The needs of our community are great, but the strength of individual and collective acts of service, catalyzed by faith, is far greater. Through its grant support to area congregations and organizations, Lutheran Foundation acts as a conduit for Christians

to model Christ's servant leadership, thereby creating a healthier community attuned to mind, body, and soul.

Metro-East Lutheran High School in Edwardsville is owned and operated by 12 congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The purpose/mission of Metro-East Lutheran High School is to provide a quality, Christ-centered education in an environment that enables students to find identity, meaning, purpose, and power to live out their varying roles as the people of God in a complex, changing society.

For more information, contact Terri Mize at 618-656-0043 ext. 122, or terri.mize@melhs.org. Metro-East Lutheran High School is located at 6305 Center Grove Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025; 618-656-0043; www.melhs.org.



About 125 children spent time in “Gadget’s Garage” each day during vacation Bible school June 15-19 at Zion, Bethalto. Students also raised more than \$350 for the Mission to India project through Lutheran World Relief.

NEWS

Report on district Golf Scramble

Who would expect June 22 to be 94 degrees and very humid? But that is what 25 golfers put up with at the Southern Illinois District Golf Scramble at Oakbrook Golf Club in Edwardsville. The one major change for the best ball scramble was that it was decided to hold just one SID scramble instead of two as done in past tournaments, and the attendance seemed to indicate that this was a good decision.

The winning team consisted of teacher Mark Belli (Unity, East St. Louis), Josh Schelp, youngest son of teacher/principal Keith Schelp (St. Peter, Prairietown), Rev. Michael Walther (Good Shepherd, Collinsville), and Rev. Herbert Mueller (Southern Illinois

District president). They shot a 67, which was four under par.

Mark Belli also won the closest to the pin on hole number 2. Ruth Waeltz (lay member of the Board of Directors) won the closest to the pin on hole number 14. The longest putt on hole number 16 was won by Jim Rohe, retired teacher from Zion, Bethalto.

Lunch was provided by Wally Streuter, Kevin Rust, and Ken Kober, all Thrivent Financial for Lutherans representatives.

Each player received a sleeve of three golf balls, compliments of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund of the Southern Illinois District.

The following golfers participated in this district scramble:

Pastors (both active and retired): Rev. Herbert Mueller, Rev. Mike Kumm, Rev. Elmer Schwartzkopf,

Rev. Les Mitkos, Rev. Mark Nebel, Rev. Michael Walther, Rev. Paul Bramstedt, and Dr. Alvin Kollmann.

Teachers (both active and retired): Mark Sochowski, Robert Mayhew, Roger Sprengel, Dan Roth, Keith Schelp, Robert Dosien, Richard Krause, Dave Klein, Chip Harms, Mark Belli, Roger Wittmann, Jim Rohe, and Warren Frank.

SID Board members: Ruth Waeltz, Paul Walther.

Family members of golfers: Josh Schelp, Janet Kumm.

Guest: Bill Keel.

The tentative date for the 2010 golf scramble is Monday, June 21.

Calendar of events

August

6—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

11—Day of Spiritual Renewal, Metro East

Lutheran High School, Edwardsville.
24—Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9 a.m.
27—Youth Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m., district office.

September

3—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

11—Central Illinois District/Southern Illinois District staff meeting, 9:30 a.m.

19—Board of Missions, 9 a.m.

24—Youth Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m., district office.

October

1—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

1-2—Southern Illinois District/Central Illinois District Teachers Conference, Belleville/O'Fallon, Ill.

5-7—Pastors Fall Conference, Rend Lake Resort, near Benton, Ill.

10-12—Junior High School Youth Gathering—Camp Wartburg

15—LWML District Board of Directors, 9:30 a.m.

22—Youth Advisory Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., district office.

24—SID Board of Directors, 9 a.m.



SID Scholarship Endowment Golf Scramble—The fifth annual Bob Streuter Memorial Golf Scramble was held May 2 at Roland Barkau Golf Course in Okawville. The winning team from the Chester area (score of 56; 15 under par) included, from left, Paul Zemlyn, Greg Wilson, Jason Furlow, and Jesse Barge Jr.



St. Luke, Olmsted, —relationships in Christ

“Celebrating Our Relationships” is the 2009 theme for St. Luke Lutheran Church, Olmsted. The people are celebrating their relationship with Christ and their relationship with each other as members of God’s family.

Everyone receives a colorful card with a positive affirmation statement on it. Instructions on the back of the card encourage people to practice saying a statement such as “In Christ, I Have Conquered Death” seven times a day for 21 days, making it a spiritual habit.

Every three weeks, members receive another affirmation card, eventually receiving 10 colorful celebration cards over a period of 30 weeks.

Members also pass out these cards to friends, neighbors, and coworkers. This is an enjoyable way to witness and evangelize others.

On the back of each card is a Scripture basis for affirmation and church name, address, worship/Sunday school times.

Throughout the year, the church celebrates those who are 90 years and older, those who are 80 to 90 years old, those with birthdays or anniversaries,

veterans, and those brought into God’s family through Holy Baptism.

Spiritually celebrating and appreciating the relationships with one another is their response to Jesus Christ celebrating His relationship with them as His children in God’s family.

Carl Miller, pastor and also senior chaplain at Tamms Correctional Center, looks forward to the opportunity to pass out similar celebration-affirmation cards to those in prison. Such a ministry could have a strong spiritual impact on their lives.

Faith-sharing story: ‘Teach About Jesus’

The following story was shared by the principal of Trinity Lutheran School in Sawyer, Mich.

This morning I was talking to a non-member preschool mom (who doesn’t attend church) about sending her child to our kindergarten next year. She was explaining to her son the difference between our school and the public school.

She said, “At the public school there are more kids, and they don’t teach about God.” Her son asked, “Do they teach about Jesus?” Mom said,

“No!” The little boy replied, “Well then, it must not be a very good place if they don’t teach about Jesus.”

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 Lois Engfehr, 2408 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221; or e-mail at sidlw@earthlink.net. Photos must be 300 dpi and e-mailed separately.



Members of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Olmsted, are holding their affirmation cards and celebrating their relationship with Christ and with each other as members of God’s family under the theme “Celebrating Our Relationships.”

CHURCH/PEOPLE

Church/People news in Southern Illinois

On May 22, seven senior high youth and two adults gathered in the parking lot of **St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Columbia**, to spend the evening in boxes and tents.

Throughout the evening, the youth were taught about how to live their lives following Christ's example and how to serve those who are less fortunate than they are.

* * *

Mike Voges, St. Paul's, Columbia, built a wooden cross six feet high from 4-by-4s. One side was finished in tree bark and the other side with chicken wire.

The cross was placed in the church next to the pulpit on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

On Good Friday, the side with the bark with nails in the wood was turned forward and draped in black. The nails reminded people of their sins and what Christ did for them. A crown of thorns was placed at the top of the cross. Everyone entering church was handed an obituary notice.

On Easter morning starting with the sunrise service, the cross was turned around, with the chicken wire facing the



A storm on May 8 caused \$500,000 worth of damage at Christ Lutheran Church and School in Jacob, Ill. The storm ripped apart the school gymnasium, and a tree fell on the roof of a classroom. Due to the damage, the school classes ended a week early this year. One member of Immanuel, Murphysboro, was killed by the storm when a tree fell through his house.

front, and was draped in white. A crown of live flowers was placed at the top of the cross. A small

basket was placed at the foot of the cross. Everyone entering church was given a flower and asked

to place their flower anywhere they chose on the cross before sitting down. Each child also was handed a flower. Toddlers could place their flowers in the basket or on the cross.

On Easter morning, the cross "came alive." We live because of what Jesus did for us.

* * *

The R.A.M.S. Junior Youth group of **Trinity, Hoyleton**, hosted a communitywide "Scavenger Hunt for the Hungry." Area residents kept their front porch lights on if they had a donation to help fight the hungry. A total of 355 food items were collected.



A group of 27 Christians from the Edwardsville area, including members of Trinity, Edwardsville, and Holy Cross, Collinsville, participated in a medical mission trip to Honduras in February. The group, known as "Starfish Enterprise," provided ministry care in the following areas: optical, dental, general medical, and pharmaceutical. Other ministry activities included an evangelism station where the Gospel was shared with more than 3,200 Hondurans.