



## **Southern Illinois District Convention slated for Feb. 19-21**

The 2009 Southern Illinois District Convention will be held Feb. 19-21, 2009, at the Gateway Center in Collinsville, Ill. "One Sure Hope" is the theme for the convention.

The logo (shown below) was designed by Melissa Merker, daughter of Wayne and Sandra Iehl, of Collinsville.

Here are some features of this convention:

**Opening Service**—The opening service will not be at the Convention Center but will be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1300 Belt Line, Collinsville, at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009. LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick will be the

proclaimer for the service, which will be followed by a fellowship hour.

**Modified Schedule**—There will be no business sessions on Thursday evening, but the business begins promptly at 8 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 20, and will dismiss, God-willing, by 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21.

**Electronic Voting**—How will the business get done? Electronic voting will be utilized, and a session is scheduled for Friday evening. The convention is shortened by holding the opening service in a church, but approximately the same amount of time will be utilized for debate and business. Some money will be saved by providing only two meals instead of four.

**Synod Structure Task Force**—The President's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance has requested two hours of time for the presentation and discussion of its proposals. This will be granted Friday afternoon but is in addition to the time scheduled for business and debate.

**Theological Essay**—The Convention Planning Committee has asked Rev. Matthew Harrison, executive director of the Synod's Board for LCMS World Relief and Human Care, to make a presentation on the convention theme, "One Sure Hope." He is an engaging and Christ-centered speaker.

May God richly bless the convention under the theme "One Sure Hope."



## **A Blessed Christmas**

Christmas blessings to you and your family as you celebrate the birth of the Christ Child! "For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11 RSV).

### **EDITOR**

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February 2009  
deadline: Dec. 15



# NEWS

## **Calls in the district**

### **Calls Accepted**

Cliff Adair, Trinity, Harvel, to St. Paul, Pipestone, Minn.

Keith GeRue, St. Paul, Hamel, and Trinity, Worden, to Trinity, Girard.

## **Calendar of events**

### **December**

4—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

25—Celebrate Jesus' birth!

### **2009**

#### **January**

8—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

15—Mission Staff meeting, 9:30 a.m.

17—Mission Board meeting, 9 a.m.

21—Finance Committee meeting, 4 p.m.

26—Convention Planning Committee meeting, 7 p.m.

31—SID Board of Directors, 9 a.m.

#### **February**

2—Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9 a.m.

5—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

19-21—**Southern Illinois District Convention**, Gateway Center, Collinsville.

#### **March**

5—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

21—Board of Directors and Boards Day of Orientation



**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ferrin, held adult confirmation on Sept. 7. New members included Maria T. Zimmerman, Jaime Schneider, and Kathryn E. Brink. Rev. Darwin Schrader, interim pastor at Bethlehem, performed the service.**



**Pastors participating in the ordination and installation of Pastor Scott Niermann at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ferrin, Ill., on Oct. 5 included, from left, back row, Revs. Tim Weiser, Trinity, Iuka; Tim Mueller, St. John and St. Luke, New Minden and Covington; Stephen Krenz, Trinity, Hoffman; Tom Kramer, Hope, Mount Carmel; middle, from left, President Herbert Mueller, SID; Steve Sommerer, Messiah, Carlyle; Pastor Darwin Schrader, interim pastor at Bethlehem, Ferrin; Professor Robert Hoehner, Placement Director, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Matthew Roeglin, Blessed Savior, Florissant, Mo.; Tom Krause, Lord of Life, Leawood, Kan.; front row, Jon Smithley, Zion and Trinity, Pinckneyville and Conant; Perry Schefelker, Trinity, Centralia; Steve Niermann, St. John, Napoleon, Ohio (Scott Niermann's cousin and preacher for the service); Scott Niermann; Herman Kramer (emeritus), Lake View, Iowa; Ron Simmons, St. Paul, Ironton, Mo.; Joshua Theilen, Trinity, Hoyleton; Brad Hirsch, Grace, Bellefontaine Neighbors, Mo.**



## **A People of Hope** by Herbert C. Mueller

Last night, just for fun, I was reading in *Josephus*, a book about a first-century Jewish historian, some of his descriptions of King Herod's family (the Herod who was King when Jesus was born). This man was so jealous that when he left town, he told his brother to kill his wife if he did not return, so no one else could have her.

When he thought two of his sons were plotting against him (which they probably were), Herod had them killed and then bribed his Roman overlords to cover the crime. So, kill a few babies in Bethlehem (see Matt. 2:16-18)? Herod was quite capable of doing much more in his jealous rages.

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### ***Into that dark world, hope was born.***

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Into the stillness of the night came the angels' song to the shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:14 ESV). They went to catch a glimpse of hope in the Christ Child laid in a manger.

At about the same time, Magi in the East saw a miraculous star and somehow recognized the



**Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.**  
**District President**

dawn of hope. They followed that star to find in Bethlehem the Light of the world.

Mary and Joseph, too, believed the word of the angels that they were holding in their arms the Hope of the world. While carrying Him in her womb, Mary had sung, "He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever" (Luke 1:54-55 ESV).

In the same way, Zechariah—with tongue loosed by the Spirit—praised God: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people ... to show mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his Holy covenant" (Luke 1:68, 72 ESV). Old Simeon also, with eyes illuminated by the light of God, when Mary placed in his hands

the child who is the Hope of the world, proclaimed: "My eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples" (Luke 2:30-31 ESV).

That's what they believed, yes, but the 21st century world is different, is it not? No, not really. Human nature and sinful activity are the same, no matter what the century. What you see on TMZ (a contemporary gossip TV show) about today's celebrities is no better or worse than King Herod and his family.

The first-century Roman world was full of conflicting religious claims, violence, sexual abuse, and grinding poverty next to unimaginable riches. Our 21st century is full of the same foolish and sinful violence, producing in many the same sense of hopelessness.

Into our dark world, we believe, real hope was born in Bethlehem's stable, as we sing: "The hopes and fears of all the years, are met in thee tonight" ("O Little Town of Bethlehem," *LSB* 361).

The Scripture says, "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,

groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved" (Rom. 8:22-24 ESV). Jesus Christ is that one sure hope of the world.

Here is why we who believe in Jesus are people of authentic hope. We have seen in our own lives the meaning of what the Scripture says: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). God's word of hope has lifted our eyes to see in Jesus the assurance, absolute and certain, that God is for us, that He is the God of life, not death, and that God's promises overcome aimlessness and despair.

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### ***The world has many counterfeit hopes, but we celebrate Christmas exactly because Jesus has made us people of hope, people who look to the future, people who know how history will turn out.***

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Again, Scripture says: "... to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially

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## PEOPLE OF HOPE

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of those who believe” (1 Tim. 4:10 ESV).

So, do you ever feel hopeless? Do you ever feel as though life is a dead end, with no purpose or meaning? Jesus was born for you! Christmas is your holiday. Let every Christmas display you see this season be a sign that God has not abandoned you, that your life has meaning in Christ, that you are valuable to God, and that in Jesus, born for us, crucified and raised from the dead, you have “a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11 ESV).

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***From every Christmas service, we will be sent back into the same world, but filled with hope, to be agents of lasting hope. So let every Christmas carol you hear (or sing) ring in your ears and fill your heart with hope and joy.***

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May every Christmas gift you give or receive point you and those you know and love to Jesus, God’s greatest gift. We are Christmas people, people of hope in Jesus.

A very blessed and hope-filled Christmas to all!

## **Good Shepherd, Collinsville, hosts Women’s Day of Renewal**

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Collinsville is planning its ninth annual Women’s Day of Renewal for March 7, 2009. The theme will be “Faith in the Midst of the Jungle.”

The keynote speaker will be Elaine Bickel, a well-known humorous and inspirational speaker. She has served the church for more than 38 years and currently is principal at St. Paul Lutheran School, Millington, Mich.

Elaine has written curriculum for Sunday school, vacation Bible school, and Lutheran day schools, and has authored Bible studies, devotions, and various articles. She feels blessed to be the child of One Awesome God, wife of Jim, thankful mother of two children, and the playmate of four grandchildren.

We’ve all said it, felt it, and lived it. ... “It’s a jungle out there!” We live in a world where we’re bound to get tripped up by things that so easily entangle us. The devil is roaming about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour each one of us by luring us into traps he has set specifically for us.

It is scary until we remember that we do not fight these battles alone. Satan roars like he is the



**Bickel**

king of the jungle, but our God reigns! We are safe and at peace even in the midst of the jungle because we have faith in God and God alone.

Second Corinthians 5:7 reminds us to “Walk by faith, not by sight.” Remembering this, we walk on, confident and unafraid of the pitfalls Satan wants us to fear.

Women attending the Women’s Day of Renewal will be able to personalize their experience by choosing two workshops from a large variety that focus on spiritual renewal and practical ways to deal with your everyday life (parenting, procrastination, family illness, and many other issues). The workshops are designed to instruct, encourage, and uplift the young woman, those in their middle years, and the seasoned senior.

The cost for the day is \$22 if paid by Dec. 31,

2008; \$25 if paid between Jan. 1 and Feb. 22, 2009; and \$30 after Feb. 22. This fee includes a continental breakfast, a delicious catered lunch, plus two workshops!

To register, contact Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Collinsville, Ill., at 618-344-3151 or visit the Web site at [www.goodshepherdcollinsville.org](http://www.goodshepherdcollinsville.org).

Plan to attend this day of renewal, fellowship, laughter, and encouragement as participants focus on “Faith in the Midst of the Jungle.”

## **Send in your news**

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

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





## Anticipating God's Gifts

by Roger Sprengel  
Schools and General  
Executive

### Anticipation

For Christians, Advent is the traditional beginning of the Christmas season—a time when we anticipate the precious gift of the baby Jesus! The commercial segment of our population began the “anticipation” this year in October, fearing that the downturn in the economy would have a negative effect on consumer spending. So, what are you anticipating during this Advent/Christmas season?

### Valued Gifts

Young children can't wait for special days in their lives. They become extremely excited as they anticipate a birthday, a special vacation or surprise, or the coming of Christmas because they look forward to receiving good things (gifts, money, pleasure, etc.). In other words, they “value” the end result of the special occasion, and their anticipation becomes heightened as this special time approaches!

### What do we value at Christmas?

The retailers are hoping for each of us to



**Roger Sprengel**  
Schools and General  
Executive

spend large amounts of money, even go into debt by placing purchases on our credit cards, in order to make ourselves and others enjoy or value the gift(s) we buy. Many families will have to prioritize their values this year and judge which gifts and how many gifts to purchase.

### Treasures

Jesus tells us in Matt. 6:19-21, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

When I was a child, Christmas was a time to anticipate gifts of clothing, candy, homemade toys, or special food at a family gathering. Simple

gifts—yet, special gifts that many children and adults truly appreciated!

Times have changed and most of us have the ability to purchase what we want, when we want it! In other words, we do not have NEEDS, but WANTS. We want the latest and greatest electronic gadget, clothing style, new toy, or latest fad. The financial crisis that began a couple of months ago may cause us to change our purchasing habits this season, and hopefully will allow Christian families to re-focus on our REAL treasures.

### Customs or Traditions

I challenge all of us to re-focus on some of the customs or family traditions that enable families to “store up heavenly treasures” as we anticipate the coming of Christmas!

***We can focus on the Advent wreath in our daily devotional lives, meditate on the decorations or seasonal carols, or begin a new tradition that helps us to place value on the important aspects of life during this season of light and celebration.***

Sit down with your spouse, plan with your extended family, and

make conscious choices fiscally that will place value on the gifts and celebration of Christmas this year!

### Celebrate

Celebrate the Christ Child—the baby Jesus given as our salvation! Celebrate what you have (materially) rather than complaining about what you don't have!

Share the gifts of peace, joy, love, and fellowship with your earthly family and your spiritual family.

***The true meaning of Christmas is giving—in the spirit of “It's better to give than to receive.” If you can't afford to give material gifts, give of your time and talents or give homemade gifts that express your love and appreciation for others!***

God gave us His simple gift of love—new life, born in a stable, placed in a manger. May we look forward to His valuable and treasured gift with anticipation and appreciation in lieu of any material gift that ultimately will lose its luster and value.



# NEWS

## **Trinity, Prairie, plans organ celebration**

An organ celebration will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 6 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Prairie. The title is "Music Festival in Celebration of the 100-year-old Organ and 140th Anniversary of the Church Building."

The organists are preparing special music for the occasion. The celebration will include a recording of favorite hymns played on the organ by organists of Trinity.

A CD titled "Trinity's Favorite Hymns" is being produced and will be for sale the night of the festival. It includes 20 hymns chosen from *The Lutheran Hymnal* and *Lutheran Service Book*.

For more information, contact Sarah Koester at 618-282-4265 or e-mail at [mkoester@htc.net](mailto:mkoester@htc.net).

## **Annual Choir Member Workshop**

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will offer its 17th Annual Schola Cantorum: An Adult Choir Member Workshop, on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2009. The workshop will be held in The Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus and the Clara and Spencer Werner Auditorium on the seminary campus.

The Schola Cantorum is open to all choir members, choir directors, and ministers of music. The schedule for the day begins with registration at 8:15 a.m., Morning Prayer at 8:45 a.m., and rehearsal sessions at 9:15 a.m. The day concludes at 3:30 p.m. after the Closing Prayer service, which will include some of the music learned that day. Dr. Kurt von Kampen will serve as this year's clinician.

Dr. Kurt E. von Kampen has conducted choirs at Concordia University Nebraska in Seward since the fall of 1998, and is the fourth conductor in the 68-year history of the University A Cappella Choir.

Prior to accepting the position at Concordia University, von Kampen served as head of the choral program at Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Mich., and as director of music at Lutheran High School Westland and Northwest in the Detroit area. He holds a bachelor of science degree in music education from Concordia University Nebraska; a master of music degree in choral conducting from Oakland University in Rochester, Mich.; and a Ph.D. in choral music education from the University of Nebraska.



**von Kampen**

"We hold the Schola Cantorum as a way of serving the church at large," commented Rev. Henry Gerike, director of choirs at Concordia Seminary. "By attending, choir members and directors will learn and rehearse new choral music that can be used in their own churches. They will also learn better the art of singing. Each of our clinicians provides great insights into singing the praises of our Lord."

This year, a Choral Reading Session will be held Friday, Jan. 23, 2009, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. In the session, von Kampen will guide participants through an evening of choral and instrumental song in which he will preview new and current titles of music.

The session is open to all, but is especially

designed for choir directors. There is no charge to attend but registration is required.

The cost for the Schola Cantorum is \$60 per individual or \$110 per congregation (\$70 or \$125 after Jan. 16, 2009). For the congregation fee, a choir can send as many members as it desires. Lunch and the choral music are not included in the fee.

For more information or registration forms, call 314-505-7486, e-mail [ce@csl.edu](mailto:ce@csl.edu), or visit the seminary's Web site at [www.csl.edu](http://www.csl.edu).

## **Our Savior, Carbondale, celebrates 10 years of Chinese ministry**

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Carbondale, celebrated 10 years of Chinese ministry at a 4 p.m. service on Nov. 2.

For 10 years the church has had a Sunday afternoon service in Mandarin Chinese. Thanks and praise to God for the spread of the Gospel in Chinese.

Southern Illinois University alumnus and former Our Savior Lutheran Church vicar, Rev. Michael Paul, preached at the anniversary service on Nov. 2.



Students from St. John's Lutheran School in Red Bud were baptized recently. Alex, Addison, and Allister Gunter were baptized on Sunday, Oct. 12, after the late service. They are the children of Vince and Laurie Gunter. Their sponsors are Kathy and Scott Ferguson. Rev. Mark Nebel, in back, baptized the young men.



Jenna Borger was baptized Oct. 15 in the morning chapel service at St. John, Red Bud. She is the daughter of Paul and Deborah Borger, and her sponsors are Lee and Amanda Braun. She was baptized by Rev. Mark Nebel.



Over Columbus Day weekend, sixth-through-eighth-grade youth from around the Southern Illinois District participated in the district's annual Junior High Youth Gathering at Camp Wartburg. The theme for this year's gathering was "Cross Training" and had as its theme verse 1 Cor. 9:25. Students participated in worship, Bible study, singing, and Olympic-themed games.



The sixth-grade classes from Zion, Bethalto; Immanuel, Murphysboro; St. John, Red Bud; and Zion, Staunton, as well as their teachers, enjoyed an outdoor education experience Sept. 29-30 at Camp Wartburg.

# CHURCH/PEOPLE

## Church/people news in Southern Illinois

Six students from the Southern Illinois District are included in the 93 new pastoral formation students and three new deaconess formation students who enrolled at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, this fall.

In addition, 17 students enrolled in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology Program (EIIT); 29 students enrolled in the Specific Ministry Pastor Program (SMP); and 12 students enrolled in the Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS).

The students are:



*Kory and Heidi Janneke*



*Jacob Mueller*



*Michael Musegades*

### Pastoral Formation

**Dean Herberts, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Collinsville.**

**Kory Janneke, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Steeleville.**

**Jacob Mueller, St. John's Lutheran Church, Nashville.**

**Michael Musegades, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Collinsville.**

**John Schultz, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wood River.**

### Deaconess Formation

**Adrienne Kern, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Collinsville.**



*John and Sarah Schultz*



***Congratulations to the baseball team of St. John in Chester on a very successful season. The boys won the SIJH-SAA Regional Tournament, earning them the opportunity to play in the Class S State Tournament. Their season ended with 12 wins and two losses. This was the first baseball Regional Championship in the school's history. Pictured are, front row, Joe Marks, Brett Bunselmeyer, Liam Canady, Jared Johnson, Lucas Doiron, Austin Weige, Jason Schwartz, Nick Gross, and Hunter Cushman; standing, Justin Marks, Jacob Lochhead, Jacob Cowan, Colin Canady, Austen Barnhart, Caleb Arbeiter, Dalton Misuraca, Christopher Schwartz, Austin Redeker. The Hornets were coached by Ron Arbeiter, Jesse Canady, Dewaine Bunselmeyer, Ron Cushman, and Tyler Search.***