



## Celebrate His birth, visit a live nativity

As part of its 150th anniversary activities, Zion Lutheran Church, Bethalto, will host a live nativity on the north side of the church from 3 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19. Visitors may view the nativity from their vehicle as they drive through, or they may walk up to the display.

Youth group members will play the parts of Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and wise men, and live barnyard animals will occupy prominent spots in the stable and yard. Appropriate to the season, Christmas music will be played over loud speakers.

Coffee, hot cocoa, and Christmas cookies will be served outside, weather permitting.

Zion's annual children's Christmas program will be held at 6:30 p.m., Dec. 20. Bringing back an old tradition, all children who attend will receive brown paper bags containing fruit and candy.

On Christmas Eve, to emphasize Jesus as the light of the world, luminarias will encircle the exterior of the church.

Zion Lutheran Church is located at 625 Church Drive, at the intersection of Moreland Road and State Route 140 in Bethalto. For more information, call the church office at 618-377-8314, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.



## LWML seeks grant requests

The Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League is requesting proposals for mission grants.

Reach out to others by submitting a grant request. Look within your community for outreach ministries that show God's love by serving cross-cultural groups, the homeless, aged, and underprivileged. Be alert for mission needs in the United States and abroad. Contact missionaries or individuals working in specialized ministries.

What should you include in the grant proposal?

a. The cover page must contain the name,

address, phone number, and e-mail address of both the person and/or agency submitting the proposal and the person or agency where the funds should be sent.

b. Discuss the following:

1. Briefly describe the project.
2. The need.
3. The mission focus of the project.
4. The amount of money requested or needed.
5. How the money will be used.
6. Who will handle the funds? Who or what organization to make check payable to?
7. Preferred date(s) to receive money.
8. Is it current and ready for implementation?
9. The organization or person(s) responsible for the project.
10. Names of people who can be contacted if more information is needed.



Submit six copies of your grant request with two to six pictures by Feb. 1, 2010, to:

Mickey Roth  
V.P. Gospel Outreach  
110 Foxbrush Drive  
Belleville, IL 62221

The grant request forms are available on the Web site at [www.sidwml.org](http://www.sidwml.org) or call Mickey Roth at 618-277-3649 or e-mail [danmicroth@charter.net](mailto:danmicroth@charter.net).

## A Blessed Christmas

Christmas blessings to you and your family as you celebrate the birth of the Christ Child!

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11-12 ESV).

*Lois Engfehr*  
Editor



## EDITOR

Send news, articles, and photos:

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

Or e-mail to:  
[sidlw@earthlink.net](mailto:sidlw@earthlink.net)

*February deadline:*  
Dec. 15

## **Women's Day of Renewal at Good Shepherd, Collinsville**

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Collinsville is planning its annual Women's Day of Renewal for Saturday, March 13, 2010. The theme for this 10th anniversary year will be "Encouraged in Heart — United in Love," based on Col. 2:2-3: "My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Mary Hilgendorf, who currently serves as professor of education and ambassador for the Women's Leadership Institute at Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Concordia University at Seward, Neb., and received her Ph.D. in educational foundations from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.

Hilgendorf gives presentations and leads Bible studies for women's groups throughout the country to encourage and equip women for Christian leadership.



**Hilgendorf**

Recently she was Bible study leader at the LWML's national convention held in Portland, Ore. Her presentations are lively, humorous, entertaining, and thought-provoking, with a sound biblical message and foundation.

Hilgendorf grew up in Chester, Ill., and she still thinks of Southern Illinois as home.

Today's world offers amazing opportunities and challenges for women. How will women use their personal gifts to influence others for Christ and share their talents in God-pleasing ways to support others, especially women? Dr. Hilgendorf's message will share biblical responses to these questions and will challenge her audience to find avenues to use their special gifts in church, home, and community.

There will be an opportunity for women attend-

ing the Women's Day of Renewal to personalize their experience by choosing two workshops to attend. The variety of workshop topics include prayer, joy, mother-daughter relationships, mentoring, the gospel and country music, hand-on missions, attitude adjustment, and flower arranging.

The cost for the day is \$25 if paid by Dec. 31; \$30 if paid between Jan. 1 and Feb. 28, 2010; and \$35 thereafter. The fee includes a continental breakfast, catered lunch, two workshops, and the keynote.

This year, we have added a Friday night event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Women's Day of Renewal. The Women's Day of Renewal 10th anniversary tea party will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. on March 12 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Through very generous donations, this pre-Women's Day of Renewal evening celebration is being offered for the minimal cost of \$5 per person.

Phyllis Wallace, nationally syndicated radio host of "Woman to Woman," will present, "You Are a Designer Original!" You are the only "You" God will ever make. Come to the Tea Party, discover your uniqueness, and take away deepened

friendships, party favors, and a personal Design Moment with your Designer.

For more information and to register for the Women's Day of Renewal and/or the 10th anniversary tea party, 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 exciting day of fun and renewal ... it's a great opportunity for women of all ages to fellowship together, to be encouraged in heart and united in love!

## **Call in the district Call Extended**

Gregory J. Schultz, St. Peter, Campbell Hill, to St. Matthew Lutheran Church, North Tonawanda, N.Y.

## **Call Accepted**

Gregory J. Schultz, St. Peter, Campbell Hill, to St. Matthew Lutheran Church, North Tonawanda, N.Y.





## **Merry Christmas, One and All!**

by **Herbert C. Mueller**

Is it coincidence or planning? Actually, it's a little of both, as in our series on the Apostles' Creed we this month look at the phrases "conceived by the Holy Spirit" and "born of the Virgin Mary." I didn't really plan it, but things have worked out perfectly to talk about Jesus' virgin birth during the month we celebrate that event.

Do you know who was the first to wonder at Jesus' virgin birth? Yes, it was Mary, His Virgin Mother. When Gabriel announced to her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High ..." (Luke 1:30-32), Mary's first response was, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34 ESV).

But then Gabriel explained, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God ... for nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:35, 37), and Mary responded in faith,



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

"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). There Mary becomes the mother and example of all who believe, for this is what God calls the Church to say whenever she hears God's Word: "Let it be to me according to Your Word."

The other person who had trouble with this was Joseph. He and Mary were engaged to be married when "she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18). At first, Joseph, too, could not believe it and, because it made no sense to him, he "resolved to divorce her quietly" (Matt. 1:19) until, that is, an angel appeared to him as well: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20-21).

These Scriptures, then, are the reason we confess, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary ..." (Apostles Creed). Because the Bible teaches it clearly, we believe it.

What difference does it make? All the difference in the world! Last month you may remember how we emphasized that Jesus is God in our human flesh. Here is how it happened.

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***In a miraculous and mysterious way, all by the power of God's Holy Spirit, Mary conceived in her womb and bore a son, Jesus Christ. Because He was born of a human mother, Jesus is fully human. Because He is conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, He is also, at the same time, fully God.***

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This is not a fairy tale for us but is absolutely essential for our salvation. If our Lord Jesus was only a man, however good, His life and death cannot apply to us all. And if our Lord Jesus was a divine being who only appeared to be human, then He

could not live our life and die in the same way we do.

In essence, the great problem of our sin and death requires not a partial but a full and complete Savior, one who unites in His one person everything it takes to be God, and everything it takes to be human.

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***Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary—for you and for me! Soon we will again sing our joy:***

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*Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,*

*Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.*

*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity!*

*Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!*

*Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*

(LSB 380, st. 2)

There it is! Jesus is our Immanuel, our God with us!

Next month, we'll explore the names given to Christ—what's in a name, anyway? For now, a very merry and most blessed Christmas to one and all!

# NEWS

## Chosen

by Roger Sprengel

*"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior ..."* (Luke 1:47).

Have you ever received an unexpected job promotion or reward? Perhaps you won a prize or some other gift?

Consider this: You are going about your day as normal and then, all of a sudden, you are called into the boss's office. Uh-oh; can anything good happen in there? But there you are told how valuable an employee you are! You are told how appreciated, how much you are respected, how much you are favored. You are filled with "warm fuzzies" because you have been validated and affirmed in the great job that you are doing!

Lutherans do not talk much about Mary. After the Reformation period, the Protestant church was so intent on removing any worship or idolatry toward Mary, they ignored this humble servant.

Mary is the mother of God, chosen by our heavenly Father to bear the Savior of the world. "You are highly favored! The Lord is with you ... You have found favor with God." Talk about a job promotion or a glowing



**Roger Sprengel**  
**Schools and Executive Assistant**

recommendation! Of all the candidates and resumes, God chose Mary. She was handpicked by the Creator to give birth to the King who would redeem the entire world. Now, this would certainly appear to be a legitimate reason to celebrate, a reason for Mary to boast and gloat throughout Galilee.

After Mary shared this news with Elizabeth, Elizabeth exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women!"

Mary, however, deflect-ed the praise and set forth in a beautiful song of thanksgiving and praise to God. Though she was indeed chosen by God, she never wavered in her faith. She understood that she was only an instrument of God; she did not let this calling go to her head. She realized she had no special standing

on her own, no special merit or worthiness. She was merely favored and chosen by God, and for that she was grateful, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior ..."

We have all been chosen by God. By the sacrificial blood of Jesus we, too, have found favor in the eyes of God. Not because we are worthy. Not because of our ancestry, our good works, or our pious and humble spirit ... not because of anything we do or say. We are favored only because of Jesus Christ. It is because of our Spirit-given faith in Him that the Father looks at us and declares us to be His redeemed children, heirs to His promise (Gal. 4:4-7).

Like Mary, you have been hand-picked to deliver Christ to the world. Obviously not in the same child-bearing manner, but in the way you live, care for, and love others. May God grant all of us a spirit similar to that of Mary's—one that is humble, willing, obedient, and rejoices in the salvation we share in Jesus!

(Reprinted with permission from *Insights & Ideas*, November 2009, Vol. 14, No. 3.)

## Calendar of events 2010

### January

- 7—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 21—LWML Board of Directors, 9:30 a.m.
- 21—Finance Committee meeting, 5:15 p.m.
- 28—Youth Advisory Committee, 6:30 p.m.
- 29-31—Youth Leader Training, Camp Wartburg.
- 30—SID Board of Directors, 9 a.m.

### February

- 1—Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9 a.m.
- 4—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 4—Board of Congregational Support, 5:30 p.m.
- 19-20—Regional Convention Delegate Caucus in St. Louis.
- 25—Youth Advisory Committee, 6:30 p.m.

### March

- 4—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 25—Youth Advisory Committee, 6:30 p.m.

## Order Witness subscriptions now

It is now time to order your Southern Illinois District *Lutheran Witness* subscription. Receive news about the Southern Illinois District today!

Please send \$15 to your church office, which will forward the information to the district. Thank you!



## 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 at [sidlw@earthlink.net](mailto:sidlw@earthlink.net).

Photos must be 300 dpi and e-mailed separately. Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. The submission deadline is the 18th of each month, two months before publication.



**The children of St. Salvator Lutheran Church in Venedy enjoyed a summer adventure traveling to the Bayou in the Crocodile Dock. In addition to learning about Christ's unfailing love and forgiveness, they hosted a collection to gather supplies for the Unity Lutheran Christian Mission School in East St. Louis. Shown are the children who attended, with Director of Christian Education JoAnn Harriss.**

## Southern Illinois District 2009 Junior High Gathering



**Sixty-five youth and adults representing 10 Southern Illinois District congregations and seven circuits participated in the fifth annual Junior High Youth Gathering Oct. 10-12 at Camp Wartburg in Waterloo. The theme was "This then is how we know that we belong to the truth," based on 1 John 3:19. All district youth in sixth through eighth grades are invited to the next district junior high youth gathering, Oct. 9-11, 2010!**

## **St. John, Baldwin, celebrates 125 years**

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baldwin, celebrated 125 years of blessings on Sunday, Oct. 4, at its 10 a.m. worship service.

Rev. Clifford Adair was guest preacher, and Rev. Merlen Wegener was guest liturgist. Both are sons of the congregation.

Rev. John Taggatz is pastor of St. John.



**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Baldwin celebrated its 125th anniversary on Sunday, Oct. 4. Pictured greeting worshipers are, from left, Pastor Merlen Wegener, Pastor John Taggatz, and Pastor Clifford Adair.**

## **Bach at the Sem concerts**

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is pleased to announce the following *Bach at the Sem* sacred concerts by The American Kantorei, under the direction of Robert Bergt. There is no admission charge, and no tickets are issued.

- Sunday, Dec. 13, 3 p.m.
- Sunday, Jan. 31, 3 p.m.
- Sunday, March 21, 3 p.m.
- Sunday, May 2, 3 p.m.

Concordia Seminary is located at 801 Seminary Place in Clayton, Mo.

## **St. Paul, Troy, assists new mission start**

St. Paul Lutheran Church in Troy will give \$5,000 a year for the next three years to the Saline County Mission start, now known as Faith Lutheran Church.

This generous donation came in response to St. Paul's efforts to support both local and district missions in the name of Christ.

The new mission start is celebrating its first year of growth in Saline County, Ill. The members say they are constantly surprised at how the Holy Spirit is showing His blessings in their community.

Faith is currently served by Rev. E. James Rivett of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Gol-

conda, Ill., and Vicar Matthew Tassej from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

The mission start began when Our Redeemer recognized the need for a Lutheran church in its neighboring county, as there was no other LCMS congregation in the whole county.

For more information and updates about Faith Lutheran Church, visit its Web site at [www.faihlcmssaline.org](http://www.faihlcmssaline.org)

**Rev. Mitchel Scheussler, left, of St. Paul, Troy, gives the first installment of the congregation's gift to Vicar Matthew Tassej of Faith Lutheran Church, Saline County, at St. Paul's mission celebration Sept. 20.**





## **Astronaut speaks to SID students**

On Oct. 16, students from Holy Cross Lutheran School, Collinsville; St. John Lutheran School, Red Bud; Trinity Lutheran School, Edwardsville; and Zion Lutheran School, Belleville, gathered at Zion to hear a presentation by astronaut Sandra Magnus. Altogether, about 400 students, parents, and teachers heard Dr. Magnus.

Magnus spoke to the students, answered questions, and showed slides describing how she lived for months on the International Space Station.

Magnus, a Belleville native, was invited to speak at Zion by fourth-grade teacher Natasha Cheatham. Cheatham's father-in-law works for NASA and arranged for Dr. Magnus to speak about her experiences in space.

What a wonderful opportunity for our students to see God's wonderful creation from another perspective several hundred miles above the earth!

After Astronaut Magnus' presentation, the eighth-grade students from Holy Cross spent the remainder of the morning with the eighth-grades classes of Zion and were led through some experiential science lessons by Ananda Baron, eighth-grade teacher, and Kris Althoff, Zion's upper-grade science teacher.

**Students from Holy Cross Lutheran School, Collinsville; St. John Lutheran School, Red Bud; Trinity Lutheran School, Edwardsville; and Zion Lutheran School, Belleville, gathered at Zion to hear a presentation by astronaut, Sandra Magnus.**



**Students from Southern Illinois District schools listened to astronaut Sandra Magnus talk about her experiences in space.**

**Astronaut Sandra Magnus is pictured with students, from left, Kaitlyn Mueller, Grace Tantillo, and Carter Baldus.**



# CHURCH/PEOPLE

## Church/People news in Southern Illinois

**Joyce Duelm** retired Sept. 17 as secretary of **Immanuel Lutheran Church** in **Mount Olive**, after serving there for 30 years. The elders hosted a retirement luncheon in her honor on Aug. 30. She was presented with an engraved clock, "Presented to Joyce Duelm for 30 years of dedicated service to Immanuel Lutheran Church." Many thank you's from members were extended to her at the luncheon, as well as cards and gifts.

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**Trinity Lutheran, Nashville**, had a very busy month of July. First, they celebrated the installation of **Pastor Russell Johnson** as associate pastor of Trinity and principal of **Trinity-St. John Lutheran School** on Sunday, July 12. Participating in this special service with Rev. Timothy Scharr were **Rev. Herbert Mueller**, Southern Illinois District president; **Rev. Timothy Mueller** (St. John, New Minden, and St. Luke, Covington); **Rev. Rich Futrell** (Shepherd of the Hills, Kimberling City, Mo.); **Rev. Darwin Schrader** (vacancy pastor of Immanuel, Okawville); **Rev. Stephen Krenz** (Trinity, Hoffman); and **Rev. Arthur Eichhorn** (St. Salvator, Venedy, and



*Joyce Duelm received a clock upon her retirement as secretary of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mount Olive, after 30 years of service.*

St. Peter, Memphis).

Special music was provided by the children's choir, the combined adult choir from Trinity, Nashville, and St. John, New Minden, and a solo/duet by Rev. Futrell and Vicar John Eyer.

A special part of the service was the "laying on of hands" by the participating pastors as they prayed for Pastor Johnson and asked for God's blessings, love, grace, and guidance on his ministry. Vicar John Eyer's final worship services were held July 18-19 at Trinity

as he continues his education at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis to become a pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

On July 25, a surprise celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ministry of **Rev. Timothy Scharr** was held beginning with a 5 p.m. worship service and followed with a catered dinner. Joining the congregation to help celebrate the occasion were Southern Illinois District President Rev. Herbert Mueller, Rev. Timothy Mueller, Rev.

Mark Loest (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Frankfort, Mich.), Rev. Russell Johnson, and Vicar Eyer. Special music was provided by the adult choir, children's choir, and a solo by Matt Bierman.

Many members, visitors, and special guests, along with correspondence from friends and colleagues who were not able to attend, honored and thanked Pastor Scharr for his faithfulness in preaching God's Word in all its purity to the three congregations he has served so far in his ministry.

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**LWML News**—The Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Women's Missionary District convention will be held Friday and Saturday, Sept. 24-25, 2010, at **Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School in Centuria, Ill.**

New mission grants will be selected. Applications for grants to be included on the ballot are available on the Web site—[sidlwml.org](http://sidlwml.org). Go to "mission grants" and then click on the word "application." You also may get an application by e-mail at [danmicroth@charter.net](mailto:danmicroth@charter.net) or write Mickey Roth, 110 Foxbrush, Belleville, IL 62221. The applications need to be submitted by Feb. 1, 2010.