



Southern Illinois District Convention in Collinsville

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

Here are some features of this convention:

Opening Service—

The opening service will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1300 Belt Line, Collinsville. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, will be the preacher for the service, followed by a fellowship hour.

Modified Schedule—

There will be no business sessions Thursday evening, but the business begins promptly at 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 20, and will dismiss, God-willing, by 1 p.m. 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 their 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 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."

First 'Reaching Out Together' Conference in February

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will hold an evangelism conference titled "Reaching Out Together" Feb. 14 on the campus of Concordia Seminary. This event is designed for pastors, evangelism boards, church leaders, and laypeople.

Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president of Concordia Seminary, will serve as the conference keynote speaker. Other presenters will include Rev. Scott Snow, director of national outreach with LCMS World Mission; Rev. Joseph Sullivan, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis; and Dr. Yohannes Mengsteab, national director of new

mission fields development with LCMS World Mission.

Registration is required. The cost is \$20 per participant for the first four from a single congregation; \$12.50 per participant for each additional participant. Fees include all materials and lunch. Registration is due by Feb. 6.

For more information or to register, call 314-505-7486 or e-mail ce@csli.edu. Concordia Seminary is located at 801 Seminary

EDITOR

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April deadline:
Feb. 15

Lutheran fraternity presents Distinguished Alumni Award

Alpha Chapter of Beta Sigma Psi at the University of Illinois presented Rev. Peter N. Kirby with the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award during special Homecoming activities. At the annual banquet on Oct. 11, 2008, Rev. Kirby received this award at the University of Illinois campus in Champaign/Urbana.

Kirby graduated from the University of Illinois in 1985 with a degree in nuclear engineering and received his master of divinity degree in 1994 from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

Kirby is pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Carl-ville, Ill., and an active member of the local Ministerial Alliance and Good Samaritan Ministries Board. He previously served in Jamaica for approximately eight years and was privileged to be a guest speaker at various civic clubs in Jamaica and the Bahama Islands. In 2001, he had the distinction of being a featured speaker at the National Lutheran Women's Missionary League Convention.

The award was made by a fraternity brother, Merle Aukamp, and the alumni



Among those attending the presentation of the Beta Sigma Psi Distinguished Alumni Award were, from left, Terry Borrenpohl, member of Zion, Belleville; Michael Nolte, member of St. Paul, Columbia; Rev. Peter Kirby, award recipient; Merle Aukamp, member of Zion, Belleville; and Dale Wachtel, member of St. Paul, Blue Point.

president, Michael Nolte. When presenting the award, Aukamp stated, "Rev. Peter Kirby is a most deserving recipient of our Distinguished Alumni Award, and an outstanding representative for his church, community, and Beta Sigma Psi."

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 a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 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 for the 2009-10 academic year to four men preparing for the pastoral ministry.

Student Assistance Fund Scholarships

These scholarships are given to church workers taking graduate courses through one of the synodical schools or to seminary students. If funds permit, scholarship money may also be provided to support undergraduate stu-

dents in professional church workers programs in our synodical colleges. 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 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.



Jesus Only

by **Herbert C. Mueller**

This month the church observes one of her lesser known but still very important festival—The Transfiguration of Our Lord. We will hear how our Lord took His three closest disciples, Peter, James, and John, to a mountain where He was “transfigured” before them.

What does that mean? St. Mark tells us, even “His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them” (Mark 9:3 NEV).

It was not as though there was a bright spotlight shining on Jesus. No, Jesus IS the light. Jesus Himself was shining with a light brighter than the sun. There appeared with Him two of the great prophets of the Old Testament—Moses and Elijah—speaking, Luke tells us, of His “exodus which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31 NEV), namely, His death and resurrection.

Peter wanted to stay but Mark tells us that “a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is My Son, listen to Him”” (Mark 9:7 NEV). The Father points to Jesus, “Here is the One!” And then there is a little descriptive statement that points to the full meaning of this event,



Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.
District President

“Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only” (Mark 9:8 NEV).

Jesus only. Only Jesus can shine with un-borrowed, un-reflected light, because only Jesus is God in our flesh. Only Jesus can take on Himself all our sin and sorrow by His death on the cross. Under their rule, the Romans crucified thousands, but Jesus only is the One we remember.

Only Jesus rose from the dead. Other religions may show you a religion, that is, a set of rules to live by. But only Jesus has crossed the great divide called death, and come back! Only Jesus can take us across when we reach that chasm. Only Jesus gives eternal life.

Only Jesus can forgive sins and make it stick! One of my favorite hymns in the old hymnal reads: “Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus,

can my heart-felt longing still. Lo, I pledge myself to Jesus What He wills alone to will. For my heart, which He hath filled, Ever cries, Lord, as Thou wilt” (TLH 348, vs. 1).

Jesus only. The Epistle for Transfiguration Sunday tells us: “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:5-6 NEV). Only Jesus shines.

Soon we enter the season of Lent where we focus on our need to turn from sin, turn away from self, to see Jesus only, crucified and raised from the dead, now in glory, waiting for us.

Jesus only. Paul had told the Corinthians once before, “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

Jesus only. Does that sound too exclusive? It’s really not, because this Jesus is for ALL. Remember Paul in Athens: “God commands all people everywhere to repent.” What God has is for all, but the one way to receive it is to acknowledge that you need it “because He has fixed a day on which

He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31 NEV). God has provided one way in Jesus, yes! And this one way is for all.

Every other religious system on earth ultimately leaves us in doubt. Only Jesus will tell you, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34 NEV). Only Jesus will say to the penitent thief, “Today, you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43 NEV).

Only Jesus can assure you, “Because I live, you will live also!” (John 14:19 NEV). Only Jesus can promise you, “In the world you will have tribulation, but fear not, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 NEV).

So when, on the last Sunday in February, you hear again in church how Jesus was shining on the mount of Transfiguration with a light that came from within, remember, He shines there FOR YOU. Only Jesus lights our way in this dark world. Only Jesus shines for you still, here in His Word. Then, at the end of time, we will see Jesus only shining, when He comes again for us.

Yes, Jesus only!

Support of church workers

by Roger Sprengel

How well are you and your congregation doing in caring for and nurturing the workers God has placed in your midst? Permit me to spend a little time this month examining some of the stress that church workers encounter in ministry and the “support” that congregations promise to their workers.

Some of the following thoughts and ideas are taken from portions of *ISSUES* (reprinted from *ISSUES in Christian Education*, Volume 42, No.3, Winter 2008, a publication of Concordia University Nebraska, Seward, Neb.).

Stressors

“Church workers have many of the same stressors that come with many other vocations. But church workers have the additional stress (and accompanying joy) of striving to remember that what they are doing will have and does have eternal consequences—and that whole hosts of demons, worldly temptations, and sinful flesh are working behind the scenes to undermine our vocations” (Rev. Rick Marrs, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis). The pressures that professional



Roger Sprengel
Schools and Executive Assistant

church workers face are typically the result of expectations from others and themselves. With each expectation they are faced with fears, desires, and judgments—which can be real, imagined, or threatened (Rev. Mark Rockenbach, LCMS Nebraska District).

Professional church work students often run heavy debt loads to finance their study and preparation for the ministry. In some professions, high debt loads are not as critical because the end result of higher income will allow a student to pay off his or her debts. But pastors and other church workers will never see those high incomes and are forced to carry thousands of dollars of debts for many years of their ministry! The Southern Illinois District Scholarship Committee reviewed 12 applications this past

year for an Educational Debt Relief Grant. The average indebtedness of these 12 professional church workers in our district was more than \$16,000 (for one to six years of service in the church)!

Indeed, some church workers have left the ministry because of this fact! Could this also have something to do with the lack of recruitment of needed professional church workers in our colleges and universities—down nearly one-third over the past eight years (see January’s SAGE Report in *The Lutheran Witness*)! Resolving church worker debt has become a major emphasis of synodical and district officials during the past several years and continues to be a matter of discussion with our colleges and universities!

Nurture and Support

“Encouraging, nurturing, and loving others characterize both a healthy Christian and a healthy church. Just as servants of the Lord strive to manifest a genuine love for those under their care, the people of God need to have a deep love for the professional church worker. The way a church nurtures its workers speaks volumes about the Christ-centeredness of the congregation. Churches can

—and must—do much to help pastors and professional church workers weather the stress inherent in their ministries” (Dr. Randall Schroeder, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.).

Part of this nurture must be self-generated! Church workers must utilize time-management resources to balance the demands of the ministry. This includes understanding the importance of their own spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, and devotional topics. Grace Place Retreats are available either free or at greatly reduced cost and provide physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, and fiscal skills for enhancing the health and ministry service of workers. Check out times and locations at www.parsonage.org!

Congregations should not seek to balance the budget of their ministry on the backs of their professional church workers (called “fourth-source funding”)!

Too often congregations are forced to lower salaries, decrease health coverage (fringe benefits), or lower the per-

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centage of district schedule to make the ministry plan work for the next year. Does your congregation have a salary review committee? Do you recognize the service anniversaries of your professional church workers? Do you offer continuing education stipends for your staff?

Summary

Check out the entire publication of *ISSUES* (www.cune.edu/issues), including the editorials! I invite you also to check out the LCMS Web site for ways to nurture your professional church workers (www.lcms.org, click on "Resources" in the left margin).

But most importantly, I want you to do two things RIGHT NOW:

- 1) Pray for your pastor, teachers, directors of Christian education, deaconesses, and all other church workers; and
- 2) affirm their ministry

the next time you greet them by saying "thank you"! I would be interested in the results and stories. (E-mail them to sidsage@sidlcms.org or mail them to the Southern Illinois District office at 2408 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221.)

St. John, Red Bud, installs new director of parish music

Lindsey Pfanstiel was installed as director of parish music on Sunday, Nov. 30, 2008, by Rev. Russell Koen at St. John

Lutheran Church, Red Bud, during the 10:30 a.m. service.

Lindsey is from Cape Girardeau, Mo., where her father, Rev. Barry Pfanstiel serves as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Lindsey is a 2008 graduate of Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon, Wis.

Attending the installation were her parents, Rev. and Mrs. Barry Pfanstiel and her twin sister, Rachel, and husband, Eric Fox of Nashville, Tenn.

The congregation hosted a welcome reception

in the church fellowship hall at 9:30 a.m. to introduce her to congregation members.

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. Photos must be 300 dpi and e-mailed separately.



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NEWS

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. 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 written 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



Bickel

remember we do not fight these battles alone. Satan roars like he is the 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 \$25 if paid before Feb. 22, 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.

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

Calls in the district

Calls Extended

Daniel Decker, Zion, Bethalto, to Living Faith, Clive, Iowa.

Mitchell Schuessler, Immanuel, Altamont, Ill., to St. Paul, Troy.

Call Accepted

Mitchell Schuessler, Immanuel, Altamont, Ill., to St. Paul, Troy.

Call Declined

Daniel Decker, Zion, Bethalto, to Living Faith, Clive, Iowa.

Calendar of events

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

April

- 2—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 10—Good Friday, district office closed
- 12—Easter Sunday, district office closed
- 16—LWML District Board meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 25—SID Board of Directors, 9 a.m.
- 28—Spring Pastors Conference, Camp Wartburg

May

- 2—SID Student Aid Golf Benefit
- 4—Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9 a.m.
- 7—Prison Ministry Conference, Camp Wartburg
- 7—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 19—SID Lutheran Laymen's League meeting, 7 p.m.
- 25—Memorial Holiday, district office closed



Trinity, Hoyleton, receives grant

Steve Kasten, science teacher at Trinity Lutheran School in Hoyleton, has been awarded a \$320 Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grant for a bio-diesel production project at Trinity Lutheran. Tri-County Electric Cooperative has budgeted \$8,000 toward Touchstone Energy Empowerment Grants to fund innovative, unfunded school projects or materials. The project submitted to the grant program from Steve Kasten of Trinity Lutheran School, Hoyleton, was among 10 grant winners from a pool of 50 total grant applicants.

Marcia Scott, manager of Tri-County Electric Cooperative, says, "As your local Touchstone Energy electric cooperative, our focus is on our community, and we are proud to be able to support local schools. We realize that school budgets are tight, and these grants will empower schools to pursue projects that would not otherwise have been funded."

For more information about Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants, please contact Bruce Barkau, director of Member Services at Tri-County Electric.

Touchstone Energy is an alliance of more than 640 electric cooperatives



Steve Kasten, left, science teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, Hoyleton, received a Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grant of \$320 check from Tri-County Electric. Bruce Barkau, director of Member Services, presents him the check.

across the country, committed to serving members with integrity,

accountability, innovation, and commitment to communities.



Kelly Mees and Tim Nummela of Camp Wartburg in Waterloo, Ill., attended the Servant Events Leadership Conference in November 2008. Camp Wartburg will host "Shepherding Sheep" May 24-29.

2009 LCMS Servant Events

More than 100 Servant Events are planned for 2009. All kinds of events are available, from construction, human care, and outreach events to crisis, multicultural, and environmental events.

This year's events also feature some opportunities especially for families and, for the first time, one just for young adults.

LCMS Servant Events give young people across the country the experience of learning that serving others can make a difference because of Jesus Christ.

Since 1981, LCMS youth and adults have participated in more than 1,000 Servant Events and have made a difference in the lives of thousands of others by contributing to the development of resources and facilities of synodical camps, congregations, and other service agencies.

Visit LCMS Servant Events online at www.lcms.org/youth for a complete list of events and to search by type, date, and region of the country. For a free DVD about LCMS Servant Events, contact the LCMS Youth Ministry office at youth.ministry@lcms.org or 800-248-1930, ext. 1155.

CHURCH/PEOPLE

Church/people news in Southern Illinois

Concordia Publishing House (CPH) donated 2,600 children's Christmas books to the St. Louis-area Marine Toys for Tots annual drive as part of the company's "Give a Gift, Share a Gift" campaign. CPH President and Chief Executive Officer Bruce G. Kintz delivered the books on Dec. 19, 2008. Speaking on local St. Louis radio station KYKY at the drop-off center, Kintz said, "Our hope is that these books are a special item for young readers and their families, and that they provide a sense of peace and hope to those homes this Christmas through the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The campaign ran through the month of December and provided a



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free children's book to local St. Louis charities for every children's book purchased at the company Web site (www.cph.org)

or at any of its bookstores located in St. Louis, Chicago, Ann Arbor (Mich.), and Fort Wayne (Ind.).

Concordia Publishing House is a not-for-profit

publishing company. The company offers more than 8,000 products for use in Christian congregations, schools, and homes.



Gertrude Rennegarbe, a member of Immanuel, Okawville, sewed 24 quilts for Orphan Grain Train. The quilts were packed and taken to New Minden, Ill., for distribution.



Valerie Helland, a member of Immanuel, Okawville, sewed hats and mittens for Orphan Grain Train.