



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 not be at the convention center but will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1300 Belt Line, Collinsville. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 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 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."

Seminary offers Epiphany celebration

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will hold its annual Epiphany celebration at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 11, in The Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus. Participating in the celebration will be several vocal and instrumental groups from the Concordia Seminary community, including the Concordia Seminary Chorus, Pro Musica Sacra, and Brass Choir.

Two new compositions will premier at the Epiphany celebration. Concordia Seminary Chorus commissioned Dr. Ralph C. Schultz, former president of Concordia College, Bronxville, N.Y., to write a setting of "O Christ, Who Art the Light and Day." Dr. Schultz set

selected stanzas of an ancient evening hymn along with quotations of Jesus being the Light of the world and arranged them for male chorus and viola.

The other work to premier at the Epiphany celebration is a setting of "Lord, Support Us All Day Long," utilizing the hymn text of Stephen P. Starke (*Lutheran Service Book* 884). The new setting by Rev. Henry V. Gerike, director of the choirs at Concordia Seminary, sets the hymn for congregation, mixed-voice choir, male choir, organ, and string ensemble.

Special recognition will be given to pastors and church musicians from Lutheran churches in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Concordia Seminary desires to express its appreciation for their work of proclaiming God's Word and leading God's people in worship and song.

For more information, call 314-505-7374.

EDITOR

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NEWS

LCMS Foundation gives special award to SID counselor

Kirk Mueller, LCMS Foundation gift-planning counselor for the Southern Illinois District, was recognized for his accomplishments in gift planning and received the leadership award for ministry teamwork at an awards celebration at The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod International Center in St. Louis.

He and other LCMS Foundation gift-planning

counselors from around the country met for continuing education, stewardship training, and spiritual refreshment.

Kirk has served the Southern Illinois District for almost one year, linking Christians with giving opportunities in their local congregations, in the district, and worldwide.

Calls in the district Call Extended

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



Kirk Mueller, left, gift-planning counselor for the Southern Illinois District, was recently recognized for his accomplishments in gift planning and received the 2008 Leadership Award for ministry teamwork from Terry Gerdt, senior vice president of gift planning services for the LCMS Foundation.



Clergy participating in the installation of Rev. Martin Springer at Trinity Lutheran Church, Edwardsville, on Sept. 13 are, from left, Dr. George Gude, Emmaus, Dorsey; Revs. Brian Downs, Zion, Belleville; Tim Weiser, Trinity, luka; Hyo Jung Kim, Zion, Belleville; Gary Galen, associate pastor at Trinity, Edwardsville; Leonard Laetsch, Hope, Highland, also circuit counselor for Circuit 3; Randy Wilken, Acts 1 Mission Society; Robert Mundahl, Peace, Fairbault, Minn.; Martin Springer; Martin Schultz, St. Paul, Wood River; David Fielding, Hope, Granite City; Darwin Schrader, candidate; Jim Daub, St. Paul, Havelock; Ron Nelson, LCMS; Doug Nicely, installer and chaplain at Memorial Hospital in Belleville; Ron Hilmer, emeritus; Rev. Jules Bush, emeritus; and Bob Weise, Concordia Seminary.



A New Year in Mission

by Herbert C. Mueller

Happy New Year to one and all in the Lord Jesus!

Are you involved in leadership in your congregation? As we begin the year of our Lord 2009, I have an observation for you, as a leader, to consider—the church is never more evangelistic than its leaders. Whether we are talking about pastors or laypeople, leaders lead the way.

But what do I mean by evangelistic? I mean someone whose life and conversations are centered in the evangel, the Gospel of Christ; someone who knows he or she is a sinner but forgiven in Christ, dead but alive in Jesus by His death and resurrection; someone who is filled with hope and willing to tell others the reason for that hope in Christ.

An evangelistic leader is a person who drinks deeply at the “wells of salvation” (Is. 12:3), the Word of God, who lives in the daily washing and renewal of the Spirit in Baptism, who eats often at the Table of the Lord, and from that is simply ready to point others to Jesus saying, “Here’s Life!” Here is the God of second chances, the Father who waits for the prodigal, the Good Shepherd who lays



Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr.
District President

down His life for the sheep, and then goes to find the lost ones. Here’s the God in our flesh who brings those who were far from home into the Father’s house by means of His own blood shed for us.

Yes, that is all true, you might say, but it seems so theoretical. How do we make it real? How does it come alive in our churches, like Jesus took on skin and bones, flesh and blood, to save us? I’ve got four things that follow here, things for you to think and pray about for your church, the body of Jesus Christ in your local place. God is calling you and your church to make real in the world the love of Jesus for the lost people around you.

First, before you talk to your neighbors about the Father, we need to talk to the Father about our neighbors. It makes a

difference when we pray because Jesus promises to hear. Do you have someone you want to talk with about Jesus? Pray for them. Pray for the words to say. Pray that your love for them and your witness can be authentic. Perhaps encourage the members of your church to commit to pray for one lost person for one minute every day. Then be ready for the opportunities.

Second, be open for questions. Make time for people so that you listen for their questions. Seek answers together in the Word of God. Invite people to read God’s Word with you. Bring them to your pastor’s class. Find ways in your church to be open to those who have questions about life, God, and what’s going on in the world.

Reach out and invite them to “come and see.”

Always, then, be ready not just to share your faith, but to show your faith at work in love. Words are necessary, but words alone can seem empty. Help your church develop a “compassion radar” to seek out those who need love, looking for times and places to demonstrate Christ’s compassion for lost people.

Wherever you are located, there are people who need Christ, but first they may need you to become the arms, the feet, the mouth of Jesus to show His love.

Finally, pray that we can be consistent in the way we relate to people. What we say about Jesus and how we live toward people need to match up. People outside the church often have a very sensitive “hypocrisy radar” ready to detect false piety, a “holier-than-thou” attitude or a phony witness. That can only be accomplished through honest humility and an open recognition of our failures, even while we point to Jesus as the One who took all our failures and sins on Himself on the cross.

Pray, be open, be ready to act with compassion, and be authentic. Who can do all of that? We don’t have the ability ourselves, but He does. He hears our prayers, He opens our hearts to others, His compassion fills us with compassion, and His faithfulness overcomes our fears and our failures.

How will the Lord Jesus lead your congregation in the new year? How will His love show through you in 2009? Let the adventure begin. He will show the way!

School ministry trends

by Roger Sprengel
Schools and General Executive

Fast Facts and Summaries of Private Schools

CAPE (Council for American Private Education) summarizes school statistical reports each year and tracks national educational and enrollment data regarding U.S. schools (private as well as public).

The recent report comparing ACT scores from the class of 2008 indicated that graduates from religious and independent schools surpassed public school graduates in the test's college readiness benchmark scores in English, mathematics, reading, and science.

In fact, the number of students meeting or surpassing these benchmark scores was on average 10 percent greater for private-school students!

Average ACT scores for students in private



Roger Sprengel
Schools and General Executive

schools also were significantly above the average scores for students in public schools. The ACT average composite score for 2008 private school students was 22.4 compared to 20.9 for public school graduates.

Elementary School Study

The initial findings of an eight-year longitudinal study by the National Center for Education Statistics show that students in religious and independent schools score above average in academic assessments, and when compared to public-school students, devote more hours to homework, participate more in school-sponsored activities, and have higher long-term educational aspirations.

This study collected information from the students, parents, teach-

ers, and administrators. Data was collected in the fall and spring for kindergarten, first grade, third grade, fifth grade, and eighth grade.

School Crime

During the past 10 years (1995-2005), school crime has actually dropped by 5 percent. A 2005 survey of students ages 12 to 18 indicated that 4.3 percent of them had been victimized either on school property or on the way to school; 3.1 percent were victims of theft; and the remaining 1.2 percent were victims of violent crimes.

Three percent of students who attended public schools reported being victims of theft compared to 1 percent of students who attended private schools. Roughly 1 percent of students in public and private schools claimed to be victims of violent crime.

Enrollment

Private schools (elementary and secondary) increased enrollment by 7 percent from 1992 to 2005, compared to an increase of 14 percent in all schools. Private school enrollment is predicted to grow another 5 percent between 2005 and 2017, compared to a projected increase of 10 percent for all schools.

The number of teachers in private elementary and secondary schools increased 22 percent during the same time and is projected to increase an additional 20 percent between 2005 and 2017! Part of this increase in the number of teachers is due to the decrease in "student-teacher" ratios from 15.4 to 13.5 during 1992-2005. This "ratio" is projected to decrease further to 11.8 students per teacher by 2017!

Synodically Trained Teachers

While enrollment at our Concordia University System schools is up 32.6 percent from 2004 to 2008, the number of students preparing for church-work careers has declined by more than 25 percent from 2,729 to 2,034 students!

Unless we can reverse the trends discussed in this article, we will continue to experience serious shortages of LCMS trained workers for our churches and schools throughout the Synod!

Please continue to encourage young men and women who have the gifts of professional church work to be pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, deaconesses, or any other area of service needed in our congregations and schools!





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 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 we do not



Bickel

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 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 by Feb. 22; \$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."

Annual Choir Member Workshop

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will offer its 17th Annual Schola Cantorum: An Adult Choir Member Workshop, on Saturday, Jan. 24. 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 been conducting choirs at Concordia University Nebraska since the fall of 1998 and is the fourth conductor in the 68-year history of the University A Cappella Choir.

This year, a Choral Reading Session will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 23. 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). 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 or e-mail cec@csel.edu.

NEWS

Zion, Mascoutah, celebrates 140 years

Zion Lutheran Church, Mascoutah, Ill., celebrated 140 years of God's grace and blessings on the congregation in a special worship service held on Sunday, Nov. 9, 2008. Worshipers filled the sanctuary to capacity for the joyful occasion under the anniversary theme, "Preach the Word."

The sermon was preached by Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr., president of the Southern Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who urged the congregation to sense the urgency in sharing God's Word, along with pointing to the many blessings God has bestowed on the congregation in the past 140 years.

Several visiting clergy also participated in the

service, including former pastors of the congregation and "sons of the congregation" who went on to serve in the pastoral ministry. Along with President Mueller, participating clergy included Rev. Glen Thomas and Rev. Darwin Schrader (former pastors of the congregation) and Rev. Paul Bramstedt, Rev. Paul Donner, and Rev. Donald McKelvey (sons of the congregation), and Rev. Kirk Clayton, Zion's current pastor.

In addition to welcoming former pastors back for the service, the day was supplemented by special music including Zion's Senior Choir, a brass ensemble, soloists, and guitarists.

Following the festive worship service, the celebration concluded with a catered banquet. Visitors for the event were surprised that, for a congregation that is 140 years



Zion Lutheran Church, Mascoutah, Ill., is filled with worshipers during a service to celebrate 140 years of God's blessings on Sunday, Nov. 9, 2008.

old, Zion is very young in regard to its membership.

Many members are in their 20s and 30s, and young children abound. Members and guests alike rejoiced in the gifts of grace that God has given to Zion in the past 140 years, and the congregation looks forward to

God's blessings for years to come.

Zion Lutheran Church of Mascoutah is a faith-filled, family-friendly congregation that warmly welcomes guests and new members. For more information about Zion, Mascoutah, please call 618-566-7345.



Norbert Meier directs Zion's Senior Choir during the 140th anniversary service.



Pastors who gathered for Zion Lutheran Church, Mascoutah's 140th anniversary service included, from left (front row), Rev. Paul Donner, President Herbert Mueller, Rev. Paul Bramstedt, and Rev. Donald McKelvey; (back row) Rev. Glen Thomas, Rev. Kirk Clayton, and Rev. Darwin Schrader.



Trinity, Hoyleton, celebrates town's 150th anniversary

Trinity Lutheran Church in Hoyleton, Ill., helped to celebrate the 150th anniversary of its hometown by entering a float in the July 12 parade. The float was such a hit that the congregation later entered it in the Okawville Wheat Festival Parade, where it earned fifth place in the annual competition.

The float followed the theme for the parade (All Nations of the World) by depicting the German roots in Trinity's heritage. Rather than simply giving out candy, the walking crew (including Lori Brammeier, Edie Grote, and Lisa Rommelman) handed out scrolls containing a brief history of the congregation, beginning with its humble 1867 charter. The float also featured several renditions of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" over loudspeakers.

Funds and supplies for the float were donated from many sources, including the Men's Club, Gary Unverfehrt, DBG Construction, Rommelman Bros., Lester Pitchford, and Brian Grathwohl.

Other volunteers included Gary, Marilyn, and Craig Suedmeyer; Keith and Stephanie Grote; Steve and Marge



Pictured on the Trinity, Hoyleton, float are, from left, worshipers Rebekah Theilen, Rev. Joshua Theilen, and elders Rollan Schnitker, Roger Koelling, and Norman Kasten. Ringing the church bell is custodian Don Schnitker. Diane Guinzy teaches the Sunday school to pupils Andrew and Owen Holle. Laura Haake works diligently on a quilt, while Paige Kasten reads to her from Holy Scripture. Other riders aboard the float in the Hoyleton parade included Dawn Mueller, Herb Grote, Sydney and Emily Schnitker, and Roy Krueger.

Kasten; Eileen Twenhafel; Tony Guinzy; Trisha Boehn; Curt Grote; Josh Holle; Brad Rommelman; Randy Brammeier; Kari-
anne Schnitker; Deb Holle; Nathan and Cindy Kasten; Tim Schnitker; Raven Holle; and Ron Ogrzewalla.

Trinity Lutheran Church is proud to have been a light for the Gospel of Christ in Hoyleton, Ill., during the past 15 decades. The people of Trinity are thankful for their heritage and excited about their future as a mission outpost in Southern Illinois.

Calendar of events

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.
- 25—SID Convention Floor Committees, St. Paul, Columbia, 2-5 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

April

- 2—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.
- 16—LWML District Board meeting, 9:30 a.m.

CHURCH/PEOPLE

Church/people news in Southern Illinois

Beta Sigma Psi, National Lutheran Fraternity at the University of Illinois, is pleased to announce its 2008 Merit Scholarship recipient, **Timothy George Homeier**. Timothy is a freshman this fall at Illinois majoring in chemical engineering, pursuing his goal of cancer research to find a cure for cancer.

Timothy is the son of **Clifford and Jane Homeier** of Staunton, Ill., and a member of **Zion Lutheran Church, Staunton, Ill.** He was presented the scholarship on June 29, 2008, at his



Scholarship winner Timothy Homeier, center, is pictured with Pastor Nathan Meador, Zion, Staunton; John Garlisch, scholarship director; and Michael Nolte, Beta Sigma Psi—Alpha alumni president.

home congregation.

Making the presentation were Beta Sigma Psi—Alpha Alumni President

Michael W. Nolte (Village Lutheran, Church, Ladue Mo.) and Scholarship Director John R. Garlisch

(Trinity Lutheran Church, Urbana, Ill.). Congratulations, Timothy!

Beta Sigma Psi, National Lutheran Fraternity, was founded in 1925 at the University of Illinois. The fraternity's goal then was and still is to be an organization that creates well-rounded Christian gentlemen through spiritual, scholastic, and social means to benefit the greater Lutheran community and world in which they live.

The fraternity works closely with the Lutheran churches on the University of Illinois campus.

To learn more about the fraternity and the scholarship, please visit the Web site www.betasigmapsi.org and click on "Alpha Chapter" (University of Illinois).



Roger Sprengel, Schools and General Executive, in back, presented the National Lutheran Schools Association certificate to Lynn Lukomski, principal at Immanuel, Okawville (holding certificate). Pictured are teachers, from left, Joy Fox, Tracy Boeker, (Sprengel in back), Jody Liszewski, Lynn Lukomski, Haley Wilkey, Eric Tepe, and Joe Kirby.