



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 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 a 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. Prior to accepting the call to Concordia in 1992, Hilgendorf taught in Lutheran schools in Arkansas, Florida, and Wisconsin.

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



John Anthony of Unity Lutheran Church, East St. Louis, and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans representative, presents a check of \$4,779.53 from Thrivent to Gina Jackson, president of the Parents for Unity Group at Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School. Dr. Willie Stallworth, pastor of the congregation, stands in the background (between them). The check was for matching funds for the Spring Draw Down Dinner and presented during the school's dedication service on Aug. 30.

equip women for Christian leadership. 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? In these uncertain times, where will women turn

for advice and counsel? Scripture is full of answers from women who also lived in uncertain times and looked to God for eternal life-changing answers. Dr. Hilgendorf's message will share these biblical responses 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 attending the Women's Day of Renewal to personalize their experience by choosing two workshops from a large variety that are designed to educate and energize women in both their spiritual and practical everyday life.

The cost for the day is \$25 if paid by Dec. 31; \$30 (Continued on Page B.)

Order Witness subscriptions now

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

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

EDITOR

Send news, articles, and photos:

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2408 Lebanon Ave.
Belleville, IL 62221

Or e-mail to:
sidlw@earthlink.net

January 2010
deadline: Nov. 15

CPH to hold warehouse sale Nov. 7

Concordia Publishing House announces its annual warehouse sale—the largest sale of the year—on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 8 a.m. to noon.

For one day only, excess inventory from the non-profit Christian publisher is sold at deeply reduced prices. Sale items include Bibles, curricula, music, adult and children's books, boxed greeting cards, and church resources at savings of up to 75 percent.

Concordia Bookstore, located in the Concordia Publishing House building, offers its own savings during the warehouse sale. Customers save 20 percent on nearly every item in the store. Bookstore hours during the sale are 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Shoppers can register to win one of four certificates good for \$50 in warehouse sale purchases by listening for details on KFUE 850 AM in St. Louis and by calling KFUE at 314-505-7850 or toll-free 800-730-2727. Contestants must be present at 7:45 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 7, to win. Each certificate is good for the Nov. 7 warehouse sale only; certificates are not valid in the Concordia Bookstore.

Concordia Publishing House and Concordia Bookstore are located at 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., south of Interstate 44 and

north of Interstate 55. Free parking is available on Miami Street, east of Jefferson.

For more information about the warehouse sale, call 800-774-0274. For more information about the Concordia Bookstore sale, call 314-268-1268.

WOMEN'S RENEWAL

(Continued from Page A.) 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.

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 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!

Calendar of events

November

- 2—Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9 a.m.
- 4—Mission Staff meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 5—Southern Illinois District Prison Ministry

Workshop, 8:45 a.m.–2:45 p.m., Camp Wartburg.

5—S.A.M.T.F. meeting, 7 p.m.

14—Board of Missions, 9 a.m., Our Savior, Carbondale.

26—Thanksgiving Day

27—Southern Illinois District office closed.

2010

January

- 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.



On Sept. 13, five organists joined children and adult choirs and instrumentalists at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Collinsville to present a hymn festival. The occasion was to celebrate the rebuilding of the pipe organ at Holy Cross by the Buzard organ firm. Pictured are, from left, Kathy Lyon (former music director at Holy Cross and now organist/choir director at Messiah, Wilmington, N.C.), Karen Shimkus (current music director at Holy Cross), Deb Meier (choir accompanist at Holy Cross and organist at St. Peter, Caseyville), Lisa Moore (former music director at Holy Cross and now music director at Trinity, Orlando, Fla.), and Dr. Arthur Eichhorn (former music director at Holy Cross and now pastor at St. Salvator, Venedy, and St. Peter, New Memphis).



God Comes Near by Herbert C. Mueller

“Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord” (Jer. 23:23-24).

The almighty and ever-living God, Yahweh, “I am who I am” (Ex. 3:14), who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, both created and fills all things.

He is not a god, such as an idol of wood or stone that you have to carry around. He is not a god that you walk up to and touch, nor is He a god you can manipulate with sacrifices.

God is not our “sugar daddy,” filling our every whim, nor is He our “buddy,” someone like us who tells us we’re all right even when we’re not. No. Three times holy, He is “the Lord of hosts” and “the whole earth is full of His glory” (Is. 6:3).

God Most High, Abraham called Him, saying, “I have lifted my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:22).

There is no other, no one else who can make



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

this claim, “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; ‘I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god’” (Is. 44:6).

Then, after describing the foolishness of idolatry, where man takes a piece of wood and with half of it builds a fire to cook his supper and with the other half fashions an idol to worship, the Lord says, “I am the Lord who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself” (Is. 44:24).

This is the God we serve, the God who made heaven and earth, who fills all things with His presence.

Our God is way beyond awesome, and we dare never forget this side of His nature.

But how shall we know Him? How can we trust Him? We instinctively know (though we often deny it) that we are sinful creatures who cannot stand in His holy presence. We are afraid of a holy God, just as Moses, at the burning bush, “hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God” (Ex. 3:6). How shall we draw near to Him, when “our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29)?

The good news from Scripture we confess in the Apostles’ Creed is that God has drawn near to us! His desire is not to consume us, but to rescue us. That’s what we mean when we say, “I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord” (Apostles’ Creed).

In His one and only Son, God has drawn near to us. In Jesus, God has taken on our flesh, breathed our air, lived our life, suffered our pain, received our punishment, and died our death. All because He wants to draw near to us, the Lord God, Yahweh Himself, clothes Himself in a human body and soul.

The Bible says of Jesus, “In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him” (Col. 1:19-22).

Nothing could be sweeter! In Jesus, God has come near to us, because He wants to make us holy and blameless. He wants to enable us to stand in His presence without fear, because we have our living Lord Jesus standing with us.

So, to have Jesus as Lord is to trust that God has, in Jesus, taken all of His almighty power, all of His divine character, harnessed it to His love. “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9).

To say, “I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,” is to have confidence in the promise of God that “there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18a).

That’s what we mean when we confess the
(Continued on Page D.)

Being thankful for less

It's been a difficult year for many! Unemployment rates near 10 percent, continuing recession, market declines, and other uncertain economic conditions have made us appreciate more the gifts God gives us every day that we may not fully appreciate—family, good health, shelter, clothing, and food. There are many in our world struggling for just those basic essentials and simply need the care and concern of Christian neighbors in providing these needs in their life.

The Yes Culture

We live in a culture that promotes MORE, FAST, EASY, and FUN! Media and advertisers use highly effective techniques to promote and reinforce these overriding themes.

GOD COMES NEAR

(Continued from Page C.)
creed. Our God has come near to us in Jesus, come near to rescue us from ourselves, come near to raise us to life and bring us home to Himself forever.

Next month, as we come near to Christmas, we will dig into what it means that Jesus was “conceived by the Holy Spirit” and “born of the Virgin Mary.” Talk to you then!



Roger Sprengel
Schools and Executive Assistant

One highly successful businessman is quoted as saying, “It is our job to make people unhappy with what they have.” We become obsessed with fast and instant gratification. We simply must have the latest innovation. If our children don't have what the other kids have, they will whine, protest, and put on a tantrum until they get it.

How much “screen time” are your children getting each day? Time in front of a TV, computer, cell phone, electronic gadget, or other device where they are bombarded by these “YES” messages from society! Eat what you want, buy what you want, go where you want, be who you want to be.

(Excerpts taken from the book *No*, written by Dr. David Walsh, National Institute on Media and The Family, Minneapolis, Minn.)

What's a Parent or Christian Leader to Do?

I would suggest two things. First, be intentional and disciplined in parenting/instructing our children. Read or tell stories that promote values. Limit your child's media diet to two hours a day or less—for children over 2 years old. Children under 2 should NOT watch TV or videos. Keep a list of what you buy for your child. Do you always seem to be buying more “stuff”?

Decide if your kids are doing too much. If they are always on the go, it may be time to drop an activity.

Secondly, stewardship is managing God's resources to accomplish His will. He wants us to be happy and content and promises to provide and care for us. “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have ...” (Heb. 13:5).

During these times of financial difficulty and economic uncertainty, we need to prioritize our resources and limit some of our choices based on need and availability. “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (Deut. 31:8).

Thankful Hearts

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ... And

be thankful” (Col.3:15). Be thankful for all of the blessings that God has provided in your personal life. Remember, give a portion of your firstfruits to the Giver (God) and be willing to share your overabundance with your neighbor (anyone in need of your love and care).

“For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations” (Ps. 100:5).

Calls in the district

Call Extended

Joel Fritsche, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to Zion, Staunton.

Call Accepted

Joel Fritsche, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to Zion, Staunton.

Send in your news

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

Send news about your congregation, school, or an individual's achievements to Lois Engfehr, 2408 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221; or e-mail at sidlw@earthlink.net. Photos must be 300 dpi and e-mailed separately.



LWML seeks grant requests

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

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.

(Continued on Page G.)



Pictured are sixth-grade students and teachers/vicar from three Southern Illinois elementary Lutheran schools. Students enjoyed a two-day outdoor education experience on Sept. 28-29. Schools represented include Zion, Bethalto; St. John, Red Bud; and Zion, Staunton.



The quilting group from Immanuel Lutheran Church, Murphysboro, Ill., is shown with some of the approximately 4,800 quilts, lap covers, and afghans made in the last 18 years. Pictured are Doris Heise, Ruth Boese, Mildred Brkljach, Lorena Presutti, Wilma Barnes, Ruth Welten, and Virginia Lewis. Not pictured is Viola Koch. These quilts are given to the Women's Center in Carbondale or sent to Lutheran World Relief in the fall. The lap covers are distributed to the various rehab and care centers in the area. The group also has made sewing kits for Lutheran World Relief.

LCEF update

Is North America a mission field?

It is estimated that the unchurched population of the United States and Canada are 195 million and 24 million, respectively. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the population in the United States increased 11.4 percent, but the overall church membership declined 9.5 percent.

North America contains a very diverse religious landscape, and the church's growth is not doing well. Cults and other world religions are growing at a very rapid rate. Aubrey Malphurs noted in his book on church planting that the number of Mormons has tripled in size between 1965 and 2001 in the United States and that the Jehovah's Witnesses did likewise in Canada. Christianity grew by 5 percent from 1990 to 2000 in the United States, but compare this statistic with the following growth rates:

- Nonreligious/Secular: 110 percent increase
- Islam: 109 percent increase
- Buddhism: 170 percent increase
- Hinduism: 237 percent increase
- Unitarian/Universalist: 25 percent increase
- Native American: 119 percent increase

- Baha'i: 200 percent increase
- New Age: 240 percent increase
- Sikhism: 338 percent increase
- Scientology: 22 percent increase
- Taoism: 74 percent increase
- Deism: 717 percent increase

"Most Americans when asked to describe rural America conjure up images of farm life, fresh air, wide open spaces, and small, somewhat isolated towns populated with hard-working, independent people (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2001). When we think 'rural,' we imagine a time in our country's history when life seemed more simple and straightforward. Folks raised their animals and crops, cared for their families and land, and met their neighbors at church every Sunday. In the 21st century, while parts of this image still hold true, close to 94 percent of the rural labor force is engaged in work other than farming" (Johnson, 2006).

New pressures from globalization, demographic shifts, migration, landscape transformation, and resource limits are reshaping rural life. Fifty million people live in small towns and rural communities—17 percent of the nation's population, living on 80 percent of the land. Dur-

ing the last four decades, jobs in rural areas have moved from agriculture, mining, and forestry to low-skill manufacturing, and more recently, to the service sector." So, we ask again: "Is North America a mission field?" Indeed it is! In most Illinois counties, at least 40 percent of the people are unchurched.

What does this have to do with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)? The mission statement of LCEF is "to support the Church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner of the LCMS, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future."

LCEF is about building churches and schools so the Gospel message can be shared with all. As you invest in LCEF, you earn a fair rate of return and help provide low-cost loans and services to LCMS ministries, helping them spread the Good News of Jesus.

Here are several examples of how your investment helped a church or school in the LCMS.

1. Concordia Lutheran Church, Chula Vista, Calif., is building a bridge to their community by offering early childhood education and ultimately a new church. A construction loan from LCEF has brought the first stage of the dream to fruition: a

12,000-square-foot preschool and child care center opened July 27 with 130 children. Eventually, the project will include two more buildings to complete an education center with an elementary school and a community center with full gymnasium. Plans for the space include before- and after-school programs and a senior center. A formal 600-seat worship center will be the last phase on this construction project. Concordia's dream began six years ago after a church meeting at which 120 active congregants decided it was time to sell their current church site to a developer and relocate.

2. Concordia International School Shanghai, China—Concordia started with just 22 students 10 years ago. An LCEF loan in 2001 kept the school from closing. This school year's enrollment totaled 1,055 students representing nearly 30 countries, from preschool through high school. The school has a full curriculum, including music and art. Many students are not Lutheran but are exposed to the faith through chapel and religion classes.

3. Immanuel Lutheran Church, Englewood, Colo.—Members of this congregation ordered an LCEF demographics study and mailing list when it

(Continued on Page G.)



LCEF UPDATE

(Continued from Page F.) began planning its vacation Bible school last summer. The demographics study helped them decide to which residents they would send invitation postcards.

For example, a high percentage of people in the area were not familiar with what a Lutheran is. A large number of people were struggling with personal and financial issues. It was eye-opening to see that their community was really hurting—thus, an opportunity for the congregation to reach out to those in need.

As a result of the mailing to 1,000 specific households, two families joined the church. One mother commented that in the 10 years her family has lived in Englewood, they had never been invited to any church event until they received the postcard from Immanuel. Rev. Scott Matthis said that “we like to say here that our job as Christians is to connect people to Jesus, and those tools from LCEF help us to do that.”

Contact Southern Illinois District LCEF Promotion Director Dan Roth for more information about LCEF investment opportunities and services. Call 618-234-4767 or e-mail Dan Roth at LCEFPromo@sidlcmis

District young woman crowned National American Miss Illinois

Emily Lymberopoulos, daughter of Mark and Dawn Lymberopoulos, has earned the prestigious title of 2009 National American Miss Illinois through her successfully scored events.

Emily is an eighth-grade student at Good Shepherd Lutheran School in Collinsville. Representing the state of Illinois, she will attend the national pageant to be held in Anaheim, Calif., at Disneyland during Thanksgiving week, where she will have the opportunity to win her share of more than \$500,000 in cash and prizes!

The National American Miss pageants are dedicated to celebrating

America’s greatness and encouraging its future leaders. Each year, the National American Miss Pageants awards \$1.5 million in cash, scholarships, and prizes to recognize and assist the development of young women nationwide. National American Miss has added the ultimate door prize to Nationals 2009. Each girl who qualifies for the national pageant has a chance to win a new 2009 Ford Mustang convertible. For more details, visit www.namiss.com/car.

National American Miss is dedicated to developing the success of young women across our nation with a program that is designed to be age-appropriate and family-oriented. Pageants are held in each state for girls ages 4 to 18 in five age

divisions.

The National American Miss Pageants are for “Today’s Girl” and “Tomorrow’s Leaders.” The pageant program is based on inner beauty, as well as poise, presentation, and offers an “All-American Spirit” of fun for family and friends.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of gaining self confidence, learning new skills, learning good attitudes about competition, and setting and achieving personal goals.

The pageant seeks to recognize the accomplishments of each girl while encouraging her to set goals for the future!

Emily’s activities include dancing, modeling, art, volleyball, snow skiing, boating, swimming and photography.



Emily Lymberopoulos, daughter of Mark and Dawn Lymberopoulos, has earned the prestigious title of the 2009 National American Miss Illinois through her successfully scored events. She is an eighth-grade student at Good Shepherd Lutheran School, Collinsville.

LWML GRANT REQUESTS

(Continued from Page E.)

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.SIDLWML.org or call Mickey Roth at 618-277-3649 or e-mail danmicroth@charter.net.

CHURCH/PEOPLE

Church/People news in Southern Illinois



St. John's Lutheran School, Red Bud, dedicated its new playground equipment on Aug. 19. Proceeds from the school's first annual dinner action, golf scramble, class gifts, and private donations made the project possible.



Linda McGuire, with the help of her husband Bruce, made new white altar paraments for Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Carrollton. The altar paraments, dedicated last February, were given in the name of the Lord in memory of Angela Lee and Rissa Reif.



St. John's Lutheran School, Red Bud, dedicated its new ball fields, which were renovated over the summer. Proceeds from the school's first annual dinner auction, golf scramble, class gifts, and private donations made the project possible. Pictured are the students, faculty, and staff. The ball fields were dedicated before the school's first home game on Aug. 28.