



The InSIDE Word

www.sidlems.org

A newsletter by and for Southern IL District-LCMS

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Presidential Activities February 2008

- 12 Individual Consultations
- 4 Speaking/ Preaching Engagement
- 9 District Meetings
- 3 Meetings with Dan Roth
- 2 Congregational Meeting
- 6 Days COP in St. Louis
- 2 Days ILCC in Chicago

Some Lenten Reflections on Repentance

We are surrounded by a violent culture. Violence on the news or some other media we can often hold at arm's length. We become immune to it, seek to put it out of our minds, cover it up. Then something happens that is just too much to ignore. It comes way too close for comfort.

A cross is burned on a lawn right here in Belleville – what motivates that? We know, but we do not want to talk about it. Multiple people are killed in a city hall in Kirkwood. We are uncomfortable with how close it seems. Students just went to class at NIU in DeKalb. That's all they did, not knowing they were about to be gunned down.

Why?

We do not have to run all the way to the top of the "Richter Scale" of shock. If we are honest, there's enough run-of-the-mill violence right around us as well. Kids get into a fight in school. The wife hides the bruises and makes artful excuses for her husband's behavior. Certain neighborhoods are just to be avoided. Everyone "knows" that...

From the Iraq war all the way down to every day domestic violence and school yard bullying, what's happening? Of course, we can blame others. In fact, we'd like to blame someone else. It's *those* people, whoever *they* are, not *good* people like us.

Jesus will not let us off so easily, however. He points to the *real* trouble in our hearts. What is it that makes someone "unclean"? *"Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'" (Mark 7:15).* When the disciples questioned Him on it, Jesus responded, *"Are you so dull?... Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? ... What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'" (Mark 7:18, 20-23).*

As I write this the last week of February, just as I think these two problems over here are on their way to being solved by God's grace, in recent days four more have risen to take their place over there! What is it? What's going on? Yes, Satan loves to stir things up, to keep the pot bubbling, if you will. But our old evil foe has his ally in corruption right within us! From the heart, as I remember the Scripture memorized long ago, *"the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21).*

The evil begins, not out there, but in here! In *my* heart. It is the will curved in on itself, the natural inclination to seek what I want for myself, no matter who else might be in the way. It is idolatry, pure and simple, because we are looking for good and for life in created things rather than the Creator. And when *you* get in the

way of *my* good, I have to somehow push *you* out of *my* way, according to this thinking.

My beloved in Christ!

The Word of God calls us this Lent to repentance: *“Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love...”* (Joel 2:12-13).

Me repent? Yes! You *and* me. Examine your own heart and life. But hear also the word of promise, that *“He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love”* (Joel 2:13). The Lenten path of repentance is the one way to the Father’s heart of mercy.

Repentance means simply that we give it up, that we give up trying to justify ourselves or point out the violence of others. Repentance means that we give up our sins into the hands of the one who came to bear our sins, into the hands that were nailed up to the cross for us. Repentance means that we *“seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near,”* that *“the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,”* and that we *“return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on [us], and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”* (Isaiah 55:6-7).

In Jesus, crucified and raised from the dead, that Word is for you and for me. *“Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus, can my heartfelt longing still,”* the hymn writer sings (TLH 348:1). Jesus, alive but bearing the marks of His suffering, alive forever to assure us, *“Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”* (John 14:27b).

Jesus suffered all the violence our sin, death and the devil could throw at Him, but in Jesus *“the light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it”* (John 1:5). He took all the violence into Himself, but this Jesus, crucified before the world, *“God raised up, and of that [there are many] witnesses”* (Acts 2:32). Now this Jesus speaks tenderly to us, *“I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

If you know anything of the ancient world, you know that the level of violence was just incredible. For the sake of our violent world, we are now given the same message Peter brought then: *“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”* (Acts 3:19). This is the word that also gives us confidence before God when *“our hearts condemn us, for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything”* (1 John 3:20). Believe it, and it’s yours! All this because the grave is empty! Because Jesus lives!

Daily repentance and renewal in Jesus is for us the only way forward, the only way to life.

A blessed Easter to all, for Jesus lives!

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

TRINITY, ANNA—(Pastor Carl Miller, Vacancy Pastor) (May call Seminary Graduate)

TRINITY, EDWARDSVILLE - (Senior) Called Rev. Scott Schmieding, Pastor, Trinity, Baton Rouge, LA. (Received and Declined)

ZION, FARMERSVILLE—(Rev. Walter Byerley is serving)

CHRIST, FAIRFIELD—(Served by seminary students, and profs)

TRINITY, HOYLETON – Calling Seminary Graduate.

ZION, LITCHFIELD – Called Rev. Charles E. Brandt of Trinity Lutheran Church, Toledo, OH. (Received and Declined)

HOPE, MT. CARMEL—Rev. (Emeritus) Robert Reinhardt, IN/ District, Vacancy Pastor

ST. MARK, STEELEVILLE—Calling Associate Pastor/Principal

SID PASTOR’S CALLS RECEIVED/ACCEPTED/RETURNED

PRAYER REQUESTS



For the family of **Mary Owens**, Mother of Ellie Gibson, our SID webmaster, who was called to glory on February 16, 2008.

For the family of **Julana Aufdemberge**, widow of Pastor Carl Aufdemberge and retired teacher from Trinity, Edwardsville, was called to glory on February 14, 2008

For **Pastor Kit Belk**, Trinity, Girard, as he handles the pain and life adjustments of osteoarthritis.

For **Larry Thoele**, brother-in-law of Pastor Jim Rivett, who is under Hospice Care, remember the entire family as we pray for strength and courage.

For **Cathy Bevirt and Melissa Combs**, teachers at Holy Cross, Collinsville, for strength and courage while both are fighting cancer.

For **Ed Cook**, teacher at Trinity, Edwardsville, who is recovering from vertebrae surgery.

For **Bob & Corrine Streuter**, of Murphysboro, both are undergoing medical treatments and need our prayers for strength and courage. Bob is the former Treasurer of the District.

For **Pastor Mark Meschke**, formerly of Southern Illinois, is battling soft-tissue cancer and after several rounds of treatments the cancer has returned rather rapidly. Please keep Pastor Meschke and his family in your prayers.

For **Rev. Walt Byerley**, Zion, Farmersville, undergoing treatment for prostate cancer.

For **Pastor Leroy Eckert**, Emeritus, who has been hospitalized recently for cold/flu symptoms.

Please keep our brothers and sisters serving our country in your prayers

Active duty Chaplains from the SID: **Lt. Col. Gary Brooks, Major Gregory Jans, CDR Gregory N. Todd, LT. COL. David Wilshek, and Capt. Keith GeRue.**

For **Khosti Tswaedi**, son of Bishop David and Lucy Tswaedi, Southern Africa, in the U.S. Army, deployed to Iraq.

SPC Chris Willig (son of Mark and Paula Willig) is back in the United States. **Praise God**

Lt. Commander Craig Muehler (brother of Cindy Nebel, teacher at Trinity, Centralia) US Navy Chaplain now serving in Iraq.

Lt. Carl Muehler (brother of Cindy Nebel) US Navy Chaplain now serving at Camp Fuiji, Japan.

Sgt. Aaron Richardson (son of Faith Richardson, (Immediate Past President of the SID LWML & member of the Southern Africa Mission Task Force) has returned from Baghdad and is safely home, **Praise God**

Capt. Joshua Henschen (son of Ron and Ellen Henschen, teachers in Edwardsville) at Ft. Hood, TX.

Capt. Warren Kostencki, (son of Dan and Jean Kostencki, Dan is principal at Metro East Lutheran High School), is back home. **Praise God**

Capt. Drew Ponivas (son of Nancy Ponivas, teacher at Faith, Godfrey) is being to deployed to Iraq.

MM2 John Ponivas (son of Nancy Ponivas, teacher at Faith, Godfrey) has been deployed on the USS Albuquerque (submarine).

Lt. Col. Robin Schultze (daughter-in-law of Shirley Schwartzkopf) is now in Command of the 36th Medical Operations Squadron in Guam.

Sgt. Matthew Kasten (son of Steve and Marge Kasten, Hoyleton, IL.) U.S. Army has returned to Baghdad for 18 mp.

Capt. Anthony Skeesick (son of Pastor Dale and Kathy Skeesick, St. Peter, Prairietown) serving in the US Air Force and rejoicing over his return back to the United States following three years in England. In August he will report to Fort Campbell, Kentucky where he will serve with the 101st Airborne.

Lt. Col. John Pepin (son-in-law of Pastor [Emeritus] and Lois Eckert) is now serving in Iraq.

Do you have a prayer request you would like to share...please call Donna at (618) 234-4767. OR send an email to secretarysid@cbnstl.com Thank you

PRAISE REPORTS:

Praise and thanks to our loving God for this wonderful day He has made for us.

PICTURES FROM UNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH EAST ST. LOUIS

On Sunday, February 24, 2008, Unity Lutheran Church and Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School observed Black History Month (February) with a special service and program provided by the children of the school. After a powerful and Christ-centered message by Dr. Willie Stallworth from Synod's Board for Black Ministry Services (and soon-to-be DELTO Vicar serving at Unity), the children reminded their parents and members of the church of all the gifts God has given through many of the African-American heroes of our history.



Unity School Children telling the story of Black History



Joel Scott reciting his part in the Black History program.



Ms. Fonya Banks directing the "Clap Your Hands Choir"



Here's the crowd that came for the meal of "soul food" after the Service and Program.

Stewardship Life: Free* Training and Resources

The 2006 SID Convention passed Resolution 5-04 mandating a stewardship training process in the District. The Board for Congregational Support appointed a Stewardship Task Force to plan events and activities. NOW is the time to plan for the Southern Illinois District Stewardship Life: Free* Training and Resources workshop to be held at three different locations the second weekend in April 2008. The first is Saturday, April 12, 2008, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Wood River. The second and third will be on Sunday, April 13, 2008, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church in New Minden, and from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at St John Lutheran Church in Red Bud. You have your choice!

Rev. Wayne Knolhoff, new Director of Stewardship for the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, will give a one hour presentation on “Congregational Stewardship Culture.” There will be a half hour presentation on “Consecrated Stewards,” a stewardship program for proportional giving published by Capital Funding of the Lutheran Church – Extension Fund. There will also be plenty of time for Q & A.

Plan now to attend. Fill out and send in your registration form to the district office by March 31, 2008. We also plan to have registration available soon on the SID website – www.sidlcms.org.

(* Your presence is required to receive free training and resources.)

Registration Form

**Stewardship Life:
Free* Training and Resources
Rev. Wayne Knolhoff,
Director of Stewardship for the LCMS**

Saturday, April 12, 2008

or

Sunday, April 13, 2008

Congregation: _____

Pastor(s): _____

We will bring _____ *People (approximate).*

Names: _____

We will attend at the following location:

_____ 9:00-11:00 a.m. Saturday - St. Paul, Wood River

_____ 2:00-4:00 p.m. Sunday - St. John, New Minden

_____ 6:00-8:00 p.m. Sunday - St. John, Red Bud

Christians and the Challenge of Islam

Main Presenter – Dr. Adam Francisco, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

*Spring Session – 2008
Southern Illinois District Pastoral Conference
Tuesday, April 8, 2008
Camp Wartburg, Near Waterloo, Illinois*

Dr. Adam Francisco:

Adam S. Francisco graduated from Concordia University (Irvine, CA) with a M.A. in Theology (2001). Afterwards he moved to England where, in addition to pursuing further research in Christian theology, he studied Arabic and Islamic theology at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. From the University, he earned both a M.St. (2003) and D.Phil. (2006) for his work in the history of Christian-Muslim relations. Dr. Francisco served as Albin Salton Fellow at the University of London from 2004-2005. Afterwards, he taught in the history department of Concordia College (Bronxville, New York) until his recent appointment as a guest professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. He recently published the monograph *Martin Luther and Islam* (E.J. Brill, 2007).

Christians and the Challenge of Islam:

The theology and proliferation of Islam presents a significant challenge to Christians. To provide a foundation from which to consider how it should be regarded and how Muslims might be approached, Dr. Francisco will present a series of three lectures under the title “Christians and the Challenge of Islam.” “The origin and theology of Islam” will set the foundation by honing in on the key ideas and events that have shaped contemporary Islam. “A Lutheran evaluation of Islam” will consider how Christians should regard its theology. Particular attention will be given to the question of whether Islam should be considered a heresy, a sect, or, perhaps alongside Christianity and Judaism, an Abrahamic faith. Lastly, “A Christian approach to Islam and Muslims” will, after considering local demographics, analyze and recommend various approaches to Muslims.

(You can find the registration for the Spring Pastoral Conference on page 7)

PASTORS’ ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED

The following pastors celebrated anniversaries of their ordination into the Holy Ministry in **February** and received certificates. If you, or someone you know had an anniversary (20, 25, 30, 35, etc.) during the month of **February** and their name is not on this list, please call Donna at the District Office so this can be taken care of right away. Thank you.

No anniversaries were celebrated during February.

Southern Illinois District Pastoral Conference Spring Session – 2008

A One-Day Conference

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Camp Wartburg, Near Waterloo, Illinois

*(5705 LRC Road, just off Maeystown Road 4 miles SW of Waterloo, just past
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wartburg)*

Christians and the Challenge of Islam

Main Presenter – Dr. Adam Francisco, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

Schedule

Monday Evening – Travel to Camp Wartburg (if spending the night)

Main Conference Day - Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Conference will be held in the new dining hall – a great facility – at the top of the hill. Drive through the camp, past the new dorms, to the new dining hall.

7:30 – 8:00	Registration (& refreshments)
8:00 – 8:45	Morning Prayer (or Matins)
8:45 – 9:00	Break
9:00 – 10:30	Presentation (Session One) - “ <i>The Origins and Theology of Islam</i> ”
10:30 – 11:00	Break/Private Confession and Absolution
11:00 – 12:30	Divine Service
12:30 – 1:30	Lunch
1:30 – 3:00	Presentation (Session Two) - “ <i>A Lutheran Evaluation of Islam</i> ”
3:00 – 3:30	Break
3:30 – 4:00	District Business
4:00 – 5:00	Presentation (Session Three) - “ <i>A Christian Approach to Islam and Muslims</i> ”
5:00 – 5:30	Q & A (and unfinished district business)
5:30 – 6:15	Vespers
6:15 – 7:30	Dinner
7:30 – ????	Gemuetchlichkeit

Tuesday, late evening – Travel (if not spending the night)

Call Camp Wartburg (618.939.7715) to make arrangements to stay overnight at the Camp. You will need to bring your own bedding. There is also a Super 8 Motel in Waterloo, about 5 miles from Camp, located at 112 Warren Drive, just off IL-3 at the north end of Waterloo. Check it out on the internet (www.super8.com) or call 618.939.2020 to make your reservation. The conference will be held in the new dining hall, a first class facility with plenty of meeting and eating space.

Cost - \$40.00 registration fee for Pastors and Deaconesses and DCEs
\$16.00 for retired pastors, vicars and wives (cost of food)
(Please use registration form included in Pastors Packet.)

A “Blog” from Jacob Mueller, Our Man in South Africa

Right now, Jacob Mueller, son of Pastor Tim and Dawn Mueller of New Minden, is spending a semester (6 months in between college and seminary here) studying at the Lutheran Theological Seminary Tshwane in Pretoria, South Africa. He writes a daily blog and sends it out to many. We share excerpts here to give you a flavor of what he is doing on our behalf as part of our partnership with the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. Write him at - fanof2cards@yahoo.com

Day 21 Monday, February 4

Before I begin talking about today, I need to mention dinner last night. Alex had never seen a hamburger so of course I carried out my patriotic duty and made him one. The patty wasn't that great and I had a different kind of bun, more like a dinner roll. It was close enough to be a real hamburger. He liked it. His homeland of Kenya produces a lot of beef, but hamburgers aren't something they eat much I suppose.

Day 22 Tuesday, February 5 the First Day of school!

It's scary to think, but yes today I started my seminary career. I have seven classes for right now and they are intense. The morning began when timetables were handed out to everyone else—at six this morning. I had a systematic class on the Holy Spirit at 8:20 followed by a research class. After Matins is a double portion of Anssi Simojoki, our first guest professor from Kenya. He's teaching Reformation and Galatians. Finally came Traditional Religions in Africa with Professor Ntambo. They all look to be a lot of reading and hard work, but I can do it.

I also got a taste of the worship life here; it was one of the things which impressed me most about the seminary. Matins is four days a week at ten every morning with Confession on Wednesdays. Vespers is in the evening. To hear the guys sing is one of the most incredible parts of this experience. Given a single line of melody they will naturally harmonize to it. I must get a recording of this soon!

Day 23 Wednesday, February 6 My Birthday AND Ash Wednesday

Being from Illinois means that having a February Birthdays means you can typically expect the day to be cold and dreary, but not cold enough for snow. Today was a pleasant surprise. The temperature must have been around 80 and not too hot. It was a beautiful day, made even more amazing (once again) by the Hoffmeiers who brought ice cream for everyone to celebrate. I met Bishop Tswaedi and ate lunch with him and the Hoffmeiers under a shade tree here on campus.

The real highlight of the day came this afternoon by accident. Simojoki had been trying to cram too much into his morning sessions and so it was decided that we should add an afternoon session as well. Today I was the only one who came. Since there was no one else there I basically got to listen to him talk to me for nearly two hours. The conversation ranged from Finnish architects to French, although the bulk of it was about his life and work. Allow me to share a few highlights. Simojoki was a pastor in the Church of Finland until he was asked to go to Kenya because he knew English. This was to be for one year, but he wound up with a work permit for four instead. That was eighteen years ago and he's worked on numerous Swahili translation projects with Lutheran Heritage Foundation, most notably the Book of Concord which should come out later this year. Swahili is spoken by 100,000,000 people in Kenya, Tanzania, and the Congo. (The same number of people in Europe speak German.) It should be widely used as Lutheran Churches grow and become more confident of their faith by studying the confessions. Also along the language comment, he said that there are only six million or so Finnish speakers, so they all need to know another language, or two, or three, or four!

All in all a great birthday was topped off by my first pizza here. I even got it delivered and it wasn't bad!

Day 24 Thursday, February 7

Today was the first meeting of the South Africa Task Force so I wrote them a summary of the whole time here so far; that should suffice for an entry for today. Today I was simply really busy with just classes.

“If I had to describe my three weeks here so far, I think I could do it in one word; flexibility. I've had to learn to be flexible with the government of South Africa-- the Ugandans still are not here as of Wednesday night, the scheduling-- I've had about 4 changes of classes/class time in the past 2 days, the living conditions-- I've moved once. And those have just been the big things; I've also been flexible with the food. I remember a proverb a wise man once told me; blessed are the flexible, for they are not bent out of shape! So far this has served me well.”

(Continued on page 9)

Day 25 Friday, February 8

Tonight I introduced Obed to the Lutheran concept of two degrees of separation. He was listening to a conversation Robert Roethemeyer and I were having about how we both went to Africa and ran into people we knew, or people who knew people we knew-- he is good friends with a few of my professors from Ann Arbor. This of course is the tip of the iceberg for the connections between the two of us; the most notable being that he worked with my Uncle Bill at the library in St. Louis.

Anyway, we had to explain to Obed, that in ten years or so the same kind of thing would happen with people that we know.

Still there is much work to be done on the Library where Prof. Roethemeyer, synod's leading librarian, has been thinking about improvements for the past three weeks. Tomorrow we will finally move things around so we're all looking forward to a hard working Saturday.

Day 27 Sunday, February 10

Today was the beginning of children's ministry here at the Lutheran Church in Arcadia. Barbra ran a workshop for people willing to help out and had twice as many people as she expected! Most of my day was spend in the library, again. Books moved and were put in correct order for the entire afternoon. Not terribly exciting stuff.

Every Sunday afternoon here had been a time of moving. We have set up about 120 chairs for worship, most of which are filled each Sunday. But for the week that number is halved because that's all we need for chapel. The other half of the room becomes a classroom for about thirty students, our biggest one by far. This requires tables to be moved in and chairs to be moved back to the other classrooms. That's right every Sunday morning about ninety percent of the chairs on campus are used for worship.

The most exciting thing happened today while shopping. I found ostrich sausage! This will be the second African animal I've had the chance to eat (I had some Kudu jerky a few weeks ago). I haven't made it yet but I'm a little excited about this. I'll let you know later about how this turns out.

Day 28 Monday, February 11

Today was the day for eating the ostrich sausage. I fried it and was rather disappointed to taste that it was just like any of the other South African sausages. It wasn't bad, but it was so much like a borwors and I'm not a huge fan of those yet.

Every Monday night here is football night. This means that most of the students here go a block and a half over to St. Paul Lutheran Church and play football on the grass parking lot. The fun part is that we play with the German college students who meet there for Bible study each Monday night. Rather than playing Seminarians versus Germans, the Germans suggested that we split it up randomly. It went well and an excellent game of soccer ensued. (Football=soccer down here if you hadn't picked that up.) I played okay, I've never really played soccer other than a few pickup games in college, but I got an assist so it was good.

I find it interesting that they call themselves Germans; I asked one of them where he was from in Germany and it turns out they are mostly from here in South Africa! Most of them are fourth generation South Africans but still speak German. Many of the students come from farmer in KwaZulu-Natal. I heard on German ask the question, "Is the church keeping German alive or is German keeping the church alive?" Either way the FELSISA seems to have many very devout members. Daily devotions in German at meal times seem to be very important to these people. God be praised!

Day 30 Wednesday, February 13

I find it interesting being here among such an international community. The interesting thing is that you have all these people with very different accents (Lee commented that I'm the only one here without an accent; to which I responded, "I can surely develop one for ya'll if ya'll want.") Imagine someone with a very thick German or Finnish accent trying to teach a class filled with people speaking with very thick African accents. It does lead to a few interesting questions and misunderstandings in class. One classmate today asked why the Emperor made peace with the Church; when in fact the Emperor made peace with the Turks.

As the only member of the student body whose mother tongue is English, I'm in a unique position. I can understand most everybody so I wonder if everyone else can understand each other. Also when classmates have to read lessons in chapel they sometimes come to me to check pronunciation of certain English words. The list so far includes words like "shrub" and "Bartholomew". Even Axel (from Germany) has asked me how to pronounce a few words. I'm glad I know English because it must be a terrible language to learn. At the same time I can't do click yet, the guttural "g" in several African languages is still a mystery, and my German has still not improved much. All these guys are way ahead of me, good for them!

Day 31 Thursday, February 14

Today was a very busy day class went until lunch and then I was working in the library until the afternoon class and then again until Vespers and dinner. After dinner I helped Obed with Greek. Then I only had a little time for homework until really late. A long day, with the finals from the first two intensives tomorrow!

Day 32 Friday, February 15

Today was the day of the first finals. I finished before anyone else for both tests. I normally feel really strange about finishing before everyone else. Lee explained it to me this way; all the classes are in English, my native language. I've also studied this a few times before. I'm therefore able to process information without translating and can therefore write faster. I even did well on both tests.

Library work continued again today as we hit 400 books in the system. It's been my job to go and find Dewey Decimal numbers for the books no one else can find.

Today I was invited to come with the seminarians from Ft. Wayne after they come on Thursday to go to a game park with them for Friday and Saturday that will be a welcome break.

Day 34 Sunday, February 17

This morning was my first morning to help out here in worship at the Seminary church. I was the reader and helped with communion. Axel was the liturgist and his brother-in-law Christian, from the Themba schools preached. All three of us had the black "Geneva" robes and somehow it felt like church, sitting with two Germans in black robes.

Every chair was packed this morning. It was so full that when I got up to read the Old Testament Lesson and Epistle I lost my chair to someone who came in late. We had so many people for communion that I had to go back and get more wine for both individual cups and the common cup. (Yes, they use individual cups here, which was one of my questions before coming.) These are good problems; most American pastors would love to these kinds of problems every Sunday. I guess we'll just have to find more chairs this week.

We almost lost the chalice this morning after church. I took it into the sacristy from the altar, but when we came in to clean the communion wares the chalice was gone. This sparked a good twenty minutes of frantic searching; the sanctuary, sacristy, student housing, even the baptismal font. We were almost resigned to the fact that it had been stolen when I realized that no one had checked Sunday school. Sure enough they were studying the Lord's Supper and the teacher had borrowed the chalice without telling anyone. That was a big relief.

Day 35 Monday, February 18

My other roommate from Kenya finally arrived today and he has a guitar! It's been a while since I've been able to play so I took the opportunity.

Greek class was also interesting. No one else in the class will likely be doing much ministry in English so we have to take some words and look into their meanings more fully. A good example is from Galatians 4:5 in English we use the word "redeem" a great translation, and even used in other ways in English, "I'm going to redeem this coupon." But Africans aren't familiar with this term. The Greek word that Paul uses here is ἐξαγοράσῃ which means literally to buy out. (ex-out, agorazo-buy related to the agora-open air market- in Greek and Roman cities, also familiar from the word agoraphobia, fear of open places.) To buy out or to buy back makes more sense to Africans. There's just a little snippet to prove that I'm actually learning something here.

Yesterday my text for preaching this week got changed. All the students in the homiletics class are preaching in chapel this week. I was to speak on John 20 but got switched to Luke 15. And now I'm supposed to preach on it tomorrow. It's equally frustrating that I haven't been able to get many of the creative juices flowing on the computer even as I've been frantically studying the text and commentaries.

To make matters worse I was hoping to get to play soccer at St. Paul's again, but we got there late; everyone was gone and the gate was locked. I really needed to let off a little frustration on the pitch, but it didn't happen.

Day 36 Tuesday, February 19

Other things happened today, but really the only thing that mattered to me was preaching the sermon for Homiletics tonight at Vespers. Not much else was on my mind. In class this morning and after chapel I just compared what Dr. Quill said with my already forming manuscript. After class I finished it off, showered and then it was time.

I preached on the prodigal son, a term I've never used outside of referring to this text. The sermon went well and people said I talked a little too fast but had confidence. I was nervous, but once I started it felt good and I got into it, hence the speed. After wards I rewarded myself with a slice of fattened calf. Ah, that was good.

To: The Pastors, Teachers, DCEs, Deaconesses of the Southern Illinois District – LCMS
From: Mr. Paul Miller, Principal
Re: Time to Build Capital Campaign

A few update items on our Time To Build Capital Campaign for Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School

1. Our enrollment has remained fairly solid throughout the school year. We began the year with 70 students; we now have 69 students. There has been a little coming-and-going, but not much. You might be interested to know that former Mayor Carl Officer enrolled his daughter, Carli, in Grade One.
2. We look forward to opening Grade Five in the Fall. We are now accepting names of candidates for teachers. We are praying for a male teacher to fill that spot. God will provide! Please pray for us.
3. Our annual fund goal this year is \$150,000. All funds go directly to providing scholarships for all of our students. Last year, we gathered \$85,000 through the annual fund. We are currently at \$120,000 for this year. We have several reasons to give praise to God, and we still have a ways to go before the end of the year. Please pray for us.
4. The search for a site for our new building has not produced a solid direction at this time. We are planning to have Grade Five in the gym. Several contacts have been made with local officials to help with the search for property. We believe strongly that, when the time is right, the Holy Spirit will direct us, God will provide just the right place, and we'll all be amazed. Please pray for us.
5. Our Time to Build Capital Campaign goal is \$3,000,000. We currently have approximately \$250,000. We joyously learned last week that the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis accepted our grant proposal for \$300,000! These funds will be used for matching incentives. Beginning March 1, all contributions to the Capital Campaign will be matched, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$10,000 per person. We have two years to reach the 300,000 limit.
6. *You will soon receive an invitation to our Time To Build Dinner*, being held at the Gateway Convention Center, on Thursday, April 17, at 6:30 pm. Rev. John Nunes, President of Lutheran World Relief, will be the keynote speaker. Mr. Rich Hermann, President of Wheat Ridge, will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Our own Unity Angelic Voices Choir will provide entertainment. The teachers and parents will serve as hosts. There will be a few silent and oral auction items. We are also giving away a week for two at a condo in Desert Palms, CA, including air fare, as a door prize. Fantastic!
This is a major fund-raising dinner. Tickets are \$300 per person; \$500 per couple; \$2,000 for a table of eight. The cost of the dinner has been under-written by several private and corporate donors, so the entire cost of the ticket is tax-deductible, *and will also be matched by the Lutheran Foundation!*
When you receive the invitation, would you please consider gathering a group of members from your congregation to attend the dinner? We would be blessed to have your support! *If you can't afford the ticket cost*, we would love to have you as our guest anyway. Call me for further details. Please pray for a successful event.
7. If you are not receiving bulk copies of our Time To Build Newsletters to distribute to your congregation or school, please let me know. We'll get them to you ASAP.
8. If you are interested in a presentation about Unity at your church, please let me know. I am booked through the end of April, but I have many open dates during May and after. I love to tell the story of God's mission at Unity! I can tailor the presentation to fit your needs. (On March 9, I'm speaking to a Christian Motorcyclists Club!)
9. Finally, we sincerely appreciate the support and prayers of the Pastors and Church Workers of our District. Unity Lutheran Christian Elementary School is all about God's mission to the children and their families. With your help, it is being accomplished! Thank you!

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & EVENTS IN AND FOR THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT 2008

March

- 6 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 7 Student Aid Golf Tourn. Committee, 11:00 a.m. at Okawville
- 18 District LLL Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 21 Good Friday—District Office Closed
- 23 EASTER—He Is Risen!
- 27 Mission Staff Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 27 District Convention Planning Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

April

- 3 Board of Congregational Support, 4:15 p.m.
- 3 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 5 Mission Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 5 Stewardship Task Force Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 8 Pastoral Conference (one day), Camp Wartburg, Waterloo
- 12 Stewardship Workshop, St. Paul, Wood River, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
- 13 Stewardship Workshop, St. John, New Minden, 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
- 13 Stewardship Workshop, St. John, Red Bud, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
- 16 Finance Committee, 4:00 p.m.
- 17 SID LWML Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 17 Unity “Time To Build” Dinner, 6:00 p.m.
- 24-26 LEA Convocation in Minneapolis
- 26 SID Board of Directors Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 28 Fund Advisory Meeting, 4:30 p.m.

May

- 5 Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9:00 a.m.
- 5 Metro Principals Meeting at Metro East Lutheran High School, (time to be announced later)
- 7 Older Adult Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:15 p.m.
- 20 District LLL Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 26 Memorial Day celebrated—District Office Closed

June

- 5 Metro Principals/Athletic Directors Meeting at Metro East Lutheran High School, (time to be announced later)
- 5 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 12 Mission Staff Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 21 Mission Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.