



The InSIDE Word

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A newsletter by and for Southern IL District-LCMS

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Our Prayers for the Church

I am writing to you on the day of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus. One of the hymns new to us in Lutheran Service Book, "See, the Lord Ascends in Triumph" (LSB 494), proclaims in stanza 4:

He has raised our human nature
On the clouds to God's right hand;
There we sit in heavenly places,
There with Him in glory stand.
Jesus reigns, adored by angels;
Man with God is on the throne,
By our mighty Lord's ascension
We by faith behold our own.

How great the comfort! The One who is both God and man is now in charge, Lord of all things. Our Conqueror of sin and death rules the universe – for us! As the writer to the Hebrews tells us, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16). When we come to Him in prayer, we are coming to our brother, Jesus, who pleads on our behalf.

For what shall we pray? I solicit specific prayers for...

- Our Mission Partnership with the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, and for Pastor Timothy Scharr and President Mueller as they travel to South Africa this month (May 5-17) to meet with our partners and discuss the progress of our mission projects.
- Our district mission efforts in East St. Louis. The next weeks will see many important decisions for the mission school, Unity Church and the efforts of the Acts 1:8 Mission Society. Satan is hard at work to thwart any efforts to bring the Gospel. Pray that the Lord would defeat his evil schemes so that the Gospel may be freely and fully proclaimed.
- Our district prison ministry as Pastor Maurice Alms retires as prison ministry coordinator and Pastors James Rivett, Jeff Nehrt and Jon Smithley work together as a prison ministry coordinating committee.
- Pray for a God-pleasing resolution of the controversy surrounding the cancellation of Issues Etc and for Pastor Todd Wilken and Jeff Schwarz, their families and all connected with this situation.
- For Dan Roth as he repositions from Schools and General Executive for the District to Lutheran Church Extension Fund Promotions Director (part

Presidential Activities April 2008

- 10 Individual Consultations
- 4 Speaking/ Preaching Engagement
- 13 District Meetings
- 4 Meetings with Dan Roth
- 3 Congregational Meeting
- 7 Days COP & Call Services
- 1 KFUE –Phone Interview
- 2 Days Kentucky

time).

- For Roger Sprengel (Concordia, Peoria) who, as of this writing, has in hand a Call from the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors to serve as our new Schools and General Executive.
- For the ongoing mission efforts of your congregation faithfully to point people to the only Life that is really Life! As Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3).
- For our Synod and District, all our leaders and workers, as we prepare for our District Convention February 19-21, 2009, under the theme, “One Sure Hope.”
- For our new graduates and vicars entering Southern Illinois (see inside) as they begin their ministries in our district.
- For our parishes experiencing vacancies in the pastoral office and in teaching and principal positions, that God will provide in His good time.
- For... [here you fill in the blank]

Of course, there are so many other needs as well, but remember, the Lord is never lacking in His supply. “Grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it is said, ‘When he ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.’” (Ephesians 4:7-8).

Christ ascended to give His gifts! That’s why we go to Him for everything we need, and more!

God’s peace is ours!

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

TRINITY, ANNA— Candidate Stephen Manz from Ft. Wayne Concordia Theological Seminary.

TRINITY, EDWARDSVILLE - Called Rev. Danny Tutweiler, McKinney, TX. (Received and Declined)

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

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

BETHLEHEM, FERRIN— Rev. Darwin Schrader serving as vacancy pastor.

TRINITY, HOYLETON – Candidate Joshua Theilan from St. Louis Concordia Seminary

ZION, LITCHFIELD – Called Rev. Jonathan Bontke, from Associate to Senior at Zion, Litchfield (Received and Accepted) Installation on May 4, 2008

HOPE, MT. CARMEL—Candidate Thomas Kramer from St. Louis Concordia Seminary

ST. MARK, STEELEVILLE—Calling Associate Pastor/Principal

SID PASTOR’S CALLS RECEIVED/ACCEPTED/RETURNED

Rev. Jonathan Bontke, Associate Pastor, Zion, Litchfield, to Senior Pastor, Zion, Litchfield. (Received and Accepted)

Rev. Ryan Willis, Bethlehem, Ferrin to Federal Bureau of Prisons, Ft. Worth, Tx. (Received and Accepted)

PRAYER REQUESTS



For **Marian Martens**, former SID Treasurer, who has been recently diagnosed with inclusive body myositis.

For **Julie Heimgartner**, wife of Ft. Wayne Seminary Student, Gail Heimgartner, (Our Redeemer, Golconda) as she has been hospitalized in Ft. Wayne.

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 **Corrine Streuter**, of Murphysboro undergoing medical treatments and needs our prayers for strength and courage.

Corrine is the widow of Bob Streuter a 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 **Pastor Leroy Eckert**, Emeritus, who is recovering at home.

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 Fuji, 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 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.

PRAISE REPORTS:

For the birth of **Adiel Jewel Melchior**, on March 20, granddaughter of Retired Pastor Edward and Jackie Melchior.

The **Southern District Office in New Orleans** called our district (**SID**) to say Thank you to all the volunteers from the Southern Illinois District who helped with all the clean up projects the last couple of years.

Praise God for a successful surgery for **Rev. Kit Belk** (Trinity, Girard) to take care of sciatic nerve problems.

WELCOME TO THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT

Candidate **Thomas Kramer** to Hope Lutheran Church, Mt. Carmel
Candidate **Joshua Theilan** to Trinity Lutheran Church, Hoyleton
Candidate **Stephen Manz** to Trinity, Anna

Vicars from Concordia Seminary—St. Louis

John Eyer—Trinity, Nashville

Steven Frentz—Emmaus, Dorsey

David Hoehler—St. John, Chester

Todd McMurry—Zion, Staunton

Eric Rodgers—Good Shepherd, Collinsville

Benjamin Smith—Our Savior, Carbondale

Vicar from Concordia Theological Seminary—Ft. Wayne

Terrence O'Brien—Our Redeemer, Golconda



From left, front row, Emma Hoehler, David Hoehler, Rebekah Theilen, Joshua Theilan, Faith Mueller, Rev. Herbert Mueller-District President; second row, John Eyer, Kristin McMurry, Thomas Kramer, Vickie Frentz, Jennifer Rogers; back row, Todd McMurry, Benjamin Smith, Steven Frentz and Eric Rodgers.



Vicar Terrence O'Brein and wife, Sharon.



Candidate Stephen Manz

PASTORS' ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATED

The following pastors celebrated anniversaries of their ordination into the Holy Ministry in **April** and received certificates. If you, or someone you know had an anniversary (20, 25, 30, 35, etc.) during the month of **April** 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.

Pastor Daniel Decker 4/13/2008 25 years

Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music

It's hard to believe it's been one and half years since the **Lutheran Service Book** was introduced at the workshop you attended in the fall of 2006. Over 60% of our LCMS congregations are now using **LSB** and it's companion editions.

To our knowledge, the first large gathering of Lutherans to use **LSB** for each of the worship services over four days will be the upcoming Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music. This worship conference will be held at Concordia University Nebraska in Seward. July 22-25, 2008 with the theme of "Sing to the Lord a New Song." This is the third triennial conference sponsored by the LCMS Commission on Worship.

If you are a pastor, church musician, or anyone interested in the church's worship, please join us for this enriching week of worship, education, and fellowship. There will also be workshops of benefit to church secretaries, Sunday school teachers, and other volunteers in the church, so please spread the word and tell others about this opportunity.

The brochure for this worship conference can be downloaded from:
<http://worship.lcms.org/2008Institute>. This is also the Web page where you enter the online registration. Copies of the brochure can also be requested by sending an email to:
worship@lc.s.org

Early bird deadline for registration is June 2, 2008.

In 2005, the hymn festival was one of the highlights of the worship conference and will be held again at this event with a high school honor choir as the featured choir.

Blessed Eastertide to you all!

The LCMS Commission on Worship

Message Regarding “Issues, Etc.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus!

I pray this letter finds you strong in the Lord and in the grace of His Holy Spirit. Remember, the One who is both God and Man is now in charge, Lord of all things. May this message, that our Lord Jesus, our Conqueror, now rules the universe for His Church, be our comfort, our peace and our courage.

As you know, on March 18, David Strand, acting on behalf of the BCS, cancelled Issues Etc. and terminated the positions of Todd Wilken and Jeff Schwarz. Subsequently in April, the BCS did not reverse this decision, nor did they hear from Todd Wilken on the matter. On Monday, April 21, in executive session, the COP heard from Synod’s Treasurer, Tom Kuchta, and from David Strand, Executive Director of the Board for Communication Services. In open session on Tuesday morning, President Kieschnick presented to the COP a statement in which he says: “I regret that I did not counsel Mr. Strand to postpone implementation of the decision until some time other than Holy Week...” This statement is posted to Synod’s web site.

Out of a desire to have something to which District Presidents could refer going back home, the Council of Presidents also adopted a statement with counsel to the members of the Synod. Both statements were quickly posted to the Synod’s web site. The COP’s statement was adopted in the closing minutes of the meeting on Tuesday, April 22, after the COP had rejected a formal resolution that would not have been helpful at all. The web site says the COP statement was adopted by voice vote with no dissenting voices. Personally, I did not raise an objection to the final version of the statement because I believed at the time it was better than the first resolution presented. To those who are disappointed in the COP Statement, I understand and I do share your sense of disappointment. I am sorry I failed to do better. At the very least, I failed to slow what became a hurried process to adopt something. As a result, the COP Statement itself does not fully represent, I believe, the level of frustration on the part of many members of the COP that Issues Etc was cancelled, or that the matter was handled in the manner it was. Having said that, I do not believe it would be helpful or wise for me to have any further public comment on the COP Statement.

In all of this, each of us must examine our actions according to the commandments of God. Even as we ask legitimate questions of those in authority, each of us needs to examine ourselves, live in repentance, and see ourselves covered in Christ’s cleansing blood. The Holy Spirit in the Word gives the precious gift of repentance unto the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Yet that does not mean we receive blindly what we are told. Questions need to continue to be addressed to those in authority – that’s what the 4th commandment would also enjoin us. As indicated in President Kieschnick’s statement, David Strand (and the BCS) felt constrained by Synod’s financial realities to cancel Issues Etc. I will continue to address my questions to David Strand, the BCS and the Synod’s Board of Directors, asking if there is any way this action could be reversed, revisited or ameliorated in some way. Why was cancelling Issues Etc the only option that could effectively reduce costs? Why was this action taken without warning? Why was Issues Etc not “spun off” in some way to another group that might have been formed to support it? I have other questions that I also intend to address to those in authority, respectfully and with charity. I encourage you to do the same.

I encourage you to present your questions to the BCS and to the Board of Directors of the Synod, but make your case lovingly, carefully, persistently, and then trust God to do His will. Christ Jesus is Lord of His Church. His word assures us, “*Out of my distress I called on the Lord; ‘His steadfast love endures forever.’ The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? ... It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. ... The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation*” (Psalm 118:5-6, 8-9, 14).

Yours in Christ,
+ Herb Mueller

Rev. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr.
President, Southern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
2408 Lebanon Avenue
Belleville, IL 62221
618-234-4767

P.S. On April 26, 2008, the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors adopted the following letter to be sent to the Board for Communication Services and the Board of Directors of the Synod:

April 26, 2008

Mr. David Strand, Executive Director
Board for Communication Services
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

The Board of Directors
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus on the Board of Directors of Synod and the Board for Communication Services:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We, the Board of Directors of the Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, wish to go on record in expressing our disappointment over the cancellation of *Issues, Etc.* This radio program has been a great blessing to the pastors and people of the Southern Illinois District and has reached people around the globe with the good news of Jesus Christ. Even though *Issues* could be

Therefore, we, the Board of Directors of the Southern Illinois District, respectfully request that you and the Board of Communication Services revisit your decision to terminate *Issues, Etc.*, restore the program, and reinstate both Rev. Wilken and Mr. Schwarz to their positions. We also request a full disclosure of the reasons why this show was cancelled. Too many concerns have been raised to keep your proceedings and rationale for termination a private matter. We urge that this issue be approached openly and in a spirit of love, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us and work among us as we fix our eyes and message on Jesus.

Respectfully in Christ,

Rev. Antonin Troup
District Secretary
Southern Illinois District

Rev. Herbert Mueller
District President
Southern Illinois District

CC: Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, President, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
Rev. Todd Wilken
Mr. Jeff Schwarz

[This letter was adopted in the regular meeting of the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors on April 26, 2008.]

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

May

- 3 SID Student Aid Golf Benefit—Okawville, starting at 10:30 a.m.
- 7 Older Adult Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 17 Stewardship Task Force Meeting, 8:00 a.m. location to be announced
- 19 Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9:00 a.m.
- 19 Camp Wartburg Golf Classic—Call John Mohl for more info 618-939-7715
- 19 SID Convention Planning Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 20 District LLL Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 22 Prison Ministry Conference at Camp Wartburg; 9:00 a.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 Board of Congregational Support, 4:15 p.m.
- 5 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 12 Mission Staff Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 13-15 SID Youth Gathering at Lake Williamson, Carlinville, IL.
- 21 Mission Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.

July

- 3 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 4 District Office Closed
- 16 Finance Committee, 4:00 p.m.
- 17 District LWML Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.
- 26 SID Board of Directors, 9:00 a.m.
- 28 Fund Advisory, 4:30 p.m.

August

- 6 Older Adult Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:15 p.m.
- 7 Board of Congregational Support, 4:15 p.m.
- 7 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 11 SID Convention Planning Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 13 Day of Spiritual Growth, St. John-Red Bud, 8:30 a.m.

September

- 4 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 18 Mission Staff Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 19-20 LWML Convention, Good Shepherd-Collinsville
- 27 Mission Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.