



The InSIDE Word

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A newsletter by and for Southern IL District-LCMS

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One Sure Hope

Our Lord's apostles, all of them witnesses of the living Lord Jesus, agree. The resurrection of Jesus anchors us in a living and certain hope. Peter wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). St. Paul brings the same testimony, "If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:19-20).

We have, in Christ Jesus, "One Sure Hope" for life and forgiveness, meaning and purpose. In our sin, we are looking for life in all the wrong places – pleasure, possessions, power. When God has shown us that none of these can give what they promise, Jesus, crucified for us and raised from the dead, remains our "One Sure Hope." Living for Jesus now, we seek to give the "reason for the hope that is in [us]" (1 Peter 3:15).

These are the thoughts included in our theme for the 2009 Southern Illinois District Convention, to be held at the Gateway Center in Collinsville, Illinois, February 19-21, 2009. "One Sure Hope" is the theme, with a logo designed by Melissa Merker, daughter of Wayne and Sandra Iehl, of Collinsville. But is the convention that soon? Yes, it's coming up fast!

What will be some features of this convention?



Presidential Activities August 2008

- 8 Individual Consultations
- 1 Day –SID Day of Spiritual Growth
- 9 District Meetings
- 3 Meetings with Roger Sprengel
- 2 Congregational Meetings
- 1 District Interview
- 3 Days-Synod Theological Conf.
- 1 Day-Funeral in Billings, MT. for Former District President

Opening Service – The opening service will not be at the convention center but held at a church – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1300 Belt Line, Collinsville, at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 19, 2009. President Gerald Kieschnick will be the preacher for the service, followed by a fellowship hour.

Modified Schedule – There will be no business sessions Thursday evening, but the business begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. Friday, February 20 and will dismiss, God willing, by 1:00 p.m. Saturday, February 21.

Electronic Voting – How will we get the business done? We will utilize electronic voting and will schedule a session for Friday evening. We have been able to shorten the convention, hold the opening service in a church,

but keep approximately the same amount of time for debate and business. Some money will be saved by providing only 2 meals instead of 4.

Synod Structure Task Force – The President’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance has requested 2 hours of time for the presentation and discussion of their proposals. This will be granted Friday afternoon, but is in addition to the time we have scheduled for business and debate.

Theological Essay – Our convention planning committee has asked Rev. Matthew Harrison, Executive Director of Synod’s Board for LCMS World Relief/Human Care, to make a presentation on the convention theme, “**One Sure Hope.**” He is an engaging and Christ-centered speaker.

Deadlines for Convention Preparation – There is one important date to keep in mind – October 17, 2008. That is the deadline for all the following.

Nominations for District President must be received by the District Secretary by October 17.

Nominations for Circuit Counselor must be received by the same date by the District Secretary, Pastor Tony Troup of Immanuel, Waterloo.

Nominations for all other district offices except vice president are also due (incumbents must be re-nominated to be on the ballot). These forms are sent to the District Office, care of the nominating committee.

The form indicating your lay voting and alternate delegate (and your pastoral delegate) is due in the District Office also on October 17.

Reports and overtures (proposed resolutions) are also due in the District Office by October 17, 2008. Eligible to submit overtures are congregations, Circuit Forum meetings, official district wide pastor and teacher conferences (not circuit winkels) and district boards.

What’s that date again? October 17, 2008 is the deadline for nominations, reports, overtures and delegate decisions.

May God richly bless our convention under the theme, “**One Sure Hope.**”

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

TRINITY, EDWARDSVILLE - Called Rev. Martin Springer, St. Paul, Imperial, MO. (Received and Accepted)

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

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

BETHLEHEM, FERRIN— Called Seminarian, Scott Niermann. (Received and Accepted)

TRINITY, GIRARD—Working with Call list

ST. PAUL, TROY—Working with Call list

SID PASTOR’S CALLS RECEIVED/ACCEPTED/RETURNED

PRAYER REQUESTS



For **Laurel Witte** and her husband, (Laurel is the granddaughter of the late Pastor Clarence Witte and wife, Fern) as they try to leave Georgia, Central Asia. The airports are closed and at times they can hear the bombs.

For **Marian Martens**, former SID Treasurer, who has been diagnosed with cancer and inclusive body myositis and has now moved into Rosewood Care Center in Swansea.

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

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

Active duty Chaplains from the SID: **Major Gregory Jans, CDR Gregory N. Todd, and LT. COL. David Wilshek.**

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

Lt. Commander Craig Muehler (brother of Cindy Nebel) 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 Zion, Bethalto) is stationed in Bagdad, Iraq.

MM1 John Ponivas (son of Nancy Ponivas, teacher at Zion, Bethalto) is assigned to the USS Albuquerque.

Lt. Col. Robin Schultze (daughter-in-law of Shirley Schwartzkopf) is now at Fort McNair, DC. for additional training.

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 is being deployed to Afghanistan.

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

Please call Donna at 618-234-4767 to add your prayer request to our monthly newsletter.

PRAISE REPORTS:

For the birth of **Hannah Wilson**, the 4th grandchild of Rev. Gary and Sharon Galen, Trinity, Edwardsville. Hannah was born on Wednesday, August 20.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT- LCMS
Fall Pastoral Conference Schedule
October 6-8, 2008

Pere Marquette Lodge, near Grafton, Illinois

“Preaching – Law and Gospel and Narrative Sermons”

Dr. Carl Fickenscher (Concordia, Fort Wayne) and Dr. Glenn Nielsen (Concordia, St. Louis)

Monday, October 6, 2008

- 12:30 p.m. Registration
1:00 p.m. Opening Devotion – Matthew 22:1-14
1:15 p.m. Session I – “Matthew 22:1-14 – Two Homiletic Approaches”
(*Drs. Nielsen and Fickenscher*)
(10 minute homily plus 30 minutes explanation each; Discussion with Moderator – 25 minutes]
3:00 p.m. Break
3:30 p.m. Discussion and Review of Proposals for the Changes in Synod’s Structure
(*President Herbert Mueller*)
5:00 p.m. Opportunity for Confession/Absolution
5:30 p.m. Divine Service
7:00 p.m. Dinner on your own, followed by Gemuetlichkeit at the Lodge (9:00 p.m.)

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast at the Lodge
8:30 a.m. Matins
9:15 a.m. Session II – Sermon Preparation and Structure (*Drs. Nielsen and Fickenscher*)
[40 minutes each; Moderated Discussion 25 minutes]
11:00 a.m. District Business – Conference Committee Elections
12:00 p.m. Lunch
12:55 p.m. Noon Suffrages
1:00 p.m. Session III – Sermon Delivery and Reception (*Drs. Nielsen and Fickenscher*)
[40 minutes each; Moderated Discussion 25 minutes]
2:45 p.m. Recreation
7:00 p.m. BBQ Banquet – Todd Wilken, Banquet Speaker
8:00 p.m. Evening Prayer
8:30 p.m. Gemuetlichkeit/Reading of letters of excuse

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Matins
9:15 a.m. Session IV – Responders: Pastor John Lukomski on Walther (20 minutes)
Pastors Holle & Curtis on Forde (20 minutes)
10:00 a.m. Q/A Panel Discussion with Presenters and Responders
11:00 a.m. District Business
11:30 a.m. Itinerarium

WELCOME (back) TO SOUTHERN ILLINOIS



Mr. Roger Sprengel Schools and General Executive

In last month's newsletter President Mueller told you all about Roger. Now let's make him feel really welcome, call him to encourage him and keep Roger and his wife, Donna, in your prayers.

You Are Invited

To worship with St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Steeleville and hear Rev. Tom Baker from Concordia Mission Society. He will be the Fall Mission Festival Speaker on September 13 & 14. Rev. Baker hosts a regular week day show on KFUE 850 AM from 1-3 PM called "Law & Gospel". You can also hear him on the web at www.kfuo.org, then click on Law and Gospel, or go to his web page at www.lawgospel.com

St. Mark's services are on Saturday at 6:00 pm and Sunday at 8:00 & 10:00 am.

Rev. Baker will also lead the Adult Bible Class between Sunday services at 9:15 am.

August Golf Scramble a Heated Affair!!!

The 2nd SID Golf Scramble was held on Monday, August 4 at Oakbrook Golf Course in Edwardsville. Ten golfers participated and survived the 100+ heat index, they included: Rev. Matt Gehrke, Rev. Dr. Alvin Kollmann, Rev. Michael Kumm, Rev. Herb Mueller, Rev. Elmer Schwartzkopf, Rev. Ernie Wentzel, Teachers-Mark Belli, Jim Rohe, Roger Sprengel and Layperson Josh Schelp. Thanks to Thrivent Financial and Ken Kober for providing lunch and cold drinks and LCEF for providing a sleeve of balls for the golfers.

Rev. Kollmann was closest to the pin on hole #2 and Josh Schelp was closest to the pin on hole #14. The winning team with a score of 74 was Rev. Schwartzkopf, Rev. Wentzel, Mark Belli, and Josh Schelp. The winning team was also the lone survivor of the Pink Squirrel competition in keeping their pink ball in play throughout the competition.

Congratulations to the winners! God willing, we will see everyone in 2009!



On August 24, 2008 Pastor Thomas Kramer was installed as pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Mt. Carmel, IL. Pastors participating in the service, L-R: Pastor Kirk Horstmeyer, Immanuel, Evansville, IN.; Pastor Perry Schefelker, Trinity, Centralia; Pastor Robert Reinhardt (emeritus, served as interim pastor of Hope, Mt. Carmel); Pastor Kramer; Pastor Stephen Krenz, Trinity, Hoffman (Circuit Counselor); President Herbert Mueller, preacher and installer. Pastor Kramer was ordained on August 10, 2008 at his home congregation of Christ Memorial, St. Louis, MO.

Holy Cross, Livingston, celebrated the installation of Pastor Kevin Cook with a huge cake. Pictured are Pastor Cook, his wife, Kristi (originally from Bethalto) and daughter, Leah, with the cake.



On August 17, 2008, Pastor Kevin Cook was installed at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Livingston, IL. Those participating in the service were: Front row, L-R: Pastor James Norton, St. Paul, Nokomis; Pastor Daniel Decker, Zion, Bethalto; Pastor Cook; Pastor Willard Meyer, Zion, Bethalto (preacher for the service); President Herbert Mueller (installer). Back row, L-R: Pastor Maurice Alms, Emeritus; Pastor Daniel Barbey, Immanuel, Mt. Olive; Pastor Nathan Meador, Zion, Staunton; Pastor Peter Kirby, Zion, Carlinville (Mid State Circuit Counselor); and Seminarian Jonathan Hemler (lector for the service).

Willard Meyer, Zion, Bethalto (preacher for the service); President Herbert Mueller (installer). Back row, L-R: Pastor Maurice Alms, Emeritus; Pastor Daniel Barbey, Immanuel, Mt. Olive; Pastor Nathan Meador, Zion, Staunton; Pastor Peter Kirby, Zion, Carlinville (Mid State Circuit Counselor); and Seminarian Jonathan Hemler (lector for the service).



On Sunday, August 10, Zion Lutheran Church/School in Bethalto installed their new principal and 4 new teachers. From left to right: Sandra Balsters (principal) was installed, Miss Megan Gould was commissioned and installed, Mrs. Jennifer Whitmore was installed, Mrs. Leah Sherman was commissioned and installed, and Miss Rachelle Wilcox was commissioned and installed.



On Sunday, August 17 Mrs. Rachel Mehring was Commissioned and Installed as teacher at Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School in Evansville, IL.

**WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR NEW
TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN THE
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT**

Mission Trip to South East Asia

Pastor Timothy Mueller
Mrs. Dawn Mueller

Editor's Note: In June and July of this year Pastor Tim and Dawn Mueller made a mission trip to South East Asia: Thailand and Cambodia. The trip included several objectives: 1) Dawn Mueller is a member of the Board of Directors of the Children's Christian Concern Society (an LCMS RSO). One purpose of the trip was to strengthen ties with two daycare centers in Bangkok and to explore other avenues by which CCCS could be involved in Thailand and Cambodia. Dawn serves as liaison to these two countries. They visited the two daycares and had productive meetings at each. 2) June 23-27 Tim and Dawn team taught a seminar in Bangkok for pastors and volunteer Christian teachers called "Teaching the Young." 3) The following week they repeated the same seminar in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Pastor Mueller led the Bible studies and Dawn had the "practical" presentation. Following are some "first person" accounts of this trip.

When we took off from Detroit, we headed northwest across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and into Canada, west of the Hudson Bay, and made an arc across Southern Alaska and over the Pacific toward Japan. (On the map it is an arc; I have a hunch on the globe it is more of a straight line.) As we headed west we chased the sun and it never got dark. However, the airline has everyone close their window shades to create a sense of nighttime so that people can sleep. When you wake up in Tokyo it is the middle of the afternoon a day later. Rather weird it is. This flight was on a 747, with ten seats across. Being in the middle four seats we were nowhere near a window to peek out and see what was really happening during our artificial "night." At one point, however, while wandering up and down the aisles taking the long way around from the rest-room, I saw an awesome sight. Someone had opened the window shade in an open area (so as not to disturb any of the sleeping passengers), and there below us was a stunning range of snow-covered mountain peaks piercing a fluffy blanket of cloudcover. Only the tops of these sharp massive pieces of granite were visible. When I walked away the brightness blinded my eyes for a few minutes. Always desperate for a sermon illustration I thought, "Isn't that something. Man lives in self-imposed darkness while God's light shines more brightly than ever." May the light of Christ's Gospel shine brightly wherever people have tried to pull down their blinds to shut it out.

[Dawn writes about June 20] – We had a great day yesterday!! We got to visit the daycare/ preschools in Bangkok. The director picked us up in her car and we drove to the BangNa slums. It took about half an hour to get there. The traffic is crazy!!! Lots of cars, motorcycles, bicycles, and buses. The streets are very narrow. The children were very excited to see us. I was able to tell a Bible story using the Bible posters we sent. I told the story of Jesus birth from the

angel announcing the news to Mary to the coming of the wise men. Happy Day, was the theme, Jesus has come to be our savior. Later in the afternoon we had a great visit with the directors of the two preschools. They are excited to continue to work with Children's Christian Concern Society.

[Tim continues:] To say the children were excited is an understatement. I wish I had had the camera ready to go when we first drove up to the Bang Na daycare. Imagine a whole gaggle of precious little ones jumping up and down and screaming for joy. I'm not sure what the leaders had told the little ones to expect - maybe every guest is greeted that way. Maybe they heard she was bringing gifts from America. They were all reaching for a hug and pressing their little faces against her side, wrapping their arms around her legs. Dawn beamed with excitement; she was really in her element. It's a scene I won't soon forget.

Part of our visit included a walk through the Bang Na slum. Normally foreigners are not welcome there, as there is fear of drug trafficking, but the people know and trust the staff members who took us through. It had hardly changed from my visit three years ago. One of the "children" I remembered was Lek, actually a woman of 25 years. Mentally she is like a child, and her mother now works at the daycare. Lek does a lot of the activities with the children and helps them when she can. She is safe at the day care. I could tell that things were going better for her and her family than they were three years ago. She showed us her home. Now they have a little washing machine, left by one of the missionaries who traveled back to the states.

Then she took us to the other "Concordia" day-care center in Bangkok, the one run by "Goi." That's where the productive meetings took place regarding CCCS. Dawn is a very animated, passionate, and candid representative of CCCS. I'm sure the working relationship she has been a part of establishing will be a fruitful one.

Last night we had supper with Pastor Ted Na Thalang, who had just arrived from China. He represents Lutheran Heritage Foundation and related to us the challenges of the negotiations toward the production of a translation of the Lutheran Confessions in Chinese. He says China has really opened a lot and how they love to eat in China! We first met Ted and his wife back in the summer of 1986 when we came back from vicarage. His wife Gunya coordinates Lutheran Hour activities in this part of the world. Today they will have a few hours together at the airport while she flies somewhere.

Saturday, June 21, we slept in and relaxed. It was great to catch up on our sleep. In the afternoon we went over to the Concordia Gospel Ministry Center, which is just a few blocks from the hotel. (The Hotel is named the "TK. Palace.") The CGM Center is hosting the seminar. They are supported by the English lessons, often taught by volunteers from the states. We had a wonderful conversation with Robin McCoy, a volunteer missionary from Washington, MO. She has been here almost three years, and has become something of a fixture. Come to find out she arrived here just a few days after I left three years ago. The students love her (both adults and children) and she loves them. It sounds like next term they will have to add some extra classes. She had an amazing story about how the Lord led

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her to this work and to this place. She hopes to stay as long as possible. In those three years she has been home twice to visit family and raise support for her work here. She has learned a few Thai words in that time and sang a song for us that she had written/adapted from a Thai song. She invented motions for it and often sings it with her students. It is simple enough that she can teach it in the States when she makes presentations here. When Robin is home, be sure to have her out to make a presentation. She is a genuine servant of the Lord, dedicated to teaching English as best she can and witnessing to Christ whenever possible. We also met her Pastor and wife, (Dr.) Mark and Lisa Bangert, traveling here just to see her. He has helped us out by leading a couple of sessions at the seminar.

Sunday, June 22

We first went to the CGM center to work on some musical things with a man named "Mythree." (Like "My Three Sons" I was told.) Together we figured out a few hymns that I knew from our hymnbooks, that were in a Thai hymnbook (Presbyterian), that the people could sing, and that he could play. Ted has said that another project down the road will be the compilation of a Lutheran Thai Hymnbook. Then we were picked up and taken to the Concordia Church at Phongphet (still in Bangkok), where we attended worship. There were about 12-14 of us in the service--something like St. Luke's, Covington. After the sermon I was given a few minutes to bring a short message. Lay leaders conducted much of the service. In fact, after the sermon, the lay leader gave some reaction to the sermon. I wondered: wouldn't that be great if our elders would be willing to get up and react to the sermon? Dang sat close enough to us so that she could whisper a translation of the sermon to us. The worship folder was printed in Thai and English. This is the church connected with Goi's daycare that we had visited on Friday. There was a lunch served, with food brought in, during which I bit into the hottest red pepper I have ever had explode in my mouth. I still get a knot in my esophagus when I think of it. Following lunch I was the cameraman as Dawn conducted an interview with Goi about her daycare, how she became a Christian, and such matters. They both looked very photogenic. It is a tool that CCCS can use.

The Seminar in Bangkok seems to have been a success. The whole trip was made worthwhile by a young man from somewhere in the south of Thailand: "You teach me -- good -- exciting. I am -- exciting." Dawn did a great job bringing the Bible stories to life. She had the participants pretend that they were children in her class. It really brought them to life. On the last day volunteers gave class presentations in which they had their turn to teach a lesson. Thursday afternoon multiple copies of the Thai version of "A Child's Garden of Bible Stories" were distributed at the Bang Na (Slum) Day Care. Dawn has been working on that project for the better part of a year and it was incredibly rewarding for her to see the book in the hands of children. She came back to the hotel and told me, "This was one of the best days of my life." It was exciting to see them point to the pictures of Jesus and to show their friends those pictures.

After the video session we rode with Goi and her American fiancée, Seth Fischer. We parked at the University

from which Goi graduated; they walked over to an early childhood seminar at the hospital while Dawn and I visited the Royal Palace. We discovered a good way to keep from getting lost: Dawn took a picture of me at the gate of the University; we figured we could show it to a taxi driver if we got lost and have him bring us back there. We are thankful for our new digital camera. A retired gentleman, formerly a sort of civil engineer, served as our tour guide. His English was not quite as good as he thought it was, but much better than our Thai, of course. He kept saying to Dawn, "In a former time, maDAM..." We are glad that we had him. He pointed out the remains of the king from "The King and I" and related the others to him. The Rama dynasty began in 1782 when Rama I (read "Rama One") took the throne. He moved the capital to Bangkok and the palace compound we toured is where he and his successors ruled. So about the time the US was formed, Thailand came under the current family of kings. The current king, now on the throne for 60 years, is Rama IX. Now he lives elsewhere. Of course, the kingship here is intimately tied with the Buddhist faith. One of the structures is said to contain part of the ashes of Buddha himself. The tour guide attended a missionary school as a small child. He said, "Buddhism and Christianity--they are both good." Although we only agreed on a one hour tour, he was with us more than an hour and a half. We tipped him well and asked him to reconsider the Jesus he heard about as a child, the one who has no ashes to be put in a grave.

We found our way back okay and then took Goi and Seth out to eat. What a great visit we had! They are to be married in November. The current LCMS missionary in Bangkok, Robert Hedtke, is a relative of his. Last year Seth came to Bangkok for some R & R after leading a Habitat for Humanity Build in Indonesia. Pastor Hedtke recommended Goi as someone who could show him around for a few days. Now they are engaged to be married here in November! She is committed to serving at the day care so they will locate here. He got a job teaching math to elementary children in an all-English Catholic School. (The Thai kids are made to speak English; the idea is to prepare them for education abroad later.) Goi became a Christian through one of our English centers here; he is Lutheran from Beloit, Wisconsin. Both are great about witnessing. At one point in the conversation he said, "I just love Luther's Small Catechism..." When was the last time you heard that from a 20-something young man in the church back home?

Monday, June 23

I haven't been this nervous in a long time. It didn't help that the plane ride was catching up with us. Because of excitement or nerves or jet lag or whatever, we didn't sleep the best. The seminar began on schedule at 9:00 a.m. at the Concordia Gospel Ministry Center in Bangkok. Actually, it took place on the second floor, which is Into Light Lutheran Church. The participants, about 30 in all, arrived on time. Each morning we began with worship, a portion of which is usually led by one of the visiting pastors, either from the States or a seminar participant.

Dawn was really fired up. It looked like she could have

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jumped out the window and flown, she was so excited. Having warned the seminar participants ahead of time, she often spoke to them as she would the little children of her class. In that way she modeled her teaching for them. They loved it! It really loosened everybody up after my rather traditional Bible Class. Following devotions I would lead Bible study and then we had a break. After the break Dawn did her part. In the afternoon we repeated the same thing. About 3:30 p.m. the books arrived! For the first time we saw "A Child's Garden of Bible Stories" in Thai. Dawn was thrilled; she had been working on that project for the better part of a year. A few important stories were added to the old version, such as the Baptism of Jesus, Pentecost, the conversion of Paul, Paul's missionary journeys. Here and there the text was made more precise and some elements added that are really needed in the mission field, such as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the words of Institution, Jesus institutes the Office of the Keys--things that transition into the teaching of the catechism. She also wrote questions to be put at the end of each story before it was translated into Thai. Her heart leapt for joy as she saw the package carried up the stairs into our meeting room and witnessed the look on the faces of the Thai pastors and teachers who now have another tool in their important work.

One of the Pastor's wives heard my stomach was unsettled; she brought a bunch of bananas to help. They were great--cute little sweet bananas. The Lord really does provide. At one point my stomach was feeling upset, but just moments before I had turned over the mike to Pastor Mark Bangert from Washington, MO, who had asked if he could help in some way. It was the part that he had agreed ahead of time to lead--perfect timing. I lay down for a little bit and took my medicine that night--the meds sent with me from the International Health Clinic in Carbondale--and I was a lot better by Tuesday. Everyone asked: Is it the food? I really don't think so. Dawn and I are country folk; to be in Bangkok is to be in the city--16 million people. There are crowds everywhere; it is only natural that we would pick up some little bug to which we are not accustomed. Each day, at least twice, we crossed a pedestrian bridge which thousands used each day. I'm sure lots of germs are there on the railing left by thousands of sweaty palms.

Wednesday, June 25

Dawn led her part of the seminar sitting down, since she was little under the weather. She also asked for volunteers to help. She has taught them the Apostles' Creed with motions, the same way she does it in pre-school. It was fun to watch them take turns leading that. She also had volunteers lead other parts of the lesson as she routinely teaches. Some stayed after in order to sing a few Thai Christian songs for children for us on video. They sing with great gusto. Ted has given us a translation. My hope is to try to translate one of them into English and teach the kids in the states.

Thursday, June 26

I'll let Dawn tell you later about her thrilling return trip to the Bang Na Slum District. While she went there with a group in the afternoon, I stayed behind and led the afternoon

seminar session. After the Bible Study it was time to teach music. Of course, they are all musicians: they can sing and use their voices very well in praising the Lord. They just don't read music. Even the guy hired to play keyboard for worship just looks at the text with guitar chords and plays the melody by ear. I wanted them to see that they could do more if they could read notes. Some of them had heard of "do re mi fa so la ti do," so we tried to put that on a the ladder of the staff. Then we tried to talk about how long a note lasts, so we started with the whole note, the fat man who sits on the line for four counts and ended up with the eighth note, the guy running so fast that his hair is blowing in the wind. After half an hour of that, we passed out the recorders, donated by the Men's Club and Ladies' Aid of St. John's, New Minden. I taught them the fingering of the C major scale, do re mi.... Then we played "God is so Good," which someone had translated into Thai for us. The last couple of times it didn't sound that bad, but before we got to that point there were lots of squeaks! After an hour of music we had Pastor Ted (Na Thalang) come out of his office and I introduced my "Thai Recorder Band." We played the one song for him. I'm not sure how much was accomplished, but some of the people seemed as though they would follow up by trying to learn more.

After the session we went over to the Lutheran Hour Office for a tour. In Bangkok it is called "Journey Into Light." We ended up spending a couple hours with "Boom," the director. ("Don't say it like an explosion" she told me the last time I was here. It is pronounced something like "Book" except with an "m" instead of a "K.") Boom is very very capable and overseas many projects that her staff has going. They are struggling with budget cuts. The amount of support from Lutheran Hour Ministries in St. Louis has been about steady the last couple of years, but there is inflation throughout these Asian countries, plus the dollar has been sinking. Therefore they are having to find ways to do more with less. In Thailand they have taken the broadcast off the expensive station in Bangkok and instead send it out on CD's to local radio stations throughout the country, who work with local pastors. In the two studios at JIL they produce something like five shows every week, plus some other programs. For example, they organize outreach events at various locations throughout the country, train local Christians for outreach, and also have a part in humanitarian relief. They have begun a cell phone ministry whereby encouraging devotional messages can be forwarded from one phone to another. It is catching on. (Cell phones, or mobile phones--say it with a long i sound--are big in Asia.) She gave us a DVD on the Thai work that we can show when we get home. Really, Lutheran Hour Ministries has a lot of good things going on in Southeast Asia.

Friday, June 27

Today we wrapped up the seminar in Bangkok. I hope we gave them a lot of good things to think about--the series of eleven Bible studies was titled "What does the Bible say about teaching the Young?"--as well as many practical ideas. Lots of pictures were taken as we each went our separate ways. In the evening a bunch of us went out to eat to celebrate the successful conclusion to the Seminar. Just to give you an idea how many different groups work together, let me go around the table and explain who

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was there:

Robin McCoy, LCMS volunteer missionary at "the Center" (Concordia Gospel Ministry Center) in Bangkok, almost done with her third year of teaching English.

Pastor Kinh, an LCMS pastor in Orange Country, California, who was born in Vietnam and came to the states as a teenager. He traveled with us to Cambodia and by now is probably in Vietnam (for the first time in over 30 years). He is doing some translation work for Lutheran Heritage Foundation. The hope is to find ways to help pastors in his native country. He gave us his electronic alarm clock.

Dr. Mark and Lisa Bangert, Robin's pastor from Washington, MO. He did several sessions of the seminar for us and was to preach last Sunday in Bangkok.

Jeff Ehlers was an LCMS missionary to Thailand for years and knows the language well. Now he is based in Phoenix and is with the Garuna Foundation. (Garuna means "grace" or "mercy" in Thai.) The Foundation helps sponsor these Seminars, at least one of the Day Cares, and other projects in Thailand and surrounding countries.

Goi and her fiance Seth--Goi of the Day Care connected with the Children's Christian Concern Society, and Seth the math teacher.

Rev. Ted and Gunya Na Thalung. Ted is based in St. Charles, MO, but travels extensively for the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, overseeing many translation projects in Asia. Gunya, his wife, travels to many Asian countries as part of her work with Lutheran Hour Ministries. They both travel for weeks at a time; it was great for them to have at least one evening together. Ted is also here with LISA, the Luther Institute--Southeast Asia, which officially sponsors these training seminars. In a typical year they may have 5 or 6 of these week-long seminars for pastors and other church leaders.

Dr. Jacob Preus, president of Concordia University, seeking to find avenues of partnership between the University and LISA. He very graciously included me in the people he introduced at the Seminar as "old friends." I never got to have him for a class over twenty years ago when he was a prof. at the St. Louis Seminary, but he said he remembered me.

Walt Winters--from Lutheran Hour Ministries--also was in town.

Joe and Ar--the managers of the CGM Center, a hub of activity for Lutherans in Bangkok.

The Children's Christian Concern Society was represented by Dawn. This is the first year they are sponsoring a school in Thailand. It was great to be a part of such a diverse team, all working toward a common goal of carrying out the Great Commission in SE Asia.

Saturday, June 28

We caught an early flight to Phnom Penh, leaving the hotel about 4:30 a.m. The Air Asia flight was uneventful--the best kind. Ted and Pastor Kinh traveled with us. One of the Khmer (Cambodian) pastors was here to meet us. He took us to the Chin Tong Guest House, right across the road from the Airport. We met with him to make sure everything was set for the seminar, especially the materials we requested. In the

afternoon we met with another pastor, Pastor Wanarith (I'm not sure about the English spelling). He is obviously a gifted man. His language skills are impeccable and he is very quick. We were blessed to have him as a translator all week long this week. You know you have a good translator when you can use long sentences and he doesn't get lost. Also, the best translators not only translate what you said, but add to it what you should have said! He listens to KFUEO radio on the internet. I asked him what his favorite program was. "Issues, Etc." he said. He was responsible for doing A Child's Garden of Bible Stories into Khmer. He and his wife Delise have a wonderful little girl whose English name is "Jessica." She was the center of attention all week long at the seminar here, and very well behaved.

Sunday morning we traveled about 80 kilometers south of Phnom Penh to visit a country church. This was really amazing and something to remember. We rode in a hired van. The local pastor was waiting for us on his motorcycle at the turnoff from the main road. We followed back roads another 15 kilometers off the main road. We got there too late for worship, but the children were still gathered for Sunday School. A couple months ago they were able to start worshipping indoors--an older farm couple has opened up their home to allow this. Imagine a cement home consisting of two rooms. The floor was concrete with contact paper over the top--good thing everybody takes their shoes off when they enter! The children met outside under a roof, a little shelter for a couple of gasoline engines--I think one was a pump to control the water for the rice paddies. The farm couple has seven cows, which are used for plowing, not for meat or for dairy. About 40 children were gathered for Sunday School. We showed them copies of A Child's Garden, even though the edition in their language was not available yet. They enjoyed looking at the pictures in the book. Dawn spoke to them with her inflatable, beach-ball globe and we all prayed together. Some of the children are not able to attend school; it is too far off the main road and the government has never built a school there. The pastor has a vision for starting a Christian school that would serve the community. In fact, some land has been promised for a church and school. We went there and said a prayer on that site that the Lord would bring it to fruition. The Congregation was formed about five years ago. The pastor works for the military. (All the pastors over here have other day jobs.) Part of his military training has to do with veterinary medicine. The mission start happened as a result of his side work of helping the farmers with their livestock. I think he has one or two other preaching stations that he visits other days of the week. It was very moving to see this farm couple opening up their home for use as a house church--they don't have much but they are willing to use it for the Lord's work. On the way back to the main road, about noon by now, we met many cows being driven by children on bicycles or on foot.

Monday morning we went to visit the "Killing Fields" and the Genocide museum. What this nation went through in the late 1970's is hard to imagine. In a four-year period, 1975-79, from one to three millions were killed by their own government--I think the whole country only had something like

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seven million at the time. The "Khmer Rouge" (Red Cambodians) tried to wipe out every trace of the previous civilization. If someone were to write a novel about it, it would be written off as impossible.

[Dawn writes about the BangNa Slum] – Tim is great at writing and remembering great details of our trip. He has asked me to write to you about last Thursday afternoon when we (Robin McCoy her pastor and wife, Mark and Lisa Bangert, Dr. Jacob Preus of Concordia University Irvine, and Dang) drove to the BangNa Slum. The children were napping so we were given a tour of the Slum. Tim and I had been there on Friday, the week before. Dang, director of the Daycare, and another teacher led us through it. Lech, a participant of the daycare and another child, Sila, were also along as they would show us their homes. Without a guide, we would not be able to visit the slums, they work hard to keep strangers out, keeps the robbers and drug dealers out.

We walked down the narrow paths, between the buildings, along the sewage that flowed beneath. In spite of the horrible conditions, the people consider themselves blessed. Other areas have it much worse. When we got to the daycare, the children were up and having a cool drink while watching a video of Micky Mouse cartoons. They sang a song with Robin – Jesus in the Morning. Robin talked to them a little bit and then I had a turn to talk to them. I was able to introduce them to the Child's Garden of Bible stories, and hand the first five out. Everyone was given a turn, but I was given the honor of giving them first. I had to pry open the hands of the first little boy as I placed the book in his hands, "for you," I said, "this Jesus book is for you." The next child took it eagerly, then a child in the row behind, reached forward and took the next book. As the children paged through the books, they eagerly pointed to the pictures. A little girl stared at Jesus on the cross and traced it with her finger. They loved the rainbow, the fish created on the first day, and the pictures of Jesus. Pastor Mark Bangert told the story of Daniel in the Lions den as they all looked at the pictures in their own books, except for the little ones who kept looking for other pictures that were exciting to them. It was so precious to see their excitement, and to know that they would be able to have the books for their very own. I hope they will be able to take them home and read them with their parents. Thank you to everyone who gave us money for the books. It was one of the most exciting days of my life. God is so Good!!!

[Reflections near the end of the trip.] In a little more than an hour Joe, the manager here at the CGM Center, is going to pick us up and take us to the airport for our 6:00 a.m. flight. What a dedicated servant of the Lord! We offered again and again to have a taxi take us--it is an hour drive from here--but Joe insisted on being here at 2:30 a.m. to make sure we get there all right. God willing, we will arrive in St. Louis about 24 hours after we take off here. That should be just before 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9, St. Louis time.

The seminar in Phnom Penh went well. We actually found our time in Cambodia quite relaxing. For one thing, we were staying in the very same building where the Seminar took

place: the Chin Tong Guest House and Restaurant. The restaurant offers good meals (both Asian and American) at good prices, with good service. Also, there is not much else to do besides the Seminar; we found ourselves enjoying good quality time, just the two of us, in between Seminar sessions. One further advantage is that neither of us were bothered with the slightest of any health issues or concerns. The hotel, or "guest house" has unbelievable rates. We had two very large rooms (bedroom and a sort of dining room) with two bathrooms, at least as much room as our living room and dining room at home. The rooms are decorated with beautiful wood work, a medium-sized refrigerator, king-sized bed, and a kitchen counter with a sink. And, yes, the rooms were clean when we arrived. Cost: \$20 per night! (I guess it's all about supply and demand!) Location: right across the road from the airport. Of course, you must also consider that you have to ask for a roll of toilet paper from the front desk if you need a new one, and we had two towels to last us the week. As far as we could tell, no one entered our room to clean the entire week we were there. (But then, we never asked to have anyone, either.)

It is interesting to discover new ways of thinking. For example, when discussing the story of the ten plagues in Egypt, it took some time to explain what "hail" is. Whoever heard of ice chunks falling from the sky? (Only some of the participants who had lived in mountainous areas.) Dawn had them make a little booklet with one panel for each of the Ten Plagues. I watched the guy next to me draw a picture of a house with the blood of the Passover Lamb around the door. The picture was much as you would see from kids here except that the house was built on stilts! That is the traditional style in rural Cambodia--the main part is 8 or 9 feet off the ground. The area underneath serves as a shady living space. At night you can pull the ladder up and feel safe. Just park your vehicle underneath the house--whatever your vehicle might be.

A big part of Dawn's program was providing an assortment of Bible figures on card stock that could be colored, cut out with a scissors, and used to tell many Bible stories, especially the ones in "A Child's Garden of Bible Stories." Besides the card stock printouts, the scissors, and the crayons, we resolved to use materials locally available with which to display them. Here at home she would probably use "sticky tack" to stick the figures unto wooden blocks. In Bangkok we found a set of plastic building blocks (akin to Duplos here) at the "Big C" (Thailand's answer to Walmart), backed by pieces of corrugated, plastic material. We first looked for cardboard, such as we have in plenty in cereal boxes. No such thing around in Bangkok! Very little cardboard, fiber board, paper products--everything is plastic. When we got to Phnom Penh, we wondered, what would we use here? In our meeting with the local pastor, a solution emerged: The card stock figures could be fastened to pieces of bamboo and stuck into a piece of banana tree. "Just like foam," said Ted--and it was, only it didn't crack like Styrofoam might. It is cheap and available virtually everywhere in Cambodia. Picture an 18-inch section of banana tree trunk (about 3" in diameter), sliced lengthwise with a knife down the

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middle. It yields a flat base into which to stick your figures. Next question: Where to find bamboo sticks? Ah! Chopsticks! One hundred pair cost 1\$ US. They are already tapered gently at one end. How do we make the figures stick to them? We simply took a knife, split the ends of the chopsticks, and wedged the figures in the slot.

We had some difficulty with crayons. Dawn wanted to have a pack of regular crayons to give to participants with which to color their Bible figures. On Sunday afternoon the two of us got brave and went by "tuk tuk" to the market a few kilometers away. What an amazing place! Every conceivable item is sold in little booths right on top of each other--some on the outside in the open air, some on the dark inside. We wandered up and down the rows showing our box of crayons, trying to get someone to understand what crayons were. We found all manner of food, clothing, shoes, personal care items, tools, hardware, electronic gadgets, small appliances, DVD's, household cleaning supplies--everything under the sun. We even came across one dark booth that was a dentist's office! Picture a 6' by 6' glass enclosure. Inside was a teenaged girl in the dentist chair, the dentist with a small light drilling in her mouth, and the girl's mother watching. I said to Dawn, "Do you have a toothache?" We moved on and finally found a nice old couple who knew a little English, knew what crayons were, and actually sold them in their shop! They carried a handful of boxes. Then we told them that we needed 25 or 30 boxes. First she asked if we could come back tomorrow or that evening. Finally she made a phone call and said, "30 minutes." She was good for her word. A motorcycle arrived with a shipment in plenty of time. Cost: \$1 US per box. While waiting I observed why it is that we were advised not to drink beverages with ice in them. I watched a guy take a huge block of ice, man-handle it with his dirty hands, kick it with his foot (in flip-flops), and put it into a rusty metal grinder. The result was beautiful ice suitable for a snow-cone.

The language barrier was more steep here than in Bangkok. Fewer people knew English and we depended more on our translator. Even the numerals are in the Khmer alphabet, so I couldn't look at the Khmer notes and figure out what page we were on. Our translator was excellent and up to the task. Thailand takes great pride in the fact that they have never been colonized by a European or Asian power. The Thai's have wisely learned from many other countries--I think the King even studied in the U.S. for awhile in his youth--but they have always ruled themselves. Not so in Cambodia. The French ruled here until about 1953. It is often said that the best thing the French left was French bread, but there are other legacies of French rule: you drive on the right side of the road (unlike neighboring Thailand, where you drive on the left), Phnom Penh is laid out in French style with streets radiating out from a circle, and people take siestas in the middle of every day. Most days the Seminar went from 8:00 to 11:45 a.m., then 1:45 until 5:00, and 7:00 to 8:00 in the evening. I think the siestas over the noon time improved our concentration in the afternoon. On Monday we didn't start until after lunch, and Friday we finished in the middle of the afternoon, to allow travel time for the participants. They came from nine of the 24 provinces in

Cambodia, some traveling eight or ten hours or more by bus. About 50 were in attendance.

In May a group of 20+ pastors and laymen signed a petition requesting to be recognized by the government as a Lutheran Church body in Cambodia. Ironically, the government encourages them to have support from foreign church groups, so that they will be stable and able to maintain themselves. The chairman of the group, if I understand correctly, is a layman--I think someone said he was a dentist (not the one we saw in the market). He appeared to be the oldest of the group, very quiet and unassuming, but well-respected by all. One evening they had a meeting to discuss further details of the formation of their church association. We visiting pastors were invited to observe. It was interesting to listen to them ask such questions as: If we join this association, will we lose control of our local churches? Pastor Ted, working through the translator, was magnificent. In his calm, patient, reasoned voice, he explained that no outsiders could tell them how to set up their church body; it had to be THEIR church to fit their country. He also told them it was a lot like getting married: you have to know each other well and each willingly give your consent to be joined to each other around the confession of faith that you have in common. (Without using the word "Synod" he did a great job explaining to them what a church body should be.)

One of the highlights of the week was the Thursday evening session, when Dawn divided everybody up into four groups, each with about a dozen. Each group was a "class" and the participants took turns teaching a Bible story to the rest of the "class." Dawn was very proud of them. The music class was a challenge with the language barrier. At first they were like a bunch of kids with those recorders in their mouths! We did make some progress. Those who didn't want to continue were encouraged to take the recorder home and give it to someone with some interest. Hopefully the participant could at least show them how to hold it and how the fingering chart is set up.

One thing I will treasure is a letter written in beautiful Khmer handwriting. Pastor Vanerith translated it as follows: "Thanksgiving letter from Glory of the Lord Church in _____ province. The Glory of the Lord church members like to thank you, the lecturer who has been teaching the word of God and study materials for the children in our church. May God bless you and give you an increase when you return home." We also treasure the banner with Matthew 28:19 and a map of Cambodia, with all the provinces marked. At the presentation of the banner we had people from each province stand.

That's all for now! Thanks for your patience, encouragement, and prayers as we were privileged to go on this trip. God bless -- Pastor Tim Mueller.

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

SEPTEMBER

- 18 Mission Staff Meeting, 9:30 a.m.
- 19-20 LWML Convention, Good Shepherd-Collinsville
- 25 Youth Advisory Committee, Zion-Belleville, 6:30 p.m.
- 27 Mission Board Meeting, 9:00 a.m.

OCTOBER

- 2 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 2-3 Teachers Conference in Springfield, IL.
- 6-8 SID Fall Pastoral Conference, Pere Marquette
- 11-13 Jr. High Youth Gathering at Camp Wartburg
- 15 Finance Committee Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- 16 LWML District Board, 9:00 a.m.
- 20 Fund Advisory, 4:30 p.m.
- 23 Board of Congregational Support, 4:15 p.m.
- 25 SID Board of Directors, 9:00 a.m.
- 30 Mission Staff, 9:30 a.m.

NOVEMBER

- 3 Board of Spiritual Care and Supervision, 9:00 a.m.
- 5 Older Adult Advisory Meeting 6:15 p.m.
- 6 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 8 "Carload" Conference, St. Mark, Steeleville
- 10 SID Convention Planning Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 15 SID Mission Board, 9:00 a.m.
- 27 Thanksgiving Day—District Office closed
- 28 District Office Closed

DECEMBER

- 4 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 25 Celebrate Jesus birth!

JANUARY 2009

- 8 S.A.M.T.F. Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 26 Convention Planning Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m.