Mission RE

As a member of Iowa Districts West's Board of Directors, I had the privilege of helping to craft our district's mission statement: *On a mission to support Christ's mission!* It's a great mission focus for our district and helps us prioritize our efforts, but it assumes we all know Christ's mission! So what is it? If someone asked you, "What is Christ's mission?" what would you say?

Let's start with what it's not. Christ's mission is not to make the world a better place or even to change the world. This mission is far too easily co-opted by political movements or popular social causes, and many are the churches and Christians who have been lured into this mission.

Christ's mission is not to help people be good or to help them get along. This mission reduces the church to a weekend school of etiquette and manners – and many are the parents who have embraced this mission as they drop their kids off for a good dose of moralism during Sunday school, while they do other "important" things.

Christ's mission is not to make things go well for us or to bless us materially. This mission turns God into a vending machine and leaves people ill-prepared for hardships and suffering. And many are the Christians who have equated physical comfort or success with Christ's mission.

Nor is Christ's mission to get people's souls into Heaven. This mission emphasizes escaping the earth and turns Christianity into a "someday" religion with next to no meaning for today.

Christ's mission is far bigger than all these. Christ's mission is not to change the world, but to restore it. Christ's mission is not to help people be good, but to restore the good across the cosmos. Christ's mission is not to make us comfortable, but to comfort us with the promise of bodily resurrection and creation's renewal. And Christ's mission isn't to help us escape from earth someday; His mission is to bring God's reign here as He invites us to join Him in the mission of restoration.

This has been the mission all along: to get God's heavenly reign into earth, to bring Heaven here! Isaiah prophesied about it. Paul and Peter wrote about it. And Jesus announced it: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." This gospel of the Kingdom of God is the astonishingly good news that God is bringing His heavenly reign here. Heaven is coming to earth! God is doing His work of renewal today!

We joyfully announce the inauguration of this renewing heavenly reign in the resurrection of Jesus. We celebrate Heaven's entrance into earth in the Lord's Supper where earth and Heaven's worship of Jesus merge. In fact, we confess precisely this in the words of the Sanctus where Heaven's song (holy, holy, holy) blends with earth's song (hosanna, hosanna, hosanna). We pray for Heaven's entrance in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come… on earth as it is in heaven." And we join Jesus every day in our vocations as He brings His heavenly reign into the lives of our family, friends, and neighbors. Our lives are centered in confessing Christ and His Gospel and in eagerly joining Jesus on His mission.

This mission focuses our lives. We're not waiting around for Jesus to take our souls to Heaven; we're building for the Kingdom now, knowing that Jesus will perfect our work upon His return in glory! We're eagerly joining Jesus as He continues His work of renewal today. We're living as renewed people in every facet of our lives, seeing our vocations as the place where Jesus' mission meets us and the means by which it reaches the world. This mission invites our undivided and lifelong focus. We're on a mission to join Jesus' mission!

Holy Week 2017

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

Trinity: Saturday, April 7 @ 4:00 p.m.
Zion: Sunday, April 8 @ 9:00 a.m.

Trinity: Thursday, April 13 @ 2:00 p.m.
Zion: Thursday, April 13 @ 7:00 p.m.

Joint Service at Zion:
Friday, April 14 @ 7:00 p.m.

Trinity: Sunday, April 16 @ 9:30 a.m.
Breakfast potluck at 8:00 a.m. (before service)
Zion: Sunday, April 16 @ 7:00 a.m.
Breakfast to follow

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (April 2017): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

There is no "app" for peace. A guilty conscience, a grieving heart, a life of chaos, a burdened soul, or any other predicament cannot be remedied by scrolling down an iPhone or computer screen. There is peace from the resurrected Jesus. On the evening of His resurrection and a week later, Jesus comes to His frightened disciples and announces, "Peace be with you." The reality of the resurrection is that Jesus shares His peace to us. "Peace be with you" this month and always. Pastor Riggert

"Peace" proclaimed in Holy Week Worship

Holy Week worship takes us into the commotion of Jesus' last hours. We cannot truly understand the peace of Easter without the journey of Holy Week. Jesus brings peace to His disciples in the Last Supper and shares the peace of His meal with us on Maundy Thursday (2 p.m. at Trinity; 7 p.m. at Zion). The turbulence of the Good Friday setting precedes Jesus' peaceful death as payment for our sins. Good Friday worship will be a joint service at Zion at 7 p.m.

Jesus offers peace to grieving women and searching disciples as they witness the empty tomb. We stand with them on Easter Sunday. There will be a sunrise service (7 a.m.) at Zion and a Festival Service at Trinity (9:30 a.m.) Both settings will have special Easter fellowship breakfasts.

"Peace" for All God's Children

Sunday school children will participate in special processions on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. The peace of Jesus is shared each week in the Sunday school classroom. Note: There will be no Sunday school on Easter Sunday, April 16, because of the special services and Easter Breakfast.

God's Word brings peace for a lifetime. Confirmation vows will be shared by this year's confirmation classes on April 29 (Trinity) and April 30 (Zion). We pray that each confirmand will be faithful for a lifetime. "Peace be with you" and welcome new communicant members.

VBS will be held the mornings of June 5-9! Many volunteers will again be needed. Please share your desire to help with Pastor or Diane Riggert.

A special Pentecost service for children of all ages will be held on Sunday, June 4 with Jenn Williamson leading music. Jenn will also be one of the vocalists at the C3 concert that Sunday evening.

"Peace" for Our Community and Beyond

C3 seeks to bring peace to hungry stomachs in the community through the Food Pantry and around the world through Wolf Pack for Hunger (Wednesday, April 19). Thank you for your support of these ventures. Information on donations and volunteering for the food packaging event will be shared with the church and community. The annual summer concert will be held on Sunday evening, June 4 at the Heritage Park with gates opening at 4 p.m. with food and fellowship before the concert.

"Peace" at the Crossroads

Jesus meets us at every crossroad! Thanks to all who have so faithfully met Him at the Wednesday services. Thanks to the youth and their families who have served the weekly fellowship meals at Zion. The Lenten season is such a significant time for the family of the church and the family in the home.

Family Game Day Enjoyed by Many

On February 26, nearly 40 individuals and families, from the very young to the formerly young, gathered for an afternoon of fun, fellowship, and games. Thanks to the Board of Education for hosting the event!

ON THAT NOTE

Treasuring our Musical Treasure

Martin Luther wrote, "The riches of music are so excellent and so precious that words fail me whenever I attempt to discuss and describe them..." We are blessed to have a hymnal that has preserved the rich musical heritage of the Christian Church throughout generations, cultures, and geography. This month's featured hymn, "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted," a profoundly moving Good Friday hymn, was written over 200 years ago in 1804 by the Englishman Thomas Kelly. Kelly, in a strikingly similar manner to Martin Luther, was set to become a lawyer, but experienced a profound spiritual change and took Holy Orders in 1792, becoming a clergyman in the Church of Ireland.

He was most known for his Gospel-focused preaching and his hymn writing, having written 765 in his lifetime. In the preface to one of his hymn books, he wrote, "The author has seen much and heard much; but nothing that he has seen or heard has made the least change in his mind that he is conscious of, as to the grand truths of the Gospel. What pacifies the conscience then, does so now. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'" We consider his hymn "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted" (*LSB*, 451).

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis the true and faithful Word.

With its opening words this hymn takes us into the heart of Isaiah's arresting description of Jesus' crucifixion. Writing over 700 years before Christ, Isaiah saw His suffering, rejection, and crucifixion with clarity:

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities…

This dying man is the long-expected Prophet (of which Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 18:15), David's Son, and David's Lord (of which David wrote in Psalm 110:1; Matthew wrote in Matthew 22:45; and Luke wrote in Acts 2:34-36). In fact, this dying man is the true and faithful Word (of which John wrote in John 1:1-14). This dying man is the Christ – and He is being rejected! He is being stricken, smitten, and afflicted. How can this be? Why would the Christ suffer such brutality? Why would mankind kill his Savior?

On That Note

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would intervene to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that justice gave.

Verse two brings us near enough to Christ's cross to hear him groaning in agony. His skin has been flayed from His back by the fury of the scourge. His wrists and feet have been pierced through with metal spikes, severing exceedingly sensitive nerves. And He's slowing suffocating.

As we stand there the hymn asks, "Was there ever grief like His?" His friends disowned Him; Judas betraying Him for money, His disciples deserting Him upon His arrest, and Peter denying Him during His trial. His foes insulted Him; soldiers mocking Him, priests accusing Him, and passersby wagging their heads at Him. Many hands wounded Him; soldiers struck Him and spit upon Him, a temple officer slapped Him, guards nailed Him to the cross. The One who saved many had none to save Him. The One who intervened for others had no one to intervene for Him.

But that wasn't the deepest stroke that pierced Him. The stroke that pierced deepest was the stroke of justice. This Christ was pierced, as alluded to in the Isaiah text of verse one, for our transgressions. God put Him forward, as Paul writes in Romans 3, "as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show… his righteousness…, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Jesus was pierced so that justice for evil – our evil – could be done. He was pierced because of us!

Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed,
See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed,
Son of Man and Son of God.

So verse three exhorts us to view sin rightly. Sin is not child's play. One need only turn his gaze to Christ's cross to see what the righteous God thinks of sin: it deserves death.

But look who is dying in our place! See who is bearing the awful load! See who has been appointed as the substitutionary sacrifice! The Word of God, the Lord's anointed, the Son of Man and Son of God is bearing sin's burden in our stead!

Here we have a firm foundation,
Here the refuge of the lost:
Christ, the Rock of our salvation,
Is the name of which we boast;
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded,
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built.

On That Note

This reality, and this reality alone, is the foundation of our faith. As referenced earlier by the author, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The penalty for our sin has been borne by another so that we need not fear God's right response to sin: wrath.

Our boast, then, is not in ourselves, but in Christ, the Rock of our salvation. He is the Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, who cancels our guilt before God. We, who have built our hope on this work of Christ, will not be confounded, will not be turned back before God. We can approach God with confidence. For this reason, we build our hope on Christ.

We will sing this hymn on Good Friday.

CALL DAY 2017

Call Day 2017 is set for April 26 at 7:00 p.m.!
Watch online here:callday.csl.edu/watch/placements.html
After the service, download a PDF of the Call assignments here: callday.csl.edu

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

About Call Day

Call Day at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is the day when second-year students learn their vicarage church assignments (a one-year internship at an LCMS church anywhere in the U.S.) and fourth-year students learn their first Call assignments. Deaconess students learn their deaconess internship assignments or diaconal Call assignments on this day as well. These assignments are announced and celebrated during two worship services on Call Day.

A Birth Day for *Every* Baby

Recently we welcomed two new nephews into our extended family (my brother and his wife's third child and my brother-in-law and his wife's fourth) – and they were born within 24 hours of each other! For the rest of their lives, we will celebrate March 1st and 2nd as their birthdays.

But what would you think if their parents decided to ignore those days? What would you think if their parents forbade these children from celebrating or even acknowledging their birthdays – no gifts, no cake, no cards, no mention whatsoever, as if the day didn't exist? Do parents have the right to erase a child's day of birth? What if they pointed out how expensive birthdays are, how much they inconvenience adults' lives, and what a burden these celebrations are on adults?

And what if our Supreme Court found "penumbras, formed by emanations" in the Bill of Rights that gave parents such a right to erase a child's day of birth?[1] And what if this right was championed by politicians, even ensconced in their party platform? And what if this right was defended by media pundits and publishing giants like *The New York Times, The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*? And what if we were forced to support it through our tax dollars?

Wouldn't you want to stand up and say, "Stop! These children have birthdays! And every child deserves his or her birth to be celebrated! Doesn't anyone care about the needs of the child? Doesn't anyone see the inherent value in the child? And doesn't anyone see how incredibly selfish we adults are being?"

Fortunately, that world is a fiction. Tragically, our actual world is far worse. Our world doesn't deny children the right to *celebrate* their birthday; our world is denying children the right to *have* a birth day. Since 1973, abortion in America has denied 52,000,000 babies their birth days. That's equivalent to the populations of Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan!

This is more than a national tragedy; it is a national evil. All 52,000,000[2] aborted babies deserved a birth day and our laws currently allow them to be denied it, claiming it's the parent's right. If parents don't have the right to deny the celebration of a child's birthday, why do they have the right to deny the child's actual birth?

Yes, there are hard cases. Yes, there are financial burdens. But do those hard cases and those financial burdens justify the choice to deny a child his birth day? Doesn't every newly conceived life have the right to his birth day? If we wouldn't support laws or politicians who'd champion the erasing of birthday celebrations, how can we support laws or politicians who are championing the termination of the baby in the womb and his right to his birth day?

It's time for the church to stand as one and say, "*Every* baby deserves a birth day!" For suggestions on how to gain your voice, come visit with me. Let's gain our voice together.

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[1] This is the precise language used by Justice Douglas in a 1965 Supreme Court case that influenced Justice Blackmun in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case that struck down laws forbidding abortions in America.

[2] And this number says nothing of the chemical abortions performed at home with abortifacient drugs (such as RU-486) and even less of the abortions caused by drugs marketed as contraceptives (such as Ella and Plan-B, and possibly even the standard oral contraceptive) which may prevent a fertilized embryo from implanting in his mother's uterus.

Highlights
Ladies Guild of Zion
March 8, 2017

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love
Ladies Guild

The meeting was begun with the recitation of the LWML Pledge followed by Connie Ahrendsen reading a devotion that dealt with connectedness: our present day connectedness by technology, compared to Jesus' personal connectedness with the people of his day, which led to the thought that we also ought to be aware of those who need our personal touch. The mite box was then passed as we read the mite box prayer.

President Buhr called the business meeting to order in the name of the Triune God. Roll call was answered by 16 members telling what they would do if they could perform a miracle. The secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting. They were approved as read. An invitation was read from Priscilla Guild at Trinity Manilla inviting us to join them for their meeting on April 18th at 2:00 p.m. We are to call Cathie Segebart at 712-677-5547 by April 12th to let them know how many will be attending. Mary Grimm, treasurer, sent her report to be read in her absence. Kitchen treasurer, Darlene Vollstedt, gave her report.

Pastor Conner joined us and had us look at "Sing Praise to the God of Israel" (*LSB* 936). Pastor said all hymns are written to teach the faith we live by. This hymn talked of God's promise to Abraham, then took us to Moses who received the commandments, and finally brought us to baptism which makes us God's adopted children.

President Buhr continued the business meeting with a thank you to the members who attended and served at Day of Prayer. She said there were 26 in attendance. Committee reports: Sunshine Chair Becki Ehlers sent 13 cards this month including a thank you to Jim Soll for the new furniture in the fellowship hall. Circle #1 served the Duane Karsten funeral. Circle #2 will have Marge Kusel's funeral.

Guild collection items: Postage stamps, box tops for education, soap, computer ink cartridges, cell phones, and rinsed prescription pills bottles with stickers removed. Campbell's soup labels are no longer being kept.

The spring LWML rally will be held at Arcadia on April 22nd beginning at 9:00 a.m. and adjourning at 11:30 a.m. Plaza bingo will be hosted by Zion on March 25th with Connie Ahrendsen as chairman, and Cynthia Genzen, Barb Anderson and Gloria Ewoldt as helpers. The next guild meeting with be April 12th with Margaret Backhaus and Cheral Buhr as hostesses.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer followed by the table prayer. Refreshments were served by Barb Anderson and Bev Grundmeier.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Puck, secretary

Fellowship Group

"An Invitation"

The Zion Fellowship group meets on the second Monday of each month. Webster's dictionary defines fellowship as: "a group of people who have similar beliefs and/or interests." The history of this group goes back to its beginning as a men's organization.

Over time it evolved to become a couples group. The current makeup of the organization includes men, women, singles, widows, widowers, and couples. A shared belief in Christ and the desire to share that with others is what we have in common. A typical meeting begins with prayer followed by a study topic led by Pastor Riggert, a short mission meeting led by Dennis Backhaus, and a time for refreshments and socializing. All members of Zion are invited. We encourage you to join us in "Fellowship" with Christ.

Preschool Praises for March 2017

During the first week of March we focused on Dr. Seuss, rhyming, and the letter "W." The children enjoyed watching a short movie of Green Eggs and Ham. The Prodigal Son was our Bible lesson for the week which I thought was fitting since Dad's Night was that Thursday. It was wonderful that Dads and Grandpas got to enjoy having a Dr. Seuss themed photo prop booth as well as making and painting a bird house, play time and a special snack. Thank you to Third Generation Cakes for providing the delicious cupcake cake shaped as the Cat in the Hat's hat!

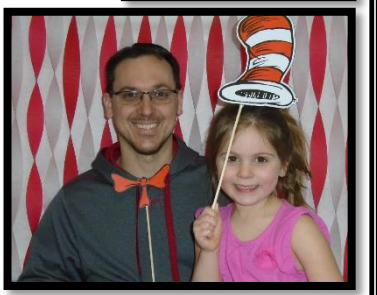
The second week we spoke about Community Helpers and had special guests who read their favorite children's story and spoke to the children about what they do in the community. Thank you to Angel Mundt, David Gore, Scott Renze, Pastor Conner, Dr. Tom Ulrickson and Mike Gore for sharing with the children! They loved it! The children helped us fill out papers about what they want to be when they grow up...as you can imagine, there were some good ones! Our Bible story for the week was how Jesus wanted the children to come to him and how we need to keep our trust in him all our lives just as we do when we are children.

The third week we focused on St. Patrick's Day and the letter "L." We continued to work on number identification, writing, and sequencing. On Thursday they enjoyed a short Veggie Tales video about St. Patrick who spread Christianity into Ireland. I started to do evaluations this week ahead of Parent/Teacher conferences. It's amazing to see the improvements that they have made since October! Our Bible story this week was about how the woman washed Jesus' feet with her tears and hair then anointed Him with expensive perfume. I explained that the woman knew that she had sinned and was sorry for them and that it is important for us to realize when we have done wrong and to ask for forgiveness, then try to do better.

The fourth week we focused on spring and it was super fun because we started an experiment that will take us 3 weeks to complete! We put bean seeds into a plastic baggie with a wet paper towel and sealed it then taped it to the window in the classroom. We had the children draw a picture of what it looked like that first week and will have them draw a new picture on day 7 and 14 to help them realize how their seed has changed.
They were a little disappointed that the seeds hadn't changed drastically in just 24 hours, but I reminded them that it takes time! We also did a cute craft about parts of a plant using cupcake liners and pipe cleaners. We displayed these in the church entrance one Sunday morning for everyone to enjoy before sending them home. The letter "Y" was also fun this week because we had the children glue yarn in a big letter Y since "Y is for yarn." The children had a couple of activity areas where they could sort 4 types of seeds out of a pile into their respective seed packets and another where they could take fake flowers and make their own arrangements by adding them into an upside down colander. Our Bible story this week was Jesus' washing the disciples' feet and how he wants us to serve others.

The final week of March we only had class one day as we had Parent/Teacher Conferences on Wednesday and Thursday. I enjoy this time with parents to review their children's growth. It is so fun to share what we have done together! Thank you to everyone for the continued support of the preschool program and I continue to be blessed by this vocation!

Yours in Christ, Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Nemitz



!Amigos En Cristo!
News from ***La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:*** *Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church:* **Pastor Daniel Vogel**, Denison, Iowa

Iowa District West, LCMS
Year 13, Issue 4, April 2017

Leaders of Amigos: These 3 men were recently appointed to serve as leaders of our congregation. They are Elias Garcia (from El Salvador), Moises Mendoza (born in California) and Daria Zunia (from Guatemala). It is very important that we develop leaders for our growing church, especially male leaders as in the Hispanic culture men are often not active in church life. While we are small, with 30 communicant members, we have visitors almost every Sunday. During the last 6 weeks, we averaged 26 in attendance, but during the same time 60 different individuals attended church. Our challenge is to teach our members to be the leaders of "their" congregation and to participate regularly. We look forward to a bright future with young leaders like these men to guide our church in the future.

A Historic Vote: On Sunday, February 26 the Voters of Amigos en Cristo unanimously voted to call a bilingual candidate from the Seminary. I announced in January that I will be retiring at the end of June and so we have begun the process of calling a new pastor. This is a big step for our immigrant church. The members have struggled to understand their part in the church. It is such a blessing to watch them grow, to watch leaders develop, and to see our mission become a stable church and active in the community. Started in 2000 as a mission of the District, we were received into membership in Iowa District West at the District Convention in 2015. It was a challenge to organize members into a Voters' Assembly, to prepare a Constitution and By-Laws, and all that is required for this process. Most of our members have never been active in a church and certainly not as leaders of a church. But God is gracious and has guided this unique church.

The Lenten Season Has Begun: These youth joined us on Ash Wednesday as we entered the Lenten season. They are the reason that each year we need to repeat the special story of Jesus' mission of humility and sacrifice on the cross to pay for our sins. In our fast-paced modern world, our children, and even more so our immigrant youth, are pulled in many directions. They live in two different worlds: their immigrant culture and the American culture. At times they may not feel comfortable in either one. Both cultures at times are at odds with our Christian culture where God, not man, is in control. Lent brings us to the Cross where we are invited to learn of God's love for all people groups. What a wonderful message for our youth to grow up in a church family where they are welcomed by the Savior and given the hope for a special life now and for eternity.

Please Pray: + For Amigos en Cristo and our Call for a Seminary candidate. + For the Grace Hispanic church in Storm Lake as they continue the process of calling a bilingual pastor. + For four families in both Denison and Storm Lake with plans to baptize their babies. + For Rosa in Storm Lake and Dario in Denison as they study for adult membership. + For the blessings of the Lenten season. + For our nation that God would unite and unify all our people. + In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and in our other two missions in Sioux City and Des Moines.

***Please Continue to Support* our new church**: For our mission friends financial support checks should now be sent to: Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church, 1004 1st Avenue South, Denison, Iowa, 51442

CONTACT ME:
Rev. Daniel Vogel
32678 Aspen Ave. Manning, Iowa, 51455
1-712-653-2354 or Cell: 712-309-1292
E-mail: daniel.vogel@ziondenison.org

Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, Cassie, and Chloe Ferry

Missionaries to Indonesia

I sat across the table from the Chief Editor and the head of Theological Books, wondering what I'd gotten myself into. The city was Jakarta, Indonesia, and the calendar read October 2014. I'd only been in-country for a year and a half, but I was joined by Pastor Eben Ezer Aruan of the Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI), who served as my translator.

We had come to the offices of BPK, a Christian publishing house (yes, there is such a thing even here) to negotiate with them to fulfill a need in this country.

Since we first started interacting in earnest with the GKLI, they've been telling us that they needed the Lutheran Confessions in a language their pastors could understand. The LCMS had worked with others some years ago to make it happen, but all those copies had run out many years before. In fact, most of the current GKLI pastors had never read the Confessions before, and certainly didn't have their own copy. So we set out to do what we could to assist.

Because there isn't a great deal of interest in the Lutheran Confessions among the general population of Indonesia, the publishing house needed us to fund and buy out the entire print run if they were going to produce this book. But once again, our Lord and His Church shocked me with what they could accomplish using His gifts. The congregations and members of the LCMS gave generously, and we were able to fund the whole run of 3,000 copies of the Book of Concord in the Indonesian Language. What an incredible gift for us to give to the Christians in this country.

SELAMAT

It took many months of back-and-forth with the publishing house, but the project finally came to fruition this month when the truck pulled up in my driveway, and we took delivery of all 3,000 copies of Buku Konkord, the Book of Concord in Indonesian. They look great, and they include introductions by both the GKLI bishop, and our own President Matthew Harrison. We're already making plans to host a workshop in May where we'll teach for several days about the book itself and the Confessions it contains, and each participant will have their own copy to take home. And we're making them available, giving copies to people of several different Protestant church bodies here who are interested and want to learn more.

I cannot say "Thank you" enough to all of you who helped make that happen, nor to all of you who are allowing us to live and work here so we can take part in things like this. You should see the way so many faces light up when they receive these books, and as they're asking how they can learn more and get a copy for their friends. Please pray that the faithful, Scriptural teachings of the Book of Concord will reach many in this country, pointing them to the gifts that our Lord gives in His Word: forgiveness, life, and salvation.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Another worker to be raised up to help with the efforts here.
- Smooth renewal of our residence permits, already in progress.
- The Asia Region as we await our new Regional Director to be appointed.

To support our work financially, send a tax-deductible gift to: The LCMS, P.O. Box 790089, St. Louis, MO 63179

Or: Mission Central, 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to **The LCMS**, and mark them "Support of Charles Ferry." Gifts can also be given securely online through our online giving page at *www.lcms.org/ferry*.

SERVING THE LORD IN

PANAMA

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

March 2017
Vol. 2 Issue II

Greetings in Jesus! We pray this newsletter finds you doing well during this season of Lent. Life in Panama is often a tale of two worlds. While walking downtown or in one of the many large malls, you often forget that you are in Latin America - it feels like a big city in the US. On the other hand, there are neighborhoods and small towns that remind you that you are, indeed, not in Kansas anymore.

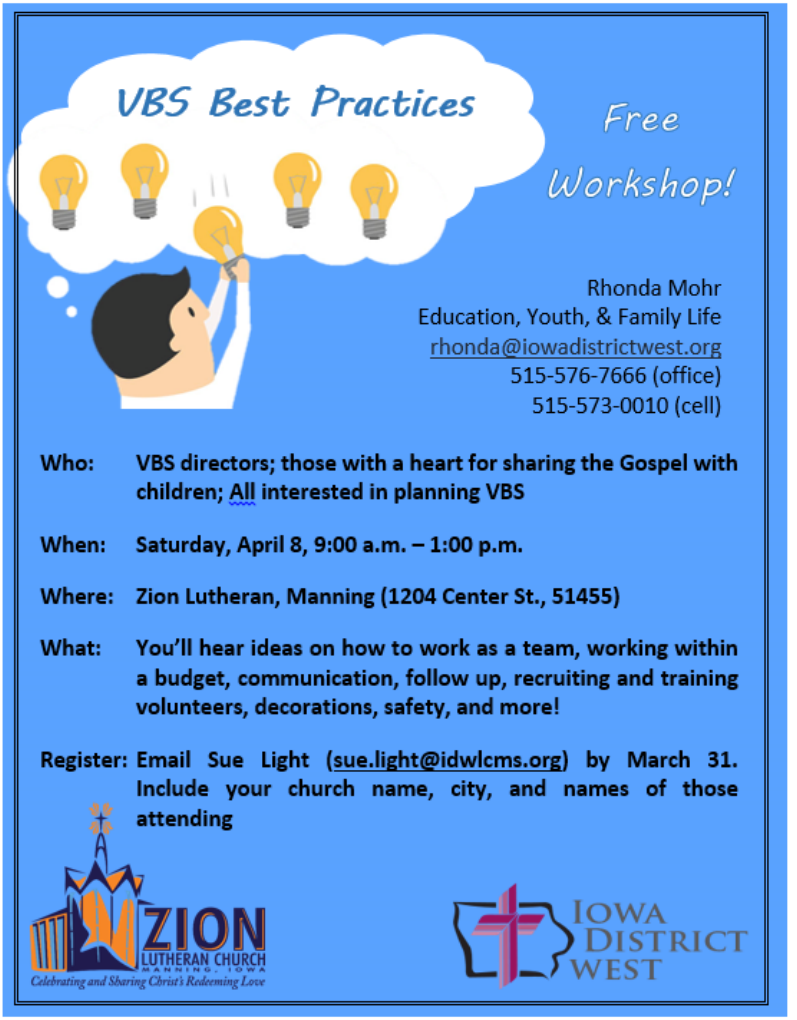
A quick tour at the Lutheran churches in Panama conjures a similar feeling. Unlike many mission fields in Latin America, Panama actually has church buildings (vs. rented storefronts) - many of which are large and beautiful. But a careful observation reveals termite damage, missing windows, broken light fixtures, and loose pews. What I have learned in my short time in Panama is that what is important is not what the buildings look like, but what happens in them.

The end of February brought professors with Luther Academy and two deaconess instructors to offer courses to the pastors, deaconesses, and leaders of the Panamanian church. The conference was well attended despite its taking place during Carnival, a five day vacation period where most people leave the city to spend time with family and friends relaxing. But for these twenty men and women, Carnival looked a little different. They took buses from the country and cabs from all over the city to sit in sessions on Luther's Catechism and The Letters of Paul. Why did they choose eighteen hours of study over vacation? Because they crave the gospel and solid Lutheran theology. Because they want to know more about the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Confession and Absolution, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. And because they are excited to take what they learned about Paul's writing in Scripture back to their churches to share it with family, friends, and neighbors.

The church buildings may be cracked and tired, but inside, a firm foundation upon Christ crucified is being laid. To God be the glory!

Greetings from Panama! Brian, Ezra and I are very happy to have a home again, especially Ezra! His face was priceless when our container arrived and we set up his room. We heard him saying "Wow!" and "Oh Boy!" for days. Not having to pack up and travel every few weeks has been a refreshing change. Poco a poco (little by little) has been our motto lately as we adjust to life here. We have already made some friends and are researching different preschools for Ezra so that he can begin learning Spanish.

While the transition has been smooth there are some aspects of Panama that have required a bit of adjusting on our part. One example is the security guards that are at nearly every neighborhood entrance. On a couple of occasions we have been stopped, asked to show our passports, and explain where we are going. Another fun experience has been grocery shopping. I recently bought a whole chicken to make chicken noodle soup and as I was prepping it in the sink I found two feet stuck in the top so I pulled them out wondering "I wonder how people prepare them here?" As I continued to rinse out the inside of the chicken the head (still attached to the neck) slid out! I jumped, screamed, and eventually laughed about it. I can now say I am glad that I helped (mostly watched) my mom, aunts, and grandma clean chickens on my Uncle David's farm growing up. All in all, life is coming together and we thank you for your continued prayers and support.

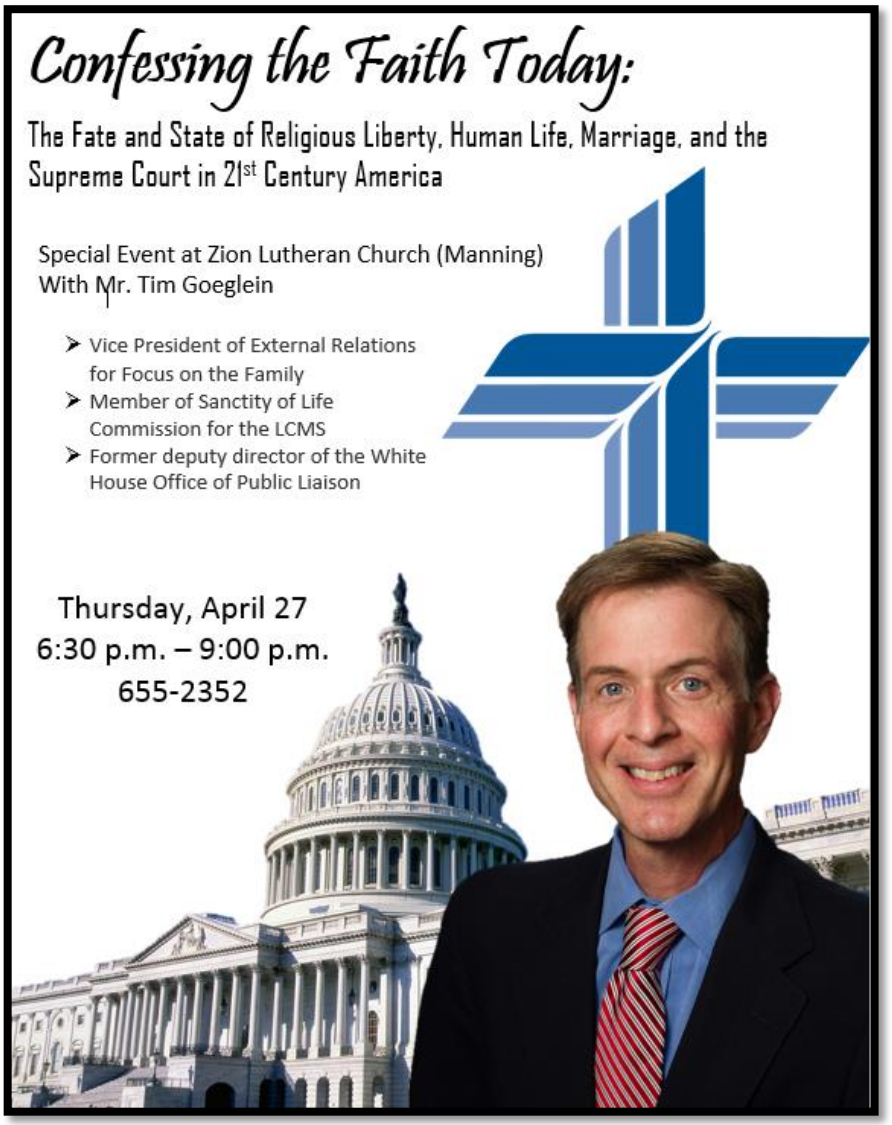


Consider Camp Okoboji This Summer

Looking for a faith-building experience in a beautiful setting on the shores of Lake Okoboji for your 3-6 grade student, junior high or high school student, or for the whole family? Consider the many opportunities at our church camp—Camp Okoboji. A listing of summer 2017 opportunities is available on the camp web site: www.campokoboji.org Financial assistance for children and youth programs is available through Iowa District West and the camp. Contact Pastor Conner, Pastor Riggert, or the camp for more information. Families wanting a day trip are welcome to enjoy the Camp's sand beach and picnic settings.

The Discover Center is nearing completion and will be dedicated on May 28 of Memorial Weekend. More information on specific dedication activities will be shared soon. Donations toward this new ministry center are still being accepted with a gift "match" opportunity from the Camp Board of Directors. Contact Pastor Riggert or the Camp for more information. The Camp is also a Thrivent partner accepting Thrivent Choice or Action Team donations. May 5-7 is Volunteer weekend and May 12-14 is Youth Volunteer weekend. Volunteers are always welcome at camp!

Other special dates include: April 22—Annual Meeting; May 24—Quilt Auction. Enjoy your camp!



Tim Goeglein champions God's role in the public square. His years of public service and private initiative have been devoted to faith, freedom, and family.

Tim is the Senior Advisor to the President and Vice President for External Relations at Focus on the Family in Washington. He served in high-level government posts for the past two decades. He worked as Special Assistant to President George W. Bush, where he was the Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison from 2001 to 2008. He was the President's principal outreach contact for conservatives, think tanks, veterans' groups, faith-based groups, and some of America's leading cultural organizations. He was a member of the President's original 2000 campaign and White House staff, serving for nearly 8 years.

March Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

Birthdays

2. Connie Ahrendsen
Larry Hansen
3. Aaron Ahrendsen
Lillie Ceminksky
4. Dorothy Knudson
Duane Otto
5. Bob Henkelman
6. Darla Neumann
Viola Ostebee
Dennis Tibben
7. Jeff Bradley
Amelia Hinners
Jesse Page
Hadley Wiig
8. Judy Bald
Mikasia Jacobsen
10. Stephen Grimm
Dorothy Larsen
11. Vicki Tibben
12. Cory Otto
Vila Ranniger
Kael Renze
Thomas Ulrickson
Nathan Vetter
13. Drew Greving
Deborah Ranniger
14. Katelyn Dreher
Brett Eddy
15. Jerry Backhaus
Natalie Bauer
Nancy Muhlbauer
Dan Peters
Karen Reinke
17. Tim Kienast
Sue Puck
18. Curt Janssen
Cheryl Kerkhoff
Susan Lamb

19. Saylor McManigal
Colton Otto
Diane Riggert
20. Tanner Bald
Franklin Mohr
21. Joene Bohlmann
22. Conrad Kurth
23. Shauna Borkowski
Ashley Johnson
Roger Sinow
Daniel Vogel
Judith Wegner
24. Collin Borkowski
Ericka Irlbeck
25. Jackie Hagedorn
Virginia Johnson
Becky Karsten
26. Ron Schilling
27. David Gore
Georgia Lohrmann
Rylan Stoberl
28. Glen Ahrendsen
Eric Lage
29. Craig Wegner
30. Andy Booth
Emily Brus
Madison Grabill
Nancy Opperman
Sara Puck

Anniversaries

8. Todd & Tammy Winter
12. Ron & Susan Schilling
25. Brian & Diane Vetter
28. Greg & Sandra Sextro

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Official Acts

Transferred Out:
Eric, Beth, Madilyn, and Makenzi Trost to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Carroll, IA March 9, 2017

Funerals:
Duane Harry Karsten, Died February 25, 2017; Buried March 1, 2017; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Marjorie Ellen (nee: Kuhn) Kusel, Died March 8, 2017; Buried March 11, 2017; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Delores Betty (nee: Rix) Kuhn, Died March 12, 2017; Buried March 27, 2017, Pastor Jonathan Conner and Pastor Robert Riggert

In Our Prayers

Walt Noelck, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Gabriel Albers (Pastor and Rebecca's nephew), Eric Lage, Justeen Schwieso, Athena Bess