



Scenes from SoCal Constituting Convention. l-r: Group meeting, Felicity Grover, Carlton Smee, Dan Van Voorhis & Brodie Taphorn.
Photos courtesy of Julie Smith.

LCMC SO-CAL DISTRICT OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED!

By FELICITY GROVER, *Director, LCMC Southern California District Council*

The LCMC Southern California District was officially launched on July 20, 2024, at its Constituting Convention held at Ascension Lutheran Church, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA.

Forty-one attendees from 12 LCMC SoCal congregations gathered, shared in worship, and experienced a sense of unity as we prayed, praised, enjoyed a time of fellowship, and worked to accomplish the tedious and exhaustive task of adopting our governing documents.

The day began with Pastor Carleton Smee (Grace Lutheran Church, Ridgecrest), leading us in worship. Pastor Brodie Taphorn (St. Timothy Lutheran Church, San Diego), served as the provisional district council chair and shared the vision for the SoCal District.

After a two-and-a-half hour exhilarating discussion and friendly debate, we were done! It was a very exciting moment and the culmination of nine months of the formational process, which began last November when Pastor Brodie Taphorn called together Pastor Carleton Smee and Felicity Grover (Christ Lutheran Church, Santa Clarita) to serve with him as the provisional district council. We are now part

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Mark Your Calendars:

- Augustana District WOW Annual Gathering
September 21, 2024
- LCMC Annual Gathering
September 29-October 2, 2024
- LCMC Seminarian Retreat
September 29, 2024
- Global Mission Fellowship
Concert of Prayer
October 1, 2024
- Youth Impact Northwest District
October 18-20, 2024
- IIM Intermediate Training
October 22-23, 2024
- Heartland District WOW Fall
Gathering
October 26, 2024
- 2024 Youth Leader Webinars
November 21, 2024
- Three Days of Prayer
January 7-9, 2025
- IIM Advanced Training
January 20-23, 2025

THIS ISSUE:

This newsletter is a publication of LCMC, an association of churches and individuals. Inclusion of articles is intended to provide information and does not imply official endorsement. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect an official position of the association or its Board of Trustees. We welcome comments, suggestions for stories and submissions from our members.

EDITOR: Joy Minion. CONTRIBUTORS: Steve Abend, Galen 'Andy' Anderson, Renae Behrends, Ebassa Berhanu, Dave Brauhn, Ross Cochran, Chris Dahl, David Fisher, Cindy Glessner, Felicity Grover, Jonathan Haseley, Kurt Hoover, Cassandra Langr, Cathy Nichol, Ann Schaer, Julie Smith, Justin Spieker, Kristy Thomas, and Anna Tucker.

NEXT ISSUE:

To submit an article for this publication, please contact Joy Minion at joyminion@gmail.com. The deadline to submit articles for our next edition of BY THE WORD is:

November 6, 2024

ABOUT US:

We are an association of congregations and individuals, free in Christ, accountable to one another, rooted in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and working to fulfill Christ's Great Commission and go make disciples of all nations.



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Lutheran Disaster Assistance Fund Update

BY DAVE BRAUHN

Director, Lutheran Disaster Assistance Fund

“Thank you, Jesus and LCMC!” This was the response from Danevang Lutheran Church in Danevang, Texas. They had just received notice that their LDA grant application request for \$20,000 for replacing their roofs had been approved by our five regional LDA grant reviewers. Hurricane Beryl had taken the shingles off three buildings to the tar paper, and their 55-worshiping-member church insurance plan would not replace the roofs...and more rain was forecast! Danevang Lutheran did not know about LDA until a neighboring fellow pastor asked them, “Have you called our LCMC disaster relief, LDA?”

Did you know...

- In 2013, LDA began offering **Natural Disaster** relief support (repair and/or replace) to LCMC congregations. The grants are up to \$20,000, funds permitting, up to two grants/disaster.
- In 2018, we expanded that opportunity with a **Service** grant to support disaster relief agencies (such as 8 days of Hope), where LCMC churches sent disaster service teams to a disaster site.

FROM THE BOARD...

By ANNA TUCKER and KURT HOOVER

Trustees, LCMC Board of Trustees

We All Showed Up!

Last quarter Randy shared his hopes that our June joint meeting of the Board of Trustees, Ministry Board, LCMC staff, district and fellowship leaders would be a time of “holy chaos.” Indeed, it was chaotic and a little crazy at times, but it was also a holy and productive time. We came together in worship, in prayer, and in conversation, both casual and focused. In these ways, we were able to build relationships and trust – the necessary components for our core value of being accountable to one another.

God used presence, both His and ours together, creating connection and order out of so many contributing voices. We had the opportunity to experience who we are and can be together as an association – an association that



Danevang Lutheran Church, Danevang, TX: roofs of three church buildings were damaged by Hurricane Beryl.

Photo courtesy of Ann Schaer.



DAVE BRAUHN

Service grants are up to \$10,000, sent to the disaster relief agency/\$1,000/person.

- In 2020, responding to COVID- related need, LDA created the LCMC **Pastor Benevolence** grant of up to \$3,000, available to any LCMC pastor experiencing a critical emergency situation requiring funding such as a personal disaster.

LDA is funded entirely by LCMC churches and member contributions. 100% of funds contributed are used to support

disaster victims. No administrative costs. LDA only responds to application requests from LCMC churches for uninsured repair or replace grant funding.

2024 Disbursements:

April 2024: \$1,000 Service Grant to 8 Days of Hope (FaithLife Church, Marion, IA), helping 8DOH with tornado cleanup in Omaha, NE.

April, 2024: \$5,000 Service Grant to 8 Days of Hope (Holy Ghost Lutheran Church, Fredricksburg, TX), helping 8DOH with tornado cleanup in Temple, TX.

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Celebrating an Ordination Milestone?

Ordination pins are available to commemorate the special milestone in increments of 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65.



Contact Cathy Nichol, LCMC Administrative Coordinator:

cathy@lcmc.net
734.788.7476

values accountability to one another among churches and members, not simply staff and clergy.

This only happens when we come together (presence matters!) and YOUR presence at the next district and annual gatherings matters.

The multiple invitations, car trips and schedule changes are worth it. It's an opportunity to grow together and to build relationships, which are the future of the association! It is our DNA as an association that ministry happens locally and regionally, not from the top down. That means districts are the fertile ground where new congregations are welcomed, the seeds of call are planted, leaders are cared for, our theological distinctives



ANNA TUCKER

are given, seminarians are equipped, new churches are imagined, and congregations can support one another in times of need.

Our international staff support the work of the congregations and

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KURT HOOVER

districts, but instead of growing that staff, the future of the association is in the growth of our districts. To be clear, we are asking congregation leadership to identify and financially

The Great Commission: A Core Value for LCMC

By EBASSA BERHANU

Senior Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Torrance, CA

Dear LCMC Family: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am humbled to write this article on one of the four core tenets of our association's DNA: "We're all working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations."

This statement resonates deeply with me, as it was the focus of my D.Min. thesis. Much has been covered and written over the years about the Great Commission. There is some debate over the Greek word "go" and whether it should be understood as a commandment or an implied statement. However, scholars agree that the absolute imperative in the Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew's account, is the phrase "make disciples." In this article, I don't aim to present a groundbreaking idea. Instead, I hope to draw our attention back to the simple yet profound call of Jesus for us to be His agents in carrying out His last will and testament.

It's undeniable that the American church is in decline and facing a crisis. Recent trends and research from Pew Research and Gallup polls reveal a disheartening exodus from the church. According to an article I read in Christianity Today Magazine in April, roughly one million Gen Z individuals leave the church annually. Many of our congregations are missing three to four generations, with the average age of churchgoers being 55 or older. These stark realities can leave us feeling hopeless and the

future seems bleak. However, I firmly hold onto Jesus' promise that the gates of Hades will not prevail against the church.

After His resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples a task, which has come to be known as the "Great Commission," included in each of the Gospels and the Book of Acts (Matt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-49; Jn. 20:19-23; Acts 1:8). It is called the "Great" Commission because of the final emphasis Jesus gave to it before He ascended to heaven. Jesus entrusted the disciples and all the church with this astonishing responsibility. Undoubtedly, these declarations were the guiding principles of the life of Jesus, and thus He sought to impart them to His followers.

As people of the Word and Sacrament, we understand the power of both. We recognize the Holy Spirit's transformative ability and God's Word, as well as our collective calling to the "priesthood of all believers." Unfortunately, when it comes to discipleship formation, we have often relegated this responsibility to professionals—those with seminary training and a Master of Divinity degree. In reality, the call to discipleship is the responsibility of all the baptized.

One of the fundamental notions that erupted during the Protestant Reformation is the idea of "priesthood" of all believers. The Reformers understood that a "believer is a priest, regardless of his or her full-time occupation." Luther argued, "For



EBASSA BERHANU

we must yet again state that this word priest should become as common as the word Christian. For to be a priest belongs not to an office that is external, it is only such a service as has to do with God's presence." He argued that one is not declared a Christian because of one's wealth or social status, but because one believes and confesses the person of Jesus Christ as Lord. Likewise, one is not "called a priest because you wear a tonsure or long robe, but for this reason, that you come into God's presence."

If the church of the 21st century is to get back to its roots, it needs to rekindle passion for lost souls. It needs to take to heart that discipleship has to be one of the top priorities in its ministry. For the local church to experience spiritual and numerical growth, it must understand the significance of intentional commitment to living out the Great Commission. Engaging in "making a disciple" is not an option but is the heartbeat of a vibrant and growing church. Discipling the lost and spreading the Gospel to a fallen world was not a mere recommendation to the believer, but the indispensable continuation of Christ's work throughout the ages. The 21st century church must thereby heed

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SECRETARY'S REPORT.

By RENAE BEHREND
Secretary, LCMC Board of Trustees



RENAE BEHREND

The LCMC Board of Trustees met June 26-27, 2024, in Marion, IA.

- Treasurer Cindy Glessner reported on budget/finances and the need to continue a stewardship path and communicate with congregations.
- Sharon MacFadyen reported on Communication AIP. The trustees agreed to change the cadence for the print newsletter for 2025.
- The board approved the treasurer's report and April minutes, and reviewed a proposal from Capital Management on restructuring the 403b plan. They also approved the 2025 budget.
- Mike Bradley gave updates on LCMC 3.0 Strat-OP, the 2024 Annual Gathering, conflict management, generosity and stewardship, leadership development, board structure, pastoral inquiries, and proposed vetting for partners/entities on the website.
- The board approved the following congregations for membership: Lake Campbell Lutheran Church, Volga, SD; Bethany Lutheran Church, Gold Beach, OR; Grace Lutheran Church, Walton, NE; and Sinai Lutheran Church, Sinai, SD.
- A joint session was held with district leadership and fellowship leadership to discuss LCMC 3.0 and how each group can work with the association. Joint sessions were also held with administrative staff and with the ministry board.
- The board approved a proposal by St. Mark's Lutheran Church for LCMC to administer the LDA fund, with a board designee seated on the approval committee.
- The board discussed some ideas on onboarding trustees. It was agreed that there would be a brief description of each board position added to the nomination form used during elections, written by the following: trustee - Julie, chair - Randy, vice chair - Jason, secretary - Sharon, and treasurer - Cindy.

— United in Christ, Renae Behrends

TREASURER'S REPORT.

By CINDY GLESSNER
Treasurer, LCMC Board of Trustees



CINDY GLESSNER

I'm happy to report that, thanks to your giving and the wise stewardship of the staff, we ended the 1st half of 2024 with all expenses covered by current giving! In the next few months, you can expect a message from our Service Coordinator updating you on our giving and expenses and how we can finish the year strong.

At our board meeting in June, we agreed to assume administration of the disaster relief fund, created and sponsored originally by St. Mark's in Marion, IA (the host church for our next gathering). Thanks to the generosity of the folks who initiated this fund, money is available for churches suffering natural disasters such as tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc. Applications will continue to be directed to the team of leaders led by St. Mark's via the link at our website.

As always, please make sure your updated beneficiary information is on file with the pension plan, and encourage your pastors with seminary debt to apply for seminary debt relief.

Thank you!

— Respectfully, Cindy Glessner

Up Next:

2024 Zoom Youth Leaders Webinars

November 21 11:00am CST

Cathy Nichol: cathy@lcmc.net 734.788.7476

2024 Zoom Church Planting Fellowship Monthly Conversation

1st Thursday each month starting at 10:00am CST

October 3 November 7 December 7

Erica Varcoe: erica@thetableministry.org

605.929.2065

2024 Zoom Support Group for Church Support Staff

2nd Tuesday each month starting at 12:00pm CST

October 8 November 12 December 10

Wendy Magruder: office@augustanadistrict.org

320.234.8403

2024 District & Fellowship Leaders Monthly Zoom Meeting

4th Tuesday each month starting at 3:00pm CST

September 24 October 22 November 24

Augustana District Women of the Word Annual Gathering

September 21, 2024

Faith Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, MN

Jan Kreie: jkreie@mediacombb.net

320.510.1942

24th LCMC Annual Gathering

September 29-October 2, 2024

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Marion, IA

Cathy Nichol: cathy@lcmc.net 734.788.7476

Youth Impact – Northwest District

October 18-20, 2024

Shoshone Retreat Center, Idaho

Travis Powers: onepayer30@gmail.com

402.641.1495 (Kim's number)

Three Days of Prayer

January 7-9, 2025

Your Congregation

Mike Bradley: mike@lcmc.net



Do you know of a youth leader, volunteer, or member in your congregation who is passionate about youth ministry?

2024 Webinar date: November 21 at 11:00am CST. Join us!

Sign up for the emails:

<https://mailchi.mp/75a65006d3ae/youth-leader-webinars>

Like the LCMC Youth Ministry Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/LCMCYouthMinistry>

Events during Annual Gathering:

Seminarian Retreat:

September 29, 2024 – 1-4pm CST

No charge, but registration is required

For more information, please contact:

Christian Huntley: christian@lcmc.net

Global Mission Fellowship Concert of Prayer (no charge)

October 1, 2024 – 7:00pm CST

For more information, please contact:

Mike Wind: mike@sonetwork

Both events held at:

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Marion, IA

Intentional Interim Ministry Intermediate Training

October 22-23, 2024

Online

For more information, please contact:

**Mark Neumann: 651.724.0830
mark@transitionrenewal.com**



engaging your
**CULTURAL
MOMENT**

≥ 24th LCMC Annual Gathering & Convention ≤

SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 2, 2024 * MARION, IOWA * WWW.LCMC.NET/ANNUAL-GATHERING

IIM Advanced Training

By STEVE ABEND

LCMC Communications and Public Relations Specialist

How about going to Gulf Shores, Alabama, in January 2025? Ministry is tough, intentional interim ministry is all the more difficult because the intentional interim pastor and family are in constant transition. There is a great need to stop and take a breath and rejuvenate one's body and spirit.

On **January 20–23, 2025**, all LCMC intentional interim pastors and spouses are invited to gather for further equipping for intentional interim ministry and rejuvenation from ministry overall.

We will be returning to Gulf Shores and the great entertainment venue of OWA for our 5th annual Advanced Intentional Interim Ministry Training event. This is a great place where we can gather, worship, fellowship, learn and just get away from the rigors of intentional interim ministry. One advantage to this venue is that everything is on site in the hotel

or entertainment complex. Plus, every room has a kitchen for those who prefer to stay in and prepare a meal themselves. To learn more about the setting, visit their website at:

visitowa.com

Unlike the other training events for intentional interim ministry where most everyone takes them once, this event is specifically designed for participants to return for annual continuing education. There are three components: system thinking, self-care, and theology. However, this will not be a “fire hose” learning experience. Our agenda has scheduled relax/rest time to make this event a balance of learning and relaxation.

Cost: \$295, not including hotel.

For more information contact:

Pastor Steve Abend
misea2018@outlook.com
989-202-5301

Congregation: Is Your Contact Information Up to Date?

By CATHY NICHOL,

LCMC Administrative Coordinator

Does your congregation have a new location or mailing address?

Or a new phone number?

An updated website address?

Joined a new district?

Help US by keeping the profile for YOUR congregation up to date.

Go to **<https://www.lcmc.net/update-congregational-info>** and fill in the ALL of the fields.

If you have any questions, please

contact Cathy Nichol at

cathy@lcmc.net

or (734) 788-7476

A New Future with a Renewed Purpose

BY JONATHAN HASELEY

Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Blossom, Elma, New York

*“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”*

— Isaiah 43:19 NIV

In the famous holiday classic *Christmas Vacation*, Clark Griswold says to Cousin Eddie, “If I woke up tomorrow with my head sewn to the carpet, I wouldn’t be more surprised than I am right now.” This is the sentiment I use to describe my experience when St. Paul’s worship building burned down on my call candidate weekend in May 2023: Are you kidding me!?!?

Long story short, I accepted the congregational call via the baptism by fire! Now a year and a few months later, we are currently in the middle of a church revitalization project and a rebuilding project. (We like keeping our plates full in Buffalo – not just with chicken wings!) In a time when many congregations are closing, merging, and consolidating, we are trusting God to make a way forward with these opportunities. We are joining Jesus on His redemptive mission as neighborhood missionaries in the places where we live, work, play, and learn. We are seeking to build a new space that will serve our mission – to be a source of love, hope, and transformation through Jesus Christ in Blossom and beyond.

As we pivot into a new future, we are grateful for the training, equipping, and encouragement given to us by a few key leaders: **Pastor Eric Hulstrand** (Moving Forward is Possible Ministries), **Pastor Marcus Carlson** (Preparing for Amazement Ministries), and **Pastor Mike Bradley** (LCMC Service Coordinator). Each of these individuals have coached our congregational leaders, helped us shape our vision and mission, and encouraged us to keep the Great Commission as our true north for the present and into the future.

While we currently worship in our parish hall, we are actively working with an architect to design a facility that will provide space for congregational worship, community activities, and multipurpose use. Our hope is for our space to be a



JONATHAN HASELEY

strategic asset for our greater community – demonstrating our commitment to the flourishing of our neighbors and to the life-giving hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Currently, strategic community partnerships are developing and being transformed. We are excited about a new future with a renewed purpose where God is at work through His word and His people for the sake of His kingdom.

The leadership of St. Paul’s and I are so grateful for the outpouring of prayer and financial support from our LCMC brothers and sisters in Christ around the country. We ask for continued prayers for the future as we engage in Word and Sacrament ministry, continue with leadership development, and love our community in Jesus’ name.

If you would like to partner with us in our rebuilding project, financial gifts can be sent to:

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church of Blossom,
360 Main Street, Elma, NY 14059.



Welcome!

Please take a moment to welcome the new congregations and the new pastors that have joined LCMC since the last newsletter!

By **CATHY NICHOL**
LCMC Administrative Coordinator

New Congregations

- **Lake Campbell Lutheran Church**, Volga, SD
Mindy Spangler 605.693.4512
mindyspangler@hotmail.com
- **Bethany Lutheran Church**, Gold Beach, OR
Vacant 541.247.6333
bethanygoldbeach@gmail.com
- **Grace Lutheran Church**, Walton, NE
Pr. Doyle Karst 531.220.7412
gracewaltonne@gmail.com
- **Sinai Lutheran Church**, Sinai, SD
Mindy Spangler 605.826.4241
slc@itctel.com
- **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Stewart, MN
Pr. Mahlon Bekedam 320.562.2352
godscall@centurylink.net
- **St. Paul's Evang. Lutheran Church**, Wilson, NY
Pr. Ronald Haefer 716.751.9300
lippyron@roadrunner.com

New Pastors

Lucas Kinser, Loveland, CO lucask.fclc@gmail.com 903.707.4229
Tim Peterson, Alexandria, MN tim@mountcarmelministries.com 715.441.9660
Jason Christensen, Marion, IA pastorjasonlc@gmail.com 319.504.8600
Laura Webb, Elk Horn, IA ehlcpastor@gmail.com 712.304.9214
Chris Kimpston, West Des Moines, IA chris.kimpston@hopewdm.org 515.537.6603
W. Stevens Shipman, Jr., Dillsburg, PA prsteveshipman@gmail.com 570.916.7780
Wesley Teixeira Alves, Fort Gregg-Adams, VA wkteixeiraalves@gmail.com 617.964.3620
Robert Muller, Urbandale, IA robert.muller@hopewaukee.org 515.720.9222
Eric Snyder, Gardners, PA eric.m.snyder@comcast.net 717.729.6223
Michele Jones, Marion, IA mjones@faith-life.org 319.270.2089
Alice Murray, Cedar Rapids, IA amurray@faith-life.org 319.721.9567
Emmanuel Jackson, Hockley, TX risetogether1981@gmail.com 281.961.2010
Mawien Ariik, Juba, Central Equatoria, South Sudan mawienariik@gmail.com
Gary Heltsley, Shelton, WA shipoke351@gmail.com 818.434.1804

Pastor: Is Your Contact Information Up to Date?

By **CATHY NICHOL**, LCMC Administrative Coordinator

Have you moved? Do you have a new address? Or a new phone number? Perhaps you have changed congregations? Help US by keeping YOUR profile information up to date.

Go to <https://www.lcmc.net/pastor-update> and fill in the ALL of the fields, including Ministry Education/Credentials.

*If you have any questions,
please contact*

Cathy Nichol:
cathy@lcmc.net or
(734) 788-7476.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Naperville, IL

By ROSS COCHRAN
Communications Director, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

If you go to the center of Naperville, Illinois, you'd expect to find something flashy, something trendy, or something that reflects that affluent nature of the surrounding community.

But if you go to the center of Naperville, you find a steeple: 1310 Shepherd Drive is the home of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, a church that has kept focused on being a Christian church with a Lutheran perspective over its nearly 50-year history.

In a time when too many churches are known for who they are hurting rather than helping, Good Shepherd has remained committed to teaching the Gospel every week. We are a community that is known by what we are *for*, not what we are *against*.

Good Shepherd is for *Jesus and His teachings*, and is committed to walking together to follow the author and perfecter of our faith every day.

Good Shepherd is for *Our neighbors*. We walk together with local like-minded mission partners, and we live that out by being a refuge for those who are looking to belong through our small groups. Good Shepherd welcomes nearly 400 kids each summer through VBS. Our annual Christmas tradition of *Encounter Christmas*, a worship experience that reminds us to slow down and celebrate our Savior entering the world, last year welcomed over 1,000 people. Our Neighbors are beginning to recognize what God is doing at Good Shepherd. We've seen a 47% increase in total attendance year to year, and that increase is people who are brand new to the faith, people who are finding a new church home, and people who are coming back to Good Shepherd after COVID.

Good Shepherd is for the *World*. Good Shepherd has been a "tithing church" since its inception, committed to providing resources for global organizations, missionaries, and local non-profits that are helping reach the underserved with the Good News of Jesus. One example of many can be found in Nairobi, Kenya, at Cherish Watoto. This school and orphanage is entirely supported by the people of Good Shepherd and those who have heard about it through us. At Cherish Watoto, you will find over 100 children whom God has lifted up from poverty to possibilities through the generosity and tenacity of a church on the other side of the world.

Come to the center of Naperville someday. You'll be glad you found Good Shepherd.



GETTING TO KNOW

So-Cal District...continued from page 1

of the newly elected eight-member SoCal District Council, along with Pastor Scott Hawkins (Ascension Lutheran Church, Rancho Palos Verdes), Pastor Brandon Way (Christ the King Lutheran Church, Fallbrook), Pastor Mike Jobst (Radiant Church, Huntington Beach), Pastor Greg Wallace (St. John's Lutheran Church, Arroyo Grande), and John Ryan (Trinity Lutheran Church, San Pedro).

We received 11 congregations as charter members of the SoCal District, which covers a geographical area from San Diego County up to San Luis Obispo and Kern Counties, with the hope that we will eventually connect with the other 22 SoCal congregations for mutual support, encouragement, and ministry partnerships.

Dr. Dan van Voorhis from 1517 was our keynote speaker. He talked about the history of the church in Southern California and led us in

a discussion on the trends that we are seeing in our congregations and how they impact the way we do ministry and discipleship. He also engaged us in a lighthearted team-game of Jeopardy!

Our day concluded with a communion service. Pastor Julie Smith, LCMC Coordinator for Districts and Fellowship Groups, preached the Gospel and installed our new council members.

We thank Pastor Scott Hawkins, staff (especially Amie Wills) and members of Ascension Lutheran Church for graciously hosting our Constituting Convention. We also thank Mark McCormick (organist – ALC), Pastor Greg House and the worship team from Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Torrance, for providing the music for our worship time together, and Christ Lutheran Church for their help with the printed material, along with those congregations and others who



FELICITY GROVER

have given benevolences and other monetary gifts to our district. We truly have been blessed by your generosity. We look forward to the many opportunities God is preparing for us to love and serve others together, in the name of Christ, and for His glory and honor.

“From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised.”

— Psalm 113:3

Great Commission...continued from page 4

to the counsel of the Apostle Paul as he challenged the church of Ephesus, “making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil” (Eph 5:16) AMP.

So, my fellow brothers and sisters, I plead with you: let us resolve as an association to be a people passionately dedicated to making disciples. Let both the laity and those called to Word and Sacrament ministry embrace the calling and commandment to make disciples of all nations. The harvest is plentiful. Just

as Isaiah faithfully responded, “Here I am, send me,” let us all resoundingly exclaim, “Here we are, Lord, send us.” Empowered by the Holy Spirit, let us bear witness to the grace of God and the finished work of the cross.

Ebassa Berhanu is originally from Ethiopia, but grew up in Minnesota. He attended the University of Wisconsin - Superior, and later received his masters from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. He served as a pastor in Colorado for 11 years, and received a Doctorate from Denver Seminary. He is currently serving as lead pastor at a church in Torrance, California. He and his wife have been married for 17 years and have four children, with another one on the way! Passionate about sharing the good news of Jesus, he travels to speak at conferences throughout the US and abroad.

From the Board

...continued from page 3

support districts, just like we do the international association. Investing in districts is at the heart of LCMC's vision for the next 10 years. The presence of you and your church leaders in district and fellowship gatherings is the investment God is using to live out the Great Commission.

In Christ,

Pastor Anna Tucker and

Pastor Kurt Hoover

— Pastor Randy Freund

Trustees, LCMC Board of Trustees

Bringing Christ's Love in Community Through Clean Water

BY DAVID R. FISHER

Retired LCMC pastor, Greenwood Village, Colorado

Would you like to change the lives of up to 125 people for only \$475? That is what one protected, clean water drinking well costs to build and install in a rural village in sub-Saharan Africa. Obtaining safe water in many regions of Africa is a major problem. Many people, particularly children, die from water-borne illnesses as a result. Water is life! Everyone needs and deserves clean, safe drinking water.

For 35 years, Marion Medical Mission, a unique Christian 501(c)3 non-profit, has worked with African partners in rural villages in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia to install and maintain these inexpensive wells. Manually operated, the wells are constructed and maintained by local Africans. The water is clean at the source! American donors and volunteer helpers provide only what the Africans cannot. A well costs only \$475, and all donated funds go to the donor's designated purpose.

I have seen this ministry at work in person. In 2018, 2019, and 2023, I was an American volunteer for the ministry and served in Tanzania. All wells are dedicated to the Glory of God, and each village – no matter their religious background – is told that the love of Jesus Christ motivated Christians to help them. The joy and gratitude of the people receiving this gift of clean water is a blessing to witness! American volunteers will hear these words from grateful villagers: "Thank you! You changed our lives!"

Clean water means that children do not die and adults who are subsistence farmers do not get sick and

can work more effectively in their fields to produce more food. This program works!

Marion Medical Mission goes where other water ministries and projects do not or cannot go. Over 50,000 wells have been installed over the past 35 years, providing five million people (mostly children) with safe, drinking water. A sustainable, African-run infrastructure and annual inspections ensure that the vast majority of these wells are still in use. It is estimated that there are still 85 million people in the rural areas of Africa mentioned above who are without a source of clean drinking water.

How can you become involved in this effective work of God?

Pray! Marion Medical Mission is a Christian organization that neglects neither the spiritual nor the practical. Prayer is essential to the effort to bring clean, protected water to those who need it in the name of Christ. Pray for the African and American staff and workers, the American volunteers and supporters, and for the finances of the mission.

Give! A well costs only \$475! Again, 100% of donations go to the designated purpose.

Go! Experience the mission first hand by volunteering. Two volunteer teams go annually to help with well installation: one in September and one in October.



DAVE FISHER

Tell! Let others know what you have learned in this article. Marion Medical Mission is an organization that has a solution to a basic need for the poorest of the poor in our world and does it from the Love of Christ.

To learn more about
Marion Medical Mission,
visit their website at:
mmmwater.org



The Master's Institute Seminary (MI) Calls New President and Provost

BY CHRIS DAHL

Board Chair, The Master's Institute Seminary

MI began over 23 years ago, with a focus on equipping the head, heart, and hands of pastors and ministry leaders, empowered by the Holy Spirit, for God's Kingdom work. MI has over 100 Masters of Divinity graduates and over 350 graduates from our church-centric certificate programs, who have been released for Kingdom ministry into congregations all over the world, including many LCMC congregations. MI has had three presidents, most recently Pastor Per Nilsen.

Last year, our Board of Directors began the process of seeking a new President after Per advised us he felt led to step down from his position. After much prayer and discernment, we're excited to announce Rev. Dr. Jeremy King as our new President and Rev. Dr. Steve Turnbull as our new Provost. Jeremy shares his desire for the continued mission of the seminary:

"Our deepest desire is the development of Spirit-filled Christian leaders who experience, know, and live out the Good News of the Kingdom. We are a vibrant community dedicated

to the transformational journey of theological education. At our core, we embody the belief that we are a seminary of the Church, by the Church, and for the Church, meaning that all of our leadership and faculty are practitioners in their fields first. We are out in our congregations serving shoulder-to-shoulder with those called to become our next generation of pastors and leaders.

In the spirit of Henri Nouwen's profound insights from 'In the Name of Jesus', we embrace a vision of leadership rooted in servanthood and solidarity. Our commitment to theological education is grounded in deep reverence for Scripture and tradition, yet also responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities facing the Church today.

To that end we have two masters-level opportunities integrating excellent academics with extensive Christian character formation and practical leadership development training. We optimize students' stewardship as they develop their individual calling. Our desire is for students to leave seminary with no debt



CHRIS DAHL

so that financial concerns won't be a roadblock to following their calling."

We're excited for what the Lord has in store in the years ahead at The Master's Institute. Connect with Jeremy or any of our staff to learn how we can continue to be strong ministry partners together in the future!

For more information on The Master's Institute, visit our website:

www.miseminary.com

This article has been condensed to fit the available space. Read the complete article: **www.lcmc.net/blog**



Rev. Dr. Jeremy King



Rev. Dr. Steve Turnbull

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Rev. Steve Turnbull

LDA Fund Update...continued from page 3

June 2024: \$5,000 Service Grant to 8 Days of Hope (FaithLife Church, Marion IA), for working with 8DOH flood disaster clean up in Spencer, IA.

July 2024: \$20,000 Natural Disaster Grant to Faith Lutheran Church, Spencer, IA. Epic flood, repair/replace. (2nd \$20,000 grant pending.)

July 2024: \$20,000 Natural Disaster Grant to Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer, IA. Epic flood, repair/replace. (2nd \$20,000 grant pending.)

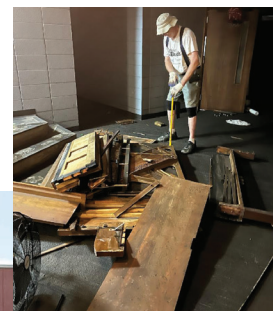
July 2024: \$20,000 Natural Disaster Grant to Danevang Lutheran Church, Danevang, TX. Hurricane Beryl, replace 3 roofs shingles. (2nd \$20,000 grant pending.)

Since 2013, LDA has sent out \$574,733 to LCMC churches affected by natural disasters. So far in 2024, LDA has funded 3 Service Grants and 3 Natural Disaster Grants.

For details about the Natural Disaster, Service, and Pastor Benevolence Grants, contact Dave Brauhn: brauhn1864@gmail.com 319-849-0013



Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer, IA: basement contents destroyed, including HVAC system (left) & church piano (right). Photos courtesy of Galen "Andy" Anderson.



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Faith Lutheran Church, Spencer, IA: flood waters inside and out.

Photos courtesy of Justin Spieker.





CASSANDRA LANGR

Pastor, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Rockton, Illinois

IT'S IN THE WAITING

"I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in HIS WORD (emphasis mine) I put my hope."

— Psalm 130:5

It is in waiting that we see things we may not ordinarily see. We often undergo a transformational process when we wait for the Lord. We seek Him, wondering where to go or what to do. We press and lean in to hear the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit. Tears may soak the pages of our Bibles or hit the floor while we are on our knees praying. Waiting can feel like being in a wilderness of preparation for a new season.

We live in a society where things can be so instantaneous, but we still have to wait. We wait for chocolate chip cookies to cool after they come fresh out of the oven (or some of us do); we wait at signal lights for our turn to drive; and we wait in shopping lines. What do we do while waiting?

When I am waiting, things pop into my mind. The questions come: how am I using my time? In self-care? Praying or reading the Word? Preaching, teaching, ministering? But sometimes, the Holy Spirit, in a loving, quiet voice, asks whether what I'm doing is striving. How many of us strive for a feeling of control in our waiting, or even just a sense of usefulness, when God wants us to surrender and wait on Him?

This has been a year of many external events. We have seen joy and victory, but also destruction, division, and brokenness. We may have gone through battles we shared and struggles that we have kept silent. We hope, often in tears, anger, confusion, and doubt, for a situation to end and the wait to be over. But the Holy Spirit directs us to change our waiting, even in the wilderness, to a time of joyful anticipation.

As the Psalmist states:

"I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in HIS WORD I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than

watchmen wait for the morning."

— Psalm 130:5-6 (Emphasis mine.)

In my home church, the congregation member giving the announcements closes with her catchphrase, "... and remember, God's got this." In waiting, we may be in agony with desperation for the strength to continue the mission to which He has called us. But everything points to the cross. Consider this Scripture:

"...let us throw off everything that hinders, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame... Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

— Hebrews 12:2-3 (paraphrased)

It is also possible to be in a period of refinement, restoration, and rest while waiting. As we surrender to His will, God may change our mindset from old patterns to fresh possibilities, preparing us for what will come next and giving us the strength to continue His call. In Romans, Paul says:

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is— his good, pleasing and perfect will."

— Romans 12:2-3

As we wait for Christ's return, be encouraged by the fact that waiting is in God's time and not our own, that every good thing comes from Him, and that He loves us. Our intimacy with Christ deepens in waiting, and the Holy Spirit transforms us. We can stop striving. In waiting, God's got this!



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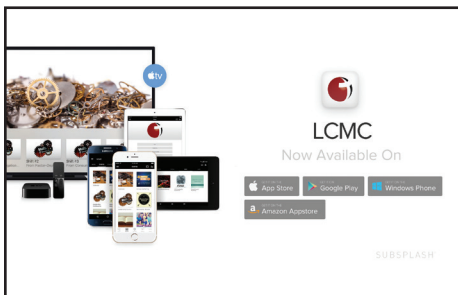
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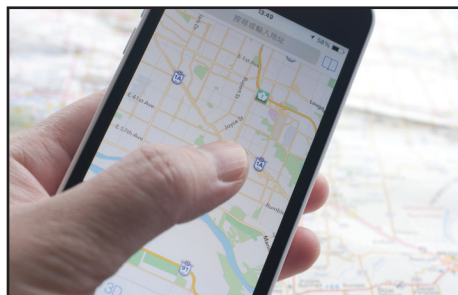


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