



Lutheran
Community of Grace

What's New?

www.LutheranCommunityGrace.org June 2010

Worship Sundays 9:30 am

June 6 – *Holy Communion*
Joel Smeby

June 13
Joel Smeby

June 20 – *Holy Communion*
Joel Smeby

June 27
Joel Smeby

(see updated worship information at
LutheranCommunityGrace.org/worshipInfo.php)

Forums 10:45 am

June 6
Coffee and conversation

June 13
Bible study: Acts, part iv

June 20
Bible study: Acts, part v

June 27
Bible study: Acts, part vi

Prayer Requests

Carla and her family of care-givers
those serving in the Armed Forces—especially
Ralph, Karl, and Eric (and thanksgiving for
Ralph's return home)

Roger
Dan

the Luke Bible study group on Mondays

Lyle Hall

Flo and Merton Gustad
all mothers

all those who are traveling

Signe
Orpha

Dorothy Preus

Heather

Rhonda and her ministries

Jeanne

Charlotte

Jaimie

Nancy Kruse

Esther McDermid

(Send your prayer requests to
info@LutheranCommunityGrace.org)

As oil is to water so is... Evangelism to Lutheranism

Perhaps too simple an analogy? or not? You've probably heard a commentator (as in news, not the Bible) assess the eruption of oil in the Gulf as pretty much a "natural" phenomenon. After all, both substances are merely natural products of the earthly environment. But, we must admit that water in the gas tank is a disaster, as is crude oil in the stomach. Are Lutherans really *meant* to be as isolated from evangelical fervor as they seem to be? David Housholder, a west coast pastor and long-time Lutheran, contends that the core body of that which defines a Lutheran, the Confessions, are defensive in nature. They were put up to prevent the "invading" Romans

from tarnishing those precious *solas*. Nothing wrong with that, but even when the battle (and the war?) was won, the Lutheran defensive team never left the field so that the offense could march down the field with its missional strategy. So Confessional education has for centuries been protection for the insiders, the outsiders left alone to fend for themselves.

Is Evangelism now oil to the Lutheran's water? Take a look at Housholder's article and ruminate for yourself and your neighbors on this analysis. "[W]e have no idea how to get someone saved," he says of us Lutherans. Like many experts have said in many ways, you can't go where you want to go without knowing where you *are*? Where *are* we Lutherans? Stuck in educating the unchurched about the catechism? Unable and unwilling to speak about faith to someone who doesn't know the Lutheran grammar and vocabulary? "I'll get back to you when you've got the *proper* faith in place—we'll talk," we say.

Perhaps the "complications" that Luther insisted were part of faith (experiential doubt staring in the face of complete trust in the Savior, Jesus as fully human and fully divine simultaneously, law and gospel both being God's means for working with humanity, etc.) are in the same ballpark as many issues facing people today? Oil and water both come from the ground, right? Perhaps the tension that comes with Lutheranism, instead of being a prescription for exclusivity can be an invitation into mission to those who are struggling with similar dialectics.

"The Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith." We all recognize Luther here. It's the Holy Spirit doing his calling, enlightening, and sanctifying. Who are we to know what that Holy Spirit is up to? Most likely something outside our own realm of experience, our own ideas about doctrinal practices. ["Why Lutheran Can't Evangelize"](#) is the article's web link.

Reluctant to step out?

Speaking of evangelism, what of **Jonah**? A pretty

cut and dried assignment he had, according to Jonah 1:2. The LORD says, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." Jonah could speculate on the reception he might receive in Nineveh—not a friendly one from this city known for its vices. And so he headed to Tarshish, about as far as one could go—in the opposite direction. Physical distance, he thought, would keep him from the "presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:3), and his commission.

And, remember **Moses** and the call from Yahweh to lead his people out of Egypt? The reluctant Moses is full of questions and protestations right back at God: "*Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?*" "*Who should I say has sent me?*" "*What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'*" "*Oh LORD, I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue.*" Moses ends his long train of complaints with a final plea: "*O LORD, please send someone else to do it.*"

Gideon, too, put up a defense against doing the will of God: "If the LORD is with us, why has all this happened?" and "How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The weakest member of the weakest of the clans—sounds like the material God works with, doesn't it? Later on God even trims down the army of Gideon from several thousands to a mere 300 soldiers, to do battle against a much larger army, all so that victory would be attributed to Yahweh, not the strength or the tactics of Gideon's army.

Perhaps you find yourself in one of these situations? Doing "battle" against some internal spiritual reluctance, an unwillingness to get involved, a lack of strength or courage to do what you know needs to be done, or the rampant (and lame) excuse that others will step in. Then the upcoming Women's Bible study may be for you. It goes deep into the stories of these reluctant leaders—Moses, Jonah, and Gideon.

The author, Pastor Lisa Lewton, says of the study, "It is my prayer that as you read about God's call in their lives, you may be reminded of

God's call in your life as well."

The dates and time for this women's study are not yet set. Most likely it will meet sometime in the early evening on a weekday. Please indicate your interest by contacting us via e-mail or phone, or speak to Jean Hansen.

LCMC and the Augustana district

As part of the *association* of congregations called Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Church (LCMC), each parish in LCMC belongs directly to the national organization; there are no intermediary levels. Without wishing to disturb that arrangement, many congregations have joined themselves into smaller districts for mutual support and collaboration on projects.

One hundred forty-one people from thirty-five different congregations met on Saturday, May 22 at Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson to act as the constituting convention of the Augustana District of LCMC.

The day began with a worship service, with Dr. Steven Paulson preaching. We then had greetings from the Rev. Jaynan Clark, president of Word Alone, Thomas Walker, vice-president of Word Alone and the Rev. Paul Spaulding, *interim* National Service Coordinator for LCMC. Then there were information sessions on Sola Publishing and other sources of curriculum materials, led by Steven King, and on the Institute of Lutheran Theology ([ILT](#)), led by Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt. The Q&A sessions on these presentations were very lively. Dr. Bielfeldt, Dr. Paulson and the Rev. Julie Smith all fielded questions on ILT, its curriculum and its relationship to the various Lutheran bodies. The participants at the convention were very concerned about the future training of their clergy.

We also heard from representatives of new parishes forming in Marshall and Alexandria. After lunch we took up the proposed constitution and bylaws and approved them with only a few changes. (Mr. Justice G. Barry Anderson chaired this business session.) We then elected a seven-

person District Council and an eight-person Board of Theology and Ministry, and concluded the afternoon by signing the charter of the [Augustana District](#). Attendees who were actually delegates from congregations signed for their parishes; the rest of us signed for ourselves. *[jh contributing]*

Ordination at St. Paul's Evangelical

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." These verses, found in John 20, were part of the ordination service on Pentecost Sunday, May 23. The sanctuary of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis provided the time and place for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the life and ministry of Joel Smeby. As he stood before those assembled, and surrounded by clergy of LCMC, Joel made his ordination commitments to the work of ministry of Jesus Christ.

A particularly poignant moment occurred as Joel's wife, Cynthia, and his mother, Margrete, placed upon his shoulders "the yoke of service," the stole that had belonged to his father.

Those attending the ordination consisted of family members, members of Lutheran Community of Grace, Joel's calling congregation, members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran, members of LCMC clergy, and friends of the family. The presiding minister was Rev. Roland J. Wells, Jr., pastor of St. Paul's. The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Paul Spaulding, interim National Service Coordinator for LCMC. A reception was held in St. Paul's fellowship hall following the service.

The friends and members of Lutheran Community of Grace wish for and pray for God's great blessings upon the ministry of Joel. And we do not overlook the great supporting contributions made by Cynthia for Joel's pursuit of the work of ministry. God will certainly use both of you, with your long years of life's experience in secular service, to minister in

Christian service to many who otherwise may not be reached. *[th contributing]*

Shady Oak Road at Mainstreet open

Our little space on Shady Oak Road at the foot of Mainstreet in Hopkins is open. Several efforts to build relationships with members of the community are underway. We plan to have a ministry to women with young children, and another for younger folks, up and running early this summer. Additionally, we are looking at ways to utilize the space for some sort of “drop-in” center during the late afternoon/early evening hours. Other ideas are also on the table and will be implemented as time and resources (human and otherwise) permit.

Members and friends of Lutheran Community of Grace are invited to get involved. God needs you! Here are some ways that you can help:

- Contribute or donate items on the list of physical needs (furnishings, etc.)
- Volunteer to serve in these ministries
- Promote and market events (like the Monday evening Bible study) to your friends and neighbors, or even strangers
- Pray for the “strangers” in our neighborhoods, and in our country, in the world, who do not know Christ
- Contribute money to help support the storefront
- Pray for Lutheran Community of Grace and its ministries, especially those in experimental stages

Prayer: Onsite or offsite

Think you have to be *on-site* to pray together on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm? Try sending in your own prayers (via e-mail or phone or during morning worship). Or get a group together in your own living room during that time period. Our schedule tracks alongside the appointed Psalm of the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), so read the Psalm (more than once is probably in order) and then offer up your own prayers. Read some more...then pray some more. Break into

discussion. Or...come join us at Shady Oak. Add your own prayers or comments on the Psalm at www.LutheranCommunityGrace.net/wordpress.

Volunteers for our Worship

Here are some of the activities and services that need to be done every Sunday. Can you help?

- Setup and tear-down of the gathering room
- Communion assistants
- Ushers and greeters
- Scripture readers
- Donations of coffee and treats

Contributing

jean hansen, trygve hauge, joel smeby

Your ideas and contributions to this newsletter are always welcome.

Worship with Us



Volunteers of America (VOA) building
11400 4th Street North
Minnetonka, MN 55343

(Traveling west on Hwy 7, make a U-turn at Shady Oak Road and take the first right exit)

4 Shady Oak Road, Suite 6 (upper)
Hopkins, MN 55343-8852

Contact Us

(952) 217-7908

info@LutheranCommunityGrace.org
www.LutheranCommunityGrace.net/wordpress