



Lutheran  
Community of Grace

# What's New?

www.LutheranCommunityGrace.org May 2010

## Worship Sundays 9:30 am

May 2 – *Holy Communion*  
Joel Smeby

May 9  
Joel Smeby

May 16 – *Holy Communion*  
Joel Smeby

May 23 - *Pentecost*  
Joel Smeby

May 30  
Joel Smeby

(see updated worship information at  
[LutheranCommunityGrace.org/worshipInfo.php](http://LutheranCommunityGrace.org/worshipInfo.php))

## Forums 10:45 am

May 2  
*Coffee and conversation*

May 9  
*Bible study: Acts, part i*

May 16  
*Bible study: Acts, part ii*

May 23  
*Bible study: Acts, part iii*

May 30  
*Bible study: Acts, part iv*

## Prayer Requests

Carla and her family of care-givers  
those serving in the Armed Forces—especially  
Ralph, Karl, and Eric (and thanksgiving for  
Karl's return home)  
Flo and Merton Gustad  
Linda Kerlinski  
Harvey Havir  
Dan and Ila Ronning  
Charlotte  
all those who are traveling  
Jaimie  
the Dalsgaards in their travels  
Lyle Hall  
those travelers impacted by the air traffic  
problems in Europe  
Nancy  
Thelma

all those suffering and those serving in Haiti and  
in Chile  
the Elder family  
the Luke Bible study group on Mondays  
Cynthia  
Nathan  
Rev. Andrew Rogness  
Esther McDermid  
Mark and *all* those who are not with us  
Kurt Hilden

(Send your prayer requests to  
[info@LutheranCommunityGrace.org](mailto:info@LutheranCommunityGrace.org))

## Congregational Action

The pastoral call process, initiated at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation last September, came to a conclusion at the special

congregational meeting on April 11, 2010. (This meeting was originally convened on January 24, and immediately recessed pending further call committee activity.) The congregation voted on April 11 to extend a Letter of Call to Joel Smeby as our pastor.

Joel has been performing pastoral duties for Lutheran Community of Grace for approximately a year and a half, first on a part-time basis as he completed his course of study at Luther Seminary, then on a full-time basis for the last several months. We now look forward to his ordination (scheduled for May 23 at St. Paul's Evangelical on Portland Avenue in Minneapolis) and installation that we might move on aggressively in bringing forth the message of the Gospel and reaching out to the un-churched in our neighborhood, planting the seed of the Word—as we Christians are commissioned to do.

Congratulations are due not only to Joel, but also to his wife Cynthia. No undertaking so great as answering the Spirit's call to the ministry, with all the trials of life this brings, is done without a strong partnership involvement. Thanks to you, Cynthia, for all your support. *[th contributing]*

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## Know the Bible?

Apparently Americans do not, according to an article in *Record*, the official periodical of the American Bible Society (ABS). It was stated that Harris Interactive® conducted a survey for ABS. Eighty percent of the adults polled claimed to be familiar with the Bible. Yet a majority of these Americans failed to recognize some of the Bible's strongest statements about the issues of struggling with poverty and justice.

The survey results showed that fifty-four percent of those polled attributed a Biblical verse about caring for the poor to the celebrities of society and to the politicians. In our politically charged society, it is not surprising that President Obama received the highest number of attributions. But, would we here in Lutheran Community of Grace have done any better with those survey questions? Do we know what the Bible really states? But, be that as it may, the

survey results certainly reveal why it is so very important that we as a church reach out with the Gospel message to our neighbors and friends, teaching them the truths stated in the Bible. ABS has created a new version of the Bible, *The Poverty & Justice Bible*, to highlight the Biblical concern for the poor. Its cover carries the banner "***Ending Poverty Begins Here.***" That is well and good. Certainly we ought to implement the Gospel's concern for the poor. But of much greater importance is the eternal salvation of the soul. It can truly be said of the Gospel, "Eternal salvation begins here *only.*" What a compelling burden upon the Christian Church! Our congregation is increasing its emphasis on Bible study and Bible reading activities.

- A study of the gospel of Luke has been launched on April 26 at 7:00 pm as a ***Neighborhood Bible Study***, an effort to reach out to the "un-churched" in our area.
- A Women's Bible Study is in the planning stages and will be started soon. "*God's Reluctant Leaders*" looks at Moses, Gideon, and Jonah. According to the introduction, "*As we journey through the Old Testament, we regularly run into people who hear God's call and wonder if He is talking to someone else. Trusting and serving God doesn't come naturally to us as human beings.*"
- Our Sunday morning adult forums will continue to be dedicated mostly to Bible study—a study of the book of Acts begins this month. We have already offered overviews of Romans and Revelation.
- Soon, the entire worship group will be encouraged to participate in a program of reading through the entire Bible in one year, following the pattern of one of the many such programs.

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## LCMC conference in Omaha

The annual LCMC Leadership conference was held in Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha, NE this year. The focus of the conference was on the "DNA" of LCMC, its four main

attributes:

- Free in Christ
- Accountable to one another
- Rooted in Scriptures and Confessions
- Working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission

G. Barry Anderson spoke about accountability and its implementations for pastors, congregations and districts, particularly as it relates to the loosely structured and voluntary nature of LCMC. Barry spoke of the implications for theological education, leadership, voting membership, checks and balances in constitutional as well as practical terms. Romans 14:11-12 was cited as the inspiration for accountability:

<sup>11</sup> *As it is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God."* <sup>12</sup> *So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

David Housholder, of Robinwood Church in Huntington Beach, CA, preached about the importance of "rediscovering the church as a Bible church." *No Bible, No breakfast* is the mantra he commended for the individual. "Be a good guest," and leave your opinions and biases to the side and become "submissive" as you come to terms with the Bible. Housholder segmented the history of Lutheranism (and mainline Christianity, in general) into three phases:

- immigration in 1880-1920
- procreation in 1920-1960
- adult conversion in the present

He claims "passion" about adult conversion, advising that baptism of adults is the only means for church growth today. How does adult conversion work? Through *socialization* (making people feel welcome socially), *catechization* (by which he means basic knowledge of the Biblical witness, not necessarily Lutheran theology), and *transformation*, the "messy" process by which a person is visited by and comes to know Christ. Three years he expects it will take to become a Bible church, one in which the majority of parishioners will be seen walking from the parking lots with their Bibles in tow, ready to

hear expository preaching focused on the Scripture.

Walter Sundberg, of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, lectured on the "congregation as the agent of mission." He cited Jaroslav Pelikan's proposal that it's the heretical that often is at the forefront of missional activity in the world, rather than the orthodox. Arians moving into the midst of Germanic tribes and Nestorians bringing Christ to India and China are two such examples. Similarly, Luther himself (condemned in 1520) was heretical in his focus on the scandal of the cross vs. the assimilation of the insider into Christendom.

So Sundberg argues that it is the *congregation*, rather than the sacramental priesthood with its authority embedded in Christendom, that is the agent of such "heretical" focus on the unchurched as potential members of the body of Christ. Human beings require rescue in the "spiritual warfare against sin until the day of death" and this rescue (or conversion) takes place in the congregation, where the individual is changed—moved to believe and become a Christian. The congregation, after all, is the place for calling of the individual by the Word into a relation to Jesus as Lord and Master.

The conference was not only a venue to listen to and be inspired by talks such as these, but also a place to converse with some of the several hundred attendees whose experiences "in the sanctuaries" witness to the Christ who is wildly and passionately active in the world today. We are grateful to this Omaha church and its staff for providing the hospitality to effect such a valuable exchange of information and fellowship.

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## Shady Oak is OPEN!

Our efforts at obtaining a place to interface with the community are bearing fruit, in the form of a little storefront at Shady Oak Road at the foot of Mainstreet in Hopkins. This long and narrow "sanctuary" is slowly becoming a comfortable place for ministry opportunities focused on those who are "strangers" to the church or to the Gospel (for Bible study on Monday evenings, for

instance). Look for news of activities in the future, or, better yet, fire up your own creative juices with ideas for ministries that might be located in this place.

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## Prayer in the flesh or on-line

Think you have to be on-site to pray together on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm? Try sending in your own prayers or praying with a group in your own living room during that time period. Our schedule tracks along the 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. Or come join us at Shady Oak. Add your own prayers or commentary on the Psalm at [www.LutheranCommunityGrace.net/wordpress](http://www.LutheranCommunityGrace.net/wordpress).

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## More LCMC: a *district*

As part of an association of congregations, 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. Several of these districts are geographical; at least one, the Evangelical Renewal District, is non-geographical and is composed of congregations who are serious about missions. There is now forming another non-geographical district, the Augustana District. Its chief purpose is to serve congregations, particularly to maintain orthodox Lutheran teaching and ministry, and to help support the training of orthodox pastors. In the first meeting (November 2009) of those interested, six goals were established:

- to assist congregations, call committees and pastors in the call process and pastor/parish relations;
- to establish and/or support a publishing house for educational materials and worship resources;
- to endorse and support the Institute of Lutheran Theology;
- to engage in world mission and evangelism;
- to maintain and promote the theological

commitments of the district;

- to assist in developing LCMC mission congregations

Volunteer committees have now drafted a faith statement, a proposed constitution and a set of by-laws, which will be reviewed and voted on at a constituting convention to be held on Saturday, May 22, at Faith Lutheran in Hutchinson. Copies of these documents, and registration forms for attending the convention, are available on-line at [www.AugustanaDistrict.org](http://www.AugustanaDistrict.org). A number of congregations plan to send delegates to this meeting; a number of individuals also plan to attend whose congregations have as yet made no decision on the district, or whose congregations are not yet members of LCMC. [*jh contributing*]

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## Contributing

*jean hansen, trygve haug, joel smeby*

*Your ideas and contributions* to this newsletter are welcome.

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## Worship with Us



Volunteers of America (VOA) building  
**11400 4<sup>th</sup> Street North**  
Minnetonka, MN 55343  
(Traveling west on Hwy 7, make a U-turn at Shady Oak Road and take the first right exit)

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## Contact Us

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