



VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4

The Happenings

USA — Canada

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Dear members of the NW District LCMC,

Warmest greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I pray this finds you well.

The past three months have been a whirlwind. Much has happened. Many NW District LCMC members, including myself, attended the 22nd Annual Gathering in Lakeville, MN (Oct. 2-5) and planning for the upcoming NW LCMC gathering at Lutherhaven is well underway.

The Annual Gathering was a breathtaking event. To meet new people and rekindle old relationships, to hear and share the Word of our AMAZING GOD! What a beautiful thing!

My drive out to the Annual Gathering was an adventure in and of itself. I was blessed to visit with family including my son in Bozeman, MT and my son and his beautiful family in Miles City, MT. I was even able to watch my granddaughters play soccer and volleyball. I also stopped and saw my mother and sisters in Fallon, MT and we had a great time talking about the past and what the future has planned for us. They still can't believe I was attending the Annual Gathering in Minnesota.

There were many great speakers including Ebassa Berhanu; Steve Turnbull and Ryan Alexander to

name just a few. The breakout sessions on discipleship were engaging and fun, and it was a real treat to hear Rite of Passage for the Seasoned Soul taught by my very own Pastor Jon Anderson, Peace Lutheran Church in Post Falls, Idaho. We have a friendly team of NW District LCMC leaders and we hosted two "Meet and Greet" hospitality nights which enabled LCMC district members to visit with others and share ministry experiences. We were also able to share resources and information on the call process with churches who are currently seeking a pastor. A good turnout at both events! The Fellowship Dinner was amazing, with great food and beverages, along with time to visit and continue to learn about other congregations. The spiritual kinship we share with fellow believers is so very precious.

My biggest take away from the 22nd Annual Gathering is that the LCMC has developed a group of caring and loving people to carry the word of our LORD JESUS CHRIST to the ends of earth and make disciples of each and everyone. Next year's gathering will be held in St. Louis, Missouri and I am already making plans to be there!

There is joy in following Jesus, but we cannot assume that people will accidentally fall into it simply by showing up and attending our churches. We must be intentional about forming meaningful relationships, and take seriously the need to actively teach, train, and develop followers of Jesus. Failure to take our call to do so seriously will have consequences. If we do not become more active in discipling our people, the world will continue to do it for us.

Cont'd on next page.

LCMC

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The Happenings is a publication of the Northwest District of LCMC. We welcome comments, suggestions for stories and submissions from our members.

To submit an article for publication, please contact Carol Ann Buelow at buelow@aol.com. The deadline to submit articles for our next edition is: February 22, 2023

Chairman's message cont'd

Our NW District Board meeting was held at the Hampton Inn in Burnsville, MN. We had a great meeting discussing our upcoming NW District Gathering plans and the speakers we are enlisting for the program. Make your plans to attend the NW District Gathering at Camp Lutherhaven in Coeur d' Alene, ID, May 19-21, 2023. This is going to be a family event, featuring author Rev, Greg Finke, worship and singing around the campfire. Hope to see you all there.

Merry Christmas!

May God continue to bless you and keep you in His grace.

Jonathan Davis LCMC NW District Chair



There are times the Holy Spirit takes what some people have been ignoring or only engaging in by rote, breathes fresh life into it, and uses it to pull us into the current of God's plans for our lives. An illustration of this is the ancient prayer and practice of The Lord's Prayer.

This year the LCMC is taking that ancient prayer and practice of the Church and putting it to use in LCMC's **Three Days of Prayer** on January 3-5. Join together in praying as individuals, congregations, and across one international association using the Lord's Prayer as an outline to pray for our congregations and leaders, for those who don't yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and for our international partners.

Each congregation or person can structure these days of prayer however seems best. In the past, some congregations put together a prayer vigil – a person signing up to pray in 30-minute intervals – perhaps for all three days or a few hours each day. Others have offered a prayer service at a set hour on each of the three days. Some have encouraged their people simply to pray at work, home, or school, wherever they are, and whatever they are doing. For more information or to download a sample prayer guide, check out: <https://www.lcmc.net/three-days-of-prayer>

May the Lord use what we pray in this ancient prayer to pull us into the current of the plans and purposes He has for us in the present and in the future.



Transition: A Time for Renewal

Read the Bible and you will see that God often did some of his greatest work in the lives of his people when they were in the times between. After enduring generations of slavery in Egypt, the descendants of Jacob travel through the desert, the land between, toward their new home in Canaan. They crave the food of their former home in Egypt and despise their present environment. They are unable to go back and incapable of moving forward. Many of us have, likewise, made personal journeys through undesirable or difficult transitions such as, unemployment, foreclosure, failure, or uncertainty. Such times provide our greatest opportunity for spiritual growth.

A church family also faces the challenges and opportunities of “times in between.” A pastoral vacancy can be one of those seasons that can heighten the anxiety and put other difficult stressors on any congregation. Depending on the circumstances that create the vacancy there can also be great grief and pain. In many cases, not all, various ministries of the church freeze and wait. Leadership teams stop leading, planning teams stop planning, the church hopes to find someone to “fill in” for the missing pastor to accomplish the basic tasks, he or she had left behind. While the “fill-in-person” can cover the task gap, it’s quite common for the collective “waiting” mentality to acquiesce to phrases like, “Let’s wait to see what the next pastor wants to do.” “Let’s wait before we...” “We can’t decide that until...”

Some churches look to Intentional Interim Ministry to navigate a season of renewal during a pastoral vacancy. Intentional Interim Pastors lead congregations through developmental tasks that prepare them for new ministry with a new pastor. What types of churches would benefit?

The Transitioning Church

A congregation that has experienced a long-term pastorate and needs to create space between the old and new. A congregation that is facing challenges and changes as it looks to future ministry.

The Teams Church

A congregation with staff and/or multiple ministries that require an evaluation and strategy for receiving and working with a new pastor.

The Troubled Church

A congregation that has experienced a split, a controversial resignation of the pastor, a tragedy, or some other stressor.

The Tranquil Church

A congregation that is plateaued or declining due to neglect with regard to their mission, vision, and values.

The Terminal Church

A congregation that may be nearing the end of its life cycle and needs to transition through a hospice or closure time and/or adapt to a different form of ministry.

A congregation might be like one of these described above, or a combination of two or more. A trained Intentional Interim Pastor is prepared to adapt to the specific needs of a congregation and walk them through key developmental tasks.

Know and Understand Heritage & History

Churches in transition have a story of how they came to this point. Those stories, facts, and events happened in a context, whether good or bad, and have made an impact on emotions, attitudes, reputation, hopes, and dreams. We will embrace this season to find peace with our past, to grieve, reconcile, and understand, and resolve to move forward, not paralyzed by either a painful or positive past.

Affirming Present Identity and Discovering Newness

A transition time between pastors provides the congregation an important opportunity to identify its real self and get a fresh look at its context for ministry. Before a new pastor arrives, discovering newness in the flock will prepare it for the shepherd, best fit to lead it. We answer these questions... Who are we? What do we dream of doing together?

Leadership Optimization

Transition happens with natural shifts and changes in leadership. We recognize this and celebrate a heightened opportunity to renew and engage God’s people in leadership and involvement that is optimized and utilized.

Connection to the Church-At-Large

The interim between settled pastors offers some their first chance to understand and embrace their identity with LCMC. A healthy transition makes the congregation able to claim, in newly articulated ways, what their relationship with other Christians is and why it is important, and also see with fresh insight, how the congregation is important to the good health of their association with other Christians, locally and globally.

Call Commitment

A healthy transition makes the congregation ready for new direction in ministry and leadership. The congregation embraces God's ministry call for itself, as individuals and as a body, and commits itself to the calling of a new pastor.

Intentional Interim Pastors take good care of the "task gap" by being a good pastor to the congregation in transition. They help as a non-anxious servant during times that are often anxious to the congregation. They carry on the Word and Sacrament ministry of the church and help the congregation embrace their own ministry too.



Pastor Mark Neumann and his wife Susan recently came into the Northwest District and are now serving Faith Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Montana.

Together they have 11 children and are expecting their 8th grandchild in April.

Pastor Mark has more than 30 years of pastoral experience and is a Certified Intentional Interim Pastor. He has served congregations large and small in six states so far. You can learn more at www.transitionrenewal.com.

Pastoral Installations in Rudyard, MT and Idaho Falls, ID

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Pastor Brad Varvil who has accepted the call to serve as Pastor at New Beginnings Lutheran Church in Rudyard, Montana and Pastor Mike Knauff who accepted the call to serve as Pastor at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Idaho Falls, Idaho. We give thanks for these servants and pray that their love for serving our Lord will become ever stronger and more joyful through the years. God bless these new ministry partnerships!

Merry
Christmas

LCMC NW District Annual Gathering

May 19-21, 2022

Camp Lutherhaven , 3258 W Lutherhaven Rd, Coeur d'Alene, ID

Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” Mark 1:17 (NIV)



Greg Finke is the founder and Executive Director of Dwelling 1:14 and author of books, *Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Be an Everyday Missionary* and, *Joining Jesus – Show Me How: How to Disciple Everyday Missionaries*. Dwelling 1:14 is a non-profit ministry which helps leaders disciple people to join Jesus on his mission in the places they already live, work and go to school.

The name Dwelling 1:14 refers to John 1:14 and the incarnational, missional nature both of Jesus and those who would follow him into the world. Greg offers consulting and training experiences for congregations and their leaders in discipling, living missionally, and multiplying missional community environments.

Greg will be delivering a series of keynote sessions throughout the course of our *Come Follow Me* gathering. Often times people simply look at the cross through the lens of personal salvation and live life primarily on the sidelines of God’s activity in the world. But Greg will show us how Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on the cross not only saves us, but also gives us a mission and compels us to live on the frontlines of God’s Kingdom building activity in our own communities. Using a scriptural foundation, Greg will educate and inspire us toward an exciting new way of living as everyday missionaries in our local communities.

Greg is a graduate of Concordia University, Chicago and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Before founding Dwelling 1:14, he served as pastor of two congregations in Michigan and Texas for 21 years. Greg and his wife, Susan, have three daughters and enjoyed life as neighborhood missionaries in League City, Texas before God’s call to begin Dwelling 1:14.

I have a challenge for you. During these next few months until we reunite once again at beautiful **Camp Lutherhaven on Lake Coeuer D’Alene**, to be sure and check out Greg’s Blog and the Dwelling 1:14 website. I particularly want to encourage you to order a copy of Greg and his wife Susan’s newest book, *Joining Jesus as a Family* (Get your copies [HERE](#)). So far, about 1000 copies have gone out to families who want to intentionally raise their children to be followers of Jesus! And, make sure to read [Greg’s Blog entry from September 19, 2022](#)

"What Does It Mean to 'Disciple' My Child?" Pastors and congregational members will recall why **every** member of the congregation has a stake in raising the children of the congregation. “It takes a village to raise Jesus-Followers” (Chapter 17), don’t you know?

This year’s gathering will take on an intergenerational look, There will be times for all ages to gather together for worship and learning as well as a parallel YOUTH track...so encourage your youth and families to attend this gathering at “Camp”.



Pastors Pre-gathering Session, Friday, May 19th ~ 10:00 am



Julie Smith, LCMC's Coordinator for Districts and Fellowship Groups will be joining us not only to report on happenings across the wide spectrum of our association but also looks forward to facilitate this year's Friday morning **Pre-gathering Session for Pastors**. (Pastors, make sure to sign up for this on your registration form).

Smith is a life-long Lutheran and became a pastor in 1998. She has served congregations in Clarkfield, Bock, and Springfield (all in Minnesota). In addition, she served for several years as a Bible camp director. She is also a co-founder of St. Paul Lutheran Seminary.

Julie's main hobby is running around to whatever activities her seven nieces and nephews are involved in. She is a sports fan, and while high school football is a favorite, NBA games featuring any former Minnesota Timberwolves are a close second. Like all Minnesotans, Julie believes as many summer days as possible should be spent at the lake, with the Twins on the radio. Please don't ask her about the Vikings.

Julie is a graduate of Luther Seminary and loves any opportunity to teach, whether that's leading silly Bible skits with first graders or giving seminary students some pointers in preaching. She has previously served on the LCMC Board of Trustees and has worked with the Augustana and Epiphany Districts of LCMC.

Registration will open soon. For now, save the date: May 19-21, 2023 at Camp Lutherhaven on beautiful Lake Coeur D'Alene! On behalf of the NW District Gathering Planning team, I look forward to seeing you there!

Pastor Donna Zipp, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lewiston Idaho



IMPACT Youth Gathering @ the LCMC Northwest District Annual Gathering

Join us May 19th to 21st, 2023 for the IMPACT Youth Gathering at Lutherhaven Camp in Coeur d' Alene, ID. Our theme is "Come, Follow Me!" and we will be learning about how we can follow Jesus and apply it to our everyday lives by serving others in many different ways. Our keynote Speaker is Greg Finke who has written many wonderful books including "Joining Jesus as a Family". This is a wonderful weekend to grow in faith, serve others and have fun together in fellowship with youth from all over the Northwest. Our outdoor camp activities will include archery, campfires, canoeing, high ropes, zip-lining, and more. This is for youth ages 6th to 12th grade. Registration information is coming soon!

Youth Impact leaders 2022:

April Johnson, Peace Lutheran Church, Belgrade Montana
Ken Olson, Wilderness Ranch Camp, Alberta, Canada

Happy 125th Anniversary!



Good Hope Lutheran Church celebrated their 125th Anniversary on Sunday, September 18th, 2022. Members and friends celebrated with an 11am communion worship service led by Ivan Thompson, worship leader. After the worship service approximately 40 people enjoyed a traditional Lutheran potluck accompanied by a barbecue. Gene Butler was the master meat flipper with Davern Riggers, Randy Tiede and Brett Garner assisting. A beautiful cake was purchased to celebrate the historical occasion.

Good Hope Lutheran Church was organized in November of 1897 in the home of Henry Brammer. Before Good Hope was organized a minister from Cameron Lutheran Church, Karl Voss, would travel on horseback to the Henry Riggers homestead to hold services. With the opening of the NezPerce Indian Reservation for homesteading about half of the Cameron congregation left to settle around Gifford. Seven of the nine charter families, of Good Hope Lutheran, were from Cameron. The church building that stands today, on a hill, 4 miles SE of Gifford, Idaho on Settlement Road, was built in 1898 and completed in 1899.

Through the mercies of God, we join Christians across the Northwest District in congratulating you as you mark this important milestone. May God strengthen and preserve you as you continue to serve Him!

Becoming a citizen of a new country is an exciting and momentous occasion. Congratulations to NW District LCMC Coordinator Horacio Castillo who received his U.S.A. citizenship on August 27, 2022!



Church Spotlights:

Prairie Peace Lutheran Church in Cut Bank, MT



Prairie Peace Lutheran Church of Cut Bank, MT began as a congregation and joined the LCMC in January of 2010 after splitting with the ELCA congregation in town. Fred Grundmann became the pastor of Prairie Peace, and the congregation was soon blessed with land on which to build its own facility in 2012. Shortly thereafter, Valier Lutheran Church in Valier, MT, joined with PPLC as a two-point parish. In 2018, Pastor Fred left to serve as an interim minister, and the congregations called Ron Hamm to lead them. Because of health reason, Pastor Ron resigned in 2021 (we are thankful to report he is now doing very well), and Pastor Fred was once again installed as pastor.

As we journey into our 13th year as members of the LCMC, it is amazing to reflect on all the Lord's blessings. Within the past year, Prairie Peace has been able to pay off its building and has added screens and streaming to make services more interactive for the people in attendance and to minister to those that are more home-bound. The congregation enjoys many fellowship events throughout the year, Bible studies, quilting, and serving at the food pantry, Care Center, and various city-wide events. Members are looking at opportunities to share the Gospel with the wider community of Cut Bank.

Valier Lutheran Church in Valier, MT



Valier Lutheran continues to be a close-knit and loving congregation remaining faithful to the Word, while dealing with the declining and aging population of a very small town. They are very thankful for being blessed with a pastor, church building, faithful members, and opportunities to serve in their community. They also are looking forward as they search for ways to share Christ with others.