



VOLUME 8 ISSUE 2

The Happenings USA — Canada

APRIL 2024



Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Church leaders from around the NW District of LCMC gathered from April 12th- 13th at Christ Community Lutheran Church in Lebanon, OR. We enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship with one another and rest in the Word of God.

Pastor Fred Westerhold and the music ministry team led the worship services with their musical talent.

Additionally, a choir was gathered together from those in attendance and was led by Karla Kaleva in melodic hymns for our and God's enjoyment.

There was a large contingent of selfless volunteers from the congregation who prepared several delicious meals, decadent deserts, and snacks during our two days. The Boy Scout Troop did a great job in serving and bussing our tables. I want to extend the board's gratitude and thanks to all the Boy Scouts and CCLC volunteers who spent many hours, seen and unseen, dedicated to making sure that a lovely experience was had by all in attendance. Your dedication to service was evident in the details and care and thoughtfulness was a blessing to us all!

During our time together, we were blessed by our keynote speaker, Pastor Ebassa Berhanu. The theme of the gathering was, "I Love to Tell the Story," based on Isaiah 55:10-11. He shared stories from his childhood, escaping the communist government of Ethiopia, to growing up in Embarrass, MN. He discussed God's work in the world in the past, what God is currently up to in the world, and what he shall do in the future. We were comforted by God's promise that when the preaching of his Son Jesus Christ goes out, it will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish that for which He sent it.

Christian Huntley and Julie Smith also took time to update the district on LCMC 3.0, the association's strategic plan. While there are many needs in the districts, one of the main take-aways was that the NW District will start assisting call committees and congregations in transition. The board members of the NW District will participate in call coach training to be of assistance to call committees.

One of the exciting new developments in the NW District is the creation of a youth retreat by the Youth Impact Team. This retreat will be for 7th-12th graders of our district. The theme is "Saved" (Romans 6:23) and it will be held at Shoshone Mountain Retreat in Wallace, ID, October 18th-20th 2024. Pastor Julie Smith will be the speaker for the retreat. Look for registration info and volunteering opportunities *coming soon* to the NW District website!

Finally, we give thanks for the faithful service of Craig Nissen, Mot Hedges, and Ken Olson to the district board. Craig faithfully served one full term; Mot served two full terms plus an additional year during the pandemic as the district treasurer. Ken served two years and has regrettably resigned his position. We welcome three new board members: Pastor Dave Hall to complete Ken's term, Pastor Ed Skutshek, and Karla Kaleva. Additionally, Moe Bessey was appointed as an interim district coordinator and will join Horacio Castillo in the role, working in tandem, to serve the needs within our large geographic district.

We hope you will join us next year at the NW District gathering which will be hosted by Victory Lutheran Church in Medicine Hat, Alberta, CA, May 2nd-3rd, 2025!

In the Crucified and Risen Jesus Christ, Rev. Dr. Marney Fritts, Chair NW District Council

LCMC

Northwest District Council

Executive Committee

Pr. Marney Fritts, Chair

Pr. Edward Skutshek, Vice Chair

Pr. Carol Ann Buelow, Secretary

Karla Kaleva, Treasurer

Council Members

Pr. Grant Crichton

Jonathan Davis

Pr. Dave Hall

Pr. Travis Powers

Pr. Donna Zipp

Pr. Fred Westerhold

Pr. Greg Wightman

District Coordinator

Maureen "Moe" Bessey

Pr. Horacio Castillo

Webmaster

Steve Hruza





Pastors Directory Changes

To better assist congregations, call committees, and others, the **LCMC Ministry Board** initiated changes to the pastoral list categories that will be reflected on the LCMC website in May 2024. Current categories are not well defined and allowed pastors to be in more than one category. This unclarity was difficult to explain and created unrealistic expectations, especially among call committees. The updated categories will better reflect a pastor's current call status. If you have not already done so, please update your information at: <https://www.lcmc.net/pastor-update>



Council Highlights: By: Carol Ann Buelow, Secretary, Northwest District LCMC

The NW District Council met in Lebanon, OR during the Annual Gathering. Here are the highlights of our meeting:

- All council members were assigned to their respective positions and duties.
- A Youth Retreat – “SAVED” - has been scheduled for Oct. 18-20 at Shoshone Mountain Retreat. Discussed and amended the 2024 budget to allocate \$3000 for Youth Impact events in 2024.
- Approved Zion Lutheran Church in Kent, WA and New Hope Lutheran Church in Circle, MT for membership in the Northwest District LCMC
- Rev. Julie Smith, LCMC Coordinator for Districts and Fellowships, met with district leaders to discuss the additional roles and responsibilities districts will take on as part of LCMC 3.0.
- Moe Bessey has agreed to serve as an Interim District Coordinator for a one-year period.



LCMC 24th Annual Gathering & Convention

Sept. 29 – Oct. 2, 2024

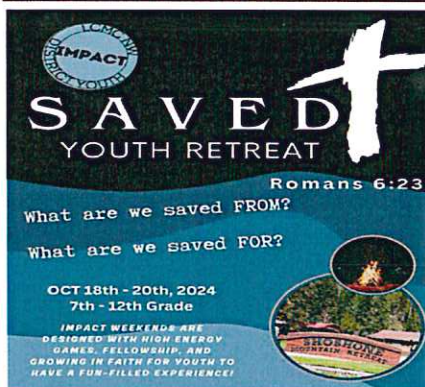
St. Mark's Lutheran Church – Marion Iowa

The theme of our **24th Annual Gathering & Convention** is “Engaging Your Cultural Moment”. Together, we will explore how the cultural moments happening all around us can be seen not as something negative, but as potential opportunities for carrying out the Great Commission.

The LCMC Annual Gathering & Convention serves as an opportunity for pastors, leaders, and church members from all types of congregations to join together for an intentional time of worship, prayer, fellowship, networking, learning, and inspiration.

24th Annual National Gathering Scholarships Available

The Northwest District has ten (10) adult scholarships of \$500 each, maximum \$5000, available to help with Annual National Gathering registration costs and expenses. Requests are on a first come, first serve basis. To obtain a scholarship, please contact: Karla Kaleva at: karlakaleva12@gmail.com or send your request to: Karla Kaleva 400 Circle Drive Cut Bank, MT 59427



3rd Annual IMPACT Youth Gathering

Calling all teens 7th to 12th grade!! Join us October 18th to 20th, 2024 for our 3rd Annual IMPACT Youth Gathering for all of the LCMC Northwest District. This year we are at the Shoshone Mountain Retreat in Wallace, ID. Our theme is Saved, we will learn about what we are saved from and what we are saved for. Our keynote speaker will be Julie Smith, our LCMC District Coordinator. This weekend will be a fun filled time of fellowship, high energy games, serving others and growing in faith together.

WELCOME ABOARD!!!

Meet our New Northwest District Council Members

Pastor Dave Hall



I am a follower of Jesus who is a husband, father, pastor, and internet marketing consultant. Most of my growing up years were spent in Colorado Springs, CO with some time in Lawton, OK and Wesel, Germany. My wife, Stacy, and I have two adult children, Alison and Albert, who live in Pueblo and Ft. Collins, CO with their significant others. Stacy's mom lives near us in Miles City, MT.

Before coming to Joy Lutheran in Billings, I served large and small LCMS congregations in Kansas and Colorado. I have been able to be the staff lead for worship, congregational care and community outreach, youth, and small group ministries. I also have training and experience as a church consultant, and as a mediator and conflict coach.

I like all things new – new people, visiting new places and having new experiences. Stacy and I enjoy hiking, music and the arts, and our Friday date nights on the couch with a frozen pizza, glass of wine or a beer, and a movie. I am excited to see how God will take my experiences and gifts and use them to be a blessing in our NW District as we continue to tell the story of Jesus and his love!

Karla Kaleva – NW District Treasurer



I am a born and bred Montanan and while I have lived in other states, I keep heading back here! I spent my school years in Cut Bank, MT and then attended the University of Montana in Missoula and received degrees in Music performance (saxophone), German, history, and education.

Just like I couldn't quite narrow down my study choices, I've worked in several fields...sometimes simultaneously. I have had a private instrumental and piano music studio, a tutoring service for middle school and high school students in a variety of subjects and worked in human resources as the trainer for a large Sears store to name a few things. I am now certified in bookkeeping and Quickbooks online and work in that field.

Through it all, the Lord has always kept me connected to church music and serving where needed. I have worked as a church music coordinator, choir director, and still am a church pianist. In 2001, I married Pastor Fred Grundmann and I have often been his service planner and secretary. In 2009 we moved back to Cut Bank to help care for my mom who had ALS. We began serving the new congregation of Prairie Peace Lutheran and Valier Lutheran Church in 2010. We have loved our LCMC family, especially those we have been blessed to meet in the Northwest District, and I am humbled to work with such a great team on the District Board and look forward to serving as treasurer.

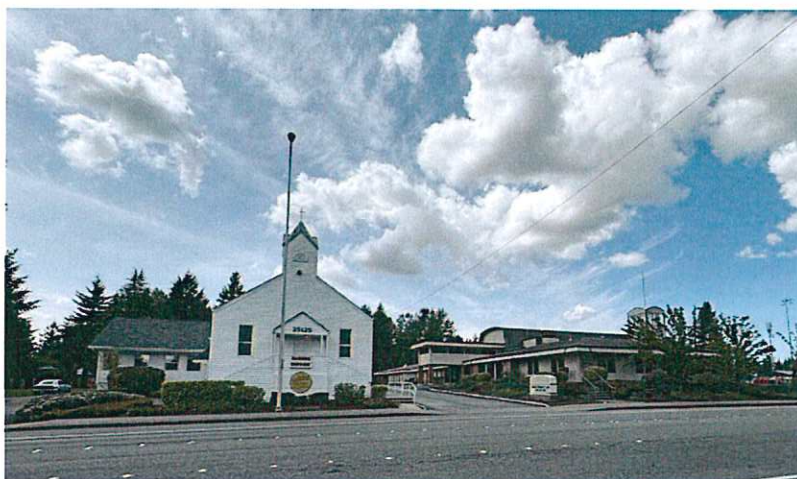
Pastor Ed Skutshek



Pastor Ed Skutshek served as full time Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church of West Kelowna, BC, from June 2000 to January 2021. He continues to serve Grace as their emeritus pastor. From 2009 to 2021 he served as President to the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC), a small Canadian Church body. Grace Lutheran is dually rostered with CALC and LCMC. Pastor Ed is rostered with both LCMC and CALC. He continues to serve CALC as the Special Assistant to the President. He is completing his second term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) and has recently been appointed to the Board of Regents of the Christ School of Theology (ILT's graduate school and seminary). He has taught preaching and pastoral ethics at ILT. Prior to becoming a pastor he studied law and practiced law for some 13 years. He is married to Deni, a recently retired Speech Language Pathologist (now doing consulting work in the field). They have one son,

Jonathan (Neesha), who works as a pharmacist. He is very excited about working with the NW District Board of Directors.

Church Spotlight – Zion Lutheran Church – Kent, WA



Zion Lutheran Church has been a part of the growing and diverse community of Kent, WA, in the beautiful Pacific Northwest since 1903. In the early years of the church, the practice of worship was very much like the “home churches” from which the founding members had emigrated – with men and boys seated on one side, and women and girls on the other side. Services were conducted in Norwegian until 1921, when there was a change to holding services in English and Norwegian on alternating Sundays. The original little white church was built in 1946, and that building is currently the home of

Sunshine Mountain Christian Preschool and Kindergarten, which was founded in 1979. A new church building was dedicated in 1967, to which a separate education building was added in 1994. We are currently blessed to have over 320 members, and many wonderful opportunities for all ages.

In its over 100-year history, Zion Lutheran has experienced many changes not only in the East Hill community of Kent, but also in the life of the congregation itself. We’ve taken time over the last couple of years to consider the direction of Zion’s ministry through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our current mission statement declares that “In Jesus Christ, we REJOICE in God’s grace, RENEW through God’s Word, and REACH OUT to serve others all to the glory of God.” In the most recent change, after two years without a pastor, Zion Lutheran called Pastor Kelly Westlund, who began ministry here in November of 2023. Pastor Kelly finished her MDiv studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in March, and we recently celebrated her installation at Zion Lutheran on April 27, 2024. We eagerly look forward to all that God has planned for Zion Lutheran Church in the future!



On Saturday, April 27th, Reverend Kelly Westlund was joyously installed as pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Kent, WA on April 27th. We congratulate Pastor Kelly and members of Zion Lutheran Church as they begin this new chapter of ministry together. May God’s grace and love rest upon you!

News for “The Happenings”

We would love to hear what you are up to! If you or your congregation would like to include information in the next LCMC Northwest District newsletter, *The Happenings*, please submit to Carol Ann Buelow. Her email address is: buelow@aol.com

Welcome to our newest LCMC Northwest District Members!

With great joy, we welcome New Hope Lutheran Church of Circle, MT and Zion Lutheran Church of Kent, WA to the Northwest District! We look forward to working together as we live out our faith and spread the Gospel. Together we give thanks to God for their ministry and warmly welcome them into the Northwest District! May God bless them and grant them His peace!