

# BY THE WORD



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

*Volume 2, Issue 3  
November 2003*

## **"IN CHRIST, A NEW CREATION"**

*Highlights from our 2003 Annual Gathering*

-- Bill Sullivan, NSC

Exploring rich themes from 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, delegates from LCMC congregations and a number of visitors gathered in Canton, Michigan from October 5-7 for the 3rd national convention of the association.

With "In Christ-A New Creation" as the theme for the annual gathering, attendees assembled at St. Michael Lutheran Church, one of LCMC's member congregations in the great state of Michigan.

Activities began on Sunday evening, October 5th, with a dynamic worship service, planned by Amy Williams and members of the Augsburg Lutheran Churches, one of LCMC's non-geographic districts. Rousing singing, Word-centered preaching, and the sharing of the sacrament of Holy Communion were all part of a memorable evening suffused with the presence of the Spirit of God.

Rev. Gerrit Wolfaardt, president of Veritas College in the USA and a priest in the Anglican Mission in America, delivered a powerful and challenging message on being reconciled with Christ and with one another. Using 2 Corinthians 5:18 "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." as a springboard, Gerrit wove a compelling message for the congregation that filled St. Michael's sanctuary. He drew on his own life experience as a former racist in South Africa who was won to Christ and has been used by God in dozens of countries around the world, sharing his personal testimony of the power of God to restore our relationship with him and with our fellow human beings.

Sunday evening's activities concluded with a time of fellowship and a showing of the docudrama "From One Blood" - a retelling of the story of Rev. Wolfaardt's life and ministry.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

Dec. 3 - 4, 2003  
Ministry Board Meeting  
*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Dec. 4 - 5, 2003  
Trustees Meeting  
*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

April 25 - 27, 2004  
Leadership Conference  
*Lied Conference Center  
Nebraska City, Nebraska*

June 13 - 16, 2004  
*Pressin' On for Christ*  
Youth Gathering  
*Lutheran Church of the Cross  
Altoona, IA*

Oct 3 - 5, 2004  
National Convention  
*Atonement Lutheran Church  
Fargo, North Dakota*

**Lutheran Congregations  
in Mission for Christ**

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# LEADERSHIP LINK:

## LCMC's Version of "Clergy Connect"

One of the most frequently asked questions by our membership is, "Where will we find our next pastor?"

While the Ministry Board is working diligently to come up with additional alternatives, LCMC is making a new tool available. "Leadership Link" is now available on the LCMC web site ([www.LCMC.net](http://www.LCMC.net)) and will allow members to post listings for leadership positions.



This service will be for LCMC congregations only. It is not limited to pastoral openings; other salaried leadership positions will also be advertised.

If you have a position currently open you may forward the following information to the LCMC office in Canton: the name of your congregation, the name, address and phone number of your contact person, whether you are LCMC only or LCMC/ELCA, and a brief description of the position.

Let us hear from you—we're ready to post your openings and help you make connections!

# SEMINARY DEBT RELIEF FUND

## SEPARATE LCMC FUND ESTABLISHED JOINT SDRF DISSOLVED, DIVIDED

In May 2003, the LCMC board of trustees moved to establish a separate LCMC Seminarian Support program. LCMC membership was advised that contributions for the purpose of seminary support were to be channeled to this restricted fund as the default unless the donor specifically designated the Joint LCMC/WAN Seminary Debt Relief Fund as their intention.

In October the WordAlone board passed a resolution approving the dissolution of the joint LCMC/WA Seminary Debt Relief Fund. The resolution contained a provision that any monies left undistributed after the final meeting of the Joint LCMC/WA SDRF committee in 2003 will be divided equally between LCMC and WordAlone. This is to be accomplished by year's end.

The LCMC board of trustees passed a similar resolution to dissolve and divide the joint fund. This action is one more step toward establishing LCMC as an independent organization.

Congregations and individuals are encouraged to support seminarians directly, however the association acknowledges that some may choose to contribute to a pooled effort. The LCMC Seminarian Support fund is in place for those who choose to do so. Contributions may be mailed to the LCMC offices, and should be marked as "Seminarian Support Fund."

*Joint SDRF members Tony Stoutenberg, Phyllis Andersland, Tim Baglien, and Lenae Rasmussen deserve a vote of thanks for their service. Anyone interested in serving on the new LCMC committee that will administer the LCMC Seminarian Support fund may contact Bill Sullivan, NSC, or any member of the board of trustees.*

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or by or by visiting our website at [www.lcmc.net](http://www.lcmc.net)

### BY THE WORD

NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 2, Issue 3

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PUBLISHED BY: LCMC  
HEADQUARTERS: 7000 Sheldon Rd,  
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"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith-- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast." ...

Ephesians 2:8-9

LCMC

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

# ***Leadership Transition***

## **Lake & Drum Thanked for Service; Rasmussen & Braafladt Seated**

*-- Bill Sullivan & Deb Lingen*

The annual convention brought changes to the face of your LCMC board of trustees. Two areas affirmed appointments that had been made by the board to fill vacancies which occurred in the past year. Rev. Larry Lindstrom, pastor at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Farmersville, Ohio, was affirmed by area 5 to fill the remaining term of Rev. Bill Sullivan, who had left the board last year to assume responsibilities as LCMC's National Service Coordinator.

Rev. Dale Wolf, pastor at Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota was affirmed by area 2 to fill the remaining term of Mr. Kevin Cramer, who resigned from the board earlier in 2003.

Area 1 elected Rev. Dr. Paul Braafladt of Seattle, Washington to fill the seat vacated by Robin Lake, who did not seek another term. Area 7 elected Mrs. Lenae Rasmussen, who replaces Rev. Dave Drum as the representative from the "Sun Belt."

Prior to announcing election results, convention chairman Barry Anderson took the opportunity to recognize, on behalf of the association, the invaluable service of Robin Lake and Rev. Dave Drum. He noted they have served LCMC with commitment, wisdom, and integrity. Both were invited to address the assembly, and spoke of their continued commitment to working on behalf of the association. The body extended their appreciation in rounds of applause as we thanked them for their passion and dedication. The body was then introduced to its new board of trustees for 2003-2004.

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## **NEW FUNDS ADDED**

Two additional American Funds have been added to your LCMC Retirement Savings Plan. They are: CAPITAL INCOME BUILDER and INCOME FUND OF AMERICA. Both are equity income balanced funds that historically build income for the owner as they invest in companies that regularly increase their dividends. These type of funds can be especially helpful for folks who have retired or for anyone who wants to build their income. Contact Fred Jensen at 1-866-938-8270 for more information.

# **The "State of the Association"**

Trustees Barry Anderson and Dale Wolf addressed the national gathering on the "state of the Association." Some of their observations:

- ◆ We have grown to over 80 congregations in three years, with the most remarkable activity occurring in the past 18 months. We are building the right way, as a congregationally-based association.
- ◆ We are now administratively separate from WordAlone. The process took longer and was more complex than expected. We thank the WA staff and wish the organization well, and will work together when possible on areas of common interest.
- ◆ We will be challenged to check our attitudes and break out of the mold of being told what to do. Churches will need to continue to learn how to network with each other to support mission partnerships, while resisting creeping institutionalism. We must learn not to rely on an imposed hierarchical structure because we are drawn to what we've known. Our greatest investment will be in building strong congregations, making disciples, and fulfilling the Great Commission.
- ◆ We will need to continue to look at ways of training pastors and other leaders.
- ◆ We need to work and worship well together, and celebrate our diversity in worship styles.
- ◆ We need to celebrate our effectiveness in ministry and our success in Lutheran circles. We should ask "what is God doing in your place?"-- and then listen to one another!
- ◆ We need to learn how to tell our story well - about who we are, how we can reach the broken, how we can leave behind comparisons to the ELCA.
- ◆ Our future is with new congregations, mission starts, and those who don't have the benefit of a church home.

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## ***Convention Highlights Available***

Unable to attend? Share the excitement of our convention through links on [www.LCMC.net](http://www.LCMC.net) as well as via CD's of the convention highlights. Thanks to Andy Brandt and Tim McFadyen of St. Michael - Canton, the videos were downloaded immediately and are still available on the web. Want one of your own? You may obtain a CD for use in your home computer from the LCMC office in Canton for \$5.00 to cover shipping and handling.

## **“In Christ a New Creation” - 2003 Convention Highlights - from page 1**

Monday morning's activities were highlighted by the Bible study led by Rev. Dave Mann, one of the pastors of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio and by the keynote address brought by Rev. Revenel Benoit, president of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti.

### **BIBLE STUDY**

Rev. Mann delved deeply into the biblical understanding of reconciliation in three sessions which began Monday morning, continued in the afternoon session on Monday, and concluded with a third presentation on Tuesday morning. Using a helpful PowerPoint format, Dave led us through the richness of the themes contained in the Scripture verses around which the gathering was planned.

### **TRANSFORMING POWER OF GOSPEL**

Pastor Benoit moved the convention attendees Monday morning with his testimony of deliverance from fear and the demonic oppression of Voodooism, and of the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The “new creation” that God has made of Pastor Benoit's life was a profound inspiration to those in attendance. His passion for Christ and the people of Haiti challenged us all to examine our own lives and commitment to the Great Commission. Revenel shared stories of the many ministries he and the congregations of the IELCH are involved in and invited LCMC member congregations to send servant leaders to Haiti to help in a host of mission opportunities.

### **TRAINING LEADERS - FR. WOLFAARDT**

Rev. Wolfaardt gave us much food for thought on Monday afternoon as he presented some ideas and thoughts about training leaders for our congregations. Veritas College has developed leaders for congregations around the world using a model that keeps learners in the context of the congregation. The model espoused by Veritas will no doubt be looked at closely by our own Ministry Board as they continue to research models for training leaders for LCMC congregations.

### **BREAKOUTS**

A variety of well-attended breakout sessions were held on Monday afternoon and on Tuesday morning. Offerings on Monday included a session on worship led by staff and members of Upper Arlington Lutheran Church; one led by members of the Strategic Planning Team;

another by Rev. Benoit on specific mission opportunities in Haiti; and a session led by Rev. Dave Drum on a smorgasbord of service ministries our member congregations are utilizing. Tuesday's breakout sessions included another session on worship led by Amy Williams from Elk Horn, Iowa; a session on the challenges of ministering to a culturally diverse neighborhood led by Rev. Will Scott from Fort Worth, Texas; a session on ministering to persons experiencing sexual brokenness, led by John Stolzenbach and Mary Lou Garves from Columbus, Ohio; a session on ministry standards and training models led by Rev. Dale Wolf from Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota and Rev. Kip Tyler from Lutheran Church of the Master in Omaha, Nebraska; and a session on pension matters led by Fred Jensen from Edward Jones Investments in Hopkins, Minnesota.

### **ELECTIONS**

Late Monday afternoon, four area caucuses were held to elect members to the board of trustees. *(See related story, page 3)*

### **BANQUET & “A.D. - THE MUSICAL”**

On Monday evening the convention attendees attended a lovely banquet served by members of our host congregation and then enjoyed a musical drama presentation presented by the Sr. Choir of St. Michael, Canton. “AD” recounts events beginning on Good Friday and continuing through the ascension and coming of the Holy Spirit. The compelling message, encouraging Christians to be about the work of the Great Commission, was a fitting end to the day's activities.

### **BUSINESS**

After Tuesday morning's Bible study and breakout sessions, the convention finished up its business. Outgoing trustees Robin Lake and Dave Drum were applauded for their service, and the new board of trustees was introduced. Once officially adjourned, convention-goers enjoyed one more excellent meal served by members of our host congregation before returning to their homes and congregations.

### **THANKS**

The association thanks the members of St. Michael for their gracious hospitality throughout the convention and looks forward to next year's gathering to be hosted by the members of Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota on October 3-5, 2004.

*Ed. Note: The association also thanks our staff, Bill and Sharon, and all the volunteers for helping make this event a success.*

## Strategic Planning Results

The Strategic Planning Task Force, led by chairman Rev. Chris Magnell presented to the LCMC convention the results of a survey it conducted last year. Also participating in the presentation were task force members Rev. David Mann, Mrs. Amy Williams, Dr. Jim Krier, and Rev. David Schrader.

Pr. Chris noted that the committee was not vested with power and did not take a “top down” approach, but rather “packaged” the opinions and concerns of LCMC’s membership. He observed that the process should be viewed as just the first step in our continued growth as an association.

The report itself is descriptive, rather than prescriptive, and is meant to identify who we are as an association and where we are headed. Taking the responses, Purpose and Identity Statements were crafted identifying a focus on fidelity to Scripture and following the Great Commission.

The team then identified goals from a survey of the association last fall. Surveys were sent to each pastor and each church council of member congregations, with approximately 2/3 responding. The survey was also a topic for discussion at LCMC’s first Leadership Conference last spring. Once the information was compiled, the task force employed the “POST” method in analyzing responses: Purpose, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics were identified. They then identified, in descending order, who is responsible for implementation of the results by indicating Congregation, District, or Association--with the understanding there is no hierarchy to that order (though convention-goers joked about all tasks being the responsibility of National Service Coordinator Bill Sullivan!) The overarching intent in engaging in the entire planning process is to determine how we can serve and equip LCMC churches in their Christian ministry.

Copies of the full Strategic Planning Task Force report may be obtained from the national offices.



## Ministry Board Reports

Rev. Kip Tyler, chairman of the LCMC Ministry Board, made comments on that committee’s summary report as provided to convention-goers, then fielded questions from the body. He noted that many looking to LCMC have questions about the call process, training pastors as well as lay leaders, the colloquy process, availability and transfer of pension and health benefits, as well as other serious issues. The Ministry Board is wrestling with answers to those questions in addition to continuing to refine the LCMC Ministry Standards.

They view this as an organic process, one of striving to provide standards while at the same time not mandating exactly how they will be implemented so long as the guidelines are met. The Ministry Board believes LCMC will be stronger and more flexible if it chooses not to operate with a “cookie cutter” approach, yet they seek to equip LCMC pastors and lay leaders with the highest standards of professionalism. As an example, Pr. Tyler observed that the process may mean not talking about “an alternative route” to ordination, but rather several alternative routes, perhaps utilizing distance education, regional houses of study, or partnerships creating LCMC tracks at existing seminaries.

As part of the refinement of Ministry Standards, the LCMC Board of Trustees requested that the document become a “wholly LCMC” document, expunging references to specific Lutheran denominations. The Ministry Board is striving to frame its work so that congregations will be empowered and yet still receive assistance when needed, such as with model letters of call.

Pr. Tyler noted that the Leadership Conference to be held next April is open to both lay and ordained members. Some of these issues the Ministry Board is grappling with will be addressed, and it will be an opportunity for fellowship and relaxation in a beautiful setting as well. Above all, the Ministry Board desires input from the membership.

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## LCMC Health Plan: an Option for Your Church?

The LCMC Board of Trustees asks each congregation to consider the benefits of utilizing LCMC’s joint health plan with the WordAlone Network. The more members we enroll, the better our options-- and at this time, it is important to recognize that without the participation of WordAlone and in particular St. Andrew’s (Mahtomedi, MN) this health plan would not be possible. The ability to offer coverage makes LCMC a viable option to those who cannot or will not participate in other plans. Please consider supporting it.

# LCMC-Lutheran Men Formed to Support Mission

by Rev. Roger Lindler



The LCMC Convention endorsed the idea of a men's organization, LCMC-LM, whose main purpose is to support mission congregations. It is now in the process of organizing. Two funds were put forward: The Mission Gift Fund supports mission congregations with dollars to purchase start-up items such as computers and copiers. The second fund is the Mission Loan Fund and will be available for mission and smaller congregations for building and property purchase.

There are two main ways of raising funds. Every man in an LCMC congregation will be asked to give \$12 each year to the Mission Loan Fund. At this time, that could mean from \$60,000 to \$100,000 for the Mission Loan Fund. Of course, while the effort is aimed primarily at men, women are also invited to participate. You can become a voting member of LCMC-LM with this \$12 annual gift.

A second way of raising funds is the Committee of 100. This is a committee that never meets! Give \$100 to the LCMC Committee of 100 and \$90 will go into the Mission Gift Fund, and \$10 into the administrative fund. The administrative fund will be used for postage, paper, etc., as well as travel expenses for a once-a-year meeting of the officers. E-mail, snail mail, and telephone will be used for most business.

Are you interested in being the "Key Man" in your congregation? The job description is to promote LCMC-Lutheran Men by example, talk about the Mission Gift Fund and Mission Loan Fund, and distribute literature that will be provided. If you will be your congregation's "Key Man" e-mail Pastor Roger Lindler at rogerlindler@yahoo.com.

It is also hoped that the organization will receive memorials, bequests, and special gifts to assist mission congregations. A Grant Request Committee will make decisions on distribution of funds.

The first year interim officers are: President - Harold Lewis (AL); Vice President - Bill Lane (SC); Secretary - Phil Shoner (CA); Treasurer - Pat Lukasik (MI); Pastoral Advisor - Roger Lindler (SC).

The Grant Request Committee consists of: John Leistad (IA); Barry Brown (SC); Steve Hutchenson (NE); Pastoral Advisor - David Drum (AZ).

Pastor Kip Tyler of Lutheran Church of the Master is the Honorary Chairman of the Committee of 100, having given the first Committee of 100 gift.

The LCMC Trustees agreed to provide bookkeeping services for the organization at the LCMC office in Canton, Michigan. Send your check to LCMC-LM, c/o St. Michael Lutheran Church, 700 Sheldon Rd., Canton, Michigan, 48187-2753.

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## LCMC's own "Cookie Monster"

surfaced last May when the Great Lakes District met and congregations wanted to know how they could help St. Michael Lutheran Church - Canton, MI, in hosting the LCMC convention. National Service Coordinator Bill Sullivan replied with one word: "**Cookies!**" The idea, of course, was to have members of the GLD congregations of Michigan and Ohio bake cookies for breaks at the convention.



When GLD gathered again in August, St. Andrew - Farmersville, OH, volunteered to be the Cookie Coordinators for the breaks, since they had the farthest to travel. The two Ottawa Lake congregations of St. Michael and Zion coordinated continental breakfasts with danish and other pastries, and Living Stones - Warren, MI, brought the fresh fruits for all the breakfasts and breaks. Purchase of the fruit was helped by a cash donation from a member of a non-LCMC congregation in Ohio. St. Michael - Canton, the hosting congregation, provided the other meals and beverages for the convention.

All of the food was plentiful and tasty, and there were literally **hundreds of cookies!** Barb Weide, who coordinated the St. Michael - Canton volunteers for the food service remarked "there were a lot of compliments on the food!" And, it was reported that Pastor Bill, on occasion, was seen enjoying "one or two" cookies!

Thanks to all of the Great Lakes District congregations who helped out, and especially to all the congregational volunteers. *Looking forward to Fargo . . . .*



- by Bob Herbon

## ***From the desk of Barry Anderson:***

### Some comments on the "State of the Association" and changes in leadership

To the Membership of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ:

In parliamentary societies where a permanent record of the proceedings is kept there is an opportunity for members of the body to "revise and extend remarks."

This letter to members, supporters and friends of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ could reasonably be viewed as a revision and extension of my brief remarks to the national convention of LCMC and an update on activities since that time.

Thanks to the generosity of the member congregations of LCMC, as well as individual donors, the association is in the black and operating with a balanced budget (thanks at least in part to the able leadership of John Chatelain, now serving a three year term as your treasurer). In approximately three and a half years, membership has gone from zero to more than eighty congregations. Congregations and Districts are busy planning new mission starts, ways to create new seminary models and partnerships with other Christian organizations to spread the Gospel and fulfill the Great Commission.

As the Chair of the Board of Trustees of your association, I can tell you that I have never seen a governing board more united or determined to carry out the will of the membership of LCMC. When you see David Drum or Robin Lake, our two board members who are not returning for another term, thank them for their service to the association. Dave and Robin continue to work on your behalf in their congregations, in their districts and this association and by supporting the goals and objectives of LCMC.

And I'm pleased to report that two new members have been elected to the board of trustees, Lenae Rasmussen and Paul Braafladt. Lenae and Paul have been working within the association from the very beginning and will bring valuable experience to the board. I look forward to working with our new board members on the various LCMC projects now underway or planned.

Finally, the board has unanimously elected new leadership by selecting Dale W. Wolf, senior pastor at Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota, and Larry Lindstrom, pastor at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Farmersville, Ohio, as chair and vice chair of the association, respectively and also unanimously reelected Deb Lingen as Secretary.

I need to share with you a thought about that last item.

The LCMC bylaws require the board to select leadership from among the members of the board elected at the national convention. Although I was eligible to seek another one year term as board chair, I declined to do so.

I reached this conclusion for several reasons, not the least of which is the conviction that I developed over several months that LCMC is heading into a new phase of its young life and leaders with different skills would best serve the needs of the association. I could not be more delighted that Dale and Larry have agreed to serve in their new leadership positions and that Deb has agreed to another "tour of duty" as board secretary.

Sometimes a leader best serves by recognizing when the time for change has come. In my judgment, that time is now.

I remain committed to the goals of this association. I remain a member of the board of trustees. I see a bright future ahead for LCMC and I look forward to doing my part to help the association grow and prosper.

Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to serve as the chair of the board of trustees of an association of Lutheran congregations. But as I told those assembled at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Canton, Michigan, for our national convention, this service has been a privilege not a burden. Not only have I met other Christians with awe-inspiring faith, this experience of service has forced me to re-examine, and deepen, my own faith commitment. And although I claim no special theological understanding, my involvement in this renewal movement has convinced me that Lutherans, the priesthood of all believers, have the gift, and perhaps the duty, to carry the message of Christ crucified to everyone.

With warm personal regards, I remain,

Very truly yours,

Barry Anderson

Member, Board of Trustees, LCMC

Apple Valley, MN

*Editor's Note: The following letter will be sent to all LCMC congregations as a year-end stewardship appeal. Please prayerfully consider your support of our association.*

## A Message from the Treasurer

Dear Friends in Christ,

The LCMC Convention this fall in Canton, MI, was thrilling indeed. We heard how Christ battled apartheid in South Africa and racism in America through the conversion of Rev. Gerrit Wolfaardt. We also learned how Pastor Benoit and The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti are bringing God's merciful plan for salvation to desperate people. Yes, in Christ a New Creation is certainly possible.

No less exciting than His work in these great missionaries, is what Christ is doing through LCMC. The rapid growth of LCMC continues. The number of member congregations now exceeds 80, with several congregations in the preliminary stages of joining and new mission starts proliferating. LCMC districts continue to coalesce providing many services and much needed fellowship to our member congregations.

LCMC's message is easy to sell as the demand for a congregationally based Lutheran alternative remains strong. People are hungry for the Gospel in its beautiful simplicity, the Gospel of the Reformation, a Gospel unencumbered by unnecessary rituals and top down political agendas.

LCMC's energy continues to flow from the grass roots upward. Our congregations don't wait for directions from headquarters to take action. On the contrary, we are constantly learning from them what really works in ministry.

As church associations go, LCMC is in the infancy stage. Yet we're fully functional with excellent health insurance, retirement plans and ministry standards, which are adaptable to the needs of the congregations and the clergy.

Since day one, the LCMC vision was that most ministries take place within, among, and between the congregations. Therefore it has not been our intent that large amounts of dollars flow to national headquarters.

Although we believe directing benevolence is the job of the congregations, LCMC has certain cash flow needs. Our general fund pays for our small office within St. Michael Lutheran Church in Canton. It also pays the modest expenses of the board as well as the salaries of our two employees.

In addition to our general fund, LCMC has two restricted funds dedicated toward new mission congregations and seminarian support. LCMC charges no administrative expenses to these funds. Therefore every dollar given will find its way to the intended purpose. We graciously offer these funds should you desire to make use of them.

Many non-member congregations now want a piece of National Service Coordinator Bill Sullivan's time to hear the good news about LCMC. To satisfy this demand, the board recently made the decision to increase his job to full time. Given the rapid growth of the association, it is foreseeable that other additional help may soon be required. Therefore, please consider increasing your contribution to our general fund and if you have not done so in the past, consider a contribution now.

What a privilege it has been for me to be personally involved in the formation of LCMC. As Treasurer of the association, I wish to thank you all for making 2003 a great year in so many ways. Much work remains to be done as we strive to be Jesus to so many yet to be reached. Please consider a tax-deductible gift to LCMC as a part of your year-end planning. Also ask God's guidance about including LCMC as a line item in your 2003 budget.

May the Lord's richest blessings surround you throughout the holidays and as you start the New Year.

In Christ,

John C. Chatelain  
LCMC Treasurer





## **HERE WE STAND!**

### **Dynamic Preachers and Speakers Highlight Our 2003 Gathering**

*- by Lenae Rasmussen*

This summer, from Sunday, July 20 through Tuesday, July 22 over 250 Lutherans gathered in the Iowa heartland around the battle cry "HERE WE STAND!" as the Augsburg Lutheran Churches (LCMC) held its Third Annual Convention and Assembly at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Audubon, Iowa.

Based on Martin Luther's famous and historic confessional stand before Emperor and Pope at the Diet of Worms, "Here We Stand!" is the ALC's battle cry to congregations, pastors, and individual Christians for our day. It calls us to stand on God's Holy Word no matter what the cost, and not yield our witness and confession to church organizations and a culture driven more and more by the spirit of paganism rather than by the Holy Spirit.

Again and again the theme was highlighted by dynamic preachers, Bible study leaders, and speakers as a message of hope and the call to faithfulness in Christ reached out to Lutherans across the country.

Our guest lecturer, Dr. Robert A. J. Gagnon, distinguished Associate Professor of New Testament from Pittsburg Theological Seminary, set the tone on Sunday with a dramatic and in-depth exposition of the Bible's teaching on human sexuality and marriage with particular emphasis on the attack posed by those who would substitute the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender liberation agenda on church and society. Dr. Gagnon is the author of *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*, Abingdon, 2001 (for a great summary of his message, see <http://members.aol.com/gaymatter/gagnon1.htm>).

Rev. Homer Larsen dramatically introduced our convention theme on Monday morning with a powerful devotion on Martin Luther in which, through Rev. Larsen's words, we were asked to put ourselves in Luther's position at the Diet of Worms and see what it might have meant for us. To be a Christian is to be a confessor every day facing the crisis into which God has sent us here and now.

Dr. Larry Gedde inspired and challenged us anew to be faithful to the great treasure of our Lutheran heritage. "Red Velvet Cake and Other Delights: When Memories and Traditions are Forgotten—Part II" was a continuation of the theme he introduced at the previous year's Augsburg convention. Using the memorable illustration of the "life sucking frog beetle" as metaphor for the ELCA's

effect on confessional Lutherans, Dr. Gedde showed how vital it is for us to resist the drift toward faithlessness in North American Lutheranism and indeed all of Protestant Christianity today. He reiterated his ten points for building the Augsburg fellowship and challenged us especially to continue stressing mission church development and Luther's Small Catechism.

In our Tuesday morning plenary session, Dr. Oliver Olson, a Claus Harms House Regent, and Dr. Eugene Boe, Dean of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, MN, explained the challenges and goals of the crucial matter of theological education for pastors who will serve our churches. According to Dr. Boe, the Claus Harms goals are very similar to those of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary. Dr. Olson explained the Claus Harms effort [see *The Crux of the Matter*, Vol 2, No. 5, (May-June 2003)] and explained the significance of Jan Hus' motto ("a swan will come who will sing better") which will be the motto encircling the Claus Harms seal.

Perhaps the best thing about the convention, however, was the worship. Dynamic preaching was the order of the day from our Augsburg pastors. Rev. Jack Torgersen gave the devotion on Tuesday morning, Rev. Walt Kukkonen and Rev. Dick Smith gave the Bible studies on 2 Corinthians 1:18-24, and Rev. Perry Toso, Rev. John Rasmussen, and Rev. Mark Jamison preached for our evening worship services.

For many of us, this was the best convention we've ever attended. The worship was awesome, varying from traditional, to folk, to contemporary! The versatility of our musicians and our worship leaders was spectacular. We were fed with the Bread of Life and the Living Word every day—in our plenary sessions, our worship services, our devotions, our Bible studies, and our consensus building sessions. As Rev. Cher Clay put it, "Jesus is here with us," uniting us with one another in Him.

Permit me one final word. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to the members of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church for all their hard work preparing for the gathering. You were such gracious hosts throughout the entire convention. The advertising, the banners, the food, the table decorations (model Augsburg boats) and the big Augsburg lifeboat out front were superb! We praise and thank God for you and your fellowship.



*Lenae Rasmussen is the Executive Chair of Augsburg Lutheran Churches, and a member of Peace Lutheran in Gulf Shores, AL.*

## Evangelical/Renewal District Enjoys Convention Fellowship

- by Pastor Dave Drum

In the midst of the eventful LCMC convention, friends in the E/RD found time to catch-up and roll up their sleeves with an eye to the future. The first order of business was to organize positions to help keep us accountable and active in our mission. Bob Nordvall was selected as our district pastor, and Kevin Rennells and David Drum as co-coordinators of the district.

Next we heard about exciting mission work taking place, including:

- † the growing mission congregation **City on a Hill** in Manhattan Beach, CA
- † Lutheran Vietnamese Ministries and Pastor John Dovich
- † establishing relations with Pastor Enrique Estrada and the ministries based around Monterrey, Mexico.

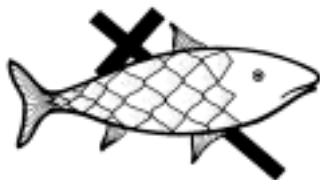
District membership has grown to six congregations in the U.S., plus the international congregations mentioned above, and two additional congregations were voting to join during October.

We heard a preview on the 2004 LCMC Youth gathering scheduled for next June at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Altoona, IA. The theme will be "Pressing On" based on Philippians 3: *"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

The E/RD also established a ministry team for handling the colloquy process.

E/RD welcomes the chance to discuss opportunities for ministry and mission work.

For our statement of purpose or for more information, see: <http://evangelical-district.org> or contact Pastor Dave Drum at [dmdrum@juno.com](mailto:dmdrum@juno.com).



## Great Lakes District

by Bob Herbon, GLD Coordinator

The 5th Great Lakes District Gathering was held Saturday, November 8 at St. Michael Lutheran Church - Ottawa Lake, MI. Devotions were led by Bob Herbon, and centered around the End Time Season, specifically the lectionary readings for Last Judgment Sunday (*see Living Stones' Worship page - Season of End Time* [http:// www.livingstoneslutheran.net/worship.shtml](http://www.livingstoneslutheran.net/worship.shtml))

### LCMC Convention

The group discussed the LCMC convention and several attendees gave their impressions. All agreed that the keynote speakers, Revs. Gerrit Wolfaardt and Revenel Benoit, were outstanding!

### Congregational Updates

Pr. Mose Henney is retiring as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church - Ottawa Lake, MI. He and his wife, Robin, will be moving to the Las Vegas area to be closer to their daughter and grandchildren. Mose is looking into the possibility of starting a mission congregation at the retirement community where he and Robin will be living. We wish him God Speed, and thank God for his service!

### GLD Ministry Committee

Pr. Mark Gibbs gave an update on the GLD Ministry Committee. After the August gathering in Van Buren, OH, the committee colloquized Pr. William Scott of Ft. Worth, TX, and received him as a member of the LCMC clergy. At the November meeting the Ministry Committee met with two individuals interested in being part of the LCMC clergy, one as a contract minister, and the other as a certified minister.

Great Lakes District will meet again in the spring.

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## EPIPHANY HELPS EDUCATE

- by Kathy Sandmann, Epiphany Group Secretary

The Epiphany District encourages all LCMC congregations to consider joining us to focus on educational issues. We have Sunday School and Vacation Bible School materials available; we hope to be able to offer Adult Bible Studies in the near future. In addition, we have a series of educational, easy-to-read booklets addressing current issues of concern in the Lutheran Church today.

If you would like to be a part of our group, or if you would just like more information, please contact Epiphany District secretary Kathy Sandmann at [kathysandmann@hotmail.com](mailto:kathysandmann@hotmail.com).

# LCMC Goes International!

Delegates to the 3rd national gathering of LCMC overwhelmingly approved two motions that have set this association on an exciting path.

In the first resolution, the convention commended our international partners who were present for their commitment and courage in living out faith in Jesus Christ in their settings, and committed to them our ongoing support.

In a related action, the body requested the Board of Trustees examine and develop a plan to strengthen our relationship with our international partners, with the purpose of forming LCMC into an international Lutheran association. In so doing, the association opened the way to welcome into our fellowship Lutheran congregations in other parts of the world.

In step with the action of the body, members of the Evangelical/Renewal District met and welcomed into their midst Pastor John Dovich and the congregations of Lutheran Vietnamese Ministries as well as Pastor Enrique Estrada and the ministries based around Monterrey, Mexico.

