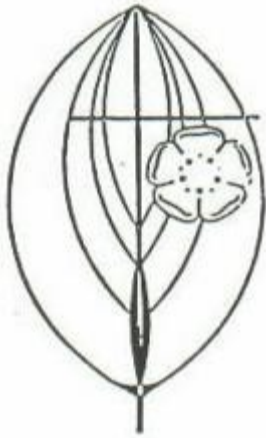


NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH



Messiah Messenger

July/August 2015

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE REV. DR.
MARTIN K. ERHARDT
PASTOR

THE REV. DR.
JOHN MARK GOERSS
PASTOR EMERITUS

JANICE HOFREITER
ORGANIST AND
CHOIR DIRECTOR

EINE KLEINE DISTRICT CONVENTION REPORT

Every three years, each of the 35 districts of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) meets in convention to elect officers, set policy, and hear from member congregations, district officers, synodical (denominational) representatives, and missionaries. Our English District – one of two non-geographical districts in the LCMS – convened June 17-20 at Concordia University in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Each congregation in the district may send one pastoral delegate and one lay delegate to the convention. At this 55th convention of the English District, Herb Gishlick and I represented Messiah.

I encourage you to read the summary of convention news available at blogs.lcms.org/2015/english-district-elects-hardy. It will give you an overview of convention business; I will mention some highlights here and reflect on a few of them. This brief review of church structure and governance will make it to understand convention news:

Messiah is a congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The word “synod” comes from a Greek term for meeting or assembly; literally it means “to journey together”. It's the name we use for our entire church body (denomination), which includes over 6000 congregations in the United States, and a few in Canada and other countries. From local to global, this is where Messiah fits in:

Congregation: The Lutheran Church of the Messiah, Princeton, NJ

Circuit: New York (10 congregations in New York and New Jersey)

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The symbol in the upper left corner expresses by means of candle and messianic rose the worship of the Messiah and the Truth of Christ. The cross signifies His central deed and the five crosses in the rose the sacred wounds.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

District: English (24 circuits in 19 states and the province of Ontario)

The president of the English District is our bishop.

For more information about the English District, see:

englishdistrict.org/about-us/our-history

Synod: The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (35 districts)

For more information about the LCMS, see:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheran_Church-Missouri_Synod

Now on to convention news beyond that included in the summary on the LCMS website:

- 1) The district recognized Pastor Goerss on this 45th anniversary year of his ordination for pastoral ministry. Herb and I received a certificate of recognition on his behalf, which will be presented to Pastor Goerss in a worship service this summer.
- 2) Pastor Matthew Harrison, president of the LCMS, addressed the convention, encouraging us to “stick to the simple gospel message”. That, said Pastor Harrison, must continue to be the center of the church's mission and public witness. It's easy to become distracted from the gospel, and for the church to become something other than the church – a social club, a political party, a philosophical society, or a provider of religious ceremonies. The work of the church includes ceremonies and social events and the gospel does have political and philosophical implications, but our reason for being is God come to us in Jesus Christ. We proclaim that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). The Holy Spirit draws us together in worship, where God feeds us with his Word and sacraments. That, said Pastor Harrison, must stay at the center of our life and work as Christ's church.

Pastor Harrison's address encouraged me. He is well aware of controversies that divide the church, and spoke about those gently, pastorally, and encouragingly, making us aware of opportunities for agreement and reconciliation while keeping the gospel front and center. In addition to being committed to the centrality of the gospel, Pastor Harrison is funny, intelligent, candid, and approachable. He has an informal, self-deprecating way of speaking that makes room for people who disagree with each other and with him, and takes much of the bitterness out of disagreements.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

- 3) Each convention includes a theological convocation, which includes teaching and discussion. At our convention, the teaching theologian was Dr. Joel Lehenbauer of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). Dr. Lehenbauer spoke about the church's identity in a post-Christendom world, in which we are much more an insurgent movement than the dominant cultural institution that some Americans apparently remember. He encouraged us to maintain our independence from secular and pagan cultural forces, to remain God's peculiar people (as in Exodus 19:5 and 1 Peter 2:9), and to think of our congregations as colonies or outposts of God's kingdom.

One thing I appreciated about Dr. Lehenbauer's presentation is his attention to and respect for good theology from non-LCMS, non-Lutheran sources – theology that we too often ignore or dismiss simply because it comes from an untrusted source, i.e. someone outside our church body. Dr. Lehenbauer drew extensively on the work of theologians Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon in their book, *Resident Aliens* (Abingdon Press, 1989). He called listening to and learning from theologians outside our church body “doctrinal humility”, adding that it has a long history among orthodox Lutherans illustrated by this quote from Lutheran Bible scholar F.E.W. Mayer:

“After all, as great a theologian as Martin Luther had gathered but a few crumbs of the article of Christ, which is so rich, so deep, so all-embracing, that throughout eternity it will be our delight to study the marvelous depth of God’s mysterious being. In the New Testament *koinonia* [fellowship], the elder shares the simple faith of the child; the learned theologian in the remarkable insights of the humble peasant; the successful pastor in the victory of the experienced Christian in the pew; yes, and more often than may appear, the orthodox theologian not only gives to, but also receives from, a heterodox teacher some spiritual gift. This is the glory of the New Testament fellowship, that every Christian shares in all humility, but also in deep gratitude the manifold blessings of all (“The New Testament Concept of Fellowship,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* XXIII [September 1952]: 643-644).

- 4) A district convention involves a lot of sitting indoors and listening to people talk about serious, important issues. It was a refreshing change of pace, therefore, to honor at a music- and fun-filled outdoor pig roast that faithful, dedicated, and energetic servant of the Lord, our outgoing district president, Bishop David Stechholz. Organized by Pastor Eric Forss and the Western Michigan circuit of our district, the farewell dinner included the multi-talented comedy trio of synod president Harrison on the banjo,

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

vice-president John Wohlrabe on the harmonica, and the Rev. Fritz Baue on the guitar. It was a relaxing, uplifting, and unifying event for the district, a pleasure to attend, and a fitting tribute to Bishop Stechholz. We wish him, his wife Janet, and their family well as they enjoy a well-deserved rest from the demands of presiding over the English District. We look forward to the ministry of our newly elected district president and bishop, Pastor Jamison Hardy of Peace Lutheran Church, McMurray, PA.

- 5) I was elected the pastoral delegate to represent the congregations of the New York and Philadelphia circuits of the English District at the next synod convention, July 9-14, 2016, in Milwaukee. Elected alternate pastoral delegate was our neighbor Pastor Fred Gerlach of Bethany in Ewing. Michael Coffey of Trinity in Scarsdale, NY, was elected lay delegate, and Walter Dissen of Faith in Chesapeake, VA, was elected alternate lay delegate.

I hope this description of the district convention gives you a better sense of the church of which we're a part, and of Messiah's place in it. It's good to know that as an outpost of God's kingdom, we are not alone.

Pastor Erhardt



Visit our website to listen to audio recordings of Sunday Sermons.
<http://www.princetonlutheranchurch.org/services.html>

NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FINANCIAL AUDIT

In the coming months, Messiah will conduct an internal audit of our congregational financial records for 2014. The Executive Board decided to do this as a good stewardship practice, not because the board suspects any dishonesty. Trish Oelrich and John Fischer II will conduct the audit. The audit will include verifying contribution records. If you receive a letter from the audit team (not everyone will) asking you to confirm contribution records from 2014, don't be alarmed or offended. They will use your records to verify church records, not to audit you. The auditors will keep individual contribution records confidential and appreciate your help ensuring the integrity of Messiah's financial records.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, July 9, 7:00 PM

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, August 13, 7:00 PM

Executive Board Meeting

Prayer Shawl Ministry

will not meet during the summer, but will resume in September. This doesn't mean they are not active!



Siv Mitt, one of the founding members of the prayer shawl ministry in 2006, has just finished her 100th shawl. Well done, Siv — you are an inspiration to all!



UPCOMING READINGS IN JULY

EASTER, PENTECOST YEAR B	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost <i>July 5, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10	Psalms 48	2 Corinthians 12:2-10	Mark 6:1-13
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost <i>July 12, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19	Psalms 24	Ephesians 1:3-14	Mark 6:14-29
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost <i>July 19, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 7:1-14a	Psalms 89:20-37	Ephesians 2:11-22	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost <i>July 26, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 11:1-15	Psalms 14	Ephesians 3:14-21	John 6:1-21

UPCOMING READINGS IN AUGUST

SEASON AFTER PENTECOST YEAR B	FIRST READING	PSALM	SECOND READING	GOSPEL READING
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>August 2, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a	Psalms 51:1-12	Ephesians 4:1-16	John 6:24-35
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost <i>August 9, 2015</i>	2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33	Psalms 130	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	John 6:35, 41-51
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost <i>August 16, 2015</i>	1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3- 14	Psalms 111	Ephesians 5:15-20	John 6:51-58
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>August 23, 2015</i>	1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43	Psalms 84	Ephesians 6:10-20	John 6:56-69
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost <i>August 30, 2015</i>	Song of Solomon 2:8- 13	Psalms 45:1-2, 6-9	James 1:17-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23



SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR DRAWS TO A CLOSE

The Sunday School year drew to a close at the end of May. It was a bittersweet occasion: Drew Von Bergen and Megan Tria are leaving us to begin studying in the Fall with Pastor Erhardt in preparation for their Confirmation! We will miss them, but we are also excited for them. It alleviates our separation anxiety somewhat to know that they will still lend their considerable talents to some Sunday School projects, including our eagerly-anticipated (at least by us!) upcoming Christmas Extravaganza. And luckily, the lively and lovable terpsichorean Katy Von B. and the preternaturally scholarly Roger Tabris will still be a part of our class, along with whoever else joins up in September.

We celebrated the end of the year with a mini-graduation ceremony, complete with caps and gowns, certificates dignified by Messiah's official seal and the Pastor's signature, and the rousing strains of Pomp and Circumstance, courtesy of an iPhone. The gowns were actually re-purposed children's choir robes, and the quite authentic looking caps were fashioned out of blue card stock with lighter blue tassels made of yarn.



Roger Tabris leads blindfolded Megan Tria and Katy Von Bergen, along with an apparently headless Drew Von Bergen, around an obstacle-strewn room as part of a Sunday School lesson.

As the end of the school year loomed ever closer, we tried to cram as much as we could into each lesson, while still coming up with activities to make the spiritual meaning memorable. In one slightly offbeat class, we read in Luke chapter 24 about the disciples who encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Despite walking along with him and discussing the hot topics of the day, the disciples were unable to "see" that their companion was Christ. You might say that they were "blind" to what was going on around them . . . So one part of the lesson was devoted to very thoroughly blindfolding all but one of the students so that they could have the experience of not seeing what was right in front of them, and having the remaining "sighted" student lead them carefully through an impromptu obstacle course with the goal of not having anyone bonk into the random objects along the way.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL YEAR DRAWS TO A CLOSE (CONTINUED)

The students became quite rigorous about the measures they took to make sure they wouldn't be able to see something by mistake. Drew Von Bargen, for example, in his quest for authenticity, put on his jacket and zipped it up with his head completely submerged inside. When he joined the line of blindfolded students being led around by Roger Tabris, it looked as though Washington Irving's Headless Horseman were dancing at the tail end of a conga line. At the end of the class, after readings, crafts, the "conga line," and discussion, students came away with a sense of Jesus's enduring presence, and the limitations of relying too heavily on senses like our sight.

Over the summer, in addition to enjoying the weather and making the most of the vacation time, we will be cracking open our books, preparing for the coming school year. There is always more to learn, more to teach, more to discuss, and more faith to encourage. Teaching Sunday School is a blessing. Preparing for these classes encourages us to explore and experience the various books of the Bible in greater depth and in new ways. Working through the Word with the students and hearing their thoughts reveals new layers of meaning as well. We miss the students and the classes already, and we are looking forward eagerly to the beginning of the new school year and to new adventures with the class.

As always, if you have suggestions for activities or topics for Sunday School, or would like to assist, please don't hesitate to let us know. You can contact Miranda Hempel at mirandahempel@gmail.com.



Katy Von Bargen (left) and Megan Tria (right) hold up their diplomas signifying that they have satisfactorily completed the year's coursework and are ready to move up to the next level in their Bible studies.

MAY 2ND CHURCH POTLUCK



CHILDREN'S SERMON: OBJECT LESSON WITH AN OIL LAMP



CONFIRMATION/NEW MEMBERS



Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, May 24.



Our Confirmands

Dan Baer, Jon Wackerman, Alex Block



**TRENTON THUNDER
VS.
HARRISBURG SENATORS
JUNE 7, 2015**



Above: Dan Baer and his friend Xavier ready to bat.



Great day for a ball game!

Below (L to R): Petey, Pastor Erhardt, and
David Steinnagel enjoying the sun.



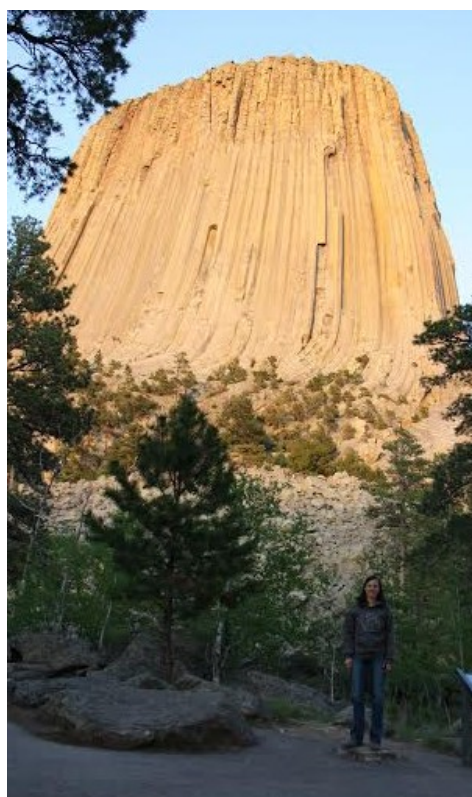
DORIS AND NADINE'S ADVENTURE TO THE AMERICAN WEST



Journey To 50 States Completed
Doris kisses the ground as she leaves
North Dakota, the final state on her list!



Bison (above) and bears (below), oh my!



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Do you recognize someone in this picture? More than one?

Where are they? (Hint: It's a college)

Can you guess why they're in such a good mood?



Photo courtesy of Messiah archives

July 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 9:30am Holy Communion	6	7	8	9 7pm Executive Board Meeting	10	11
12 9:30am Holy Communion	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 9:30am Holy Communion	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 9:30am Holy Communion	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 9:30am Holy Communion	3	4	5	6	7	1
						8
9 9:30am Holy Communion	10	11	12	13 7pm Executive Board Meeting	14	15
16 9:30am Holy Communion	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 9:30am Holy Communion	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 9:30am Holy Communion	31					



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF THE MESSIAH

407 Nassau Street at Cedar Lane
Princeton, NJ 08540

Phone: 609-924-3642
lcmprinceton@gmail.com
www.princetonlutheranchurch.org

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