

**Learning from Luther on mission:
Make sure the church locates
the mission in His Word**

“They [chief priests and scribes] told him [Herod], ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet [Micah]’” (Matt. 2:5).

The church is God’s instrument to make disciples of all nations. Epiphany is the church season in which the church highlights God’s mission, especially to the Gentiles. The Gentiles are a stewardship to the church from the Lord, given to her in order to bring them from darkness to light. As the Promised Land was given to the Israelites but they still had to defeat the seven pagan nations, the world too has been declared righteous through His Son. The church, though, still must battle for the harvest which He has given.

Mission as a gift of stewardship from the Lord inherently bears the responsibility of doing it God’s way. It is God’s way or no way, really.

Luther in his preaching on the Epiphany text of the Wise Men (Matt. 2:1-12, preached in the year 1532) first highlights the universal scope of the Baby’s saving reach:

Through this story the Lord wanted to make known and validate His coming not only among the Jews, but also among the Gentiles, so that everybody might know that He existed, and none could make the excuse or be allowed to say He had kept Himself hidden, so that nobody could have known about Him (*Sermons of Luther: The House Postils*, Vol. 1, edited by Eugene F. A. Klug, 197).

Luther then preaches extensively on where to find the Baby. The Wise Men mistakenly at first believe He is in Jerusalem, the religious capital of the Jewish world. Wrong. Luther says:

Thus the wise men miscalculated then. The way they think about Christ is that, if He is the King of the Jews, He will occupy the Royal City and castle. And so they head straight for Jerusalem; but when they arrive there, they find that they have erred. What to do? They refer to the Scriptures, according to which the Jews knew that the King of the Jews is not to be born in Jerusalem but in Bethlehem of Judea, as recorded in the prophet Micah. The Word is the trustworthy start, and it guides them straight to Christ. Without and apart from the Word, they would not have found Christ the King (Ibid, 201).

What has this to do with God’s mission by His church? Luther explains:

The same phenomenon is true among us too. All the world looks for the Christian church at a council, with the pope and his retinue. But to try to locate the Christian church by a council and pope is like the wise men trying to find Christ in Jerusalem. ... The wise men, accordingly, stick to the Word. ... This very Word is their light and guide. ... So, it is by God’s great, overflowing grace that the Gentiles—having neither temple nor priesthood—stumble upon the Word of the prophet and stick to it (Ibid, 203).

The church is tempted to draw the Gentiles apart from the Word, for example, by using entertainment as attraction. Fundamental, though, to God’s mission is God’s Word, the star that leads to the Christ. Outward trappings—no matter how extravagant—do not lead to the Christ if the Word is not present, preached, and proclaimed. And the humblest hut—as a manger—is the most extravagant house of God if the Word is there, as it cradles Christ.

The Rocky Mountain District is poor in many things but what it does have makes it rich—the Word of God. The Word is present, believed, and proclaimed from pulpit and classroom, by the new mission starts in Aurora, Colo., and Riverton, Utah, and the continuing mission of Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care and Cordero de Dios.

*Rev. Randall Golter
District President*



Send news to Jan Hoener

5446 Knoll Place
Highlands Ranch, CO 80130
E-mail: janhoener@comcast.net

March issue deadline: Jan. 14

*When possible, send photos digitally,
in JPEG format, 300 dpi.*

MISSION FOCUS

New church plants meet needs in their communities

The Rocky Mountain District mission department facilitates the development of healthy ministries in keeping with the district's stated mission—*Igniting Church and Culture for Christ*. These ministries include new mission church plants. Each mission is unique in terms of culture, history, and needs.

One such mission, Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in southeast Aurora, Colo., had its beginnings five years ago as an outgrowth from its mother church, Mount Olive in Aurora. Initially the new church plant followed a conventional growth model but encountered numerous setbacks and challenges along the way.

Through these challenges, it became evident that God was reminding the core group that He is the builder of His church according to His plan. Part of His plan was sending Pastor Dustin Lappe and his family to work in building up this new congregation.

Without a physical building, the Cross of Christ core met as groups in homes from March through September 2009. Last Oct. 4, the congregation celebrated its "grand opening" with its first service in the Southland Stadium Theaters in Aurora.

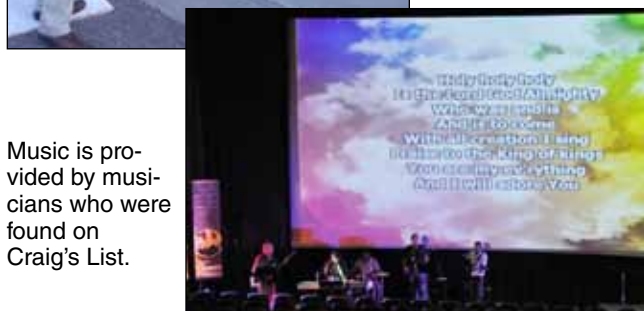


Pastor Lappe leads worshipers during a service in a theater setting.

The congregation has received many people who have had no church home or who have been "de-churched." Some come to the theaters to enjoy a movie, only to stay for church or to return to the church the next week. Each week, more new worshipers join the group. A nearby coffee house has opened its doors to provide a place for Bible studies.



Each week a cart is loaded with supplies for the worship service and nursery.



Music is provided by musicians who were found on Craig's List.



Members and visitors gather at 9 a.m. for coffee and conversation.



While the adults worship in one theater, another is used to care for children in a special children's church and nursery.





The logistics of holding such a service include hauling everything necessary in a (former) motorcycle trailer. A worship cart and children's nursery items are unloaded and reloaded every week.

Pastor Lappe said, "It is a blessing to not have a church building. It has made us be in the community."

Cross of Christ is an example of a mission congregation that made a new start after several years of struggle.

Another recent mission plant is Light of the Valley Lutheran Church in Riverton (metro Salt Lake City), Utah.

Light of the Valley faces many challenges not typical of a new mission. With support from Grace Lutheran Church in Sandy and other Lutherans in the Salt Lake City area, Light of the Valley has sought to reach new people in a growing part of the metropolitan area. This area often is referred to as "the largest domestic mission field" in the United States.

In a practical sense, even the business of finding a building or place to worship is a challenge in Utah. One common option for new missions is to rent a space in a school. However, since the school board in Riverton is entirely Mormon, they oppose a Christian church using any of their spaces. Retail space can be found, but the cost is prohibitive. The congregation, which formed about five years ago, has rented spaces in a car dealership and a mortuary. Every time it changes locations, it loses members.

Currently, the congregation meets near a strip mall and has a \$6,000 monthly rental fee. The owner of the building has recently placed it on the market, and it is questionable whether Light of the Valley will be in a financial position to purchase the building. The required market feasibility study alone carries a price tag of \$15,000.

Establishing a Christian church in an urban area that



Young people enjoyed the day camp/vacation Bible school at Light of the Valley last summer.

is more than 50 percent Mormon presents some unique challenges. People are not necessarily unfriendly or antagonistic, but they often are closed to Christian outreach. Additionally, those who have rejected Mormonism tend to reject God altogether.

The mission of Light of the Valley is to feed believers through the Word and Sacraments and to grow this church. There are many good reasons to stay strong in this mission. Many people want to know just what it means to be a Lutheran and will thus engage in theological discussions more easily.

Eventually the congregation would like to offer day care and early childhood education. God is guiding the development of this church and has blessed it with the leadership of Pastor Alan Borchert. Obviously, the congregation's monetary needs are great, as is its need for our prayers.

Cross of Christ and Light of the Valley are just two of the mission plants supported by the Rocky Mountain District. Numerous studies have shown that the planting of new congregations is one of the most effective ways to reach people who currently do not belong to a church. People who are reluctant to join a well-established church are often open to participating in a new start-up, especially one that is clearly focused on their personal and family needs. For this reason, the Rocky Mountain District is devoted to continually planting new congregations.

Financial support is always needed. Your dedicated gift in support of new church plants may be sent to the Rocky Mountain District, 14334 E. Evans Ave., Aurora, CO 80014.

Prayers are needed as well. A free monthly electronic newsletter, *Throne of Grace*, details the prayer needs of all our mission congregations. To receive *Throne of Grace*, contact Margery Richter in the district office at 303-695-8001.



Light of the Valley's current worship facility has been put on the market by the owner of the building.

CONVERSATIONS OF GRACE

Bilingual evangelism conference focuses on ‘plowing’

More than 200 “evangelists” and family members gathered to listen, discuss, equip, work, and worship at the Rocky Mountain District’s 2009 Conversations of Grace Evangelism Conference. The conference was held Nov. 6-7, 2009, at the Radisson Hotel in Albuquerque, N.M.

The conference theme was “Plowing the Field—Preparing Congregation and Community for Outreach.” In the widely varied program, nationally recognized speakers led sessions for everyone from the introvert to the experienced outreach leader.

The weekend opened with a reception featuring the joyful music of Mariachi San Pablo from Ysleta Lutheran Mission in El Paso, Texas. In a vibrant worship celebration, Rocky Mountain District President Randall Golter called each person in attendance to reach out to our unchurched neighbors.



Rev. Snow spoke of the huge impact the audio New Testaments could make for the Kingdom.

National LCMS Director of Outreach Scott Snow unveiled a new synodwide program for distribution of audio New Testaments in 2010-11, in partnership with Faith Comes By Hearing ministries (FCBH). In his keynote presentation, Rev. Snow was joined by FCBH head Morgan Jackson. Attendees received advance copies of the audio MP3 discs along with program info-packets.

A major focus of the conference was cross-cultural outreach—especially critical to the future of the church in our district. Experts held a groundbreaking panel discussion on Hispanic outreach in one of the general (plenary) sessions. A Spanish-language program track was available throughout the conference, and a number of individuals enjoyed having the opportunity to attend workshops and worship in both Spanish and English.

The youth program included a visit to a local skate park

where the teens could put their evangelism training to work in personal witnessing about Christ. One adult who went with them said, “The youth were bold; they put us adults to shame.” Another said, “They gave me hope and confidence in the future of our church.”

Other featured speakers included Dr. Phil Bickel, author, publisher, and missions pastor at St. Michael’s, Bloomington, Minn.; Dr. Ken Behnken, ethnic ministry consultant, Pacific Southwest District; Rev. Shin-Hwan “David” Kim, mission director of LINC (Lutheran Inter-City Network Coalition), Houston, Texas; and, in an exciting and emotion-packed youth program, Dr. Micah Parker, founder of TrustGuy Ministries.

The conference culminated in a dynamic and moving divine service in English and Spanish. This service featured three special conference choirs of 26 children, 30 youth, and 20 adults, as well as more music by Mariachi San Pablo and accompanists on keyboards and violin. Rev. Mark Larson, RMD executive for missions, delivered the bilingual sermon.

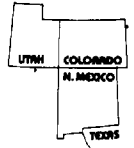
Thirty-one workshops (five in Spanish) were offered on topics ranging from “Help for the Shy Evangelist,” “Evangelism Can Be Fun,” and “Knowing Your Community” to “Writing a Congregational Outreach Plan,” “Leadership Development and Church Planting,” and “NET Fishing” (outreach through group networking).

The 182 participants who registered for the complete conference program included 34 youth, 13 younger children, and 135 adults. The addition of more choir members, part-time attendees, volunteers, and worshipping family members brought the total number of participants to more than 230.

More information on program details is still available at www.conversationsofgrace.org.



The bilingual closing worship service was a fitting culmination for the inspiring weekend conference.



Michael Glowinski took a break from grilling burgers and hot dogs to be installed as the fifth-sixth-grade teacher at Gethsemane. Pastor Tom Mroch (Gethsemane's interim pastor) performed the Rite of Installation.

Glowinski receives 'chef-style' installation

In August 2009, Gethsemane Lutheran School in Northglenn, Colo., called Michael Glowinski to serve as its fifth-sixth-grade teacher. With about two weeks' notice, "Mr. G" (as he is affectionately called) moved from Florida to Colorado. He did an astounding job of pulling his classroom together and preparing to teach within this short timeframe.

Mr. G was installed during Gethsemane's annual church and school picnic at EB Rains Park in Northglenn last Sept. 20. His installation brought smiles to many faces—and not just because they were grateful that he had accepted God's call to teach among them. Mr. G had volunteered to grill hamburgers and hot dogs for the picnic, so he was grilling and wearing an apron (with spatula in hand) when he was called forward to be installed during the service.



Rocky Mountain District Office
14334 E. Evans Ave.
Aurora, CO 80014
303-695-8001

www.ignitingchurchandcultureforchrist.org

'Breakfast Tours' at Lutheran High

Lutheran High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, offers a unique experience every Thursday morning. They invite their community to visit and stay for breakfast!

They want the Salt Lake City community to come and see firsthand the awesome ministry, the college-prep education, and the caring family environment that is Lutheran High School. Tours are one hourlong and start at 9 a.m. Visitors have the opportunity to observe classrooms, talk to students and teachers, and join in the invocation of chapel. A light breakfast is served.

If you're interested in finding out more about Lutheran High School or these special tours, contact Patti or Shelly at 801-266-6676 or shellyadavis@hotmail.com.

El Paso churches celebrate Reformation together

On Reformation Day 2009 (Saturday, Oct. 31), the Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute sponsored a Reformation worship service together with San Pablo Lutheran Church in El Paso, Texas.

This beautiful service included choirs from Ascension Lutheran and Zion Lutheran, and the CrossPoint praise band. Also participating were Zion's bell choir and Mariachi San Pablo.

The riveting sermon on the *Mundhaus* (the "mouth house") was preached by Pastor Howard Patten. Many area pastors and church leaders participated in the worship service. Nearly 100 people attended and were blessed by this celebration of salvation by grace alone through faith.



Choirs and musicians joined together and ended the service with a rendition of "A Mighty Fortress" arranged by Stephen Heimer.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Veterans honored at Lutheran High School, Parker

by Anna Peterson, Lutheran High School student
Photos provided by Lutheran High's journalism class

An illuminated American flag billowed above Lutheran High School in Parker, Colo., on the evening of Veterans Day 2009. Military veterans, their families, students, and parents streamed into the festively decorated flex room and relished sharing old war stories, good food, and good company.



How did this wonderful event come about? Short on funds for an upcoming "World War II and the Western Front" tour, a group of teachers discussed fundraising at lunch one day. When they realized Veterans Day also was approaching, an idea popped into their heads. After a month of preparation, Lutheran High School Parker presented community veterans and their families with a soup supper honoring their service and sacrifice.

One hundred eighty people, including 20 veterans, filled the flex room and enjoyed homemade soups and desserts. Donations from Save-A-Lot, King Soopers, Sprouts, and Great Beginnings Café made the event possible. Ann Hazel's second-grade class from Shepherd of the Hills Christian School in Centennial made patriotic table decorations for the event.

Pictures of veterans from various school families lined the front wall of the room, honoring the service of these brave men and women. The American flags hung about the room provided a true patriotic air to the evening.

The main event organizers—Jenny Keith, Sandy Lop-tien, and Brooke Davis—gathered student and parent



At this first annual Veterans Day event, a wall of honor exhibited photos of veterans who are members of students' families.

volunteers to decorate the facility, to serve, and to thank these wonderful people for the contributions they made to their country.

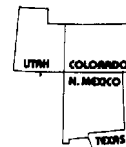
Jenny Keith, whose husband, Walt, is a Navy veteran, said, "Servicemen and women don't get thanked enough. They sacrifice so much and don't receive the gratitude they deserve."

The event raised more than \$900. Twenty percent of the funds were sent to the United Service Organization (USO). The USO takes on the responsibilities of making sure soldiers returning home have a welcoming committee at the airport. When families see their soldiers off at the airport before deployment, the USO organizes an area for the families to sit, drink coffee, and savor the final moments with their loved ones before they head overseas. On top of this, the USO provides deployed soldiers entertainment through live bands, speakers, and actors.

The other 80 percent of the proceeds went to the students planning to travel to Europe for the "World War II and the Western Front" tour.

Although something very small, we hope that we reached out to the veteran community of Parker through this event. Lutheran High plans to make this an annual fundraiser for military organizations, expecting a growing number of attendees every year.

Editor's Note: How does your church or school serve its community? Send your story to **Peaks and Valleys!** See contact information on Page E.



Rocky Mountain District calendar

January

25-26 RMD Board of Directors meeting

February

20 Older adult seminar, Bethlehem, Lakewood, Colo.

April

13-15 New Mexico area Spring Pastors Conference, Bonita Park Camp and Conference Center

13-15 Eastern High Plains and Pikes Peak Circuits Spring Pastors Conference

August

9-10 RMD Board of Directors meeting

November

1-2 RMD Board of Directors meeting

Calls in the district

CALLS ACCEPTED

• Rev. Geoffrey Wagner, Lincoln City, Ore., to Christ Our Savior, Elizabeth, Colo.

CALLS EXTENDED

- Grace, Sandy, Utah, to candidate Brian Horning, Concordia, Ann Arbor, Mich.
- Trinity, Denver, Colo., to Rev. Thomas Lock, Hometown, Ind., as assistant pastor.

CALLS DECLINED

- Rev. Andrew Wehling, Grace, Liberal, Kan., to Gethsemane, Northglenn, Colo.
- Rev. Jim Nash, Trinity, Sterling, Colo., to St. Paul, Enid, Okla.

Resolved ...

Can you imagine a New Year's resolution like "I resolve to be perfect"?

I suspect not. We rarely keep the resolutions we make that are less ambitious. We all know the truth revealed: "the good I want to do, I don't; the evil I don't want to do, I do." Resolving to be "perfect" makes little sense to just about everyone.

Yet, I hear The Word Made Flesh say, "You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

An observation: When those outside the Church hear this teaching of the Savior apart from its context, I get two basic reactions. First, outsiders have no reason to

join a group that demands "perfection." They sense the impossibility. Second, outsiders are going to keep an eye on us "Christians" to see if we hold to the standard.

Over the last month, I asked those inside the Church about this "being perfect" teaching. I did not find one person who thought of this as good news. I'd get responses like, "this demands too much ... unrealistic ... never happen ... not going to try ... this just proves how sin-full I am."

Have you ever heard this Word from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:48) used to highlight your sinful failings? If so, pulpit words meant for your encouragement were spoken such that the mission of God was hindered.

As a way of sharing the Good News, I ask two questions about this Word. First, "Did you know that this is not a command?" As I take the time to discuss this with the person, I watch uncertainty turn to understanding. Second, "What does 'perfect' mean?" I get answers like "no mistakes, nothing wrong, spotless, unblemished ... you know—perfect."

I then tell the story behind the word "perfect," leading the person to a new awareness of "being mature, being complete, attaining to the goal intended."

Out of respect, I let them think about this for awhile, formulating any further questions they might have. Then, I let them tell me, using their own words, what Jesus means by this Word. I am so fully convinced that the Spirit works through the Word!

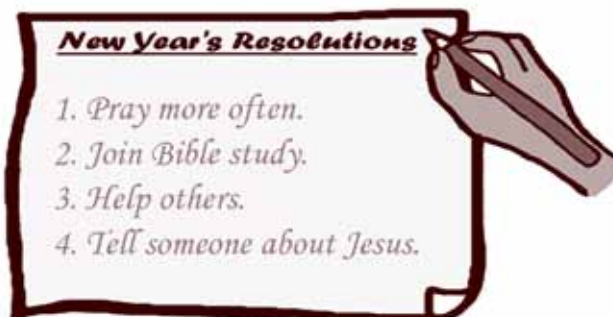
The mission of The Church Without Walls is to bring the Good News to people in the everyday places where we live, work, and play. If we can be of service, let us know. If we can encourage your being and sharing the Good News, we are here for you.

Craig W. Henningfield, M.Div., D.Min.

Church Without Walls

Missionary/Coach

303-725-6760



LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND



Through investment support, LCEF loans dollars to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod churches, schools, child-care centers, and more!

Start or continue your investment with LCEF and help more people be connected to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

StewardAccount[®]

INVESTMENT

- Optional ATM/VISA[®] Check Card
- Check-Writing Capability
- No Annual Fee
- No Monthly Service Charge



Lutheran Church Extension Fund

10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63127-1020
1-800-843-5233 • www.lcef.org

LCEF StewardAccount access features provided through UMB Bank, n.a. LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks.