

### Church Simple: Church attacked!



*“Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old and under, according to the time that he ascertained from the wise men” (Matt. 2:16).*

“Church Simple” is the theme for this series of articles on the Church. The Church is never about herself, nor did she make herself. She is the making of none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. (Note that I refer to the Church in the feminine gender as the Lord does in Matt. 16:18 and also as St. Paul does in Eph. 5:29 in the original Greek.) She is Christ’s Bride, and He her Bridegroom.

Clearly, the Church did not make herself. This upholds the clear biblical teaching that it is all about grace. Every sinner, the whole lot, is saved solely by the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This is why the Father preached about the Son, the Son preached about the Son, and the Holy Spirit preaches about the Son. The Triune God uses the Church to preach “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

Because Jesus Christ, not Satan, was the Father’s choice to represent humanity, God used Michael the Archangel to cast the devil out of the heavenly courts of the Father (Rev. 12:7-9). The slanderer’s domain is now the earth where Christ’s Church exists to preach the Gospel to the unbelievers (Rev. 12:13-17). Satan hated Christ as he hates every believer, those washed with water in Holy Baptism.

The devil used Herod as the tool for slander and murder in the Wise Men text quoted above. Satan’s hatred was exhibited most clearly in the slaughter of all male infants in the Bethlehem area in his attempt to kill the Christ Child. His purpose was to exterminate Jesus Christ. Now, since Satan can’t persecute Christ, he seeks to exterminate faith in the heart of every believer. Faith exists and receives strength only from that to which faith clings—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Extermination of faith can happen by God’s people clinging stubbornly to unholy teaching or to unholy living. Either can suffocate Jesus in a believer.

Significant, though, is the “back door” approach by the devil. He is the “accuser of our brothers” (Rev. 12:10). Who or what does he accuse? Your conscience! God gives us a clean conscience by the application of

Christ’s salvation benefits through the Means of Grace (Word, water, bread/wine and body/blood).

Of what does this liar accuse you? Your sin, failure, greed, lust—simply look at your heart according to the Ten Commandments. Here is the kicker: his accusations are accurate. God’s people are sinners—real sinners, terrible sinners, sinners—but sinners for whom Christ died!

If these accusations are not countered by faith in Jesus Christ, by a continual hearing of God’s Gospel and the receiving of Christ’s Holy Meal, they take root and cause division. Unjust anger, for example, if not repented of but allowed to roost in the heart (“do not let the sun go down on your anger” Eph. 4:26) will cause not only anger but bitterness and separation from the one the anger is against.

Most often, this progression of sin happens against those to whom you are to submit: your pastor, parishioner, parent, neighbor, husband or wife, etc. Pretty soon the tongue becomes the tool that slanders, penetrating the ear and then slicing the soul of the other person.

Satan attacks the Church, either by causing believers to doubt God’s Word or by causing them to sin against a fellow brother or sister in Christ, causing division and conflict in the Lord’s House.

Church Simple is all about the Church remaining humble and repentant, trusting solely in the Christ Child who was born for all sinners—everyone, everywhere. By the Spirit’s prompting, the Triune God protects His Church even as He uses her to be the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13).



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

# IGNITING CHURCH AND CULTURE FOR CHRIST

## Love that warms hearts



“Nothing is colder than a Christian who does not care for the salvation of others.” One of the greatest preachers of all time, John Chrysostom, delivered that statement in a sermon more than 16 centuries ago!

He goes on to say, “You cannot plead poverty

here, for the poor widow who put in two copper coins will be your accuser.” The widow, commended by Jesus, put in everything she had. He contrasted her sacrificial contribution with those made by the rich (Mark 12:41-44).

If you were to place yourself on a line drawn between the widow and the rich, where would you find yourself? Living in the prosperous country that we do, most of us would probably be somewhere on the continuum closer to the rich.

The sharing of God’s gifts for the work of the church—to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world—finds its basis not so much in our wealth as it does in our love for the lost. We make generous and sacrificial gifts because our hearts have been warmed by the love of Christ who sacrificed Himself for us and by the Holy Spirit who has brought us to faith.

*Igniting Church and Culture for Christ* (ICCC) gives each of us the opportunity to demonstrate that we do care about the salvation of others. This special appeal campaign will raise money for international and national mission work in the following ways:

### • International work

- ☆ South Africa (seminary and human care)
- ☆ Biblical Orthodox Lutheran Mission
- ☆ LCMS World Missions

### • National work

- ☆ Revolving mission funds
- ☆ Healthier ministries
- ☆ Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute

As our hearts are warmed by hearing the Christmas story, the birth of the Christ Child who came to save us from sin, may our hearts be on fire for *Igniting Church and Culture for Christ* so that the precious

news of salvation may be shared in our own area and around the world!

Additional information for the various ministries supported by ICCC may be found on the district website, [www.ignitingchurchandcultureforchrist.org](http://www.ignitingchurchandcultureforchrist.org). You also may call the district office (303-695-8001) for further information.

## Healthier Ministries taskforce brings new life to Rocky Mountain District by Rev. Chris Matthis, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Englewood, Colo.

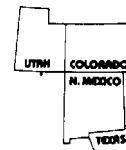
There is a crisis facing LCMS congregations. Over the past several decades, our denomination has continued to lose members and see churches close. Ninety percent of our congregations are in decline or have plateaued in worship attendance, and the vast majority has not had one adult baptism in the past year.

Even in the Rocky Mountain District, the number of baptized and communicant members has decreased by 6,272 and 2,937 souls, respectively, over the past decade. Sadly, many LCMS congregations are paralyzed in fear when facing the decision to change or die. But many do not know how to begin reaching out to their communities and neighbors with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is why the Rocky Mountain District began its Healthier Ministries Task Force several years ago. Healthier Ministries is tasked with providing resources and training to congregations, schools, pastors and staff in order to lead transformational change that will bring new life and vitality by focusing on Jesus’ mission “to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). A major component of that effort is the Transforming Congregations Network (TCN) which helps congregations address issues that have resulted in decline: ineffective leadership, unaddressed conflict, a lack of vision, stifling structure and a failure to be outward-focused on lost people.

Through a weekend consultation, ongoing coaching and learning communities for pastors, TCN helps congregations address the needs of their neighbors and communities—especially the need for lost people to be found and loved by Jesus and His Church through the Gospel. Most congregations participating in the TCN process have experienced significant new conversion growth (adult baptisms) within the first two years of the three-year process.

In addition to making TCN consultations and coach-



“Behold ...  
I bring you good news  
of great joy ...”

es available to congregations and pastors, Healthier Ministries hosts three Lachaim learning communities in Salt Lake City, Denver and the Denver Southwest Circuit. These monthly and quarterly groups meet to help train pastors, principals and administrators to lead transformational change in their churches and schools by equipping them with skills and resources that help make loving lost people their top priority and mission. Through lectures, discussions, prayer and fellowship, church leaders grow in their love for Jesus, one another and the lost. They also find challenge and encouragement from the Lachaim leaders to make Jesus’ top priority their top priority: loving lost people.

You can help congregations and schools of the Rocky Mountain District experience new life and vitality by supporting Healthier Ministries through your prayers and financial contributions. The district’s mission funding campaign, *Igniting Church and Culture for Christ*, is seeking to raise \$100,000 in support of Healthier Ministries.

This \$100,000 will make it possible to provide training for consultants and coaches who will help pastors and churches develop a mission, vision and strategic plan; provide support for church and school workers dealing with overwhelming personal stresses; and provide resources for churches and schools to become healthier and more effective in their mission and ministry.

## Gospel Gap Paradigm

by President Randall Golter

*“Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest” (John 4:35).*

Is it not interesting how the Lord saw the need to instruct His disciples in the story of the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well? Why did they not get it, that is, not know that the harvest field was right before their very eyes?

The disciples had gone into Sychar to buy food (John 4:8). They did not see what the Lord saw in Sychar, a city full of lost sinners for whom He would shed His blood as payment for their sins. They saw it only as a

place to buy food, not to spread the Word.

Is it not interesting how gentle and patient our Lord is with His disciples? He uses a woman to teach them that the church’s purpose is redemptive—to save souls. And the boundary is as broad and as wide as the Father’s heart is full of mercy.

Adhering to that purpose, I am proposing a new mission paradigm for the Rocky Mountain District which is fundamentally a “circuit-based church planting model.” It is based on the cell-phone coverage metaphor.

Imagine each of the 17 circuits within the RMD as cell-phone coverage areas. Each church is a cell tower that transmits signals: the preaching of the Gospel.

There are gaps, though, where the Gospel is not transmitted, not being heard. These “gaps” may be geographic or demographic. Thus, this new paradigm is called the “Gospel Gap Paradigm” (GGP).

How does this paradigm work? For example, the Northeastern Circuit of Colorado sees its GGP as the Hispanics in its midst. God’s people in Holyoke and Sterling and Fort Morgan, etc., are going to call a Hispanic pastor in the spring of 2011. They are identifying, strategizing, implementing and, with collaboration from their larger church family, the Rocky Mountain District, planting missions to reach out to Hispanics.

Where are the “Gospel Gaps” around you? Are you like the disciples who saw only places to buy food but not the souls that were lost in unbelief?

The Gospel Gap Paradigm places the joyful responsibility of stewarding the Triune God’s mission at the circuit level first, where the eyes and hearts are closest to the ground. But not only there. The larger church, represented by the district, will help build capacity for each of the circuits through training, motivation, financial support, ecclesiastical supervision, etc.

Together, bound by Christ’s voice revealed in His Word, we cooperate in the Triune God’s mission. In reality, we are trying to catch up to Him. He is always on the move, seeking and saving the lost through the preaching of His shed blood.

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# AROUND THE DISTRICT

## The season of giving



Members of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) from Trinity Lutheran Church in St. George, Utah, get Christmas bags ready to send to children in Kyrgyzstan.



## Risen Savior, Broomfield, dedicates new expansion and renovations

During Sunday services on Sept. 12, Risen Savior Lutheran Church dedicated the recently completed expansion and renovation of its building and campus at 3031 W. 144th Ave. in Broomfield, Colo.

Work on the \$3.2-million project started in fall 2009, resulting in substantial changes inside and outside the church. The expansion added 6,500 square feet of space to the interior, which now totals 20,000 square feet. The sanctuary, narthex and classrooms were enlarged; a second kitchen was added; a basement, which accommodates youth ministry, was built under an addition; entrances on the east and west sides were revamped;



Risen Savior's expansion was dedicated on Sept. 12.

and secondary rooms were created or expanded.

A new, prominent cross is centered on the building's south (front) exterior wall. A stone-tablet sign on a brick-and-mortar base along 144th Avenue is new to the southeast corner of the 10-acre campus. Improvements to the infrastructure also were made.

Outdoor changes include a new parking lot, a new right-turn lane on westbound 144th Avenue leading into the original parking lot, enhanced landscaping and new sidewalks in front of the church and along 144th Avenue, and a code-mandated water-retention pond.



In the sanctuary, Risen Savior's new cross welcomes current and future worshipers to learn of Jesus, their Redeemer.

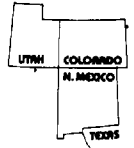
Risen Savior's growth in recent years had made for crowded, cramped and inadequate quarters, which prompted the expansion. Baptized membership grew from 690 in 2005 to nearly 1,000 at present.

Project costs are being paid by members' contributions to a fund-raising campaign and by a loan from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

## Putting the grace of God into action

Kailee Walters (left), member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Denver, Colo., gets it! She recently helped form a Peace Club at Abraham Lincoln High School in Denver. Kailee wants to take God's grace and put it into action. She plays an integral role in the weekly meetings during school club time. Way to go!





## ‘Retreat—Renew—Reach Out’

Professional church workers from throughout the Rocky Mountain District met Oct. 6-8 in Breckenridge, Colo., under the theme “Retreat—Renew—Reach Out.”

Keynote speakers included Rev. John Nunes, president and CEO of Lutheran World Relief; Dr. John Kleinig, a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Australia and former professor at the Australian Lutheran College; and Rev. David Langewisch, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Colo.

Bible study was led by Rev. Randall Golter, president of the Rocky Mountain District.

Breakout sessions provided educators with 24 different topics that addressed issues related to children from preschool through grade 12. Topics ranged from technology trends to Christian conflict management, from equipping our children for spiritual survival beyond our churches and schools to designing ecosystems.

Young children attending the conference with their parents also enjoyed a full-morning vacation Bible school session provided by Lutheran Valley Retreat.

Chosen “Educator of the Year” was Wendy Dillon of Immanuel in Albuquerque, N.M. Renee Williams at Christ Early Childhood Center in Denver, Colo., was named “Early Childhood Director of the Year.” “Administrator of the Year” was Loren Otte of St. John’s in Denver. Congratulations to all these dedicated servants!

The professional church workers wish to thank their schools and congregations for this time of retreat and renewal so they can continue to reach out with the Gospel. They will meet again Oct. 5-7, 2011, in Breckenridge.



# OUR SCHOOLS

## **Preparing ourselves and our children for spiritual warfare**

by David Black, interim principal, Shepherd of the Hills Christian School, Centennial, Colo.

In October our day school faculty had the opportunity to attend the Rocky Mountain District Professional Church Workers Conference. One of the blessings of the conference this year was the presence of exceptional Bible study leaders. One gentleman, a church leader from Australia, spoke about the spiritual warfare that is constantly taking place within us and around us.

Our leader reminded us that Satan seeks to divide God's people from each other as well as from Him. He does that in two key ways: by reminding us of our own guilt of sin and by reminding us to hold on to frustrations with others when we feel we have been wronged. Each of us no doubt can see the temptations of Satan in our own lives in these two ways. Not only does our adversary seek to separate us from our Savior, but he also works to create discord between God's people—within families, schools, churches and any place God's people gather.



Thankfully, we have the most powerful weapons available at our disposal: the Word of God and prayer. To me, this is another reminder of why Christian/Lutheran education is **CRITICAL** for our children

today. We are constantly faced with these spiritual attacks. Each of us, especially our precious children, needs the constant reminder of God's love and forgiveness that removes the guilt of sin. We also need to be a part of a community that is regularly defending each other in prayer, taking proactive measures to stand up to the wiles of Satan. That is why each of our teachers lifts every student and family in prayer throughout the year. That is why we regularly study God's Word and pray in our classrooms. We want our entire school community to remain strong in their Christian faith.

I've said it before: some people think that a Christian school is a nice "extra" for our children. After working through this Bible study, I am even more convinced that [our Lutheran schools] are of critical importance for our children as they seek to navigate life in this sinful world in a faith-filled manner. Won't you join me in thanking God for our school and in praying that God might continue to bless our efforts on His behalf!

## **St. John's hosts fun for community ...**

by Dr. Michael A.L. Eckelkamp, pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church and School

St. John's Lutheran Church and School, Denver, Colo., teamed up to reach out to the Washington Park community Sept. 12. The event was blessed with the attendance of Rocky Mountain District Education

Executive Paul Albers, Lutheran High School Chief Executive Officer

Juls Clausen, Lutheran High School Principals Dan Gherke and David Ness, and Loren Otte, principal of St. John's Lutheran School.



Executive Officer Juls Clausen, Lutheran High School Principals Dan Gherke and David Ness, and Loren Otte, principal of St. John's Lutheran School. Approximately 1,200 people from the church, school and community attended the three-hour event. A free lunch was served to the attendees, who also enjoyed a chili contest, a cookie competition and a dog show.

Adding to the festivities of the day were a children's art demonstration, a quilt show and face painting. The family-friendly setting included fire engine rides, jump castles and a climbing wall.

The mission of St. John's Lutheran Church and School, partnering together as one in ministry, is "Connect people to Jesus by creating a culture that values people and by raising up people to love them."

## **... and shows appreciation for its pastor**



The sixth-grade class of Julie Lemke of St. John's Lutheran Church and School in Denver, Colo., held a pastor appreciation party Oct. 30 for Pastor Michael Eckelkamp. Along with enjoying cupcakes, each child prayed aloud for Pastor Eckelkamp. Way to go, Ms. Lemke!



**Rocky Mountain District calendar**

**January**

- 14 LEAD meeting, Denver, Colo.
- 24-25 RMD Board of Directors meeting

**February**

- 28 Nurturing the Faith, Immanuel, Albuquerque, N.M.

**March**

- 6-12 National Lutheran Schools Week
- 11 LEAD meeting, Denver, Colo.
- 15 Nurturing the Faith, Zion, Brighton, Colo.
- 17 Nurturing the Faith, St John's, Denver, Colo.
- 18 Nurturing the Faith, Utah

**May**

- 6 LEAD meeting, Denver, Colo.

**August**

- 1-2 RMD Board of Directors meeting

**November**

- 5-6 "Conversations of Grace at the ROC!" Conference, Crowne Plaza, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 7-8 RMD Board of Directors meeting



**ChristkindlMart to benefit Christ Lutheran Early Childhood Program and Preschool**

Get away to a traditional German Christmas Market in the heart of the scenic Summit County mountains of Colorado. The first annual Summit ChristkindlMart will be held Dec. 10-12 at the Outlets at Silverthorne (I-70 and Silverthorne exit).

Shop for gifts made with quality "old world" craftsmanship. Celebrate the season with authentic German food, beer and *Glühwein*, along with lively holiday entertainment.

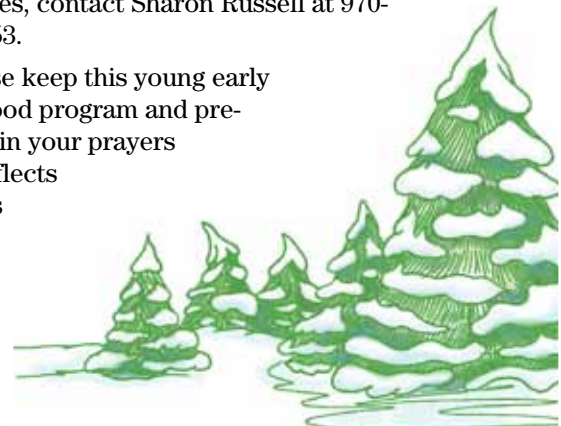
You can even drop off the kids for up to two hours at the on-site Children's Christmas Nook where they will be entertained in their own Christmas world! Weekend accommodation packages also are available.

Best of all, the ChristkindlMart will benefit Christ Lutheran Church's Early Childhood Program and Preschool in Breckenridge, which opened its doors at the end of October. It serves infants through preschoolers (age 5). It is the only Christian preschool in all of Summit County and is eager to make an impact for Christ, especially during this Christmas season.

For more information about the Summit ChristkindlMart, visit [www.christkindlmart.com](http://www.christkindlmart.com).

To learn more about the weekend accommodation packages, contact Sharon Russell at 970-468-0353.

Please keep this young early childhood program and preschool in your prayers as it reflects Christ's love in the mountains!



**Calls in the district**

**CALLS ACCEPTED**

- Christa Stec, Wentzville, Mo., to Our Father, Centennial, Colo., as music director.
- Julie Lemke, Denver, Colo., to St. John's, Denver, Colo.
- Sheryl Stults, Littleton, Colo., to St. John's, Denver, Colo., as Early Learning Center director.
- Terry Miller, Ogden, Utah, to St. Paul, Ogden, Utah, as director of parish music.
- Rev. Les Judge, Our Savior, Pagosa Springs, Colo., to Zion, Ashton, Idaho.
- Rev. Jason Reitz, St. Paul, Ogden, Utah, to Zion, St. Charles, Mo.
- Rev. Charles Westby, Mount Olive, Aurora, Colo., to Our Saviour, Commerce City, Colo.

**CHANGE OF STATUS**

- Amy Landgraf, candidate to non-candidate.
- Jane Fields, active to emeritus.

**TRANSFERRED TO DISTRICT**

- Sara Borgstede, non-candidate status, Kansas District to RMD.

## Making a difference in Haiti



Thanks to Orphan Grain Train—and your support—Mitha can now maintain a job and care for her children.

lives—also took Mitha’s two legs as the iron gate near her house fell on her, breaking her legs.

It took Mitha’s family one hour to free her, but there was no hospital available to repair her injuries. Finally, 24 hours later, they found that Port au Prince General Hospital had opened for extreme emergencies. One week later, Mitha’s broken, irreparable legs were amputated after infection set in.

Mitha healed, but how could she survive? With no legs, how could she provide for her four children? Several companies had job openings, but they would not hire Mitha because she was unable to move around the company floor and work on the assembly line.

After the earthquake, Orphan Grain Train sent dozens of 40-foot containers into Haiti loaded with food, clothes, tarps, generators and relief aide. It also sent dozens of PET mobile wheelchairs—sometimes described as “all-terrain wheelchair carts.” Because of this special wheelchair’s heavy wheels, disabled persons can sit on the seat, peddle with their arms and move through rough terrain. The wood basket on the rear can hold supplies or products they need to transport.

Mitha received a PET wheelchair and now is employed at a regular job. She is able to take care of her family, thanks to the wheelchair sent to Haiti by Orphan Grain Train.

Mitha is 29 years old and has four children. Her husband abandoned the family. To support her family, Mitha sold small bags of oil at the marketplace near her little house in the Port au Prince slum area of Cite Soliel.

Last Jan. 12, the earth shook; and the earthquake that devastated Haiti—taking 330,000



## The Lutheran Chorale plans Christmas sing-in

The Lutheran Chorale and the Lakewood Symphony, along with Green Mountain High School’s Shadow of the Mountain choir and Denver Lutheran High School’s Light Brigade choir, will offer a Christmas sing-in. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Lakewood Cultural Center in Lakewood, Colo., on Thursday, Dec. 2.

The program will include favorite choruses from Handel’s magnificent “Messiah,” plus traditional pieces such as “The First Noel” and beautiful contemporary works such as Morten Lauridsen’s “O Magnum Mysterium.”

This sing-in concert, a Christmas tradition for the Lakewood Symphony and Lutheran Chorale, is the first “Messiah” concert to be conducted by David Hodel, the chorale’s new director. David, a long-time chorale member, has appeared before Lakewood Cultural Center audiences as tenor soloist in the “Messiah.” He also sings with the Colorado Symphony Chorus, the Empire Lyric Players, the Ovation Players and the Main Street Players.

Coupled with his bachelor of arts degree in voice and piano, Hodel brings this broad choral experience to the chorale’s dual mission of providing opportunities for non-professional singers to learn and perform great classical music and of presenting this music to local (and even international) audiences.

David says, “Members of the Lutheran Chorale are in most cases dedicated members of their home church choirs. Rather than competing with local churches for the time of their singers, the chorale is intended to be a place where singers can expand their range, grow in their ability to read difficult music, work on performance skills and technique and bring back that experience to their home choirs.”

David encourages singers to consider joining the chorale, both to enjoy the wonderful music and to expand their skills and musical knowledge. David’s broader vision for the chorale includes a spring choral workshop, for which planning is under way. This Saturday workshop will include voice classes as well as choir organization, conducting, recruitment and rehearsal ideas. The workshop will conclude with a Sunday concert.

