

Church Simple: How is it to be Church today

“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours”
(1 Cor. 1:2).

It seems that every Tom, Dick and Harry is writing a book about church. Because of a fundamental change and breakdown of Western culture, Christians are seeking ways to be and to act as Church. Postmodernism’s push to divide everyone into mini cultures and groups, as well as the devaluation of absolute truth, has Christians nervous.

The Christian church in America has a choice—either join the crowd or resist. Some have joined the crowd. Even churches with whom we share the name “Lutheran” are losing their saltiness by agreeing to the practice of the ordination of homosexuals. Churches—if they are worth their salt—must retain their saltiness, according to Jesus. “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet” (Matt. 5:13).

St. Paul knew the culture in which the little church in Corinth existed. He had preached there, lived there and read the works of their poets. He preached right in the marketplace surrounded by temples. Along the west end of the marketplace rose a series of Roman temples—from the south to the north were the temple of Venus, the Pantheon and the temples of Poseidon, Hercules and Apollo.

Above all, literally, on a hill some 2,000 feet high was the temple of Aphrodite. One can only see it from below in ancient Corinth, but the ruins above are an impressive sight. Below this place some thousand prostitutes were employed, and sailors were drawn to join themselves to the goddess Aphrodite, the goddess of love. This is where Paul preached.

What did he preach? The crucified Christ. This missionary—the one confronted, owned and sent by Jesus—preached the crucified Christ. “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power” (1 Cor. 1:17).

It is all about the cross, really, and the One whom the Father placed there. In the midst of a sexually charged

culture, where people flocked to listen to well-spoken speakers, Paul preached Christ. This missionary preached Christ.

He also chastised the church for its sexual immorality, its broken marriages and its lawsuits against each other. He instructed the church that only men are to preach the Word in the assembly (that is, be pastors). And he adds that this instruction has a divine command (1 Cor. 14:37).

To be Church is to be in Christ, and that happens by the preaching of Christ from pulpits by pastors and from the lips of the laity in their daily vocations. To be and to act as Church also means to remain pure and chaste, resisting any false doctrine and unholy living.

You should read both 1 and 2 Corinthians this Epiphany season. You will see a missionary preaching, writing, admonishing and encouraging this little flock (some suggest the city’s population was 100,000 and the church’s membership 50-100). Portrayed in these pages of Holy Scripture, though, is a messy church, a church tempted to drift from Christ.

Paul, the missionary, was bringing the Corinthians back—to Christ. And he pointed out anything that would separate them from Christ and admonished and called them to repentance, that is, back to Christ.

That is Church, then and now.

*The Rev. Randall Golter,
LCMS Rocky Mountain
District President*



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March issue deadline: Jan. 13

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

DISTRICT NEWS

2012 Rocky Mountain District convention official notice

The 49th Regular Convention of the LCMS Rocky Mountain District will be held June 7-9 at the Hyatt Regency Tech Center, Denver, Colo.

A call for nominations for elected positions of district president, vice-presidents and circuit counselors was mailed to all congregations in late October. The mailing to each congregation contained official ballot forms for submitting such nominations. The chairman of the nominating committee is Dale Stoner.

A call for nominations for district board of directors, district secretary, district nominating committee members and Synod's 2013 committee for convention nominations also was included in the same packet. If additional copies are needed, please contact the district office at 303-695-8001.

The LCMS Rocky Mountain District website at www.rm.lcms.org contains an official convention page where general convention information, news, form due dates, timeline of events and updates are posted. Additionally, attending delegates may begin making lodging reservations for the convention from the same page.

New debt assistance fund for commissioned ministers

Last October at the Professional Workers Conference in Breckenridge, Colo., the newly formed Commissioned Minister Debt Assistance Fund received a big boost. The Debt Assistance Fund committee for pastors and their representative, the Rev. Dwight Hellmers, presented a check for \$30,000 to the district school committee as seed money for the Commissioned Minister Debt Assistance Fund.

This new fund is the fulfillment of a resolution at the 1997 District Convention which established the Debt Assistance Fund for pastors. It was resolved that pending the success of the pastor's Debt Assistance Fund, a similar fund would be established for commissioned ministers in helping with the repayment of educational debt.

This seed money comes at a time of great need with our commissioned ministers experiencing high educational debt much like our pastors. The Rocky Mountain District School Committee will manage these funds along with the help of the district's business manager



The Rev. Dwight Hellmers (right) presents the District School Committee with a check for \$30,000 to begin the Commissioned Minister Debt Assistance Fund.

until a formal committee can be formed to solicit additional support and grow the fund.

To God be the Glory for this wonderful assistance! If you have questions about either the Pastor or Commissioned Minister Debt Assistance Funds or would like to contribute to these funds, please contact the district office at info@rm.lcms.org or 303-695-8001.

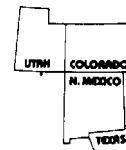


Keeping Healthy Church Workers Healthy!



"Keeping Healthy Church Workers Healthy!" is the theme of this year's Grace Place Retreat in the Rockies to be held June 25-29 at the Stonebridge Inn in Snowmass Village just west of Aspen, Colo. This is the 12th year of programming in the Aspen area, encouraging LCMS pastors and teachers to understand the importance of self-management as a marvelous response to God made possible by the new creation in the the Word and waters of Baptism—understanding the importance of caring for this temple of the Holy Spirit.

(Continued on Page G.)



Peace With Christ to celebrate 40 years

Peace With Christ Lutheran Church in Fort Collins, Colo., will celebrate its 40th anniversary on Sept. 15-16. A catered meal and entertainment are slated for Saturday evening, the 15th. Pastor Frank Winter III will preach on Sunday morning, the 16th.

For additional information on these upcoming events, please contact Paul Rubel at lowiskayj@msn.com.



Matthis installed at Epiphany

On Sunday, Oct. 2, 2011, Pastor Chris Matthis was installed as the senior pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, Colo. More than 242 Epiphany members and guests participated in the divine service, including Pastor Matthis’ relatives and 21 pastor friends who blessed the new pastor during the laying on of hands.



Pastor Matthis is surrounded by the many pastor friends who blessed him during his installation service. Photo by Sherry Jacob, Epiphany member.

Pastor Michael Eckelkamp of St. John’s, Denver, a close friend of Pastor Matthis, preached on the theme of Jesus the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep and loves His flock. Rocky Mountain District President Randy Golter installed Pastor Matthis. Pastor Joe Murphy of Grace, Parker, read the Scriptures and the Rev. Glenn Kalthoff (emeritus) served as liturgist.

Organist Ila Twogood led the congregation in the singing of several stirring hymns. Epiphany’s adult choir, directed by Cindy Hendricks, shared two uplifting musical offerings. Following the service, guests enjoyed a catered meal.

Pastor Matthis’s installation comes as another celebration in the life of a congregation that recently

dedicated a remodeled, expanded sanctuary and a new education wing.

Previously, Pastor Matthis faithfully served God’s people at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Englewood, Colo. Both pastor and congregation ask for your prayers as they continue their journey in mission and ministry together by God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s power.

Mount Calvary to celebrate 75 years

On Jan. 17, 1937, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Fort Lupton, Colo., held its first worship service. The congregation approved the articles of incorporation and the church became a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Mount Calvary will celebrate its 75th anniversary at 9 a.m. on Jan. 30 with a service of celebration. Immediately after the service, a time of remembrance is scheduled, followed by a meal at noon.

The Rev. Dr. John C. Wolhrabe Jr. will be the guest speaker at this service. Wolhrabe currently is the second vice-president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and former pastor at Mount Calvary, serving from 1982-1984.

An additional anniversary service is planned for Aug. 19. Pastor Charles Blanco will be the guest speaker. Blanco served at Mount Calvary from 1984-2002.

If you have any questions about the upcoming services and celebrations, please contact the church office at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, 650 S. Park Ave., Fort Lupton, CO 80621 or 303-857-6827 or office@mtcalvaryluth.org.

Want Synod news fast?

New stories are posted each week to *Reporter Online* (reporter.lcms.org), the national online newspaper of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Want those stories delivered to you? Subscribe to LCMS News, the free email news service from LCMS Communications. To subscribe, go to lcms.org and create a “myLCMS” account. Start by clicking “Register” in the top right corner of the LCMS homepage, and then complete the “New User Registration” form.

When your account is confirmed by email (this could take up to 48 hours), log in, click the “my e-Newsletters” tab, and select “LCMS News” (in the “News” category). Every time new stories are posted to *Reporter Online*, you’ll receive an email with links to those new stories.

STUDY TOUR OF TURKEY AND GREECE

Some T.R.A.V.E.L. thoughts on Turkey and Greece

by Pastor Rick Miller

Touring far-away places, especially Bible lands like Turkey and Greece, is an exciting way to meet new people and experience other cultures (like Turks and Greeks—alike in many ways, yet differing greatly according to their “secular” Moslem and Orthodox Christian viewpoints). Learning their history and seeing the geography of the region (in this case, their common Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman influences, along with their temperate Mediterranean climate and a rocky-hilly, yet surprisingly fruitful topography) also adds great understanding of the people and culture of these Bible lands. Touring in such places is very worthwhile for any Christian and just about a necessity for pastors.

Rest and relaxation is not something one will experience much on a tour like ours last Oct. 12-23. We trekked over hill and dale, walking several-a-dusty-trail (though, during the first few days, those trails were moistened by light, steady rains). Some of this hiking even included ascending an acropolis, or two or three—usually towering at least 1,000 feet above the ancient cities (such as Assos, Pergamum and Athens)—to see temple complexes and to enjoy awesome views. Oh, well. If we had wanted to rest, we would have gone to something like a Sandals Resort rather than on a study tour.



Rocky Mountain District President Randy Golter and wife, Elizabeth, enjoy the view from the Temple of Apollo in the ancient city of Corinth.

Attractions on such a tour are plentiful and varied. For some of us, the breathtaking views were the main attraction. For others, it was the archaeological excavations, whether in places like Ephesus (where 150 years of digging have exposed a magnificent complex of temples, government buildings, homes, shops, a multi-story library and a 50,000-seat theater), or Alexandrian Troas or like good ol' Corinth, Greece.

For some, it may have been a place like Istanbul's Grand Bazaar (with more than 4,000 covered shops), or possibly the rug, onyx and turquoise, leather and antiquity-reproducing factories. For others, perhaps it was the brief-yet-romantic island stops on Patmos, Rhodes, Crete and Santorini. For all of us, at least at some level, it was the connection to biblical sites and events, showing that ours is a historical, factual faith.



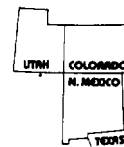
Golter and tour participant Harry Krueckeberg stand in front of the ancient Celsus Library in Ephesus, Turkey.

Venturing alone to such destinations is one way to go about it. I've done it that way in most of my touring excursions. The schedule is more one's own and the costs are less. But then there is the safety issue and the loneliness. An organized group tour is easier, with others doing the planning and leading. One also has the opportunity to experience the details of the trip through the eyes of others and just enjoy their company. In our case, the company was shared by 14—all Missouri Synod Lutherans but one—from Colorado, Utah, Montana and California. Overall, if one is experiencing another country for the first time, it is probably best to do so through some kind of organized tour such as ours.

The group of 14 is shown in the Theatre in the ancient city of Miletus. The Theatre seats 15,000 and is still in use. Starting on the bottom steps are, from left, the Rev. Clare Skov, Deborah Hinman, Luther Skov, Marcy Carroll, Twyla Skov, Krueckeberg, Londa Skov, Golter, the Rev. Christ Erickson, Karen Erickson, Kathleen Bowen, Lisa Carroll, Elizabeth Golter and the Rev. Rick Miller.



(Continued on Page E.)



20th Annual Schola Cantorum to be held at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will offer its 20th Annual Schola Cantorum: An Adult Choir Member Workshop, on Saturday, Feb. 4. The workshop will be held in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus and the Clara and Spencer Werner Auditorium on the seminary campus.

The Schola Cantorum is open to all choir members, choir directors and ministers of music. Dr. Horst Buchholz, director of music at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis and the Archdiocese of St. Louis, will serve as this year's clinician.

A Choral Reading Session will be held from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 3. In the session, Buchholz will guide participants through an evening of choral and instrumental song in which he will preview new and current titles of music. The session is open to all but is especially designed for choir directors. There is no charge to attend, but registration is required.

The cost for the Schola Cantorum is \$65 per individual or \$120 per congregation (\$75 or \$135 after Jan. 20). Lunch and the choral music are not included in the fee. For more information or registration forms, call 314-505-7486 or email ce@csl.edu.

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., to host annual Symposia series

Since 1977, theologians, scholars and lay people from around the world have gathered at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., for the annual Symposia series. The 2012 series will take place Jan. 17-20. Complete Symposia information and online registration can be found at www.ctsfw.edu/symposia.

This year, even those who cannot make the trip to Fort Wayne will have the option to watch and listen via the Internet, as the presentations are broadcast live from Sihler Auditorium on the seminary campus. The registration fee for the live stream is \$75 and will allow viewers to enjoy all four days of Symposia 2012.

The theme for the Exegetical Theology Symposium, Jan. 17-18, is "In Search of Jesus: Why History Matters." The Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions has chosen "Justification in a Contemporary Context" as its theme and will take place Jan. 18-20, under the sponsorship of the Department of Systematic Theology.

SOME T.R.A.V.E.L. THOUGHTS

(Continued from Page D.)

Evangelism, whether for sharing the Gospel of Jesus among ourselves or with others, is a major reason for touring such Bible lands. By actually being at the sites where biblical events took place, one enters a sort of three-dimensional doorway into a better understanding of God's Word. In our case, this was done by following some of the footsteps of our ancient brothers, the apostles Paul and John. This was to our benefit, generally, as Christians. Also, it was to our benefit specifically as pastors (there were four on the tour). Just imagine the sermon and Bible class applications! Hopefully, it also was to the benefit of others, like our Turkish guide, Ercal. For four days, this born-and-bred Moslem, now self-proclaimed humanist, listened to our biblical devotions, discussions and prayers. What the Lord could do with that!



Tour manager Ercal (left) stands with Golter, Pastor Mike Miller, Elizabeth Golter, Twyla Skov and Marcy Carroll overlooking the Baptistery of St. John in Ephesus, Turkey.

Leaving all this to come home was a bittersweet experience. Sure, home is likely to be physically less demanding, and it certainly is a more comfortable and convenient place. But, there were still so many things "over there" we didn't get to see and do. And many others we wish we could have spent more time seeing and doing. Our lives have been expanded biblically and historically. We have also come to a fuller contemporary understanding that the world is much larger than the United States. Besides all that, by touring afar, it was confirmed among us that "there's no place like home." Happy traveling!

RESOURCES

Portals of Prayer celebrates 75 years

Every day, 900,000 people in 120 countries take five minutes out of their day to open their copy of *Portals of Prayer* and read a quick devotion. In fact, during the last 75 years, the daily devotion has not only been a staple product at Concordia Publishing House (CPH), it also is a favorite in households around the world.

Since 1937, readers have enjoyed the brief, powerful devotions written by authors that include Synod presidents, pastors, professors and laypeople. Each one features a Bible reading, meditation and prayer in an easy-to-read format.

To celebrate the diamond anniversary of *Portals* in Lent 2012, Concordia Publishing House has released a commemorative book called *Daily Devotions*. Each day of the year features a devotion taken from one of the past 75 years of *Portals*; plus, there are 20 extra “special occasion” devotions included for times such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Transfiguration, etc. Great for gift giving, this high-quality devotional book features a ribbon book marker and can be purchased at cph.org or by calling 800-325-3040.

Knitted Together

According to the Craft Yarn Council, there are 38 million people in the United States who knit or crochet—and that number is always growing. *Knitted Together*, the newest women’s Bible study from Concordia Publishing House (CPH) combines Bible study with this ever-expanding craze. The study focuses on how God’s love for us through Christ gives value and dignity to all human life.

Knitted Together can be ordered online at cph.org or by calling 800-325-3040. The study is made for women looking for a community, whether they are knitters who also go to Bible study or Bible-study participants who also knit.

“Combining a Bible study with knitting patterns is a logical choice, because both knitters and those who participate in Bible study rarely do so in isolation,” said *Knitted Together*’s editor, Peggy Kuethe. “Participation in and appreciation for both activities is deepened when we join with others who share these passions. We are created for community, after all.”

Knitted Together is written by Julie Stiegemeyer and features patterns by Sara Nordling (who, coincidentally, taught Stiegemeyer how to knit). The study is based on Ps. 139:13-14, and is meant to draw participant’s attention to how God’s work through Christ gives value and dignity to all human life.

New hymnal just for children

Generations of members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have cherished Lutheran hymns and taught these songs to their children in worship and at home throughout the years. Now, Concordia Publishing House has created an exceptional hymnal designed especially for little hearts and minds—*My First Hymnal*. This treasured book will teach even the youngest of believers the traditions of the church as they grow and learn in faith.

“The dilemma we’ve faced is how to bring children into the worship life of the LCMS,” said the editor of *My First Hymnal*, David Johnson. “With this book, we’ve taken the hymns loved by all generations and combined them with realistic artwork that tells the story of the church and Jesus’ love. This is something that all children can take to church and say, ‘This is *my* hymnal.’”

Order it at cph.org or by calling 800-325-3040.



New book helps you care for church workers

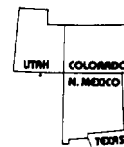
What is the most stressful job? Unknown to many, service professionals (such as a church workers, pastors, teachers, and DCEs) are at an increased risk of sadness, despair, stress, frustration, anger and disappointment.

In order to assist in the care of church workers, Concordia Publishing House (CPH) and author Dr. Bruce Hartung have released *Holding Up the Prophet’s Hand*, an honest book that provides clear suggestions for caring for church workers.

“We heard from a number of congregational leaders and Synod district presidents telling us that this resource was desperately needed,” said CPH President and CEO Dr. Bruce G. Kintz. “Dr. Hartung has provided a very practical, down-to-earth and *indispensable* book.”

Each chapter of *Holding Up the Prophet’s Hand* includes anecdotal stories to bring to light common challenges and sources of tension. By discussing these important issues (such as job stress, finances, marriage and housing), this book provides clear suggestions for helping our church workers, thus holding up the prophet’s hand.

Holding Up the Prophet’s Hand is available at cph.org or by calling 800-325-3040.



OFFICIAL NOTICE

The 49th Convention of
The Rocky Mountain District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
will be held
June 7-9, 2012
Hyatt Regency Tech Center, Denver, Colo.

Rocky Mountain District calendar

January

30-31 RMD Board of Directors meeting

February

27 Nurturing the Faith 2012 — New Mexico

March

4-10 Lutheran Schools Week

5-6 RMD Board of Directors meeting

13 Nurturing the Faith 2012 — North Denver

15 Nurturing the Faith 2012 — South Denver

16 Nurturing the Faith 2012 — Utah

June

7-9 Rocky Mountain District Convention,
Hyatt Tech Center, Denver, Colo.

22-24 RMD Lutheran Women's Missionary
League Convention, El Paso, Texas

July

15-17 Rocky Mountain District Youth Gathering,
Redeemer, Fort Collins, Colo.

August

6-7 RMD Board of Directors meeting

Calls in the district

PLACEMENTS

• Phillip Quarles, Concordia Theological Seminary (DELTO program), Fort Wayne, Ind., to Sangre de Cristo, Taos and Christ Our Savior, Angel Fire, N.M.

CALL EXTENDED

• Calvary, Rio Rancho, N.M., to the Rev. Thomas Barton, candidate status, Albuquerque, N.M.

• Our Father, Centennial, Colo., to the Rev. John Kunze, Messiah, Lincoln, Neb.

• St. Paul, Farmington Hills, Mich., to the Rev. Joseph Murphy, Grace, Parker, Colo.

• Trinity, Cedar City, Utah, to the Rev. Robert Sharp, candidate status, Denver, Colo.

CALLS DECLINED

• The Rev. Dan Thews, Faith, Appleton, Wis., to Our Father, Centennial, Colo.

CHANGE OF STATUS

• The Rev. David Dahl, Grace, Moab, Utah, to emeritus.

• The Rev. George Hesse, Mount Hope, Boulder, Colo., to emeritus.

• The Rev. Wayne Riddering, Hope, Westcliffe, Colo., to emeritus.

• Janice Maxson, Immanuel, Colorado Springs, Colo., to non-candidate.

• Sarah M. Doane, Zion, Farmington, N.M., to candidate.

TRANSFERRED DISTRICTS

• Mary Oldenburg, commissioned minister, non-candidate, California-Nevada-Hawaii District to RMD.

GRACE PLACE RETREAT IN ROCKIES

(Continued from Page B.)

The Stonebridge Inn sits at mountainside just above the new base village at Snowmass, with easy access off Highways 70 and 82. It is a full-service lodge with wonderful amenities and with close proximity to all of the treasures of Aspen Valley's beauty, Maroon Bells and, of course, Aspen itself.

The four-day, four-night program is anchored each day in the four hours of daily prayer outlined in the *Lutheran Service Book*. Mornings begin with stretching and song, followed by wonderful health education interactive discussions led by John D. Eckrich, M.D., internist and founder of Grace Place; the Rev. Dr. David Ludwig, humorist, professor, clinical psychologist and pastor; and Eustolio Gomez, director of Fiscal Education for Concordia Plan Services. To boot, if you are enrolled in Concordia Plans, you and your spouse each receive a \$100 gift card just for attending the retreat, and your congregation receives \$200 for encouraging your attendance.

The cost is being underwritten by the Dunklau Foundation of Fremont, Neb., so this is very affordable with couples' rates at \$350 and singles at \$275. These rates cover everything except incidentals and adventure activities like rafting.

Please don't delay because this retreat often fills up early. Register at www.graceplaceretreats.org; call Patti Allen at 314-842-3077 with questions.

Also visit the website to learn about the Single Church Workers Retreat in the Rockies scheduled for June 18-22.

BEING WELL—SAYING ‘THANK YOU’

In January, many of us develop a New Year’s resolution or two, with one of them usually related to taking better care of ourselves—eating better, exercising more, etc. Throughout this year (as space allows), *Peaks and Valleys* will run a series of “wellness” articles written by Dr. John D. Eckrich, founder of Grace Place Lutheran Wellness Ministries. The first of this series appears below. May it and the subsequent articles bless your 2012!

Well-being

Wellbeing, a recently published book from the famed Gallup organization, sheds incredibly helpful insight into what it takes for us to be *well*. Well-being does not mean merely *being happy*. Now, there is nothing inherently wrong with being happy or joyful, even for Missouri Synod Lutherans! Consider what God has done for us through Christ and it puts a smile on your heart.

However, well-being goes far beyond happiness. Gallup surveyed the peoples of over 200 nations—populations representing about 98 percent of the world—and came up with the following findings. The five key areas of *being* that seem to reflect the health or wellness of the human lot are career well-being, social well-being, physical well-being, financial well-being and community well-being.

Nevertheless, the most striking comment from Gallup was that it is not wellness in any one category of health that is important. In fact, most Americans can claim good health in one of the five areas of wellness (63 percent of us can make that statement). Only 7 percent of us claim to have well-being in all categories and, frankly, that may be a rather hollow boast.

What is really important according to Gallup is how these five areas of health interact, how they balance with each other. When we are balanced in the multiple threads of our being, we have a much stronger rope.

Furthermore, Gallup discovered that for all people, the energy, the driving and motivating force for wellness is, of all things, our spiritual being—our faith!

Imagine, a secular, worldly surveyor like Gallup finally coming to realize what St. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, shared with the Ephesians and Galatians and today with us. By God’s grace, we are saved through faith, not of our own doing. Our well-being is a gift of God, not of ourselves. Having been justified and sanctified by Christ, our faith flows in us and is matured in us in our baptismal walk by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Oh, one other interesting tidbit—well-serving lives are lives well-lived. Can you imagine that?

Learn more about living and serving well and consider experiencing a Grace Place Retreat (see Page B). Visit www.graceplaceretreats.org.

* *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements*, James K. Harter, Ph.D. and Tom Rath, Gallup Press, May 4, 2010.

The power of ‘thank you’

The following is an excerpt of a blog written by the Rev. Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann, director of *What a Way*. To read the entire June 29 blog, go to <http://blog.whataway.org/>.

“Joyful and happy church workers are well and serve well. I know a Lutheran pastor who writes a ‘thank you’ at every opportunity. For example, each time he is invited to lunch or dinner or to a member’s home or meets with a member in their place of employment or business, he writes a thank-you note expressing appreciation for the person’s time, hospitality and conversation, and commenting on a highlight of their relational visit.

“As you work to set a climate of thanks in the congregation, the spirit is catching. A lifestyle of thanks can be contagious. It will inspire people over time to thank you, to encourage you, to tell you how important you and your work are to their lives of service in Christ’s church.

“Manners practiced in a congregation, especially a ‘thank you,’ reveal a lot about how persons will treat people outside the congregation, too. This sets the stage for being the receptive church that visitors see when they come to hear the preaching of God’s Word.

“The best thing you can do to start thanking others is to use a handwritten note of thanks and send it in the mail. It is so rare today that it really stands out. Make the note brief and meaningful. A telephone call is also a salutary exchange. Even a well-worded email saying ‘thanks’ can be a stand-out in that person’s life.

“A ‘thank you’ builds up people. And do it promptly; timing is important. Don’t underestimate the power of saying ‘thank you.’”

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