



Church Simple: A Church of bold and big sinners!

“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’” (Luke 18:13, New American Standard, emphasis added).

English translations of the Bible (ESV, NKJV, NIV, KJV) all get it wrong, except one, the New American Standard Bible. The underlined *the* is the correct translation. The tax collector is not concerned about *other* sinners but only about himself. He knows—he *knows*—by the Spirit’s prompting that he is absolutely sinful; he is *the* sinner. He is *the* big sinner before God!

The Church Year celebrates Reformation Day on Oct. 31 when, in 1517, Dr. Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg. Luther’s conscience was not quiet until he discovered the absolute truth that God revealed His righteous work, not by damning, but by saving people through His Son.

Because this belief changed Luther’s worldview, he could give such counsel to his fellow reformer, Philip Melancthon:

If you are a preacher of grace, then preach a true and not a fictitious grace; if grace is true, you must bear a true and not a fictitious sin. God does not save people who are only fictitious sinners. Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly, for he is victorious over sin, death and the world. As long as we are here [in this world] we have to sin. This life is not the dwelling place of righteousness, but, as Peter says, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (AE 48:281-282).

The Church in *this* America must be comfortable hanging around real and big sinners, starting with the one sitting in the pew and extending to everyone on the street. This America is on hyper-drive, sliding toward Sodom and Gomorrah. America is endorsing gay marriage as a viable alternative lifestyle. I suspect that, within 10 years, those who disagree can expect to be persecuted and/or prosecuted.

How shall the Church respond? Not with fear or with self-righteous pride! And I would say, not with an attitude of being too serious, as if the world’s events depend upon us! The Church must not take herself too seriously! The Lord of the heavens and the earth is not surprised or intimidated by outbreaks of outright and

rank wickedness. He has been around for a while! The Church trusts humbly in her Lord as she abides in this world.

While awaiting the end times, the Church fights by faith. The Church’s most powerful weapon remains the humble message of God’s Son. He is labeled by St. Paul as “sin” in our place (2 Cor. 5:21). Before the Father, Jesus took upon Himself the standing and status as *the* sinner, on behalf of all. The Church proclaims not her own righteous acts but those of the One who owns her, Jesus Christ. The Church is full of big and bold sinners because she is all about Jesus Christ!

“Be a sinner and sin boldly,” said Luther, *“but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly.”*



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

Celebrate the victory!

It never ceases to amaze how we can become so passionate about sports when our team does something great or wins the game.

We would all agree that Christianity is so much more important than any game or victory! As a matter of fact, the basic truth of the Gospel—salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ alone—is the most important truth in the world. As Christians, we celebrate this truth every Sunday in worship. But isn’t it great to celebrate this truth with other Lutheran Christians in the Denver area at least once a year? Many of you might say, “Yes, it is! But when can I do that?”

At 4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 6, at Ascension Lutheran Church in Littleton, Colo., you will have that opportunity. At this service, we will celebrate the truths of the Gospel that stir our soul and excite our spirits.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Maier, world-class church historian, author and apologete of the faith, will be our guest preacher. A catered meal will follow in Ascension’s fellowship hall (cost will be around \$10 per person).

So, come to this service and celebrate the greatest news in the world. We are all winners through faith in Jesus Christ! Celebrate the victory that will go into eternity! Let’s celebrate it on Nov 6—a day you won’t want to miss. Hope to see you there!

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Crud Wars and other summer fun

Breanna Wengel, student at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., served as a summer intern for Trinity Lutheran Church, Alamogordo, N.M. Her responsibilities included working with the youth group, helping with vacation Bible school, organizing the Fourth of July church picnic and organizing and teaching summer Sunday school. Breanna's hard work was a wonderful blessing to the congregation.



The youth group at Trinity seems to have enjoyed "Crud Wars," led by Breanna Wengel last summer.

Heimer ordained



Pastor Stephen Heimer receives a blessing from Rocky Mountain District President Randy Goltz during his ordination at San Pablo Lutheran Church, El Paso, Texas, on July 30. As part of his call to serve at Zion Lutheran Church in El Paso, Heimer

also will serve part time at Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care as chief operating officer and pastor of outreach. Heimer was ordained by his father, the Rev. Karl Heimer.

Trinity reaches community through VBS

Last summer, Trinity, St. George, Utah, hosted a vacation Bible school (VBS) under the theme "Let's Build an Ark." Eight youth from the congregation helped lead approximately 45 young children through the VBS activities. Only five of the children were from the congregation with the others coming from the surrounding community.



Nearly 45 children from the surrounding community heard about God's love and promises at Trinity's VBS last summer. What a great outreach!

VBS activities included building a cardboard ark. Children also learned how Noah built the ark to save his family in the great flood. This, along with other Bible stories, helped them understand God's justice, care, goodness, guidance and promises. The children worked at seven stations rotating every 10 minutes.

Missionary from Colorado to serve in Hong Kong

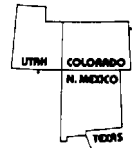
Persephone James of Sterling, Colo., recently accepted an appointment from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) to serve as a human care worker in partnership with Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation of Hong Kong.

James will begin serving as a GEO (Globally Engaged in Outreach) human care worker based in Hong Kong later this year. GEO personnel typically serve between one and two years. She will serve as the development coordinator for Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Hong Kong that is dedicated to improving the lives of poor, rural communities in Asia through education and service.

A native of Long Beach, Calif., who grew up in Sterling, James previously served in the military and worked at a business process outsourcing company for 15 years. She is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sterling.

James is among a group of more than 30 new international missionaries, human care workers and teachers who were formally commissioned during a sending service in July in the chapel at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis.

To find out more about these LCMS missionaries and others, or to support their efforts, download their prayer cards from the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/prayercards.



'Conversations in Spanish' a huge success

Recently, 11 students took part in the second "Conversations in Spanish" Language Intensive sponsored jointly by the Lutheran Hispanic Missionary Institute (LHMI) and Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care (YLM).

Seven of the students were beginners and also participated in the "Jump Start" program, and four students studied on level two. The instruction was offered by professors from the Language Plus Institute and the staff of LHMI and YLM.



Students of the second "Conversations in Spanish" Language Intensive are pictured with some of their instructors.

The Jump Start program began on Saturday, Aug. 6. After a welcome and orientation to YLM, they jumped into Spanish with a Spanish-language scavenger hunt. Afterward, the students attended "Viva El Paso" with Erin MacKenzie and Pastor Richard Schlak. Viva El Paso is a three-hour music and dance production put on in an open-air amphitheater in the Franklin Mountains. It traces the different cultures that have inhabited and influenced the El Paso region: Indian, Spanish, Mexican and American. It was an eye-opener for many of the students, particularly as they saw the interaction between the Indian and Spanish cultures and saw how the popular religion of the Mestizos is a syncretistic mix of Roman Catholicism and paganism.

Sunday morning, the Jump Start participants attended church in both English and Spanish at San Pablo Lutheran Church and continued their cultural odyssey by touring the Mission Trail, a series of missions in the El Paso area started by the Roman Catholic Church to reach out to the Indians in the 1500s and 1600s. The rest of the students arrived in the afternoon. The day ended with dinner and orientation for everyone, including a bit more Spanish vocabulary.

From Monday through Friday, students were in class all morning until 3 in the afternoon. The classes, guided by Language Plus, are extremely participative, aimed at giving each student the maximum amount of practice (not just theory). During lunch, a series of Hispanic speakers from the area addressed the group to give them an idea of what it is like to be Hispanic of different generations in the United States.

In the late afternoon, participants went on several cultural excursions to the Chamizal National Monument (commemorating the resolution of a U.S./Mexico border dispute), to a local Hispanic supermarket, to a market for handcrafts and to a very popular Mexican restaurant.

In the evenings, Pastor Stephen Heimer taught the students Spanish Christian songs and hymns, and Pastor Richard Schlak led discussions of topics related to Hispanic missions: Hispanic worship styles and church vocabulary, cultural differences, special challenges (particularly immigration) and Hispanic mission basics (practical steps to take). The Mariachi San Pablo performed during one evening meal.



A trip to the Ranch Market was one of several interesting cultural excursions that helped students understand and experience Hispanic culture.

Students found the entire weeklong experience to be very helpful, enlightening and unique. Pastor Paul Sorcek, one of the students, commented: "I really hope you continue this program. I searched all over the Internet and as far as I can tell, this is unique. You combine intensive Spanish learning with an introduction to the border culture and tools for Hispanic ministry."

Another student had this to say about the program: "The instruction was exactly what I needed. I appreciated the flexibility in meeting me where I am. The special topic presentations greatly enhanced the language instruction and brought to light important insights for which we should be mindful when working with Hispanics. Fabulous experience!"

PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

'Pastor, thank you!'



Such words are good words. They are spoken to our pastor following a funeral, wedding or counseling session. Every once in a while, they are spoken following a sermon that he preached that spoke wonderfully to you. It is a timely event when you can express thanks to the man

that God has called to serve in His name in your congregation.

October has been designated as Pastor Appreciation Month. We on the Debt Assistance Committee of our district encourage you to voice or show your appreciation to your pastor or pastors during this month. We even have another way to suggest to you to show your appreciation to them—make a gift in honor of them to the Debt Assistance Program.

A gift in honor of your pastor or pastors will be given to other pastors who are assisted by the Debt Assistance Program. The Debt Assistance Program of our district makes annual gifts to pastors who serve within our district who carry educational debt. Dozens of pastors within our district annually have some of their debt reduced because of the generosity of others. This reduction of debt is a blessing to them and to their families.

If you are so led and so blessed, please send a check to the Rocky Mountain District for the Debt Assistance Program. Let us know that this is being done in appreciation for your pastor and we will contact him letting him know that other pastors in the district also are being blessed by his ministry through this gift in honor of him.

Gifts should be sent to the Rocky Mountain District, 14334 E. Evans Ave., Aurora, CO 80014 (Attention: DAP). Please be sure to provide the name(s) of your pastor(s)! Funds received in this special appeal will be distributed this year to help our pastors reduce their educational debt.

Thank you for remembering the one who leads you faithfully into the hands of your Savior, Jesus.

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14).



Gospel music brings community together

"Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs" (Ps. 100:2).

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19).

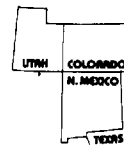
Through the vibrant Gospel music of Blackwood Legacy from Nashville, Tenn., Colorado's Arkansas River Valley was granted this opportunity to praise and proclaim our Lord in song. This dynamic trio performed on Aug. 13 at La Junta's Otero Junior College and on Aug. 16 at Rocky Ford's Grand Theatre.



Blackwood Legacy carries on the spirit of the Blackwood Brothers, who ministered through music to the nation from the 1930s through the 1990s. Under the leadership of Rick Price, the last lead singer of the Blackwood Brothers, along with Daniel Childs and Luke Yates, Blackwood Legacy offers churches in the western United States the opportunity to listen to good Gospel music and to share it with the community—without fee. All expenses are covered through freewill offerings.

The two Arkansas Valley concerts brought together a total of 600 attendees. The publicity before (from Pueblo to Lamar), along with word-of-mouth testimonies after, provided some very worthwhile notice for the three little local congregations—St. Peter's Lutheran of Rocky Ford, Trinity Lutheran of La Junta and Grace Lutheran of Sugar City. In addition, through the concerts, the churches collected canned goods for local food banks.

If your congregation is looking for an opportunity to listen to some great Gospel music (and have a few laughs in the process), praise the Lord through that music and proclaim Him through it to your community, please consider a Blackwood Legacy concert. And, if you are in the Arkansas Valley in August 2012, check out the local concert schedule. They just might be playing there again. Praise the Lord!



There still is time to register



The partnership of the Rocky Mountain District's "Conversations of Grace" (COG) with Lutheran Hour Ministries' "Regional Outreach Conference" (ROC) will bring you to the foot of Pike's Peak for inspirational worship, breakout sessions, fellowship and networking with other mission-minded Christians. Come to the Crowne Plaza in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Nov. 4-5 for this mountaintop experience.

The goal of this year's conference is a simple one: Train and encourage God's people to be mission-minded witnesses for Jesus Christ, ready and able to speak His truth to struggling souls wherever they may be.

This conference will provide an optimal venue for mission-minded Christians, including:

- Opportunities to meet and hear Rev. Greg Seltz, the new speaker for *The Lutheran Hour*.
- Engaging presentations by Dr. Micah Parker from Trust Guy Ministries.
- Interactive sessions to sharpen your skills to share the Gospel in those "mission moments."
- Breakout sessions with hard-hitting topics for reaching out to those who don't know Christ.

(Click on *Breakout Sessions* at www.lhm.org/roc/roc.asp?id=17293 for complete details.)

- "five14" (Matt. 5:14) teen program is a witnessing-training program to inspire teens to shine Christ's light in the lives of their friends and classmates. Teenagers will get charged up by the way five14 gets the message across! Led by Rev. Ben Hoyer from Holy Cross Lutheran Ministries in Lake Mary, Fla.

- "Shine Your Light So Bright!" is like a day at vacation Bible school with the power and excitement kicked up a notch. Age-appropriate Bible stories, music and crafts will teach the children practical ways they can share the love of Jesus.

For a complete schedule, registration form and all conference details, please refer to the *ROC Information Kit* that was mailed to all congregations in August or go online to www.lhm.org/roc. (Click on

"Conferences" and then click on "Colorado Springs" for all the information, online registration and room reservations at the Crowne Plaza.)

Should you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Damon Tobias at 505-286-5778, damon_tobias@hotmail.com or Mike Brown at 303-438-5766, mbrown_illrmd@comcast.net.

"They all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).



CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Opportunity for college students to discover the seminary

As colleges gear up for another academic year, many of the returning students are pondering just what the future holds and what vocation they should choose. For some, that will mean choosing full-time church work in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, possibly as a pastor or deaconess.

To assist college students in answering the questions that will come when considering these paths, Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, offers Christ Academy—College for young men and Phoebe Academy—College for young women, Nov. 3–6.

"Christ Academy—College and Phoebe Academy—College offer a firsthand look at the faculty, curriculum, worship life and the unique community of Concordia Theological Seminary. The students who participate experience the highlights of this remarkable place and begin to prayerfully consider pursuing the pastoral ministry or deaconess service by studying at CTS," commented Rev. Andrew P. Yeager, director of Christ Academy—College.

There is no fee for this event and on-campus housing and meals are included. To learn more or to see a complete schedule of events, go to www.ctsfw.edu/cac. Those interested also may phone 800-481-2155 and a member of our admission staff will be happy to answer your questions.

MORE DISTRICT

Christ Our Redeemer, Bennett, turns 25

Christ Our Redeemer, Bennett, Colo., will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Oct. 23. The worship service (with Holy Communion) begins at 9:30 a.m. A luncheon will be served following the service.

Mariachi San Pablo Tour 2011

What better way to celebrate a 10th anniversary than a four-state tour aimed at spreading the Gospel, Mariachi style?

Recently, the group returned from its annual summer tour that saw them visit Texas, Arkansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma. Nine members of the band, plus two sound people, ventured to five cities and performed 16 different events, ranging from concerts to worship service to community care events.



Members of the Mariachi band love to interact with the crowds that come to hear them.

Not only were the Mariachi able to share the love of Jesus, they also were able to grow in faith through a Bible study on the life of Joseph. The members expanded their worldview by visiting Joplin, Mo., site of the recent damaging tornadoes, to see not only the devastation caused by the storms but also to see the rebuilding efforts and the faith of those in the community. Additionally, they visited the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum and came to truly appreciate all that happened through that tragic bombing.

Several highlights were mentioned among various members, but those that stood out were helping with a vacation Bible school in Big Spring, Texas, and seeing the same people at more than one event in the same city. One member shared a personal highlight:

“There was one man that came to our first outdoor concert in Lincoln, Neb., and then he attended the other three events there. He even asked about joining the Lutheran church in town. This really shows that we are reaching people.”

Another touching story came from the youngest

member, who was given a gift (a keychain) from a resident of a senior center. This giving lady told the young violinist that this special keychain had helped her with her faith battles and she hoped that it would do the same for its new owner.

For information on future tours, please contact Ann Hernandez at 915-858-2588 or ahernandez@ylm.com.



Both the young and the young-at-heart enjoyed listening to and watching Mariachi San Pablo share the Gospel through its music.



Get ready for ‘Living the Grande Life’

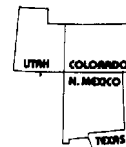
It’s not too early to start planning for the 2012 Rocky Mountain District Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) convention in El Paso, Texas. Mark your calendars for June 22-24 and get ready for “Living the Grande Life.” To learn more about this upcoming convention, visit www.rmdlwml.org.

Send news to Jan Hoener

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Email: janhoener@comcast.net

December issue deadline: Oct. 15

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



Rocky Mountain District calendar

October

- 4 Administrators Conference, Breckenridge, Colo.
- 4-5 2011 Circuit Counselors Conference, Breckenridge, Colo.
- 5-7 Professional Workers Conference, Breckenridge, Colo.
- 31 RMD Board of Directors meeting

November

- 1 RMD Board of Directors meeting
- 4-5 "Conversations of Grace at the ROC!" Conference, Colorado Springs, Colo., Crowne Plaza

2012

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.

August

- 6-7 RMD Board of Directors meeting

• Charles Gebhardt, Salt Lake Lutheran High School, Salt Lake City, Utah, to Concordia University, Seward, Neb.

• Brent Howard, Mount Olive, Aurora, Colo., to Christ, Overland Park, Kan.

• Dave Renquest, Denver Lutheran High School, Denver, Colo., to Lutheran High School, Parker, Colo.

CALLS DECLINED

• The Rev. Joseph Murphy, Grace, Parker, Colo., to Trinity, Great Falls, Mont.

Pursuing God's call

Not long ago, a man asked me about entering the pastoral ministry. He is a retail sales manager, living his faith in the everyday world of work, helping people with various issues, pointing them to Jesus. He is an out-of-state participant with The Church Without Walls who has been nurtured and educated in the ways of the Master.

What do you say to a man who knows the path his future is to take yet fears 1) the cost of a seminary education and 2) being taken out of the context of ministry to obtain this education? We had a good, long lunch.

For certain, no decisions have been finalized. We discussed the various options for service, reflected on the possibilities for working among God's people, outlined an approach to securing the appropriate education and answered a wide range of thoughtful questions. This man, who brings 15 years of people-management skills to the table plus 30 years of working to meet people's needs in a variety of contexts, will pursue God's call upon his life. His family is in full agreement.

In 25 years of ministry, I have been privileged to be a friend and mentor to more than a dozen men who eventually entered pastoral ministry, most of them within our Synod. As I look back on these fine men and the fond memories of our friendship and partnership together, I am grateful to our Lord for having been a part of their spiritual formation under His tutelage.

Let us pray for the Lord's work among men and women who are called and prepared for the work of ministry in the unique future that is opening before the Church.

Craig W. Henningfield, Church Without Walls, missionary/pastor, 303-725-6760.

Calls in the district

PLACEMENTS

• Elyse Cattau, Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis., to Bethlehem, Lakewood, Colo.

CALL EXTENDED

• Nicolai Lutheran Church, Canby, and Zion, Boyd, Minn., to Rev. Kevin Froelich, candidate

CALLS ACCEPTED

• Jason Block, Denver Lutheran High School, Denver, Colo., to Racine Lutheran High School, Racine, Wis.

• Daniel Cattau, Lutheran High School, Parker, Colo., to Faith, Las Vegas, Nev.

GET INVOLVED

Retired and looking for a ministry that can use your well-developed skills?



The 72[®] is now accepting applications for volunteer team members. Your skills would be used to equip and encourage LCMS members to confidently carry Jesus with them into their local communities through their daily lives, warmly welcoming guests and new members into their congregation's fellowship.

To learn more about The 72[®] ministry, please visit www.lcmsworldmission.org/the72, or call the office at 800-433-3954, ext. 1286. To request an application packet, please send an email to the72@lcms.org or call the office at the number above.

Be merciful—be prepared

In the past 11 years, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has come to be recognized as one of the major non-governmental responders to national and international disasters. LCMS members have always been generous in their support for people in need.

But things are changing. Those who have responded to the tsunamis in Indonesia, Malaysia and recently in Japan, and the disasters in New Orleans, Haiti, Houston, Alabama, Joplin and North Dakota have come back with a new insight. If the local people had been prepared better, much pain and misery could have been avoided and the recovery could have been quicker. Local resources in the communities were not always properly used.

With this background and experience, the LCMS World Relief and Human Care came to recognize that the local congregation is made up of people who understand God's mercy and God's desire to help anyone in need. The local congregation is God's best instrument to demonstrate His mercy to its community when disaster strikes.

Three programs have developed to help local congregations in the United States.

1. Under the direction of the Rev. Carlos Hernandez, LCMS World Relief and Human Care can help the congregation assess needs and provide direction, financial support and long-term counseling for the congregation to help its members and the community.
2. Through district coordinators, Lutheran Emergency Response Teams are trained to

respond to disasters faced by other congregations in the district and Synod.

3. Through district coordinators, local congregations are trained to access community and congregational assets. Prepared members who have the tools are able to help during an emergency.

On May 21, Lori Dowe, a member of Grace Lutheran Church in Sandy, Utah, attended a Congregation Preparedness class organized by Rev. Bob Schrank at Christ Lutheran Church in Murray. Later she wrote, "For me personally, Saturday's class had a big impact. I've had years of disaster training and protocol development, but I had never been taught how critical it was to keep Christ at the center of all of it. Although my government-based classes have always focused on the physical and initial emotional response in an emergency, it was not until yesterday that I understood how critical it is to address the 'whole person.' It felt like the piece I'd been missing for all these years suddenly fell into place. It really got me fired up for this group."

A well-prepared congregation is a tremendous gift from God for its community in a disaster and can give a positive testimony that our Lord is a God of mercy. Any eight-year-old child can fix something to eat, but a well-trained cook like

Rachel Ray can do it so much better.

If we have any gratitude for God's mercy and pity in our hearts for people who are hurting, we will want to take the time to be better prepared to help them.

*Rev. Doug May
Coordinator, New Mexico Region
LCMS World Relief and Human Care*



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