



IDE TODAY

Iowa District East - LCMS

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DISTRICT UPDATES



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Accepted

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Declined

Calling Congregations

Congregation

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Vacancy Pastor

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Clarke Frederick

Randy McHone

David Jacob

DCE/School/Teacher Calls

Vacancies Bethany, Cedar Rapids DCE

Accepted

Pending

Declined Davie Meier E. Dundee, IL to Bethany, Cedar Rapids - DCE

About the Cover

Joey Sunne and Jacob Preus practiced their archery at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca this past summer. Archery is just one of many activities the campers enjoyed this summer, including horseback riding, swimming, games, devotions and more!



Iowa District East - LCMS



@lcmside

Calendar of Events

October

1-2 Fall Pastors' Conference
5-6 Confirmation Retreat
12-13 Pastors' Wives' Retreat
30 Board of Directors Meeting

November

16-17 Sr. High Retreat
22-23 Thanksgiving Holiday,
District office closed.

President's Piece for Peace

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders

So that we do not lose sight of the significance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, I have been writing a series of articles for the IDE Today from the translation of a document called "The Wittenberg Reformation (1545)". The purpose of this document was to clarify the fine points of the 1517 Reformation. Topics range within this document, but up front is a discussion on the Sacraments of the Church. In the last edition of the IDE Today, I wrote about the three Sacraments of the Reformers, namely, Baptism, Holy Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. There were significant differences between the Reformers and Rome on these issues. While the Reformers held to three Sacraments, Rome practiced seven of them.

For the Reformers, a Sacrament must have the command of God from Scripture, and the forgiveness of sins received through it. Four of Rome's Sacraments did not meet this criteria, therefore, they are not considered a Sacrament by the Reformers. That said, it does not mean that the Lutheran Church did not value the remaining four. I address each of them in the following.

Confirmation

While Scripture admonishes parents to teach their children the Word of God and expects the Church to assist in this venture, the ceremony of confirmation is neither commanded by God, nor does it bestow the forgiveness of sins. Confirmation is a fine and good custom that the Church does well to retain. It may not reach the level of a Sacrament but it does serve for the preservation of proper doctrine, pure understanding and good discipline. The age of confirmation has become an issue but need not be. Uniformity is always beneficial in the Church, from one congregation to the next, yet at the same time, there is no biblical instruction for the age one can be confirmed. Confirmation is bound to the satisfaction of the catechist and the parents, satisfaction that the catechumen is well prepared in the doctrines of the Faith, that they can confess it publicly with the intention of adhering to it.

Ordination

Once again, the Reformers did not believe that ordination bestows the forgiveness of sins at its rite. That does not mean that ordination was a "take it or leave it" issue. In the Lutheran Church, ordination is the public confirmation of the Divine Call into the Holy Ministry. It is so important that the Reformers stated this: *"If rulers would consider the great bounty of God that is founded upon the ministerium, namely, that God gathers to Himself His eternal church through this office, and not otherwise, and has commanded us wretched men to call persons who understand Christian doctrine, through whose voice and service in the preaching office and sacraments he will assuredly co-operate and give salvation, they would be more diligent about properly and solemnly arranging for ordination...God wills assuredly to work through this call and office."* In the rite of ordination there is, in the prayers, a bestowal upon the ordained of the gifts of God to carry out the office to which he has been called.

For the Reformers, a Sacrament must have the command of God from Scripture, and the forgiveness of sins received through it.

Invocation of Departed Saints

Rome had developed a doctrine that declared the Church could call upon those who had died and ascended to heaven for help and assistance to the Church on earth. Many festivals and worship rites developed from this belief, so did myriads of abuses and false practices. The Reformers declared there is not one word of Scripture concerning this invocation. There is no invocation to intercede in the Church except the intercession of the Triune God on behalf of the sinner. The Reformers said, "Anyone who invokes the dead saints gives them the honor and power of



REV DR BRIAN S SAUNDERS

knowing hearts and hearing invocation in all the world. This is to give them omnipotence, which is public idolatry." Needless to say, invocation of the saints before us was not and is not a part of Lutheran doctrine or practice. That does not mean we do not have reason to commemorate them on the Church calendar. They do deserve honor but a different kind of honor than does the Lord. We may recognize that God revealed His Word through many of them, the Prophets and Apostles. We also rejoice in the fact that God exhibited His grace to and through them. Men like David, Peter, Paul and others received forgiveness of sins, the same sins that haunt our consciences. These are also men and women who diligently held on to God's gifts, lived a disciplined life, and learned the Word of God. All are marvelous examples of the Holy Faith to us today. We do well to remember them and honor their steadfastness, as indeed we pray we may be and do the same, but not invoke them for what they cannot do.

Matrimony

Clearly the Scriptures speak of marriage and do so with the holiest of blessings. Yet it did not reach the level of a Sacrament for the Reformers. The main reason is that the rite of marriage does not bestow the forgiveness of sins. Marriage, of course, is highly honored in the Lutheran Church and a great blessing to mankind as God intends for it to be. The main complaint that the Reformers had with Rome was with the denial of marriage to the priests and nuns. The Reformers quote I Timothy 4:1-3 which calls the prohibition of marriage a devilish doctrine.

Cont. on pg. 4...

This covers the Sacraments of the Reformation and why the Lutherans speak of three rather than seven, as Rome still does. Next edition will address the Reformers view on Lutheran Education and the place of schools either in the parish or in the home. Until then, enjoy the blessings of God coming to you in all His vast glory, covered by water, voice, bread, and wine. As He does, you receive the blessed Sacraments. These are the Holy Things and they bring with them Holy Gifts that make you Holy before our merciful Lord.

Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders is the President of Iowa District East and Assistant Pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, IA.



Gearing Up!

Rev. Dr. Dean F Rothchild

As fall approaches and the school year begins anew, the church finds herself gearing up again. Bible Class and Sunday School classes will be resuming if they had shut down for the summer months. Confirmation classes will begin very soon. By the time you read this, the athletes who participate in volleyball, football, or cross-country will have already begun their practices. Some might have already had a match, a game or a meet. Everyone seems to be geared up!

St. Paul states: *"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory"* (Colossians 3:1-4).

*One American idol
which we are
confronted with is the
idol of "activity."*

Paul tells us that our focus should be on the heavenly things; that would include such things as forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Contrast that with all the things of the world which get us off track or detoured from the ways of God. Our ways are not His ways. Our ways, in and of themselves, would lead to spiritual death. Our ways do not have "salvation" as their outcome.

In talking with Pastors in our district and outside of it, they all have a real frustration over the lack of commitment of people to the Church. One American idol which we are confronted with is the idol of "activity." It can be sports, music, drama, speech, dance, camping, you name it for yourself. All of these have become more important than receiving the gifts of God in the Divine Service.

Wake up, parents. Don't bemoan the fact that your kids are no longer in church when they are adults because you taught them that it wasn't important when they were in your home and you succumbed to the idol of "activity."

God calls us in repentance back to our baptism. Paul says that we have died. We need to die daily to sin so that Christ can raise us up again. Our real life is "hidden in Christ." Our sins are buried with Christ Jesus. *"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection"* (Romans 6:4-5).

Christ Jesus has walked the perfect straight way in our place. His death and resurrection, bring life and eternal life to us. Our salvation has been accomplished by Him! As Edward Mote wrote in the hymn: "When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In ev'ry high and stormy gale My anchor holds within the veil. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand." The Church keeps pointing people to Jesus, preaching the cross and empty tomb, absolving the penitent, and giving Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. In that sense, the Church never has to gear up but continue to deliver that which Christ Jesus has entrusted to her.

Rev. Dr. Dean F. Rothchild is Assistant to the President and Director of the Proclaiming Christ Jesus Campaign.



REV DR DEAN F ROTHCHILD

Capital Campaign Update

As of August 7, 2018

Gifts received to date

\$751,981

Promised in the next 1-6 years

\$25,300

TOTAL TO DATE

\$777,281



Proclaiming Christ Jesus!
Luke 24:46-47

Put On Your “God-Attitude”

Jan Doellinger

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31

The Israelites had many enemies throughout their time on earth. One of the most well-known we learned about in our Lutheran school upbringing were the Philistines and the giant, Goliath. You need to go back in your Bible in 1 Samuel 17 to read about the frustrating situation the Israelites are in. It’s looking pretty bleak for Saul and his army. The Philistines on one side of the valley and the Israelites on the other. Meanwhile, Goliath challenges the Israelites daily with his taunting and jeering to come out and fight.

Under Jesse’s orders, David goes to his brothers to deliver some supplies. While he’s there, he hears Goliath taunting the Israelites to come and fight. When David heard and saw what was happening he spoke up and said, *“For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”* (1 Samuel 17:26) As the story unfolds it appears David has three strikes against him and is in big trouble. First, Eliab, David’s older brother, didn’t take kindly to David’s “pride and insolence” of his heart. After all, he was supposed to be taking care of the sheep he left in the wilderness. Second, Saul thinks David is too young to fight a man of war. Third, Goliath looked at David with disdain because of his youth and said he would give David’s flesh to the birds of the air and beasts of the field. Though David was at great odds to lose the battle against Goliath, we know that God was with him, and he defeated the giant with a stone’s throw.

In this scripture account, David is young, but he is not a boy either. He had been tending his father’s flocks, and had man-handled lions and bears. He was tough as nails, and he demonstrates great courage and leadership with God’s help. Goliath didn’t stand a chance against David. This battle is over before it even begins. David is not the surprise underdog champion. It is Goliath who is the weak one.

This is October, and you have been with your students since the latter part of August. Have you experienced any “Goliath” moments since you first started to get your room ready for your

students this school year? Goliath moments in your school? Your personal life? These moments can be varied in nature, and can happen any time, especially when you least expect it. Maybe you have a few schneckelfritzes that keep you on your toes. Perhaps you have to get use to a new curriculum, one that requires you to use resources and technology you’re not as familiar with. Does the Board realize that long-range planning needs to take place while understanding the need to keep our Lutheran identity? Are you the new principal or teacher getting used to a new culture and set of expectations? Could it be that you’re wondering is there an end in sight to DHS rules and regulations?

Enter David. Here is an example for us about leadership and courage. In the face of danger and humiliation, David rises above the Israelite and Philistine soldiers with these words, *“For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God”* (v. 26). David was saying, “Just who do you think you are?” David knew God could do anything. How dare anyone speak to the contrary or even insinuate that any person, giant or not, could defy God!

Lutheran school teachers want to be courageous leaders who have no failing hearts in the face of challenges. In reality, on our own, we are faced with our sinful self. How can you feel courageous when Parent X comes to your classroom and gives you a tongue lashing because of the way you treated her son over a homework assignment?

How can you feel courageous facing the same student who constantly, day in and day out, pushes the envelope of your patience? How can you feel courageous when presenting a “new” or “different” way of doing something to the principal, faculty, or Board? Take heart! Jesus is with you in all those situations. He shattered the enemy for you by His gift of grace. Your sins have been washed away and you are a new person in Christ. Though there will always be challenges and difficulties in our life of service, by faith we can stand



JAN DOELLINGER

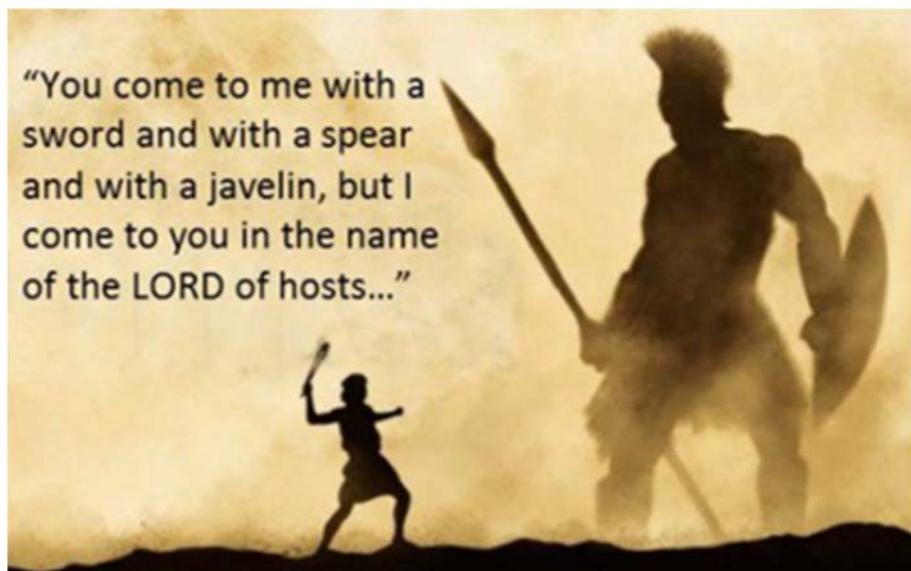
up to any situation or difficult odds because we are His redeemed children. In fact, we can go forward in confidence and hope because Christ’s victory is our victory. We can put on our “God-attitude”!

Courage basically boils down to “who do you trust?” If you believe and trust that God has called you to be His leader in a particular situation (e.g. your classroom! Your school! Your congregation!), then you must also believe and trust that He has equipped you to lead in that situation. Draw upon the skills God has given you for that moment in time. Trust in God using the tools He gives you. David was courageous because he trusted in God and used the tools God gave him.

One additional thought here. It’s tempting to just focus on this one scriptural account of David and put him on a pedestal. Because we’re students of the Bible and teachers of faith, we know there is more to David’s life than just this one story. We know that sin was a part of David’s life too. Remember the story of Bathsheba and Uriah? Remember how he had issues with his own family, Absalom for example? David’s sinfulness brought despair, hurt, and sorrow. Yet, God never forsook David, and through his confession and repentance, David was forgiven. The same can be said of us. Our sinfulness causes us to create problems and make mistakes. Christ comes to us when we falter and confess to Him what we have done. Through that sweet gift of grace, we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins and can move on, forgiven, restored, and made whole by Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

It's October. Put on your "God-attitude"! No matter what day of the month it is, God calls us to believe in Him and to trust in Him. This is not of our own doing, but through what Christ is doing with you, His servant. This means we are not limited when He gives us a task to perform. Boldly and confidently we can say, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31), as you serve Christ during this school year! We go forward each new day in confidence and hope!

Jan Doellinger serves IDE as the
Assistant to the President for Schools.



2018 IDE District Convention

Iowa District East met in convention at the Hotel at Kirkwood Center in Cedar Rapids on June 29-30 with the theme "Life Together: Laity & Clergy." The delegates from the district's congregations gathered for worship, study of the Word and district business. Rev. Dr. David Scaer served as the essayist and presented "James: The Apostle of Faith." Synod President Matthew Harrison presented "Joy:Fully Lutheran" to the assembly. The "Joy:Fully Lutheran" publication is produced by Synod and outlines some of the topics to be covered at Synodical Convention in 2019.

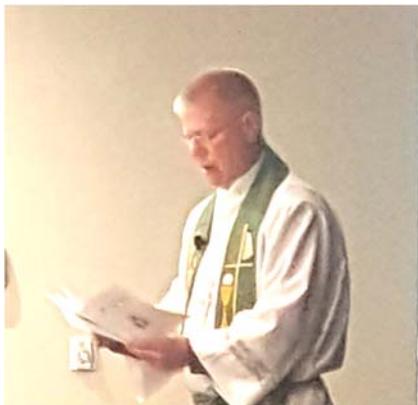
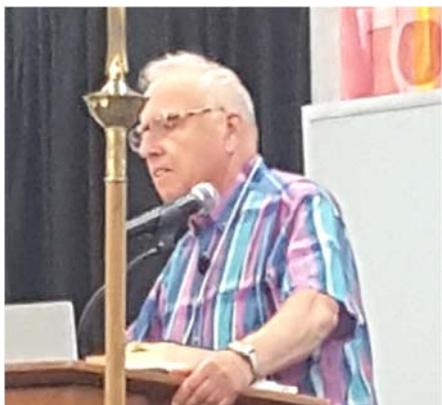
In elections, the Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was re-elected by affirmation to his fourth term as president. Also re-elected were: Rev. W. Max Mons, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Chapel, Iowa City, Iowa, First Vice-President; and Rev. Dr. Matthew Rueger, pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Hubbard, Iowa, Second Vice-President.

The delegates adopted resolutions to: address the current shortage of rostered teachers in the district; retain the current district convention delegate representation to pastor-congregation-parish; request that the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) revisit the 1985 CTCR document "Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice" regarding lay lectors; reaffirm and clarify the "Of Creation" section in "The Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the LCMS" (1932); reaffirm the scriptural teaching concerning the age of the earth; and amend several portions of the Iowa District East bylaws.

Below are photos from the Iowa District East Convention held June 29-30 in Cedar Rapids:

Top row, L to R: Convention Essayist, Dr. David P. Scaer; Iowa District East President Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders; Synodical President Matthew C. Harrison.

Bottom row: Delegates of the Convention enjoyed meeting and visiting with one another during breaks throughout the weekend.



LCEF

"I have been privileged to serve the congregations and families of Iowa through LCEF for over 19 years in various ways," wrote Carole White, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) District Vice President - Iowa Districts East and West, in her Iowa District East 2018 convention report. "As always, loans to finance church and school operations, expansion, improvements, new mission starts and many other ministry purposes are available through our church's financial organization, LCEF, and I consider it a joy to meet with committees and congregations interested in furthering the Lord's work in their communities."

In Iowa District East for the last triennium, LCEF has made 14 new loans totaling over \$2,314,000 thanks to faithful investors and borrowers partnering together to make a difference in things eternal. Over the last three years, Iowa District East received \$103,313 in operating results from LCEF. This earnings distribution is made available to districts and the Synod each year that LCEF is profitable. The amount given back to each district is based upon a 5-way average consisting of the following components: loans to congregations compared to total congregations, operating income, income producing assets, investors as a % of confirmed members and capital-to-asset ratio. LCEF was blessed to provide Iowa District East with these extra funds for new mission starts in Charles City and North Liberty, supporting congregations and our camp, as well as missionaries in our district and around the world."

LCEF is your Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod partner providing loans, investments and ministry support. Loan funds are available thanks to the faithful support of LCEF investors. To learn how you can become a partner in ministry with LCEF, contact Carole White at Carole.White@lcef.org, 515-240-2229 or visit lcef.org.



Carole White, LCEF District Vice President - Iowa Districts East and West, connected with convention attendees at the 40th District Convention of Iowa District East in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on June 29, 2018.

Redeemer, Marshalltown

God's people at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Marshalltown rejoice with our catechumens on the day of their confirmation.



L to R: Pastor Alex Post, Jamie Smith, Eysak Stanfield, Angus Callaway, Marcus Barker, Diew Gatwech

Faith, Mount Pleasant

On Palm Sunday, March 25th, 2018, Faith Lutheran Church in Mt. Pleasant welcomed into its family Nick, Lindsey and Sofia Yoder, Nick and Lindsey by adult confirmation and Sofia by Holy Baptism. While this may not seem like a major event to most congregations, for Faith, Mt. Pleasant, it was a significant marker! The Yoders are the first family to join Faith through Sonshine Academy – Faith’s preschool! Sonshine was established as an outreach of Faith in 2000. Thanks be to God for His gifts!



Grace, DeWitt



CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2018

Front row: Alivia Burzlaff, Cole Tobey, and Audrey Small.
Back Row: DCE Mark Sperry, Carver Krukow, Ben Alger, Madison Lawrence, and Rev. Ron Rafferty.

St. John’s, Victor (Lincoln Township) Celebrates 150 Years!

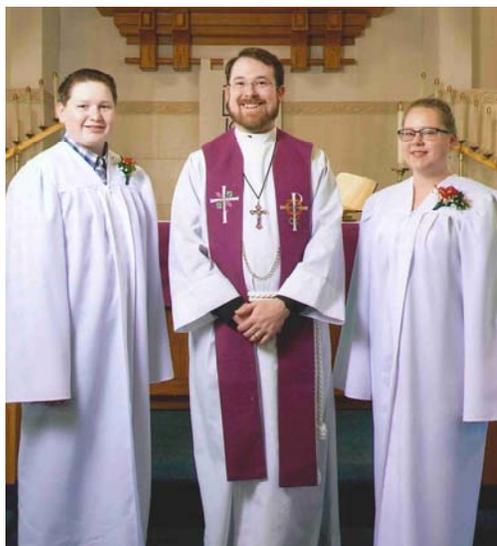
With full hearts and house of worship, St. John’s gave thanks for God’s Grace, at Christ’s expense, to us throughout our existence on June 24, 2018. Planning the event for two years included a recent redecorating of the worship space which many guests and former members and pastors saw for the first time. Former Pastor Eric Allyn who began his ministry at St. John’s in 1979 and is now retired, proclaimed God’s Word at the 9 am Divine Service, and current Pastor Stuart Rethwisch led liturgy and was Celebrant. Assisting them in distributing Holy Communion were former Pastors David MacKain and Nathan Rastl. Many voices including a choir made up of members and former members, along with instruments and current and former organists gave a joyful sound. After the morning service, introductions were made by Chairman Roger Kuesel of former pastors and teachers in attendance, and for some unable to attend, letters of congratulations on this milestone were sent. A group picture followed in the Church of many of the 419 worshippers before a catered meal was enjoyed, with seating in a large outside tent, feeding 450.

The enthusiastic sounds and conversations of this homecoming for many was very audible, and the weather God provided enhanced the feeling of good will. Many pictures of past school classes and church events were on display, bringing back even more shared memories. Some of the children enjoyed playing on the softball field while parents talked.

The 2 pm Anniversary Vespers service was held with much music, instrumental and vocal choir and soloists. Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz, former Lutheran Hour Speaker, former Vice President of Synod, and now editor of “Good News Magazine,” preached on the ongoing need to watch out for tares of false ideas about God being sown among the true faith and God’s harvest. Around 240 had ears to hear and give praise to God from whom all blessings flow. The day ended with an open house at the parsonage and good memories from the God who is the “tie that binds our hearts in Christian love” (LSB 649).



St. Paul, Mount Vernon



CONFIRMATION CLASS 2018

L to R: Kian Hageman, Rev. Sean Hansen, Tessa Cords

Christ, Gladbrook



INSTALLATION OF PASTOR FRED BERRY

Front row, L to R: President Brian Saunders, Rev. Fred Berry, Rev. Michael Knox.

Middle row, L to R: Rev. David Splett, Rev. Karl Bollhagen, Rev. Joel Koepp.

Back row, L to R: Rev. Troy Peperkorn, Rev. Paul Beisel, Rev. David Brandt.

St. Paul's Chapel, Iowa City

"The Blessing Of An Organ Responsive Prayer and Hymn Festival" was held on June 24 for the chapel's new organ. Pastor W. Max Mons began the service with a blessing followed by beautiful music and hymns from the organ played by chapel organist Tony Birnbaum, trumpeter James Mons and the St. Paul's Choir. The service was a hymn sing along attended by a chapel full of members and friends of the chapel. The new organ replaced the one from the early 1960s. More pictures of the Festival can be viewed at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/stpaulschapeliowacity/albums/72157697841302654>.

The chapel launched a website with a whole new look this summer. Please visit us at www.stpaulic.com.

Our students are back at the University of Iowa and St. Paul's. The chapel has been blessed with many returning and new students. The students are very active participants at the chapel helping plan fun events for other students and the congregation, as well as community service events. They are also planning fund raising events for upcoming trips. The first is the January 2019 LCMS U Conference in Fort Wayne, IN, followed by a mission trip in May 2020 to Ethiopia.



Davenport Lutheran Home Chapel

Rev. Christopher Neuendorf greets a resident after a Davenport Lutheran Home Chapel service.



St. Paul, Alden

The April 8th ceremony of Pastor Michael Kearney's commissioning into the Army Reserve as a Chaplain.



Front Row, L to R: Beatrice Kearney, Margaret Kearney, Anderson Kearney, Simeon Kearney.

Back Row, L to R: CH (Lt Col, Ret.) Randy McHone, CH (Lt Col, Ret.) Michael Kearney, Erica Kearney.

Westgate Circuit

On May 20th, the Westgate Circuit welcomed Pastor Phillip Girardin as new pastor of Immanuel-Klinger and St Paul-Readlyn churches. A large group of pastors from the area joined in the celebration for the installation, including Pastor Larry Feldt who served as lector, Pastor Ronnie Koch who served as liturgist, and Pastor Mark Girardin, Pastor Philip Girardin's father, as guest preacher. President Brian Saunders was there to perform the installation. We welcome Pastor Girardin, his wife Heather, and his children, Lily and David, and pray for God's blessing on his service in our community!



Summer Camp 2018 “True God, True Man”

Another fantastic summer, with a great mix of outdoor fun and Christian education, has come and gone at Camp lo-Dis-E-Ca! The 2018 summer camp program began on June 13 and ended August 3. Under the theme “True God, True Man”, campers took an in-depth look at Jesus and the importance of why our Savior was both God and man. We learned that Jesus, as a man, had to be man to fulfill God’s law for us and to suffer and die for our guilt because we failed to keep the law. Jesus also had to be true God in order to be the sufficient ransom for all people, and overcome death and the devil for us. Knowing and believing that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Redeemer, we love and serve Him with our whole lives. Thanks to all who participated in this year’s camp program!



Spiritual Care In Training For War and Peace

Rev. Michael Kearney

On April 8th, 2018, I was commissioned into the Army Reserve as a Chaplain. I was assigned as the Battalion Chaplain for the 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion out of Fremont, NE. This important outreach ministry on behalf of my congregation has led to some amazing events, even in the brief time I've been a chaplain.

At my first Battle Assembly weekend (1 weekend a month), I had an eye-opening experience. I offered a worship service after lunch which was only attended by 6 people. I was a bit frustrated, but I figured it was a start. Then my assistant told me that was twice as many people as they had ever had! This was followed immediately by a request from the Command Sergeant Major to take care of a soldier who was nearly suicidal. After calming him down, I was able to speak the Gospel to him and administer absolution. I continue to pray for him and follow up with conversations, encouraging him to join a local congregation.

The very next month my unit was sent to JRTC in Fort Polk, Louisiana. JRTC stands for "Joint Readiness Training Center." The exercise was a month long "crucible" event where they pitted the 10th Mountain Division, 2nd Brigade Combat Team against "enemy" Army Rangers (played by US Army Airborne Rangers). The exercise also included support from Tunisian Army Airborne Commands. The idea behind the training was to prepare the US Army for a near-peer conflict. The purpose of JRTC, as told to me by the instructors, is "to stress you out as much as humanly possible, short of sending you into war." I was also warned that an officer had taken his life in the last training rotation. There was no doubt that this training was stressful on the soldiers.

The exercise was grueling, but the opportunity for ministry couldn't have been better. In a few short weeks, I had become the close confidant and spiritual leader of around 250 soldiers. They sought me out when they received bad news from home, they came to me with questions about Christianity and life in general, and they received the Word of

God from me during numerous Bible studies, worship services, and impromptu gatherings.

I found that flexibility is key to being a Chaplain. There wasn't a chapel in the field, so I had to improvise and find places to offer services. This included everything from mess tents (mobile dining halls) to the back of LMTVs (canvas covered Army trucks). I also discovered that many soldiers don't know what they'll be doing in two hours, let alone two days. I found that if I wanted to provide a service, I better do it the minute I found a need. Rather than saying, "Services will be held at 1900 tomorrow," I began saying, "Take a knee."

These soldiers were being pushed to the limit and needed relief. That relief is the same for them as it is for you and me. They needed to hear the Gospel. They needed the refreshment of the Word of God. They needed to hear (sometimes for the first time), "I forgive you all your sins." They needed Jesus.

I have found the Chaplaincy to be a great opportunity for me and my congregations to take part in caring for those who serve us in the US Army. The members at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Alden and St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Buckeye may never meet those soldiers this side of heaven, but because of the sacrifice of their time with their pastor, sinners from all over the country were able to hear the Gospel preached to them during a time of great difficulty. My prayer is that the seed planted by the Gospel would sprout forth one hundredfold so that on the last day, we will stand together before the Lamb on His throne.

Rev. Michael Kearney

Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran, Alden and St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran, Buckeye IA

US Army Reserve Chaplain, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Fremont, NE



REV MICHAEL KEARNEY

JRTC Ministry "By the Numbers"

- 23 Personal Spiritual Counseling
- 7 Commander and/or staff moral guidance
- 38 Religious services (3 regularly scheduled)
- 48 Twice daily Bible studies
- 10 Confession/Absolution
- 3 Red Cross message delivery
- 7 Medical emergencies, bedside care

God Our Highest Good

Rev. Christopher Neuendorf

If there's one thing we've come to know at our Lutheran Homes, it's loss. Our residents have lost their strength, their mobility, their independence. Many have lost their memories and even their personalities. Their families have lost loved ones who are so very different now than they were in their heyday. As residents move on to other facilities or even depart this life, our staff lose patients to whom they have sometimes drawn quite close indeed. Loss is a constant among us.

And yet there is one thing that we will never lose: our God in Christ. He is our one constant. No one can ever take us from Him, and therefore no one can ever take Him from us. *"No one will snatch them out of My hand,"* says Jesus of the sheep entrusted to His care. *"My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one"* (John 10:28-30). And *"I am sure,"* writes St. Paul the Apostle, *"that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39). God is ours forever.

And if we will always have God, that means we have that for which everything else exists anyway. Think of the things of which loss can afflict us at our Lutheran Homes: possessions, health, memories, and relationships. They are all good things. They belong to that creation of which the Scriptures could say, *"It was very good"* (Genesis 1:31). But in what sense are they good? Jesus said, *"No one is good except God*

alone" (Luke 18:19). If other things are good, they must be so only because they proceed from and lead to God, who alone is good. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"* (James 1:17). *"From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen"* (Romans 11:36).

Apart from God, everything else is good only insofar as it comes from and leads toward God. Saint Augustine recognized that there are two classes of things: those that exist for their own sake, and those that exist for the sake of something else. If we trace the reason for everything's existence, it all leads ultimately back to God, who alone exists and is worshiped, loved, and adored for His own sake. In this sense God is our "highest good" (*summum bonum; höchstes Gut*). That's why we refer to Him as such in our hymnody. "Sing praise to God, the highest good!" "Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood / Be for my soul the highest good!"

The good things whose loss we experience at our Lutheran Homes all exist for the sake of something else, a higher good—and ultimately the highest good. Possessions? They exist for the higher good of preserving bodily life. Health? A healthy body exists for the sake of the person inside, the spiritual nature, who has memories and relationships with other persons. Relationships? They exist that through the love of our neighbors we may rise to the love of God. God truly is our highest good.

How wondrously comforting, therefore, to reflect that our highest good is the one thing that can never be taken away from us! As Martin Luther defiantly



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proclaimed at the conclusion of his hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," "And take they our life, / goods, fame, child, and wife, / Let these all be gone, / They yet have nothing won; / The kingdom ours remaineth." No matter what other good things might be taken from us, the kingdom of God, in fact God Himself, our highest good, remains ours forever.

May this console us in the midst of loss at our Lutheran Homes. Our residents, their families and friends, and our staff all experience loss with some regularity. But through our faith in Jesus Christ, we still have our highest good, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that highest good can never be taken from us.

Rev. Christopher Neuendorf is Pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Davenport and Chaplain at the Davenport Lutheran Home.



LHM Cares: Dr. Yahnke to speak on Depression at Spring 2019 Convention

Lutheran Hour Ministries will be holding its annual convention on Saturday, April 13, 2019, at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca, 3271 Sandy Beach Rd. NE, Solon, IA 52333. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Beverly K. Yahnke, Executive Director for Spiritual Counsel with DOXOLOGY. She is a licensed clinical psychologist who has provided consultation to LCMS District Presidents, Pastors and other church workers for over three decades. Her presentation will address the subject of DEPRESSION, a major issue in society today. She says of her presentation, "SOMEONE YOU KNOW REALLY NEEDS TO HAVE YOU HEAR THIS!"

Anyone can attend; save the date. Registration details will appear in future issues of *IDE Today*.



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