

## A Holistic Approach To Life

**By Rev. Michael Brown**  
**Life Coordinator — English District**  
**Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
**Lincoln, NE**

It was the late 1970s. This sort of thing wasn't all that common: a woman, in her 40s, pregnant. She did a lot of crying. Granted, she might have been "expecting," but she and her husband weren't expecting *this*! Not at her age. It was unplanned. It was unconventional. It was life changing.

Moreover, there was real cause to have concern — health concerns. With her first child there had been birth complications - terrible ones. Not to mention, she and her husband had just suffered a devastating miscarriage. So the doctors warned her of the increased risk of "birth defects" for babies born to aging mothers. Her Lutheran pastor was also aware of the potential health risks. So he went out of his way to reassure her that if she wanted to terminate her pregnancy because of the potential "defects," her Lutheran church would stand with her in her decision. So would God.

Thankfully, I'm glad my mother didn't listen to her pastor. I happen to enjoy my life.

Yet I hope each of us do just that this Advent and Christmas season; listen to our pastors that is. Listen to them tell the story of something that wasn't all that common 2000 years ago: a woman, probably in her teens, pregnant... but with no husband to speak of. Perhaps she did a lot of crying too. She might have been "expecting," but Mary and Joseph weren't expecting *this*! Talk about unplanned! Talk about unconventional! Talk about life changing!

Though, isn't this *exactly* what we're expecting this Advent and Christmas: A baby that is going to change our lives too. And that's Good News! At least that's what the angel called it when speaking to some shepherds near Bethlehem. It's Gospel. Good News that gets spoken in

our ears each week too. Forgiveness, life, and salvation that is placed in our lowly manger, our lips, this season. His life, His death, and His resurrection that we have been baptized into, completely changing life as we know it. Yours and mine. Body and soul. A life we enjoy now, but a fulfillment that is not yet. New life that is nothing less than the holistic redemption of *all* creation.

Turns out, Jesus is holistically pro-life.

Just like Lifeline hopes to be, holistically pro-life that is; and hopes to encourage you to be until Jesus' Second Coming. Yes, abortion is an important issue to address

individually and as the body of Christ in our society, but it is not the *only* pro-life issue. Being holistically pro-life includes offering post-abortion support (something at which we

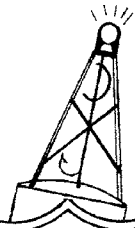
could be a lot better). A holistic approach to life also includes addressing looming issues like human-trafficking, adoption, euthanasia, end of life issues, even providing for people whom society often treats as "defective" or "less than" (folks who happen to be blind, deaf, or developmentally delayed) among others. With that in mind, Lifeline has constructed a website to serve as a resource hub for the English District on life issues at [www.englishdistrictlifeline.org](http://www.englishdistrictlifeline.org). And looking ahead to 2015, Lifeline's Task Force will be considering new ways to connect with pastors and congregations across our District, region by region. We invite you to be a part of this, for certainly Jesus' holistic approach to life includes His work for, in, and *through you* by His Word and Spirit. And yes, even though these issues of life are often tough, circumstantial, and sensitive, we can strive together to seek God's answer to them in Christ, who is our Life.

So to that end, let us be your Lifeline.

*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* John 10:10b

[www.englishdistrictlifeline.org](http://www.englishdistrictlifeline.org)





# Channel Markers

The Rev. Dr. David P. Stechholz  
Bishop & President of the English District

## *The Singing Church*

Christmas greetings to you, beloved, in the Incarnate Son of God, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ:

**Historically, ever since the 1500s, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has been known as “the singing Church.”** Luther restored congregational singing. The laity were no longer spectators of a Divine Service but were singing worshippers, giving honor and glory to God in song. The Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season of the Church Year is known for its singing.

My prayer to the Lord God is that He help us always to be “*a singing church.*” That it would not just be the clergy, choir, or a praise band doing the singing, but that all of God’s people would sing His praises.

Years ago as a parish pastor, the congregations I served sang lots of hymns and carols of the season. Select stanzas, to be sure. The people loved it. They cherished singing so many of the favorite hymns and carols and songs, including a few beautiful but more challenging ones. And, yes, we even sang a stanza of “**O Come, All Ye Faithful**” in Latin.

*Adeste fidelis, laeti triumphantes,*

*Venite, venite in Bethlehem.*

*Natum videte, Regem angelorum.*

*Venite adoramus, venite adoramus,*

*Venite adoramus, Dominum.*

If you need that first stanza in English go to LSB 379.

What makes such a hymn endearing is not just a pretty, simple tune. It is the words, drawn from Holy Scripture (Luke 2, John 1). Let’s look at those words:

First, there is the invitation to the faithful as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ to **come to Bethlehem**. We sing this to ourselves. We invite ourselves in a spirit of Christian joy and triumph to return to our blessed Savior’s birthplace. The word, “come” is again stated to **behold Him, “born the King of ages.”** Jesus, Son of the Heavenly Father and born of Mary, was and is the Messiah who came as the King of all humanity to rescue fallen humanity from the perils of our sins. We



**Bishop Stechholz, kneeling, with the Dominican Rep. Lutheran Mission, international guests, & mission team in the DR. The English District is a managing partner of the DRLM. That October morning, we sang God’s praises in joyful worship of the Lord in Spanish.**

come and adore Him.

Twenty-first century folk are not in the habit of adoring. Instead, we “worship.” Sadly, fellow North Americans “worship” sports heroes, Hollywood and media stars, and business tycoons, including some who are Christians. Too easily we put people of status, even those in the Church, up on pedestals. There is a lot of false “worship” in our culture of the current and next American idol or super-star.

**Only One is to be worshipped and adored, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** We adore the Babe of Bethlehem, born to be our blessed Redeemer from sin. “Adore” means to hold in holy awe. It is a holy fear of God born out of love and deepest respect.

Each year at our Concordias and campus ministries, there are unique Christmas events. At one of our Concordias, CUAA (Concordia University-Ann Arbor), there is an annual Boarshead Festival, a **continued on page 3**

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Christmas commemoration, held in early December. Each year, the same two men serve as good King Wenceslas and head shepherd. The head shepherd is an older man who has a marvelous look of great awe on his face. His countenance is radiant. I wish you could see it!

**May you**, like this lead shepherd in the Boarshead Christmas pageant and as a part of “the singing Church,” **radiate from your face and heart such an adoration of the Christ Child this holy season.** May you sing joyfully the words of “*O Come, All Ye Faithful*” in whatever style of tuneful worship to the glory of God and in your witness of Him whom we together adore.



*Christmas greetings to you and your family, church, school, and ministry in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Pictured is the Christmas tree with congregational ornaments at the District office in Farmington, MI.*

## Community Outreach as easy as a backpack and food?

**By Heidi Koehler, DCE  
Fairlawn, Akron, OH**

At Fairlawn Lutheran Church in Akron, Ohio it is. Have you ever felt God laying an idea on your heart that scared and overwhelmed you? Operation Backpack was that idea for me this year. I am sure you can relate when I say “I am busy”; my list goes on and on just like I am sure yours does.

I know in my head that God cares very little about how much stuff I think I have to get done. He has this amazing ability to see the whole picture and see just how you and I will fit in nicely to His plan. All He asks in return is that we trust Him, trust that he has it all figured out and that He would not call us if He hadn’t already orchestrated it all to work out for His glory. He is the God of the universe after all.

I know those words to be true, but knowing and living are two different things and if you’re like me, the living is where it gets hard. Good thing God does not give up easily.

Almost a year ago, God leaned into me and brought to my attention that over 15.8 million children under 18 live in a home where there is not enough food for them to eat. My heart broke for them. I knew God was calling the ministry that I serve to do something about

it in our community.

I did not see that we had the time or the backpacks to pull something like that off, so I brushed the idea aside. Stuffing backpacks full of food each week for those less fortunate in our school community would have to wait till later.

God’s answer to my putting His idea aside: a stranger delivering 18 backpacks to my office in a garbage bag with my name on a yellow sticky note. Yes, you read that correctly, my name on a yellow sticky note clear as day. There was no more arguing with God, no more excuses, only 18 backpacks to be filled, prayed for, and delivered each week. We are three weeks into our ministry.

God has provided money, time and a new found excitement to help those in need, not only in my life, but in the children, youth and adults I serve. I would encourage you to see where God is working and follow His lead. There are sick, dying and hungry people, both physically and spiritually. God cares about each one of them.

So if God is leaning into you, or laying some ministry idea on your heart, I would urge you to step out in faith and begin to take the steps to make it happen. He has it all planned and is including you in the service of His people. Won’t you join Him?

# Around the District

Congratulations and God's blessings to **Reinald W. Kaufmann**, SMP pastor, Risen Christ, Plymouth, MI who has completed studies in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. He was recognized during the morning chapel service on November 4, 2014. The SMP Program is a distance-education program designed to meet the need to train pastors in context for ministry and mission opportunities in the church.



**Chaplain Scott Simpson**, Deputy Director of Religion, Culture and Advisement Directorate at the US Army Chaplain Center, Fort Jackson, SC was recently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Pictured from left to right are son Daniel, wife Mary, Chaplain Scott Simpson, and son Timothy. Missing from the photo is daughter Lydia who is attending college in Ohio.



**Rev. Steve Sutterer** was installed at Martin Luther Chapel, East Lansing, MI on November 16 in his role as Chaplain of Sparrow Hospital, Lansing, MI. This is the first call that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Board for National Mission has issued to a hospital chaplain.



**Holy Spirit, Elk Grove Village, IL**, welcomed Chaplain Craig G. Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN, (Ret.) on Sunday, Nov. 16th. Chaplain Muehler is the Director of the Ministry to the Armed Forces, where, he serves as the chief liaison to the more than 160 LCMS chaplains in all branches of the military, active and reserve, and the Civil Air Patrol. Chaplain Muehler's visit enriched both the congregation's Veterans Day celebration, and their November Packages-4-Patriots' event, known as Christmas Around the World. Since its inception in 2010, Packages-4-Patriots (P4P) has shipped over 57,000 lbs. of care items to military personnel serving in hotspots overseas. Chaplain Muehler (left, CAPT, USN) and Pastor Manwell (right, Chap., Capt. CAP) pose in front of the Packages-4-Patriots' Flag Memorial board located in the narthex of Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit.



**Hope, Grand Rapids, MI** celebrated its 100th Anniversary on October 12, 2014. Pictured standing next to the banner are Rev. Allen Gartner (pastor '83-'94), Rev. Daniel Gruenwald, and guest preacher and a son of the congregation Rev. John Shumate.  
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On Monday, September 29, 2014, ***Our Savior, Hartland, MI***, hosted a conference to discuss topics of Church and State. The conference, entitled *The Body of Christ and the Public Square*, was the brainchild of Rev. Christopher Thoma of Our Savior, and brought together nationally renowned speakers – historians, legal advisors, educators and politicians – with an assembly of pastors and lay leaders of Missouri Synod Lutheran churches. “The purpose of the event was to learn first-hand from people who are well-respected experts in particular fields how we as Christians can engage in the public square faithfully and fully,” said Rev. Thoma. “Unfortunately, when it comes to precise issues of ‘Church and State’ or ‘religious liberty,’ many pastors and churches exist in uncertainty.” Speaking over lunch, Michigan Senator Joe Hune urged those present to vote according to Biblical principles and encourage others to do so, too.

In 2011 the youth of ***St. Mark, Janesville, WI*** came together to sponsor a child through Compassion International. The sponsorship of Fabianne from Bolivia went well with letters being traded between her and the youth until her family moved. In 2012 the youth continued sharing God’s love by sponsoring Karely, also from Bolivia. Two years later the youth continue to write her letters and cards that let Karely know that they love her and Jesus loves her. The youth group donates \$38 a month to Compassion for Karely

that she might find love, encouragement and hope for the future.



On Friday, October 31, 2014, ***Risen Savior, Green Valley, AZ***, hosted the “Mulligan vs. Mosquito Tourney,” in an effort to raise funds for the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI). LMI is dedicated to the eradication of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. With just six golfers, the church raised \$250. “A local pest control company donated several items to support our LMI golf tournament. Kind of cool that they are a pest control company AND their color is orange,” said Deaconess Jeri Morrison, noting that LMI’s color is also orange. LMI educates families on the causes and treatments of malaria. They also offer affordable medical care and provide bed nets to help prevent the disease. The golfers enjoyed a beautiful and warm sunny day. Pictured from left are Mic Houghton, tournament coordinator, Dave Chapman, Deaconess Jeri Morrison, Wayne Vernon, and Ray Bozeman. Other golfers included Lou Mirabeau and Rev. Roger Stuenkel, pastor emeritus.

For information on how to help LMI, visit their website at <http://www.lutheranmalaria.org/> and find updates on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lutheranmalaria>.

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***The staff of the English District Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod wish you and yours peace, joy and hope as we celebrate our Savior’s birth.***

## School News

### *Advent Lutheran Preschool going strong after 14 years*

By Marianne Dooms, Board Member  
Advent Lutheran School

The mission of Advent Lutheran Preschool, Zionsville, IN, is not unlike many Lutheran schools in the country. With the understanding that children are a gift from God, Advent's school staff endeavors to proclaim the gospel to their students. Advent's school doors opened in 2000.

Over the past fourteen years, the early childhood programs have included a Mom's Morning Out program for 2-year-olds, 3- and 4-year-old Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and an enriched curriculum class titled Explore.

In 2012 the state of Indiana extended half-day kindergarten programs to full day programs in public schools. Many other private and parochial schools followed suit. Because Advent is a self-supporting school apart from the church's budget, frugal stewardship of tuition and fundraising resources were needed in order to fill the subsequent niche in programming. With trust in God's mercy, Advent school opened one section of half-day kindergarten in September 2013.

The class roster included 14 students, and was taught by Mrs. Lois Dooms. Despite the fewer minutes of instruction, the curriculum contains best practices in literacy and math, with writing and science, large motor time, as well as daily religious circle time and weekly



chapel services.

"The opportunity to see the growth not only of students' reading and math, but more importantly the increase in their love of God and understanding of the faith is a blessing to me as a teacher," said Mrs. Dooms. Parents have also endorsed Advent's classes at all levels with an over 95% approval rating in the end of the year survey. The kindergarten offering continues this school year with six students. In a time when opinions on educational priorities abound, the simple humble work of Advent's school staff is a daily light to the true Teacher who blesses His children beyond the gift of a temporal education with the gift of eternal life.

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**Zion, Detroit, MI** hosted the 17th annual St. Michael Liturgical Conference, Monday, September 29, 2014. The keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. D. Richard Stuckwisch (Emmaus, South Bend, IN) presented on "The Pastoral Care of Catechumens and Communicants." Additional presenters included Rev. Fr. Joel Baseley (Emmanuel, Dearborn, MI); Rev. Fr. Burnell Eckardt (St. Paul, Kewanee, IL); and Rev. Dr. Daniel Reuning (Redeemer, Fort Wayne, IN). The conference began with Holy Mass commemorating St. Michael, Archangel. Rev. Fr. David Petersen (Redeemer, Fort Wayne, IN) served as the preacher; President/Bishop David Stechholz presided. Papers and videos from the conference, are available on the St. Michael Liturgical Conference page of Zion's website, [www.ZionDetroit.org](http://www.ZionDetroit.org). Next year's conference is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 28, 2015.



## *What are Parish Nurses and how do they help our congregations?*

According to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) website, “Health ministry helps congregations care for one another by attaining, maintaining and/or regaining the best possible whole person health—wellness of body, mind and spirit—that can be experienced.”

It is done with help from health professionals and other interested lay members, and they support the spiritual and health needs of the congregation.

Additionally, the LCMS website states that, “The parish nurse is a registered nurse who is committed to — and, on a broad level, is an integral part of — this concept of health ministries. He/she works with the members of the health ministry committee or health cabinet, helping and enabling people of the congregation and the community attain, maintain and/or regain optimal health. Parish nursing is a unique blending of professional nursing and spiritual care-giving.”

Registered nurses are encouraged to become part of this ministry, and there are two, four-day introductory courses offered in 2015:

### **March 16-19, 2015 and May 4-7, 2015**

These courses will be held on the campus of Concordia University, Wisconsin. If you are interested, but can't attend onsite, there is an off-site distance learning format. Materials will be mailed to you and you will work with a mentor to complete the course. Partial scholarships are available.

**May 27-28, 2015** is the 23rd Annual Parish Nurse

Conference, “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus,” which will be held on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin. There are some very special scholarship incentives to attend:

\* \$75 scholarships for first-time LCMS RN's attending the conference.

\* Full conference scholarships to the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference to LCMS clergy.

Please know that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has granted financial support to help RN's and clergy across the nation to attend these education events. For more information, contact Carol Lueders Bolwerk, RN, PhD, via email: [carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu).

The international branch of Lutheran Parish Nurses, LPNI (Lutheran Parish Nurses International) is planning their sixth annual study tour to New Zealand in September 2015. These study tours are both culturally enriching and educational. Previous tours have been to Palestine, West Bank, Australia, Finland, USA, and Germany. For more information, or to register for the study tour, please go to the web site [lpni.org](http://lpni.org) and download a registration form.

Contact Sue Neff, RN, FCN, Parish Nurse and District Rep. Parish Nursing, LCMS-English District at [sneff@youhaveaplace.com](mailto:sneff@youhaveaplace.com) or Carol A. Lueders Bolwerk, RN, PhD at [Carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:Carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu). Further information can be found at <http://www.lcms.org/health/parishnursing>.

## **Serving the Congregation by Lavern Kruse**

### **Initiating, Launching and Maintaining a Vibrant Small Group Ministry**

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, The Lutheran Church of the Shepherd King in West Bloomfield, MI, hosted a workshop led by Lavern Kruse, Congregational Services Exec. for the English District entitled “Initiating, Launching, and Maintaining a Vibrant Small Group Ministry.”

Members from Ascension of Christ in Beverly Hills, MI and St. Matthew in Walled Lake, MI also participated in the workshop. Participants were led through a process of determining “Mission” and “Vision” statements for their small group ministry in their individual churches. In addition, they learned how to begin a small group ministry in their church. Numerous ideas were presented as to how to launch the ministry with a clear vision for how small groups can enhance the prayer

life and spiritual growth for the individuals who participate in a group. Many small groups become like a family as they study God's Word together, pray together, and care for one another as individual needs arise within the group.

This workshop is filled with an ample amount of audience participation and we trust that God will use this workshop to take a church's small group ministry to be a vibrant part of the church's revitalization in making disciples for Jesus.

If your church would like to host this workshop, more information is available at [englishdistrict.org/ministries/congregational-services](http://englishdistrict.org/ministries/congregational-services), or you can contact Lavern Kruse at [lkruse@englishdistrict.org](mailto:lkruse@englishdistrict.org).

# English District Official Acts

## Pastors – Installation

*The Rev. Dr. Frank G. Ciampa*, September 15, 2014, Sole Pastor, Mount Olive, Tucson, AZ

## Teachers – Installation

*Lori Kelling*, August 24, 2014, Hales Corners, Hales Corners, WI; *Matthew Beisel*, September 2, 2014, Valley Lutheran High School, Phoenix, AZ; *Susan Predoehl*, September 7, 2014, Prince of Peace, Stroh, IN; *Jonathan Swett*, September 7, 2014, Director of Parish Music, Our Savior, Hartland, MI

## Calls Accepted

*The Rev. Joel Holls*, Intentional Interim, St. Paul, New Boston, MI (Michigan District); *The Rev. Chad Potts*, Sole Pastor, Christ, Breckenridge, CO (Rocky Mountain District); *The Rev. Jonathan Sachs*, Sole Pastor, Angelica, Allen Park, MI; *The Rev. Steven E. Sutterer* (North Wisconsin District), Staff Chaplain Sparrow Hospital, Lansing, MI, LCMS Board for National Mission; The Rev. Jonathan Gruen, Senior Pastor, Beautiful Savior, Lee's Summit, MO

## Change of Status

*The Rev. Jeffrey Siegel*, August 1, 2014, Active to Candidate; *The Rev. Joel Holls*, December 31, 2013, Active to Emeritus

## Appointments

*The Rev. Bradford Scott*, Circuit Visitor, Detroit South Circuit

## Transfers In

*The Rev. Robert A. Brockhoff*, October 27, 2014, Ohio District; *The Rev. Steven E. Sutterer*, November 5, 2014, North Wisconsin District

## Transfers Out

*Gary Beyer*, August 27, 2014, Pacific Southwest District; *The Rev. Dr. Paul Dancy*, September 9, 2014, Indiana District; *The Rev. Dr. Dusan Tillinger*, November 1, 2014, Lutheran Church Canada - East District; *The Rev. Joel Holls*, November 1, 2014, Michigan District

## Closed Congregation

*Ebenezer, Milwaukee, WI*, January 30, 2012

## 2015 Lumen Christi Award nominations now open

The 2015 Lumen Christi Award nominations are now open for the following awards: *English District Professional Educator of the Year* and *English District Volunteer Educator of the Year*.

Pastors, principals, DCEs, preschool directors, etc. can nominate individuals by completing the appropriate form online. If one prefers, we will mail a paper nomination form to you as well. The nominations for both the Professional and Volunteer Educator of the Year awards are good for two years. If you submitted a nomination last year and the person was not selected, the nomination is good

for the 2015 cycle.

You can check out the English District website's [Lumen Christi page](#) for more information on the Lumen Christi Awards and see listings of [past recipients](#) as well. Presentations to award winners will occur in the spring.

Please prayerfully consider recognizing a deserving individual by nominating them for a Lumen Christi Award. The due date for nominations to be received at the English District office is February 15, 2015.

## Connect with Us!

We're a click away! Connect with the English District via social media! Stay up-to-date with conferences, events, happenings around the district and blog posts. On our Web site you will find resources, our blog, contact information and so much more.

English District Web site: [www.englishdistrict.org](http://www.englishdistrict.org)

"Like" us on Facebook: **English District LCMS**

"Follow" us on Twitter: **EngDistrictLCMS**



And join the English District Connect Group:  
**English District Connect**

If you would like to share anything on our social media pages, or a blog post, contact Lynne Cobb, Communications Coordinator, at [lcobb@englishdistrict.org](mailto:lcobb@englishdistrict.org).

## About the Channels

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