

The LASSIE Approach to Witnessing: Listen—Ask—Seek—Share—Invite—Encourage

The Evangelization Team has the goal to make witnessing simple and easy because it is integrated into every facet of your daily experience. Witnessing is simply serving as an instrument of God who bears testimony to the truth that apart from Him, you can do nothing (John 15:5) but in Him, we live and move and have our very being (Acts 17:28). The following approach to witnessing, “LASSIE,” helps make witnessing a simple way to serve as a living, breathing, witness bearing instrument of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you follow the “LASSIE” approach to sharing the faith God has given you in your daily experience. Let the Evangelization Team know of your experience on the Facebook group English District Connect.

L

The starting point in sharing the Gospel with someone is to listen. Listen to understand where they are, what they believe, and for what they are longing, i.e., what’s missing in their lives. Listening attentively to people will uncover points of contact with them.

A

Asking questions about what you hear as you listen serves to further the conversation and gain the speaker’s trust. Be careful to ask genuine questions. Don’t simply restate your point in a question form. Also, resist the temptation to ask leading questions to force the conversation.

S

Seek the Holy Spirit. Christ is with you and His Spirit is working to guide you in your conversation. Seek a point of contact. Respond to something that is shared, not with a canned speech. Seek an opportunity to speak. Once you’ve discovered a point of contact, look for an opportunity to respond.

S

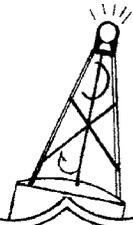
Share the Faith. The Word of God is powerful. Don’t be afraid of sharing the Word of God for exactly what it is. It’s not up to you to convince anyone that the Word of God is true and reliable. Speak the Word as the Good News that it is, don’t argue it.

I

How you invite a person to continue the dialogue and to what you might invite him depends on the person, the circumstances, and the resources you have available. Make sure your invitation is specific and appropriate for where you are in your dialogue.

E

Express your appreciation for the person’s openness and for the enjoyment of your conversation. Ask him if he would like for you to pray about any issues, problems, or concerns that have come up during your conversation. And make sure that you follow up on any invitations that you have made.



Channel Markers

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

Being Prepared for What Lies Ahead

Dear friends in Christ in the English District-LCMS:

The Apostle Paul writes by inspiration of the Holy Spirit some tremendous words of encouragement in his Letter to the Philippians, replete with military over-tones: *“Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:13b-14).

What lies ahead? As I write this, there awaits the 55th Convention of the English District, June 17th-20th, in Ann Arbor, MI. The Convention may be over by the time you read these words, and a new Bishop & President, Praesidium, Board of Directors and others chosen, resolutions approved or turned down, presentations, reports, and a theological convocation given. We will have worshiped and prayed to the Lord God together. My Staff is at this moment working feverishly to prepare for the Convention, make accommodations, and handle thousands of details. Are you prepared to welcome a new Bishop and other elected officers, and to give them your support, encouragement, and godly aid?

How about this Summer? Are you prepared for VBS; a vacation; a trip to Wittenberg, Germany, now that we have dedicated the Lutheran International Center (Old Latin School); time with family; a permanent journey to a college campus in another state or province where you will be attending; or a transition to a new job and location?

How about your health? We all want good health and healing, especially if you were in a recent auto accident or suffered an unexpected mental, physical, or emotional health setback. Are you prepared for life's transitions, whether you are a child or youth reading these words, or, more likely, a young adult, middle-aged, or elderly person?

St. Paul has a good perspective on preparedness that looks at **the ultimate transition**, namely from this



Dr. Roni Grad, University of Arizona LCMS Campus Ministry faculty sponsor, and Bishop Stechholz, hold up banner from Catalina Lutheran Church, Tucson, AZ, in the Chapel of the Lutheran International Center, Wittenberg

life to everlasting life with Jesus Christ, our crucified, risen, ascended, and returning Lord. Recognizing that Jesus has paid the penalty for Paul's sins and yours and mine and the sin, guilt, and shame of humanity, Paul considers everything of this life as "loss" or "rubbish" because of and compared to the "surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ" and His righteousness.

You and I, also, base our lives not on how many toys we have, how much our net assets are worth, or how many material items we have acquired, as fine as these earthly things may be. These, too, are gifts from God. Nor do we base our lives on past or present accomplishments or status or rank we may have. Our lives are based on the crucified God and proclaim new life in Him. We see our lives as called to care and privileged to serve. (Thank you, Roger and Dave!) We live for Christ now in humble service to others and press on to what lies ahead.

I read in the *Crossroads* of Chapel of the Cross,
continued on page 3

Channel Markers (continuation)

continued from page 2

North St. Louis County, MO, about “renewing the city,” an item that was raised not just with the concerns of Ferguson, MO, and many other places. “Renewing our cities” was also a concern raised at our annual Circuit Visitors and Praesidium meeting in May, as we met with the First and Third Vice Presidents of Synod. We Christians live in the world now, and we are prepared to witness for our Lord Jesus Christ in words and in actions (deeds that speak of human care and God’s redeeming love).

But we also **“press on.”** As a Synod and District, as congregations and schools, as members who are disciples of the Lord Jesus, we, with Paul, press on

toward the “upward call,” the goal of heaven. Are you prepared for what really lies ahead? No, “heaven can(not) wait.” If the Lord says it is time, you will die and be with Him forever through faith in Jesus Christ. We do not live in fear but rather press on toward that goal by living and serving under the Cross, that is, living for Him. Heaven is our prize, won already for us by Jesus. Keep that goal in mind, even when the emails and social media responses pile up or your workload and other life expectations are over the top. God gives His people strength, as well as hope and zeal. So press on, brothers and sisters in Christ, joyfully prepared for what lies ahead.

School News

Lambs of Faith Early Childhood Center

By Jori Reuter, Preschool Director

A dream that turned into a vision became a ministry of Faith Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights, IL in 2008. After years of discussions, building renovations, and fire system updates, God answered our prayers and Lambs of Faith Early Childhood Center opened in the fall of 2013. In the years prior to our opening, our previous Minister of Children, Cheryl Sanders, helped introduce the community to Faith’s ministries to families and children. She used events like LEGO’s Club, Saturday Club, Mom’s Day Out, and story times to prepare for our opening. Jori Reuter was hired by the ECC Board of Directors to be our first Early Childhood Director. Lambs of Faith serves children ages two years old to five years old in two half-day preschool classrooms licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In 2013-14, Lambs of Faith served twelve children in one multiage pre-k class. In 2014-15, we opened a two/three year old preschool classroom and our enrollment grew to thirty-three preschool aged children. God has richly blessed our ministry with children of diverse culture backgrounds from the surrounding neighborhoods in Arlington Heights, IL, as well as the nearby suburbs of Palatine and Mount Prospect.

Lambs of Faith Early Childhood Center uses the *One in Christ* curriculum and the Illinois Early



Learning and Development Standards to prepare lessons and guide our students intellectually and spiritually. The preschool children attend an age appropriate chapel service led by our pastors, Pastor Tom Sanders and Pastor Brad Urlaub once a month.

The preschool children alongside our Sunday School students participate in a Christmas service, Palm Sunday Processional, and Easter Eggstravaganza at Faith. Our Faith Fellowship Committee welcomes preschool families with food and fellowship after each of these events. The Women of Faith, led by Pastor Sander’s wife, Cheryl, organize art lessons featuring famous artists for our Lunch Bunch extended day program, as well as events for the whole family.

Lambs of Faith Early Childhood Center took time, prayers, hard work and the dedication of many to become a reality. It is truly amazing to watch our faith community learn together, work together and share resources to reach the young learners in our local community. We thank God for blessing us with wonderful teachers, families, and resources. We are also grateful to the English District for its support and seed money, as well as many members of Faith and our community who helped support our efforts. We look forward to providing young learners with a quality Christian preschool education, and to bring the love and care of Christ to many young families for years to come.

Around the District



Grace, Vine Grove, KY is ready for fair season and a tasty means of evangelism. Located in the heart of town the church overlooks the park which is the focus of a number of community events each year. Shortly after moving into the building the congregation hosted a hot dog booth for the town's "Autumn Daze" festival. It was an opportunity to introduce neighbors to the new "church on the hill." Hearing of a recent catering company that was going out of business, members Steve and Cathy White purchased a number of concession appliances that could be used in this outreach. Grace now has a hot dog warmer and machines to make fresh popcorn, hot nachos, frosty snow cones and cotton candy. Assembled on shiny steel serving carts the machines roll out easily onto the patio for use. Plans are underway to combine this outreach with a free Christian craft table for the children and more.



The Rev. Daniel Murray was installed on April 12, 2015 as sole pastor of Our Saviour's, Chatham ON.

Pictured are before and after photos of **Pilgrim, Kenmore, NY** showing the ADA lift addition project which was fully funded by a bequest and two anonymous donations from the congregation.



On May 10th **St. Michael, Ft. Wayne, IN** received 78 new members; twenty of whom are under the age of eight, which bodes well for the church's growing pre-school and elementary school.



The Chrim Mass at **Zion, Detroit, MI** held on the morning of Maundy Thursday, includes the blessing of Sacred Chrim and Oil for the Infirm for the following year. Pastors are invited to bring their own oil or may request to receive some provided.

Around the District (continuation)



The Rev. Ronald Rieger was installed as pastor of Trinity, Scarsdale, NY on March 15, 2015.

Lumen Christi Award



Pictured are Pastor Mark Ebert, DCE Rod Lane, Phillip Sawhill, Lavern Kruse, English District Congregational Services Executive, and Pastor Michael Brown.

Congratulations to the “Lumen Christi Volunteer Educator” award winner, Phillip Sawhill at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lincoln, NE. It was an awesome worship service celebrating “Good Shepherd” Sunday. A special part of the presentation was when all the current and former students of Mr. Sawhill surrounded him as the presentation was made. He is very much loved by the children, their parents, and the congregation. Congratulations, Phillip!

Lumen Christi Award



Pictured from left are Gail Holzer, Les Morris and Christy Wood.

Christy Wood, Assistant Principal of West Portal Lutheran School, San Francisco, CA, received the Lumen Christi Professional Educator award from the English District. The award was presented by Gail Holzer, the English District LCMS School Ministry Executive. Gail also recognized Les Morris with an award for 50 years of service in Lutheran education. Les has received the Lumen Christi award in the past, and he was able to see a former student of his receive the award this year.

Congratulations and thank you for your dedication, Christy and Les. May God continue to bless you both as you serve in Christian education ministry.

About the Channels

The English Channels is a publication of the English District-LCMS, 33100 Freedom Rd., Farmington, MI 48336.

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Seminary Placements

Warm welcome to new vicar and assistant pastors!

The English District welcomes our new assistant pastors! Rev. Joshua S. Palmer of Arizona received his Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary. He received his call as Assistant Pastor to Catalina Lutheran Church in Tucson, AZ. Rev. Christopher W. Schneider of Michigan received his Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary. He received his call as Associate Pastor of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Lee's Summit, MO. Congratulations, Joshua and Christopher and may God richly bless you as you begin your service!

The English District welcomes Vicar Kelly D. Kreig to St. Michael, Ft. Wayne, IN from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Welcome and God bless you!



Serving the Congregations by Lavern Kruse

'Mobilizing the Laity' workshops help increase involvement

"Mobilizing the Laity" workshops have been held recently at Risen Savior in Green Valley, AZ and at First Lutheran Church in Kingsville, ON (Lutheran Church- Canada) with English District members of Gethsemane Lutheran, Windsor, ON in attendance.

The workshop is designed to help the congregation develop a process for getting more people involved in serving in their church based on their Spiritual Gifts, Passion, and Personal Style.

There was a lot of excitement about how they might increase the number of volunteers in the congregation. Also shared were some "Family Time Activities" designed to equip parents and grandparents to have activity-based devotions with their children or grandchildren.



Mission team serves in Haiti

A mission team from Grace, Wyoming, MI, visited Haiti from January 9-17. Seven members from Grace, along with three people from other congregations, spent the first four days on the island of Ile a Vache, which doesn't have electricity or running water and the only means of transportation is walking.



The team worshipped with the Haitians in their new church, where the congregation was presented a keyboard (made possible through the congregation of Grace and fundraisers), which will help provide music during worship. After the two-hour worship, a meal of one chicken leg per person, with rice and beans was served.

The chicken was quite a luxury, especially since

many Haitians don't even get a meal each day. There were around 300 people that walked miles to get a meal.

The team spent time with adults and children, worked at an orphanage in Torbeck, donated shoes, played sports with the students and more. The mission team continues to pray for the

people, especially the children, who worship without air conditioning, sit on hard benches and have no television, finding it hard to imagine sitting in darkness for so many hours a day, and having a limited supply of water.

The hardest part was saying goodbye, knowing they'd miss the children's smiling faces, their hugs and the love shared as believers in Jesus.

School News

Preschool/kindergarten teaches children to love Jesus

By Sue Nelson, Preschool Director

At Family of Christ Preschool and Kindergarten, Phoenix, AZ God has given us a unique mission field. Over 45 percent of our students do not attend any church and several parents are either antagonist or atheist. When they register for our school they are informed we have Bible lessons every day, and Chapel once a week. Our prayer is that God would send the students He wants in our school, and He is sending children who have no knowledge of Jesus or any church background.

In our school, when a child does not have a Bible, we give them a children's Bible of their own. It is as if we have given them the greatest treasure in the world. Such was the case for one of our students in the Lions class. Every night she asked her parents to read to her from the Bible. She came back after two weeks and told us she had read through the entire



Bible. She understands the truth and lessons of the Bible and makes the appropriate connections.

At one of our events, I was talking with her mom about her passion and love for the Lord. Her mom says, "Ms. Sue, you have no idea what we have to deal with at home". She informed me her daughter makes all of them pray before meals and bed time, and every night they still have to read a Bible story.

At Christmas time when the student went to buy a present for her Grandma from our Christmas store, she saw a cross and said, "I want this for my Grandma because every time she looks at it I want her to think about Jesus."

Many children have come to know and love Jesus and have great faith. They are our missionaries to many unreached parents.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me."

Official Acts

Pastors - Ordination / Installation / Initial Membership

The Rev. Daniel Murray, April 12, 2015, Sole Pastor, Our Saviour's, Chatham, ON

Change of Status

Catherine Wurster, April 1, 2015, Active to Emeritus

Transfers In

The Rev. Wade Butler, March 3, 2015, Southern Illinois District;
The Rev. Daniel Murray, April 11, 2015, Michigan District

Resigned

The Rev. Charles Werth, March 31, 2015

Secretary's Sidebar



Pictured are members of the English District Board of Directors with Synod Vice Presidents.

We don't typically get a lot of company at English District Board meetings, but May was an exception. The Board of Directors was pleased to welcome LCMS 1st Vice President Herb Mueller and 3rd Vice President Daniel Preus to its May meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn in Romulus, Michigan. The purpose of their visit was "to listen and to encourage" the Board of Directors, the District President/Bishop (and his wife), as well as District staff and (following the board meeting) the college of Circuit Visitors. The District visitation arose out of 2013 Synod Convention Resolution 7 01A ("To Set Forth Clear Mutual Expectations in Carrying Out Office of Visitation"), which, in the words of Committee 7 Chairman Rev. Richard Boche, was a move to "emphasize the importance of visitation," laying out "clear expectations for the Synod president, district presidents and circuit counselors ("visitors") of at least one visit per triennium with church workers and congregations under their ecclesiastical supervision and spiritual care." It was a part of, as Synod President Harrison said at the time, "caring for one another."

The Synod Vice Presidents shared with the Board copies of "District Visitation 2014-15 Documents and Data," and led an extensive explanation of several of its sections that highlighted LCMS District statistics and restricted/unrestricted revenue data. First Vice President Mueller

reminded the Board that although many of the statistics are discouraging, we have the Lord's promise that "on this Rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not overcome it." The visitation team invited the Board's questions, and conversation ensued over the missionary funding model, "trust issues" in the Synod, District viability, work in the about-to-open Governmental Affairs Office, strengthening congregations, and Concordia University, Selma, Alabama.

In its regular work, the Board: (1) reviewed copies of the audited Financial Statements of the District; (2) considered a request from a congregation to transfer out of the District; (3) adopted changes in the English District Endowment Fund Document clarifying the "earnings" that are available for distribution; (4) held initial conversations on New Church Worker Education Debt Reduction Grants and English District Financial Aid Guidelines; and (5) began consideration of (electoral) circuit exception requests for the 2016 Synod Convention.

The English District Board of Directors honored Bishop/President David Stechholz with a dinner and gifts that included a beautiful picture frame with several pictures highlighting the Bishop's past nine years of service to the English District.