



St. John's Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod

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FEBRUARY 2015

SUPPORTING MISSIONS THROUGH THE LCMS OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL MISSION

On December 13-18, 2014 I was privileged to visit the Czech Republic along with the Rev. Dr. Albert Collver III (LCMS Director of Church Relations & Regional Operations), Pastor Tony Booker (Regional Director of LCMS Eurasia), Pastor James Krikava (Associate Regional Director of LCMS Eurasia), Deaconess Grace Rao (Director of LCMS Deaconess Ministry), Deaconess Dorothy Krans (Director of Recognized Service Organizations), and Mrs. Kay Kreklau (President, LWML International).

Though we spent a half day in Prague at the beginning and end of the trip, which included the Divine Service at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, most of the time was spent in the northeastern city of Český Těšín, on the Polish border. In fact, three of us stayed in a small hotel just across the Olse River in Poland, in the sister city of Cieszyn.

The purposes of the trip were twofold: to continue talks between the LCMS and the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (SECAC) and to lead a two day conference on the theology of mercy, both for the benefit of SECAC and its partner organization for mercy work, the Silesian Diakonia. My participation in the trip was an outgrowth of our congregation's support of Missionary Jim Krikava who is one of five network supported missionaries (NSMs) that our congregation has adopted over the last 15 years. We have known this more commonly as the Together in Mission program. I was largely an observer at the talks with SECAC and at the Mercy conference, but also participated in many informal conversations. I was originally invited to give a presentation on "Preaching Mercy" which I did prepare but didn't end up giving due to conference schedule adjustments.

The Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession is the largest (non-union) Lutheran Church in the Czech Republic. While its formal beginning dates from the early 20th century, her roots go back to the time of the Reformation. Though the LCMS isn't presently in altar and pulpit fellowship with the SECAC, the LCMS did sign a working agreement with the SECAC about four years ago.

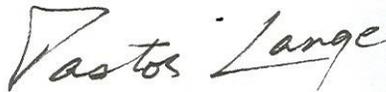
This Silesian Lutheran Church is comprised of about 35 pastors and 21 congregations located in the northeastern Czech Republic in part of a larger region historically known as Silesia. Until World War I Silesia was the name for the territory located both in this northeastern part of the Czech Republic as well as in southwestern Poland. It was a very Lutheran area! In fact, still today, the overwhelming percentage of Lutherans in both Poland and the Czech Republic still live in this area formerly known as Silesia.

Earlier I mentioned a two day conference on "Mercy" which was also presented for employees of the Silesian Diakonia. This Silesian Diakonia is an amazing organization for mercy work, which is closely affiliated with the Silesian Lutheran Church and provides a full array of social services throughout Silesia. These services consist of 102 programs in 60 centers provided by 600 full time employees, 100 part time employees, and 115 volunteers. Orphanages, homeless shelters, and sheltered workshops are just a few examples of the types of services they provide for the benefit of 8,000 needy people. In Europe it is common to have such 'diakonias' or social service organizations that are affiliated with various church bodies (many of them Lutheran). These diakonias receive much of their funding from the government. *(Continued on page 2)*

It was both surprising to me as well as humbling to observe the depth of theological education of many of the pastors in SECAC. Almost all had four year university Bachelor degrees plus a seminary education. Some received their university education at the respected 14th century Charles University, in Prague. Several have studied at U.S. Lutheran seminaries. But it was also very interesting to note the differences between their theology and that which we confess as LCMS Lutherans. There is still much work to be done if we are to grow together into the fullness of our Lutheran identity.

So much more could be said about our time with these Lutherans of the Czech Republic! But I'd like to close by saying how much greater of an appreciation I gained for the dedicated hard work of the LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM). From the things I learned about funding and budgeting issues, to aspects of the strategic plan, to the uniqueness of each Lutheran church body in the world, to the OIM's critical relationship with LCMS diaconal work and our Recognized Service Organizations, the LCMS Office of International Mission works hard to advance the mission of our Triune God to all nations in a way that is fully integrated with everything else that our Synod does.

My hope is that more people of the LCMS will read and take to heart the wealth of information regarding international missions that is communicated through the Lutheran Witness, the Reporter, and the LCMS website with its various blogs. And my prayer is that, as this understanding increases, by the grace of God the people of the LCMS will work increasingly closer together to advance the one mission of the Triune God—that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.



P.S. For additional articles and pictures of the trip see the posts for December 18, 19 and January 5 at <http://wmltblog.org/category/alcollver/>

Pastor - Rev. Peter K. Lange, ext. 101
Assistant Pastor - Rev. Jon S. Bruss, ext. 104

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

Visitation Pastor - Rev. Glenn R. Bitter

Day School Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki, Marcia Lange

2015 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

If you still haven't picked up your Contribution envelopes you still may do so at the church. If you have any questions regarding contribution boxes/envelopes, please speak with Yvonne Berry in the church office.

NEW BAPTISMAL BANNER

For some time, St. John's has been working with Gaspard, Inc., to produce a new baptismal banner. The funding for this project comes from the special account created by the K.I.N.G. team to purchase furnishings for the church. Please take notice of the beautiful new banner hanging in the baptistery behind the font.

YOUTH NEWS

Reminder for Jr. High Youth: Don't forget about the super-fun educational catechesis lock-in coming February 6. Registration is from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the church. The event will conclude Saturday morning February 7 after breakfast. Let Deaconess Linda or Pastor Bruss know if you plan to come.

Sr. & Jr. High Youth (and families) mark your calendars for Saturday, February 21 when we will head to Snowcreek Ski Resort in Weston, MO again. Details about equipment rental and cost will be coming soon. The Youth Fund will pay half of the cost, so this is a great deal for all you snow-bunnies. Sign up now on the breezeway bulletin board.

Golf Scramble Date Has Been Set. Mark your calendars for the youth's annual fundraiser at Forbes Golf Course. The event will be Saturday, June 6. This will be another 18-hole (2 rounds of 9) shotgun start so start assembling your team now. This is tons of fun for the golfers and the youth truly appreciate all who participate and support this event making it a huge success each year. Prizes, a delicious lunch, goodie bags and loads of fun await all who participate. Registration sheets will be out in March, but you can also sign up early by talking to Kathy Gehrke (785-331-4641) or by letting Jim Simpson or Pastor Bruss know.

THE TREE FOR LIFE

Our annual project to help Caring Pregnancy Options is active during the month of February. In the Information Center you will find a tree (a very special thanks to Bill and Shirley Nolting!) with suggestions for items needed by the organization. Please take a circle or two and return the items (diapers, sleepers, pacifiers, etc.) suggested on the circle; place the items in the basket provided under the tree. Caring Pregnancy Options is a "For Life" organization which encourages women to have their babies and helps them to care for them up until age 4. They appreciate donations of baby items of all kinds. Please return your donations by March 1.

If you wish to make a donation by check, please make the check out to St. John's, with the memo Caring Pregnancy Options.

SAVE THE DATE

June 6, 2015! The annual St. John's Golf Scramble will be held again this year at Forbes Golf Course. Mark your calendar and plan to participate in this yearly fundraiser for the youth by forming a team and/or donating your time or money to the cause.

ADULT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Adult Christian Fellowship will meet for dinner at Coyote Canyon at 4:00 p.m., Sunday, February 22. Adult members of St. John's are invited to join us for an evening of good food and fellowship.

FEBRUARY PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The menu for the monthly breakfast on February 8, includes pancakes, sausage links, fruit and drinks. All will be provided, so you don't have to bring anything this time. These men will be hosting: Myron Akers, Jim Simpson, Dakota Sorensen, Keith Powell, Buck Ellis, and Ron Revelle. Thank you, gentlemen! Also Curt Loupe from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund will be at the breakfast to present a check to St. Johns.

FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2015 Flower Calendar is now posted. If you would like to provide flowers for a particular service this coming year, please sign your name and phone number by the date of your choice. The calendar is located on

the bulletin board outside of the church office. Glenda Cox, Chairman of the Flower Committee, will call to remind you that you are responsible for flowers the week preceding the service you chose.

DOORSTEP NEWS

The month of February brings cold weather and hot soup and chili! Doorstep's major fundraiser, Operation Soup Line, is in its 12th year and will take place on Wednesday, February 25 at the Expo Centre Ag Hall. At the request of many, evening dinner is being added to the normal lunch time. Celebrity servers, entertainment, and a theme basket auction will be during lunch and dinner. Carryout is available for lunch and dinner; however, delivery on orders of 10 or more is available during lunch time only. Thank you to Jere Niehoff for making our theme basket.

Lunch: 11:00-1:30; Dinner: 4:30-7:00. Ticket price remains at \$9 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. This includes your choice of soup or chili, dessert, and a drink. The Soup Line is an important fundraiser as the funds are used to help our neighbors in need with rent and utility assistance throughout the year. With cuts this year in several grants used for client services, this event is even more important. Please bring your family and friends for lunch or dinner and support Doorstep!

Upcoming for March, St. John's annual assigned month, we will be one of five congregations responsible for providing a significant portion of food to Doorstep. Also, volunteers are needed to work in the clothing room at Doorstep on each of the 4 Wednesdays in the month. Shift times can be arranged between the hours of 8:30 and 2:00. Please call Chris Graversen at 235-9982 if you are able to volunteer. Your assistance with this outreach is greatly appreciated!

RUSSIA MISSIONS CHANGING TO INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

In consultation with our Treasurer, the Board of Missions and Evangelism has decided to change the name of the Russia Missions fund to the International Missions fund. This is to reflect better the expanding list of missionaries and the countries that they serve (Russia, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, etc.). This will also give the Board greater latitude in the future in selecting missionaries to support. Because of the one year lag in ordering offering envelopes, the 2015 envelopes will still say Russia Missions, even though the funds will be used more generally for International Missions. If there are questions or concerns about this, or if you would prefer that your gifts which have already been given would go only in support of Russia Missions, please contact Yvonne Berry in the church office.

LENTEN SERVICES AND MEALS

Lenten Services will be held at 12:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on the Wednesdays listed below. There will be a light meal starting at 5:30 p.m. before each 7:00 p.m. service except Ash Wednesday, February 18. The flyer included with this newsletter also has service times for the Lenten sermon series, which does not include Ash Wednesday. February 18 February 25 March 4 March 11 March 18 March 25

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR FEBRUARY 2015

February 1:	<i>Jesus and the Little Children</i>	<i>Mark 10:13-16</i>
February 8:	<i>Jesus Heals a Man Who Is Paralyzed</i>	<i>Mark 2: 1-12</i>
February 15:	<i>The Transfiguration</i>	<i>Mark 9: 2-10</i>
February 22:	<i>Jesus Heals Jairus's Daughter</i>	<i>Mark 5:21-24, 35-43</i>

YOUNGER CHILDREN**BIBLE WORDS FOR FEBRUARY:**

[Jesus said,] "Let the children come to Me." Mark 10:14

CHILDREN IN GRADES 2 THROUGH 5**BIBLE WORDS FOR FEBRUARY:**

February 1: *[Jesus said,] "Let the children come to Me . . . for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Mark 10:14*

February 8: *Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." Matthew 28:18*

February 15: *A voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him." Mark 9:7*

February 22: *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deuteronomy 6: 6-7). Parents, this command from God's Word is for you, and the Sunday school is here to support you in the nurture of your children's spiritual growth. Please accept God's invitation to bless your children through the Sunday school and worship service each week.

MOVIES FOR YOUR CHILDREN THROUGH JUNIOR HIGH

Want some good family movies to watch this winter? There are 31 new DVD's and one new VHS available in the children's library located on the second floor of the Sunday school area. These are from Feature Films for Families. Please check one or two out at a time and return them in a timely manner.

**THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

[Jesus said] "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19-20a

So that we may obtain faith in Christ, God instituted the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments. Through the gospel and sacraments, as through means, God gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when He wills, in those who hear the gospel.

The Augsburg Confession, Article 5