

2015 Convention Report of the Indian Ministry Committee

A primary goal of the Indian Ministry Committee (IMC) for the past triennium has been improving communications about Indian ministry within the District. This has involved having more frequent articles in the *Montana Reflections* and the *Montana Missive*.

In 2012, a new newsletter was begun—*Lutherans in Indian Communities* (LINC). Initially its purpose was to aid communications between LCMS congregations on or near Indian reservations and urban centers. Therefore it was sent to tribal offices, the tribal college libraries, the state universities and the aforementioned congregations. The mailing list has now been expanded to include all of the District congregations.

Various forms of ministry have been conducted by or aided by the IMC. These involved ministries on the Flathead, Fort Peck, Crow, Blackfeet and Northern Cheyenne Reservations, as well as in Ashland.

The work on the Blackfeet Reservation is centered in Browning and is conducted by Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Columbia Falls. In 2012, they asked Pastor Dan Jacobs to visit them for further discussion on the ministry. They had questions concerning Blackfeet culture and reservation issues, as well as some questions dealing with their powwow VBS. Devotional materials are shared with P pastor Matt Nelson.

The work on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation is conducted by Circle of Life Lutheran Church, Muddy Cluster. The committee has been able to aid with *Portals of Prayer* devotionals to the Everything Beautiful Thrift Store in Lame Deer. Other devotion books are also shared with the pastors and congregation.

The work on the other reservations and Ashland focuses on the powwows. New contacts are made at these events, and old relationships strengthened. This has opened the way for devotional materials and worship service CDs from Crow Lutheran Ministry to reach various members of these communities.

Though VBS and worship services have been held at Crow Fair for many years, 2013 saw a worship service held at the dance arbor in Ashland during the Labor Day Powwow, and in 2014 a service was held at the dance arbor in Wolf Point during the Wadopana Celebration, too. Also in 2014, VBS was held at both the Ashland and Wolf Point powwows.

Radio ministry was begun in Wolf Point by Pastor George Draper, under the title “The Gospel Minute”. It has been continued by Pastor John Vallie, under the title “Food for Thought”. The IMC has worked to cover the cost of air time so the broadcast can continue to go out to the Fort Peck Reservation.

Through all of this work the effort has been made to try to link the Native people with our local pastors. This often is not easy because Native people work so much by

relationships with people they know. Therefore, bridging between strangers is a constant challenge.

Pastor Jacobs has been able to build relationships with a few Native pastors. Dean Buffalo in Ronan, Flathead Reservation; Eugene Deputee in St. Xavier, Crow Reservation; and Pastor Steve in Wolf Point. He is able to provide them with devotional materials and some doctrinal instruction.

There have been some visits to District congregations. As mentioned above, Pastor Jacobs visited Our Redeemer, Columbia Falls. He also visited St. Mark, Butte and Zion, Whitehall for a mission festival. He was Bible study leader and guest speaker at the 2013 dual-zone LWML rally in Great Falls.

In 2014, two crops visited Crow Lutheran Ministry. In March, the college group from Hosanna Chapel, Mankato, MN visited to begin getting to know the Crow people. In June, the youth group from First Lutheran, Bozeman, visited for the same purpose. Then in August, a few of the Bozeman members came to help with VBS at Crow Fair. In December, a couple of their members also visited Ashland for a few days job shadowing a teacher at St. Labre School and staying with Bobbi Schenderline, a member of Crow Lutheran Ministry working at St. Labre.

In the fall of 2014, Pastor Jacobs was asked by the Wyoming District President to visit the new pastor on the Wind River Reservation, WY, to help him get oriented to his new setting. In late October, that occurred with Pastor Jacobs going to Fort Washakie for a few days.

For a number of years now, two individuals who are not members of the IMC have been helping, especially with the powwow ministries. These are Bobbie Schenderline (mentioned above) and Mike Aswegan, a Sioux man who is a member of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Altoona, IA. They have been a big help in this work and a blessing to the people they have come to know.

Submitted by Rev. Dan Jacobs