



The congregation at Trinity-Miles City honored their pastor, Rev. Howard Schreibeis, with a Pastor Appreciation Reception on Sunday, October 30th.



Thanks to everyone for submitting great pictures and articles these past few months. We love to publish them in the Reflections and encourage you to keep sending us material to include in an upcoming issue. Please keep this in mind as you go through Advent and celebrate Christmas. We especially like pictures of the childrens' programs and activities. I will also be featuring one of our schools each month. A special thanks to Bridget Michel of First Lutheran in Helena for sending us an article on short notice.

Have a blessed and thankful Thanksgiving!

Betty Bagley
Administrative Assistant

MONTANA REFLECTIONS

November 2011

Montana District—LCMS
30 Broadwater Avenue
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 259-2908
office@mtdistlcms.org

“Oh, Give Thanks to the Lord”

“Thank You God... for socks.” Thirty five years ago, during a devotional time, at the campus of St. Paul’s College in Concordia Missouri, those words were spoken by one of my college classmates. I remember them yet today because at first they made me angry. I thought she was trying to be cute. I was afraid her mention of something so trivial would derail our thoughts from the weightier matters for which we ought to be giving thanks. There was little room in my personal piety for whimsy during prayer. I wished she hadn’t thanked God for socks.

I was wrong, both about her personal motivation, and about our need to give thanks to God for even those things that may seem trivial. Through the years those simple words have popped into my head at the oddest times, (although quite often around Thanksgiving). They have served as law by reminding me that I do not give thanks as I should, in view of the fact that everything I have and everything I am is gift. They have served as Gospel by reminding me that my loving Father cares about every little detail and richly and daily provides all I need to support this body and life.

In a few days I imagine, I hope, that Christians across the United States will be giving thanks to God for all sorts of things. More than a few of them will use the words of David from I Chronicles 16:34 and various Psalms, “Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and His mercy endureth forever.” Too often we repeat these words without investing much meaning. They are both proclamation and exhortation. The Christian who prays these words is proclaiming and giving thanks for the goodness of God. At the same time he is calling everyone else to give thanks along with him.

Exhortation to give thanks is a sentiment that gets short shrift in today’s world. It seems we barely have time and energy to give thanks ourselves, let alone encourage others. We have many important tasks to do. So the day set aside for Thanksgiving often becomes anything but a day of thanks-giving. Still, this day is a marvelous opportunity, not only to give thanks but also to call the entire world to give thanks to God. Believers and unbelievers alike are blessed by God with His good gifts. Jesus paid the price for the sins of everyone. On Thanksgiving we can say to everyone, “Give thanks!”

David instructs us to give thanks because of the goodness of God. He continues by reminding us that we see God’s goodness in His never ending mercy. For this we can be truly thankful. God shows His mercy to us in so many ways. From the simple- (God has given me socks that keep my feet warm), to the sublime- (God has blessed me with an amazing wife, five wonderful children and four tremendous grandchildren), to the supreme- (God daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers), the mercy of God touches every aspect of my life.

I pray that you will receive this exhortation in the spirit it is given. Dear fellow redeemed, giving thanks is not something that takes place once a year on an assigned day. It is a way of life carefully cultivated by the Spirit of God. (I Thess. 5:18) Because we have been claimed and freed by Jesus, the Holy Spirit of God is always at work in us, creating a thankful heart. From the simplest things we take for granted every day to the supreme gift of eternal life we have cause to rejoice and give thanks. In this joy I say to you, “Oh give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and His mercy endureth forever. Amen.”

Terry Forke, District President

November

24-25 Thanksgiving—Office Closed

27 Advent begins

December

4 Official Visit—Messiah, Missoula

Ordination and Installation:
Mark Christensen, First Lutheran,
Missoula, 5:00 p.m.

18 Official Visit—Glendive

25 Christmas

26 Office Closed

January

1 Official Visit—Trinity, Kalispell

10-12 Quad Circuit, Belgrade

15 Official Visit—Hope, Lockwood
Redeemer, Worden

29 Official Visit—Concordia, Forsyth
Trinity, Hysham



Trinity Lutheran Church of Kalispell, Montana is calling for applications for the part-time position of Executive Director of Trinity Camp. Qualifications include: Member of LCMS, and camp experience. Please see trinitylutheran-kalispell.org or call 406-257-5683 for further details and application form.

Montana District Organist Workshop

The organist, or pianist plays a very big part in the life of the congregation. Leading the hymns and liturgy of the Church is a large responsibility. The Montana District will be sponsoring a workshop for organists on February 11, 2012 at First Lutheran Church in Bozeman. This Saturday workshop will be held from 9 am to 3:15 pm. The cost of registration is \$10 covers lunch and other materials.

The workshop will cover the basics of what worship is and how the Divine Service is ordered as well as technical issues of playing the organ, leading singing, and planning for worship. Organists and their Pastors are encouraged to attend. Pianists may also benefit.

President Forke and Ted Kober, long-time organist of Trinity in Billings, will lead the workshop. This will be a practical as well as theological presentation. There will be time at the organ and plenty of time for questions and answers. Please watch for more information to be sent to your congregation.



Western Circuit Pastors gather at Grace Lutheran Church, Hamilton, for the 2011 Circuit Reformation Service. Front row: Rev. Don Schneider, Rev. Ray Larson, Pastor Ray Wiegert, Pastor Vern Sandersfeld; Second row: Pastor Kevin Peterson, Rev. Kent Stenzel, Vicar Mark Christensen, Pastor David Renfro.
(photos & story submitted by Rev. Larson)

Members of almost every congregation in the Western Circuit gathered at Grace Lutheran Church in Hamilton the evening of 30 October to celebrate the Reformation, worshipping together and sharing fellowship and a meal. An informal count indicated that over 230 people attended the worship service, and most stayed for the meal and accordion music which followed. As usual for the Circuit, the evening had a German flavor, both in the meal and in the music played by the band during the meal. Rev. Kevin Peterson, Pastor of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Salmon, Idaho, preached for the service, with other pastors of the Circuit sharing in reading both the scripture lessons and selected sections of Luther's Larger Catechism.



Where Does All the Money Go?

Stewardship in the church from a Layman's Perspective.

We are approaching the time of the year when we begin to think about budgeting for our expenditures for next year. For the most part this is true in our individual households, our churches, the Montana District and even our Synod. It is interesting to reflect on how each of these entities depends fully on the previous entities for its very existence. In other words, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod depends primarily on the voluntary giving of the 35 member Districts who depend primarily on the giving of their member congregations who depend fully on the giving of their member households.

Over this past year, my wife, Billye, and I have attended LCMS churches across Montana as well as in South Dakota and Idaho. Attendance at these churches on the Sunday we attended ranged from 6 up to about 300. At every church, without exception, an offering was collected from those attending which was then used to fund the work of that local congregation in presenting the Word of God to that community and Word and Sacrament to the members of that church. Beyond this, a portion of this offering is forwarded to the District (in this case the Montana District) to help fund that same work of presenting Word and Sacrament to many people across Montana who otherwise would not have the opportunity to hear His saving Word.

The sixty-seven member congregations with their 14,000 members in the Montana District fully f

fund three fulltime mission pastors and one fulltime chaplain as well as the Office of the District President, a part time treasurer, a part time secretary, and the work of the several volunteer boards which serve to encourage and support the work of the churches and pastors in the communities of the District. These committees help provide suggestions, materials and funding for our Lutheran schools, preschools, pastors conferences, the work of circuit counselors in helping local congregations and pastors, as well as acts of mercy such as mission trips to help those affected by floods or other disasters to rebuild their homes, churches and lives.

The Montana District Board of Directors along with the District President and treasurer develop a budget each year to fund these programs and activities. Included in this budget is 25% of the District Congregational offerings which are pledged, as in all the Districts, to fund the activities of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The Synod, in turn, develops a budget to help further the delivery of this same Word and Sacrament properly by supporting our Seminaries and Universities, educating our pastors and teachers, and providing Lutheran Christian educational and worship materials for our churches, Sunday Schools, and members around the country as well as to our partner churches around the world. In addition, the Synod funds many missionary pastors and teachers who are sent around the nation and the world to bring Christ to millions of people who would not have otherwise been able to hear of the saving work Christ did for each one of them.

In time of trouble such as floods, hurricanes, drought, earthquakes, wars and other disasters that destroy people's lives, the Synod

provides disaster relief through aid in rebuilding homes and communities and other acts of mercy here at home as well as around the world.

Occasionally, especially during or after a disaster, the Synod or District may send out a plea for extra funds to aid those people affected by the disaster or to fund a specific need or ministry. In these instances, all of the funds given for this purpose are designated as "restricted" and can only be used for that purpose. These "restricted" funds are not included in the regular budgeting process of the Church. It is the hope of those who set the budgets that restricted giving is given above the regular intent. The "unrestricted" funds pledged and given by the congregations to the District are vital to the ongoing Mission of your church and the church as a whole.

Ultimately it can be said that the lion's share of taking Christ to the nations is provided by the "unrestricted" giving of the individual households of your local congregation. It is my belief that those we have put into the positions of leadership in our District and Synod do a very efficient job of administering the funds we have entrusted to them.

Jerry Roseleip,

St. John Lutheran Church, Deer Lodge

Stewardship and Human Care Committee



Trinity Lutheran Church in Billings recently hosted the 1st ever Stewardship Banquet, with approximately 300 people in attendance. It was an evening filled with fellowship, entertainment and insight shared with each other. The Master of Ceremonies for this event was Rev. Dan Rinderknecht and the Guest Speaker was Rev. Wes Baumeister, pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Ironwood, Michigan. Pictured above (l -r) are Connie Klundt, Amy Schleicher, Cindy Speed, Pastor Wes "Bo" Baumeister, and Jeff & Lisa Ullman.

Blessed to be a Blessing

Pictured below is the singing group "Music Box" - a select choir of 27 students in grades 6-8 from Trinity Lutheran School in Billings. The choir was part of the entertainment at Trinity's Stewardship Banquet.



Important Dates in Preparation for District Convention

October –February 28	Circuit Forums held to elect Circuit Counselors
October-February 9	Voter’s meetings to elect lay delegates to District Convention
January 27, 2012	Nominations for President and Vice presidents due to secretary
February 10, 2012	Lay- delegate characterization forms due in District office
February 10, 2012	Overtures to 2012 District convention due in District office
February 17, 2012	Consent to serve and Biographies due from Pres/VP candidates to District office
February 17, 2012	Consent to serve and biographies due for all other offices.
February 29, 2012	Results of elections of Circuit Counselors due in District office
February 29, 2012	Circuit Counselor, Pres, and VP triennial reports due in District office
March 9, 2012	Credential forms mailed to delegates
June 11-14, 2012	District Convention
June 2013	Pastoral and Lay delegates attending 2012 District convention cast votes for Synod President



Children at First Lutheran School in Helena enjoying their Halloween treats.

Capturing the Excitement of the Moment

By Bridget Michel,

Principal, First Lutheran School, Helena



First Lutheran School recently had school picture day. The preschoolers wore their best outfits and were very excited to have their group photo taken in the sanctuary. Individual shots will undoubtedly be gifts for family and friends in a few weeks.

The hallway outside the preschool room shows the story of other school picture days. Photos, dating back to the founding of the school in 1979, display the smiling faces of children enrolled through the years. The joy is the same, but the school has changed in many ways since its first year.

The school began as Good Shepherd Preschool. It served a real need for early childhood development and was well received in the Helena community. Teachers from First Lutheran Church and other churches shared the love of Jesus with many children over the years.

Eventually, members of First Lutheran Church expressed interest in expanding the school. A Genesis Project study was conducted, and a task force developed a framework for expanding classes through the fifth grade, the point when the Helena district students transition to middle schools.

The name was changed to First Lutheran School to emphasize the connection between the church and the school.

Classes were added gradually, with the first fifth grade graduate last spring.

Enrollment in the preschool classes is robust; the Kindergarten through fifth grade classes have openings. First and second grade are combined, as are third through fifth grade. Our goal is to increase enrollment and eventually have called teachers in our classrooms. We have two First Lutheran members teaching this term.

I am in my first year as principal, and as such, I am becoming acquainted with students, parents, and teachers. My joy is seeing how the teachers share their faith with their students. Children’s answers in chapel show they are learning about Jesus and are enthusiastic about sharing what they learn. Since about 30% of students claim no church home, the school is an important outreach tool for our church.

Picture day captures the excitement of the moment, and class photos record the history. Through the years, the faces and ages of the students have changed, but the mission of sharing the Gospel message remains the same.