

## From the Pastor's Desk

*"We have only five loaves here and two fish." And He said, "Bring them here to Me." – Matthew 14:17-18*

Dear Friends in Christ,

I want to begin my column this month by thanking our congregation for helping to make it possible for me to attend the 2015 Wiki Conference in Houston, Texas, last week. The Michigan District graciously footed most of the bill, including the conference registration and lodging, but those attending were asked to cover their own transportation costs, and that's where our congregation came in. Obviously traveling all the way to Houston was more involved, and more costly, than traveling within the state, which is generally the case for most of the conferences I attend.

This particular conference was not one I was required to attend, like our annual Spring and Fall conferences or our District Convention (every three years). However, along with a handful of other pastors from across the District, I was invited by the District to attend this year. I felt it would be wise to take advantage of the opportunity, and it proved to be a worthwhile learning experience.

You may be wondering, first of all, what in the world a Wiki conference is. In the on-line world, "Wiki" generally indicates some sort of a collaborative effort. Collaboration is also a big part of the idea behind the Wiki Conference and the organization which puts it on each year (see below). Rather than trying to do everything on our own, every church worker and every congregation for themselves, the idea is that we can learn from others who are already doing what we would like to do – both from their failures and from their successes.

In my case, I had the opportunity to hear first-hand during the conference, in three different sessions, from three fellow pastors who are involved in innovative community-oriented ministries in their communities – in Portland, Oregon; Dallas; and Houston, respectively. They were not sharing theories with us; they are actually and currently doing what they were talking about.

The Wiki conference, which has been around for not quite a decade, is organized by a group called the 5-2 Network, which originated within a LCMS congregation in the Houston area – Katy, Texas, to be exact. A group from the Michigan District has now attended their conference for three consecutive years, and beginning this fall our District will be entering into a formal partnership with the 5-2 Network, in an effort to encourage District congregations to make use of their principles and their resources.

The name "5-2" comes from the miracle of the Feeding of the 5000 during Jesus' ministry, when the disciples brought Him the five loaves of bread and the two fish and then asked Him (in John's account), "But what are they for so many?" (John 6:9) To which Jesus replied, "Bring them here to Me." His message to the disciples, in other words, was that, in addition to the bread and the fish, they also had Him. And with Him, they had more than enough to feed the crowd that day. In fact, if you remember, they had so much that they wound up with leftovers!

The idea behind the 5-2 Network, then, is that everything a congregation needs for ministry in their community is already in their possession. With Jesus, what we already have is more than enough to do what He is calling us to do. With that in mind, the "5-2 Network" exists to encourage congregations to **"Start New to Reach New"** and to assist them in doing so. In other words, they want to encourage congregations, rather than simply doing the same old things in ministry, to consider beginning new and innovative ministries designed to reach new people – people whom aren't currently being reached successfully.

Where God is involved, I don't believe in coincidences. I don't believe that it is a coincidence that I had the opportunity to attend this conference at the same time that we are about to embark as a congregation upon a process designed to help us identify the needs present in the community around us. If you haven't heard me mention it before now, this process is called "Together With Impact," and Wellspring Lutheran Services (a ministry located within the Michigan District; see [www.wellspringlutheran.com](http://www.wellspringlutheran.com)) will be assisting us with its completion during the coming weeks. We will be taking the first step in this process on Sunday, October 11, during the service. Needless to say, the ultimate goal of the process, as one component of our ongoing congregational planning process, is to help us to develop a strategy for meeting the needs of our community. Hopefully, in other words, this process will help us, too, to "Start New to Reach New."

What will that look like? I have no idea. But I am looking forward to seeing where this process leads us as a congregation. And I invite you to join me in praying that the Lord will continue to bless and guide us as we strive by His grace, as a caring family, to reach out to all, to share Christ's love, and to teach God's Word.

In His Service,

Pastor Derek Riddle

## Dinosaurs – No Mystery!

Did you know that many Christians and non-Christians believe that dinosaurs are still a big mystery, when they are not? When you begin with the Bible as your starting point, dinosaurs can be understood, and not in an evolutionary perspective as they so often are.

According to God's Word, everything was created in six, literal 24-hour days. On Day Six of Creation Week, God created all the land creatures. Since dinosaurs were land animals, they must have been made on Day Six – on the same day God created man! So, dinosaurs and humans would have lived at the same time.

There is tremendous compelling evidence of dinosaur/human coexistence. Dinosaur art is found all around the world, as are dinosaur-like legends. Also, soft tissue is being discovered in dinosaur bones, which provides strong evidence that these creatures did not die out 65 million years ago and well before man.\*

As Answers in Genesis shows in their Creation Museum in Hebron, Kentucky (outside Cincinnati, Ohio), dinosaurs were specially made by God just a few thousand years ago.

\*See [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org), and in the search box type "dinosaur soft tissue" for several articles on this subject.

Excerpted from the September 2015 issue of *Answers Update*, a monthly newsletter of Answers in Genesis. Visit [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).

## Board of Stewardship

Stewardship! When we hear this word, most (not all) think about money. And yes, money is a big part of stewardship. We take a look at ourselves and our identity. Who & what are we? To help us with this question here are some defining words for Stewardship: A joyful response to God's goodness and grace, the fruit of saving faith, a joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church. Christian stewardship is nothing less than "total devotion" to Christ. From creation God put Adam and Eve in the garden and told them to take care of it. God is the owner, and we are His stewards to take care of all that He has given us. Stewardship is all about our personal relationship with Jesus. A Christian is a child of the Holy Spirit, an heir of eternal life. A steward is a child of God who realizes they are a partner, a trustee, a manager, a caretaker, or a temporary custodian of the gifts that belong to God. A Christian steward "receives" God's gifts, and then manages His gifts, and then also shares His gifts with others. When we study God's Word and combine that with prayer and the Divine Service, we feel in our heart the importance of Christian stewardship and become fruitful stewards. We can all take one step forward at a time and be fruitful stewards.

## The 101<sup>st</sup> Michigan District Convention

Imagine...living as God's loved and compassionate community! We will be a powerful witness to all people through the power of the Holy Spirit, Working through God's Word and Sacraments, and living as God's people. This was the theme of the 101<sup>st</sup> Michigan District Convention. This theme was used in pretty much everything we did over the convention's 2½ days.

The convention opened with an overflow crowd, with people even sitting outside the Chapel of the Holy Trinity. Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of our Missouri Synod, led the opening Sunday night service. Part of President Harrison's sermon message included this statement: "The Supreme Court decision on same sex marriage happened on Friday. Today is Sunday, and we're still here." That means compassion. We are greatly loved by Him, and we are here to have great compassion upon those who do not yet know Him. Love all in the name of Jesus. The service closed with "walking" communion. What an uplifting way to start the 101<sup>st</sup> convention! Over the course of the next two days we had three more services, with two of the services having much more contemporary music. All of the services were very uplifting, but the traditional memorial service, which was held to commemorate all of God's faithful servants who had passed away, especially touched me. These were God's faithful servants who had passed away since the last convention. They were honored by having their names and pictures shown on the two big screens in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, while the choir sang softly in the background. It was especially touching when Pastor Harold G. Molzan's picture appeared. He was only one of a large number of God's faithful servants who have passed on to their heavenly home!

A typical day began with breakfast at 7:00 a.m. and an opening devotion at 8:15 a.m., with pastors from around our Michigan District invited to lead the devotions. Pastor Joshua Ketelsen of Holy Cross in Onaway was the Pastor on Monday. He did a great job, with an excellent sermon, and made the Mackinac Straits Circuit very proud.

Bible Study was held twice a day, led by Pastor Reed Lessing of Fort Wayne. One of the agenda items for Monday was election of officers. All voting was done electronically so the results of any of the particular votes were shown on the big screen within seconds after the voting ceased.

President David Maier was re-elected as District President on the first ballot. Mark Brandt from St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, was re-elected 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Donald Neuendorf from St. Luke, Ann Arbor, was re-elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, David Davis from St. Lake, Haslett, was re-elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President, and John Duerr of Hope, Warren, was re-elected 4<sup>th</sup> Vice President. David Reed, Associate Pastor in Sebawaing, was also re-elected as Secretary. A new treasurer was elected; she is Bonnie

Mann, a retired accountant and a member of Trinity, Monroe.

There were 25 different resolutions presented to the voting body. Due to time constraints, as we had one less day of convention this year, there was only one resolution that we didn't act on. A couple of the resolutions we acted on were Resolution 1-03 (Overture 1-06) dealing with the "Here We Stand" Initiative, which includes a district-wide thank offering goal of \$1,000,000 and a huge 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation with a service in 2017 at the Breslin Center in East Lansing. Resolution 1-09 (Overture 1-10) dealt with "To Address How Best to Deal with Same-Sex Marriage." One of the resolves stated: that on the basis of the clear Word of God, Pastors of the Michigan District-LCMS shall not bless or perform a wedding of a same-sex couple (Jer. 8:11), even if it means that the government may prohibit those Pastors from performing any weddings (Acts 5:29); and be it further resolved, that the Michigan District requests the Synod to look into the ramifications, legal and otherwise, of Pastors performing only religious unions, not civil weddings; and be it further resolved, that the Michigan District requests that Synod communicate guidelines for providing compassionate care for same sex couples.

There was a total of 833 registered attendants, with 293 congregations represented. It was amazing to find out that 100 congregations were not represented by either a lay or pastoral delegate. Any other questions you may have about any of the other resolutions or the convention as a whole, feel free to contact me, and I'd be happy to answer them for you. I would like to say thank you to Pastor Riddle for putting up with me as a dorm mate and to Peace Lutheran Church for allowing me to be the congregational lay delegate. It was an honor and a privilege.

Yours in Christ,  
Dave Schaedig

## The Lutheran Hour

The Lutheran Hour can be heard locally on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. on 92.5 FM and at 11:00 a.m. on 1450 AM. You can also listen on-line or via podcast at [www.lutheranhour.org](http://www.lutheranhour.org). Now you can also download the new Lutheran Hour Mobile App to your mobile device. Instructions for doing so can be found at [www.lhm.org/apps/](http://www.lhm.org/apps/).

## October 2015 Schedule:

### October 4

"Fight for the One Next to You"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz  
Who's fighting for you? Who are you fighting for?  
(Hebrews 2:14-18)

### October 11

"Clearing the Clutter"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz  
Is there room in your life for that which is truly meaningful, important, and precious?  
(Mark 10:17-22)

### October 18

"Someone Up There Must Like Me"

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz  
Faith in Jesus means you can live knowing that Someone "up there" really, really loves you  
(Mark 10:23-31)

### October 25

"Reformation Freedom, Reformation Faith "

Lutheran Hour Speaker: Rev. Gregory Seltz  
People have risked and even sacrificed their lives so that we could come to know the joy of God's forgiving love for us in Jesus.  
(Romans 1:16-17)

## Stewardship Corner

*The reason we come to Church on Sunday morning, as opposed to Sunday afternoon or Monday evening, is because it is the first day of the week. The first thing you do this week, before you do anything else, is come to Church. You begin your week with the Word of God, Prayer, and the Holy Communion. You give the first seventh, off the top, of your time to the Lord. He blesses that time. In that time, He forgives your sins, cleanses, and purifies you. He then sends you out into the world, into the week, as His in all your days and hours and life.*

*This is also the reason we pray before we eat. We want to establish that food is a gift from God and that He provides for us through it. Before we eat, we pray. This also blesses the food and makes it holy food because you are holy people.*

*Nonetheless, we have a tendency to compartmentalize our lives, to separate the spiritual and the secular, to put on different masks at work, with our friends, or at home. This is a fantasy. We are who we are wherever we are. We are the baptized and we never go anywhere alone. Everything we do is spiritual — including our use of time and food and money.*

*Now, you have a Christian duty to support the Church, to give of your time, money, and abilities so that the Ministry would be conducted among us and that the Gospel would be preached beyond us. How much you are to give is not dictated in the New Testament, unless it is everything. But how you are to give is clear. It is sacrificial, generous, first fruits, and proportional. You are to give a percentage offering—not an amount, but a percentage.*

*In the Old Testament ten percent was the norm. It's hard to imagine that St. Paul was thinking that "being generous" would be anything less than this. But whatever it is, the point is to set your offerings in comparison to your total income. That is what makes it a sacrifice, a spiritual gift. How much of what the Lord provides do you return?*

*Next, it is to be first-fruits giving. It comes off the top. You write the check, or pay your offering, before you pay any of your bills. It is your first obligation and sets your priorities. You don't pay your other bills and then give the leftovers to the Church. You make your offering first, in accordance with whatever promised percentage you made. This is not only first fruits, it is also sacrificial.*

*And you can always give more. Start with your commitment, with your percentage-based, first-fruits weekly offering, then as you have leftovers, give them out as it pleases you. But start with the Biblical model or percentage, first fruits.*

*That is how money is to be used and given by Christians. It is to be pressed into the service of the Gospel. It is not actually that hard. Start where you are and work toward greater faithfulness. Start now. Just take what you give now and figure out the percentage of your income and commit to keep that pledge for the year. Over time you can increase that commitment, that percentage. As your income fluctuates, going up or down, so will your offering amount. Set the percentage, then take that out of your check first each week. Make it a priority. It is the most important thing you do with your money. It is a spiritual exercise.*

*It will feel a little scary at first. Just do it. Take the risk. Set the money aside for the Lord and trust that He will provide. And over time you will find that you really can give more than 1% or even 10%, and even do so without regret. This kind of Biblical, disciplined, first fruit giving takes the unease out of it. It creates cheerful givers because when they drop the offering in the plate, they are already committed. They decided beforehand what to give. They don't think about it. They are glad to fulfill their promise and to be in God's house where He receives them according to grace.*

*Taken from [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org)*

A "What Lutherans Believe" class is tentatively being planned for Wednesday evenings this fall, beginning this coming Wednesday, October 7. Entitled *God For Us: An Introduction to Lutheran Teaching*, the class will consist of approximately 10 sessions and is intended for non-members interested in learning more about what we believe and teach as Lutheran Christians and pursuing membership at Peace and members interested in a review of what we believe and teach as Lutherans. If you are interested in attending personally, please see Pastor. If you know someone else who might be interested in attending, please see Pastor ASAP so that an invitation may be extended to them.

A Marriage-Enrichment Workshop, entitled **Keeping Love Alive**, is being planned for Saturday, October 31, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., here at Peace. The workshop will be conducted by Rev. Dr. Bryan Salminen of St. John's Lutheran Church in St. John's, Michigan, a licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, a member of the Michigan District staff, and a former professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and is intended for married couples of all ages from both the congregation and community. Please see Pastor with questions.

*If you notice your name is missing from the birthday or anniversary sections, please let the church office know so we can update our records... and celebrate these milestones with you!!*

## October Anniversaries

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Yrs</u>
Steve & Sue Kandal	10/1	32
Mark & Missie Karsten	10/1	27
Kay Don & Audrey Selke	10/7	54
Gayle & Kathy Zimmerman	10/9	11
Larry & Cinda Grulke	10/11	18
David & Donna Kaski	10/14	48
Jesse & Jenny Fenstermaker	10/16	16
Nick & Carol Filipiak	10/21	43
Tom & Kay Bruning	10/27	36

## October Birthdays

Robert Heller	10/1
Nancy Mosher	10/1
Lilah Elowski	10/2
Jessie Wenzel	10/2
Erin Fairbanks	10/3
Harold Koviak	10/3
Jane Bruski	10/5
Carol Filipiak	10/5
Jessica Bannasch	10/7
Alvis Wirgau	10/9
Cole Kamyszek	10/10
Lily Lewandowski	10/10
Jeff Karsten	10/13
Tamara Rex	10/13
Jessica Wirgau	10/14
Madison Bingle	10/15
Lauren Fairbanks	10/16
Mary Fairbanks	10/18
Liam Grulke	10/18
Carolynne Schaedig	10/19
Merlin Schaedig	10/19
Alyssa Hein	10/20
Jessica Muller	10/20
Caleb Karsten	10/22
Steven Grulke	10/24
Randy Reisener	10/24
David Schaedig	10/24
Ralph Zempel	10/26
John Hudock	10/27
Nikkie LaLonde	10/29
Mason Suszek	10/29
Sarah Kamyszek	10/31