

Dear Partner in Christ's Mission



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! We pray that He has already blessed you richly during these first weeks and months of 2011. We also thank you for your commitment to the *Fan into Flame* campaign and its aim to raise funds for the Lord's work in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth."

We have so much to give thanks for as Christ's holy people! During this Epiphany season, God's holy Word points us to Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome (John 8:12). For Jesus came into our dark world to redeem us with His blood, to call us out of darkness, and to declare us to be a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

We have been given this sacred task—to "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness . . ." Such proclamation goes on in your life each day, through your vocation, in the daily work and opportunities for service He has given you—no matter what they might be. In speaking of Jesus to others and in the loving and faithful service you provide your neighbor, the Lord uses even the lowliest of instruments—sinners like you and I—to bear witness to Him.

We give thanks to God for the abundant blessings He has provided through so many generous LCMS members who have given more than \$62 million towards new mission projects and initiatives, nationally and internationally, through *Fan into Flame*. These gifts will be used to WITNESS to Jesus Christ around the globe, to carry out acts of MERCY to those who are hurting and in desperate need of relief and to strengthen our fellowship and LIFE TOGETHER with our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world.

Projects supported through *Fan into Flame* are focused on the Lord's mission of declaring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people! Inside this issue, you will read about how ministries are touching people from Wisconsin to Indiana to Germany. We pray that these updates are an encouragement to you in your witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank you for your sacrificial gifts, given in loving response to Christ's ultimate sacrifice. We ask you to consider continued donations that will help complete the funding for new ministries, such as those described in this update. Finally, we ask you to continue to pray for the efforts of *Fan into Flame*, so that the ministries that it supports would continue to fill the darkness of this world with the saving light of Christ.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. David Birner
Associate Executive Director
International Mission
LCMS World Mission

Rev. Matthew Harrison
President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Fan into Flame

SPRING 2011



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Fan into Flame provides outreach seed money for lifeGroups in Madison congregation

Members of a Wisconsin congregation find creative ways to share the love of Christ in their community.

Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Madison, Wis., has lifeGroups, which are small groups that meet weekly in homes around four main areas: **Welcome, Worship, Word** and **Witness**. This year, through the congregation's participation in *Fan into Flame*, Christ Memorial was able to offer these lifeGroups some "seed money" to get them started in reaching out in various ways to share the love of Jesus with those in need in the community. They called these monies a 'Blessing the Community' fund. The church's leadership encouraged lifeGroups to pray about who God would want them to reach out to, and how. Their only stipulation in granting the seed money was that it be used locally to build relationships with those in need—with the hope of connecting them to life in Jesus. The lifeGroups used creative means to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the Madison area.



lifeGroup members serve their community at a food pantry.

One of the youth lifeGroups used the funds to purchase the movie, "To Save A Life," and showed it at the public high school. The film tells the story of a teenager struggling with his faith in the face of many obstacles. The lifeGroup invited friends through Facebook and word

of mouth and more than 85 students attended the screening. There was a tremendous amount of follow-up from that evening. Some expressed an interest in attending the weekly student-led Bible study at school; others wanted to know more about Christ Memorial's youth ministry. One young man met weekly with the youth director and then began attending the lifeGroup. He then went on Christ Memorial's summer mission trip and was baptized at the end of the week.



Pastor Jeff Meyer baptizes a Bhutanese girl.

Another lifeGroup has been very active in working with the refugees from Bhutan that have settled in Madison. They used the dollars from the 'Blessing the Community' fund to host a picnic for all of the refugee families. It was held during the time that a missionary from Nepal (Abraham) was in Madison, so he was able to come and connect with those families and present the Gospel without a language barrier. Since then, there has been a growing understanding of the Gospel message and two of the Bhutanese families have been baptized. There have even been ongoing discipleship training times via Skype with Abraham, and weekly Bible studies with people in that lifeGroup.

One lifeGroup prayed about whom to help and the name of a single mom was brought to their attention. This mom has a teenage daughter, a son with special needs and an infant. She had a variety of needs around her home: she needed her deck rebuilt and stained; her lawn mower repaired, and other general repairs around the home. She also needed a friend. It was amazing to see how many people gathered together to help and really make a difference around her home. Now, a friendship has been established and trust has been built. This group feels that it has been a privilege to reach out with the love of Jesus.

Yet another lifeGroup volunteered at the River Food Pantry. The group members were so touched with how courteous and kind both the volunteers and those they served were that they want to continue helping with the food pantry on a regular basis. This food pantry desires to show the love of Christ to people in the community. This lifeGroup has given their money and their time to the River Food Pantry to help more and more people with their physical needs and connect them to life in Jesus.

Amy Meyer, who serves as Christ Memorial's leadership director for lifeGroups, shares the following, "We have been blessed at the church to give to those in need as God has first given to us. It has been so exciting to see how God has blessed the efforts of people reaching out and stepping out of their comfort zones to be a blessing to others. We plan to include 'Blessing the Community' funds in our 2011 budget to help us continue to meet needs, build relationships and connect people to life in Jesus."



Detailed planning for 'Martin Luther Experience' continues in Wittenberg

Lutheran museum could point up to 200,000 visitors per year to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Who is your favorite German of all time?

In 2003, ZDF, a national German broadcaster, asked its listeners that question, among others. Of the hundreds, maybe even thousands, of possibilities, Martin Luther came in number two on the list. (In first place was Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor of Germany after World War II.)

This result may come as a surprise to many who view western Europe as a post-Christian region, with atheists, agnostics, or, at best, inactive adherents of Christianity composing the majority of its population. But Germans and other western Europeans are interested in their history and cultural figures from the past. The ZDF poll results, along with this appreciation for history, suggest that an opportunity to learn more about Martin Luther can be a valuable point of connection with people in this part of the world.

Thus, a developing Lutheran effort in Wittenberg aims to connect with that appreciation and link it to a Gospel-sharing opportunity.

Rev. David Mahsman, an LCMS missionary, serves as managing director of the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW), representing the LCMS and its partners,

who together are invested in strengthening the confessional and outreach-oriented Lutheran presence in Wittenberg.

Mahsman is working with leaders from the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK), the LCMS sister church in Germany, and Concordia Publishing House, the official publisher of the LCMS. The work of the ILSW is supported by the church bodies and CPH and by the *Fan into Flame* campaign. Funds from the campaign are allowing planning to go forward and will provide support for the ongoing implementation of ministry initiatives in Wittenberg and the former East Germany.

Detailed plans are beginning to take shape for a modern museum attraction in Wittenberg—an attraction that would share the Gospel through the life and teaching of Martin Luther. Such a museum would draw visitors from Wittenberg itself and the surrounding area, Germany, Europe and the entire world. And, experts expect that tourism will only increase in Wittenberg as 2017 and the 500th anniversary of the Reformation draw closer.

Mahsman recently shared, "If 'The Martin Luther Experience'—that's the working name for the interactive museum we're planning for Wittenberg, Germany—becomes a reality, more than 200,000 visitors a year will hear the Gospel in all its clarity every year.

"I have been reporting to you about this idea—a non-traditional museum similar in approach to the wildly popular Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Ill. While the Lincoln museum gets visitors really interested in the life and thought of the Great Emancipator, The Martin Luther Experience will be designed not only to involve visitors in Luther's life and thought, but also and most importantly to share the Gospel with the same clarity that Luther taught it.

"In October, the board for the joint LCMS-CPH-SELK (our German sister church) project in Wittenberg voted to work toward developing the larger of two options. The smaller option, which would have been located in the



Participants share ideas during a June 2010 creative planning meeting in Wittenberg.



The Martin Luther Experience





(left) Doors of the Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany, upon which Luther nailed his 95 Theses. (center and right) The Luther Museum will introduce visitors to Luther's teachings and the Gospel.

1564 school building we own in Wittenberg, would reach about 100,000 people a year during a 45-minute visit. But if we build a new building, our consultants assure us we can reach more than 200,000 people a year for two hours each!

"This doesn't mean, though, that we will not be using the old school, or 'altes Gymnasium.' The board also voted to develop the school building alongside the larger museum, very likely as an educational center."

The old school, or "altes Gymnasium," is four-story frame building, built in 1564 and vacant for most of the last 20 years. It sits near many historic sites—next to St. Mary's Protestant Church, where Luther often preached, and an easy walk from the Castle Church, where he posted his 95 Theses attacking the sale of indulgences and that helped launch the Reformation.

Mahsman recently also reported, "Our consultants also assure us that The Martin Luther Experience will be self supporting once it is in operation. Critical now is obtaining the funds to build it. If this is to happen, under God's blessing, we will need help from German government sources. I met last week with a member of the German parliament about this. There would also be a significant fundraising campaign in the United States. These are the two most critical pieces right now. We will share more on this as it develops. As always, your prayers for God's will to be done in all this are much appreciated!"

The Indiana District is one of several districts supporting the Wittenberg Project with their *Fan into Flame* funds. Additionally, the district is supporting Latvian Lutherans by establishing an immigrant church in Dublin, Ireland. Latvians have been forced to move to other countries due to economic hardship. With more than 35,000 Latvians now living in the Dublin area, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) is working to establish a congregation. Indiana District support will help provide this immigrant congregation with personnel, ministry materials and facility expense.

Fan into Flame in the Indiana District:

- Total amount pledged: **\$2,313,043**
- **18** congregations participating
- **199** gifts received from the Indiana District
- **118** donor households participating



A downtown street in Wittenberg



BibleSticks® update

At the 2010 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, La., LCMS youth from across the country and around the world were able to visit the LCMS World Mission booth to learn more about *Ablaze!* and international mission service opportunities. Additionally, about 4,000 BibleSticks were distributed to booth visitors. BibleSticks are MP3 players containing an audio version of the New Testament along with a 'Share it' card, which allows the listener to share God's Word with friends. At the 2007 National Youth Gathering, 24,000 BibleSticks were distributed, thanks to a generous *Fan into Flame* donor. Give thanks to God for these gifts, which have allowed thousands to hear the Good News of the Gospel!



Mission Services Endowment Fund

Each year, LCMS World Mission is presented with unexpected opportunities to reach out with the Gospel. In many cases, the window of opportunity may be open for only a short time. LCMS World Mission must have the resources on hand to respond quickly to urgent needs. One goal of the *Fan into Flame* campaign is to increase the Mission Services Endowment Fund to more than \$20 million. The interest from this fund will provide LCMS World Mission with the ability to respond rapidly to urgent mission opportunities. To learn more about the Mission Services Endowment Fund, call 800-977-2017.

Concordia International School Hanoi updates



Concordia International School Hanoi (CISH) will open its doors in August 2011. Many activities are already underway to ensure that Concordia has a successful first year. To date, CISH has secured a temporary facility in Hanoi for classroom and office space, recruited staff and faculty members, and implemented an enrollment process for future students. In the coming months, CISH administrators will be working to secure funding for a permanent school facility and continue dialogue with the Vietnamese government to strengthen their relationship and ensure the potential for future expansion. Thanks to generous gifts from the *Fan into Flame* campaign, this school will be a blessing to many students and their families in Vietnam. To learn more, visit www.concordiahanoi.org.

THANK YOU

We give thanks individual and congregational *Fan into Flame* donors, for your generous support of the campaign thus far. You have provided more than \$62 million worth of support for new mission initiatives.

If you have not yet given a gift, there is still time! The campaign is continuing through Reformation 2011.

- **34** LCMS districts participating
- **1,488** LCMS congregations participating
- More than **9,000** completed pledges
- More than **\$39.9** million received in pledge payments
- **\$100 million goal by Reformation 2011**



The LCMS introduced the WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER emphasis for the Church and the world. Interrelated to one another, the three illustrate how the church lives and works together—centered in Christ—to proclaim the Gospel and to provide for our brothers and sisters in Christ in our congregations, communities, and throughout the world.

Together with your help and support of projects through *Fan into Flame*, we are bearing witness to Christ "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth!"

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).



Mercy
(Diakonia)



Witness
(Martyria)



Life Together
(Koinonia)

For more about the WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER emphasis, go to www.lcms.org/emphasis.

UPDATE NEWS



Dear Partner in Christ's Mission

By participating in this unprecedented campaign, districts, congregations, and individuals support the *Ablaze!* vision of sharing the Gospel with 100 million people by 2017.

For more news and information:
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