



Why do we serve?

Spotlight on ‘Necessities for Neighbors’

By Lara Pesce

“God’s work. Our hands.” (the ELCA’s mission statement) is proudly displayed at my church, Peace Lutheran in Sioux Falls, and is printed on the T-shirts my 7-year-old and I wore as we participated in “Necessities for Neighbors.”

This outreach program gives people the “necessities” that can’t be purchased with food stamps, including toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, laundry detergent and diapers. On the first Sunday of every month, parishioners bring these items to the church to be distributed to those in need. Each month we serve 250 to 300 families from a diverse population of culture, race and family unit. Started as a short-term confirmation project, the program is in its fifth year.

Our job this Sunday morning was to unload shopping carts and display the donations. My son was amazed at the number of items and didn’t understand why people would come to church to get toilet paper. I told him that a lot of people don’t have enough money to buy what he saw in the room. He paused and then said, “That would be terrible. I know some kids at school who don’t have enough money for lunch.” Later that evening he asked if we could help again.

I’ve learned a lot about how to be a leader and how to motivate others for mission through this program. The first step is to ask: “What is the mission and to whom will it serve?” Jesus did this as he commissioned the disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Their mission was to make disciples and baptize. My community’s mission was to distribute necessities to those in need. Little did we know that it would turn into so much more.

To accomplish this mission, we needed to equip and send disciples into the world. As the idea grew, members passionate about serving others formed a community. The meetings

began with prayer inviting the Spirit to be active in the work of this community. Ideas, plans and executing those plans were discussed. Individual gifts were identified and celebrated.

Necessities for Neighbors is an example of a faithful community of believers coming together with a missional focus to serve others. It’s a practical example of Lutheran vocation at work in the world—volunteers are teachers, doctors, housewives, grandparents, confirmation students, mechanics, bankers, lawyers and businessmen. Members of Peace donate money or buy items. All ages participate. The gifts they bring include hospitality, organization, communication and physical strength. Recently other Lutheran churches have become involved by gathering items and providing volunteers.

My experiences with this program are life lessons to empower others. Naming the mission and helping others to identify their passions and gifts is crucial. The Spirit works in glorious ways through our hands. I’ve also learned to be expectant of the many different opportunities to evangelize to others. Allowing people to speak to the way their identity has been changed or shaped allows for community with deep roots in the gospel. “God’s work. Our hands.” is alive and well at Peace.

Necessities for Neighbors is now under the umbrella of Charis Ministry Partners, a nonprofit of 13 ELCA congregations in Sioux Falls. Charis, which means “grace” in Greek, also operates the Food to You Mobile Food Pantry and Healthy Rides ministries. To help, contact pastorbetsey@peacelutheran.com. □

Author bio:

Pesce, a member of Peace Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, serves as a chaplain at Avera McKennan Hospital. She received a master’s degree in congregational and community care from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., in December 2013.

South Dakota



The quilters of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Spearfish, get ready for Women of the ELCA Thankoffering/Quilt Sunday.

Quilting for a purpose

By Kris Garlick

Of course, they quilt—but there's so much more to this sew-n-sew story.

A group of women, whose average age is 80-something, has made thousands of quilts. And as their ages go up, the ministry that has met weekly for more than 60 years in the basement of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Spearfish, is not slowing down. On the contrary, they are gearing up for the 75th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally—that is after they patch up the Norwegian Julefest this weekend and send a truckload to Lutheran World Relief (LWR) before year's end.

Quilter Ann Sogge has been with the OSLC Quilters since 1970. She said she was hooked by the group's original mission of giving to LWR since she has a heart to give to children who are in ill health and those in need.

This year alone the 25 quilters have created nearly 800 quilts. The numbers are astonishing, and the ministry is—well, it's a God thing.

For a baptismal gift, babies receive a small quilt usually sewn by Alice Horton, 93. Wrapped in God's love, the quilt is a reminder of their special day and the blessing it brings.

Quilts are also donated to local agencies that support children, youth camps and to Pine Ridge relief efforts. Other quilts are sold with funds donated to local charities.

The elevator at Our Savior's is a prime example of what ladies late in life can do. The \$16,000 project was funded

solely by their needle and thread efforts.

Ella Schloe has led efforts to take the quilts to the masses—Sturgis Rally vending at the Spearfish Senior Center and stepping out to the Downtown Fridays Block Parties. "I enjoy sewing," she said. "The quilters are devoted to giving. ... And the camaraderie when we get together is very important to me socially."

Others concur, saying the fellowship is important to them. Lots of laughter drowns out the noise of the sewing machines.

"Then to see what these ladies can do in a couple hours—it's so very useful," said Dora Jean Garlick.

Recently, Barbara Gauger paired up with a friend who has Parkinson's disease to make knitted lap robes. She wanted her friend to maintain usefulness and steady the tremor of her hands, so her friend knits the squares and Barbara crochets them together.

A useful ministry it is.

"Yes, it's a good feeling knowing you are doing something useful and worthwhile and using recycled material," Norma Job added. □

Author bio:

Garlick is a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Spearfish.

For more information about the OSLC Quilters, contact 605-642-3715.

Center offers training to musicians



Over the past couple of decades, worship practices have changed and musical repertoire has expanded in our church. This has brought blessings and challenges to Lutheran congregations.

The blessings include new perspectives and a more generous welcome of

people who bring a wider variety of gifts. But it also has challenged many talented worship leaders who are now expected to be proficient in other music styles. Equally challenging is the experience of others who might bring broad and culturally connected musical abilities but know little about the theology or history of our worship traditions.

The Center for Worship & Music Studies was created to train musicians and worship planners, embracing *all* the musical gifts of God's people. With initial support from the Minneapolis Area, Southwestern Minnesota and South Dakota synods, the center was launched in 2013 with Lutheran composer and church musician Jay Beech as its director.

The center's mission lists three primary objectives:

- Preparing musicians and others for planning and leading thoughtful and vibrant worship.
- Equipping them to teach and mentor others.
- Training and supporting them in guiding their communities in the discernment of their worship practices.

The center will:

- Offer biblical, theological and worship studies.
- Develop and improve skills through direct instruction and contextual learning in the areas of management, worship leadership and musical ability, both personal and for directing choirs, bands and other ensembles.
- Expand awareness of repertoire and increasing capacity in multiple musical genres.
- Provide training in current and new worship-related technologies.
- Create an online network for sharing experiences, resources and ideas.

Curriculum is being developed for classes that will begin this fall. Face-to-face and distance learning opportunities will be available. The center hopes to serve those doing this important work professionally, avocationally and on a

volunteer basis in every imaginable congregational context. Individuals will be able to enroll in a single class or short-term intensive, or complete the full curriculum for certification. All offerings qualify for continuing education hours for rostered leaders in the South Dakota Synod.

The center's Curriculum Development Team is eager to receive input about the offerings that will be available, as well as various methods of delivery. Submit your thoughts at www.worshipandmusic.org/feedback.

One example of a short-term intensive course was the workshop "Composing Music for the Congregation" on Nov. 8, 2014. Composers Larry Olson, Ken Medema, Susan Palo Cherwein and Beech presented on specific areas and experiences of composing church/worship music. Several participants also shared their original work and had it reviewed by the presenters.

"This was an exciting day! Not only did we meet people who love what they do, and are gracious and knowledgeable, but we got to share information back and forth," said Christy Kimball, South Dakota Synod Council member and music director of Trinity Lutheran Church, Vermillion. "Closing the day with compositions submitted by people in attendance was just the way to end. We have so many talented people around here! Getting feedback was so helpful."

Bishop Dave Zellmer and the Synod Council recognized the need for this ministry, giving both their blessing and a financial gift. It would not have been possible to create this organization without that support.

The center's board of directors, including the Rev. John Christopherson of First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, is now working to establish ongoing sources of funding for this ministry. Individual gifts and bequests are being sought, as are grants from congregations, their foundations and many other sources.

Beech will be the guest musician and worship leader at the South Dakota Synod's 2015 assembly in Rapid City. He is eager to visit about the center and will have more information about course offerings. In the meantime, visit www.worshipandmusic.org for more information. □





2015 South Dakota Synod Assembly

May 29-30

Calvary Lutheran Church, Rapid City

Theme: "Listen God Is Calling: Never Be The Same"



Guest speaker:

The Rev. Robin Steinke, president of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Steinke came to Luther as president in June 2014. She was the first woman in the seminary's 145-year history to be named to the position. Prior to coming to Luther, Steinke was the dean of the seminary and professor of theological ethics and public life

at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, where she served from 1999.

Steinke is known for her strategic leadership and passion for sharing the gospel. She is involved in a number of important church and academic initiatives. She is currently co-chairing the national ELCA Theological Education Advisory Council that is evaluating and exploring the future of theological education. Steinke also serves as the ELCA Representative to the Lutheran World Federation Council and chairs its Endowment Fund.



Guest musician and worship leader:

Jay Beech, director of The Center for Worship & Music Studies, Minneapolis.

As a composer, Beech has the ability to bring the biblical narrative to life in a deeply meaningful and relevant way.

Seeking to express both the holiness and the compassion of God, his appreciation for the paradoxical nature of life and faith makes his music truly unique.

His published works include hymns, liturgies, camp songs, musicals and anthems that are sung each week in congregations throughout the U.S.

Beech's musical vocabulary ranges effortlessly from blues to ballad, from hymn to funky jazz. Always surrounded by outstanding musicians, a performance or worship service with Beech will be a truly inspiring experience.