

# Lifetogether

Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish

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## Unity vs. Uniformity

Unity implies diversity; uniformity eliminates it.  
 Unity makes us one; uniformity lends to making us the same.  
 Unity creates an organism; uniformity craves organization.  
 Unity combines and includes; uniformity confines and works to exclude.  
 Leaders promote unity; tyrants impose uniformity.  
 Unity springs from conviction; uniformity is brought about by coercion.  
 Unity respects individuality; uniformity eradicates it.  
 A bouquet of flowers gets its beauty NOT from uniformity, but from unity.  
 Nature is not uniform, but a wondrous unity!  
 SO, why do people sacrifice a profound unity for the sake of a superficial uniformity?

*(Msgr. Walter Niebrzydowski, November 14, 2001)*

An interesting dialog takes place between Jesus and the disciple John in the Gospel of Mark. This short passage points out the disciple's desire for uniformity and Jesus call to unity – "John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.'"<sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.'<sup>40</sup> Whoever is not against us is for us.<sup>41</sup> For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.'" (Mark 9:38-41)

So, what is Christian unity? And, is it really all that important for the church? The Apostle Paul would say that these things are essential:

- ✠ The unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3, 1 Cor. 12:13) This unites the church so that there can be one body. There is one church, the universal church...
- ✠ The unity of faith (Eph. 4:5) There is one gospel and one way to embrace the gospel, that is by faith...
- ✠ The unity of love or charity. Those who are united in Christ are also united with each other in love, so that they may be charitable to each other, which is referred to as "the bond of perfectness." (Col. 3:14)
- ✠ The unity of hope (Eph. 4:4) The unity of the thing hoped for, a heavenly inheritance...

In the various cultures of today, there seems to be less and less tolerance for diversity. In a number of conversations over the past year, I have heard the church being accused of giving in to the culture. After spending time in discernment, I have come to the conclusion that this is a true statement. The church is caving into a lower cultural value that is infiltrating countless institutions across the United States, regardless of socio-economic factors. The church is modeling the culture with less and less tolerance for diversity and more and more desire for uniformity... Is this what the Gospels, New Testament and Jesus Christ call us to? What will OUR proclamation and witness be?

Thanks for reading.  
 Gordy

## Walsburg Council Highlights

**T**he Walsburg Church Council met on Wednesday, August 4, 2010, at 8 p.m. at the church. Meeting highlights appear below. Minutes will be posted on the narthex bulletin board after they have been approved at the September meeting. Members present: Dennis Peterson, Don Nelson, Roger Sundgren, Christopher Deetjen, Jamie Hageman, Travis Hageman, Cindy Kulp, Carl Larson, Gary Hargrave, Debbie Hagenmaier. Also present: Rita Nelson, treasurer

July meeting minutes were approved.

The financial report was received as presented. The general fund has a positive balance due to a couple of Sundays where large offerings were received, as well as fewer expenses in July. Council approved prepaying 2,500 gallons of propane at \$1.45 per gallon. This is 10 cents off the regular price.

### Hearing of Visitors:

Beverly Sundgren reported an additional \$70 had been received for Kenny Neilson.

Jessie Sundgren suggested that memorial fund interest money could be used to purchase a dehumidifier for the church basement. Jessie will work with Christopher Deetjen to purchase the dehumidifier.

### Committee Reports

**Education** – Terry Peterson presented a vacation Bible School report. Twenty students, 8 student leaders, and 11 helpers attended VBS. Students and staff collected \$100 for Heifer International. Linda Toomire purchased materials for nursing home projects made during VBS. Cindy Kulp reported Sunday school will resume on September 12. She will be meeting with Linda to plan the ice cream social on August 29.

**Church Property** – Christopher Deetjen reported a church grounds clean-up will be scheduled in mid-September. Church and Memorial Hall entry doors need repairs. Carl Larson will check with Cindy Olson to get a recommendation for these repairs.

**Parsonage** – The septic system needs to be pumped. Roger Sundgren fixed the pipes and the broken piece that comes up out of ground.

**Finance Committee** – Delores Grater has expressed a desire to step down as special accounts treasurer. An announcement will be published in the bulletin, and anyone interested in being the special accounts treasurer will be asked to contact a finance committee member (Dennis Peterson, Debbie Hagenmaier, Cindy Kulp, Jamie Hageman).

Debbie Hagenmaier presented the affiliation task force report. More than 50 people attended the open forum to learn about Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). The next forum will be August 22, with Pastor Mike Peck presenting on behalf of the ELCA. Council viewed the video recording of the LCMC presentation.

August and September communion ushers were announced. Dennis Peterson will find someone from Walsburg to be a greeter at the Leonardville Hullabaloo community worship service on August 15.

The next council meeting is Wednesday, September 1, 2010, at 8 p.m.

### Walsburg Volunteers Needed!

Each Saturday morning in September Walsburg Church is responsible for working the Food Pantry at Riley United Presbyterian Church. Please contact Jane Larson if you are willing and able. We also are asked to contribute to the food collection especially this month. Following is a list of needed items:

Spam, tuna, crackers, pork and beans, chili beans, sloppy joe sauce, Hamburger or Tuna Helper, sugar flour, dry noodles, peanut butter, canned soup, canned vegetables, instant hot cereals, dry cold cereals, macaroni, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, canned stew with meat, canned fruit, mac and cheese, instant potatoes. Any other items you would like to donate are appreciated. A basket for donation is placed in the narthex of the church.

*Life Together is published monthly by the Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish. Deadline for calendar and other items is the last Monday of each month.*

### Editor/Parish Coordinator

Shelly Burklund  
Cell 785-532-9853  
Home 785-468-3370  
sburklun@ksu.edu

### Pastoral leaders

Gordon and Sonja Sandquist  
Home 785-293-5603  
Gordy cell: 785-747-7831  
Sonja cell: 785-747-8084  
gsandquist001@luthersem.edu  
sonja80465@aol.com

### Parish Information

Olsburg 468-3500  
Walsburg 293-5367

# September birthdays and anniversaries

**If you know of a member whose birthday is not listed, please contact the church office.**

## Birthdays

- 3 Kristin Bohnenblust (W)
- 4 Shirley Strauss (W)
- 4 Jeff Howland (O)
- 7 Codie Webster (O)
- 8 Ramona Johnston (O)
- 9 Kari Holt (O)
- Amber Befort (O)
- 10 Shelly Burklund (O)
- Richard Strauss (W)
- 11 Jeanette Alstatt (W)
- 12 Gevon Holt (O)
- 15 LeRoy Bohnenblust (W)
- Monica Schultz (W)
- 18 Christen Miller (O)
- 19 Brian Clifton (O)
- 20 Joshua Hagenmaier (W)

- Morgan Vargo (O)
- 21 Rachael Peterson (W)
- 22 Steven Johnson (O)
- Jared Fronce (O)
- 25 Mylene Davis (O)
- Chris Deetjen (W)
- 26 Ernest Grater (W)
- 28 Ray Miller (W)
- Donald Cobler (O)
- 30 Kraig Kasselmann (O)

## Anniversaries

- 1 Dallas and Mylene Davis (O)
- 4 Alan and Kristin Bohnenblust (W)
- 5 David and Jeannette Pultz (W)
- 12 Gregg and Alice Marie Gibson (O)
- Rick and Irene Johnson (O)
- 14 Rick and Jane Gibbs (O)
- 15 Dale and Connie Larson (O)
- 16 Bart and Norma Coutermarsh (W)
- 19 Carl and Jane Larson (W)

- 20 O.J. and Monica Schultz (W)
- 26 Ernest and Marjorie Grater (W)
- Alan and Kim Nelson (W)
- 28 Mitch and Susan Adams (O)
- 30 Kent and Mary Nelson (O)

## Pictorial Directories

Pictorial Directories are in. If you had your picture taken by Olan Mills you are welcome to take a free directory and write your name on the notebook so that we know that you have received your copy. We don't have a lot of extras so please be frugal in our honor system. If you noticed a mistake, please let us know so we can contact the company.

## Members in service this month

**T**hank you to these members for their service to the parish during September.

**\*If you are unable to be present for your assignment, please find a replacement and contact the church office so the correct name will appear in the bulletin.**

### Walsburg

**Ushers:** Carl Larson, Gene Henry, Garrett Olson, Jacob Hagenmaier

**Communion Ushers:** Christopher Deetjen, Cindy Kulp, Carl Larson, Don Nelson, Debbie Hagenmaier

**Greeters:** LeRoy and Claryce Bohnenblust, Carl and Jane Larson, Gene and Mary Kay Henry

**\*Lay Assistants:** 9/5 Kim Nelson; 9/12 Jamie Hageman; 9/19 Alicia Scofield; 9/26 Carol Deetjen

**Flowers for Church:** Volunteers (Please contact Altar Committee)

**Altar Committee:** Lynne Berry, Alicia Scofield

### Olsburg

**Ushers:** Jeff Howland, Bill Monser, Mitch Adams

**Communion Assistants:** 9/5 Joyce Cantrell; 9/19 Laura Clifton

**\*Acolytes:** 9/5 Makayla Vargo, 9/12 Monique Sandquist, 9/19 Nick Cooper, 9/26 Shane Adams

**\*Lay Assistants:** 9/5 Lee Cantrell; 9/12 Luellen Kasselmann; 9/19 Monique Sandquist; 9/26 Nick Cooper

**Altar Committee:** Shelly Burklund, April Brenner

**Kitchen Committee September/October:** Laura Clifton

**Funeral Meals Committee serving on a rotating basis:**

Committee 1—Darlene Larson, Luellen Kasselmann

Committee 2—Mary Rosell, Ramona Johnston

Committee 3—Mary Lou Gibbs, Jackie Frintrup

## 2010 Senior Fair

Plan now to attend the 2010 Senior Fair on Tuesday, September 21—the event will be out of this world! Family caregivers and seniors from across north central Kansas will gather at Salina's Bicentennial Center to celebrate fearless living and "To Oldly Go Where No One Has Gone Before!"

The North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging sponsors this full day of workshops, exhibits, speakers, and entertainment geared especially for seniors and caregivers in our region.

The cost for this fun-filled day is just \$15—and includes a great lunch with friends new and old! After Sept. 10, registration costs \$20 and must be paid the day of the fair. Respite scholarships may be available. For more info or to register, call 1-800-432-2703 or 785-776-9294.

## **Synod News and Updates: Synod to Host Hearings on the Draft Social Statement on Genetics**

The Central States Synod will be hosting two hearings for members to comment on the text of the Draft Social Statement on Genetics

September 14  
St. Andrew Lutheran Church  
Columbia, MO

September 15  
Lindquist Hall  
Bethany College

Both hearings will run from 7:00 – 8:30 PM

*This hearing is a key part in the development of this social statement. Representatives of both the synod and the Genetics Task Force will be present. A synod representative will be present to record all comments made by participants. This record of comments will be submitted to the task force and considered as they revise the text for 2011.*

*'It is important that we have as many members as possible participating in this step of the process.' Stated Bishop Mansholt of the Central States Synod. 'This participation is part of how we develop social statements in this church. The hearing is a chance to both speak and to listen.'*

*The draft social statement was written by members of the task force. Since 2005, the task force has been involved in discussions, panels, and consultations with individuals, ranging from scientists to theologians and biblical scholars. Embryonic stem cells, cloning, genetically engineered food are some of the issues highlighted in the draft.*

*The comments made at the synodical hearings are critical to the task force in the*

*development of the proposed social statement to be brought to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. Final responsibility for changes to and adoption of the text of the proposed social statement is the responsibility of the churchwide assembly.*

*A copy of the Draft Social Statement on Genetics may be ordered by calling a special resource line at 800-638-3522 ext. 2996. It is also downloadable at [www.elca.org/genetics](http://www.elca.org/genetics).*

*If you have questions regarding your synodical hearing, please call the synod office.  
(re-printed from the Synod Newsletter)*

## **Lutheran Malaria Initiative**

By resolution passed at the Synod Assembly, each family unit in the Central States Synod is encouraged to consider giving \$10 toward the "Nothing but Nets" program.

For information and to donate, go to [www.lutheranmalaria.org](http://www.lutheranmalaria.org).

## **Adult Education**

### **S.A.L.T. (Stewards Attending to Life Together)**

### **Walsburg Monday Night Bible Study Monday, September 20 (we will not gather on Labor Day)**

Meet in Memorial Hall with your bibles.

Book of Faith: Exodus

Gather twice a month with Pastor Gordy to explore the stories of faith through conversation and in-depth exploration. The group will be studying the last three sessions that deal with the material in the book of Exodus.

Session Four: "Let My People Go! How Does God Lead and Provide for the Needs of All?" (Exodus 14 – 16)

Session Five: "Laying Down the Law: What Does God Expect From Us?" (Exodus 20-21)

Session Six: "Don't Have a Cow! How Does God Deal with Those Who Fail to meet Expectation?" (Exodus 32)

**Olsburg Sunday Morning Adult Education**  
**Sunday Mornings beginning on**  
**September 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM**  
**The coffee will be hot and sign up to**  
**bring goodies to share!**

***Biblical Stewardship: Our Duty and Delight***

With DVD appearances of Dr. Mark Allan Powell  
Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, OH

*Stewardship means – “belonging to God” – all that we are and all that we have comes from God. We are grateful to God for it all, and responsible to God for how we use it. There is a connection between stewardship and spirituality: generous giving as a spiritual discipline helps us to grow in Christ.*

*“Duty and delight” are both motivating factors for giving – doing what we ought to do as responsible church members, and making cheerful sacrifices out of love for God.*

*The overarching theme of this course is, ‘This is good news!’ The biblical message of financial stewardship is:*

- *Promising and encouraging;*
- *Not (usually) guilt inducing;*
- *A way of life;*

*For many of us, just may be the way to a better life.*

*This brand new course features seven DVD sessions:*

*Session One: Belonging to God*

*Session Two: What is a Steward*

*Session Three: Treasures and Hearts*

*Session Four: Motives for Giving*

*Session Five: Duty and Delight*

*Session Six: Cheerful Sacrifices*

In addition to view this comprehensive course, we will be using many of the tools available to us through the *LifeKeys* Gift discernment program to get a look at how God gifts us through our life gifts and spiritual gifts for the sake of the world. We will look at Myers Brigg Type Indicator, spiritual gifts, and values. These all come together to shape a full picture with how God shapes us and sends us to the world as God’s bright light for others.

***Life together***

**Olsburg Monday Night Adult Education**  
Gather in the Pastor’s Study on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>  
Monday  
September 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>  
4:30 – 6:30 PM

***Draft Social Statement on Genetics***

As a group we will review and discuss the recent draft on genetics that is in process throughout the larger church. The draft contains the biblical background, theological implications and social realities that call for the use of ethics as we consider both the joyful advantages and consequences of scientific advancements. As a group we will respectfully engage in moral deliberation in an effort to discern our own sense of ethics concerning the field of genetics at play in our world in the future. Our conversation will be guided by excerpts from the Nova Series called, “Cracking the Code” which highlights the work of the Genome Project. At the end of each draft statement, each person will have the opportunity to submit a reflection of the draft for the committee to review and consider as it prepares the final copy of this social statement that will go before the national assembly next summer.

What is a social statement?

*ELCA social statements are teaching and policy documents that assist members in discernment for action and in forming judgments on social issues. They also set policy for this church, guide its advocacy and aid its life as a public church. Social statements are developed through an extensive process of deliberation involving the whole church, and are adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA churchwide assembly.*

**Please contact Pastor Sonja if you wish to participate so we can order enough copies of the statement. All are welcome to participate in this one month study and response. If you cannot be at this study and wish to participate, please consider attending the synodical hearing at Bethany on September 15 at 7:00 PM in Lindquist Hall. All responses to the draft statement are due to the national office by October 15, 2010.**

**Confirmation for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Youth  
Wednesday, September 8, 6:30 PM at  
Olsburg Fellowship Hall: Orientation /  
Parent Meeting / 1<sup>st</sup> Bible Lesson  
Wednesday, September 22, 6:30 PM at  
Olsburg Fellowship Hall: Lesson 2 and 3**

It is that time of year again. Confirmation for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade youth will begin in September. We will start the year off with a brief orientation followed by a parent meeting while the kids engage in their first lesson on Genesis 1.

Changes this year include a new kind of schedule. We will be meeting twice a month from 6:30 – 8:00 PM at Olsburg unless notified of a different site (and there is a different schedule during Lent). Those that live in Walsburg area can meet at the parsonage at around 6:00 PM. Pick-up in Randolph will happen around 6:15 PM. Everyone gets returned by 8:15 / 8:30 PM. We may go up to Marysville on occasion to meet at St. Mark's Lutheran where Pastor Jeremie and the boys from Valley Heights worship and we may on occasion meet at Walsburg (especially during Lent). In addition to different time and location, we will not be offering a meal prior to Confirmation. Most everyone will be able to be at home before arrival to Confirmation. This is simply a cost and time-saving measure. Parents are welcome to make other arrangements if necessary. We are also in conversation with some other churches to attend a retreat at Camp Tohma Shinga, October 15-17 during which we will cover the stories of Moses (4 total). More information will follow as it becomes available to us! Mark your calendars now!

This is the year of learning the Bible. We will have 30 sessions to cover both the Old and New Testaments. On most nights, we will cover two lessons. We will be using the "Here We Stand" Curriculum alongside the *Lutheran Study Bible*. All students will receive these two books. Those that are able to make a donation to cover the costs are welcome to make checks payable to the "Olsburg – Walsburg Lutheran Parish." The costs for the books are \$30.

If you are a non-traditional student (older than 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) and would like to attend classes and be confirmed, you are welcome. We can find a place where you both fit in and use your gifts of age and wisdom to be a leader as you learn. We discourage students who are younger because the material that we deal with involves abstract thinking skills that often don't develop until 7<sup>th</sup> grade.



**OLSBURG  
COMMUNITY SUNDAY  
SCHOOL**

*...Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these. And he put his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left."*

Matthew 19:14-15

**Who:** Children age 3 to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Adult classes are also offered.

**Curriculum: It's New! YEA!** - This year the children will discover God's love and interact with the Bible in a way that helps them connect to God, Jesus, the church, family and others. The lessons will contain activities that children will enjoy sharing with others.

**When:** Classes begin September 12 class time is from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Where:** Fellowship Hall at Olsburg Lutheran Church

**Why:** To serve as an extension of the wonderful Vacation Bible School and to provide tools to our children so they are able to learn about God's love.

**Everyone is invited to join us for our regular worship service at 9 a.m.**

## **Candidacy Endorsement**

During this past month, Pastor Gordy prepared a lengthy essay and went before the Candidacy Committee for an interview. The purpose of the candidacy committee is to help the church prepare candidates for ministry in realms that work in conjunction with their theological education at seminary. They are elected from the wider church body during synod assemblies and are tasked with knowing the candidates and discerning with them as they are prepared as leaders for the church. The first step in candidacy is “entrance” during which you discern your path of ministry. Both Gordy and myself have been “entranced.” The second step is “endorsement” meaning that the candidate has enough skills, education, leadership ability and relative health to begin practicing with a congregation under the supervision of a seasoned pastor. This past month, Gordy was “endorsed” and will begin the internship phase of his process. Because he is already approved and serving at his internship site - Walsburg and Olsburg, not much will change. He will meet with his supervision pastor each month while he continues to take classes that will complete the education portion. The final step will be gradation and finally “ordination.” Congratulations, Gordy.

## **Seminary Update**

Seminary Class will be in full swing in September.

Sonja will be taking two classes online:

*Foundations of Pastoral Care:* An investigation of the resources, methodologies, and approaches to pastoral care ministry on the basis of a biblical and theological understanding of God and human experience. Pastoral care issues are addressed in relationship to the multiplicity of contexts in which ministry occurs.

*Education I:* Students explore three dimensions of Christian education: identifying the congregation as a learning community, equipping people for their teaching/learning tasks, and connecting the learning community with vocation in the world.

Gordy will be taking two classes online:

*Synoptic Gospels:* A study of the gospel of Matthew, exploring its structure, theology, and teachings within its ancient setting. Attention is given to its theological and ecclesial significance today, particularly for preaching, and its understandings of mission and making disciples. The study of this gospel is preceded by a general introduction to the synoptic gospels. Prerequisite: LG1200 Greek or equivalent for all MDiv and MA-New Testament students.

*Ethics 1 – Introduction to Ethics:* An overview of various ways that Christians make moral arguments and decisions. The focus is on methods and models important for moral discourse and the relationship of theological ethics and its biblical, historical, and confessional sources to insights from philosophy and other disciplines.

## What is a CASA<sup>®</sup> Volunteer?

A CASA volunteer is a Court-Appointed Special Advocate<sup>®</sup>, who is appointed by a judge to provide consistent and caring support on behalf of an innocent child who has been the victim of child abuse or neglect.

## The Role of a CASA Volunteer

You don't have to be a lawyer or social worker to be a volunteer; you just have to be an adult willing to stand up for an abused or neglected child. As a CASA volunteer, you'll receive training from professionals to get you familiar with the court and child welfare systems and other important aspects of our work as child advocates. You'll be given the tools and personal support you need to aid in your search for as much information as possible about a child in order to achieve an objective viewpoint of his/her welfare. You'll review the case to become familiar with the background, gather new data and then develop a report with your recommendations to the judge regarding your CASA child's future.

## Who We Need Most

We need dedicated men and women who care about children and are willing to confidently stand up for them and make a difference in their lives. In the past few years, our program served an average of 147 children per year and 26% of these children were African-American. However, less than 5% of our volunteers are African-American. In addition, with 50% of the children served by our program being boys, we have a special need for more men to stand up and be counted as everyday heroes and role models in the lives of these future men.

## How Do You Qualify As A CASA?

- Ability to commit for at least a year
- Willingness to interview a variety of sources and remain objective in your recommendations
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Willingness to participate in an in-depth training class
- Ability to pass a background check

## How To Get Involved

For more information, visit our web site at <http://casa.manhattanks.org>, email us at [sunfcasa@interkan.net](mailto:sunfcasa@interkan.net) or call our program at 785-537-6367.

**There is a child waiting for your voice.**

## Answers for Older Kansans

Come to an AOK workshop near you to learn how to help older relatives, friends and neighbors when it is time to come home from the hospital. Learn about financial tools to protect assets for well spouses, how to look out for Medicare fraud and how the Affordable Care Act encourages better hospital discharge planning.

There are two workshops being held in this area. Both workshops are free, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and lunch is provided!

**Oct. 13—MINNEAPOLIS**  
**The Golden Wheel**  
**114 Concord St.**  
**Register by Oct. 6**

**Oct. 29—MARION**  
**Marion Senior Center**  
**309 S. 3rd St.**  
**Register by Oct. 21**

*Topics for the workshops are:*

- Transitioning home from the hospital
- Protecting assets to provide for the well spouse
- Medicare fraud and scams
- What health care reforms means for Medicare and seniors

**To register send your Name, Address, City Zip, Phone number ant the date you wish to attend to:**  
**AOK Registration**  
**Area Agency on Aging**  
**401 Houston St.**  
**Manhattan, KS 66502**

**OR**  
**Call 1-800-432-2703**



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

On a recent morning walk I reflected upon familiar words from Ecclesiastes, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, NRSV). As I walked, I prayed and pondered about this time in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It is my prayer that we use this time for discerning and engaging; for repenting and reconciling; for restraint but not timidity; and for rejoicing.

#### **A Time for Discerning and Engaging**

Throughout the ELCA I hear people asking, "Is my voice heard? Will my voice be respected as we seek together to discern God's purpose for us?" The answer is yes. Nevertheless, people of deep faith and a desire to be part of this church wonder: Do we mean it when we say we can preach, teach and hold divergent views on sexuality and be full participants in the ELCA's life and witness? Again, the answer is yes.

My confident "yes" is predicated upon our shared commitment to be engaged together in discernment. This discernment is hard work. It must be grounded in the witness of the Scriptures and the Confessions, and it needs the voices of all the baptized. It calls for the Holy Spirit's guidance and our prayerful, disciplined and respectful listening to one another.

Even more, the source for my confident "yes" is God's gracious "yes" to us, spoken through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The "yes" of Jesus empowers us to be passionately engaged. It frees us to ask questions, have difficult conversations and uncover differences and tensions. It calls each of us to be everyday evangelists, discerning together what the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ means for the world and for our common life.

Let our shared commitment be that our discerning together always will serve our proclamation of Jesus Christ in word and deed and our engagement in God's mission for the life of the world.

#### **A Time for Repenting and Reconciling**

The most powerful moment in the recent assembly of The Lutheran World Federation occurred when Lutherans asked for forgiveness from God and from Mennonites for the violence done to Anabaptist Christians in Reformation times and through the continuing legacies in Lutheran teachings. This public act of repentance, with many delegates on their knees, was a powerful witness to the healing of wounds in Christ's body, the church.

With tears in our eyes, we heard promises of God's mercy in Christ and words of forgiveness from Mennonite sisters and brothers as we received and shared God's gift of forgiveness and healing.

This experience of reconciliation is underscored for me in the fifth chapter of 2 Corinthians: the powerful announcement that if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. This new creation rises from Jesus, who died rather than be in the sin-accounting business.

The implication for us of the gospel's transforming power is that we become ambassadors for Christ. God has entrusted to each of us the message and ministry of reconciliation.

As yet another Lutheran church body forms, we must ask how this separation in the body of Christ will serve the ministry and message of reconciliation entrusted to us by God.

The ELCA has and will continue reaching out to others for the sake of the gospel and serving our neighbor. Standing together, we are known as a church that rolls up its sleeves and solves problems, the church that is catalyst, convener and bridge builder. Our strong ecumenical relationships and global partnerships testify to that commitment. Yet before the ELCA can undertake any such efforts with a new Lutheran church body, I believe we must commit to obey the commandment against bearing false witness and commit to live its meaning in every setting, both private and public: "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light" (The Small Catechism, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 1161).

#### **A Time for Restraint but not Timidity**

We live in a world that is plagued by incivility, willful misunderstanding and hurtful caricatures of those with whom one disagrees. Let us declare that such behaviors will stop with us. There is room in this church for lively conversations and disagreements about questions of faith and life. There is room in this church for vigorous dialogue that witnesses to faith without rushing to judgment and closing off discussion.

Let us be restrained in our judgments and speak charitably with and about one another. Let us not be timid as we boldly proclaim Jesus Christ and participate in God's healing of the world. Let us generously, faithfully and courageously respond to the groaning of the creation and the cries of humanity.

#### **A Time for Rejoicing**

Even in the midst of great challenges in the economy and in the church, we can rejoice because the ministry in which we are engaged is a ministry of God's mercy and reconciliation in Christ. Our ministry is not about us, our shortcomings or our problems, for we proclaim Jesus Christ. We rejoice in the forgiveness that God offers at the font and the table, in public proclamation and personal assurance. We celebrate the reconciliation from God that breaks down every dividing wall of hostility and unites humankind in the bonds of Christ. We delight in the promise of the new creation that God is bringing to life in Christ. We joyfully embrace the world and all its inhabitants in love and service. What a cause for rejoicing!

By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 75)

In God's grace,

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# Life together

**Olsburg-Walsburg Lutheran Parish  
12410 Union Road  
Leonardville, KS 66449-9617**

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## **NALC Presentation at Walsburg**

The Walsburg Affiliation Task Force will host its third and final open forum on Sunday, September 12 at 7 p.m. at the church. Information about the new North American Lutheran Church (NALC) will be shared in a DVD presentation.

Everyone is encouraged to attend to learn more about the NALC, constituted in August 2010. This forum will follow the same format as previous meetings with representatives from Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and the ELCA.

The NALC will shape its life around four key attributes: Christ-centered, mission-driven, traditionally-grounded, and congregationally-focused. The NALC website, [www.thenalc.org](http://www.thenalc.org), describes these attributes as follows:

### **Christ-Centered**

We confess the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. We affirm the authority of the Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged" ( Formula of Concord ). We accept the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses to the Word of God.

### **Mission-Driven**

We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples — in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world — must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

### **Traditionally-Grounded**

We affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with Scripture, particularly the office of the ministry and the tradition of worship under Word and Sacrament. We seek dialogue and fellowship with other Lutheran churches and with faithful Christians of other confessions.

### **Congregationally-Focused**

We strive to be a church body that is organized to facilitate the ministries of local congregations in a posture of servanthood and a spirit of partnership, through the provision of resources, connections and information.