

Zion Lutheran Church • Fairbanks, Alaska

Pastor's Monday • July 17, 2007

Prelude – the Baumgarten family arrived early this morning. When we called them at 9:10, they were already at their new home. As this message goes out, the movers are moving their household goods into their home. We did not have an opportunity to do a group welcome at the church but everyone has the opportunity to meet them this weekend at the church picnic (4 p.m.) and the installation service at 7 p.m.

Pastor's Monday on Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Houston, TX The 63 Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church – Mo Synod

This is day four of the convention which opened on Saturday afternoon with a wonderful opening service in the huge convention center in downtown Houston. President Kieschnick preached on the convention theme – One Message, CHRIST! Much of the convention is organized around the Synod's Ablaze effort to reach 100 million people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ before the year 2017. 50 million of that goal has been assigned to those outside the United States. It was thrilling to hear how our sister churches, especially in India, are already reaching their part of the goal. It seems that in India part of being a Lutheran Christian is sharing their faith, talking about Jesus, often in situations that are unbelievable hostile or in situations in which witnessing carries with it the risk of being ostracized or worse. What an encouragement to me (and to us who lie in America) to witness to the faith in Jesus that saves!

I left Fairbanks just a week ago. The first four days in Houston I was attending the Board for Mission Services meeting of the LCMS. I was appointed to the Board the end of last year to fill the unexpired term of Warren Davis who had been elected as First Vice President of the Southern District. Since VPs of districts are considered elected officials of the Synod, Pastor Davis chose to give up his position on the BMS to take the position in his district. The term expires at this convention. I am on the ballot to be elected to the board, but it remains to be seen whether or not I will be elected. The great thing about the meeting last week was that it coincided with the gathering of all LCMS missionaries and their families from around the world for a week of fellowship, Bible Study, recommitment and fun. Talk about a group of people who have "that look" in their eye. Among those I had a chance to visit with were Tim and Heidi Norton and their two little children who serve in Guinea, Africa. Their service along with another missionary family, the Heine's and Ms. Hermann (a very close friend of Pam – and who in fact because of this trip back to the US was in Pam's wedding the week before!) have been through several life threatening situations due to political unrest and rebel insurgency in that part of Africa. Tim and Heidi are the son and daughter-in-law of Pastor Bill and Judy Norton. Judy was in Houston to help with care for missionary children, in fact, she ran the preschool program for the children which included her grandson Philip!

Last night I was an invited guest to the Military Chaplains Banquet. What is not well known is how our LCMS leadership at the highest levels has benefited from retired military leadership – both at the board level and at the administrative level. Those retired officers were front and center in celebrating the work of our 200+ military chaplains, 90 of which are now deployed on active status and serving in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. A few of those were with us and they and their work were honored and celebrated. Retired Army General (three star) Merle Freitag (his son Mark and family were members of Zion for three years including the 15 months that Mark and his battalion were deployed to Iraq) is now the CEO

of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. His speech was a stirring challenge to remind ourselves of what is happening in the Middle East and how we can be supportive of our troops.

Because of my brief time on the Board of Mission Services I have gotten to know the present and the previous two presidents of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. The presidents of both the LWML and the Lutheran Layman's League serve as ex officio members of the BMS! The newly elected president Jan Wendorf addressed the convention this morning immediately after opening devotions. Virginia Van Seagram, past president, is on the BMS in the middle of a six year term and the immediate past president Linda Reiser is on the ballot to be elected to the BMS. If she would be elected, the BMS would benefit from three of the most outstanding lay women who have demonstrated their commitment to mission outreach. All three of them are gifted, delightful and totally committed women. What a joy and privilege to get to know them.

But my heart is in Fairbanks, especially today as we get ready to welcome Joe and Cyndi and Madeline and Duncan to Fairbanks. I received an email from them yesterday with 8 pictures of their trip. From the pictures, it looks like they are having a great time. They were in Whitehorse Sunday Evening. From their letter: "...The scenery has been awe inspiring and the wildlife amazing....We're reminded as we drive of the glory of God's creation and, at the same time, we need to remind ourselves of that same creators love for us...." I am sorry that I won't be there today to welcome them, but from what I hear, there will be no lack of an enthusiastic welcome for them.

Golden Day's Parade on Saturday and Picnic on Sunday... I'm going ask Pam to add details about what is being planned for these two days along with details on how you can be involved.

My heart is heartbroken to hear of the drowning of the two year old in the Chena River. I will be preaching on John 9 this coming weekend – the chapter that begins with the question that begs the questions of God's place in a tragedy like this. Pray that the Holy Spirit gives me a message of hope and comfort for all of us who face those questions of why terrible things happen to God's children.

Pastor K

Parade/Water Distribution update:

Craig Robinson has been busy constructing the float; Jayne and Brooke Patterson are painting waves and doing lettering today. And the water bottle count has been climbing daily – too many to count but an estimated 3,500. LAMP volunteers have been labeling the bottles as they have time. Thank you LAMP volunteers! Pam is still looking for volunteers to help distribute water or walk beside the float – it is a great way to participate. To create a look of unity, we ask that those who participate wear either a blue or purple shirt. Contact Pam at dco@zionfairbanks.org or call 456-7660 to volunteer.

In your prayers, remember -

- the Hodges family, whose 20-year-old daughter died of a brain aneurysm;
- prayer of thanks for successful surgery for Ellie Raulston;
- Harris Shelton, Katie Harmon's godfather;
- Jerry Oliver, Dawn Harmon's uncle;
- Susan Labrenz, recovering from cancer surgery;

- Pat Weaver, diagnosed with lung cancer;
- Sarah Rogers, Homer, AK, with lung cancer;
- Ardell Pitcher, healing slowly from abdominal surgery;
- Anny Stark and her family in Germany, mourning the death of her husband Jonathan; (relative of Christine Brown)
- Almeda Witter's family as they mourn the death of her sister-in-law, Dolores Hardy;
- for the Gronewold family, continued healing for Phil Gronewold and Irene Lutterman; Kara's 19th birthday;
- Bill Whitesel, Seamus' grandfather, very ill and hospitalized;
- Kirstin Stolz, fighting lymphoma;
- Michael Steckel, beginning his Seminary education in St. Louis, and for his family, hoping soon to join him;
- the Baumgartens as they complete their journey to Alaska and prepare to begin their ministry here;
- for our Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod as they conclude their National Convention in Houston, TX this week;
- a prayer of thanks for Ruthe Peterson's healing and for Dennis' new prosthesis;
- for Brenda Byrd and her children after the tragic death of her husband David in an accident.