



## **NEWS FROM ROCKY MOUNTAIN:**

### **A DECADE OF MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TO THE WOMEN ON THE FRINGE**

New Beginnings is a synodically authorized Lutheran/Episcopal congregation worshipping behind the walls of Denver Women's Correctional Facility. They worship each Friday evening with Bible study at 6 and Holden Evening Prayer at 7 pm. Worship attendance is 50-60 each week.

DWCF is Colorado largest women's prison 900 women and it is the only maximum security prison for women in Colorado.

Lives are changed each week through the gifts of God being offered to the children of God. On Easter Sunday, New Beginnings baptized 9 women and welcomed them into the Lord's family.

"Pastor Emily lets us know this is just temporary, that we really can be somebody, that we are loved and celebrated."

"I look forward to Friday night all week so I can sing and praise God and there is light in my dark world." "

Last week when I was in seg and all alone in my cell I could hear the singing from here rising up to my cell and I felt apart of all of you...thank you! Sing loud you don't know who you are reaching with your voices of praise!"

### **LUTHERAN-EPISCOPAL MINISTRY PREPARES TO ORGANIZE OFFICIALLY**

Peace in Christ Episcopal-Lutheran Ministry is the result of the relationships that have grown between two independent denominational missions. In 2002, Elizabeth Lutheran Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) and Holy Innocents Episcopal Mission began sharing a pastor and a rented facility while maintaining separate worship services and governing councils.

Over the course of several years, with strong lay leadership and consistent pastoral direction, the two entities began to worship together, share education opportunities, and have their lay boards meet together. The result was a decision in late 2006 to choose one common name that represented the depth of the relationship that evolved between the two missions.

Peace in Christ functions as one congregation with dual denominational affiliations, even though in reality it is two distinct entities. One entity is Peace in Christ Lutheran SAWC, and the other is Peace in Christ Episcopal Mission, a special ministry of the Diocese of Colorado. The Financial Secretary records offerings as going to either the Episcopal or Lutheran side for denominational benevolence payments, but other than this distinction, Vicar/Pastor Steve Harten is the only person who can accurately state who is an

Episcopalian and who is a Lutheran. “We have reached a point where we are Christians first, denominational affiliation second,” states Hartten.

Peace in Christ worships by creating a blended service that draws from Episcopal and Lutheran resources. The form of worship and its components remain true to the historic mass, but the liturgy varies seasonally. The Governing Board (a combination of the Episcopal Bishop’s Committee and the Lutheran Church Council) agreed early on that it was important to worship using a blended liturgy, not to create a definitive blended liturgy.

As Peace in Christ continues to grow in numbers and outreach ministry, the congregation remains excited about its future. Members helped start a non-denominational, non-political assistance ministry in Elbert County, a ministry that laid the groundwork for the present community outreach center. It has a solid adult education ministry, where over 30 adults have completed a 30-week Divine Drama Bible Study. The ministry conducts fundraisers for area charities, often giving away the entire proceeds of the fundraiser. While money remains tight in this mission outpost, the congregation has learned the value of operating within God’s economy. “We receive what we need because we share with the larger community” says Hartten.

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

***Dr. Rocky Piro***

Greetings to all! As we transition from summer into autumn, there a number of transitions affecting the LERN network to note. A new editorial team is in place with this issue of LERNing; many thanks to John, Kenny, and Kim for their contribution to the newsletter. LERN will also be launching a

new webpage this fall and information will be sent out to you once it is up and running. Elaine Siemsen has put a lot of time and work into making this possible - our thanks to her! The Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations is also putting final touches on a new website. (At present, the old website is in an archive mode and still can be accessed for information.) Please check out these new and improved electronic resources at your earliest convenience.

During the summer, the board has had the opportunity to try another new electronic resource - an on-line LERN workspace. Thanks to the efforts of Russell Meyer, the workspace provides a place on the internet where LERN reps can exchange information, images, and articles with one another. You will be receiving details on how to access and use the workspace. You should also be receiving via email minutes from the Executive Board's monthly conference call meetings. Our secretary, Bill Sappenfield, deserves our thanks for setting-up his computer to send out mass mailings to the network, and for his quick turnaround in preparing the write-ups of each meeting. If you ever have questions or would like more information after receiving the board minutes, please contact me or your regional board member by phone or email.

A key development over the past couple months is the creation of a new ecumenical network for one of our full communition partners - the Presbyterian Church (USA). As this network takes form and shape, I would like to encourage LERN representatives to make themselves available to assist our Presbyterian colleagues in their work to advance the unity of the church. (Of note, the United Methodists are also looking into forming a network of ecumenical representatives as well.)

Much work is already underway to plan for

our next face-to-face gathering in Phoenix. Please check the webpage and upcoming issues of LERNing for information as it becomes available.

Peace.

## **Survey of Ecumenical Involvement**

This past summer, the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (ER) conducted a survey on ecumenical activities and involvement at the synodical and local levels. Initial results are being compiled and will be made available on ER's website this fall. If you were not able to participate in the initial survey, you will have an opportunity to provide your input before the end of the year - and are encouraged to do so, in order that we can have a fuller account of the types of ecumenical working going on in the life of the ELCA. Stay tuned for details on the initial survey results and how to take part in the next round.

## **L. A. R. C. O.**

### **“When Wittenberg, Canterbury, Rome, and Constantinople Meet Together”**

by: Pastor Kenny Bowen, Ecumenical Representative for Bishop Dean W. Nelson, Southwest California Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

During his time in leading our E. L. C. A., Bishop Herbert Chilstrom once pointed out that while Lutherans look to Wittenberg, Anglicans look to Canterbury, Roman Catholics look to Rome, and Orthodox look to Constantinople, all Christians look to Jerusalem, looking to the Cross of Jesus (paraphrased).

L. A. R. C. O. – an acronym representing Lutheran, Anglicans (Episcopal), Roman

Catholics, and Orthodox is a treat that has been occurring in the Greater Los Angeles area for over 25 years. Held during the Season of Lent at local retreat centers, both clergy and lay, gather together for times of prayer, learning, and fellowship.

The hours of the Liturgy are held in rotating traditions of these various Church bodies. One year Lutherans will lead in Morning Prayer; Anglicans/Episcopalians will lead in Noon Day Prayer, Roman Catholics at Afternoon Prayer (3:00 recalling the death of our Lord), and Orthodox at Evening Prayer.

Presenters are provided from the various traditions as well, covering various themes. One year Luther's Commentary on the Psalms was presented, emphasizing the various Psalms used during Lent. A presenter from the Episcopalians spoke on the Liturgy of Lent another year. Two years ago, a Roman Catholic scholar presented the gift of contemplative prayer through the writings of Thomas Merton. The Dean of St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Cathedral made a presentation on "Icons – Windows to Heaven". These are just some examples of the many themes/presentations that have been made over the years.

Fellowship is enjoyed – whether the retreat is overnight or just for a day. Clergy and lay have experienced the power of the Spirit at work as we find our commonality, centered in the Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ. Meals are provided by the retreat center staff - wherein attendees are encouraged to sit with traditions other than their own.

How does such retreats occur? The planning committee is composed of Ecumenical Representatives/Officers of the four traditions that begin planning the

coming year's retreat as early as August, so that themes and presenters can be firmed up. Cost per attendee is based on retreat centers request as well as travel cost and honorarium for the presenter. If you would be interested in starting such retreats in your various synods and would like more information, please feel free to contact me via email ([resgreeter@yahoo.com](mailto:resgreeter@yahoo.com)) or call/contact me at Resurrections Lutheran Church, 1900 East Carson Street, Long Beach, California 90807, 562-424-3113.

This is an excellent example of ecumenism wherein these four traditions of the Church come to pray, learn, and fellowship with one another during Lent as the Church recall the Sacred Journey of Jesus Christ, who turned his face toward Jerusalem, having come down from the Mount of Transfiguration.

### **Interfaith work in San Francisco:**

On August 5, 2008, San Francisco Interfaith Council Executive Vice Chair Rita Semel and Michael Pappas, the Executive Director appeared on NENtv (Neighborhood Empowerment Network). They were given the unique opportunity to report on the good works being undertaken by the SFIC. This brief presentation gives a concise overview of the SFIC's history, vision and programs. To access the segment, just double click :

<http://www.veoh.com/videos/v15544645amT5Xy63>

The Interfaith Council is made up of 800 organizations including ELCA congregations

LERN web page. The Manual will continue to be amended and updated as needed.

### **Sierra Pacific Synod: Spring 2008**

Diane Lowe shared an extensive list of ecumenical activities of Sierra Pacific Synod, Region 2 at the spring meeting in Chicago. Here are 3 events to give a sample of the work being accomplished in the synod.

Bishop David Mullen sets the standard high by meeting several times a year with his Commission on Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs Commission via video conference . Bishop Mullen continued his support of ecumenical activities by serving as the preacher for the 2008 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service held in Sacramento.

The annual inter-religious Paul Wattson Lecture Series held at University of San Francisco was expanded this year by partnering with the Marie Kidder Lecture series in Sacramento with the speaker spending a day in each city. 2008 speaker: The Rev James Puglisi, Minister General of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement and Director of the Ecumenical Institute Union in Rome.

### **Lambeth 2008**

The 2008 Lambeth Conference met July 16 – August 8<sup>th</sup>. As Rowan Cantuar, Archbishop of Canterbury writes, " The chief aims of our time together are, first, that we become more confident in our Anglican identity, by deepening our awareness of how we are responsible to and for each other; and second, that we grow in energy and enthusiasm for our task of leading the work of mission in our Church.

#### **LERN EXECUTIVE BOARD (by region)**

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Our ministry takes place in the context of a needy and divided world, in which there is both deep fear and great suffering. Jesus Christ says again and again to his disciples, 'Do not be afraid'. These are words which I hope will echo for us each day as we meet and talk here. But they will sound in our hearts only when we have our eyes fixed on the reality of Christ's unique saving person and on the world-transforming power of his resurrection..."

During the August LERN Board conference call, Dr. Michael Trice commended the closing address of Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams to the Lambeth Conference on August 3, 2008. Michael characterized the address as a discussion of the different claims of unity and truth in light of the human sexuality debate. Williams appealed to a covenant of faith based on restraint. Michael said the appeal was stronger on catholicity and weaker on authority. He noted that the approach speaks to the LWF and the ELCA as we face the same issues.

You can read Archbishop Cantuar's address and other remarks from Lambeth at <http://www.lambethconference.org>

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**JOIN OUR EDITORIAL TEAM!** *LERNing* is currently looking for two more individuals to fill slots on the editorial team. If interested, please contact Elaine Siemsen. (See contact information above)

