

Growing in Mission

Lenexa, Kan.

“I had been in churches before, but immediately I sensed something different at Kaw Prairie [Community Church],” said Min Baker. “It was OK to come with questions. I felt inspired and accepted.”



Baker—an Air Force veteran and information technology professional—was baptized the next summer in a lake at Kaw Prairie’s annual outdoor immersion service, with her husband and young children watching eagerly nearby.

Today, Min serves in the congregation’s hospitality and Alpha ministries and is poised to start a new small group ministry.

Kaw Prairie Community Church, Lenexa, Kan., is a 2004 mission start of the ELCA Central States Synod that has grown from 40 to more than 300 worshippers weekly.

“Our neighbors know us as the ‘outside the box church’ whose worship band plays in community parades and whose Christmas services are held in a barn,” explained the Rev. Dan McKnight, Kaw Prairie’s pastor. McKnight and the congregation seek “to change lives with Jesus’ love” by relating worship to modern life and engaging people in social ministry efforts.

Tim Ternes, a member of Atonement Lutheran in nearby Overland Park who has accompanied Kaw Prairie from its inception, credits the leadership for “taking some risks and not trying to rebuild yesterday’s church on today’s ground.” The goal, said Ternes, has been to “really build a church that will reach out to tomorrow.”

The ELCA Central States Synod, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church (USA) Heartland Presbytery, provided funds for land, building, and initial staff start up costs.

“Kaw Prairie is deeply grateful to everyone for their support,” said McKnight. “Now, we can look forward to our first building phase and to helping plant new, dynamic ELCA congregations in the future.”

For more Stories of Faith in Action, visit www.elca.org/stewardship/interpreting.html.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
GOD’S WORK. OUR HANDS.

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