



30th Anniversary

CONCORDIA
DEACONESS
CONFERENCE
Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

BLUES News

BLUES NEWS...

An official publication of Concordia Deaconess Conference (CDC). Distributed eight times a year, it serves our members by circulating devotional thoughts and articles, professional submissions, and member announcements.

For subscription inquiries, contact Linda Seward at publicrelations@concordiadeaconesslcmcs.org.

Submissions, themes, and suggestions should be sent to Mary Moerbe at assistanteditor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcmcs.org or 930 S. 6th St Blackwell, OK 74631.

OUR CONFERENCE

Concordia Deaconess Conference - Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is a free association of certified and LCMS rostered deaconesses, who subscribe to and live by the confessional position of the LCMS and who hold membership in a congregation or partner church of the same.

We work to provide opportunities for spiritual, personal, and professional growth and fellowship for deaconesses and support for diaconal service in Christ.

Donations for the work of the conference, a 501(c)(3) organization, may be mailed to Carol Schroeder at Epiphany Lutheran Church 4460 Lyons Rd Lake Worth, FL 33467-3614.



FREED IN CHRIST

In response and support of the Southern Illinois District's prisoner re-entry program, "Freed In Christ," our theme for this issue will also be Freed in Christ. Truly we are freed in Christ, free to witness His power, spread His love, and live together in the fellowship He provides His people.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Having a son at the front line in Afghanistan has had a profound influence on our day-to-day life. Praying, thinking, feeling, and even moving one's body, have all somehow taken on a new dimension.

Near the end of August David wrote:

I'm starting to forget what life is really like in a free world, but I hope that this will soon recover at the end of this tour. ... Often people ask what they can do to help the war effort. Well I suggest this: Walk. Enjoy your legs and walk to work. Do up your shoelaces with a smile. Jump up and down and enjoy freedom. Walk across a field without looking at the floor because there are no bombs there. And run. Cuddle loved ones and laugh. Sing loudly in church. Tell everyone that it's OK for there to be a mosque near Ground Zero—because *that* is why we are here: for that freedom, freedom for everyone.

Regardless of whether or not we agree about a mosque being built near ground zero, there is a parallel between David's thoughts and the fact that God created mankind with free will. From the beginning of our existence on the sixth day of creation, we were capable of making good or bad choices that had the potential to impact both ourselves and the human race.

The ironic thing about the first bad choice made by Eve and Adam is that they assumed their choice, albeit contrary to God's Word, would result in a higher level of "freedom" that would allow them to be more like God, knowing the difference between

good and evil. How foolish and sorry they must have felt afterward. How they must have lamented that their freely-made choice brought immediate death and deterioration into the world and rendered them slaves to sin. A part of their freedom was gone forever; yes, until the end of time.

When I read David's letter, one of my "mother" ways of reacting was to ask my husband if we could turn off the air conditioning in our house even though the daily temperatures were still hovering in the high 80s. My rationale was that if I was hot and suffering in the heat, I would remember to keep praying for our son who was in danger in a region even hotter. During that time I felt a great affinity with David, and got into the habit of praying more fervently for him.

Jesus Christ did something much more remarkable for us. He emptied Himself, became flesh, and lived with us. He put Himself right into the shoes of His creation, and then died in our stead. His death freed us from the bondage of sin. His resurrection assures us of our own future resurrection to His presence. And in the meantime He provides every good gift for us here in this life, even in the midst of modern wars.

Thanks be to God for the gift of our freedom in Christ. And thanks be to God for so many other gifts that He showers upon us, like the freedom to walk freely.

Cheryl D. Naumann



BOOK REVIEW: THE DAILY EXERCISE OF PIETY BY JOHANN GERHARD

After facing a lot of busyness and a number of changes, I looked for a book to help me re-center. I found it in *The Daily Exercise of Piety* by Johann Gerhard.

This is a book of prayer. The introductory letter to a noble, although culturally reminiscent of a far distant time, spoke of four truths that offer us certainty that our heavenly Father mercifully hears our prayers, and these truths were explained very powerfully.

Johann Gerhard is one of Lutheranism's foremost theologians, yet this roughly 90 page booklet was far from abstract or overly-intellectual. Instead it engaged me on a very personal level.

The format is one of prayer. A single subject is addressed, such as "Remembering the Sins of Youth," and every sentence is rich in Scripture and perspective. At the end of each prayer, the Gospel is given in a way that directly balances the concerns of the topic with certainty in Christ, His life, Words, and promises.

The variety of how the Gospel is communicated struck me and I found it deeply satisfying.

This would be a valuable tool for preparing for private Absolution and diligently equips people to tailor the Gospel to a specific concern in a thorough and comforting way.

The translation I read is available from Repristination Press, online at www.repristinationpress.com or by mail to Repristination Press, P.O. Box 173, Bynum, TX 76631.

Mary J. Moerbe



Ask just about any Christian what "Freed in Christ" means and they would no doubt talk about the freedom from sin, death, and the devil that Christ has won for us. However, for me and others involved in prison ministry, it means that and more.

Freed in Christ is also the name of an LCMS congregation-based prisoner re-entry program of the Southern Illinois District (SID), designed to embrace and teach each participant about Christ's love for them through the hearing of God's Word and the love of His people.

In this program, non-violent ex-offenders and their families are invited into one of our 96 local churches where they can receive a three-person *Freed in Christ* volunteer support group. This group prays with these Christian brothers and sisters, invites them to worship and church activities, and conducts a weekly, ready-made *Freed in Christ* Bible study with them.

Within this spiritually nurturing setting, the support group helps them determine their needs, set attainable goals, and discover their God-given gifts. While befriending and encouraging them, the support group may also help with practical needs such as resume development, mock

interviewing, budgeting skills and exploring local resources. Obviously different people will need different things, but resources that have been very helpful include food pantries, second hand clothing stores, educational opportunities, employers and employment agencies known for helping ex-offenders, bus routes, AA/NA meetings, hotline numbers, and so forth.

The district also works with case managers from Lutheran Child & Family Services of Illinois to develop an overall plan to meet many of the ex-offender's re-entry needs. This may include counseling, re-integration with family, making referrals for any substance abuse difficulties, and any other support programs that will assist in enabling successful community life during the re-entry process. We hope to identify and add other resources as needed.

We believe that with the help of God and the love of His people, we can break down re-entry barriers and reduce the recidivism rate—the rate in which ex-offenders go back to prison within the first three years of their release. In most states that rate is well over 50 percent; however, similar programs have reduced this rate to less than 10 percent.

FREED IN CHRIST

Sandra Bower

Combine teaching responsible behavior and accountability for words and actions with role modeling healthy relationships and behaviors, providing practical resources, and bringing God's words of hope and healing, we believe that God's living and active Word will change the ex-offenders from the inside out. Not only helping them but positively impacting others through them, such as their families and friends.

Transformed by God's grace, each participant may know what it truly means to be *Freed in Christ*.

If you would like further information about our *Freed in Christ* program, please contact Deaconess Sandy at 618-234-4767 ext. 55.

Sandy Bowers



UPCOMING THEMES FOR BLUES NEWS

November: Witness

December: Mercy

January: Life Together

Please submit articles, pictures, announcements, and suggestions to assistanteditor.bluesnews@concordiadeaconesslcms.org.

FREED IN CHRIST

To receive and enjoy His gifts
 To share His love and mercy
 To be who God makes us
 To rest in His care
 To explore His revelation
 To witness His goodness
 To stand firm
 To be bold and courageous
 To walk away from the devil
 To be forgiven and to forgive
 To be healed
 To await His coming
 To bear our crosses and follow Him
 To be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, now and forevermore. Amen.

PARA LOS HISPANOABLANTES

LIBERADOS EN CRISTO

Para recibir y disfrutar de sus dones
 Para compartir su amor y misericordia
 Para ser lo que Dios nos hace
 Para descansar en su cuidado
 Para explorar su revelación
 Ser testigo de su bondad
 Para mantenerse firme
 Para ser audaz y valiente
 Para huir del Diablo
 Para ser perdonado y perdonar
 Para ser sanado
 A la espera de su venida
 Para llevar nuestra cruz y seguirlo
 Para ser su propia y viven bajo Él en su reino, ahora y para siempre. Amén.



Some of the 39 CDC members who processed at the installation of synodical officers on September 11, 2010 at St. Timothy and St. Titus Chapel, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

More than 1,200 people attended the installation service for our new LCMS synodical leadership on September 11, 2010 in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

President Harrison, the five vice-presidents, other officers of the Synod and members of all boards and commissions, roughly 75, were prayerfully placed into service to the glory of God.

Nearly 300 people formed the processional into the service, including

the clergy and teachers of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Des Peres, Mo., where the Harrison family are members; the Synod's Praesidium; the LCMS Council of Presidents; 39 deaconesses; and more than 150 LCMS clergy.

Dr. Walter Obare, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, served as guest preacher for the Divine Service. Afterwards there was a reception of bratwurst and bluegrass.

Concordia Publishing House joined in celebration, as September 11th was the 141st birthday of our synod's publishing arm.



Ladies at the reception.



A picture of the CDC booth at the 64th Convention of the LCMS with Jane Obersat, Pamela Nielsen and Sara Bielby.



Pamela Nielsen, Kim Schave, Sarah Schultz, and Joyce Ostermann following the installation.

FUTURE ANNUAL CDC CONFERENCES

June 15-18, 2011
 Concordia University
 Seward, Nebraska

2012 St. Louis, Missouri

2013 Fort Wayne, Indiana

2014 Orlando, Florida

2015 Chicago, Illinois

CDC OFFICERS

President:

Cheryl D. Naumann

Vice President:

Deborah Rockrohr

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Jennifer Phillips

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Carol Schroeder

Membership:

Linda Cosgrove

Conference Logistics:

Ruth McDonnell

Spiritual and

Professional Growth:

Sandra Bowers

Spiritual Counselor:

Reverend John Berg

revberg@mac.com

Prayer requests can be emailed to the prayer coordinator at cdcprayers@comcast.net.

Digital pictures can be emailed to photos.cdc@gmail.com.

Email publicrelations@concordiadeaconesslms.org with PR suggestions or requests for banners.

Members may purchase extra cross pins or insignias for themselves from Linda Cosgrove.

DEVOTIONAL MEDITATION

Rev. John Berg

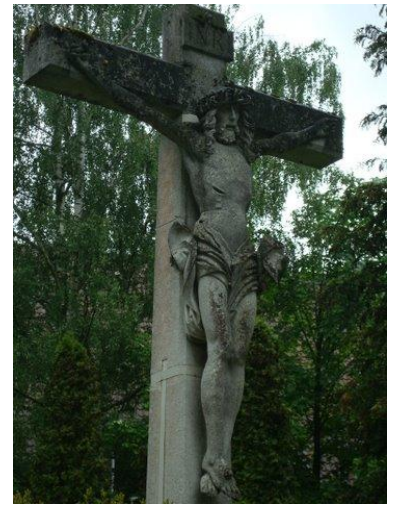
CDC Spiritual Counselor

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in among them and said to them, Peace be with you.” John 20:19
These first century disciples were locked in fear. They needed Christ to free them from their fears, from their sin and from their death. But it is not just first century disciples that lock themselves into upper rooms, for fear of the Jews.

What is it in your life that you need freedom from? What has happened to you? What coffins of fear or sin are you struggling with? What wouldas, couldas, and shouldas haunt your mind and leave you sleepless? What prison are you are you locked in? What do you need freedom from?

Oh, maybe you do not live in fear every day. Perhaps you have mastered the art of hiding your guilt, of hiding your hurt, or hiding your fear, and putting on a happy face. But while you may be able to fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time it’s still there. It still hurts. It is a prison robbing you of your life and joy. Your own little upper room with locked doors and enormous fears.

Jesus comes to you and frees you for life in His kingdom. His Word and body and blood free you from the prison of sin and death. His peace is yours. He comes not to accuse you, but to forgive you. He comes not to demand, but to provide. He comes



Crucifix in the deaconess cemetery in Neuendettelsau, Germany. Picture used with permission.

not to burden you down, but to raise you up.

In Christ we are free. The wages of sin have been paid. The fires of hell have been quenched. The prison house of sin and death is open. He shows you His wounds and doesn’t say, “Look what you did to me,” but instead, “Look what I have done for you!” In Christ you are free!

Pastor John M. Berg

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)