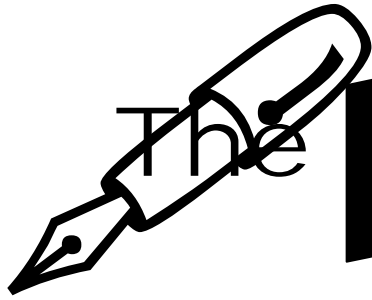


Epiphany 2010



President's Pen

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Rev. Dr. Larry Stoterau, President
Pacific Southwest District



Dear Partners in Ministry,

It was a great day to go sailing as Jesus and his disciples set out on a cruise to the other side of the lake. Mark tells us that there were other boats that joined them. Jesus, tired from a day of teaching, falls asleep. A severe storm threatens to swamp their boat and the disciples panic. "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" (Mark 4:38)

With that much water, I wonder how Jesus remained asleep. He must have been soaked. Have you ever wondered if he was awake and was waiting to see what the disciples were going to do? Well, we know what they did. They panicked and cried out for help. Then Jesus spoke, "Quiet! Be still!" and it was all over. "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

It is hard to have faith when you're drowning or so Peter would learn a little later in his training. It is hard to remain strong when the waves are overwhelming us in our ministry. When we work so hard and it all seems to be crumbling around us, we too panic and cry out, "Teacher, don't you care?" As one pastor shared with me recently, "we are just tired."

From the Garden of Eden to February 2010 it has always been the goal of Satan to sink the ship or to distract the sailors. We are doing ministry in a Post Churched time and spirituality takes on many different names and expressions. A recent article in USA Today spoke of the large number of religious movies currently being released with the explanation that religion sells.

I heard another perspective recently when visiting with a woman and we were discussing the various crises happening economically, politically and naturally and her comment was, "Some people believe there is a better life beyond this one, but frankly I am having a pretty good time in this one." My response was, "I know there is a better life beyond this one." End of conversation!

Into your life and mine the Christ comes. To the wind and the waves which challenge our faith or discourage us in ministry, Jesus says, "Quiet! Be Still!" When budgets flow red and nothing we do seems to be working Jesus says to us, "Quiet! Be Still!" When our family struggles and when a key family in the church moves away because they have lost home and job hear the words again, "Quiet! Be Still!"

Thank you for your faithfulness to the Gospel and for your care for God's people. May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

Larry Stoterau, President

The mission of the Pacific Southwest District is to effectively resource congregations and schools to fulfill the great commission.

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Economics and Mission

These continue to be challenging times for the church at every level as we seek to do ministry with declining resources. I thank the congregations and individuals who responded with special year end support of the work we do together in the District. With your support we were able to meet our mission commitments and most of our year end obligations. We did have to defer some bills until 2010 but we were able to support our missions, thanks to many of you.

As with many of our congregations, we have reduced the District Budget for 2010 and have put on hold the replacing of staff and the support of any new mission starts. While there are many priorities coming at you, I ask you to continue your support of the work we do together by continuing your financial support of the District.

Haiti Relief

The devastation in Haiti continues to overwhelm the resources of the world. It is encouraging to see resources from around the world coming into this very poor devastated nation. I encourage you and your congregation to respond. At this time the greatest need is for financial support to buy the supplies necessary. Contributions can be made directly to Lutheran World Relief, LCMS World Relief or sent to the District Office and we will forward.

Fan into Flame

Opportunities for congregations to participate in *Fan into Flame*, the mission funding effort of our District and Synod, will continue into 2010. For many congregations facing the financial challenges of this past year, they determined to postpone this effort until 2010. The planting of new churches and the revitalization of existing churches is making it possible for the message of Christ to reach beyond our walls throughout our District.

Fan into Flame provides the opportunity for the people of our congregations to respond with mission support beyond their current support for your ministry.

District Pastors' Conference

Enclosed is the registration form for the Fall Pastors' Conference. Our planning committee is providing a wonderful opportunity for us to learn and relax in the wonderful experience of a short cruise. I encourage all of us to register and participate.

Synod Convention One People – Forgiven

"Forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

Information concerning the 64th Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, July 10 – 17, 2010 is posted on the LCMS web site. Important deadlines to remember are:

Nomination for President and Vice Presidents –
Deadline March 10
Overtures –
Deadline March 6

Each month from now until the Convention, prayer requests are posted on the Convention web site and I encourage you to include those prayers in your congregational prayers. Also a 24/7 prayer vigil will be scheduled throughout the Convention and you will be asked to invite members of your congregation to sign up for particular times when they will be in prayer for the Convention. This is a great opportunity to involve your members in prayer for our church body as it considers major decisions.

More Dates

**Spring Circuit Counselors
Wednesday April 21
District Office**

**Synod Convention
July 10 – 17, 2010
Houston, Texas**

**Fall Pastors Conference
October 4 – 8, 2010
*Drawn in....changing tides!***

...and Closing

As you live and serve among God's people, I pray that the Lord will bless you and your family with peace and joy.