

COUNTRYSIDE NEWS

Volume 3 Issue 11

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Calvary, Barnum; Faith, Harcourt; Fulton, Roelyn; Trinity, Boxholm; UCC/Congregational, Moorland; Zion, Gowrie

SEXUALITY ISSUE

One thousand and eighteen voting members from 65 synods and 10,657 congregations serving on behalf of the 4,984,925 baptized members of this church will gather in Orlando on August 8 for the 2005 ELCA Church wide Assembly. Voting members will deal with a full agenda of business in addition to receiving reports from church wide units and other organizations affiliated with the ELCA. Undoubtedly, the most controversial business item will be the recommendations related to

question of blessing of same-gender unions and the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian people.

There are three recommendations related to these issues. If you would like to read the full texts of the recommendations, you can find them at <http://www.elca.org/assembly/05/VotingMatters/RecommendationsRelatedtoSexuality.pdf> or you may contact the office for a copy.

The hope of the Task Force for the Evangelical Lutheran

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Countryside Ministry Council

Marie Bengston----- Trinity
Greg Carlson -----Zion
Roberta Claussen ----- Trinity
Loretta Daisy----- Fulton
Marc Greenfield ----- Faith
Steve Julius-----Calvary
Steve Lane-----Zion
Dorothy Nahnsen----- Faith
Ned Palmer-----Zion
Joyce Silvey----- UCC/Cong.
Richard Silvey ----- UCC/Cong.
Everett Underwood ----- Fulton
Ron Walrod -----Calvary

Countryside Ministry Executive Committee

Ron Walrod ----- President
----- Vice-president
Loretta Daisy----- Secretary
Steve Lane----- Treasurer
Rev. Jim Davis
----- Administrative Pastor

Focus on the Goal



A Message from Our Pastor

After two months of running, Emma and I are at the halfway mark in training for a marathon. This weekend our long run will be fourteen miles. Hopefully, after two more months of training, we will run 26.2 miles, cross the finish line and claim our prizes – small medals that are given to each participant who successfully completes the marathon. The

prize, however, for which we are really running is the satisfaction of having achieved our goal of completing a marathon. There is nothing quite like crossing the finish line and realizing that you have reached your goal after the long months of hard training. It is exhilarating and results in a sense of confidence in your ability to do far more than you ever imagined if you just keep your eye on the goal and take the next step in reaching that goal.

Paul, in his letter to the

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NEED A VISIT?

If you or anyone you know could use a pastoral visit, please contact the Countryside office at 352-3645 so a visit can be scheduled.



Hospital Visitation

STEPHEN MINISTRY



When Jesus calls us to be His disciples, He also makes us members of His body, the church family. We are called to do the work of God in the world (1 Corinthians 12).

By the Holy Spirit, God gives each of us special gifts to use in loving service (1 Peter 4:10).

Peter emphasizes the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9-10) and the vital role of each Christian in proclaiming the gracious deeds of God in Christ. God's call to church leaders is to "...equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-12) and to activate the discipleship of God's people.

Among the many works of Christian service, our Lord has placed high priority on deeds of love to those in need (Matthew 25:19-20). Jesus impressed a new commandment upon his disciples to "...love one another even as I have loved you" (John 13:34). Paul urges Christians to fulfill this law by "bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Caring helps those in need and is a witness to the world that we are the disciples of Jesus (John 13:35). Love and care given in Jesus' name is a vital way that congregations fulfill our Lord's Great Commission "to make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20). The Stephen Ministry is that kind of caring.

When a need for a Stephen Minister is identified, I will meet with that person, explain what Stephen Ministry is, and help determine whether Stephen Ministry is the kind of care that person needs. Then I will match that person with one of our available Stephen Ministers, who will then call that person and begin meeting with him or her for about an hour each week as long as the need is there. Everything a care receiver says to his or her Stephen Minister is kept confidential. The Stephen Minister doesn't try to solve problems; he or she listens, cares, prays, and helps the care receiver find his or her path to healing and wholeness.

The Stephen Ministry is an exciting ministry for our churches and these Stephen Ministers all went through an application process and a personal interview before they attended their fifty-two hours of classroom training.

Being a Stephen Minister may not be for everyone. The Stephen Ministry is not for someone who can only make a casual or part-time commitment or who wants public recognition. It demands confidentiality and requires a high level of priority for a minimum of a two-

year commitment.

Stephen Ministers deserve everyone's appreciation and prayers. Their work is a vital part of our congregations. If you would like to send a Stephen Minister a "Postcard Blessing" or "Special Thank-you" note, please do so today. Write a note of appreciation to **anyone** serving in any of our ministries here at Countryside Ministry. One way you could do this is to sign the thank you form below and sending it to the church office or by writing in your own words if you want to be more personal. We will pass it on to the people who serve in that ministry. Special thanks to you if you do this, as this is also a very important job. To thank others for what they do takes a special kind of person.

Thank
you

May God continue to richly bless The Countryside Ministry & its ministers. I have been so blessed by you all. Thank you for your faithfulness & commitment to the Lord.

Signed: _____

Thanks for your prayers for my loved one. I request prayers for the Lord to give us courage as we fight the disease and your prayers and the Lord are helping us get through it.

Signed: _____

Thank you Countryside council members, church council members, altar guild, and all the men, women and children who volunteer at our churches; thank you choir and bell choir members, and organists; thank you usher, acolytes and lay leaders and church secretaries and all who diligently serve the Lord. You are a blessing to our churches.

Signed: _____

Or write or send your own message of thanks. You could even write one to God. Everyone likes a note of thanks!

—Cindy Youngquist,
Countryside Ministry's
Stephen Ministry Leader

"Bear one another's burdens...and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2).

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Sexuality Issue

Church in America Studies on Sexuality is that we, as a church, might find ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ. This hope is offered in the form of a resolution to the Assembly.

The recommendation regarding the blessing of same-gender unions is that the church welcome gay and lesbian persons and trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care to same-sex couples.

The recommendation regarding the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian people is that the church affirm and uphold the standards for roistered leaders as set forth in “Vision and

Expectations” and create a process for the sake of outreach, ministry, and the commitment to continuing dialogue, which may permit exceptions to the expectations regarding sexual conduct for gay or lesbian candidates and roistered leaders in lifelong, committed, and faithful same-sex relationships who otherwise are determined to be in compliance with “Vision and Expectations.”

These recommendations are an attempt to support current policies, yet allow opportunities for exceptions. Exceptions to these policies would not be taken lightly. They would involve the discernment of congregations, synods and church wide working together. It is the hope of many in the ELCA, that through this process, we may continue to live together faithfully and we discern where God is leading us in

regards to these issues.

We are not alone in wrestling with these issues. The Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church and others are struggling with the same issues. We are all joined in prayer that we might find a way to live together faithfully in spite of our disagreements.

Please join me in praying for the voting members to the ELCA Church wide Assembly as they faithfully deliberate the action before them. Pray, also, for the wider church that God might guide us as we struggle to discern God’s will for us. Finally, pray that we might find ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements, recognizing the God-given mission and communion that we share as members of the body of Christ.

PICTURES FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE PICNIC



STALEY CHICKEN DINNER

Come and join us for a Staley Chicken Dinner at Zion Lutheran Church on August 21, 2005. We will begin serving at 10:30 a.m. and continue until 1:00 p.m. Enjoy a wonderfully delicious fried chicken dinner, including potato, assorted salads, roll, dessert, and drink.

For advance tickets contact Mary Lind (352-3169) or Ruth Elaine Sandeen (352-5444). Tickets are also available through the Countryside Ministry office (352-3645). Advance ticket sales are important in determining the amount of food we need to prepare. Please help us by purchasing your tickets in advance.

Tickets also will be sold at the door. Take-outs are available.

Prices of the tickets are: Adults (11 years and up): \$6.50, Children 5 to 10 years: \$3.50, and under 5 are free.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will be matching up to \$500.00 for Zion's Women of the E.L.C.A. Proceeds will be used to benefit *FUSION* and purchase new tables for our church.



THANK YOU

We received the following "thank you" this past month in the Countryside Ministry office:

"Thank you so much for hosting MAD Tour! We really enjoyed worshipping with you. We hope you enjoyed our message. A special thank you to all who hosted us in their homes overnight and to those who fed us breakfast and lunch at the church. We really appreciated your hospitality! God bless you as you continue to do ministry in rural Iowa!"

Valerie King, director
MAD Tour



PRISON MINISTRY

The Countryside Ministry performs a joint outreach ministry in conjunction with the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility.

Pastor Don Wahlgren is coordinating this ministry. Our next visit will be in August 17. Anyone wishing to be included in this outreach

facility is required to do a background check on any new visitors as a precautionary measure. There is a dress code for visitors; call the Countryside office for more details. We will meet in the correctional facility parking lot at 6:15 p.m. The service starts at 7:00 p.m.

ministry please call the Countryside Ministry office to reserve a spot. We only have eight spaces available for this visit, so if you would like to be included, please call early.

If this is your first visit to the correctional facility, the Countryside office will need your full name, birth date, phone number, and social security number. The correctional

If you have any questions regarding this ministry, please call the Countryside Ministry office (352-3645) or Pastor Wahlgren (352-5245).



When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened to us.

—Helen Keller



Ice Cream Social
& Bake Sale!

Sunday, August 28th,
11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Faith Lutheran Church,
Harcourt.

Home-made ice cream, pie, bars, beef burgers, beans, & beverages will be served.

Freewill offering.
Matching funds by Thrivent.
Hosted by Faith W.E.L.C.A.
Everyone Welcome!

2006 NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING



For well over a century, Lutheran youth have gathered in the name of the Triune God for Bible study, theological conversation, worship, service and holy play. They come together as strangers and leave as friends, tethered forever by their shared experience of a God who is alive and active in their world. Numerous Lutherans have identified the Gathering as a life-changing encounter with Jesus.

The ELCA National Youth Gathering will be held in San Antonio, Texas in July 2006. The theme will be *Cruzando: Journey with Je-*

sus. This is a tremendous opportunity for our high schoolers to gather with approximately 25,000 other youth from across the United States and around the globe. Youth Gatherings offer young people a different perspective on what it means to be the church. There are exciting opportunities for worship, prayer, learning, serving and meeting new people. This is one of the premier events in the life of the church.

Youth who will be in grades 9—12 this fall are invited to attend. For more information call the Country-side Ministry office or talk to Pastor Jim. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

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Pastor's Message

Philippians, compares life as a follower of Christ to a race.

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to

what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. — Philippians 4:10-14

I often think of this passage while putting in the long miles we do on hot, dusty gravel roads. Like Paul, I try to stay focused on the goal that lies ahead, completing the training run and, ultimately, successfully completing the marathon. While it sounds simple to stay focused on the goal, in reality it can be very difficult. It is easy to become distracted by so many things: heat, wind, sore muscles, blisters, a dry mouth and negative thoughts and feelings. I often feel like giving up. At times like these, I need to remind myself of the satisfaction that lies ahead if I can just take the next step.

Somehow, remembering the goal provides me with the strength to strain forward another step.

Following Christ, for me, is very similar to training for a marathon. There are those times when I become distracted from the goal of being like Christ. The lure of a life focused on recreation and entertainment, my frustration with myself and others, issues that are really not very important and negative thoughts and feelings often leave me discouraged. At times like these, I need to be reminded of the goal and the satisfaction that comes from faithfully following where God leads.

I like to imagine that at the end of my life God will welcome me home by saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Somehow, remembering the goal provides me with the courage and strength to strain forward another step.



... let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1

I am confident that you understand what I am writing about. I am certain that you too struggle with the distractions that draw you away from a life of faith. I am also certain that you know what it is like to feel discouraged as you strain toward the goal of being like Christ. I pray that, when you are distracted and discouraged, you may be reminded of the goal and the satisfaction that comes from faithfully following where God leads and that remembering the goal will provide you with the courage and strength to strain forward another step.

—Pastor Jim

Box 63
Gowrie, IA 50543

Countryside Ministry

Countryside Phone Numbers:

Countryside Office.....	352-3645
Rev. Jim Davis Office	352-3932
Home.....	352-5261
Rod Meyer Office	846-6277
Home.....	354-5224
Rev. Wahlgren Office	352-3645
Home.....	352-5245
Stephen Ministry Office	352-3612
Home.....	352-3798

Countryside E-mail Addresses:

Countryside Office:.....ziongowr@wccta.net
Rev. Jim Davis:..... elca506@wccta.net
Rod Meyer:rodmeyer@lvcta.com
Stephen Ministry:.....stephencoop@hotmail.com

Countryside Summer Worship Times

Calvary, Barnum..... 10:30 a.m.
Faith, Harcourt..... 9:00 a.m.
Fulton, Roelyn..... 9:15 a.m.
Trinity, Boxholm..... 10:30 a.m.
UCC/Cong., Moorland..... 8:00 a.m.
Zion, Gowrie..... 9:30 a.m.
1st and 3rd Saturdays @ Zion..... 5:00 p.m.
FUSION Wednesday Evenings..... 7:30 p.m.
(at 1107 Market Street, Gowrie)
Connections 7:00 p.m.
(2nd Sunday of each month at **FUSION** bldg.)



**The 5th Annual Countryside Ministry
Men's Golf Tournament
August 7, 2005
Gowrie Golf and Country Club
Tee off time is 12:30 p.m.**

**To sign up, please contact
The Countryside Ministry Office
at 352-3645
For more information, contact
Paul Johnson at 548-3425.**

**Countryside Ministry Website Address:
www.countrysidecoop.org**

If you have an article or picture that you would like to submit for the Countryside Ministry newsletter, please send them to the Countryside office and we will **try** to put them in as time and space permit.