

Peace in Jesus

Vietnamese Lutheran Church

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Ten years ago, in 1993, three WELS families who lived in Idaho's Treasure Valley, near Boise, recognized a need in their community. Vietnamese refugees who were seeking better life in America ended up living in and around Boise, Idaho. These refugees who landed in Boise had nothing but the shirts on their backs. The Christian families saw an opportunity to exercise Christian love. They invited some of these families into their homes until they could get on their feet.

They, with the help of their church, Messiah Lutheran Church in Nampa, Idaho; and the help of its pastor, Mark Cares, began to share the simple Gospel message with these people who had never heard it before. They used children's Bible story books at first as the refugees knew little or no English. Yet God used this simple act of love to open a door that no one had ever even seen before in the Treasure Valley; outreach to the Vietnamese community living in Boise.

In the 1990's, Boise's Vietnamese community began to grow. So did their need for support. Most of them had never even heard of Jesus. Recognizing a need, but having little resources, the congregations around Boise could do little more than share their faith and show their love by witnessing across the language barrier.

In 1996, the Pacific-Northwest District Mission Board called Daniel Kramer, then a vicar at Messiah Lutheran Church, to spend one year exploring the feasibility of opening a Vietnamese exploratory church in the greater Boise area. At the end of that year of service it was determined that the fields were ripe in Boise for this kind of work. Kramer returned to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for his final year of training. That year the Pacific-Northwest District Mission Board called three different men from the field to shepherd this exploratory congregation. All three men declined the call. In May of 1998,

Daniel Kramer was assigned to be the pastor of the nucleus which he had started to develop with the Gospel.

Today, as a result of the efforts of these Christians and God's grace, Peace In Jesus Vietnamese Lutheran Church exists. They have one pastor, one staff minister and over 40 members. The story of the founding of this congregation is told on the video. The video is 51 minutes in length. The first 6 minutes include a tour of their storefront facilities. The remaining video length contains interviews with the staff at Peace In Jesus.

Perhaps the most important thing to note about this congregation is its place in church history, namely, how the Holy Spirit is active in gathering and preserving the saints. At Peace In Jesus the Holy Spirit is at work in a very similar way as at the time of the early New Testament church. Language and cultural barriers will not stop the work of the Spirit. The Gospel message of the peace we have in Jesus transcends all customs and languages and touches the hearts of individuals. Through the power of the Spirit, people of many languages are coming to learn about the salvation we have in Christ.

RELIGION BRIEFS

Irish negotiator is honored

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Rev. Roy Magee, a Presbyterian minister based in Northern Ireland who has worked to resolve sectarian conflict there, was named the recipient of the Peace Activist Award presented by the International Center for Interreligious Understanding.

Magee, a senior research fellow at the University of Ulster, said religious groups should contribute more toward ending the centuries-old strife between Catholics and Protestants.

Churches have often made their members more entrenched in their positions, Magee said in an interview Tuesday, one day before the award ceremony in New York. Religious groups should risk preaching to people outside their circles, he said. He noted that his own decision to work with Protestant militant groups in the 1980s was initially unpopular with his church. In 1994, he helped broker a ceasefire involving these groups.

"When a church person is involved with people committing murder and mayhem, others in church are not happy about it," he says. "But I couldn't stand aloof from people, if they were asking me to challenge them."

Magee also said he favors linking United Nations mediators to talks on the future of Northern Ireland, which resumed this week.

"No matter what the (political) changes decide, they've got to keep talking," he says. "They can't let the people die."

The Orthodox Christian Church has 300 million followers worldwide. It ranks third in size among world Christian denominations, behind Roman Catholicism, with about 981.5 million and Protestantism, with about 404 million.

Idaho's Lutheran Vietnamese

BOISE, Idaho — A church has been dedicated to help Vietnamese refugees in Idaho's Treasure Valley, who number up to 3,000.

"There is no other Christian group actively reaching out to them because they're not big enough," said the Rev. Dan Kramer, head of the Peace in Jesus Lutheran Church. He said he expected the church to help "with English classes, tutoring, even giving them cards to get through winter."

Kramer became involved in the cause while serving as vicar of two churches in Boise and Nampa, learning some of the language while helping church elder Robert Vinh Phan interpret a Bible study.

Phan said his fellow Vietnamese are more familiar with Buddhism and Catholicism than with the Lutheran religion, but he added, "They are willing to adapt if necessary."

"This is a place where people who don't know English can learn it, where people who are having trouble with work can get help, where people who need to get a driver's license can learn how," Phan said. "It's a place where we can meet other Vietnamese and take in food for the spirit."

Vietnamese Lutheran Church born

Today, March 27, Peace in Jesus Lutheran Church will hold a dedication service for the new ministry center. The service, in both English and Vietnamese, will be at 3 p.m., with a potluck meal to follow. Choirs from several churches in the Treasure Valley, as well as a Vietnamese children's choir, will perform. The new church is in a storefront at the corner of Curtis and Franklin, 5821 Franklin Road. The new church reaches out primarily to the Vietnamese community of Treasure Valley. Its pastor is Daniel Kramer.

The grand opening service in Vietnamese will be held at 10 a.m. Easter Sunday, with regularly scheduled Vietnamese language services every Sunday thereafter.

REAL TIME WITH A MISSIONARY

In this section, you'll hear news that came via e-mail from missionaries. We hope you enjoy these tidbits from our missions.

From Dan Kramer, pastor at Peace In Jesus, Boise, Idaho, a home mission reaching out to the Vietnamese:

December 9, 2001, was our New Member Service and Potluck. We had 10 people step forward to be members of our church from four different families.

One of our new member families is the David Malnes family. Dave is our new staff minister at Peace In Jesus. He and wife Lori, and children Chelsea, Justin, Jeremy, and Meagan, arrived around Thanksgiving. Dave was installed in an afternoon service on Dec. 16. It was a wonderful opportunity for the area congregations to join in the welcome of this new called worker.

Our main Christmas outreach was held on Christmas Day. We enjoyed a bilingual service (Vietnamese and English) that included our choir, as well as the children's choir. We are thankful for the 60 people who were able to come and hear the good news of the Savior born for every nation and culture. We give thanks to God who continues to bless our efforts as we "make known among the nations what he has done."

Placing priority on worship

"I used to come to church; now I come to worship," says one WELS member whose church called a parish music coordinator.

The distinction may seem small, but it isn't.

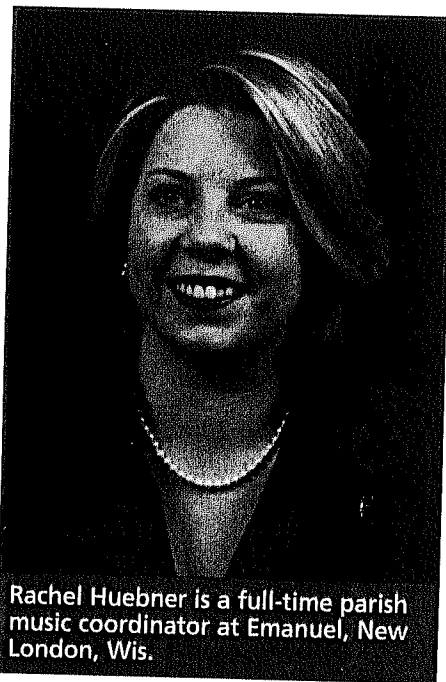
As Bryan Gerlach, the administrator for the Commission on Worship, notes, "Worship isn't just one program among many in our churches. It is the heart of everything we are and do—the time when God showers us with his gift of grace, when he blesses us with his instruction, and when we respond more intensively than any other time during the week" ("Ten Unexpected Years," *Lutheran Leader*, Summer 1996*).

Because worship is at the heart of every congregation, more and more churches are adding worship coordination to the duties of their teachers, pastors, or staff ministers. Emanuel, New London, Wis., took this idea one step further by calling a full-time parish music coordinator.

In January 2001, Rachel Huebner accepted Emanuel's call. Part of Huebner's job as parish music coordinator is to work with Emanuel's three pastors and its school's principal and teachers to coordinate all musical schedules in the church and school; to expand the knowledge and appreciation of worship quality and variety among the congregation; to develop, implement, and evaluate a school music curriculum; to recruit, train, and supervise individuals with musical talent; and to organize, staff, and oversee all groups that provide worship-related music.

Is there really enough work, though, for a full-time worker?

According to Gerlach, there is more to worship coordination than meets the eye. "If music coordination and performance are achieved only from leftover time in busy people's lives, it will often not rise to a level that really has a powerful impact on worshipers. Pulling lots



Rachel Huebner is a full-time parish music coordinator at Emanuel, New London, Wis.

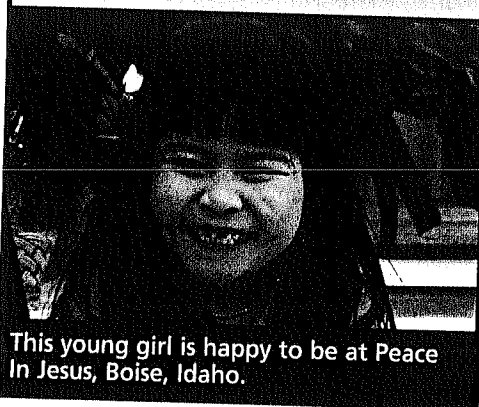
of people together in various ways takes much planning."

Huebner agrees. She says, "When a congregation calls a parish music coordinator, it shows that they are placing a priority on worship. That priority is hard to achieve if you can't dedicate yourself fully to it."

Of course, if your congregation is smaller or can't afford a full-time parish music coordinator, you could consider a half-time position for either a layperson in the congregation or a called worker. Even this step will help improve the coordination of worship and elevate worship to a place of priority in your congregation.

And, as Gerlach maintains, that priority on worship pays off: "Musical vigor from both the people in the pews and musicians contributes directly to the strength of the entire parish—including outreach; member retention; stewardship; and next generation nurture, retention, and recruitment."

* To learn more about parish music coordinators, read these articles on the Commission on Worship Web site, <www.wels.net/worship/art-19> and <www.wels.net/worship/art-14>.



This young girl is happy to be at Peace In Jesus, Boise, Idaho.



District news

South Atlantic

Victory, Jacksonville, Fla., held its first public worship at the University of North Florida on Mar. 21. Seventy people attended. During the weeks leading up to the service, 20,000 invitation cards were sent out along with 7,000 open letters to the community. A prospect list of 550 homes was established through the canvassing efforts of Phil Hoyer, Brent Bitter, and members of Good Shepherd, Orange Park. For more information about this exploratory contact Phil Hoyer at 904/821-0258.

... **Abiding Faith, Smyrna, Tenn.**, also held its first public worship service on Mar. 21. They had 95 in attendance. ... **King of Kings, Maitland, Fla.**, is operating a summer day camp—the King's Daycamp. It will run daily during June and July. Administered by staff at King of Kings, it will be run by four students from Martin Luther College. The camp will feature on-site educational, recreational, and religious experiences, and field trips will be taken regularly to area attractions to experience what Orlando has to offer. They will also offer three week-long sports camps—boys' basketball, girls' basketball, and cheer-

leading. These will be held in the evenings after the King's Daycamp empties for the day. The goal is to reach out to the community in a fresh way and launch into sharing the message of a resurrected Christ. This project is funded in part by an outreach opportunity grant through the Synodical Council. ... **Bay Pines, Seminole, Fla.**, did a Walk-a-thon for All Children's Hospital this last year. They've had a number of students from their school use All Children's for everything from broken bones to leukemia. They will also be doing a Jump Rope For Heart jump-a-thon for the American Heart Association. Bay Pines also had a groundbreaking ceremony for their new classrooms in April.

Pacific Northwest

On the Saturday before Palm Sunday, **Peace In Jesus, the Vietnamese mission in Boise, Idaho**, dedicated the storefront that they will lease for three years. About 130 people attended, the majority from the other three WELS congregations in the Boise area. Because many Vietnamese work on Saturday, only 35 Vietnamese attended.

On Easter, their opening service

was held. Approximately 60 Vietnamese attended the service, which was conducted in Vietnamese.

North Atlantic

"Oh, deer!" No "deer" is not misspelled. It was quite a day when a doe crashed through the glass of the front door at **St. Paul, Amherst, N.H.**, on Jan. 21. She ran around in the entryway between the chapel and the fellowship hall until she finally went back through the broken glass and disappeared into the woods.

Fortunately no one was injured, and other than the glass she did no other damage (although the doe must have had one large headache). This does put a new wrinkle on the idea of having an open door policy at church. ...

In March, **Living Hope, Midlothian, Va.**, purchased five acres for the site of its future church. The property had been pursued by the congregation less than a year ago but taken off the market and declared "sold." Just before Christmas, it became available again. ... **Hope, Markham, Ontario**, dedicated its new worship facility on Apr. 25. With its new location, the congregation will now be known as Hope Lutheran of Toronto (Scarborough). The area is largely Caribbean and Sri Lankan. Ten thousand flyers were mailed out before Easter advertising the presence of a WELS church in the area as well as the Holy Week schedule and dedication service. Several new families attended on Good Friday and Easter in response to the flyers. ...

Messiah, S. Windsor, Conn., has hired an architect and begun planning to expand their facility. They are also embarking on a new evangelism project, a booth at the Wapping Fair.

Happy anniversary

NA—Grace of God, Dix Hills, N.Y., celebrated its 25th anniversary on Holy Trinity Sunday, May 30.



Trinity Christian Academy, located just south of Washington D.C., regularly takes advantage of the cultural and educational opportunities available in our nation's capitol. In December, the upper grade art class enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as they viewed 70 of Vincent Van Gogh's original works at the National Gallery of Art.—*Timothy Unke*



Last September, Hurricane Georges hammered the Caribbean and our world missions located there. Pictured here is Juana Antonia of the Dominican Republic, who lost her entire house and all her belongings to the river. She is standing where her house used to be before the hurricane. With help from money she received from the WELS Committee on Relief, she was able to find a place on higher ground. Our churches in Puerto Rico, a country also hit by the hurricane, even had a clothing drive and sent canned food and clothing to the Dominican Republic. The Committee on Relief sent \$35,000 to the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Haiti, and Antigua. They also sent \$60,000 to Nicaragua and Honduras after Hurricane Mitch hit in November. If you want to send contributions, specify which fund and send it to Committee on Relief, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222.

Potluck—Vietnamese style

In August, members at Messiah, Nampa, Idaho, made room for chopsticks next to the forks for their potluck. The potluck followed a service where Daniel Kramer was ordained and commissioned as the outreach explorer to the Vietnamese in the Boise, Idaho area.

The ordination rite was translated by Mr. Vinh, a Vietnamese who works with the outreach in Idaho. Kramer concluded the service by having a

prayer and blessing in Vietnamese. The Americans present had an unusual opportunity to experience what many Vietnamese go through every day: the language barrier.

After the service, the potato salad moved aside for the rice, and the jello mold made way for the *chả giò*, (Vietnamese egg roll) as everyone enjoyed the Vietnamese-American potluck.

Daniel Kramer



Daniel Kramer and the Vietnamese families who attended his ordination. Kramer is the outreach explorer to the Vietnamese in the Boise, Idaho area.

Synodical school enrollment increasing

Overall enrollments at the synod's ministerial education schools are again higher. They are significantly higher at Martin Luther College and Luther Preparatory School. Enrollment in the pre-seminary program at MLC is 222, compared to 180 at the time of amalgamation.

WELS operates four ministerial education schools—one seminary, one college, and two prep schools. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., trains pastors. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., prepares teachers for the ministry and others who will continue at the seminary. Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich., work at the high school level, preparing students for full-time church work.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99
WLS (on campus)	111	123	112	103
MLC	772	816	811	863
LPS	506	475	479	528
MLS	319	335	347	338
Total	1,708	1,749	1,749	1,832

correction: The e-mail address of Gerald Free, the director of the Forward in Christ celebration, was listed incorrectly in the November issue. His correct e-mail address is <FICWICKS@tcccom.net>.