



Inviting
Conversations -
Empowering
Words

John 17:20

Pacific Southwest District ~ LCMS
Leadership Equipping Conference ~ June 26-28, 2009
District Convention ~ June 28-30, 2009
Daily Newsletter

Sunday,
06/28/09
Issue 1

Highlights from Friday, June 26, 2009

Our gathering began at 6:40 this evening with a beautiful musical call to worship led by our musical leader Rob Blaney. Rev. Dr. Larry Stoterau, President of the Pacific Southwest District LCMS, welcomed all attendees by introducing our Conference/Convention Theme, "Inviting Conversations – Empowering Words" and highlighting the two key texts in use. The first is John 17:20, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message..." God uses our conversations as an opportunity to welcome people to know Jesus. The second text is the book of John chapter 4. Jesus meets the woman at the well. Come and see the man who told me everything about myself. Could He be the Christ? Many came to Christ because of her – because of her conversations.

Pastor Stoterau then introduced our hostess, Mrs. Connie Schramm, who came forward to introduce our Equipping Conference Chaplain, the Reverend Greg Seltz. 2 Corinthians 4:13, "It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken. With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak" Rev. Seltz tells us that faith says 'it is time to speak'. We are not here, gathered because of others. We are gathered by our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Again, please note that faith says 'it is time'. It is time to converse. Our time, today, is most needful of the Gospel. Do you notice how people will say to you - later – it was just in time? It was *the* perfect time for you to have come to me with the Good News of Christ. This is God's hand at work. Let your faith *empower* you. Let it help you to persevere to continue to have conversations.

After prayer, we were blessed with another beautiful musical selection, "Word of God Speaks" performed again by Rob Blaney, followed by Connie Schramm's introduction of our Plenary Event Speaker, Rev. Dr. Dien Taylor from Redeemer Lutheran Church, The Bronx, New York. Listen, God is calling. Equipping us to share begins with listening. We should start our conversations with listening – not talking. That is what God does for us in Jesus Christ. We have a God who listens to us. God knows He has a servant that doesn't always listen to Him. When we are faithless – He is faithful. There are no barriers that Jesus cannot overcome. It was not right for Jesus to speak to Samaritans. There was a divide and all of society accepted that there were limits. But for Jesus it was not so. He came to save *everybody*. Here we stand. But, He didn't say 'Stand still'. Here we stand on the Word and promises of God. We stand WITH the One who causes us to stand. We stand in the One who stands up with us. We don't come alone. We stand with many. Walk around and find those that cry and wail for Jesus, for His help, for the Water of Life. God has not brought us here tonight by accident. There are NO accidents in the economy of God. We are here so that by the power of the Lord's Holy Word – we may be encouraged in the witness. That witness can be just as simple as telling someone else what Jesus has done in our life. What has He done for you lately? Share it with others. Have conversations with others. In us, God brings the well to His people. Every time we encounter others, the Waters come near them. There is a water/river of life flowing from us. We are the well. Our well is deep. It goes all the way back to Jacob and Abraham and Adam. How do we know we have water? It comes out in those moments of time when we are most vulnerable. It is in our sweat and in our tears ... allow them to flow from you. Don't worry about what you are going to say. Jesus says, 'I will give you the words to say. Just be the person that I have made you to be. Just do what I have intended for you to do. Don't just wait for someone else to do it.' God has called us out of darkness. He has selected us. Listen, Learn, Love, and Live. Listen first. Love the ones to whom you are listening. Learn from them. Live so that you may raise your water glass high – "to life" around the great banqueting table of grace. We will never know when we have to go through Samaria. When will God use us? Where will God use us?

Today
Don't Miss This!

2:10 President's Address
2:40 Convention Business
2:45 Election of President
3:45 District Missions
7:00 Memorial Service



"*You know you're a **Steadfast Lutheran** if ... You are in your eighties and can still recite at least three of your Sunday School Christmas pieces and know what grades you were in when you were a shepherd and a wiseman, and what grade you were in when you were roped into playing Joseph, and you still remember who was Mary that year, and secretly wonder if she still looks good in blue.*"

Highlights from Saturday, June 27, 2009

We began our morning with a prayer by Chaplin Seltz.

Our hostess, Mrs. Connie Schramm, came up to acknowledge and thank her Team; Rob Blaney – Music. John Randall – Workshops. Donna Lucas - Program Planning. Glen Lucas – Registration, and Pastor Greg Seltz – Conference Chaplin.

We briefly retouched some key points from the night before. It is time to speak to a world unaware of the lifesaving gift of Jesus. It is God who is the doer, the shaker, and the mover. The water from our baptism echoes through us so that no one is forgotten. All this is for the sake of the cross. Thanks be to God! Faith says I believe therefore I have spoken. Listen, God is calling through His Word; inviting us, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

We were then introduced to our Plenary Event key speaker, the Rev. John Nunes, President of Lutheran World Relief. LWR is active in over 35 different countries located all over parts of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America – many different kinds of people. When we pray and say the words, "Our Father", we are categorized by that, NOT by ethnicity or country or belief. The Lord's Prayer is radical in the sense that it pulls us all together. The words "Our Father", the Lord's Prayer itself, is full of plurality. Sin can very well be a social problem, a group problem. Sometimes sin is a whole social system that we participate in. It can be how we look at people and what we think of them. This is social. *Forgive us*, good Lord. *Deliver us* from the actual evil that exists. *Lead us* back to the water, oh Lord. Again we listened about the power of the water. The book of John is full of examples of the water through from Chapter 1 and John the Baptist all the way to Chapter 19 where we read of the water that came from the pierced side of Jesus. If you're struggling through a place in your life – go back to the water. Go back to where you were named and claimed by God. *Lead us* not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Sadly, too often the church chooses to follow and not lead society. We should be leaders. Grace matters more than race. Sin matters more than skin. Diversity is the core of who we are in Jesus Christ. In the church of Jesus Christ we are connected by one thing; our baptism thru Jesus Christ, through our faith, through His grace.

Our morning gathering was closed with an 'awe'-some a cappella singing of "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" by Monique Nunes.

-- Our evening Plenary Event was a presentation by Ben Glenn. Nothing is better when you know you're not alone. Life can be challenging. John 16:33. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." You are the light of the world. Let your light shine that people may see your good deeds and praise your father who is in heaven. Lighthouse picture. You are the light of the world, let it shine. You Raised me up to walk on stormy seas. I am strong when I am on your shoulder. You raise me up to more than I can be. We are blessed to be a blessing.

-- Many thanks to Double Honor for hosting a wonderful *Wine & Cheese Reception* which gave everyone the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with friends – old and new.