Faith Lutheran Church 714 N Grand Ave., Pierre, SD 57501

May 2012 Newsletter

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Letter From Glenn Merritt

Dear friends in Christ;

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Greetings in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus!

Once again, I stand in awe of your extreme generosity and continued expression of concern for the people of Haiti. Your recent gift is truly a blessing. It allows us the opportunity to build yet another home in the Leogane Lutheran Village. This new home will offer safety and security to a family living in the abject poverty of Haiti. Your gift will bring a new beginning for a family living without hope. The mercy and compassion of Christ are shown by your mercy and compassion.

Let me apologize for the delay in responding to your letter and gift. I was out of the country doing follow up ministry in Chile when your letter arrived. Please forgive me for not responding immediately. I've attached a few pictures of homes, a water project (including a sanitary latrine), the new church in Beaudouin, and various other shots. I truly appreciate your participation in this ministry of mercy to the thousands of helpless and hurting in Haiti.

In answer to a few of your questions, yes, Beaudouin is a part of the city of Jacmel. We have the village at Beaudouin and the village at Jacmel proper. There is also a village in Leogane which was the epicenter of the earthguake. Almost all of the goals for Beaudouin have all been achieved with the exception of installing a water system and building a school. In Beaudouin, the LCMS has helped build 24 homes and 2 apartment buildings as well as a new church, sanitary latrines, and a community store (where residents can buy food and other essentials at a reduces rate. While no more new homes are slated to be built in Beaudouin, we are waiting on donations to build the new school. A water system is currently being installed which will provide clean water to each home. A clinic is being set up at Beaudouin this month as a companion to the clinic in Jacmel proper. These two villages are separated by about 4 miles of distance.

Your most recent gift will be used to build a new home in the Lutheran Village in Leogane. At this village, the LCMS has assisted with the building of 18 homes, a clinic, a church/school, a new seminary, and a guesthouse for volunteers. The 18 homes are double homes (like a duplex) which then house two families. This type of construction saves money and allows us to provide housing for additional families. Water wells and sanitary latrines

Witness, Mercy, Life Together

have been installed in various locations in this village and roads were cut in then graveled (it rains a lot in Haiti so mud is a problem). The church in Leogane sits nearby a brand new Voodoo temple. The opportunities for the proclamation of the gospel are unlimited as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, with our support has now placed a full time pastor in Leogane.

The works of mercy made possible by generous gifts like yours have touched the lives of hundreds of Haitian in time and for eternity. Over 300 people are now in catechism classes and worship services are overflowing in each location. Thank you so much in the name of Christ and our church. Blessings always-

Your servant in and through Christ,

Rev. Glenn 7 Merritt

Rev. Glenn F. Merritt Director, Disaster Response Office of International Mission The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod 1333 South Kirkwood Road St. Louis, Missouri 63122

817-504-0078 mobile

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Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:9-10

BY THE NUMBERS!

Greetings to you in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have heard many presentations the years that included these words, "by the number." As a church we do keep track of numbers. It helps us plan and it helps us know if we reached a goal that we had set. We are glad to say, "we have good numbers." While numbers in and of themselves do not insure spiritual growth and maturity, it's fun to look at some numbers and say aloud, "Thanks be to God for such generosity."

1. On May 1 we will find out who our new assistant will be. We are excited to add a second pastor to our staff. We are hopeful to have him on board by early July if not sooner. We look forward to celebrating a grand Installation. This is but one of many joys of being a part of our Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. *"Thanks to God for such generosity."*

10. That is the number of people in out Hong Kong short-term mission team. They had opportunity to bear witness to their faith in Christ and in their sharing made our world a bit closer and trusting in Christ. We thank this crew for the wonderful buffalo burger feed in March as a big way of saying thanks to the parish for all the support in helping with the cost of this for our ten. *"Thanks to God for such generosity."*

We might find it interesting to know 20,000 students are in the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod schools which include seven secondary schools, six primary schools, twelve kindergarten schools and two special needs schools. These schools are highly valued in Hong Kong. *"Thanks* to God for such generosity."

19. That is the number of this year's Confirmands. It has been my joy over the years to confirm 1276 souls. Just think 19 more mature sets of hands that will join our hands in the ministry and mission of Christ himself. *"Thanks be to God for such generos-ity."*

29. On Easter morning I preached at Trinity Lutheran in Blunt which I have done for the most part for 29 years. It dawned on me during the sermon hymn that God willing, Blunt, Harrold, and Onida will have their own Pastor early this summer, and that I was preaching my last Easter sermon at Trinity. I will miss that wonderful bunch of saints at Trinity. They have been a delightful parish to care for over the years. I appreciate their willingness to step forward and work at a new tri-parish with Holy Cross/Onida and Immanuel/ Harrold. "Thanks be to God for such generosity."

163. The number of dresses for Africa created by the ladies of Faith. It is amazing, they are all created out of pillowcases. They were created by many hands of ladies who turned the old Fellowship Hall into a wonderful creative garment shop. *"Thanks be to God for such generosity."*

714. That might be the street address of Faith Lutheran if we were addressed on Euclid. At least I'd guess it would mirror the Grand Avenue address. Each week Jay Fredrich, our faithful Facilities Administrator, changes that sign. By the way, I hope someday that will be an electronic sign. A couple weeks after Easter this was the sign, "I'm drinking from my saucer because my cup is overflowing." I know a sermon will emerge someday from this clever thought as well as a Newsletter article. But for now, I must say our Lenten/Easter time was remarkable. So many, many generous acts of kindness. "Thanks be to God for such generosity."

936. That was our attendance on Easter. What a wonderful Holy Week and Easter we had. Nine hundred and thirty six souls is a lot of worshippers. The number I have always hoped for is that on Easter we could have a thousand people in worship. Someday in the future I will also

come to the same Trinity moment when I will preach my last Easter sermon at Faith. It will be a day of huge mixed emotions. I love preaching at Easter. I feel especially inspired and can hardly wait to step into the pulpit. I have preached 38 Easter Sundays at Faith. What a glorious place to be at Easter! It may be my last Easter sermon, but would you not agree, would it not be a moving, remarkable Sunday to have 1000 worshippers shout out. "He is risen indeed, Alleluia!" "Thanks be to God for such generosity." **2350.** The number of items donated by the members of Faith to the Pierre/ Ft. Pierre Food Pantry. It provided a great shot of supplies to a Pantry that has had heavy use in this past year. Here are a couple of other numbers

related to this project. The congregational members also gave \$650.00 to the Pantry and while the time of 9:00 was set to gather to move the Pantry items, by 8:40 all the items were in several pickups and on the way to the Pantry. So we thank all of you, we especially thank Paul Lepisto and Donna Leslie for championing this project and making it great fun. *"Thanks be to God for such generosity."*

10,110. Is the remarkable gift of money given for the Haiti Homes for Hope project. We accomplished this by designated Sunday gifts and a designation of the Wednesday Lenten offerings. Just five weeks into Lent we accomplished our goal. This is now the third home we have provided for. It will be in the Village of Leogane. *"Thanks be to God for such generosity."* Well, by the numbers, thank you for all you do, all you share, all you envision. Whatever the numbers, our cup overflows at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Lord be with you.

In His Service,

Pastor Brad Urbach

HAITI-HOMES OF HOPE

As part of the recovery effort for Haiti, the LCMS in partnership with the Haitian Lutheran Church has taken on a model that not only provides housing, churches, and medical care but also strives to build the faith community of our partner church in Haiti.

Last Lent we provided funding for two homes and through our LWML partial funding for a church in the community of Beaudrouin. Facilities in the three Lutheran Villages were dedicated in January of this year.

This Lent we funded a home in the community of Leogane as the building of homes in the Village of Beaudrouin is complete. The cost of the twobedroom home with a bathroom is \$10,000. How did we fund this home?

 We designated all of our Wednesday evening offerings.

 We also encouraged those who might miss a Wednesday to designate extra gifts for the project on Sundays.

Having hit the \$10,110 mark by the sixth Wednesday of Lent, all the rest of the Midweek offerings went to the General Fund as they normally would.

<u>Phone</u>

Numbers

When you replace your land line with a cell phone number, would you please let the church office know? We are finding more and more numbers are out of service. Thanks for your help in this matter.





As you know the five classrooms upstairs are named after St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, and St Paul. We even have a bit of humor with a storage room named

St. Storage.

We have a proposal to carpet the Christian Family Life Center upstairs hallway for \$5,102.37. It will provide a quieter hallway and bring a nice finished look. We received a gift of \$1200 from a Pierre businessman which we intend to apply to this expense. Therefore, the cost would have been \$3,902.37. Then Dale Knapp volunteered to install the carpet, which would have cost \$855.00. Suddenly the cost is only \$3,047.37.

Since all the rooms are named after saints, the board of stewardship is

ALL SAINTS HALLWAY

proposing that we seek 100 individuals/families that would be willing to give a \$31.00 gift in memory of someone who is a family member or friend.

The names will all be recorded in the red Memorial Books in the Narthex and a marker will indicate the Hallway is called "All Saints Hallway."

We would hope to have the project done by Memorial Day week when we would have a prayer of thanks and dedication of our All Saints' Hallway.

The Sts. Matthew, Mark and Paul are completely done. Our intention is to put the ceiling in Luke/John in2013. For now, it is a great activity room for our youth.

The sign-up for the "100/31" gifts is on the Information Table in the Narthex.

We thank Bob Smith for providing the signs for the hallway.

A group consisting of Jan Larson, Laurie Schultz, Renee Knapp, and Lennis Axdahl chose the carpet for the hallway. We thank them.



2012 FAITH LUTHERAN FOOD DRIVE - WOW - IT'S ANOTHER RECORD!

The Pierre-Ft. Pierre Food Pantry said they were facing a significantly higher need for food this year, and the Faith Lutheran Congregation stepped up to the plate.

It was another record-setting year for Faith's annual food drive on behalf of the Pierre-Ft. Pierre Food Pantry.

The congregation donated 2,350 food items and paper products to the Food Pantry in March, surpassing last year's record by 324 items.

In addition, members of the congregation generously gave cash and checks totaling \$650 to the Pantry in conjunction with the Food Drive - another record high, up \$200 from the amount received last year.

On March 30, a group of guys from the church hauled 140 boxes from the church to the Pantry, which is housed at the Boys and Girls Club.

Among the items collected this year:

- 447 cans of soup, chili and stew, and packages of soup mix
- 230 cans of vegetables
- 223 cans of tuna, chicken, salmon and other canned meat
- 122 boxes of Hamburger Helper, Tuna Helper and Chicken Helper
- 106 boxes of cereal and oatmeal
- 91 cans of fruit
- 88 cans of diced, chopped or stewed tomatoes
- 82 boxes of macaroni and cheese
- 75 cans of beans
- 68 cans and boxes of spaghetti, lasagna, ravioli and other pasta meals
- 65 bags and boxes of noodles
- 65 jars and boxes of baby food and formula
- 56 boxes of potato mixes
- 50 cans and jars of spaghetti sauce
- 44 boxes of stuffing mix
- 40 cans and boxes of milk
- 35 packages of paper towels, toilet paper and other paper
- products
- 32 boxes of pancake mix
- 27 bottles of syrup
- 19 bags of flour
- 15 bags of sugar

Faith Lutheran has one of the largest food drives for the Pierre-Ft. Pierre Food Pantry each year, so the congregation's generosity is greatly appreciated.

A big thanks to everyone who lent a hand with this important project!

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!



Gym Protocol!

- Always return the gym to the same configuration. In other words, <u>PUT EVERYTHING</u> <u>BACK THE WAY YOU FOUND</u> <u>IT.</u>
- <u>TURN OFF THE LIGHTS</u> when you leave.
- <u>ALWAYS</u> carry tables to move them. <u>NEVER</u> drag them across the floor. It badly scratches the floor.
- Wear non-marking gym shoes. If you do not have nonmarking shoes, please <u>TAKE</u> <u>YOUR SHOES OFF</u> and just wear your socks.
- <u>NEVER</u> hang on the basketball rims!! These are portable baskets and it ruins the backboards. While they are portable they are pretty expensive. Therefore, <u>NEVER HANG ON</u> <u>THE RIMS.</u>



May Adult Bible Study

Adults please review May's schedule:

May 6Voter's AssemblyMay 13"Courageous" LivingStudy

May 20 Senior Reception/ Courageous Living study

May 27 Memorial Weekend – No Class

Building News

The St. Paul Room Our April newsletter had a very complete list of thank yous. The finishing of the St. Paul room was truly a work of scores of people.

Now add just a few more names:

- Craig Bump and Marrill & Sandy Bales for 24 new padded chairs for the room.
- Clara & Dan Shelbourn for a coffee pot
- Joyce & Nathan Solem for a microwave oven.

The St. Paul room is a very attractive room and one more time we say THANK YOU!

Debt Retirement At the writing of the May newsletter, we know we will be able to do two to three advance payments, once again saving several thousand dollars in interest. We will give you the numbers in the June newsletter.

Our Board of Stewardship is working with our South Dakota District Church Extension plan to lower out interest rate. There will also be an update on this in the June newsletter.

All Saints' Hallway More details are found elsewhere in the newsletter. This project will greatly enhance the second floor in the Christian Family Life Center and make for a quieter hallway. We are grateful to Dale Knapp for offering to install the carpet at no charge and for a selection committee of Jan Larson, Renee Knapp, Laurie Schultz and Lennis Axdahl for making a good selection.

Witness, Mercy, Life Together

Letter of Thanks

Pastor Urbach, Helen, Jay and members of Faith Lutheran Church—

Thank you for allowing us to utilize your facility for the Capitol Area Job Fair. Thank you for your additional work to accommodate us, such as moving tables, adjusting air, making copies and poster board signs.

The job fair allowed 113 job seekers and 23 employers to talk face to face about possible opportunities.

Dakota Radio Group, Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce & South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation

High School Seniors

On Sunday, May 20 we will have a Reception for our High School Seniors.

- Please gather shortly after 8:00 a.m. in the Gym. Wear your robes, no hats needed.
- We will sit together as a group and commune together as a class.
- At 9:20 our Reception will start and go until 9:45. We know you have many places to go so we will get you on your way.



BE STILL AND KNOW ...

"Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations;

I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10

I just returned from visiting Gloris Zoller at St. Mary's Hospital. Most of you know Gloris is recovering from hip surgery, as well as an apparent stroke. She is fragile and there is a long journey of healing ahead of her. I associate Gloris with a strong faith, a lively spirit, and with music. The Zoller's daughter, Jackie, mentioned that she and her parents have spent time together praying and singing. Jackie and her dad sang a few hymns for Gloris, who responded, "You probably should not make a recording." We all laughed, but music is a soothing balm for a weary soul and a tired body.

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side,

Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.

Leave to thy God to order and provide;

In every change, He faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend

Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

It is well documented that music has the ability to evoke emotions. We have all experienced music's physical and mental effects at one time or another. Music can calm inner turmoil, but also set the pace for revolution and violence. Vocalists will tell you that sometimes the mental effect is so strong that a few lines from a song can keep running through one's mind despite any efforts to ignore them or make them stop. Beethoven was famous for being able to evoke emotions in his listeners. Many of the pieces that he wrote summon up joy, sadness, loneliness, loss and return. After a long day of work, perhaps a ballad sung by our favorite vocalist can physically relax our bodies and distract our minds from the cares of the day. On the other end of the spectrum, loud fast music with a strong beat can exhilarate and pump us up.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake

To guide the future, as He has the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;

All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Be still my soul: the waves and winds still know

His voice Who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Music serves as an emotional anchor. How many times has a song transported you back in time – childhood, a first date, a wedding celebration and other memories. A song can have the capability of reaching deep into the human spirit and change a mood in an instant. The hymn, "Be Still, My Soul," has its origins from three different nations and three different people who lived in three different time periods. The tune, "Finlandia," was composed by Jean Sibelius in 1899, and is well-known within the church body. The text encourages us to trust God's faithfulness towards us, even in life's darkest circumstances. It is built around a central thought, a cry that remains safely wrapped in a calm, anchored core. Supposedly, this hymn was a favorite of Eric Liddell, the athlete who became famous in the 1924 Olympics for refusing to run on the Sabbath (the movie, Chariots of Fire). He later became a missionary in China and was imprisoned during World War II. Liddell was said to have taught this hymn to others in the prison camp.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart,

And all is darkened in the vale of tears,

Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,

Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.

Be still, my soul: thy Jesus can repay

From His own fullness all He takes away.

As we tread along bumpy paths and "thorny ways," we need not fear, because our "best, (our) heavenly Friend," causes all things to work together for the good of His people. The struggles we experience now will bring us "to a joyful end," both in this life and the next. We are reminded that our final destination is where "sorrow is forgot, and love's purest joys restored." We have a certain knowledge of the future that enables us to face our trials with peace and confidence.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on

When we shall be forever with the Lord.

When disappointment, grief and fear are gone,

Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.

Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past

All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Karen Lindbloom, Music Coordinator

VBS AMAZING DESERT JOURNEY



On this *Amazing Desert Journey*, your children will learn about God's plan to rescue them from sin and death through His Son, Jesus, who even now is preparing a heavenly home for them and all who believe. As they hear the accounts of God's forgiveness, mercy, and salvation from Scripture, they will begin to





relate these Bible truths to their own life of faith now and for eternity.

The dates for our VBS this year are June 10-14 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

DAYCARE NEWS

Greetings from Faith Lutheran DayCare:

We are so thankful for the rain! We have been praying for it at circle time and are excited to see our prayers being answered. While we are grateful we are finally getting rain, but we can't wait to go back outside again!

The current enrollment at the daycare is 56 total children. We have 10 babies, 8 toddlers, 29 three to five year olds, and 9 schoolers. Our staff consists of 15 teachers, 3 teacher's aides, and 3 subs. We welcomed 2 new babies into our baby area within this last month and are expecting 3 more yet! However, we are saddened by our teacher Halie Blough's departure at the end of April as well as our Cook Dean at the beginning of May. We will miss you both!

At our circle time we have been discussing the miracle of Jesus' Resurrection and the great sacrifice He made for us. The children really seem to understand this. I had a parent talk to me about how her 2 year old reiterated the story to her and showed her where we discussed the nails were in Jesus' body. I am glad that the children were excited about Easter, but also remembered the *real* reason

to be happy on Easter morning!

We are excited for summer to get started as we always have extra fun with all of our children during the summer. We are also happy to announce that we will once again be transporting for summer recreation this year!

We hope everyone had a wonderful Easter, we sure did!

Your friend in Christ,

Jennifer Carr FLDC Director

Toner Cartridges

We thank everyone who has brought toner cartridges for recycling.

Guidelines have changed and until we know more about them we will no longer be accepting cartridges at the church.



Official Acts

Baptisms Reese Morgan Spomer 4-7-12 Adeline Mae Schutz 4-7-12 Matthew James Eberhard 4-14-12 Brecken Glen Ottenbacher 4-15-12

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JYM NEWS

JYM There is an no activity for our Middle School youth in May. June brings JYM aged kids three big opportunities:

Crazy Horse - Friday,

June 1st through Saturday, June 2. We will be leaving the church at 4:00 Friday. Bring a sack lunch for your dinner. That evening the group will attend the lighting ceremony at Mt. Rushmore and stay in a local church. Saturday morning its off to the Volks March at Crazy Horse and walk out on the "arm" of this massive rock sculpture. Breakfast and lunch provided on Saturday, then head home, back by late afternoon. Paul & Toni Kenefick-Aschoff will head up this event and take the church vans. The cost of \$20.00 covers it all! A sign-up sheet is now on the Narthex Information table.

VBS – Sunday, June 10 through Thursday, June 14. Please consider being a helper with VBS.

Camp Minneboji – Sunday, June 17 through Saturday, June 23. Registration forms are now at the church. This is for kids who have **completed** grades 4-9.

LYF NEWS

High School Youth Meeting We will meet Wednesday nights in May at 8:00. A huge thanks to the youth and parents of the

High School youth for:

- * the Lenten coffees* the Good FridayPotato Dinner
- * the Easter Breakfast

We thank the Hulls, Kings, Kampfes, and Hartmanns for all their efforts in coordinating the Good Friday and Easter meals.

We need to plan for our Seniors to get their hand print in the Great Room.

May 6 – LYF/Elder Pizza

Event at 5:00 Sunday, May 15. The Board of Elders is providing a pizza dinner for all our LYF youth to say thanks for Acolyting.



Acolyte Training At 4:00 the Elders will train our newly confirmed to be Acolytes, they then ask them to join the other LYF kids for pizza at 5:00.





May 6 Early: Kaci Deal, Rachel Hartmann Late: Alyssa Bump, Andrew Leif

May 13 Early: Brandon Berheim, Whitney King Late: Caitlin Bolte, Reed Lindbloom

May 20 Early: Morgan Deis, Maranda Olson Late: Colton Graves, Caden Overturf

May 27 Early: LeAndra Hoefener, Nicole Smith Late: Matt Green, Molly Tschetter



heme: "ARMOR OF GOD"

Camp Minneboji information and registration forms are now available here at the church (or get this information on-line at www.minneboji.com)! Camp week is June 17-23 at Camp Okoboji in northwest lowa. The camp, for kids **having completed** grades 4-9, features Bible study, mission presentations, music, crafts, sports, recreation, and the chance to meet new Christian friends. This year's camp theme is "Armor of God." The camp registration fee is \$280 (\$305 for 9th grade "Honors" campers). **The registration deadline is June 1, but camp fills up quickly so register early. The Church will again offer \$50 scholarships for Camp attendance.**



PRESCHOOL NEWS



Wow! Can it be that preschool is nearly over? Just four more weeks as I write this article! What a great year we have had here at preschool! We have been blessed with a great staff, supportive parents and wonderful children who are ready to learn new things each day! During May, we will be traveling to the South Dakota Discovery Center, reviewing all our stories, shapes, colors, numbers and letters. It is a fast fun month with Mother's day gifts and picnic invitations to make and share with those who are coming to our picnic on Friday, May 11th. We will be meeting at Griffin Park at 12:00 noon and after enjoying our own sack lunches, we will be giving out a diploma to each child by their class.

Registrations for next year have begun and we are starting to fill up, but **we still have many openings**. Please pass the word about our program to people you know – word of mouth is our best advertising! Use the form below, or go to our website and print the form from there, and return with the \$25.00 registration fee to enroll your child.

Thank you for all your support this past year – the milk caps are piling up! The receipts from Dakotamart are filling the boxes and so are the soup labels. These all amount to lots of extra funds for us to purchase toys, equipment and even our basic needs at preschool. God bless each of you – see you in the fall! In Christ's love,

Jan Larson, Director/teacher

If you or anyone you know is interested in our 2012-2013 program, please fill out the form below and return it, along with a \$25.00 registration fee, to the church office. Children will only be pre-registered when the enclosed form and fee are received at the church office or to Jan Larson. Children must be three by June 1, 2012, for our Tuesday-Thursday sessions and five by December 31, 2012 for our Monday-Wednesday-Friday sessions or have previously attended our preschool for a year. If you have any questions please feel free to call Jan Larson at (224-6574). Thank you.
Faith Lutheran Preschool Pre-Registration Form
will attend Faith Lutheran Preschool in the 2012-2013 school year. Child's Name
Phone Number: (Home) (Work) (Cell) Child's Birth Date
Please check section preferred: Mon/Wed/Fri a.m. * (9:00-11:30)Tues/Thur a.m.** (9:00-11:30)
Tues/Thur p.m.** (1:00-3:30) Must be five (5) by December 31, 2012 (plus 2nd year students of Faith Lutheran Preschool) Must be three (3) by June 1, 2012
Your Name Your Address

LETTER FROM OUR MISSIONARIES



Happy Easter wishes from our family to yours, this blessed time as we remember with brothers and sisters around the world the incredible sacrifice our Lord made to set us free!

As we get ready to decorate some bright and happy eggs, I thought I would sit down and share a bit of where we are, both geographically and health-wise! I have not been so consistent with updates, because sometimes it has been really hard to know what to write. So, I will share, first off, that we are still in Saint Louis, living in the missionary housing provided to us here. This has been a huge blessing, providing us not only with a living place, but also a wonderful, loving and supportive community and new friends for our children, as well as giving us a chance to "be

still" and wait for what is God's will for us regarding overseas work, my health, and what our future, living for Him, will look like.

It is hard to believe that we have been back in the States for 1 ½ years, having arrived Dec. 2010, thinking we would be here a maximum of 2 months. Those 2 months grew to 4 then 9, and frustration also grew as my health symptoms worsened and we were no closer to finding out what was causing them. Cue in Dr. Sommerville, a neurologist specializing in obscure cases. I thank God for my doctor often and sincerely, as Dr. Sommerville was able to diagnose my rare condition, Small Fiber Non-Length Dependant Ganglianopathy, and get me started on treatments for it. The past 6-8 months have seen him try to use the "shock and awe" approach to getting my immune system to stop attacking my nerve bundles. Unfortunately this did not result in suspension of hostilities, so to say! However, good days now outweigh the bad, which is a grand improvement. J As fine-tuning of treatment continues, and we wait for approval to try out a more portable means of treatment (rather than 8-10 hrs at the hospital getting IV treatments every other week), we continue to look with hope toward our eventual return to our ministry in Kazakhstan!

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and with our dear friends and fellow followers of Christ in Central Asia, who join with us to celebrate the resurrection, the proof of Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the grave! Blessed Easter, all!

In Him, the Savior and Redeemer of the world,

Marat, Amy, Amanzhol and Kuralai Kashenov – LCMS Kazakhstan

He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!!!