

Interest Time

Sharing information about our Church Extension ministry



New construction helps congregation accommodate growth, outreach

Laborer For Christ member Jeffrey Schendel surveys the construction scene atop a new wing at Trinity Lutheran Church, Sauk Rapids, Minn. The congregation used LCEF's Laborers For Christ to help it construct two new wings that added 7,700 square feet of space to the church and school. About 75 people join Trinity a year, yet Ron Eickhoff, president of the congregation, said that it added "to help us get more new people to come inside."

Building for Eternity

Serving needs of the LCMS

The desire of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations to make ministry happen does not trend up and down like the stock market. It follows a steady trend, fueled by the will of members to continue to expand God's Kingdom. Congregations build or renovate churches, fellowship halls, schools, and child-care centers so that people always have a place to celebrate and rejoice in God's love and be a part of communities of believers.

Choosing to partner with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) means congregations can forge ahead with their plans and ministry programs. That's because a growing number of LCMS members have faith and trust in the ministry of investing in the Church through LCEF. The availability of loan dollars is dependent upon investments by individuals and congregations. This issue is dedicated to showing the impact investments have and how important they are to the LCMS, and to say "thank you." Please take time to thank God for these glories and the bounty you've shared with these churches and schools through your investments.

Indianapolis church, school continue momentum with new classrooms

The pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School, Indianapolis, Ind., says his congregation is receiving lots of boats sent by God. Figuratively, that is.

What Rev. John Sattler means relates to a story from the movie "The Pursuit of Happyness" starring Will Smith. (Yes, the title of the movie does include a misspelling.)

"The little boy in the movie tells a story about a guy in a flood. The water starts to rise, so he goes up to the second floor of his house. A boat comes by and the people in it say, 'Get in, we'll take you to safety.' He responds, 'No, I trust God.'"

The story continues that as the flood waters rise, and many boats come by, the man responds each time that he trusts God will take care of him. Even as a helicopter comes by offering assistance, he says he trusts God to help.

"He drowns and goes to heaven, stands before God. He says, 'God, I thought You'd take care of me.' God replies, 'I sent boats and a helicopter for you. How obvious do I need to be?'"

Sattler said he and his staff, including Assistant Pastor Dave McClean, talk with the congregation about the boats sent to them. "God's been really obvious in so many areas here. In addition to the school and the blessings He has provided around the construction project, there are so many

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Spreading the Gospel in Kenya

Kenya is well known for its outstanding natural beauty and the varied cultures of its residents. What you might not know is that Kenya has a fast-growing Lutheran population. To assist and support Lutheran congregations, missions, and schools in this largely Muslim country, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK) recently completed construction of a building called Luther Plaza.

LCEF assisted the ELCK with a construction loan made possible through the Arthur C. Haake World Ministry Fund (see sidebar).

Dedicated Feb. 27, the three-story building houses ELCK headquarters, the central diocese and Nairobi Parish offices, and ministry space. The yet-unneeded extra office space is being rented out to help sustain the opera-

tion of the building. Dr. Dean Nadasdy, Fourth Vice-President of the LCMS and a parish pastor from the Minnesota South District, attended the service and presented Presiding Bishop Rev. Walter Obare Omwanza the LCEF dedication plaque.

Dr. Walter Obare Omwanza, archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya, accepts a dedication plaque from Dr. Dean Nadasdy, LCMS fourth vice president, on behalf of LCEF during the Feb. 27 grand opening of Luther Plaza in Nairobi.



By supporting Lutherans and the operations of the ELCK with a construction loan, LCEF is once again an active partner in the *Ablaze!* movement.

“It is a thrill to assist in the construction of Luther Plaza so that the ELCK may develop new ministries and more people in Kenya may come to know Jesus Christ,” said Merle Freitag, LCEF President.

Third generation of K.I.D.S. stamp investors

When Hannah, Benjamin, and Seth Meyer obtained their first K.I.D.S. stamps, they became the third generation to invest in the LCEF ministry. When Benjamin is asked what he wants to buy with money sent to him for his birthday, he is quick to answer, “LCEF K.I.D.S. stamps.”

Their mother, Darcy Meyer, started

selling the stamps at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Tempe, Ariz., as a way to excite the children and encourage them to save money as they learn to help LCMS churches. After researching LCEF and seeing *The Lutheran Witness* promotional ad for \$100 worth of stamps free to new K.I.D.S. programs, she obtained the stamps for Beautiful

Savior. To start the children’s savings books, she offered four free 25-cent stamps to each child. Darcy explains how LCEF investments help build new churches, schools, and other ministries when selling the stamps.

“We started a book for Seth when he was born (our Pacific Southwest District gives \$10 in stamps to new-

borns that are baptized and the family is a member of a local LCMS church). Then we supplement it occasionally with birthday money,” Darcy said. Seth is 2-1/2 years old now.

Hannah, 12, and Benjamin, 8, get a weekly allowance, and 10% goes into tithing and 10% goes into their savings bank. When they accumulate enough, they buy stamps with their savings.

“The kids enjoy being part of the process at church. When someone wants stamps, the kids (Hannah and Benjamin) collect the money and then distribute the stamps. It’s a good math lesson for them, too,” Darcy said.

Darcy and David Meyer have passed on to their children the idea of using LCEF as a stewardship and ministry tool, something they learned from their parents. Darcy’s parents, Dr. Gary and Nola Treece, of Yakima, Wash., helped her invest in LCEF when she was a child. David’s parents, Rev. Laurence and Ona Meyer introduced him to the program when he attended Emanuel Lutheran School in Hamburg, Minn. He and Darcy continue to have

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Hannah, Seth, and Benjamin Meyer are investing with LCEF through the K.I.D.S. Stamp Program at their church, Beautiful Savior Lutheran. Their parents and both sets of grandparents are LCEF investors, passing along the message of ministry and personal stewardship on to the next generation.

Tripling population leads to expansion in Franklin, Wis.

The congregation at Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Franklin, Wis., designed its latest church expansion with even more expansion in mind.

Franklin, one of the fastest-growing communities in Wisconsin, is located about 10 miles from Milwaukee and blends rural living with big-city amenities. Its attractiveness as a community is reflected in its population, which has more than tripled from the 1950s until today.

Franklin's growth is clearly evident at Risen Savior Lutheran Church, which has seen its church membership swell from 35 at its inception in the

mid-1980s to more than 500 today. An average Sunday sees approximately 200 congregants in attendance.

"It's been very exciting for us as a congregation," said Rev. David Zandt, who has led the congregation since 2003. "The blessing for us has been multi-generational, with both young families and retirement-age folks joining us. It's a colorful dynamic."

It became clear to the congregation that expanding its facilities was inevitable if it was to keep pace with its growing membership, said Jack Henry, chairman of Risen Savior's building committee. Risen Savior used LCEF for its expansion loan.

"We shopped around and LCEF was, by far, the best option," Henry said.

The expansion added 1,300 square feet to the sanctuary, including an additional 100 seats and expanded space for the choir and children's music/drama ministry.

"The Lord has certainly blessed this project, especially its timing with the growth of other areas of Franklin," Zandt said.

The preschool now can expand and, perhaps one day, an elementary school be added. That, Zandt said, would be a benefit to the entire community.

"Our church has so many opportunities now for outreach," said Zandt.

"It's been great working with Jack (Henry) and the congregation at Risen Savior," said Tim Dittloff, Wisconsin District Vice President. "They're very conservative and are good financial stewards. This church is very mission minded and has always kept its focus on helping 'the lost' in their community."



Carefully preserved in the expansion project at Risen Savior, Franklin, Wis., were 12 windows that backlight the altar and overlook a wooded area. Enhancing the beauty are stained-glass panels donated by a congregation member that can be traded out with the liturgical seasons. Pictured here is Rev. David Zandt as he delivers the Christmas service in front of the Advent panels.

Dedicated investor carries on family tradition

Just as Cindy Hilger helps continue the legacy of her family's business, Volm Companies Inc., of Wisconsin, she also continues on a tradition started by her late father, Gerald Volm: He was an LCEF investor.

"A big reason he invested was because it helps congregations, schools, pastors, etc.," Hilger said. "He instilled in me the importance of taking care of the Lord's work and the shepherds of the flocks, namely the pastors."

She said Volm was motivated by the love of Jesus Christ and even proclaimed his faith on his business card. Instead of having his title as the head of the company, it read, "I am just a salesman whom the Lord has blessed," and the Bible verse Matthew 6:33.

Hilger, of Indio, Calif., works in sales along with her husband, Robert, for the company. Her dad thought it was wise to be invested in LCEF, even investing funds for the company in LCEF and encouraged Hilger, her husband, and her siblings, about the safety of investing in church extension.

"He always said that even during the Depression, LCEF paid funds to its investors when banks did not," Hilger said. Reference to that economic crisis in today's economic climate gives Hilger even more confidence in the choice.

"Right now the way things are with the banks and stock market, no way are my husband and I investing in the market," she said. But beyond safety, she feels the mission of LCEF is just as important, as did her father.

"The main reason we invest is that since it is a Christian-based organization, we can trust LCEF with our money. As my father always said, the rates are competitive but the big factor is it helps congregations, which in turn furthers the Lord's work," she said.

Coast to coast: Investments fueling ministry

People may not be building houses or high-rise office buildings, but that doesn't mean that places that help build the Church aren't being constructed. The following are some recent examples of the joys LCEF investors get to share in knowing their investment dollars made loan funds and services available to assist congregations across the country.



Grace Lutheran, Canastota, N.Y., (pictured above) relocated and built a new church twice the size of its former facility, with the congregation doing much of the work itself. As a result of the move and the merging of two congregations, membership has grown and there is wonderful spirit of anticipation and expectation about how God is working through them. The church welcomed about 200 people to its dedication. The congregation used

LCEF Ministry Services' demographic study and architectural consultation, and a loan to complete the project.

The congregation of **Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Lithia, Fla.**, (pictured below) built an Open Arms Child Care Center that opened in August 2008, but immediately went to work on a new project as soon as it was done. The young congregation has

grown so much during the construction of the Open Arms it now must fast-track its own building plans. They currently are meeting in a modular unit, with an average of 150 worshippers.

Lamb of God, a daughter mission of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Brandon, can now reach over 200 preschoolers, as well as school-age children through an after-school care program. Lamb of God also used LCEF for its loan.

With the help of an LCEF Loan, **Trinity Lutheran School in Mequon, Wis.**, (top photo, next page) was able to make some updates to 11 school classrooms, add much-needed elevators for the disabled, and bring the fire prevention system up-to-date. Other renovations included replacing inefficient windows and lighting, updating restrooms and the heating and cooling system, and adding to the gym's seating area. Now guests no longer have to sit right on the sidelines of the gym, which was a little dangerous for players and fans during sporting events.



expansion across the nation

Members of the **Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Mason City, Iowa**, (center photo, right) congregation are conducting a successful ministry in the form of its Sunbeam Lutheran Preschool, which is located on the church grounds and has been for many years. But the congregation also realized the community was in need of quality Christian child care. This year they expanded their child care services, and LCEF helped with loan assistance.

“We started planning with the mindset that we would not be simply providing babysitting services, but would actively involve ourselves in teaching children in our care about our Savior Jesus Christ and His love for all people,” said congregation member David Mairs.

Renovations almost always involve some unusual circumstances and unforeseen side projects. That was certainly true for **St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Laramie, Wyo.**, (bottom photo, at right) last spring. Plans were to update the church and parsonage with the help of LCEF’s Laborers For Christ and a construction loan. St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Campus Center is a congregation of the Wyoming District serving the students of the University of Wyoming and The Wyoming Technical Institute.

In May 2008, a tornado came through Laramie, close to the parsonage, totally destroying the roof, damaging the siding, and knocking over the fence around the yard. Thanks to the hard work of students, Laborers, and other volunteers (including the pastor’s wife), the roof and other unexpected repairs were completed in three short weeks.



Building together, witnessing together

Laborers For Christ members bring more than just their construction and project management skills to the congregations and schools they assist. They also bring with them a sense of shared purpose: to spread the Good News of Jesus and help LCMS organizations do the same through building or renovation projects. As they assist these ministries, Laborers provide a stewardship component by saving them money and an evangelical component by witnessing to the community.

As spring approaches, Laborers are deploying to new project sites, such



as **Living Hope Lutheran Church, Stafford, Va.;** **Shepherd by the Lakes Lutheran Church, Syracuse, Ind.;** and **St. John Lutheran Church, Spokane, Wash.**

By investing in LCEF, you too have helped these churches and schools make their building projects a reality.

Each of these congregations have loans through LCEF, and your investments have become an important ingredient to complete the project. Investments and gifts also help support ministry services such as Laborers For Christ, who help congregations use their resources wisely and with a spiritual purpose.

Just ask us!

Turn to LCEF for answers to your project questions

Many congregations and organizations are contemplating building projects or renovations now that the costs of construction have come down. Your questions can be answered by LCEF. Below are some examples and common answers. For more information and answers suited for your unique situation, please call 1-800-843-5233 or visit www.lcef.org.

“How do we begin planning a capital campaign?”	LCEF’s Capital Funding Services offers a range of services that help communicate vision, assess readiness, and grow stewards for facilities and ministries.
“How do we know where to build on our property and what kind of issues should we look out for when building?”	Contact your District Vice President for information on a licensed architect that can provide advice and charges for travel expenses only.
“We need a contractor that we can trust. Who should we hire?”	Consider Laborers For Christ, no matter the size of the project. Laborers can assist in managing your project with the added bonus of having spiritual beacons for your organization and its volunteers.
“How do we let our community know about our progress on a project?”	In addition to your local media, you may wish to do a direct mail campaign. LCEF can help you gather demographic information about your community and then provide a mailing list to targeted households.
“What is an easy way to manage the gifts given during a capital campaign or Consecrated Stewards program?”	With the <i>Joyful Response</i> ® Electronic Offering Program through LCEF, congregations have the ability to offer members an automated method of meeting their financial stewardship commitments through electronic funds transfers. It’s easy and a free service.

INDIANAPOLIS

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other things that are going well.”

Holy Cross has finished the first phase of a new elementary school building, relocating the classrooms from a former residential garage and two portable classrooms. Over the past few years, the congregation received as a gift or purchased surrounding property that included two homes. LCEF is a partner with Holy Cross, providing loans for the land purchases and construction.

“Lutheran Church Extension Fund has been a huge asset in making all of this happen,” Sattler said.

More phases of construction are on the horizon because the school will add a grade level each year until the eighth grade, Sattler said. Fourth grade will be added next year.

Between the preschool and elementary classes, Holy Cross has 255 students enrolled, said School Administrator Michelle Searcy. She has been administrator for seven years.

“This included just six classrooms and we’re going to need 24. It’s designed with a gymnasium in the middle, with classrooms on the sides,” Sattler said. The next phase of construction will start within three years.

Searcy said it is too early for final enrollment numbers for 2009-2010, but “it seems to be really strong, despite the economy.”

The new school opened to classes Jan. 5, and already the community is enjoying the gymnasium, including the congregation’s men’s basketball league

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1-800-843-5233 ■ www.lcef.org



Olympic diver Thomas Finchum of Indianapolis spoke at the dedication of Holy Cross Lutheran’s new school building Jan. 25. Finchum spoke to the crowd about the power of prayer, and how it was important to him as he competed during this past summer’s Olympics in Beijing, and uses “I can do all things through Christ” as his life motto.

and a community-wide youth basketball league.

The congregation also used LCEF’s Capital Funding Services and demographic services for a new mission congregation it is planting.

More boats, one with a diver aboard

Holy Cross invited to its Jan. 25 dedication guest speaker Thomas Finchum, an 18-year-old Olympic diver from Indianapolis. Sattler said the congregation was glad to have a former Lutheran school student (he attended Emmaus Lutheran and Lutheran South High School), even though they had never heard him speak.

“This was the first time Thomas had ever spoken in public,” Sattler said. “But it was a great presentation about the power of God at work in his life.”

Finchum talked about the power of prayer, even as he competed in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and that his confirmation verse—“I can do all things through Christ”—is his life motto.

“The kids were in awe of Thomas, and the fact that he witnessed his faith to us,” Searcy said. The students also sang with songwriter Don Wharton his composition, “This Holy Place,” which

has become a favorite at Holy Cross, she said.

“It was a wonderful way to dedicate a building where it’s all about instilling Jesus into the lives of these little children,” Sattler said.

Sattler said plans for a high school may follow the completion of the grade school since now there is enough property to support one.

“God is so obvious in the ministry here,” Sattler said. “The boats keep showing up. And we refer to the land we ended up with as the ocean liner!”

THIRD GENERATION

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investments in LCEF together so that they may continue to support the ministry.

Laurence and Ona now live in Kennewick, Wash., but no matter where they have lived, they have invested in LCEF. Rev. Meyer now promotes and explains LCEF investments and the ministry as the Northwest District’s Inland Empire Promotion Representative. They are happy to hear that their grandchildren use LCEF and said “there is something special in knowing another generation enjoys preparing for the future and supporting the Lord’s work.”

Thank you for supporting the ministry

Have you ever built a church in Seaford, Del.? Reflected on God's gifts in White Bear Lake, Minn.? Watched

children grow to know Jesus in Alpharetta, Ga.?

Even if you have not done so in



The Risen Savior, Franklin, Wis., congregation is one of many LCMS organizations that has partnered with LCEF. To read more about Risen Savior, see page 3.

person, your investment in Lutheran Church Extension Fund is working in each of these locations, in addition to many others around the country and world. Your dollars are building and expanding churches, schools and pre-schools, and supporting your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Inside this special edition of *Interest Time* are just a few of the remarkable stories that happen because you are committed to investing in the creation of places of worship and Lutheran education, and supporting the people who are instrumental in those projects. Thank you for your decision to help spread the Gospel!

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