

Attention Concordia Health Plan Members

Walgreens, Express Scripts Contract Coming to a Close

Concordia Plans Services wants to remind Concordia Health Plan (CHP) members that beginning Jan. 1, 2012, Walgreens will no longer be a network pharmacy for CHP members with prescription drug coverage through Express Scripts. This includes members in Options A-E, HDHP, and Concordia Seminary Students Option CSS, as well as members with Medicare supplemental coverage. You can find Frequently Asked Questions at www.ConcordiaPlans.org.

DROP-SIDE CRIB ALERT

Just a reminder that all child care facilities and places of public accommodation must prepare to replace their current drop-side cribs with new, compliant cribs before December 28, 2012. Older non-compliant cribs should not be resold or donated. They must be disposed of in a manner that they cannot be reassembled and used.

Church Law & Tax Report, Sept-Oct 2011

School News

Trinity Lutheran School of Kalispell received a Montana District Schools Fund Grant to help us in our mission as a school. The money was used to purchase a Smart Board for our 7th grade room. The addition of the Smart Board will allow the teacher and student a way of interacting with resources on the web. It will be used in all subjects to enhance learning.

David Topp, Principal,



Important Dates for the Upcoming 2012 Convention

- October –February 28 Circuit Forums held to elect Circuit Counselors
- October–February 9 Voter’s meetings to elect lay delegates to District Convention
- January 27, 2012** **Nominations for President and Vice presidents due to secretary**
- February 10, 2012 Lay- delegate characterization forms due in District office
- February 10, 2012 Overtures to 2012 District convention due in District office
- February 17, 2012 Consent to serve and Biographies due from Pres/VP candidates to Dist. office
- February 17, 2012 Consent to serve and biographies due for all other offices.
- February 29, 2012 Results of elections of Circuit Counselors due in District office
- February 29, 2012 Circuit Counselor, Pres, and VP triennial reports due in District office
- March 9, 2012 Credential forms mailed to delegates
- June 11-14, 2012 District Convention
- June 2013 Pastoral and Lay delegates attending 2012 District convention cast votes for Synod President



MONTANA

REFLECTIONS

December 2011

Montana District—LCMS
30 Broadwater Avenue
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 259-2908

THE VOICE

“I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’”
John 1 :23

Some people are blessed with distinctive and powerfully evocative voices. For example, if I say, James Earl Jones, many of you can probably hear his deep mellow tones. If I say Pavarotti, some of you will hear the richness of his tenor, singing opera. If I say Jerry Lewis, some of you will hear his nasally, manic, comedy. If I say John the Baptist I suppose you draw a blank. We don’t know what his voice sounded like but we do know what it was for. God used the voice of John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. John’s is a distinctive and powerfully evocative voice, but it is not the most important voice for us to hear.

In this section of the Gospel the Pharisees are trying to get John the Baptist to focus on a self-created identity. “What do you have to say about yourself?” John is having none of it. Instead he focuses on God’s voice, what God says about him. He found his identification in the Word of God. He is a voice, to be sure. But, he is a voice that prepares the world to hear an even more important voice. He knew that God sent him to point to Jesus, not to himself.

The question of whose voice

to listen to is a lively one given the fact that we hear a lot of voices every day. Very few of those voices actually point us to Jesus. Yet, we rarely seem to notice. When it comes to listening, sinners are not very discriminating. How often haven’t you listened to a voice droning on in the background on the television, or radio without really knowing who was talking or what they were saying?

Someone is always claiming some power to save us from something. The banker can save you from poverty, the insurance man can save you from disaster, the lawyer can save you from injustice, Netflix can save you from the tedium of life, the tire salesman can save you from accidents, the car salesman can save you from anonymity, and your friends can save you from just about anything with their good advice. This is not like a voice droning in the background with little impact. The voices of this world, by leaving us in our sin, can kill us. Voices that do not point us to Jesus must be listened to and analyzed very carefully. There is one voice that is always safe. When Jesus talks in

John chapter 10 about the

Good Shepherd He emphasizes the power of His voice. The sheep hear His voice. (v 3) The sheep follow Him for they know his voice. (v 4) They do not know the voice of strangers. (v 5) They will listen to My voice. (v 16) This is the voice that John the Baptist pointed to.

The world sought to silence the voice of Jesus. When it hung Him on a tree and then rolled a stone in front of the tomb, they might well have thought they would hear no more from Him. But the voice of Jesus is too strong. In the power of the resurrection it keeps calling, healing, forgiving, and loving so that people can be saved. Someday, when He returns, you will hear His voice say something like this to you: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Mt 25:16)

The voice that first sounded like the whimper of tiny baby in a manger has become the distinctive and powerfully evocative voice of the savior. In Word and sacrament you still hear this voice. In this voice you have life.

Terry Forke, District President

December

- 18 Official Visit—Glendive
- 25 Christmas
- 26 Office Closed

January 2012 Blessed New Year!

- 1 Official Visit—Trinity, Kalispell
- 9 Board of Directors District Office
- 10-12 **Quad Circuit, Belgrade**
- 15 Official Visit-Hope, Lockwood Redeemer, Worden
- 29 Official Visit –Concordia, Forsyth & Trinity, Hysham

February

- 5 Official Visit –Belgrade & Three Forks
- 11 Organist workshop—Bozeman
- 17-21 Council of Presidents—St. Louis
- 22 Ash Wednesday

Preparing for the District Convention

The theme for the MT. District Convention, June 11-14, 2012, will be from Mark 16:15 "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation."

There are a number of matters that congregations need to attend to in preparation for the convention. First, congregations must elect lay delegates to the convention. The names of these delegates are due in the District office by February 10.

Secondly, congregations have the privilege and responsibility to submit overtures to the convention. Overtures are presentations of a case for something the Synod, District or congregations should or should not do. Overtures are also due February 10.

Thirdly, congregations have the privilege and responsibility to nominate officers of the District. One important office that is often overlooked is member of Board of Directors. Please note a few important qualifications for Board members: 1. That he be faithful to the confession of the LCMS. 2. That he be familiar with the workings of the Montana District. 3. That he be able to attend quarterly meetings of the Board, (most often in Billings). 4. That he be able or willing to learn to use the computer for communications. (This saves the District a lot of money.)

**Rev. Mark Christensen Ordination
December 4, 2011 First Lutheran Church, Missoula**



Front Row L-R: President Terry Forke, Rev. Ray Larson, Pastor Mark Christensen, Rev. Don Schneider, Pastor Mark Nicolaus, Pastor Timothy Gordish. Second row L-R: Pastor Ray Wiegert, Pastor David Renfro, Pastor Bob Mitchell, Pastor Vern Sandersfeld

The 11th Annual Wyoming District
Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation

January 27-28, 2012, Casper, WY

Theme: An Explosion of Ideas!!

Featured topics and speakers include:

Pastor & Parish: Doing Evangelism Together presented by Rev. Dr. Ronald Garwood

Building a Community to Reach a Community: The Joys and Challenges of Mission Work and A Critique of Modern Approaches to Missions presented by Rev. Jeremy Mills

A Distinctly Lutheran Theology & Practice of Mission by Rev. Clint Poppe

Registration Deadline: January 17, 2011

\$18.00 per adult—Youth and College Students Free

For more information & registration, please contact the MT District Office

A Christmas Blessing

Principal David Topp -Trinity Lutheran School, Kalispell

I am always amazed at the love shown to God's people through the blessings of Jesus Christ our Savior. This love is seen in many different ways. I have the privilege to share with you a blessing that God has granted his people in the beautiful Flathead Valley.

Trinity Lutheran School is one of the outreach ministries of Trinity Lutheran Church of Kalispell. Through this ministry the Gospel of Christ has been shared in the valley for over 50 years and has touched thousands of lives during that time. The school thrives because of the dedicated commitment of Trinity's congregation and school families to service, prayer, and generous financial support. Others through-

out the Montana District also offer prayers and gifts to assist our school. Without this commitment to sharing the Gospel of Christ we could not be a mission school. I am so thankful for the continuing support of Lutheran education in general and Trinity Lutheran School in Kalispell specifically.

Trinity Lutheran School serves children from Pre-K through 8th grade, providing an education that develops and challenges the whole child in all aspects of life. We strive to make disciples through the guidance of an experienced and devoted staff working with parents to nurture spiritual, academic, emotional, and physical growth. We challenge and encourage all stu-

dents to use God's gifts to build up each another and grow in knowledge.

The school reaches into the community in a variety of service projects: peeling potatoes at the local armory for a community Christmas dinner, giving to the food bank, raking leaves, opening our gym for Special Olympics, donating to Coats for Kids, supporting local homeless shelters, visiting the Veterans Home, hosting a luncheon for veterans, square dancing and playing recorders at retirement homes participating in Sunday services through singing and chancel drama, and reaching out nationally and internationally through chapel offerings.

Montana District LWML Convention

The LWML societies of the Flathead Zone are looking forward to hosting the 2012 Montana District LWML Convention on **April 27-29, 2012** at Trinity Lutheran Church in Kalispell. The theme of the convention will be **Stand Firm**...based on Philippians 1:27.

We plan to have special speakers, including Gary Thies from Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa and some of our own Montana mission grant recipients. Our national LWML representative will be the Vice President of Gospel Outreach, Marilyn McClure. We anticipate the convention to be a time of fellowship and inspiration, centered around the firm Word of God.

Watch for further information in the LWML Montana Missive and the MT Reflections.

