



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

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MONTHLY MISSION NEWS



DOMESTIC MISSION CONGREGATION SERIES

Berea Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

For just about 11 years now the members of Berea, Sioux Falls, have maintained a ministry which is currently called "Friends on Fridays." This ministry involves serving people in the Sioux Falls community who receive services from an organization called South Dakota

Achieve. The stated goal of SD Achieve is "We find innovative ways for people with disabilities to achieve their dreams." What began under the direction of Pastor John Hein those 11 years ago, has now come to be known as "Friends on Fridays", with Pastor Mark Gurath serving the clients of Achieve on several Fridays each month at 2 PM. In the beginning clients were transported to the church on E. Madison Street for a Wednesday night service. When transportation became an obstacle, services were moved to the main facility of Achieve on Western Ave. in Sioux Falls.

On these Fridays at Achieve a brief service is conducted which includes songs, clapping and hand motions, all centered around a brief Scriptural lesson appropriate to the church year. Persons in attendance over the years have numbered from 5 to 45 and everywhere in between. No matter the number present, the name of the Lord is praised and literally shouted by those in attendance. It is not uncommon for some to shout out all manner of praises as we sing and talk about the Lord Jesus.

What has made this ministry even more valuable is the person to person contact we have with those who so desperately need the Gospel in Word and Sacrament. Speaking as the current Pastor, I have been called on to provide individual counseling to persons with disabilities who have suffered the loss of a friend or loved one. On a number of occasions I have conducted funeral services or memorial services for those persons whom I had the privilege to serve with the



Word, but otherwise had no church home or family to speak of. Through this ministry I have been enriched and blessed personally, as well as the congregation being lifted up and encouraged by this reaching out to the community with the Word.

The blessings of this ministry came into focus in March of 2010 when a young lady named Amy Mager was brought into God's family through the washing of Baptism. Amy had attended our Friends on Friday services over the years, always participating in what we were doing. As is the case with many individuals with severe

developmental disabilities, Amy suffered from a host of health problems, most notably frequent bouts with pneumonia. As she approached the final weeks of her life, I was asked to call on Amy and minister to her with the Gospel. On my first visit I inquired if Amy had ever been baptized. As I found out a week later she had never been baptized to anyone's knowledge. Not having any family or church home, I gladly served this young lady as best I could. Receiving an urgent call on a Wednesday in March, I learned that Amy had taken a turn for the worse and only had hours left to live. Returning to Sioux Falls from an out of town Lenten service, I administered the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on Amy Mager sometime around 10 o'clock at night. Just hours later the Lord sent His angels to carry this precious soul to Himself in eternal rest. Several days later I also had the privilege to address her friends and service providers at Achieve while conducting a memorial service, to which more the 60 persons attended.

Through this ministry, the Lord has brought this soul to Himself, along with many others to be sure. The members of Berea are blessed tools in the hand of the Lord as He does His work through us in this gospel outreach. We pray that the Lord would continue to bless us as we carry out this labor of love to the disabled in our community.



For the members of Berea Lutheran Church,

Pastor Mark Gurath

2011 Mission Helper Trip to Nepal



crowded buses, rickshaws, elephants, and mostly hiking several hours up steep mountainous foot paths in sweltering heat and humid conditions.

The two mission teams have had two to four hours to present their lessons which cover a broad scope of the Bible. The teaching program is divided into five lessons, taking the children from Creation to Judgment Day. The heart of all that

pastors along with pastors and evangelists from Tibet who have been receiving training in the Word from the leaders of the HCLCN.

The Lord has blessed the Mission Helpers with safe travel thus far. Although they have experienced bouts of sickness, the Great Physician of the body has restored their health and given them the strength to carry on under difficult conditions. We thank God for His merciful and faithful care of these fellow Christians.

On Tuesday, July 5th, the 2011 Mission Helper Team departed from Chicago O'Hare airport with the beautiful, mountainous country of Nepal as their destination. In addition to Pastor Todd Ohlmann, the mission team is made up of Chad Seybt, Natalie Schreyer, Ryan Augustin, Emily Hulke, Melanie Halstein, Randy Wittorp, Naomi Bernthal, Carl Reim, and Becky Sippert.

During their visit to Nepal, the team of fellow Christians has been working with the pastors of the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession of Nepal (HCLCN), visiting established HCLCN congregations and tribal mountain villages in the mountains west of Kathmandu and near the Tibet border where the Gospel witness has been limited at best. The work of the Mission Helpers is best described as "Child Evangelism" as their primary work, teaching one-day Bible programs in several village congregations and gatherings. The ten Mission Helpers divided up into two teams with each of them trekking to villages each day where they have taught the children gathered there. The trips to these mountain villages have involved traveling in

has been taught is our salvation through Jesus Christ. In a culture heavily dominated (92%) by a mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism it is important to establish the fact that the Mission Helpers are there to proclaim the truth of the one true God and what He has done for all through the life, death, and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. These lessons stand in stark contrast to the tales of false gods and god-



desses, idolatrous worship, reincarnation, and work righteousness that so dominates the nation of Nepal and those who are held sway by the grips of spiritual darkness.

Pastor Ohlmann and CLC teacher Chad Seybt (who is also an ILC seminary graduate) have had the opportunity to preach, as well as conduct pastoral training seminars for the current roster of HCLCN

During the course of the mission trip, each of the Mission Helpers have written of their experiences and posted them on an internet blog. They can be accessed at <http://2011mhtnepal.blogspot.com/> or <http://journals.lutheranmissions.org/>. They write of their marvel and amazement at the wondrous beauty of God's created nature in Nepal, the great commitment of the Nepali pastors, their hosts' hospitality under very humble conditions, the joyful faith life and worship of the Nepali Christians, and the hunger to learn the Word of God. Under the difficult and trying conditions of this mission trip, each of them write of having been richly blessed through this whole experience.

The Mission Helpers will be returning on Friday, July 29th. May the Lord bless the remainder of their work in Nepal and grant them a safe trip home.

Plans have begun for a Mission Helper Trip to the East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania in July of 2012. See www.clclutheran.net/MissionHelpers for more information concerning the Mission Helper Program.