

Views & Vision

The Newsletter of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association



Why Does Grace Lutheran Church Have a School That Teaches Religion?

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Winter 2007-2008

Hugh Kress, Principal, Grace Lutheran School, River Forest, Illinois



This is a question that frequently comes up in both formal and informal discussions. The answer to this question may seem obvious since we are part of a religious institution, but as we dig deeper it leads to the heart and soul of our school.

All certified and accredited schools have strong curricula which equip students to be successful in mathematics, the social sciences, language, the fine arts, and science. Grace seeks to do all of the above, and also equip students with the understanding that a deep and meaningful relationship to God provides a conceptual framework for all of life's work. This begins with the knowledge of the salvation story of a loving God as revealed in the Bible. As soon as a child enters Grace Lutheran School, they are immersed in the stories of people and places of the Bible.

As they move up the grades, the Bible becomes the primary religion textbook, supported by study materials. This

is the focus of our new religion curriculum, to give every child the



gift of a deep understanding and knowledge of the Bible. Teachers and parents can build on this base to provide a moral guide and ways to live out the call of the Gospel to share the good news in word and deed.

Religion is taught in the classroom and lived out in the daily life of the school.

How Does Grace Lutheran School Teach Religion?

Besides having religion classroom study materials, the school keeps the Bible and its stories and ideas as a frequent part of other areas of the curriculum. One example of this is the Monday Morning Announcement. Three Bible questions and a tiebreaker are part of this all school broadcast. The first class to bring the correct answers to the school office gets the traveling trophy to keep until the next week.

A second way is through active worship. Each week the students, faculty, pastors, and guests gather in the church sanctuary for chapel. Leadership of



the service varies from week to week, but Ms. Gotsch coordinates it all. One Wednesday found the children as part of a delightful multi-sensory worship centering on Baptism. They sang songs as a

group and **listened** to a small group of junior high students, 5-6 graders and 1-2 graders lift their voices

in praise. They **saw** Pastor Modahl dressed in his liturgical robe, framed by the candles and the altars. They **felt** the drops of cool water that fell from the branches dipped into the Baptism font and tossed in their direction. They **expressed** their joy and delight by smiling and giggling as God's tickle touched them. Pastor Modahl remarked, "the angels must also be laughing." Our children are learning about a loving God who reaches out to all of us, to move us from brokenness to being whole.

In addition to his duties as Principal of Grace Lutheran School, Hugh Kress serves on the ELEA National Board and can be reached at hkress@gracriverforest.org.

Notes from National ...

Gayle Denny, ELEA Executive Director

Those of you who are ELEA members and have provided ELEA with an email address receive periodic e-newsletters, "Notes from ELEA National" electronically. For those who don't receive that publication, recent highlights are provided here. If you are not receiving electronic communications, be sure to call us at 800-500-7644 or email eleanational@cs.com and provide an email address so you too can be in the loop!

AD&D, Disability and Life Insurance Enrollments

Here's a recap of 2007 Fall insurance program enrollments:

- 20 new participants signed up for the FREE \$3,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Policy available to all staff working 20 hours or more per week (school/center and congregation). If you didn't sign up during the open enrollment period (September), you will have another opportunity to do so in September of 2008. Don't delay on opening your mail from ELEA!
- The voluntary life and disability insurance plans had a 38% increase during the open enrollment periods of October and November. Open enrollment in these programs are determined by Reliance Standard, our carrier, and we do not know at this time if another open enrollment period (where there is no request for medical information) will be offered. If you are interested in these inexpensive policies with great coverage, you may still enroll by answering a few medical questions. Visit www.eleanational.org and click on "Benefits" to download forms.

Wondering if an Item Has Been Recalled?

With recent publicity about toys and other children's items made in China being painted with lead-based paints and being recalled, many people are unsure how to find out whether they need to be concerned or not. Here's the answer: The Consumer Product Safety Commission has a great website: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prerel.html> where you can search by manufacturer, distributor, item type, etc. and find out quickly.

Cable in the Classroom

Where can you apply for the Leaders in Learning awards, request a free DVD copy of the movie "You've Got a Friend", download a free Educator's Guide, find out how to get free cable in your classrooms, and find a host of other teacher and parent resources? Go to <http://www.ciconline.org> and take time to explore!

Grace Place Retreats

Grace Place, a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) related ministry, has graciously invited our ELEA members to attend a special Grace Place Retreat focused on Lutheran educators. Grace Place Retreats are 5-day, 5-night "pause points" in teaching ministry centered on personal health care and education - physical, emotional, relational, fiscal and spiritual - health. These experiential learning retreats share strategies and skills which encourage teachers to integrate good health practices into vocational and personal pilgrim walk . . . Providing care for the care-givers - YOU!!

Although there are several retreats offered in 2008, the one which Grace Place would specifically like to invite

ELEA members to is July 28 - August 1, 2008 at the Heartwood Conference Center in

Trego, Wisconsin. This retreat specifically focuses on school/center educators and will be led by Dr. John D. Eckrich, M.D. and the Rev. Dr. David Ludwig. This retreat is heavily underwritten by Thrivent Financial and while the actual cost is \$2,000, your cost is only \$300 which covers room and board, retreat materials and group activities. Spouses are encouraged to attend and there is no additional cost for your spouse! Transportation cost is your responsibility.

Interested? Call 314-842-3077 and talk to Annette or email her at Annette.woehlke@graceplaceretreats.com. You may also visit their website at www.graceplaceretreats.org to register and click on "Available Retreats", and then on "Educators Retreat in Trego". Indicate that you will send your \$300 as a check rather than pay on-line.

Administrator Packets

You should have recently received a 10" x 13" packet from ELEA containing your 2008 Membership Directory and some other great items. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the directory which will explain the new geographic Region format which replaces the previously used Network designations.

We are here to answer questions and help you through the transition to Regions - call us anytime! 800-500-7644.



Making a significant gift to ministry can increase your bottom line!

By making a gift for a charitable gift annuity, for instance to ELEA, you receive an income tax deduction and annuity payment for life. Plus, part of each payment is tax free. Call your ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner or the ELCA Foundation at 800-638-3522, ext. 2970.

Calvary Pre-Kindergarten 45 Years of “Touching Lives Forever”

Carol Zwernik, Director, Calvary Pre-Kindergarten, Golden Valley, Minnesota

There's been much to celebrate this school year as our church and school recognize 45 wonderful years of Touching Lives Forever. The congregation began the school in 1963 to “create for children a Christian atmosphere and stimulating environment in which to grow in knowledge and love of God as well as intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.” This mission statement is carefully put into daily practice by a strong team of skilled, caring teachers with many years of experience.

Director, Carol Zwernik, traces her history with the school back to 1970. Under her leadership the school has grown in size and reputation achieving NAEYC Accreditation in 1970 until the present and ELEA Certification since 2001. Plans are underway to work

toward ELEA's new Early Childhood Accreditation.

The Pre-K reflects the congregation's commitment to develop life skills, school readiness, and spiritual growth in the community's children. Because 80-85% of the Pre-K's enrollment is non-Calvary, many non-member families that are attracted by the quality education and Christian nurture they see to explore other facets of Calvary Lutheran Church.

45th Anniversary Celebrations have already included:

- A reunion party serving all current and former staff members;
- A Thursday evening family church service which featured the singing Pre-K children, and a Sunday Celebration where the congregation was treated to Pre-K history;

- A Saturday morning giant 45th Birthday Party for current students and families.

Calvary Pre-Kindergarten plans to continue “Touching Lives Forever.”

Calvary Pre-Kindergarten is a program which has received Early Childhood Program Certification from ELEA. Carol Zwernik serves as director and may be reached by email at czwernik@calvary.org.

Happy
45th Anniversary
to Calvary Pre-K!



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Reading, Writing . . . Relationships!



**Marlene Lund, Executive Director
Wheat Ridge Ministries'
Center for Urban Education Ministries**



Roland Barth, a respected educator and Founding Director of the Principals' Center at Harvard University said in a recent article on educational leadership, "The nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the quality and character of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else." I might adjust this statement a bit to read, "The nature of the relationships among the adults and children within a school...etc." After thirty plus years serving in various capacities in Lutheran education, I truly believe that the statement is true. A school or early childhood center may have the most up to date technology, teachers may have graduated from the top colleges, or money may be overflowing (okay I know that doesn't describe most Lutheran schools) but if the relationships within a school community are toxic it will truly affect the culture of the school and the way that children learn.

In my experience, many Lutheran schools are wonderful places of learning, support and collegiality. However, I would venture a guess that not one person involved in a school would say that a positive school climate happens without work.

In workshops that I've led on team building and leadership I like to ask the participants to think about the best teacher they ever had and to reflect on what made that so. Invariably, the answers aren't, "Ms. X taught me to add." or "Mr. Y taught me how to write a complete sentence." Instead the answers are about a teacher who cared about me as an individual or a teacher who went out of their way to tutor me after school. In other words, the teachers who build relationships with students are the ones who make the positive lasting impressions. They are often the ones

cited as the persons who inspired someone to become a teacher.

I also like to ask workshop participants to think about their colleagues and to list those that they would seek out for help. Again invariably, the persons selected are those who are approachable, open, nonjudgmental and relational.

So let's get down to it—healthy, supportive relationships within a school will build a positive school climate, will build community, and will enable learning and growth for the students and teachers within.

Here are some tips for making this happen:

1. Be aware of your attitudes towards your colleagues and students. Do they prevent you from seeking and or forming a relationship with a colleague or student? Are they based in reality, on some prejudice, on old experiences? Think about faculty room discussions. Are they moaning sessions about a particular child or colleague? What happens when the thoughts and discussion are in a negative rather than a positive tone? Conversely, what happens when we see the good and positive in each other?

2. Make the time to listen to your students and colleagues. Often we as educators are so busy trying to get everything in our lesson plans completed or on our to do list accomplished that we don't take the time to listen. Becoming a good listener takes practice. Do we help our students learn to listen to each other? Are we giving our undivided attention to the student who needs us now, when we are running out the door? Do we find out how our colleagues are feeling and how their lives are going?

3. Make the time to talk to each other and to share your visions. Why are you in the teaching profession? What are you passionate about and how does it affect the way you live and work? What do you do really well that you can share with your colleagues and students?

4. Care for each other. Celebrate together. Take the time to sing the praises of your students, colleagues, classroom, school, one-to-one and publicly. How do you show your appreciation for students in your classroom? Does it only happen when you want them to do something for a reward? Do you ever send a "nice note" home to a parent to tell them you love having their child in your class? Do you ever offer to take an extra duty for one of your colleagues just because you can? Do you take the time to find out how a new teacher is finding her first year of teaching? How does it make you feel when you do something nice for someone else? What celebrations are institutionalized in your community, i.e. holidays, Lutheran schools week, student of the week, etc.?

5. Be clear about your expectations of one another and about your students. Follow through on what you've agreed to do. If you and your colleagues agreed on certain rules, do you follow them? Are you on time for outside duties? Do you participate in extra school activities willingly and joyfully? Do you confront someone in a positive way when they don't live up to your expectations or do you simply do a slow boil or gossip behind their backs?

6. Always remember to pray for each other. The older, or should I say more experienced, I become the more I believe in the power of prayer. In

Reading, Writing . . . Relationships! *Continued from Page 4*

Lutheran schools we have the unique gift of being able to pray for each other. Do you take the time alone or in faculty meetings to pray for that child who just can't seem to obey the rules, or for that mother who is a thorn in your side? Do you pray for your colleagues on a regular basis for strength, wisdom, whatever. God is there to bless our schools and centers

and needs only for us to ask in order to receive.

I'm guessing that none of the above "tips" is earth shattering or anything new for most of you. The hard part of anything listed above is actually doing it. It takes more time and effort to act on any of these things, than just continuing to ignore them. We are not all we can be without building

strong relationships. May God bless each of you as you minister to the children and to each other and as you build those healthy relationships.

Marlene Lund is one of the newest staff members at Wheat Ridge Ministries and can be reached at 212-665-4356 or by email at marlene@wheatridge.org.

2008 SAT & OLSAT Elementary Testing Dates March 31 - April 30, 2008

Letters with instructions for downloading all ordering materials from our website - www.eleanational.org - were sent from Harcourt Educational Measurement in November to all elementary schools.

A letter was not sent this year to early childhood centers. Early Childhood Screening Materials: "FirstSTeps Developmental Screening for Preschoolers" and "Greenspan Developmental Inventory" may be purchased and administered at any time during the year. Visit www.eleanational.org and click on "Testing". Contact the ELEA Office for User I.D. and password information for early childhood materials.



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ELEA Thanks Its Donors and Invites You to “Click”!

ELEA would not be able to provide the types of programs and benefits that it does for its members without the generous support of donors who donate to our Annual Fund as well as the School Extension Fund. Membership dues alone do not balance our budget - your gifts are necessary and much appreciated! We wish to thank donors since our last issue, including:

- Susan and Steve Ryan, Peoria, Arizona
- Christi Lines, Nashua, Iowa
- Mary Ann Pollock, Pasadena, Maryland
- Carroll Lutheran School, Westminster, Maryland
- Trinity Lutheran School, Marysville, Ohio
- Christ Lutheran Child Care Center, Belfair, Washington
- Sycamore Tree Preschool, Bremerton, Washington
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Marysville, Washington

ELEA no longer sends a spring fundraising packet containing chapel ideas or templates for an annual fund appeal. Rather, fundraising envelopes with specially printed flaps providing space for gift amount, designation and recognition, are sent in most mailings to members. Quantities of envelopes are available upon request if you would like to have them available to the parents in your school or center. We encourage you to think of ELEA with your chapel offerings and/or a specially designated benevolence. To keep dues affordable for all members and to be able to fund the School Extension Fund, your gifts are essential. Thank you to all who give!

Do you, your staff, the parents of children in your school or center, congregational members, your friends and relatives shop online? There's a great way to contribute to ELEA without spending a dime more than your normally would.

ELEA has partnered with Fundraising Solutions to set up an Online Marketplace. When you visit our website - www.eleanational.org - you will see an icon at the bottom of the home page which looks like a little shopping bag and says "Help us raise funds by shopping through our marketplace". By clicking on that link, you will arrive at a special page on which you can search for specific stores or by category and follow the link to the business' website - the same website you would go directly to if you entered their web address.

These businesses have partnered with ELEA through Fundraising Solutions to donate a % of your purchase back to ELEA. For example, Alaska Airlines will donate \$1.00 to ELEA for each purchase; Amazon will donate 2% of your purchase; Staples donates anywhere from .5 - 3.5%; and Toys R Us donates 2.5%. There are over 1500 merchants (Macys, eBay, Foot Locker, Target (5%), Bath & Body Works, etc.) who take part. You go to the same website and pay the same price you would anyway, but ELEA reaps the benefit!

The recent administrator mailing included 10 brochures which you can share with staff, parents and/or friends describing the program. We urge you to distribute these and ask us for as many more as you would like. This is a great way to support the Association and is very easy to use. Questions? Give us a call! 800-500-7644

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The Evangelical Lutheran Education Association promotes and supports quality, Christ-centered schools and early childhood programs of the ELCA.

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Upcoming Events for Teachers, Administrators, Pastors & Boards

February 29—March 1, 2008—ELEA Region 1 (formerly known as Network 1) Teacher & Administrator Conference hosted by Family of Christ Lutheran in Vancouver, WA. ELEA has recently become a S.T.A.R.S. approved training organization, so Washington state licensed centers will receive S.T.A.R.S. credit for this entire conference. For more information, contact Karen Beasley at 206-546-0320 or by email at preschool@flrb.org.

February 29—March 1, 2008—ALDE (Association of Lutheran Development Executives) sponsors a “conference within a conference” in Rosemont, IL (minutes from O’Hare Airport in Chicago). As part of their larger 4-day event for professional Lutheran fundraisers, entitled “Chicago 2008—We’re On A Mission From God”, a special mini-conference is designed exactly for Lutheran schools. For more info, visit www.alde.org and move your cursor to “Education” and then to “Congregations and Schools” or call Teresa at 800-458-2363, ext. 4. ***Congregations and Schools: Asking, Seeking, Finding Resources for Ministry*** is bound to be a great event!

March 4, 2008—ELEA Region 3 (formerly Network 4) Director’s Meeting at St. Andrew’s Lutheran in Eden Prairie, MN from 1:00—3:00 p.m. Contact Brenda Jensen at 507-451-8274 or brendaj@tlcowatonna.org for more information.

March 7, 2008—LSA (Lutheran Schools Association) Professional Development Day for K-8 teachers at Concordia College, Bronxville, NY. Contact Marlene Lund at 212-665-5599 or marlenelund@mindspring.com for more information.

April 3 & 4, 2008—LSA (Lutheran Schools Association) New Jersey & New York Early Childhood Education Conferences. Contact Marlene Lund at 212-665-5599 or marlenelund@mindspring.com for more information.

May 7, 2008—ELEA Region 3 (formerly Network 4) Director’s Meeting at Our Savior’s Lutheran in Circle Pines, MN. Contact Brenda Jensen at 507-451-8274 or brendaj@tlcowatonna.org for more information.

May 8, 2007—LSSCH (Lutheran Schools of Southern California & Hawaii) Spring Administrator’s Meeting. At California Lutheran University. Contact Alan Feddersen at 818-956-1485 or afeddersen@lssch.org for more information.

October 10—12, 2008—ELCA/ELEA National Administrator & Pastor Conference, “Called and Chosen to Serve” at the Marriott O’Hare, Chicago, IL. Visit www.eleanational.org and follow link on home page for more information.



For more information or to contact your local Learning for Life office go to:

www.learningforlife.org
or call 972-580-2432

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“Called and Chosen to Serve”

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Vocation and Education Unit, in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA) invites you to “Called and Chosen to Serve”. This third biennial 3-day national conference for school and early childhood center administrators, pastors and other leaders is scheduled for October 10 - 12, 2008 at the Marriot O’Hare Hotel, Chicago, Illinois.

Those who attended the previous two events (2004 in Anaheim, California and 2006 in Phoenix, Arizona) had this to say:

- Exceptional!
- Uplifting, affirming, informative
- A good chance to network with other administrators - to make new friends and share ideas
- Workshops were some of the best I have ever been to - very well organized and planned
- Time spent with peer groups was invaluable!
- Great to see and feel that everyone from around the country seems to love their school
- This conference was “right up there” and really exceeded my expectations! I was hoping the conference would be “good” but it went way past that!

There will be opportunities for worship and Bible study, a wide selection of workshops geared for pastors and administrators, vendors and exhibits, and lots of fellowship, fun and sharing.

Special highlights include “It’s More Than Lutefisk and Lefsa” keynote presentation from Larry Swenson of Noel, Interational (visit www.noelint.com to learn more about Larry’s work with schools and diversity); and our banquet entertainment - “I’m Not Normal, I’m Special” by Ben Glenn, the Chalk Guy (<http://www.chalkguy.com>). We are very excited to bring both of these quality presenters to you.

Early bird registration is available until July 15, 2008 at the rate of \$349.00 which includes two breakfasts, two lunches, banquet, all workshops and keynotes, worship and Bible study and all materials related to the conference. Registration is \$369.00 after July 15. Pre-Conference events will be offered on October 9 at nominal fees.

Discounted rooms are available at the Marriott O’Hare for \$89.00 plus tax with free hotel shuttle from O’Hare Airport to the Marriott.

Look for registration materials to arrive soon and visit our website at www.eleanational.org - click on the “Called and Chosen to Serve” link for the latest information.

We hope to see you in Chicago!!!