

LCMC Annual Gathering Summary
Upper Arlington Lutheran Church, Columbus, OH
October 3 – 6, 2021
Written and submitted by Pastor Eric Hullstrom

After not being able to attend the 2020 Annual Gathering due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was a breath of fresh air to return to, what some call, LCMC's family reunion. And "family" is an apt description of LCMC. In short, LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ) is an association of churches in ministry together. As the mission statement says, *"We are an association of congregations who are free in Christ, accountable to one another and rooted in the scriptures and the Lutheran confessions. We're all working together to fulfill Christ's great commission to go and make disciples of all nations."* That is who we are. That is what we do. We are independent, yet intricately woven together through the Holy Spirit into Christ Jesus as brothers and sisters. And so, because of that truth each Annual Gathering is indeed a family reunion.

This year's theme was titled, **Speak It, Live It, Share It** with the "It" referring, of course, to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything we did through Bible study, worship, keynote speakers, etc., served to flush out this theme. There is so much I can say about these wonderful days at this family reunion but suffice it to say, this summary will have to do. If you want to hear more, please let me know and I would be happy to chat with you about this "reunion".

Bible Study

Morning Bible studies were offered every morning at 8:30 AM. We began with some praise, worship, and prayer. Erik Anderson, Discipleship Pastor at New Life Lutheran Church was our leader. The scripture focus was from Colossians. On day 1 we looked at Colossians 1:13-16. My key takeaway from this study was that EVERYONE was created through and for Jesus, and thus let has make his grace known to all, not just to some. On day 2 we focused on Colossians 2:6-7. My key takeaway from this study comes from the phrase in this text, ***Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him*** in other words, "inhabit Jesus". We only develop as mature followers of Jesus when we inhabit or dwell in God's promises which are given through and contained in Jesus. He does what he says he does, thus, remain in him. I was not able to attend day 3 due to traveling.

Keynote Speakers

Jeremy King – Pastor at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Afton, MN. “Before We Speak” – Key takeaway: If we are going to be Kingdom people; speaking, living and sharing the Gospel, we must see the world the way Jesus does. The lens we use to do that is the Word of God. We love much when we see how much we have been forgiven.

Nathan Hoff – Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in San Pedro, CA. “Speak It, Live It, Share It” – Key takeaway: The world seeks to disciple the world; stealing its blessing. But we must speak the language of faith and carrying the blessing to the world as far as the curse is found – to all places where the enemy is working, which is everywhere.

Jenn Alexander – Pastor at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Lakeville, MN. “The Good News of the Kingdom” – Key takeaway: Isaiah 40:6-8 says that we are grass, but the Word of God stands forever. Since that is the truth, the Word of God must be proclaimed. The left wing nor right wing, the donkey nor the elephant, will save you. We must stand in the “radical middle” where Jesus, the Lamb of God, is located. It is not just what we are saved from but what we are saved for, and that is the Kingdom of God. And the Kingdom is here and now.

Business Meeting

At this family reunion there is some business we need to conduct. In our short time together (12 minutes), here are the highlights:

~ 445 total people were in attendance. We normally have more but LCMC had to cap registrations due to construction delays at the church. Their new sanctuary did not get done in time, unfortunately. Hopefully we are at full capacity next year (600 to 700 people).

~ Treasurer report:

- 1) 459 congregations (out of 968 congregations worldwide) support LCMC financially.
- 2) There was a 6% increase in income.
- 3) LCMC has a seminary debt relief fund which gave out \$13,500 last year.

4) We re-elected our treasurer for her first 3-year term. She was previously completing a partial term of the former treasurer.

5) We approved next year's budget,

Worship

Opening worship on Sunday was led by the Upper Arlington Lutheran Church worship team. Pastor Steve Turnbull from Upper Arlington was the preacher for that service. He got us going with a clear Gospel presentation as we prepared to Speak It, Live It, Share It. Preaching at Wednesday's closing worship service was one of our young leaders, 24-year-old Gabby Arland, a seminary student at Fuller Seminary. We are so blessed in LCMC with so many young, passionate leaders. Our future looks bright.

Breakout Sessions

LCMC 3.0 with Mike Bradley – We got to hear from our new Service Coordinator about what is staying the same in LCMC and what new things are being worked on.

O & A with Jenn Alexander – Pastor Jenn was one of our keynote speakers. I really enjoyed her talk and thus wanted to follow that up with more conversation.

Other Notes

The 2022 Annual Gather will be Oct 2-5 at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Lakeville, MN. My hope is that we can have a contingent of Bethlehem members attending to be blessed as I have been attending these gatherings. Thank you for allowing me the time to attend the 2021 LCMC Annual Gathering. To God be all glory, honor, praise, thanksgiving, and worship, Amen.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Eric Hullstrom