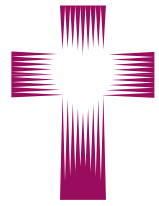


Link-Age

NEWSLETTER • SPRING ISSUE 2008



The Lutheran Home Association

Where the Care of the Soul is the Soul of Care®

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A 10-year anniversary - Jesus Cares Ministries

Today more than 1600 participants with a developmental disability, souls bought with the blood of Christ, are hearing the Gospel through Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM)! We ask that you rejoice with JCM and pray for continued growth. We invite you to join our efforts to reach more souls with the Spirit's help, sharing the pure Gospel with people who have special needs. See how the Lord has blessed our work:

The past decade has brought countless blessings and some challenges to JCM. Growth does bring both, but we will not dwell on the challenges here. The outreach of JCM has grown tremendously from 1998 to the present:

Worship At The Cross services have grown from three to 26 current services, and Bible classes have grown from 13 to 47; from 125 participants and 30 volunteers to 1608 participants and 452 volunteers.

Twenty two additional locations are asking for our help to start new programs and many are no longer just in the Midwest. With our help, a special outreach effort to serve people with disabilities is under way in our sister Evangelical Lutheran Synod's (ELS) churches. Please rejoice over this min-



Joy in Jesus Retreat (JCM) - Fall 2007

istry and rejoice for the people blessed through it.

Conscientious congregations and pastors have shared God's precious message of salvation with their members having disabilities of all kinds from the beginning of the Church. Sharing the Gospel message of Christ with individuals with developmental disabilities often presents new challenges. Traditional teaching, inclusion and outreach efforts in ministry often require personnel and time-consuming adaptations to serve these people hav-

ing special needs. The Bible lessons and the way they are shared need to be appropriate for the age and understanding level of those who will benefit from them.

To help address this need, a formal Jesus Cares Bible class program was developed by the Special Education Services Committee of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

Commission on Special Ministries in 1985.

This committee helped start other Jesus Cares Bible classes in WELS congregations. A part-time administrator for Jesus Cares was called to serve the Southeastern Wisconsin District of the WELS in 1990.

By 1993 the administrator's Call was extended to full-time, and in 1994 the WELS Southeastern Wisconsin District Jesus Cares was incorporated under the name Jesus Cares Ministries.

Volunteers at the congregational level have been a key to the programs since their inception. (Some of those original programs joined our Jesus Cares Ministries, Incorporated and others still continue as independent Jesus Cares Bible classes within congregations throughout the WELS, often using many JCM materials and methods.)

In 1998, JCM became part of The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA) in order to expand the program to a national level. TLHA had cared for JCM - continued on page 4



Kingsway Retirement Living Dedication is June 21

Please join us on Saturday, June 21, as we celebrate the dedication and grand opening of our ministry's newest service: Kingsway Retirement Living. This exciting community is for seniors 55 and older and offers independent living, assisted living and memory care apartments plus many amenities and services at our Belle Plaine, Minnesota, campus.

Invitations and announcements will be sent as the day draws closer.

Frontlines



Roofing crew for the Hope Residence begun in 1975: (L-R) Pastor Bob Schlicht, David Hanke, Henry Koepp, Edwin Harms, Rick Carlson, Reno Carlson, Ewald Hauer, Pastor Paul Hanke, Reuben Tesch, and Paul Manthe.

Michael R. Klatt

President and
Chief Executive
Officer



On a rooftop

The picture at left is among my favorites here at The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA). Although it was taken years before I began working here, I have always imagined what the conversation was like just before the photo was taken. Looking at this picture, you can plainly see that these men were hardworking guys. These men were working out in the summer sun
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Christian Insights

Cleaning the dirt that is deep and almost hidden

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9.)

I have long treasured the above Bible passage because it doesn't just talk about attempted cleaning; it says "purify" from all "DIRT". Through His Apostle John and Isaiah the Prophet of old, God has written about my dirty unrighteous sins, and yours. *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;... (Isaiah 64:6.)*

Not long ago I rented one of those machines from a local hardware store for cleaning carpets. It was one that sprays warm water and a special cleaning soap into the fibers, brushes the solution in and then sucks it back out with a powerful vacuum. I used it at my mom's house. She lives alone and there isn't a lot of foot traffic on her floors. The water that came out wasn't very

dirty. Then I used it to clean my home-office floor. I guess my wife is right; I should take my shoes off or at least wipe them a lot better.

Although I think I did a good job, I have heard that even carpets that appear quite clean have hidden dirt. Especially non-professionals, the do-it-yourselfers, tend to wash the dirt down in to be more deeply seated and almost impossible to get at.

Sin is often hidden and deep seated. There is only one "professional" sin-remover and He is far better than the best earthly "professional"; He is the One and only Son of God. You can find out about Jesus in the yellowed pages of a much used Bible or the white pages of a brand new one. His testimonial will explain about the Pharisee who was a do-it-yourselfer and actually thought he was clean through and through. It will compare and tell of the tax collector who had been brought to trust the Professional, his God and Savior who removed all his dirty sin. (Read Luke

Rev. Dallas Miller
Director of
Spiritual
Services
Administrator
of Jesus Cares
Ministries



18:10-14).

The people we serve within The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA) are just as much sinners as we are. Many people, especially grandkids, think that the grandpa and grandma-type people never do anything bad. But, consider how many years they've had to let some of the dirt get ground in and hidden down deep. They know and they know that God knows; they are far from perfect. Some people think that people with developmental disabilities are innocent because they don't know any better, but God declares simply that we have all sinned. Their consciences tell

them of their guilt even if they try to deny or hide sin. In addition, their differences sometimes make them feel forgotten by God.

What a privilege it is to share with them the precious message from the opening passage. What a privilege to help ease the burdens they often bear. Our faithful and just God forgives all sins through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. We get to tell the people who live and work here about being purified of ALL unrighteousness. When they let Jesus be the One who cleanses, He doesn't just pay for our "dirt", He takes it away. Their, and our, dirty sins may have been hidden deep down for a long time but He is more than just a professional. He is God our perfect Savior.

We pray for every person served by TLHA and for all people, that this truth will be a treasure to be enjoyed forever and shared as long as we live in our earthly home.

No need for an alternate ending

We rented a movie the other night. It was a very good movie. Unlike most movies; however, the hero dies.

People don't know how to deal with that. I mean, we've become so conditioned to expect that at the end of every good movie the hero will rise and triumph, that we don't know what to do when the hero dies. Is the whole scene just a dream where, at the very end, we'll be brought back to reality and the movie's hero is again alive and well?

In this particular movie, under the

DVD's "Special Features," there is – you guessed it – an alternate ending. For those who just can't handle the solemn death of the hero, there's a happy ending!

I think I can understand why many of us would usually prefer that our movies have happy endings. It's because we consider movies to be a little vacation from reality. We understand that danger, disaster, disease, and death are the tragic consequences of sin and the heartbreaking reality of living in a

Rev. Carl Henkel
serves Mt. Olive
Lutheran Church
in St. Paul,
Minnesota, and
TLHA's Board
of Directors



sinful world, but for an hour and a half we want a movie that will transport us to a place where truth and justice prevail and the good guys win.

There are others, I suppose, who see movies as an extension of their idea of realism, and therefore are thrilled by all the blood and guts and violence and vulgar talk and foul language. For such viewers, the more people who die, the better the movie.

Some folks, I suspect, use movies as some sort of escape mechanism, hoping against hope that real life will be like "in the movies" where, in less than two hours, all the problems are solved and all the good guys live happily ever after.

Sorting fact from fiction, truth from falsehood, and reality from fabrication, becomes fuzzy on the big screen. So you can have it both ways. Those who can stomach the death of the hero can accept the original ending. Those who want the hero to live can switch to the alternate ending.

I'm reminded of a scene – not from the movies but from the Bible, – where the Hero both dies and lives, without the benefit of "special features" or

"alternate endings"! And, amazingly, without any special effects or filming tricks! Even more amazingly, the whole scene is absolute, true reality without any suggestion of fiction or fabrication!

The scene begins on a cross where our Hero dies. We wish it were not so. We cry. We didn't want it to end this way. But as quickly as that Friday scene ends, the next scene transports us to a Happy Sunday where our Hero is fully alive. His death is real – just as the forgiveness in which we now live is real, – and His living again is real – just as in reality we too will live forever in heaven.

We don't have to go to the movies to view this incredible scene. Yes, it has blood, it has death, and it has shocking suspense. There is a Hero who dies – and who lives – but there's no need for an alternate ending! And there's justice, too. He died for our sins and in our place. He rose again and declares His victory our victory! What an ending!

Because of this real-life scene from our real-life Savior, we don't have to click on "special features" and search for the "alternate ending". However, because Jesus both died and came back to life again, all people are invited to enjoy an "alternate ending" to their own lives. This alternate ending transports us from time into eternity, from death into life, and from earth into heaven. But unlike "in the movies," this transport is reality-based.

In other words, it's true!

Mission Statement

*In Christ's love, the mission of
The Lutheran Home Association
is to provide for the spiritual, physical, mental and
emotional needs of people entrusted to our care.*

The purpose of The Lutheran Home Association is in keeping with the words of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 25:34-36, 40): "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me,



I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' "

Campus updates from Belle Plaine, Minnesota

Hope Residence receives national quality award

Recently The Lutheran Home: Hope Residence was awarded My InnerView's *Excellence in Action* award. My InnerView is a national performance measurement organization that reviews the overall quality and customer satisfaction for 16,000 residential service organizations for seniors or persons with disabilities in the United States through a comparison study. This award recognizes Hope Residence as an organization that achieves commitment and dedication in providing exceptional quality services for persons with disabilities and their families.

Hope Residence promotes individual empowerment, enrichment programs, and community involvement opportunities. This home provides an extensive menu of services including; social/recreational programs, life skills education, community integration, spiritual care, and personal planning services. Hope Residence is dedicated to assisting individuals in achieving maximum self-sufficiency, personal goals, and aspirations!

The Home's overall customer satisfaction levels are within the top 5% of the My InnerView's customer database. "We are committed to providing individuals and their families with outstanding services that will achieve increased independence, promote community involvement, and lead to personal fulfillment," states Stephen Wilson, Executive Director.

Rehabilitation Therapy Department wins national award

Angela Hoff, Program Director for the Community Rehabilitation Therapy Department at The Lutheran Home



Angela Hoff

Campus, has been awarded the National Chairman's *Bell Award*. This honor recognizes individuals and teams on a national level who have achieved successful outcomes in contributing to company goals while representing the contracted therapy department's core values.

Angela Hoff, Occupational Therapist, Registered/Licensed, has received this award as a result of the rehabilitation therapy team's outstanding performance, effectiveness and success in meeting therapy results. She is a dedicated professional who works diligently to help children through senior adults achieve their individual therapy goals all while remembering to have fun. The rehabilitation therapy team's positive, motivating and encouraging approach has been instrumental in helping individuals gain strength, mobility, coordination, increase cognitive ability, daily living skills and a broad range of personal therapy goals.

The complete remodel of The

Lutheran Home: Belle Plaine's residence and community rehabilitation center will result in an outpatient rehabilitation therapy department that will triple in size. From high school sports injuries, back and neck strains, to knee replacement surgery recovery, the rehabilitation therapy department is

equipped to successfully meet the physical, speech and occupational needs of the community.

To learn more about the services offered at our campus, please contact Stephen Wilson, Executive Director, at (952) 873-2142 or via e-mail: swilson@tlha.org.



The November 6 groundbreaking participants

Groundbreaking for renovations

The Lutheran Home Campus celebrated its 109th anniversary with a monumental groundbreaking for the Skilled Nursing Residence/ Rehabilitation Center building upgrades. Honorary residents and professional staff joined together, with shovels in hand, to break ground for the upcoming renovations. The 12-month project will transform the skilled nursing residence: featuring a new emphasis on personalized living areas, exceptional quality, and an individualized care model.

An additional community benefit that will be a significant expansion in The Lutheran Home Campus' Outpatient Rehabilitation Therapies available to persons of all ages, from children to senior adults.

Frontlines - Continued from page 1

putting the roof on what would become The Lutheran Home: Hope Residence, a home which would serve adults with developmental disabilities. This new home was the first of its kind in our church body, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

One of the men in the picture, Ewald Hauer, passed away recently. His death marks the passing of yet another dedicated colleague who faithfully served this ministry. Ewald was one of the first people I met when I came to Belle Plaine in 1988. A grandfatherly type, he cared greatly about his co-workers. Ewald was loved and respected by all. He served in a variety of roles at our campus during his career and retired as the director of residential services. His dedication was obvious; he always wanted the interior and exterior of our campus to be beautiful.

When I first arrived, Reuben Tesch, Hank Koepp, Ed Harms, Reno Carlson, Dale Manthe, and Paul Manthe, along with Ewald, formed a truly amazing team of building caretakers. Rev. Paul Hanke served by providing spiritual care. I loved listening to their stories, practical jokes, and conversations with residents.

Paul Manthe led the maintenance staff for many years. His jokes were always interesting. Paul was the brother-in-law of the then president of TLHA, Rev. Robert Schlicht, also known as Pastor Bob. I especially remember one story where Paul decided to have some fun with Pastor Bob: One day the state survey team arrived for an

inspection, and Pastor Bob was providing a tour. Paul decided to grab an extra wheelchair and place it in a hallway, instructing all the staff to leave it alone. The state inspectors were not thrilled to see an abandoned wheelchair just simply sitting in a hallway with no one interested in its removal. They immediately began providing a citation. When Pastor Bob later learned about the details, he had a few words for his brother-in-law. Paul smiled and said, "Can you think of a citation easier to fix?"

Hank Koepp was a hard working man who directed our laundry department. Cleaning thousands of pounds of laundry each week while meeting the exacting state standards, and especially those of our residents and their families, made Hank a valuable asset. He, too, was always ready for a few jokes. He was always ready to help out in areas outside of his job description. For one of his appointed tasks, Hank grew a beard for deer hunting every year and then served as Santa for our residents. After Christmas he would shave it all off and start over again every year.

Reuben, Ed and Reno were "salt of the earth" guys. For many years they quietly went about their work of serving those in our care. They were reliable, kind and compassionate. They had children involved in the work of the home.

Pastor Paul Hanke became the first full-time Called chaplain for our residents in 1976, and he served faithfully until his retirement in 1990. For many years his leadership was given in ser-

vice to our Board of Directors where his work included that of Chairman. He was instrumental in starting the Hope Residence, and his family was also supportive of his efforts.

Dale Manthe always had a ready smile and a gleam in his eyes. His work in beautifying the grounds of our campus will always be appreciated. He is now retired after many years of dedicated service. Dale and his wife, Jan (another long-time team member), continue to play in their two-person band, entertaining our residents and staff at every opportunity.

Pastor Bob brought his vivacious personality and many unique skills to the team. He was not only president but also chief roofer. I was always fascinated to hear how the aluminum roof system was developed by Pastor Bob's father during the Great Depression. The roofing crew of The Lutheran Home in the photo put on quite a few roofs over the years as our ministry grew. Pastor Bob even trained me how to crimp and seam on the roof.

This past year a major hail storm came through our region. Hundreds of cars were seriously damaged. Softball-sized hail came through the windshield of one car. As a result of that storm our aluminum roofing suffered massive damage. The brunt force and wind drove hail into the roof leaving behind all sorts of puncture holes. As a result of this damage, the landmark roof will be replaced this spring. For years, Northwest Airlines has used the shiny roof as a landmark for approach to the

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. A different metal product replicating shingles will be used. The shiny aluminum installed by these men more than three decades ago will be gone.

The men in this picture were not roofers by trade; they weren't necessarily the most proficient roofing crew ever assembled. Yet, they didn't see themselves as merely roofers. They saw themselves as people on a mission to help care for the souls of the people entrusted to us. One characteristic that all these men had in common was their faith in God, and from that faith poured out of a willingness to serve. From high on the rooftop they had a special observation of what was truly important below. For them, this work was truly inspirational and had a higher purpose. Each of them knew that it wasn't just a roof they were building. My friends, they knew they were building a place of hope where the hope of heaven would be shared.

Today, new generations of building caretakers serve in our housekeeping, laundry and maintenance departments at Belle Plaine and throughout our ministry.

Some people in society may think their career path is unimportant and may even think less of them. This new generation of workers, just like the men pictured here, sees a greater purpose in their role. They know that God is using them and the ministry of TLHA for His purpose. We thank God for those who came before us and for those serving us today.

Link-Age

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Spring Issue 2008

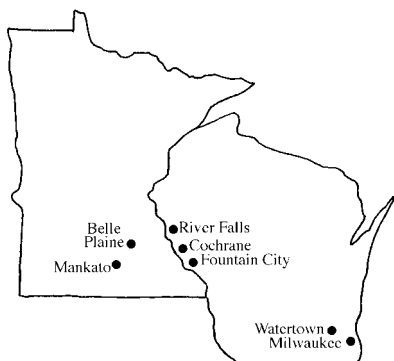
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Link-Age is published three times per year by The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA). This ministry provides numerous services from seven communities and is owned and operated by an Association of more than 200 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) congregations and those in fellowship. TLHA provides health care, housing and service options to active seniors, the elderly, persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other unique needs. TLHA also offers a national evangelism outreach program through Jesus Cares Ministries. Please direct correspondence or inquiries to:

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JCM - Continued from page 1

people with a developmental disability in residential settings since the 1970s and continues to do so still today.

In 2000 an online JCM teaching training program began to certify Bible class instructors for special needs students. JCM Publications was established to produce new and revised Christ-centered materials.

In 2004 JCM Publications produced a new prayer book titled *Dear Friend in Heaven* and the Old Testament portion of a new Bible history curriculum called *Dear Christian Friend*.

In 2005, the first series of the Bible History Curriculum, *Dear Christian Friend*, was completed with the publishing of the New Testament stories. A grant request was also submitted and approved that allowed us to begin a Youth Leadership Initiative called "New Friends". A Staff Minister was Called to coordinate this effort which has now begun programs in 13 college and university communities where WELS/ELS students become "New Friends" of people with developmental disabilities. This same Staff Minister spends the summer months coordinating another of TLHA's youth initiatives we call the Summer Ministry Experience. College students from the WELS/ELS are selected to receive a stipend to help prepare and teach JCM summer Bible camps and learn about and participate in the spectrum of TLHA's services involving people who have developmental disabilities or are aging.

From 2006 to the present the Lord continued to bless JCM with many new ministry opportunities including a grant to develop programs within the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

There are countless examples of the Holy Spirit working faith in the hearts of the JCM participants. We so often see the Grace of God warming the hearts of caregivers who accompany their clients from area group homes. Teachers and volunteers insist they often gain more than those they try to teach. Many others, including family members and those who support the classes in other ways, find great joy in being a part of JCM.

One JCM leader tells that in addition to finding this new way to share God's love with four of her church's members, Jesus Cares Ministries has helped her congregation reach out to various group homes in the area. Anyone can see her excitement as she explains: "The participants are really listening to the stories. They are asking questions after the story and they want to answer the questions." She explains that there are even four in the class that want to help read the stories. In addition to the Bible classes they have begun the *Worship At The Cross* this year with both of their pastors involved in the service.

A JCM staff program coordinator grins joyfully at God's wonderful grace. He tells about how one phone call about one soul led to many other souls being served through a JCM program. Many new volunteers also realized the joy of spending time with people who are not afraid to share their faith even though they have special needs.

It started with that one telephone call from a volunteer who taught a special needs Bible class for a number of years at a large facility. The facility had been closed and the forty people this lady



Games and crafts.



had taught were dispersed throughout eighteen locations in various group home settings. One of the last students to be moved was relocated close to the JCM program coordinator.

A meeting was scheduled with the pastor at the local WELS church. This coordinator was asked to conduct the JCM simplified worship service for the whole congregation. JCM videos and materials were also shared during the Bible hour.

Within a short time there was a request to visit and direct the congregation how to take the next step to start a special needs program. Several people, soon to be volunteers, went to see the simplified service in action and came back very enthused.

A time and date to hold the first service were set. A fellowship event was held to invite people to the class. Fifty-two people attended with half of them having special needs. *In the group of participants was the young man who was the reason for that one first phone call.*

"God works in many different and wonderful ways".

In addition to the Bible classes, worship opportunities, Christian support and outreach, there are Christian fellowship opportunities like the pictured Bible camp, picnics and fun outings. This ministry is funded entirely through donations. Members of TLHA's Office of Mission Advancement tell the JCM story in order to seek your prayers and needed funding.

We give thanks for the work that JCM and TLHA have been able to accomplish this past decade. This important task of sharing the Gospel with a group of people often forgotten by society has been accomplished due to the love and service of pastors, volunteers, JCM staff and supporters. We are grateful for the partnerships and assistance of WELS/ELS agencies and others who have helped us achieve our goals. Within WELS/ELS and some other Christian denominations, people are using our resources to share the wonderful news of Jesus and His love. To God alone we give the glory and ask for His help as we move forward in this mission endeavor.

Reflections

Ten years ago two organizations took a leap of faith and joined together to expand caring for the souls of people with developmental disabilities. God took the strengths of these two organizations and used them to advance his one purpose to bring salvation to all people. As a participant in this united effort, it is amazing to witness God's power at work.



**Mr. Jim
Esmeier**

All the doors he has opened, hearts he has moved, and faith that has been shared by the people we serve can only produce one response — thanks to God!

The doors began opening as more and more churches responded to the need shared by The Lutheran Home Association and its ministry, Jesus Cares Ministries. Hearts were moved to volunteer and provide financial resources. The faith of those we serve is evident on their faces, in the songs they sing and their uninhibited witness "Jesus died on the cross for you (me)."

The leap of faith that began 10 years ago was well founded in Jesus, our Lord and Savior. With this foundation, the future will continue to be blessed.

Note: With a teaching degree and a Masters in Special Education, Jim was Called as the first full-time Administrator of JCM and has served in that position for TLHA these first 10 years. In January of 2008 Jim assumed a new position as Administrator of Resources and Education in order to continue providing critical new materials and support needed and sought by JCM programs to serve people with developmental disabilities. At the same time, Pastor Dallas Miller, Director of Spiritual Services for TLHA, assumed the role of Jesus Cares Ministries Administrator.

JCM Mission Statement

In Christ's love, our mission is to assist congregations in meeting their responsibility to share the Gospel with people who have a developmental disability, their families, and communities.

Glenn Haeuser's perspective about St. Michael's Lutheran Home

"I get good care here. Who would have ever known that 60 years ago, a group of us from the church sat right here on the front lawn and made the decision to take over running this facility and in the years to come also add on to it? I'd have never thought someday I would be here. I'm so glad this place is here for me."

These are the feelings of Glenn Haeuser, a member of St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Fountain City, Wisconsin, who now makes his home at the nursing home named after its founding congregation. Located on a bluff

overlooking the Mississippi River and the community of Fountain City, this home is the result of the foresight of members of the congregation.

St. Michael's Lutheran Home provides Medicare/Medicaid-certified nursing care and rehabilitative therapies (physical, occupational and speech). The home also provides adult daycare services. Most importantly, it also provides care for the soul through a chaplaincy program.

Glenn was part of the leadership of St. Michael's Lutheran Home throughout its history: from that meeting on the

front lawn to many years of service on its Advisory Board to the parent congregation. He was part of the group that decided to merge and give this beloved home to The Lutheran Home Association in 1997. Glenn then continued serving on the Advisory Board to TLHA.

Now a resident for the past year at the home he helped to create, Glenn is personally experiencing the Christian

care. The home is also known for its delicious, home-made food. Glenn agrees about the food and states, "The food here is good, but I eat too much of it!"

We are privileged to serve Glenn and many others.

To learn more about the services at St. Michael's Lutheran Home, please contact Dean Dixon, Administrator, at (608) 687-7721.

Annual meeting update

For the 35th year, the delegates, pastors and guests from the congregations which own and operate The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA) gathered in Belle Plaine in January to participate in our not-for-profit's annual business meeting. A total of 214 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) congregations from across the United States comprise this association.

Trinity Lutheran Church hosted this event due to the numerous construction projects underway at The Lutheran Home Campus. The opening worship service was followed by a business meeting. Incumbent members of the Board of Directors, Rev. Elroy Conrath of Fountain City, Wisconsin, and Rev. David Ponath of Stillwater, Minnesota, were elected to serve three year terms. Rev. Ronald Ehlert, Chaplain at The Lutheran Home Campus in River Falls, Wisconsin, was recognized for his 47 years of service in the ministry; 17 of those years at the River Falls campus.

President and Chief Executive Officer of TLHA, Michael Klatt, shared TLHA's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the plans to address each of these areas. This past year, TLHA has been working on a governance study regarding the role of TLHA's Board of Directors (the principal governing board) and TLHA Foundation. The purpose of TLHA Foundation is transforming and becoming more intimately involved with raising charitable support to advance the ministry of TLHA.

Updates were provided regarding the Belle Plaine campus expansion projects and future plans for TLHA's other sites. Attention was directed to TLHA's current services for persons with develop-

mental disabilities, especially those with Down syndrome. A DVD, "Celebrating Life with Down syndrome" was shown. This DVD is produced by the not-for-profit organization, Band of Angels, in partnership with the Walt Disney Music Company. The DVD features heartwarming testimonies from parents about the lives and accomplishments of their children with Down syndrome. Recently, TLHA developed a Bible study discussing Christian issues associated with prenatal screenings for disabilities, especially the tests for Down syndrome. This new resource was introduced at the meeting.

A long-time advocate of people with special needs, including developmental disabilities, was also honored. Mary Braun of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, is the 2008 recipient of TLHA's *Care of the Soul Leadership Award*.

As TLHA approaches its 110th anniversary in November, our diverse ministry remains steadfast in our commitment to provide for the care of the soul. Our not-for-profit Christian ministry serves persons with developmental and other disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and dementia, those needing specialized care and rehabilitative therapies, and active seniors. Our ministry has grown beyond Belle Plaine. Health care and housing services are offered in Mankato and in Wisconsin, at River Falls, Cochrane, Fountain City and Watertown. Jesus Cares Ministries has numerous programs throughout the upper Midwest, serves more than 1600 individuals and is quickly growing to other parts of the country. To learn more about our services, please visit www.tlha.org or call our National Ministry Offices at (952) 873-6000 or 1-888-600-TLHA (8542).

Care of the Soul Leadership Award presented to Mary Braun

Each of us is handcrafted by our Lord with different gifts and abilities. We all need the Lord, so also our Jesus Cares people. They especially need the security that Jesus gives them as they depend on others for their daily needs. They love Jesus and tell others about his love. Their sins need to be forgiven too.

These words reflect why Mary Braun, this year's recipient of The Lutheran Home Association's *Care of the Soul Leadership Award*, feels working with people with special needs is so vital in ministry.

Mary first began working with people with developmental disabilities as a volunteer at Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services in Watertown, Wisconsin, during the 1960s. It was there that she met Jim Esmeier, who would later serve as the first administrator of Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM).

For nearly a decade Mary has served as a Bible class teacher for two JCM programs at Woodlawn Lutheran Church in West Allis and Atonement Lutheran School in Milwaukee. In this role, she leads devotions and singing, teaches the upper level students one-on-one, and does some craft projects. Each program meets twice a month.

For 38 years Mary was a Lutheran Elementary School teacher in the WELS, serving three schools in Wisconsin. During this same period, she also made the time to volunteer with youth programs and with people who are deaf. In addition to her work as a Bible class teacher for JCM,



Rev. David Ponath, Board Chairman, presents Mary Braun TLHA's *Care of the Soul Leadership Award*.

Mary provides respite and personal care for people with disabilities, provides transportation to JCM activities, and volunteers at JCM camps. She also interprets sign language for individuals who are deaf at church services and confirmation classes.

Mary lives in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and is a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Muskego. A native of Michigan, she attended Redeemer Lutheran School in Ann Arbor; Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, and Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota. She acquired her Wisconsin State Teacher Certification through Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee.

The person nominating Mary shared this information, "She works in telling all people about Jesus. She continually seeks out people with special needs to witness her faith. She is not sitting on the sidelines but actively seeking out the lost."

This humble servant of the Lord has shared her faith and touched many lives through her actions during her lifetime. The Lord has certainly blessed His Church through Mary Braun.

We remember Melvin Dumke, DDS

Melvin Dumke, former member of The Lutheran Home Association's Board of Directors, passed away on January 1, 2008. For more than 60 years he practiced dentistry in Minnesota. For 15 years he provided his leadership to our ministry through his service on our Board of Directors. He also volunteered at The Lutheran Home: Cedar Haven, our assisted living home, in Mankato, Minnesota. Dr. Dumke was very active in numerous church, civic and professional organizations.

We offer our condolences to his family and friends. Many will miss him, but we rejoice that our Lord has taken him to His side.

Association churches profiled



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church - Beaver Dam, Wisconsin

In 1950 this congregation was organized. Today, Rev. Kurtis Mau serves the 414 baptized and 327 communicant members

St. John Lutheran Church - Saginaw, Michigan

Rev. Daniel Garbow shepherds this flock of 331 baptized and 279 communicant members. Organized in 1890, today this congregation operates a joint Lutheran elementary school with Bethany Lutheran Church of Saginaw. There are 28 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The preschool has 25 pupils. Four teachers serve the school.



Dates to remember

June 21: Dedication and grand opening of Kingsway Retirement Living, The Lutheran Home Campus in Belle Plaine, MN. Details will be sent out as the date draws near.

July 16: The Lutheran Home Auxiliary annual meeting. Registration and coffee will begin at 9:30 a.m., opening devotion at 10:00 a.m. followed by a short business meeting and lunch. The Lutheran Home Campus, Belle Plaine, MN.

July 30: Inaugural golf tournament, benefiting Jesus Cares Ministries (JCM). Scheduled to appear are Ryan Grant and others from the Green Bay Packers in support of JCM! The day begins at 10:00 a.m. at The Golf Club at Camelot, Lomira, WI. Call Heidi at (414) 259-0292 for details.

August 15: Annual golf tournament of TLHA Foundation. Proceeds benefit the new, state-of-the-art therapy department opening at The Lutheran Home Campus in Belle Plaine this summer. Noon shotgun start at Valley View Golf Club in Belle Plaine, MN.

For more information about these events, please call 1-888-600-TLHA (8542) or visit www.tlha.org and look under "calendar."

Mailing note

Individuals: If you do not wish to receive this publication, are receiving duplicate copies, have moved, or wish to add a friend or family member to our mailing list, please contact Karen Lambrecht, Support Systems Coordinator, at 1-888-600-TLHA (8542), extension 115. You may also mail *both* sets of labels to: The Lutheran Home Association, National Ministry Offices, Attn: Karen Lambrecht, 337 South Meridian Street, Belle Plaine, MN 56011-1919.

Congregations: If you wish to change the quantity of *Link-Age* received or make an address change, please contact Karen Lambrecht (See above).

Letters are people . . . Here's what they say

To Jesus Cares Ministries,

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed please find a check from our mission offerings. We know that you will find a use for it in the work that you do for our Lord.

Christmas Blessings,
Pastor David H. Sternberg
Zion Ev. Lutheran Church
Rhineland, WI

To Heritage Homes,

Just a note to say your kindness really made our day! The ladies of St. John's Ladies Aid want to thank you very much for the nice meal and opening your home to us for our meeting,

plus the tour of your place.

Sincerely,
Shirley Bartel
Secretary
St. John's Ladies Aid
Ixon, WI

Dear Fellow Servants in the WELS,

. . . On behalf of the students and faculty, I am writing to inform you that we have been led to support Jesus Cares Ministries, through our school chapel offerings. Enclosed with this letter is a check; a gift for your use in our mission of spreading the gospel.

What a powerful message we have to share about Jesus. He died and rose again, redeemed us from our sins, and is now preparing a home for us in heaven—and this was done free of charge. We join you in the privilege of sharing this message and are honored to help and support you through our offerings and prayers. May the Lord continue to keep within you a burning love for proclaiming His saving work!

In His service,
Ruth Merklinger
Teacher
Zion Ev. Lutheran Church
and School
Denver, CO



This Is My Story

My name is Maynard Harms. I have had the joy of being a father, grandfather, teacher and mayor in our community. For years I have lived across the street from The Lutheran Home Campus in Belle Plaine, Minnesota.

I've observed their compassionate and dedicated caregivers. I've worked with the passionate and committed leaders. I'm now planning my move to the newest service coming to the campus, Kingsway Retirement Living.

This charitable agency is truly a blessing to us all. Thank God for the lives they have helped and the care they provide today and in the future.

This Is My Ministry This Is The Lutheran Home Association



The Lutheran Home Association

Where the Care of the Soul is the Soul of Care®

National Ministry Offices • 337 South Meridian Street • Belle Plaine, MN 56011-1919

Telephone: (952) 873-6000 or 1-888-600-TLHA (8542)

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Mission Advancement

Carrying on the family's legacy through real estate

Recently Warren and Delores Bechly generously contributed five acres of existing farm land to The Lutheran Home Association (TLHA). The five acres provides an ideal setting for the assisted living home TLHA is planning to build and operate midway between Fountain City and Cochrane, Wisconsin. This type of service is greatly needed in these communities to serve the unique needs of the seniors and others needing this type of care. This gift is not a new beginning, but a continuation of a legacy started sixty years ago.

When Warren was a young boy, his great-uncle was living with Warren's family. This uncle couldn't live by himself and take care of his own needs of daily living. Warren's mom and dad were his caregivers. Life wasn't always easy then; Warren's parents were providing care for the young family, working the farm and also caring for an aging relative. So when St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Fountain City, Wisconsin, decided to open a nursing home in 1947, Warren's father contributed \$500 to help provide the start up funding. Shortly after, St. Michael's Lutheran Home opened its doors, and Warren's great-uncle became a resident.

Times have changed since then. Nursing homes are no longer used as much for convalescent care or for what we now call assisted living. Now nursing homes are needed for skilled care such as rehabilitation from a fall, injury, or stroke, or care for a chronic condition. Assisted living facilities are needed more and more. As people's needs change, so does the vision and plans of

**James C. Klein,
CFP®**

**Director of
Mission
Advancement**



TLHA. When the word went out that TLHA was going to expand its opportunities for care in the Fountain City and Cochrane areas, the Bechlys responded with a generous gift of five beautiful acres in a peaceful setting nestled in the heart of the Mississippi River Valley. Here our residents will be able to watch the eagles flying overhead, observe the farmers working the land through their windows and from their outside sitting area, and have the opportunity to participate in the local events of both communities. Best of all, people needing this type of Christian care will be able to remain in their home area.

As I met with Warren and Delores during the months before the gift was made, we looked at all of the charitable gifting options available, from a bargain sale to a Charitable Gift Annuity. Delores asked the question, "What is best for TLHA?" I answered that an outright gift would be the best for our ministry. She looked at Warren and said, "Dad, let's just do that then." Warren agreed. Because of the history of his dad's donation of \$500, the gift of five acres would be a fitting way to carry on the legacy of care started 60 years ago by his father and others looking at providing care for their aging rel-



The Bechlys' gift provides a picturesque setting for our future assisted living home.

atives. I thank the Lord for Warren's and Delores' gift to help us get our project started.

Gifts of real estate can be made for many reasons, like the one above, or just because it makes good sense to use an appreciated asset to provide resources for a favorite charity such as TLHA's ministry.

By directly transferring ownership of real estate to TLHA, the donor receives these benefits:

- 1) a charitable deduction for the full appraised value of the selected real estate
- 2) a bypass of all capital gains tax associated with the sale of the property if the donor had sold the property themselves and
- 3) a generous gift is given to support a great Christian ministry when the charity (TLHA) sells the property. (Or, as with the Bechlys, provide a future building site)

There are many ways for people to make gifts of real estate, i.e.: vacant land, rental properties, residences, vacation homes or lots, or commercial sites. They can range from current use gifts to life income gifts, life estates, or housing for people in need. As one person said to me many years ago, "I have a lot of money in real estate, but I can't eat dirt or pay bills, one bucketful at a time." She gave away some of her land ownership to support her favorite charity's ongoing work and used the cash she had to buy groceries and pay the bills.

To see if a gift of real estate is right for you, please contact our Office of Mission Advancement at 1-888-600-TLHA (8542), e-mail: info@tlha.org or at www.tlha.org.

Three opportunities for matching funds

We have three programs underway which enable our financial supporters to make their gifts go ever further!

Summer Ministry Experience:

An anonymous donor will match all donations dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000 total. The match will end on September 30, 2008.

JCM Publications: Revising and printing the series, "Our Living Hope," Volumes I-III: An anonymous donor will match 50 cents for every dollar given, up to \$50,000 total. The match will end on September 30, 2008.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans: If you are a Thrivent member your donation to any program, home or service within The Lutheran Home Association, including Jesus Cares Ministries, can be matched by 50 cents on every dollar given, up to a \$300 match.

If you have any questions concerning the matching gift programs please contact our National Ministry Offices at (952) 873-6000 or 1-888-600-TLHA.

Sherry Fahning — a three-time winner of our Christmas card contest

For the past 13 years, residents and clients throughout The Lutheran Home Association's (TLHA) homes and services have submitted original designs for our ministry's annual Christmas card. The 2007 contest theme was "Go tell it on the mountain."

Sherry Fahning, a long-time resident at The Lutheran Home: Hope Residence in Belle Plaine, has participated in the contest since its beginning. For a third time, her artwork was selected by Michael Klatt, President and Chief Executive Officer of TLHA. The artists' names, as well as their homes or the services in which they participate, are kept anonymous during the selection process.

Michael Klatt shares, "Filled with His Spirit, through the faithful teaching of a family, pastors, and teachers, Sherry celebrates Christ's birth. She wants the whole world to know that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Give Sherry a mountain top like the one she

drew, and she would try to be on top shouting the good news of the Gospel.



Sherry Fahning with The Lutheran Home Association's 2007 Christmas card which she designed.

She doesn't let a disability interfere with her life of prayer and faith."

More than 24,000 cards sharing the good news about the birth of Jesus were mailed nationwide and internationally to TLHA's friends.

During a meeting of TLHA's Board of Directors, Sherry was presented an award and gifts by Rev. David Ponath, Chairman.

The Lutheran Home: Hope Residence cares for 52 adults with developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, ataxia and epilepsy. A licensed Intermediate Care Facility, Hope Residence is dedicated to providing residential services in a Christian atmosphere. Hope Residence is located at 611 West Main Street on The Lutheran Home Campus in Belle Plaine, Minnesota. To learn more about Hope Residence, please contact Steve Wilson, Director of Disability Services, at (952) 873-2142 or visit www.tlha.org.

Gifts of Love

The following gifts have been received and are used to minister to the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs of families, persons with developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease, various forms of dementia, the elderly, active seniors and others whom we serve. We wish to thank them for their support!

IN HONOR OF:
NURSES & CNA'S AT TLH: RIVER FALLS, WI
Vernon & Virginia Van
EMILY ARMSTRONG
William & Myrna Harvey
NORMAN BECK
Marian Beck-Jackson
ELNA BLUM
Mary E. Lisowski
MARGARET BORK
Bill & Edna Meier
HELEN BRZECZEK
Leslie & Lorraine Haney
MERRITA CABALLERO
Arby & Jean Sundstrom
LOLA CRAWFORD
Gregory & Cheryl Ewald
ETHEL DENNY
Robyn Narveson
LOIS DOINE
Prof. Arnold & Ruth Koelpin
DONALD DONOVAN
Gerald Donovan
EMILY EWALD
Gregory & Cheryl Ewald
SHERRY FAHNING
Janean Johnston
ESTHER FLICEK
Julia Busch & family
"HOPE OF HAPPINESS" FOR MY FOSTER GRANDSON JARVIS
Ruth Klatt
ST. MICHAEL'S FRIENDS AND STAFF
Alethea Fugina
IONE FUERST
Randy & Tori Kluss
CASSIE GEIS
Ken & Cindy Geis
MY GRANDCHILDREN
Mary Stewart
OUR GRANDCHILDREN
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Sue Dolbow
Bill & Janis Schumacher

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Anita Dusek
GANUS DUSEK
Monica Dusek
JOSEPH DUSEK
Grace Dusek
COLLEEN DUVAL
Duane & Twylah Wieland
LUE & EARL
Claire Louise McCoy
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Oswald & Darlene Jordan
CARL FAHNING
Janean Johnston
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Chuck, Patty & Linda Buchmiller
B.W. & HANNAH FETTIG
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Frances Fitschen
ZACHARY FITSCHEN
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Gene & Judi Geiselhart
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CHRIST GEORGE
Neil & Marian Abts
LELAND GIVERSEN
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