

# **Rainier (South Sound) Circuit**

## **Circuit Pastor: David Birsching**



### **Divine Peace – Renton**

Pastor Joel Hoff

Our summer reading program has become a great way to connect to new families in the Renton Community. Reading bedtime stories has opened the door to reading Bible stories. We are especially thankful that two families have now become regular visitors of Divine Peace through Read UP.

The Ladies of Divine Peace started a new Bible study in April. The ladies meet once a month to read “Living a Chocolate Life” by Deb Burma. A chocolaty confection accompanies each study which is fitting for the sweet study of God’s Word (Psalm 119:103).

As members of Divine Peace continue to work to beautify and improve the church building and grounds it has been encouraging to hear comments from both longtime and new neighbors on the noticeable changes. Two future projects include the church parking lot and replacing the church sign.

The South Sudanese ministry continues to be blessed by the Lord. Simon Duoth is finishing the second level of the PSI program. Professor Allen Sorum and Pastor Peter Bur will complete his studies due to language barriers. Simon has been working hard to build relationships with new Sudanese families in our community. His efforts have been blessed as the attendance for the Nuer services has increased. Simon is currently in Ethiopia. The Kingdom Workers team is daily teaching health classes and sharing Jesus with the refugees who were displaced due to the civil war in South Sudan. We thank God for your prayers and for the donations that have recently been given to support the South Sudanese ministry. Some of the recent gifts have been used to purchase Nuer bibles and hymnals which Simon will bring back from his trip to Ethiopia.

On a personal note, I accepted a call to serve at Trinity Lutheran Church in Neenah, Wisconsin. June 17 will be my last Sunday at Divine Peace. I am thankful for the years I have been able to serve in Renton and to have served our Savior with my brothers and sisters in Christ in the Pacific Northwest District.

God be with you till we meet again!

Pastor Joel A. Hoff

## **Faith – Tacoma**

Pastor Jeremy Schulz

God continues to bless the family of believers at Faith Lutheran in Tacoma. With his grace, we continue to rejoice in and to share the Gospel of Jesus through our church, school and preschool ministries.

Our school continues to thrive and served 109 children this past year. For the upcoming school year, we are welcoming two new teachers: Heidi Moldenhauer and Nicole Habeck. Our teachers are Principal Paul Leifer: Grades 7-8, Heidi Moldenhauer: Grade 5-6, Naomi Getka: Grades 3-4, Jill Holter: Grades 1-2, Mary Kurbis: Kindergarten, and Nicole Habeck: Preschool Director and Lead Teacher. We also have a few assistant teachers for the preschool and staff for our Extended Care. Nancy Leifer serves as our church and school office manager.

We are bidding farewell to two of our teachers, Brian and Amanda Humann, who accepted Calls to Wisconsin. Our pastor, Jeremy Schulz, also accepted a Call to Texas. We held a Pastoral Call Meeting on June 10.

We continue to use our church basement as a classroom, as we need more ministry space. We have been approved for permits from the City of Tacoma for a new classroom building that we will God-willing place on the west side of our campus. This building will add two extra classrooms, and a planned second phase could add two more. Our current challenge is financing the project. Please join us in prayer that construction could begin soon and be completed according to God's will!

In good times and tough, we pray that God will continue to guide and bless the ministry that is done through the people of Faith in Jesus' name to our people and the surrounding community.

Pastor Jeremy Schulz

## **Holy Trinity – Des Moines**

Pastor Thomas Voss

Transition continues to be the theme at Holy Trinity, as it has been the past few years. Our principal, Jason Kelley, and his wife Alyssa, who taught 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade, took calls to Appleton. Martín Santos, our AD and 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> teacher, was reassigned after his 1-year call. We were blessed to have Jason Gibson accept our principal call in January, and Lizzy Henning was assigned as 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher on MLC call day. We've said farewell and look forward to welcoming our new called workers.

This past year, our enrollment reached an all-time high with approximately 170 students in our classrooms (PreK3-8<sup>th</sup> grade) from 17 different ethnic backgrounds. The highlight of our school year were the baptisms of 8 students during the course of the year. With a

minimum of 16 workers and staff on our campus on all times, our school is a constant buzz of activity. Outside of our Sunday morning worship, it is also our main ministry focus as a congregation. As we welcome a new principal and teacher - after welcoming 3 new teachers last summer - an important area of focus will be on developing the connect between our church members and school families. This is an area of largely untapped potential, and the success that we've seen has been mostly organic. Our school has grown to mirror our community more and more in recent years. What a blessing it could be if our church fully capitalized on the Great Commission work that is right before us in the diverse Des Moines community!

Pastor Tom Voss

## **Korean Lutheran Church – Des Moines**

Pastor Youn Park

*This is the 2017 report; no 2018 report available.*

- Outreach plan
  - a. We would invite new people for Thanksgiving Day dinner and do some outdoor picnic with service in the summer.
  - b. Currently, we are offering After School, and ESL/Adults Classes. In these language courses, we teach them about the Bible, not only languages.
  - c. We plan to open an official website for outreach. For now we are using a Facebook page to reach out into the community.
  - d. We post outreach ads on Korean Christian Newspaper, weekly.
  - e. We make handy flyers and pass out these to people at front of Korean Market in the local area.
  - f. Visit the Community college around our area for outreach.
  - g. Online bible study through virtual class solution to children who around evangelist in Korea
  
- K School and Afterschool to Help Pubic School Kids

Many children immigrate to this country and are immediately at a disadvantage because of language barriers. When they go to public schools, their ability to learn is severely restricted because of this. One of K School's goals is to provide for those children and offer classes with bilingual teachers. Children can learn at a good pace and also become more comfortable learning English and any other subjects because of frequent interactions with their teachers and peers to whom they can relate.

This project would like to give them the opportunity to learn and grow up to become not only great Christians, but a bridge to Holy Trinity Church & School as well. K School will provide basically a home schooling environment with virtual online classes for any

children. The online classes will also be provided, as well as classes during the break. Lastly, from this program, we believe that children should become great gospel distributors to the Seattle area Korean society and, having experienced hardships themselves, be willing to give back to the Korean community and help many other people with the gospel. Korean school, this is a part of K School, is offered Saturdays for 2 hours.

Example of teaching option for K School and Afterschool:

- 2-3 times a week (or weekend)
- 4:00pm- 6:00pm (2 hours)
- 1 or 2 times a week or a couple weeks each month by internet.

- Mission Strategy Federal Way (South King county)

- Personal mailing to household: according to our research, Holy Trinity church next to Federal Way, WA, has the largest concentration of Korean people in the state and ranks number 5 in population or 5.4% out of 89,306 people. So, we made an attempt at mailing an informational post card about KLC. We will try to get the area Korean addresses to print in Korean, and attempt to send this spring for Easter, and later for church celebrations.
- Hand out church information flyers at Korean markets and sent flyers Federal Way/Des Moines school districts.
- Website Update : [www.Klutheran.org](http://www.Klutheran.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/밝은빛교회-Korean-Lutheran-Church-282811545114807/>

- **Project mission in Korea**

- **Training lay leader**

For the past few years, I have been teaching Catechism and Bible Information Classes to lay leaders in Korea via the internet (Skype). So far, it is my feeling, that this teaching has not been accepted as vital. I expect, this is due to the time difference and other reasons. So I have prayed for ways to encourage the Korean lay leaders, even if it means to see them face-to-face, if possible. A trip to Korea is not an easy thing, so far.

However, last year I visited Korea for about two weeks, as my mother-in-law is ill and it also allowed me to visit the lay leaders I have been teaching. I confirmed that there are lay leaders who dream about being an evangelist, an elder, and /or a pastor in Korea.

Therefore, the Korean Lutheran Church has been planning to provide Bible training and to share the gospel through internet means for those lay leaders and their children living in Korea. With a view toward the future, eventually this program would be able to share the gospel to any Koreans in Korea and spread into China. This training started the first week of January 2016 in officially, through internet class solution what name is 'clickmeeting' this solution is live study to face to face, upload any study materials, recoding, and reviewing lessons when they need.

In last two years 2015-2016, Kyung Ho Kim finished all of CAP courses. However, he is still studying in detail about catechism and Bible information class 1-2 hours a week though 'clickmeeting' to teach kids and family members. Please refer to pics and sample videos.

He would be start tent ministry from this year(2017)sometimes on his home in Korea after preparing few months. The ultimate objective of this project is establish WELS Church (and school) in Korea before I retire.

<https://vimeo.com/201216314> <https://vimeo.com/201216343>

\*Mark 16:15 *"He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"*

## - **Virtual Online School**

### K School of Virtual Online Class for In Korea and everywhere

KLC is running a 'Korean School'. This school is supported by the Korea Board of Education and is available for enrollment through the WA State Board of Education.

The school is accredited by a regional accreditation agency ([www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org)).

So we plan to expand the school to Korea by using this local program here via the internet and/or an afterschool program for children of the CAP course trainer and lay members and around their neighbors' children who are in public school, but it is still pending due to lack of teachers.

Further, we plan bilingual classes to their children and kids who hardly understand English and we will be using the advantages through the accredited program in Washington State. Mostly, the subjects would include: Bible studies, Catechism, writing, reading, and history, since the children learn other subjects in Korea's public schools.

I would be teaching Bible history and Catechism but would need certified teachers for other subjects, i.e., language arts, (writing, reading, spelling) history, etc. Also, K school has teachers and substitute teachers who can teach all subjects, except Bible/Catechism, in a bilingual format. Some of them are

certified in Korea for a Korean teacher, and majored in education in college. They are serving in K school Korean classes. This program can begin as soon as we are ready and have the communication tools in place via our internet system.

The children who at any levels would want to study more in the US, would be transferred to Holy Trinity and one of the WELS schools. (For reference, I assisted over 75 children with enrollment and transferring to HTLS/ELHS and other WELS schools, so far.)

Through these classes the children will become Christ-centered in their faith by and through the true gospel. We believe that children should become great gospel contributors to their community and to other souls in Korea. and this class also has a plan to open to anybody who wants to learn the true gospel with the Virtual Online Class program who lives everywhere, as soon as we are ready in the future.)

Example of teaching option and needs:

- E Book, paper books and study materials.
- 3 days a week, week days or Fri-Sun (weekends) \*Sunday class is flexible
- 11:00 pm- 1:00 am, 2 hours a day (K 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm)
- VBS / Camp 4 Star in Summer / WELS international Camp in US (if possible)  
Summer and winter VBS Camp in Korea (if possible)
- Teacher wage: \$25-\$30/Hour (45 minutes) x 2 pay teachers and few volunteer teachers.

Pastor Youn Park

## **Light of Life – Maple Valley/Covington**

Pastor Daniel Lange

-This is our last scheduled month to receive operating mission subsidy. There is a sense of gratitude among the congregation for all the support received and excitement for the future self-supporting ministry (Lord willing).

-Preschool 2018/19 We are full for next year! The waiting list has begun growing. We see an opportunity to expand but we also need to finance the expansion. The estimated cost of bringing our portable to comparable level of current classroom is \$75,000 (septic tank install included). The leadership remains hopeful that this goal is attainable through special donations or a capital campaign after the congregation is off mission subsidy.

-Back to the Word of Christ and the Body of Christ! The church leadership went through ministry evaluation and strategic planning over the past 9 months. In our evaluation, we feel it is essential we refocus our efforts to direct our members to Bible study and to

each other. We admittedly have drifted from the “why?” to the “how?” and “what?” of the mission. One evaluator asked, “Are we just “doing” church?” The board wrestled with the following questions: How do we stay focused on the mission? How do we engage new members to own the mission? How do we grow (should the Lord bless us with growth) and keep our sense of community that we enjoyed as a smaller congregation? These are just a few of the questions we wrestled with. We recently presented to the congregation an extensive small group ministry plan. We hope to launch in the fall. We pray time in the Word of Christ and time with the Body of Christ will refocus and reenergize our congregation.

Pastor Daniel Lange

### **Messiah Lutheran – Lacey/Olympia**

Pastor Joel Nitz

2 Corinthians 3 <sup>12</sup> If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. <sup>14</sup> If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.

The fire we suffered on October 15, 2017, has tested the quality of the work God has allowed us to carry out for three decades in the Lacey, Washington area. The work goes on with the major difficulty that we no longer have a church building to meet in. When the fire happened we had started an emphasis on gathering special gifts to allow us to pursue a vision of Family Ministry Outreach. We prayed that we could have enough support to lift off with early childhood education and after school care to meet the needs of our community with gospel-centered programs. We pray that we may still begin these programs but the fire has delayed our progress.

We remain grateful for the prayers and support of our brothers and sisters in the Pacific Northwest. We give thanks for prayers and support from many other parts of the WELS.

Currently we have the remnant of a building standing on our church property. Insurance has dictated that we explore the feasibility of rebuilding the structure by keeping some of the damaged walls. We await the evaluation of an engineer's report that will determine the cost to rebuild leading to a final settlement. Then we can make plans based on either a rebuild and remodel or new construction. We patiently wait for that outcome.

In the meantime we continue with as much of our normal gospel ministry that we can accomplish. We meet for Bible class, Sunday School and worship at a public school near our church property. We hold meetings and Bible classes during the week at member homes, coffee shops, a local Legion Hall, and other places we rent. Our group has grown closer through the tribulations. Attendance from members has increased but visits from newcomers have decreased.

In the Lord's good time we will hold a celebration and dedication of the church building and move forward under his blessed guidance.

Pastor Joel Nitz

## **Saint Paul – Tacoma**

Pastor David Birsching, Pastor Geoff Rue

Saint Paul's has a rich history here in the Pacific Northwest. We are not only the oldest WELS congregation in the Rainier Circuit, the Puget Sound area, or the state of Washington, but in the entire Pacific Northwest District. Our congregation began gathering in 1884 ... 134 years ago! God has been exceedingly gracious to us through the years, and he continues to shower his grace upon us.

Along with the arrival of Pastor Rue and his family, our gracious Lord has also sent us a number of younger members ... many with young children. Our Sunday morning worship services have become a bit noisier with the extra children around, and this is wonderful!

In March, we held our first ROCK gathering for our men. (ROCK stands for "Refocusing on Christ and Kinsmen.") Over a dozen men attended! And we haven't had less than a dozen any time we have met since then! This is awesome, and we are hoping that our attendance will continue to climb. At ROCK, we share a good meal provided by some of our men, we talk, we laugh, we study, we share, we get to know one another better, and we have fun. All in 2 hours time! (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) We meet once a month, usually on the second Saturday of the month.

At St. Paul's we've had the privilege of baptizing a number of folks recently. Just this year we have already baptized 4 children and 3 adults (including a Chinese student who began attending our congregation 3 years ago, and who graduated from Evergreen Lutheran High School this year). In the next few weeks we expect to baptize several more children. Most are actually not our members, but they recognize the blessing of this Sacrament and come to us to receive it. How awesome! Praise God!

God is indeed gracious, and Saint Paul Lutheran Church continues to rejoice in Him and his goodness to our congregation.

Pastor David Birsching

In the last ten months, St. Paul's has been putting together an aggressive and consistent outreach program. A new website and social media campaign have been a big part of St. Paul's outreach program. St. Paul's regularly puts out videos that can be seen on YouTube and Facebook. These videos, which share both devotional messages as well as



special events at St. Paul's (Christmas, Easter, special concerts & events) are seen by those in our neighborhood and have been seen by thousands.

While Pastor Rue has been placed as our Outreach Pastor, he recognizes that he cannot do it alone. In order for St. Paul's to carry out its mission work effectively, it must be carried out by its members as well as the pastor. While there are difficulties in getting congregational help (distance, small size of congregation), St. Paul's consistently gets helping hands to reach out to the community. This is important as St. Paul's prepares for its relaunched neighborhood block party at Lincoln Park, as well as the Hilltop Street Festival this summer, where we will have a chance to meet thousands of people. We pray that this aggressive and consistent approach in evangelism will continue to reach our community so that many more souls may come to believe in Jesus as their Savior and receive the gift of eternal life.

Pastor Geoff Rue