

# **Rainier (South Sound) Circuit**

## **Circuit Pastor: David Birsching**



### **Divine Peace – Renton**

Pastor Joel Hoff

This year marks the 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Divine Peace! We thank God for establishing our congregation as a gospel outpost in Renton for so many years. The following are ways our members are committed to glorifying God this year, and by his grace, for many years to come.

A new group, Forever Fit, meets monthly to hike local trails. These hikes provide wonderful opportunities to enjoy fellowship while exploring God's creation. The hikes are also intended to prepare us for a day hike this summer at Mt. Rainier.

Two new bible studies will be offered this summer. In July, a four week in-home bible study will be hosted by members of the congregation and a four week Ladies' Bible study will follow in August. On August 1, the ladies of Divine Peace will host a Ladies Tea.

Members of Bethany, Port Orchard, helped connect us with a summer reading program. The program is designed to encourage parents to read with their children. There are sixteen elementary schools within a five mile radius of Divine Peace so we anticipate that this outreach effort will be a blessing for many young families. At the end of the program, a one day family VBS camp will take place.

Our congregation has also offered to host a Parents & New Baby group which normally meets at Valley Medical Hospital. Since the group occasionally loses their meeting room, we will serve as their backup location as needed during the summer months. Last year, our goal was to find ways to connect to our community and ultimately to connect our community to Christ. God has answered that prayer in ways we never imagined!

On a personal note, my wife, Kate, and I were blessed with a new addition to our family last December. Our doctor was ecstatic that Micah Joel Hoff was born on December 12 so that he could be a true 12<sup>th</sup> man Seahawks fan. She was devastated, however, when I informed her that Micah's first words will probably be "Go! PACK! Go!"

(Pastor Joel 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 share the Gospel of Jesus through our church, school and preschool ministries. This year we celebrate our 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

This past September, we restarted our preschool program. We licensed it with the state for full day care for 3-4 year olds. With two teachers, we had 18 students enrolled and held a waiting list.

This summer, we are moving a two-classroom portable to our campus, generously gifted to us from ELHS. 80% of the \$50,000 relocation costs have been raised. The classrooms will be placed on a portion of our new land that we purchased about five years ago. This addition will double our Preschool space, enlarge our Kindergarten area, and provide an extra classroom for future growth.

Our school continues to thrive and serve a healthy amount of children. With thankful hearts, we will welcome new teachers to our staff this summer: Brian and Amanda Humann. Brian will teach the Middle Grades and also serve as the Athletic Director. Amanda will be the Preschool Director and Lead Teacher. Our other teachers are Principal Paul Leifer—Upper Grades, Jill Holter—Lower Grades, and Mary Kurbis—Kindergarten. 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 pray that God will continue to guide and bless the ministry that we do in Jesus' name to our people and the surrounding community.

(Pastor Jeremy Schulz)

### **Holy Trinity – Des Moines**

Pastors Mark Schewe and Thomas Voss

Holy Trinity continued to encounter change in the past year, as has been the norm for the past couple of years. Last summer, we gave thanks while celebrating Steph and Jane Rodmyre's retirement, after many years serving as the school principal and Kindergarten teacher, respectively. At the same time, we also welcomed Jason Kelley as our new principal, along with his wife Alyssa as our Kindergarten teacher.

We give thanks that in this time of transition, our enrollment continues to climb, especially in the lower grades where we will expand to a full-day Kindergarten, while adding a 3 year-old preschool classroom to our current 4 year-old program.

In the fall, we will celebrate with Chris Poetter as this year marked his 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the ministry. Change will continue next year as Carol Cole has announced that this will be her final year before she joins her husband, Stan, in retirement.

Holy Trinity continues to be a melting pot of ministry, serving children from 11 different countries in our school, with active Sudanese and Korean ministries taking place alongside our more traditional ministry.

We still face financial challenges as we continue to adjust to life without Evergreen, and we are in the midst of reevaluating our Mission, Vision and Objectives so that we might carry out a proactive and focused ministry.

(Pastor Tom Voss)

# Korean Lutheran Church – Des Moines

Pastor Youn Park

## For July 2014 – June 2015 PNWD Convention Report

Souls	CURRENT Year	LAST YEAR	2 YEARS AGO	3 YEARS AGO
1. YEARS COVERED			July 2014 - June/2015	
2. NUMBER OF SOULS:	60	57	54	43
3. NUMBER OF COMMUNICANTS:	38	36	31	23
4. Average Attend:	30	28	25	23

### Korean School (Saturdays)

Average attend numbers: 25

Teaching classes:

- Korean language and reading/writing/speaking/history/culture
- Bible history with Korean

### Bible Study / BIC class (Sunday Morning)

Average numbers: 8

Teaching classes:

- Catechism
- Bible History

### ESL ESL (Wednesdays)

Average numbers: 8

Teaching classes:

### Evangelism

- Why is this a good field for Korean ministry in the Federal Way area?

Even though Washington has less Korean population compare to California or New York, there still are a lot of Koreans live in Seattle area. Most of them are in south King county (especially in Federal Way). South king county has the biggest Korean community, and there are many conveniences for Korean people like Korean groceries, Korean Hospitals, etc. Korean population in south King county is getting bigger by above facts, and I believe Federal Way / Des Moines area is still good for ministry because it's in south King county and very close to Federal Way.

1. List strengths of the current program.

- Bible information class (Sunday Morning)
- Teaching gospel through the Korean class (Saturdays)
- Sharing gospel through ESL (Wednesdays)
- Pastoral visiting / Helping members to language barrier and trifle.

2. What new ideas might be tried during the next program years?

- After school program for public school kids to help with homework & Bible (4:00pm-6pm / 2hours a day / 2 or 3days a week)  
Expect numbers: 20-30

(Pastor Youn Park)

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

Pastor Daniel Lange

2014 was a year filled with the Lord's blessings and challenges. Along with all the immeasurable blessings, God has granted us many measurable blessings: an increase in membership, worship and Bible class attendance, offerings, a full preschool with a 50-family waiting list, etc...

The music ministry at Light of Life has been a bright spot since the inception of our music coordinator position. We have seen more of our musicians participate in worship and more variety in music and the liturgical forms. The council is beginning a plan for overall sanctuary improvements.

The leaders brought before the congregation a plan to divide Council and Elder duties (previously same board) to allow God's people to better use their gifts by distinguishing administrative and spiritual gifts. Formal Elder training has been underway for 9 months.

Along with these blessings we have seen our challenges. We have lost a few core families for various reasons. Turnover in leadership is a blessing but also provides challenges in identifying roles and responsibilities

The preschool ministry continues to be our signature tool to bring the Gospel to children and draw unchurched families closer to Light of Life. Due to a combination of factors: local co-op preschools closed doors, city growth, our program establishment in community, we were blessed with 56 students (max capacity) last year with a 50 family waiting list.

We are currently studying the feasibility of opening a second portable preschool building on campus to double our pre-k program, God-willing. In two years, we could be serving over 100 community families.

Along with this we are re-evaluating our outreach strategy to our current preschool families and are excited to try a few new approaches next year (51 kids currently registered for the 15/16 school year with 12 families on a waiting list for morning classes)

Light of Life is thankful for the years of support we have received. God has blessed our plans to step down from support. We acknowledge we have a few more steps left but we are confident the Lord will see us through them. The leadership has made it plain to the congregation that self-supporting status is not the end goal. We want to express our gratefulness to our Lord and for the years of synod support by becoming the church which generously supports synod and other local ministries. We want to keep our people focused on mission work and continue to hold the ministry opportunities before them. To God alone be all glory!

(Pastor Daniel Lange)

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

Pastor Joel Nitz

We welcome another summer of outreach with our Neighborhood Block Party on Saturday, June 27. Without a WELS traveling band passing through this time, we'll have to endure our own music.

We pray that we will draw in people from our neighborhood to see classic cars, a fire department visit, military displays, various games, food, photo booth, and that lower level of music mentioned above.

We'll get contact information as people sign up for prizes and then follow up with visits to encourage a family connection with our gospel ministry. If we shot a picture of the family or individual at the block party, we take a print of that along as a gift.

Also we will offer families visiting the block party the opportunity to sign up for our July Soccer Camp. This year we will again rent a field at the Recreational Athletic Complex about two miles from our church. That worked very well last year, much better than our field of lost dreams, dirt, moss, stubble of Scotch broom, and a few blades of grass here and there.

The venue allowed us to post our event on the reader board outside the complex. Thousands of cars pass by that spot every day. Also we met new people as we set up for the camp at our rented field.

Subsequently we will invite the families who come to Soccer Camp to Sunday School, Harvest Carnival, Living Christmas Card, Christmas Service, Easter for Kids, Easter Service and anything else that might come along.

We don't often have a Mother's Day Breakfast. We did this year. That went very well. Many mothers enjoyed a fine meal of egg frittata, potato scramble, fruit, rolls, juice, and of course, espresso, lattes and strong Sumatran coffee.

We started the Congregational Assistant Program a year ago. It took that long to make it through one course, The Life of Christ, which we offered for Sunday morning Bible study. Four of the five enrolled students have continued with the second course they chose, Life of Luther, Reformation.

At this rate it will take some years to complete the program but already it has brought blessings to our congregation.

On an ongoing basis, with some breaks during the year, we have small group Bible studies meeting. We call the program Burning Hearts, not in the Mormon sense, but in the Emmaus sense (Luke 24:32).

Generally three groups meet regularly in various homes, although as many as five groups have met in the past. One group meets off and on focused on the millennial generation folks in the congregation.

This class uses the Randy Hunter model of active learning, offering various projects, experiences, or assignments based on the sermon everyone heard on Sunday. A few years back at missionary conference Jonathan Enter introduced this concept to us with the book "Sticky Church." It has worked well, but not as phenomenally well as it seemed to work in Florida.

The pastor and his family still live in the big parsonage in the little woods tucked away in the northwestern corner of the church property. Which sometimes makes the Tacoma native Pacific Northwestern pastor residing there wonder to himself, "When can we get our church magazine to return to its real name, the Northwestern Lutheran?"

(Pastor Joel Nitz)

## **Saint Paul – Tacoma**

Pastor David Birsching

Saint Paul's continues to evaluate her ministry to try to remain as effective as possible in an ever-changing society. God's Word and its efficacy never changes, but the dynamics of our culture are always changing. How do we keep our own people engaged in Word and Sacraments, and how do we reach as many others as possible with the Gospel? May God help us accomplish both goals!

We are excited this year that a "son of the congregation," Craig Birsching, will serve us for 2 months as summer vicar before moving to his year-long vicar position in Toronto, Canada. At St. Paul's, Craig will be doing extensive outreach work in an effort to reach into the community immediately around our church. The goals are to let local folks know we are here, to encourage them to "check us out," to follow up on the best prospects, to find out what needs our neighbors have that we as a congregation might fill ... and all of course with the ultimate goal of sharing the gospel with as many as possible.

Our long-awaited church basement renovation is essentially completed. Some of the blessings God has brought us through the project are a ground-level entryway into the basement from our parking lot (north side of the church), handicapped parking slots near the door, upgraded lighting, new carpeting, and a renovated kitchen. Now we no longer refer to the space as the church basement, but rather as our fellowship area. We have also added a brand new sign in front of church, and also plan to upgrade the church entryway to make it more welcoming.

Regarding our ministry, we are actively trying to become more visible and engaged in our community. We are also exploring some creative ways to pull in families from our nearer neighborhoods, including possibly pre-school type activities and educational seminars in our renovated fellowship area. Our upgraded sound system and projectors and screens continue to be a huge blessing to our ministry.

We are ever-mindful of how God has preserved and blessed our congregation for over 100 years, and we give Him all praise for his rich provision! On a personal note, this August marks my 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the ministry, all at St. Paul's. God be praised.

(Pastor David Birsching)