

Rainier (South Sound) Circuit

Circuit Pastor: David Birsching



Divine Peace – Renton

Pastor Joel Hoff

You'll discover a few new changes when you visit Divine Peace this year. We have installed three new parking lot lights as well as exterior lights on our church building. Another project which was recently completed is the construction of a new deck/fire escape. The families at Divine Peace have been working very hard this past year to beautify and improve our church building and grounds. We have a lot on our property to maintain so we were thankful when God used the snow and wind to take a few trees down for us.

Simon Duoth, member at Divine Peace, is enrolled in the Pastoral Studies Institute Program. Our goal is that Simon will complete his training by December of 2018. He continues to lead worship services in Neur twice every month. Since Renton serves as a gateway for many Sudanese heading to Alaska for work, Simon has been able to serve many people with the gospel if even for a short time. Simon and Pastor Hoff also attended the Sudanese Conference in Wisconsin where the South Sudanese Global Ministry Committee was formed to assist with ministry planning for the Sudanese Lutheran Church both Stateside and in Africa.

This summer marks the third year of our summer reading program. Every year, this program allows us to connect with more families in our community and connect them to Christ. One family that attended last year has completed our Bible Instruction Course and their son will be baptized on Father's Day of 2017. God is great!

Twenty-nine children attended our Christmas for Kids program last year. Several families were members of Divine Peace or another WELS congregation but the majority of those who attended were from our community. We thank God for this blessing to share Jesus with others. One new opportunity to build relationships with our community will come in the form of mentoring students at Renton Park Elementary School just down the street from our church.

God has blessed our congregation with a number of new families, whether by transfer or adult confirmation this past year. I am very thankful for the four students in confirmation class, the adults who have completed or are currently studying in our Bible Information Class, and that we now have the need to start a Sunday School program this next year as God has blessed us with a number of little lambs.

We thank God for the blessings of this past year and for the many opportunities he has provided us to serve as his witnesses in Renton. This next year we intend to focus primarily on developing a ministry plan for our congregation and leadership training.

In Christ whom we serve,

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 116 children this past year, the first time ever over 100 students. With thankful hearts, we welcomed a new teacher to our staff: Mrs. Naomi Getka. Our teachers are Principal Paul Leifer: Grades 6-8, Naomi Getka: Grade 4-5, Brian Humann: Grades 2-3, Jill Holter: Grade 1, Mary Kurbis: Kindergarten, and Amanda Humann: Preschool Director. 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.

This past year we set up a classroom in our church basement as we need more ministry space. The congregation is waiting for the City of Tacoma to give final approval of 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 will add two more. 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

(No report currently available; if possible, it will be added as soon as possible.)

Korean Lutheran Church – Des Moines

Pastor Youn Park

- 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

<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).

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

-FY 2017/18 marks the last year the congregation of Light of Life is scheduled to receive 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 2017/18 registration has been a blessing. 54 out of 56 spots (3 yr. and pre-k) have been reserved for next year with more than 30 families on the waiting list for the pre-K program. (The congregation has applied for grant money to expand and immediately bring in those 30 families. Requests up to this point have been denied. 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.)

-Staffing changes on the preschool. Nicole Trebesch is moving to Watertown, WI. Amy Natalie accepted the congregation's call as full-time director and teacher for the program. She will be our only teacher this year with the support of the assistants in the classroom.

Pastor Daniel Lange

Messiah Lutheran – Lacey/Olympia

Pastor Joel Nitz

The mission of Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church is to proclaim the true gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone and strengthen each other through Word and Sacrament.

In 2016 we remained a stable congregation, gaining 9 communicant members and losing 10. Attendance for worship, Bible study, and other activities remained the same as it has for about the last five years. Programs remained much the same also, such as the Living [Christmas](#) Card, Easter for Kids, Block Party, Soccer Camp, and Harvest Carnival.

Every [Sunday](#) we serve great coffee which has included Ethiopia Harar from Batdorf and Bronson Roasters, Olympia; Raven's Brew Resurrection Blend ("In constant quest for the Supreme Bean") from Tumwater; the Mountain Goat Ethiopia Yirgacheffe Organic from Packwood, WA; Guatemala Maya Super Dark, and other fantastic brews.

Recognizing the need to expand our gospel outreach and coffee into the community, we have used the Congregational Assistant Program as a planning committee to uncover a vision for the future. This led us to pursue a vision of Family Ministry Outreach.

The CAP group continues to meet to make concrete proposals related to this vision, which they will present to our voters' meeting this July. That may lead us in a new direction.

If you come to visit our church building, you will see a new direction inside. We removed the vinyl composition tile from the sanctuary, narthex and hallway. In its place we have polished concrete. We gave away our church pews. In their place we have cushioned purple chairs. Everyone enjoys the new comforts of our church home while sipping cups of Organic Cuatro from Zoka Coffee, Seattle.

Pastor Joel Nitz

Saint Paul – Tacoma

Pastor David Birsching

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 ... 133 years ago! God has been exceedingly gracious to us through the years, and he continues to shower his grace upon us.

Recently our congregation endured what I have been describing as "the perfect storm." All at once we lost a number of key members through various legitimate means (death, moves, transfers to sister congregations that were more convenient due to distance or

school, church discipline, and etc.). Obviously this affected our church leadership, our attendance, our offerings ... in short, our entire ministry. It was a challenging year for our congregation.

Which leads us to part 2 of the story. God is always gracious! To “set the stage,” here are a few paragraphs from my report to the District for last year’s convention:

Another double blessing was that a life-long member of St. Paul’s entered heaven recently. He is blessed with living in the presence of his Savior now and forevermore, and his congregation is blessed through a very generous bequest from his estate. Our congregation is determined to do the very best we can to use this gift to expand the Lord’s Kingdom work at St. Paul’s.

So the bequest, coupled with our current challenges, launched the congregation into an extensive ministry evaluation process. The process will continue through the summer months, but we have already learned a great deal. Changes are coming! As for the use of the bequest, the current consensus among our leadership is to use it (or at least some of it) to foster extensive outreach ministry in our immediate neighborhood. This is an exciting concept, and we will see where the Lord in his grace will lead us.

Where God led us, through many meetings, Bible studies and in-depth discussions over the past year, was to a consensus to use the funds to cover the salary for multiple years of an associate pastor who would concentrate almost exclusively on outreach. Furthermore, we decided to see if the Lord would provide us with a graduate from the Seminary, as this seemed to be the ideal scenario.

Of course, the big question was, with the tremendous shortage of pastors in our church body, would God provide a graduate for us? And he did! On May 18, Geoffrey Rue was assigned to our congregation.

Geoff is married to Serena, and they have a 1-year-old son, Geoffrey Junior. They will arrive in Tacoma the last week in July. The ordination and installation service is planned for the afternoon of Sunday, August 6. You are cordially invited to attend!

Our congregation is very excited, and is working hard to prepare for the Rue’s move and arrival. We are also determined to have as many things in place as possible to ensure that we are fully supporting our new pastor’s outreach ministry with willing helpers. We are extremely excited to see how many souls can be reached with this extension of our ministry. With God’s blessing, we are expecting lots of new life around St. Paul’s in the near future.

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

Pastor David Birsching