

# SONSHINE CIRCUIT

## Eastern Washington

### Our Saviors - East Wenatchee

Our Savior's is attempting to connect more strongly to the children of our congregation in order to minimize the growing trend of attrition among our young people. We are looking at ways of better integrating them into the body of believers through bible study, service and open dialogue. We were also blessed with some new faces who have been a blessing to the body. We face the challenge of being a more senior aged congregation within walking distance of two large Lutheran churches. We are presently evaluating and searching for our niche in the Lord's kingdom in order to best serve our members and our community. We look forward to the blessing afforded us in the Lord's continued service.

### Redeemer - Yakima

This has been another year of blessings for Redeemer - slow and steady growth after a couple years of decline, as well as financial stabilizing. We added a monthly "family night" to our calendar this year for both preschool and church and have had some wonderful, encouraging times together that we hope to continue. Pastor Tim Schwartz has accepted a call to serve the saints in Columbus, WI. We are looking forward with lots of excitement to the arrival and installation of Pastor Isaac Cherney with his wife, Andrea in mid-July and can't wait to see what the Lord has in store for us in the future!

### Circuit

Trinity Lutheran has been blessed in the last year with a growing since of family and service.

From their pastor declining a call, to more members looking to use their gifts to serve in some way the church family is doing well. While attendance has been lower due to the passing of some faithful members, there have been some new faces in worship and the congregation is hopeful for the future. Recently we updated our church logo and have been "branding" it in mugs, license plate covers and t-shirts. The plan is to give these away as another way to bring people closer to us in spirit and worship. Also, this year we are trying our hand at advertising at the local bowling alley, so families will get a chance to hear more about our church.

### Good Faith, South Cle Elum and Good Hope, Ellensburg

Good Faith, South Cle Elum and Good Hope, Ellensburg, Washington have been served by the present pastor in a semi-retired manner for three years. Both congregations continue to explore ways to make the communities aware of their existence and their purpose to proclaim the Gospel. Good Faith has had two recent adult confirmations. The church councils meet annually to review the dual parish plan and discuss how things are going. Both congregations gather together in August for a joint service followed by a cookout picnic. During 2015, five communicant members of Good Hope were called to eternal glory. Some other members have moved or asked to be released from membership. Supporting the budget has become challenging due to these events. Brochures are being shared in the community to increase awareness of Good Hope's presence in the community. Work has been done to the parsonage exterior and to the church property to improve the eye appeal to those passing by.

Good Faith has been blessed with the addition of a couple of members and a Bible information class is scheduled for June. The members are faithful in attendance and in their support of the ministry at Good Faith.

#### King of Kings - Kennewick

The Gospel continues to strengthen the health of our congregation and the Lord continues to bring new souls into our (His) church family.

Other than that, a main focus continues to be relocating our church to a growing area of Kennewick. Our goal has been to dedicate a new building (approx. 12,000 sq. ft.) in 2017 and that seems very attainable at this point. We are almost to the point of developing construction plans, finalizing a few small details of the concept. Meanwhile, our current property is still for sale. Recent restructuring of our listing has generated a lot of new interest and our realtors believe some viable offers will come before the end of summer.

As we finalize plans for our new building, we are working hard at planning the new ministries that we will be able to offer in it, especially an early childhood ministry. The city's plans for our new location show that we will be one of the first buildings in the midst of thousands of brand new homes that will be built over the coming years. We are excited by the opportunities to share Jesus which this will bring.

As we plan for these coming changes, we keep an eye also on our next major focus which is working with the DMB toward the goal of becoming a multi-site campus in the Tri-Cities, looking to start a physical presence in Pasco or Richland within the next few years. Currently, we are gathering information and creating a strategy for that effort.

#### The Vine- Coeur de Lane, ID

The WELS Board for Home Missions met this past April and approved our request for a new mission start in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as a second site for St Matthew in Spokane. The Coeur d'Alene area (including Post Falls and Hayden) is a rapidly growing area and therefore an ideal location to do new mission work. We are grateful for this blessing and give glory to God for the opportunity to reach people for Christ in the panhandle of northern Idaho.

My call at St Matthew and my day-to-day ministry work will now shift to full-time work in Coeur d'Alene. My wife Miriam and I are making plans to move to Coeur d'Alene in the next several weeks. Our goal is to start doing "on the ground" mission work in Coeur d'Alene with our Launch Team in July.

We do not have a critical mass or nucleus of WELS members living in the Coeur d'Alene area right now. However, 23 of our members (plus 10 children) from St Matthew in Spokane have committed themselves for 2 years to be part of our launch team to help get this new mission started. That's exciting!

During the first year (2016-17) our focus will mainly be on building relationships within the community and developing ways to serve the community. God-willing, as the Lord builds his church and a nucleus is formed, we hope to start regular worship services in September 2017. After that, the members of the launch team will be free to return to St Matthew in Spokane.

Right now we are working on a logo and mission statement for “The Vine.” Once that is approved, we will need to develop brochures to hand out, business cards, invitation cards, golf shirts, banners, and other important resources to create awareness of our new mission.

We are also preparing our launch team to go out and canvass the neighborhoods in our target area, as well as be prepared to share the gospel with people they come into contact with. The more we can engage our neighbors in conversations like this, the better opportunity we will have to share Christ with them.

Next week we are planning to go door-to-door to collect food for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest food bank in Coeur d’alene. The goal is 500 homes and 500 lbs of food. In July we want to offer a one-day Vacation Bible School, using materials, resources, and members from St Matthew in Spokane. Then in the fall, we want to come up with some way to work with the local Coeur d’Alene public schools on a “back-to-school” project that will allow our launch team to meet local education leaders and serve our community.

It’s exciting times these days in the Spokane-Coeur d’Alene corridor. Please keep me and our Launch Team in your prayers as we prepare to reach more people for Christ in Coeur d’Alene.

#### Grace/Viviendo por Gracia, Yakima WA

“He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm” (Luke 8:24). Imagine that instant for the disciples right after they had cried out in panic because of the raging storm, “Lord, don’t you care if we drown,” and the first words of rebuke from the mighty Savior’s mouth were not aimed at weak-faithed them but at the raging storm that was frightening them. Fear and amazement is how Luke describes their state at the time. This moment of awe and amazement at the Lord against the backdrop of a crystal calm sea is, perhaps, not a bad way to picture and describe the state of Grace/Viviendo por Gracia Lutheran Church, Yakima, at this time. The storm of upheaval, transition, and tensions have subsided in obedience to the mighty Savior’s rebuke and in answer to many prayers. There is calm. There is joy. There is unity and love. There is great hope and enthusiasm for the future. There are many awestruck disciples of the Lord Jesus at Grace. In the fall of 2015 Grace Lutheran School opened its 63rd year on precarious footing. We opened the school year with both our lower and upper grade teachers on one-year calls, as the viability of the school had been recently questioned, and the 2015/2016 school year was a trial year to analyze the long-term sustainability of GLS. In December of 2015 members of the Commission on Lutheran Schools comprised of Jim Rademan, Daryl Weber, and Patrick Cortright visited GLS and did a thorough analysis of our school. The results were largely positive. We followed their recommendations, one of the most important being to make permanent the one year calls, and, thereby, end the speculation as to the future of the school. This we did. Both Mrs. Marilee Nolte’s and Miss Rebecca Hussman’s calls were made permanent. Miss Hussman will serve as the main administrator for GLS. The Lord has richly blessed the Commission’s work and our labors. Our school enrollment looks to be increasing for next year; and we’re even looking at offering all-day kindergarten. Through the school, we’re making more inroads into both the Anglo and Hispanic community. School families are joining the church and Hispanic church families are using the school. Our Hispanic

ministry, as a result, continues to experience slow, steady growth. We currently have three new Hispanic families taking BIC. Our English ministry is also experiencing a bit of a boon. Though weekly attendance has plateaued, as of late, the Lord has brought us two new families who are taking BIC. Financially, the Lord has blessed us with the ability to carry out our three-pronged English, Spanish, School ministry responsibly. For all that our dear Savior has done in calming the storm and giving us the joy to serve him and his people we stand in awe and amazement of Christ Jesus, and are strengthened in our faith in him! To him alone be the glory!

#### St. Matthews - Spokane

The Lord has been very gracious to St. Matthew in the last year. In April the WELS BHM approved funding for St Matthew to start a second site in Coeur d'Alene, ID (which has it's own update.) The congregation has seen an increase in worship attendance and will begin offering a second service in the fall. This year we were privileged to witness several baptisms through our school/preschool ministry, including a parent. God has blessed our school and preschool as well. This fall we are expecting a very large Kindergarten class coming from our preschool (a transition that has been difficult in the past), which is both a joy and a challenge as we come up with solutions to the space limitations of our classrooms.