



ASSOCIATION OF LUTHERAN CHURCH MUSICIANS Region IV 2010 Gathering Special Edition



Sally Morgenthaler



Dr. Ted Peters



Dr. Greg Peterson



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A BIG 'Thank You' To Those Who Helped Behind the Scenes

Carole Lea Arenson, Gathering Chair



The Gathering in Boulder was four months ago and made possible by many people working together. The Gathering Book has a long list of “acknowledgments” for the supporters of the event. As Gathering Chair, I would like to note some key players, who worked behind the scenes, making it all possible. And I’d like to tell you the “Rest of the Story”. All these players are important and the Gathering couldn’t happen without each one’s passion and commitment.

When Region IV President, Norma Aamodt-Nelson, asked me if I would consider chairing the regional, I asked for some time to be sure there was a good hosting community willing to support it. When I called Dr. Tim Snyder to say I would “chair” if he would “host” in Boulder, he said “yes”. This is how it all started. He followed through doing an admirable job of hosting even in the midst of accepting a new position in Florida. Thank you Tim for all your work including: organizing a hosting committee, recruiting the community choir and conducting the early rehearsals in preparation for Bradley Ellingboe’s arrival, negotiating meeting spaces, working with organ recitalists, coordinating the Finnish “St. Thomas Mass” service with local support, helping us have children in the Pre-Gathering choir, setting up local publicity to get the word out that the Lutherans are in town, and the list goes on. **Thank you, Tim.**



After there was a great location with a host, a Steering Committee was formed. It was intentional to include individuals from various parts of the region. Secondly, it was intentional to have some members with previous working experience, whom I knew would follow through on commitments, and some I had never worked with before. Luckily this “asking process” went very smoothly. Carol Churchill as Region IV Secretary/Treasurer was a key member of the Steering Committee keeping us informed about our status and coordinating with Cheryl Dieter at the national. She continually encouraged us to be “conservative” and to find ways to “cut costs”. With her guidance we made more money for the national than we had originally budgeted. **Thank you, Carol!**

Erik Whitehill and I were colleagues at King of Glory for eleven years and he has worked with me as the Region IV Layout Editor so I did know him very well and I was very aware of his creative abilities. Much of our connection to ALCMers can be credited to him with the marvelous Gathering Website he designed and maintained. Plus it was available for viewing a year in advance with updates regularly posted. He designed our logo with the compass arrow pointing north in the middle of FAITH. He formatted the entire Gathering Book with all the worship services plus all publicity material. In addition, he composed the children’s choir anthem, *I Lift My Eyes*, based on the theme. **Thank you, Erik!**



Jerry Gunderson is one whom I had worked with and knew prior to this event. He was there to pick up the slack when needed. Jerry did a lot of work arranging music for the instrumentalists we had, formulating the college student contact with Boulder hosts, proofing and did whatever was needed at the time. **Thank you, Jerry!**



Kim Cramer and Helen Thoenes were also people I knew from earlier events. Kim has a good financial mind, a passion for creative worship, and the ability to work where needed. She became the liaison with our music store, The Music Mart, plus advocating for innovative ways to include people in worship. Helen Thoenes was on the Program Committee and helped decide what we wanted from keynoters and who they should be. Towards the end, when we were not sure income would meet expenses, they convinced their two congregations to print the interior pages of the Gathering Program Book and saved us lots of money. **Thank you, Kim and Helen!**



Valerie Hess and Gerry Luethi were part of the Boulder Hosting Committee as well as being on the Gathering Steering Committee. Valerie was the “onsite host” since her building, Trinity Lutheran Church, served as our home base. She did a marvelous job of welcoming everyone while being sure all rooms were ready for the scheduled events and overseeing the caterer. Also, she personally provided additional snacks and beverages for everyone. Gerry worked with Tim behind the scenes being sure everything moved smoothly. She found housing for the college students, worked with the three hotels, secured passes on the public transit plus she rode every



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shuttle to Chautauqua's Tuesday night concert to be sure no one was left behind. When the money crunch loomed she volunteered her husband to help provide the extra worship bulletins needed as we invited the Boulder community to join us. **Thank you, Valerie and Gerry!**



Joy Berg and Tom Keesecker were advocates for getting information out to regions in Canada and Montana who were not very familiar with ALCM. Both spent time alerting people not only about the event, but also about the possibilities for college students. They worked with

Jerry on logistics for college students. Tom composed the opening gathering hymn, *We Come and Gather Here Today*, for the first service based on the theme "Faith: A Compass for Leaders". Joy is now our new Region IV President. **Thank you, Joy and Tom!**



All the Steering Committee, with the exception of Carol Churchill who was always at the registration table, were presenters insuring that the theme was carried out in all the Focus Sessions.



Dr. Gregory Peterson needs special thanks and recognition for his input into the Gathering. He is one I have worked with before and whom I trusted to help us find direction. After the Steering Committee formulated a theme, he offered to help in a number of ways. His idea of a discussion between keynoter and attendees resulted in the very successful Forum format. Also he applauded the idea of college students infused into the event. He brought two students from Luther College and coached them as organists for the opening service. He also brought South African Choral Song into our midst. As keynoter and primary worship musician he welcomed all to use their musical talents in worship. **Thank you, Greg!**

It is always a blessing to have quality people who actually volunteer to help. We were fortunate enough to have such cases.



In this financial climate when publishing houses are cutting back, we did not know who would help us supply music and books for browsing

by our attendees. Before we as the Steering Committee could begin to delve into how we could have a music display available, Joe Keith from The Music Mart in Albuquerque, New Mexico gave me a call volunteering to be our Music Store. What a blessing! Not only did they pack a SUV with materials to be an actual "Store" with Vera Kleinhenz and her husband managing, but Dan Wright from Music Mart contacted all the publishing houses to supply octavos for the reading session and for the worship services. In addition, he contacted

keynoters and presenters asking what they wished displayed for the Gathering. Finally Joe Keith offered to be the major sponsor for the "Elegant Social". **Thank you, Music Mart!**



The second volunteer was Bradley Ellingboe. He called saying, "Carole, I really want to give back to ALCM. Is there anything I can help with at the Gathering?" We talked and I told him we had already spent all our money on the three keynoters. We talked some more. The end result

was Mark Kjos of Kjos Music sponsored Brad as a presenter and supplied 100 copies of all the individual choral pieces needed for the Wednesday evening Evensong. **Thank you, Brad and thank you Kjos Music!**

This list could go on. However, there are a few more important people to be noted. Dr. Ted Peters is new to ALCM so we were not sure what to expect. He took great interest in our theme and our intent. The result was he attended all the daily events and wove himself into the theme. Everyone was impressed with his words, his insights and his passion. He was present for Morning Prayer and stayed with us through the evening activities including the "Elegant Social". **Thank you, Dr. Peters!**



There was a need for particular instrumental talent and we were out of money. We looked to people who had registered or could be coaxed to do so. Our thanks to Marshall Bowen for playing the bass guitar as needed, Kay Wehofer for playing her violin, Rachael Dales as guitarist, all the Boulder talented groups and the additional musicians listed in the Gathering Book. **Thanks to all the vocalists and instrumentalists who shared their talent at the Gathering.**



Norma Aamodt-Nelson was our Region IV President and our conduit to the National Board. She went above and beyond her presidential duties when we found ourselves caught in the necessary budget cuts at ALCM National. In order to balance the budget, major cuts were needed which included funding for mailing newsletters, GraceNotes, conference publicity, etc. Our Region IV Newsletter had been formatted and was ready to print. We had already printed all our registration forms including those reserved as newsletter inserts. Norma encouraged her congregation to print and mail the last printed Region IV Newsletter. I mailed her the registration forms which she inserted and sent with the newsletter. **Thank you, Norma!**

Cheryl Dieter, is our ALCM Business Manager. She was invaluable in her role as treasurer and after the budget cuts assisted us in finding ways to help us get the word out about the Gathering in Boulder. Cheryl forwarded Gathering information through emails and helped connect the Gathering Website to the national one. **Thank you, Cheryl!**

College Students had a “Presence” at the Gathering

One goal of the Region IV Gathering in Boulder was to help find and support young new leadership for the continuing role of music ministry within the church and within ALCM. We intended our theme, “Faith: A Compass for Leaders”, to take hold in these young lives. We “hoped” their personal faith would be nurtured and serve as a stepping stone to continued involvement in the church.

The plan was to actively engage college students in the workings of the event, while keeping their expenses as low as possible. We not only had a low discounted registration fee, but were also able to “offer” them free bed and breakfast. The “free bed and breakfast offer” included being willing to come to the Pre-Gathering and serve as mentors for the Children’s Choir. Since they arrived early, they were available to prepare for the opening service. Each one of the college students was given an active role in this service.

As you read the following student reflections, you will probably agree that we may have made a difference with and for these students towards our initial goal. Be ready to greet them at our next event, the National ALCM Conference in Seattle!

Reflections: College Students

John Stender

Luther College Music Major
Organist, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Decorah, Iowa



Never before the ALCM gathering in Boulder, had I experienced such a focused educational experience for the field of church music, worship and culture of the church. The peculiar term ‘Gathering’ proved to be a principle for community and involvement of all those attending-- especially for us college students. As soon as I entered Trinity Lutheran, Carole Arenson found me and said, “*You must be John. Here’s what I’d like you to do...*” I was given responsibility and accountability from the “get go”. I so appreciated the trust and benefited from the fact I was valued as an individual (regardless of my assumed skills and age). Eventually I was reading liturgy, playing handbells in an ad hoc group, mentoring people younger than I, as well as being mentored by peers and colleagues.

Beyond the excellence in worship and music required of me by the organization and the goals of the gathering, I was also able to foster a very real personal faith in the process. What an opportunity this was to share such things with other people of similar disciplines and ideals while at the foot of the awe-inspiring Flatirons.

Katie M. Deaver

Luther College Music Major



When Dr. Gregory Peterson first mentioned the ALCM Region IV Gathering to me last November, I had never heard of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. Over the last few years I had explored multiple professional organizations, but was still searching to find that one organization where I really fit.

ALCM seemed like a good step in the right direction. Little did I know, that in just a few short months I would attend the Gathering in Boulder and experience some of the most enjoyable and educational days of my summer.

As college students attending the Gathering, we were able to not only serve as mentors for the Children’s’ Choir, but also have the opportunity to be mentored by the many talented church musicians in attendance. I was pleasantly surprised at how much we were included throughout the Gathering. We were able to participate in all of the lectures and activities throughout the Gathering and were also able to share both musical and spoken offerings during worship.

Each minute of the Gathering was a complete joy. From Dr. Ted Peters’ discussion of the “Three Dimensions of Faith”, to the wonderful dialogue inspired by Sally Morgenthaler’s presentation on “The Screen as a Stained Glass Window”, to the numerous lectures and discussions on how to best value the children of our congregations. To say nothing of the worshipful organ recitals and prayer services throughout the week.

As a student who plans to attend seminary, I am extremely interested in how churches can help prepare children to be “lifelong worshipers”. Many of the speakers touched on this topic and I was reminded that making children feel valued in their congregations may not be difficult, but we need to be deliberate about “how” it is done in order for it to work. Children will strive to meet your expectations, so congregations can’t be afraid to raise the bar. However, as Carole Lea Arenson discussed, we need to remember we are the “safety net” so the children of our congregation will not fail. Perhaps the words of our Sending Song by Carolyn Jennings, written for children’s choir and congregation, sung at the Gathering Worship say it best: “*The song is not just for me and for you, the song is not meant for only a few; all are invited, feeble or strong, together we sing the song...we are the church.*”

I would like to extend my thanks to all of the wonderful people of Region IV and all those involved with this Gathering. It was an amazing opportunity for growth in so many ways. I look forward to being an active member of the ALCM in the years to come. **See you in Seattle!**

(con’t. on pg. 5)

College Students (con't.)

Sara Hiller

AZ Student at American University in Washington D.C.



The ALCM Region IV Gathering 2010 in Boulder was an amazing experience. About a year ago during a Bible Study, Carole Arenson asked me if I would be interested in participating in the regional ALCM event in Boulder. I had worked with Carole and her children's choirs at our church for six years. She wanted college students there to not only help with the children's choir, but also to get a sense of ALCM and potentially become active members. I eagerly agreed.

I didn't really know what to expect. I am a political science major at American University. I always have been and always will be active in my church's music program as a church volunteer. I am not studying music or theology. I am a layperson who loves music in worship. Nonetheless, I was excited.

The first couple days the college students helped the children's choir learn the anthems, hymns, etc. for worship participation. Helping with the children's choir was especially fun. It was great to see children wanting to be involved in the service beyond sitting in the pews or leaving early for Sunday school.

After the first worship service, the college students were free to participate in the seminars and listen to the speakers. I assumed that all the talks would be about directing and teaching music. I was wrong. The keynote speakers were phenomenal. Dr. Ted Peters, a theologian from Berkeley, talked about faith using the terms: Pre-Critical, Critical and Post-Critical. After his talk I really understood about owning my own faith. I remember at the end of the week saying, **"My faith has grown more in the past five days than it did in four years attending a Lutheran high school"**. The speakers and seminars were all great. There was a wide variety to choose from, but I would say my favorite part of the ALCM gathering was the last service.

The last service, based on the Finnish St. Thomas Mass, was a very powerful one for me. At my Lutheran high school we have moments we call "God Moments", meaning you can feel God around you and you are filled with the Holy Spirit. The last service was a big "God Moment" for me. The readings and music were uplifting. My favorite part was Open Space. Open Space was a time where there were different stations you could go to during the service. There was a prayer station, a healing station, baptismal remembrance station, forgiveness station and even a sermon dialogue station with the pastor. For me it was a good time to pray and focus on my relationship with God. It was completely different from anything I have ever experienced in a service before. It was a powerful moment for me.

The ALCM Gathering was a great experience. Even though I am a college student, and not planning to be a full or even part-time church worker, I still learned a lot. I made lifelong friends and my personal faith grew. **I can't wait for the national conference in Seattle next year!**

Joy Gunderson

AZ Student majoring in Church Music at St. Olaf College



I am grateful to the ALCM for making it affordable for me to attend the Gathering in Boulder and especially for inviting college students. I enjoyed staying in a host home and getting to know the other students.

I also appreciated the opportunity to be involved in worship as a harpist and vocalist, as well as the opportunity to write an arrangement of a hymn to include harp. This event exhibited the ways people of all ages can be included in worship and use their unique gifts (composing, performing, visual arts, etc.) to create a meaningful worship experience which glorifies God and builds up the Body of Christ. I am thankful for the community of the ALCM which I know will help and inspire me, as it did this summer, in my future work as a church musician.

Taylor Thoenes

University of Arizona College Student



As a photographer, I often find myself detached from the emotion of the event, gathering, or celebration which I am photographing simply for the sake of doing my job. For instance, it is hard to photograph a wedding when your eyes are full of tears and you're badly in need of a tissue.

Every once in a while however, I come to a place of unavoidable involvement where the intensity of the emotions are so thick, it is almost as if I can reach out and touch them. Throughout the entire gathering, a sense of peace seemed to walk with me. At times, the sensation was so palpable that it was all I could do to simply breathe and continue to open my eyes. At other times, I was compelled to ask questions I haven't actively addressed in years. And yet at other times, it just felt right to be goofy and fun.

Now, I know this all sounds very dramatic. And yes, I had some rather "normal" moments while in Boulder, but I have never before had this kind of experience. For most of my life I have struggled with the values of the church and how I fit into the picture. This ALCM event in Boulder gave me the first glimpse into what may be the true heart of my own spirituality. I feel truly honored, blessed, and favored to have been present at such a gathering. I am so very thankful for the friends I made, the people I spoke with, and the questions I learned were OK to ask.

Editor's Note: Taylor Thoenes was our photographer and his work is found throughout this Special Edition.

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College Students (con't.)

Kinna Nordstrom

Northern Arizona University Music Major



ALCM was an amazing space to have conversation about the church; not only what we can do musically within our congregations, but the church as a whole! I felt spiritually enriched, and ended up meeting several new friends (namely the other college students)!!! Not only was I fed, but I was given opportunities to share my gifts and be involved with the gathering. It was an incredible event, and I was blessed and thankful that I was able to attend!

Reflection: A Seminarian's Experience

Pamela Schaefer, Seminarian

PLTS, Berkely, CA



I am a third year Master of Divinity student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California. If all goes well, I will be beginning my ordained ministry in mid-to-late 2012. As the daughter of a (now retired) ELCA pastor who also serves as a church musician (ALCM member Marty Schaefer), with whom I attended the Region IV Gathering in Boulder this past July, I

have seen first-hand how intimately connected these two ministries (ordained and music) can be. I use the expression “can be” because I am aware that in many congregations the relationship between the pastor and the music director(s) is not intimate or even particularly pleasant. The relationship is often one of misunderstanding and of differing agendas. I strongly believe that one crucial step in improving understanding between pastors and music directors is the attendance and participation of seminarians and clergy members at ALCM events.

The “Gathering in Boulder” was my second ALCM event. I also attended the San Francisco conference in 2008, just before beginning my studies at PLTS. I have a foot in both the musical and theological worlds, having spent most of my life singing in church choirs, playing my flute for worship, and even (on rare occasions) leading choir rehearsals or directing the choir in worship. Many of today's seminarians also have some musical background and experience, and quite a few of those have extensive church music experience. However, many others have little or no music background. Virtually all of the seminary students I have met and had conversations with during these past two years have a willingness to learn more and to increase their understanding about church music, whether that be through developing their own skills at singing/leading the liturgy or through conversations and connections with church musicians. My great hope would be that through the coming

years ALCM would actively recruit (and financially assist, if possible) seminarians to attend its regional and national events.

I arrived in Boulder with San Francisco on my mind, meaning what I was expecting to see, hear and learn in Boulder was colored by my experience of the San Francisco conference in 2008. My memory of 2008 may have decayed slightly (!), but nonetheless, in looking back now on both events, Boulder was more explicitly theological and spiritual in its orientation. Specifically, the keynote addresses by Ted Peters, Sally Morgenthaler, and Gregory Peterson, as well as the focus group led by Katie Adelman and Valerie Hess, set the tone for a deeply reflective, theologically grounded gathering. We had great music, certainly, as is always the case at these events. In addition, this year we had theological guidance which led us to engage in reflection and conversation about who God is and about what it means to have faith and to have doubt (a topic deftly handled by Ted Peters with both theological underpinnings and with his offering of his own experiences); about what we communicate through our worship style (including the use of projectors, which Sally Morgenthaler called a “voice for the people,” a way for us to speak in our authentic voice – by the way, Sally, you may have changed my opinion of projectors in worship forever with your insightful talk); and about what we will teach those who seek to become leaders of the people's song (Gregory Peterson shared with us the syllabi of two of the courses he offers at Luther College and gave us reason to hope as he gave us insight into the young people whom he is guiding in their formation for music ministry in the church). In addition to the keynote addresses, I attended a wonderful focus group led by Valerie Hess and Katie Adelman which engaged participants in conversation about spiritual formation and development.

I was, quite frankly, surprised by the depth and breadth of the theological and spiritual undergirding of this gathering. I came away from it feeling as though I had been to a retreat, to a class, to worship, and to a concert, some of these several times over. And I grew in my appreciation for this ministry we share, clergy and musicians (many of us in both categories); for the way each of us is called to use our gifts; and for the many ways clergy and church musicians can deepen their understanding of each others' perspectives on this shared ministry.

It is my firm belief that precisely to the extent that clergy and musicians spend time in theological, spiritual, and musical reflection around our shared ministry – precisely to that extent will the dissension and misunderstandings between pastors and church musicians diminish, to the end that the Gospel be the more proclaimed in our words and in our music.

Soli deo gloria!



Reflection: A Pastor's Experience

Rev. Matthew P. Hempeck

St. John's Lutheran Church, Portland, OR

After arriving at Trinity Lutheran in Boulder on Monday July 12th, I immersed myself into Mr. Ellingboe's "New Music" choral reading. Being my first exposure to the ALCM Gathering, it was an excellent beginning. He touched on the importance of texts within the scores he had us sing. I appreciated the teaching balance he provided between the sacred voice of the music and the practical aspects. *Behold a Host Arrayed in White*, stood out for me as a participant. It was amazing to be surrounded by such strong voices and led by one as capable as Bradley Ellingboe. Indeed this choral reading set the tone for the whole of the gathering for me. I thought about the "Cloud of Witnesses", existing both here and in eternity, praising Jesus.

In *Project Fund Raising 101*, Ann Sponberg Peterson presented a plethora of materials I will use pragmatically and pastorally. Systematically she walked us through ways to approach raising money for projects within a church. In discussions she gave concrete examples of how best to build funding. Her organic way of teaching brought out the idea of donors as being foundational for any church community or project. She deftly pointed out that there are ways to bring people within fundraising together, just as there are ways in which to repel them. I will use several ideas Ann presented. In fact, I've already begun to integrate the community approach to building fellowship and transparency. Her idea of hosting a 'focus day' was brilliant. This is when a congregation would be invited to come together at the church for an eight hour period. It is billed as a brain storming event. I think through this bridge building, informed and involved donors give well. I was reminded that the strongest current in any congregation will show the intent toward and motivation of any project moving toward fundraising.

My first day ended with *"Nurturing faith with Children/Youth."* This was led by Carole Lea Arenson, Helen Thoenes, and Erik Whitehill. I enjoyed the children answering questions from the participants, since they are directly affected by musician and pastoral choices. My notes show that I will use a great deal of information from this session. Particularly, **"...a child's connection to his/her abilities connects that child to God"**, seemed pivotal to the discussion and presentation. Too often I have seen children taken out of church by well meaning teachers. I have also seen how "Children's Church" can remove children from their community in which we want to establish them. I liked hearing that children and youth need to remain in worship to interact with everyone. *"Be afraid and do it anyway"* was inspiring for Helen to say. I found all speakers here so well grounded in their spirituality that these methods would work well with any children. A faith community is built through inclusion and retention of children and youth. Thank you for the many fine ideas I heard in this session. One of the top ideas for me was the expectations for the parents and the children to come and be present in rehearsals and worship.

At the many conferences I have attended during my pastorate,

very few have challenged me. At his gathering I was challenged both as an individual and as a professional. A great impact was made upon me. As I reviewed ways I had been approaching things, I reflected now on how I could approach things musically and formational.

Sally Morgenthaler's presentation, on Tuesday July 13th, was groundbreaking for me. Over the years I've heard the terms "seekers" and "the disenfranchised". In her session of "Momentum + Emmanuel" I was reminded of perspectives that I had lost touch with over time and practice. For years I know of ministers and musicians who have struggled with how to put together the best program for their respective congregations. But in experience I have seen programs divide otherwise cohesive groupings. In and of themselves programs can take on energy where they almost become entity-like. As I listened to Sally speak, I began to remember Jesus' own goal which was to weave all participants and believers into His Likeness. I will now focus on people, not programs. In my estimation programs may well bring people into churches. But it is the Spirit of the people there which keep them involved. I loved that she chose 1 Peter 1 in being concrete about the role of momentum in a believer's life. We are in movement to one another and to God. It was an excellent session.

Since we are well aware that God is with us, it may seem strange indeed to have discussed what it meant to be dispersed when worship ended. However, I found that perhaps a little more energy on my part could go into thinking about preparing people to leave and disperse their work for the Kingdom instead of putting all my efforts into just worship. This will be central in my thoughts as I prep each week in leading worship.

The Forums during the conference were organic in that there was a chosen two or three experts in their fields but, the questions and sometimes answers were generated by the participants. I thought they were facilitated beautifully. The answers seemed to truly be contained in the knowledge and experience of those present. I felt this was an honor to God in crafting the intelligence and giftedness of each individual. I think there were differing, but not divisive, opinions given when we struggled with the question of how Lutherans connect. I am still thinking about what Lutheran identity could possibly mean across the board. I know what it means to be a Lutheran. I know what it means to lead Lutherans. But, "A Lutheran Identity" I will have to contemplate.

Dr. Ted Peters said something so profound and simultaneously so simple during the conference: **"Tell me a story and put me in it."** Christians want to be connected to God and to one another. And my fear is we are feeling more disconnect-

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Pastor's Reflection (con't.)

ed with each passing day. Yet, every time I preach, or we pray, or we sing, or listen to someone instrumentalize, a story is being told. What a great reminder to not forget that someone's story is connecting to what we are doing.

Throughout the gathering, the transcendent was connected to the imminent. And I really enjoyed being able to discuss with my colleagues these tensions when thinking about picking and offering music. Also gripping was the challenge of being interactive with the congregation vs. being invitational through music.

"Finding True North" was as refreshing as it was sobering. So many times I have felt Christians wanting to avoid or deny that there are periods where souls experience dark nights. This session admitted that even firm believers have struggles and problems. But it added that there are Spirit-filled solutions. Beginning with a passage from Scripture, we were asked to place ourselves into that situation. It was surprising to me to hear how differently people responded. I liked the way Katie Adelman and Valerie Hess led us on a journey which ended with a question: *"Why has God brought me here to this gathering?"* This was a very bold and provocative focus for us to figure out in the brief time we had to share. I learned so much from this session. And I was reminded, self care of church musicians and pastors is as vital as the care we seek to offer. We, as professional church workers, do surrender our lives under Christ and to one another in so many ways. It was good to be told to take care of ourselves so we may go on giving.

"The screen as a Stained Glass Window" imported the past into the present for me. I too learned my first Bible stories by staring at the windows of our church while growing up in a small town in Minnesota. Visuals teach. There are some truths of God I learn from music. There are some truths about God best conveyed to my brain through something to look at. I was a bit perplexed by the conversation of whether church music shouldn't stand alone without any visuals. I know the comment was made that we should use all media combinations possible to help one media stand taller upon the legs of another. As a vocalist, I depend upon the abilities of my musicians. Can there not be interdependence of music and visuals? I've heard the battle for a great while about either this or that, but not both within the church at large. I learn visually and through listening. I know both can glorify God. How about a community of media through which there is give and take of the best each has to offer?

"Fostering Faith with Church Choirs" was unique. I cannot believe I had never thought about including Scripture between vocal warm ups! Dr. Tim Snyder and Jerry Gunderson offered workable choir schedules which I liked. I will also advocate for their idea of the church choir actually being a fellowship.

"Beyond Worship Labels" and *"Mentors & Volunteers as Faith Builders"* were revelatory. Just as one size fits all does not work for music and the flow of worship, it does not work for mentors and volunteers. Since I have never found age to be a predictor of preference, I will choose music and people

according to their likes and dislikes in ministry. I can't expect people coming together into worship will have the same expectations, so why should I put people to work doing something they would rather not invest themselves within?

I was truly impressed with this Gathering in Boulder as one would know from reading about my thoughts post meeting. It helped renew and re-invigorate me in ways I had known about, but had not really considered for ministry. Of course, the worship times together became unprecedented spiritual highlights.

I did not choose to attend every focus session because I am the type of person who needs time to let things be unwrapped in my head. But I have found since returning home I will be unpacking theologically and practically, both as a musician and pastor, for some time to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. God bless you all and your ministries.

Reflection: A Musician's Experience

Omaldo Perez, Director of Music Ministries

First Lutheran of Richmond Beach, Shoreline, WA



Certain encounters can be formative because they can literally mold future experiences. Some books, movies, events, situations, conversations and even meals, can become markers in our lives, models for comparison and reference points that we can revisit with dutiful, if not joyful, diligence. We become permanently changed as a result of these radical moments. And we cherish

them because we can say, together with former poet laureate Billy Collins, that **we have felt the lion's paw of contentment resting on our chests**. We go back to those milestones because we are aware that they all possess a holistic constant: In all of them, we find ourselves spiritually nourished.

As I was collecting my thoughts and preparing to offer my impressions of the 2010 ALCM biennial in Boulder, CO, I was struck with the distinct notion that I did not want to present the reader with a summary account of all the activities we, the attendees, were privy to at this fine congress. For such a list, one can simply read the daily schedule of activities in the gathering booklet: four days of keynote addresses and workshops, of worship services and discussion groups, of concerts and exhibits. Unfortunately, the casual reader of our region's program of activities can only begin to infer the breadth, depth and quality of the discussions that were held in an environment teeming with spiritual grace, intellectual force and musical creativity. **"Faith: A Compass for Leaders"** was not only the aptly named, self-evident title of ALCM's Region IV,

(con't. on pg. 9)

but a formative and generative experience that I will treasure.

How potentially fruitful can the experience be when the purpose of our gathering was, as it was in Boulder, finding and strengthening the spiritual focus of our musical vocation? How much more beneficial and nourishing for the life of the spirit is it to devote time, to allow ourselves to grow and be inspired as musicians and as leaders of the Church? By virtue of all of these qualities, **“Faith: a Compass for Leaders” was many orders of magnitude more thoroughly salutary in its impact than a ravishing performance or an expertly seasoned meal. For us, musicians who passionately toil each week to bring the best possible worship to our parishes, the gathering was a catalyst for our imagination and an oasis for our inspiration.**

From this rich environment, I am sure all the participants benefitted greatly. I, for example, could not wait to get back to my church in Shoreline, WA, in order to share with the rest of the staff my interest in recreating the tone of Sally Morgenthaler’s devotional presentation. Her approach was refreshing. Similarly refreshing were the words **“music is a joyful discipline”** as spoken by Dr. Gregory Peterson. I could not have agreed more, for the “joyful discipline” is one of those concepts that I have always known but never really heard out loud. I have used Dr. Peterson’s words many times since my trip to Boulder: I sprinkle them regularly on all the volunteers that cross my path at church. Speaking of affecting change, I am happy to report that thanks to a casual conversation over lunch with Jim Johnson, from which I walked away with a fresh perspective on the role of music education and its relation to faith formation, we, at First Lutheran, have taken on fine-tuning our Sunday school program. On a related note, the devotional strategies for “carving out a sacred space” during choir rehearsals as presented to us by Tim Snyder and Jerry Gunderson are simple, practical and indispensable. The quality of my choir rehearsals has improved thanks to their advice.

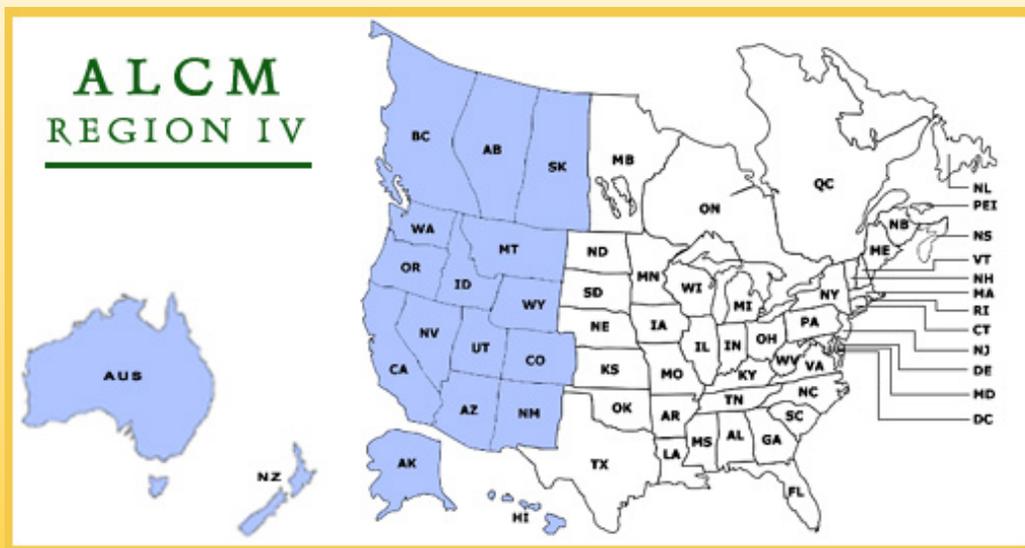
I was genuinely enthralled by the concept of the **“beatitudinal life”**, or the life of blessing, as presented by Dr. Ted Peters in the context of his discussion of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. His semantic/historic tour of the Greek word

“makarios” (which means fortunate or supremely blessed) was illuminating and is the perfect example of how a word or a concept can enter one’s mind, take hold of it and become firmly rooted there. In my personal journey, I now have a new take on what it means to be a blessing to those around us. And speaking of blessings, I am still amazed at the force with which an image can alight one’s consciousness: many thanks to Pastor Ron Roschke for sharing with us what was to me the most memorable, resonant and musical of metaphors: **The Cross, the great pedal-point of God’s creation.** That image makes all my synapses fire simultaneously.

Let me not fail to mention how Thomas Keesecher and Brad Ellingboe lead us on workshops, shared some of their compositional strategies, and got our creative fluids going by sharing their choral arrangements with us. Their leadership, as well as their especially commissioned compositions added a great deal of specificity to all the proceedings. However, if we are to talk about specificity, we would be remiss not to mention “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”, the organ recital played by Dr. Joyce Shupe Kull. We were delighted to not only hear Dr. Joyce Shupe Kull perform a superb organ recital but to luxuriate in her ability to write the most enjoyable and well researched program notes: what a pleasure!

Finally, the **Finnish Thomas Mass** that was used for our sending worship occupies a special place in my heart. The combination of the traditional, formal elements of the mass, surrounding an “open space” during which the singing, holy chatter, water splashing and perambulation took place, afforded us Lutherans with a powerful model with which to expand our liturgical vocabulary.

I can only say, as a closing thought, that the spiritual nourishment we received at the Boulder Biennial will continue to extend its reach and influence into the future. I am certain that our characteristic “joyful discipline”, this all too human endeavor with which we have been blessed and which propels us forward, is part of God’s greater plan for us and the world. I am certain that this formative experience will refuse to be eradicated from our minds, and will accompany us on our journey, wherever God may lead us.



Reflection: A Child's Experience

Preston FitzRandolph, 6th Grader
Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
Boulder, CO

The Pre-Gathering was a success because our Steering Committee and Dr. Gregory Peterson were in attendance plus the registrants and children's choir. A grass-root effort is needed in our congregations to help children become "life-long worship participants". The feeling is shared by many, but the reality needs help.

Much has already been said about the Pre-Gathering in the many "Reflections". We add these comments from a 6th grade singer about the experience:

"Singing in the children's choir was a lot of fun. It taught me a lot about singing in general. It also gave me a chance to meet people from different churches that also had singing talents. I also loved how they had college students come in to sing and play instruments with us. I especially enjoyed the harpist. We had a very special treat when we met the person who made the song *I Lift My Eyes*. It was one of the songs that we sang in worship. All in all I had loads of fun, made lots of new friends, and learned a lot as we all sang together."



Region IV Biennial History

1988 1st Biennial Conference

The Living Word in Living Cultures Living the Liturgy
(Tools for Liturgical Musicians in the Real World)
June 19-21, 1988 @ St. Mark's Episcopal, Berkeley, CA

1990 2nd Biennial Conference

Through the Church the Song Goes On
June 10-13 Community Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV

1992 3rd Biennial Conference

The Singing Congregation
July 5-8 California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, CA

1994 4th Biennial Conference

Come to Us, Creative Spirit
July 17-20 University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada

1996 5th Biennial Conference

Doing it All – Music for Worship
July 21-24 Concordia University, Irvine, CA

1998 6th Biennial Conference

The Table is Set
July 26-29 Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA

2000 7th Biennial Conference

Empowered to Join the Song
August 2-5 (with Children's Choral Camp July 30-August 5
plus DVD Recording "Empowered to Join the Song")
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

2002 8th Biennial Conference

A New Creation Come to Life
August 4-7 Lutheran Church of Honolulu, Honolulu, Hawaii

2004 9th Biennial Conference

Come Away to a Quiet Place
July 9-12 Glorieta Conference Center, Glorieta, NM

2006 10th Biennial Conference

An Epiphany in the Emerald City
July 7-10 Seattle University, Seattle, WA

2008 11th Biennial Conference

Seasons of the Church – Seasons of Life
June 27-30 St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA

2010 12th Biennial Gathering

Faith: A Compass for Leaders
July 11-15 Trinity Lutheran Church, Boulder, CO

*I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.*

*The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and for evermore.*

- Psalm 121



Photography Credits

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