

*From Pastor Nielsen
February 2011*



Dear Friends in Christ,

As most of you have heard, Julie Deepe has resigned as our youth ministry coordinator.

I have enjoyed working with Julie for the past five years. Her five years of service demonstrated her deep love and commitment to our young people. She poured a lot of laughter and tears, time and energy into her ministry with youth. I especially liked the continual effort she put on service to the community (Parkview, Royal Family Kids' Camp, Habitat, Giving Tree, People's City Mission, the Back Pack project, etc.) I have good memories of trips with Julie and the youth down the Niobrara and the Arkansas Rivers. She was a good leader in helping the youth lead Christmas Eve and Easter Sunrise worship services.

I would like to encourage you to write Julie a note of appreciation for her ministry on our behalf. I think she would appreciate hearing words of gratitude for her years of service. We will certainly miss her laughter and humor and enthusiasm in the everyday life of Peace.

Youth ministry is a wonderful but challenging call. Youth are growing up in a world that is rapidly changing. Youth are pulled in so many directions, and yet we want to compete with the school and with sports for the time and attention of our youth. We want to equip them to face the challenges of a materialistic and pluralistic world that is often hostile to their faith. We also want to help youth and parents stay connected as allies in the important years of adolescence.

Our youth ministry cannot be the job of just one person. Many of us need to be invested in this important calling. We call a youth ministry coordinator not to do youth ministry for us, but to lead us in our ministry to, for, and with youth. Our youth ministry coordinator must have the support and encouragement of many to fulfill our hopes for our youth ministry.

So in the next few months, the Church Council will be evaluating our youth ministry and seeking candidates to serve as our fourth youth ministry coordinator. If you or someone you know is interested in the position, please have them contact me for a job description. I truly believe that we can continue to build upon the good work that Tim Koester and Julie Deepe have done in our youth ministry program.

People have asked me about what is next in our new relationship with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. Some members of our congregation will be attending an LCMC/NALC meeting in Alma, Nebraska, on Sunday afternoon, February 20. Folks from about 20 congregations will meet for encouragement, support, sharing, and healing. You are welcome to ride along with us.

February 27 to March 1 I will be attending the LCMC annual leadership event. In June the LCMC Heartland District (Nebraska) will gather for a networking and learning event near Lincoln. And in October the LCMC Annual Gathering will be held in Des Moines with over a thousand people in attendance. We are not required to attend these events, but I heartily recommend them to anyone. They are all about supporting and uplifting congregations in the mission we all have for Christ in the world. As we say in LCMC, "mission" is our middle name.

Yours in Christ, *Phil Nielsen*