



Our Three Expressions



Since 1988 our church-body is organized in three expressions:

- Nearly 10,500 local congregations
- 65 synods throughout the U.S. and Caribbean
- And the churchwide organization (national office) in Chicago IL

Congregations

More than 10,500 congregations across the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are local communities of faith-filled people celebrating, learning and connecting through weekly worship and various ways to serve others.

Synods

Sixty-five synods throughout the country unite the work of congregations within their areas, serving as regional support and guiding pastoral and other staff candidates through the call process.

Churchwide Organization

The churchwide expression includes the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, officers, offices and churchwide units. Churchwide staff work from the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill., and from locations around the globe.

Mission Interpreters Newsletter

Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana
Mission Territory



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“We cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard!” Acts 4:20

Texas Panhandle! Faith Lutheran Church



Several years ago **Faith, Spearman**, located far north in the Texas Panhandle, developed a new ministry to help those in need in their community. They helped local residents with food and utility bills through their “Least Brethren Ministries”. After a while it became clear that the need in the community was great enough to call for an expansion of the ministry. Cecil Biggers, lay minister for Faith Lutheran and Grace Presbyterian churches, who was recently elected president of the Spearman Ministerial Alliance, helped bring this dream into a reality. He used his professional expertise to establish a 501(c)(3) corporation that has now partnered with the High Plains Food Bank in Amarillo so that more families in need can be assisted through this growing community-wide ministry.

This new outreach ministry now provides food for sixty-six families each month – a substantial increase from several years ago when only 2 families were being served by one congregation. The Alliance also helps with arrangements for reduced price prescription drugs and home repairs.

The renewed community spirit has resulted in joint Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Holy Week worship opportunities among the local congregations. Faith will be hosting one of the Holy Week services and noon meals this year. “Not bad for a congregation that only averages 10-15 people per Sunday”, says Biggers.



Lord of Life Lutheran Church

Glenn Heights TX

An exciting new ministry has begun this Lenten season at **Lord of Life, Glenn Heights**: Prayer Shawls are now being made by members of the congregation. A group of 8 people ranging in age from 13 to 80 and including 1 man met for the first time on March 19th to officially kick off this new ministry. The group is already looking forward to the next opportunity to gather together and continue their work.

The inspiration for this new ministry came from LaVell Wagner, long time member who recently began a term on the church council overseeing service ministry. LaVell noticed a co-worker knitting one day and inquired as to what she was making. She was making a shawl for her congregation. The conversation sparked the idea that maybe something like this would work well at Lord of Life.

LaVell explains that before beginning the shawl, time is taken for prayer on behalf of the person who will one day receive this shawl. Prayer and blessing is an ongoing part of the process as these shawls will be distributed to those who are ill, or grieving, or in need of support, as well as to those who are celebrating God’s blessings and presence.

The shawls will be available to those who need them and will include a small note card that includes a prayer of blessing as well as information about the congregation. In the future some of the participants plan to make caps that can be distributed to new born babies and chemo patients. If you would like information on starting a prayer shawl ministry in your congregation contact La Vell at Lord of Life. Additional information can be found at www.shawlministry.com.