

Heartland Lutheran has new principal, religion teacher

By Harold Reutter
harold.reutter@theindependent.com

Published: Wednesday, July 29, 2009 7:53 PM CDT

After 33 years in public education and three and a half years as a pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church in Ord, the Rev. Kurt Busskohl is bringing both vocations together as the new principal for Heartland Lutheran High School in Grand Island.

"I will be providing pastoral care for the staff and students at Heartland Lutheran, I will be the principal, and I will be the religious education teacher," Busskohl said.

He said six of his 33 years in education were in administration, including three years as principal at Loup City and three years as superintendent in Grant.

Busskohl said he retired from education while serving as the Grant public schools superintendent and moved to Grand Island because he had family living here. He became a member of Peace Lutheran Church in Grand Island.

"One Sunday, they announced there were seminary representatives there who wanted to talk to young men interested in the seminary," Busskohl said. "I wasn't a young man, but I couldn't put the bulletin down. It was the lightning bolt."

Former Heartland Lutheran Principal John Weber, who also taught religion classes at the school, received a call this spring to begin working at a school in Indiana. When Weber answered the call and made the move, Busskohl said, he was contacted about coming to work at Heartland Lutheran High School.

He then had a visitation with the Lutheran High School Association of Central Nebraska board. Following his visitation, delegates for the association issued a call for him to become the new principal and religion teacher at the school.

Busskohl noted Lutheran theology teaches that the call to any vocation comes from God.

"The delegates are a tool used to make the call," he said.

Likewise, God issues the call for any pastor to serve a particular church, with the congregation being the tool used to make that call to the pastor.

"Education has always been a joy for me," said Busskohl, who experienced that same sense of joy in being a pastor. Now he gets to combine those two joys as principal and teacher at Heartland Lutheran High School.

Busskohl said he answered the call to work at Heartland Lutheran in June. He has been working at the school since the first of July. Open gym at the school and various summer sports camps have given him an opportunity to meet some of the school's students but only on a very quick and informal basis.

Busskohl said he expects to get a more extended opportunity to meet students on Friday, when Heartland Lutheran holds its registration from 8 a.m. to noon and from 3 to 6 p.m.

"With our enrollment, I should be able to talk to every student," he said. Busskohl said registration also will give him an opportunity to meet parents who accompany their children to registration.

Busskohl said he will not conduct all chapel services at Heartland Lutheran High School.

"Pastors from association churches will conduct some of the chapel services," Busskohl said. That helps keep the ties strong between the school and the association churches that help support it.

Busskohl said he will occasionally preach on Sundays at association churches. After services, he will be able to talk to congregation members about the school.

Busskohl said he will be serving the "Heartland community," a group that includes students, staff, parents and also the wider community, especially because the school includes students who are not Lutheran.

Robin Seim has answered the call to be the high school's new vocal and instrumental music teacher. Busskohl said he is not sure what kind of instrumental program Seim will teach: It could be pep band, jazz band or some other group.

Service of Installation

Heartland Lutheran High School, 3900 W. Husker Highway in Grand Island, will host the Service of Installation for the Rev. Kurt Busskohl as principal and religion teacher and Robin Seim as music teacher at 2:30 p.m. Aug. 9.

A reception will follow the service.

Busskohl holds degrees in education from Wayne State College and the University of Nebraska at Kearney and a theological degree from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

He will teach religion classes and serve as principal. Busskohl and his wife, Marilyn, have three children and 11 grandchildren.

Seim is a 2008 graduate of Concordia University in Seward, where she earned her bachelor of music in education and a Lutheran teacher diploma. She completed her student teaching at Malcom public schools with their band program and at St. Paul's Lutheran High School in Missouri. She will serve as both vocal and instrumental music teacher.