



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **LSSI to Present Epiphany Lutheran Church in Carbondale with Ministry of Hope Award**

On Sunday, November 29, the Rev. Dr. Denver Bitner, president of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI), will present Epiphany Lutheran Church in Carbondale with the 2009 Ministry of Hope Award during the church's 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. The award, which recognizes an outstanding congregation that provides leadership in supporting the work of LSSI and other social ministries in the community, is presented annually to one congregation in each of the three ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) synods in Illinois.

“With the Ministry of Hope Award, we are pleased to recognize this congregation's contributions to bringing healing, justice and wholeness to its community and are grateful for their long-term involvement with the work of our agency,” says Bitner. “LSSI is very pleased to have the opportunity to recognize Epiphany's social ministry efforts.”

Epiphany, led by Pastor Chris Repp, is a large congregation that has been very involved with LSSI throughout the years, in addition to having an important role in bringing the agency to serve southern Illinois in 1989. The congregation has hosted fundraisers independently for LSSI, including the most recent “Concert of Caring” in October that featured the music of Elisabeth von Trapp, granddaughter of *The Sound of Music's* Maria and Baron von Trapp. The congregation has also offered turkeys at Thanksgiving to families in need, donated Christmas gifts to children in LSSI's foster care and Intact Family Services program, and collected school supplies in summer to help those children prepare for the school year. Also, several members of Epiphany have served on LSSI's Board of Directors, including Dr. David Melby, a current member, and Harvey Welch, Dr. Lynn Smith and Walt Rehwalt, former members.

In addition, on Saturday November 28, approximately 20 people will attend a “LSSI Meet and Greet” with Bitner between 7 and 9 p.m. at the Epiphany Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall.

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Guests will include current and past LSSI board members, LSSI's Southern Illinois Advancement Council members, and donors. The church is located at 1501 Chautauqua Street in Carbondale.

Founded in 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. LSSI currently is celebrating its 20th year of providing services in southern Illinois. For more information on Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, visit [www.LSSI.org](http://www.LSSI.org).

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