



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH

RELEASED... *for Christian instruction*



THE STATE OF MINNESOTA allows for a unique program known as “Religious Release Time” that is of great value to both communities and congregations. Children may be released from public schools for religious instruction for up to three hours every week. In order to make use of this program, parents must give permission for their children to participate, and instruction must be overseen and carried out by a church, an association of churches or a Sunday-school association. Costs of the program and transportation also must be covered by the sponsoring religious institutions.

Released time has been a huge tradition for the congregation of St. Johns, Park Rapids, for decades. The program accommodates students from first- through eighth-grade and runs in two 40-minute sessions each Wednesday morning throughout the school year.

This year, released-time classes began on Sept. 26. The classes are taught by congregational members who graciously donate their time to ensure that children from across the community have a

chance to hear the Good News of Jesus and His saving work for sinful man. There are 111 students who come to St. Johns on Wednesday mornings in two shifts. The first- through fourth-grade session has 49 students and runs from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m.

The 14 students from the first grade are taught by Ruth and Kim Knaack. Sandy Philips teaches the eight students in second grade. Both grades are studying Old Testament stories, memorizing the Lord’s Prayer, the list of New Testament books and John 3:16. The Rev. Jim Neubauer, pastor of St. Johns, teaches the 13 third-graders an overview of the Bible and assorted Bible verses from a curriculum called “My Bible,” while Cheryl Breitbach leads 14 fourth-graders as they learn Old Testament stories and memorize the list of Old Testament books and the Ten Commandments.

The second session for grades five through eight has 62 students and runs from about 8:30 to 9:15 a.m. The fifth grade is the largest group, being split up into two classes of 11 and 12 students. Breitbach and Phillips teach them the New Tes-

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Pictured are third graders (with the Rev. Jim Neubauer) from 2016 with Bibles they received from members of St. Johns. Every year, on the Wednesday closest to Reformation Day, St. Johns gives each third-grade student a Bible for use throughout the school year. The Bible remains at church for student use, and students may take them home at the end of the year.

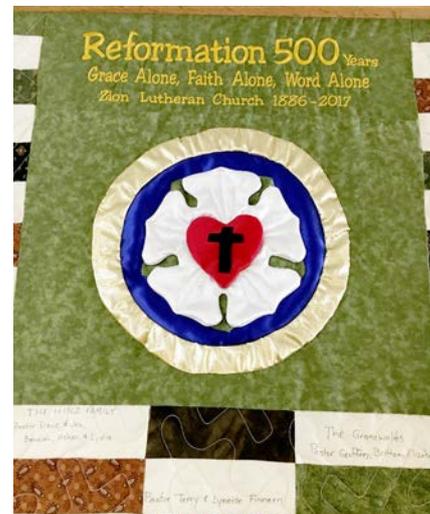
Sewn together in faith

The Quilters from Zion Lutheran Church, Alexandria, decided to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in a very personal way that helped the entire congregation remember the legacy of the Gospel re-discovered and bequeathed through the Reformation. They made a quilt.

It is no ordinary quilt, however. Built around an image of the Luther Seal that stands top and center, the ladies extended the quilt out with 2-inch x 6-inch cloth blocks alternating between

white and colored fabric. More than mere aesthetics, the white blocks of fabric served as a space for the members of Zion to sign their names to the quilt, symbolizing their unity in Christ and His Gospel, and their faith in the very same truth recovered and passed recovered through the work of the reformers.

The quilt now hangs prominently in the church, testifying that the congregation aims to stand on grace, faith and God's Word alone.



A century of faithfulness



In 2017, First Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, celebrated a significant milestone — 100 years of God's faithfulness.

A celebration service was held on Aug. 20, followed by a celebratory event that featured a meal as well displays of photos capturing First Lutheran's life as a congregation. More than 200 past and present members joined together to celebrate and give thanks for a century of ministry.

Over the decades, First Lutheran has had many pastors with one thing in common: an uncompromising commitment to the Word of God. The Rev. Greg DeMuth is currently serving as pastor of the congregation.

In honor of the occasion, the congregation decided to give back something to the community. Members contributed \$11,000, divided between Bridges Kinship Mentoring and New Beginnings Pregnancy Care Center.

STUDENTS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

tament while they memorize the list of Old Testament books. Martin Luther is the focus of Laurie Kimball's class of 16 students in the sixth grade, using the same tried and true Luther curriculum from CPH that some of the teachers themselves learned in their days in released time in the 1970s.

Their memory work is the Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments. Rev. Neubauer, meanwhile, shares his love of studying Genesis and God's creation with the 23 seventh and eighth graders in the program.

Many of the students who attend released time are not members of St. Johns. Roughly half of the students do not belong to any church, and this is the only time they receive any form of religious training throughout the week. This is one of the main reasons the congregation strives to do the best job it can with the children God has placed in its care for the short amount of time.

Most of these teachers give of their time on Wednesday morning to teach two classes. They also spend time at home preparing to teach to the best of their abilities and they keep their students in their thoughts and prayers throughout the week. The congregation feels immensely blessed to have such a dedicated group of teachers.

Clean-up in Isle

Several youth and adults from Trinity Lutheran Church, Isle, participated in the Adopt-A-Higway cleanup program in October. The effort is sponsored by the congregation's Active Christian Teens (A.C.T.) and is open to the entire congregation. Pictured are several of the members of Trinity who participated.



INSTALLATIONS



On Oct. 22, **the Rev. David Hinz** was installed as senior pastor of Trinity, Sauk Rapids. From left, (front row) the Revs. Brady Finnern, (circuit visitor and installer), Hinz, John Bakou, Don Kirsch; (middle row) Bruce Timm, Greg Tomhave; (back row) Paul Cloeter, David Strohschein, Keith Weise and Dr. Tim Rehwaldt.



The Rev. Ron Hobbie was installed on Oct. 15 as pastor of St. John's, Green Meadow, and Zion, Ada. Participating in the service were, from left (front row) Jordan Yost, Hobbie; (back row) the Revs. Dean Bell, Gary Rehborg (St. John's interim pastor) and Dr. Larry Harvala.



The Rev. Jacob Wagner was installed as pastor of St. John's, Vergas, on Nov. 12. Wagner's installation continues a family legacy as there are several ministers in his family tree. Two were present: his father, the Rev. Dan Wagner, and his grandfather, the Rev. William Schultz.

From left, (front row) the Revs. Jacob Wagner, Schultz, Dan Wagner, Bruce Noennig; (middle row) Del Stohs, John Beck, Dr. Donald Fondow (district president), Fred Wippich, Richard Boehnke, Guy Roberts; (back row) Del Meyer, David Mommens, Dan Abrahams, Bill Neumann, Scott Muehlberg and Roger Lange

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Washed clean

"You are my beloved Son, with You I am well pleased." — **Mark 1:11b**

This is the antiphon verse for the Baptism of our Lord. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River marked the beginning of His public ministry on earth. Did you realize that all four Gospels report the Baptism of Jesus? This should inform you that something significant has happened here.

This helps point you to the importance of this event. Martin Luther says this about Jesus' Baptism:

"[Christ] accepted it from John for the reason that he was entering into our stead, indeed, our person, that is, becoming a sinner for us, taking upon himself the sins which he had not committed, and wiping them out and drowning them in his holy baptism."

Then right after Jesus' Baptism, something happens that is remarkable and unexpected. You have the entire Trinity being revealed when the Father's voice declares Jesus to be His beloved Son and the Spirit descends upon Him.

Thanks be to God that Jesus is your substitute. You need not fear the wrath of God and His just punishment for your sins. For the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world has prepared the waters of Holy Baptism for you. You are washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. Jesus, the God-man, perfect, holy and sinless, was baptized just like every other sinner so that He would be identified with you, in order to provide you with His perfect righteousness.

Rejoice in your salvation, for you are baptized. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rev. Donald Klatt
Lakeland Region Pastoral Counselor

LWML Minnesota North District 2018 Convention

June 18-20 • Bemidji

The keynote speaker will be Cynthia Khan (and a guest) from POBLO International Ministries. The Bible study leader is the Rev. Bruce Timm, pastor, Redeemer, St. Cloud.

The convention will be held at the Sanford Center and hosted by Park I region.

Convention activities include worship, breakout sessions, Mites in Action speakers, election of officers, establish-



ing the mite goal for the 2018-20 biennium, selecting mission grants, mite walk, human care

ingathering and much more! For more information, visit lwmlmnn.org.

Kettle River holds workshop

The Kettle River Zone Fall Workshop was held at Zion, Mora, on Oct. 26. Pictured are, from left, Victoria "Tori" Nerud, member of Lord of the Lakes Lutheran, Forest Lake; Carol Ann Sander, zone president and member of Trinity, Isle; and Joan Erickson, Zion LWML president. Tori was one of two district Young Woman Representatives who attended the LWML national convention in June. She and Carol Ann, Kettle River Zone delegate, gave presentations on the convention to the 55 attending the workshop.



Beautiful voices

The Lakeland I Region met at Zion, Alexandria, for the Regional Fall Rally on Oct. 13. The attendees were treated to several songs provided by the students of Zion Lutheran School.



Marilyn Hittel
LWML District President
6850 Golden Spike Road,
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
president@lwmlmnn.org
320-387-2219