



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH

Witness and mercy **IN PUERTO RICO**



Mission trips to help rebuilding are planned

On Sept. 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria wrecked havoc on the island of Puerto Rico. Estimates of up to 4,000 deaths have been attributed to the hurricane and its continued impact. Many of the residents of Puerto Rico are still without roofs on their homes. People in 900 households were relocat-



▲ The FORO group outside the district office.

◀ Rev. St-Onge addressed the lack of theological leadership in Latin America.

ed to places in the United States by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Temporary Sheltering Assistance program.

In 2016, the Minnesota North District entered into an agreement with its ministry partners to carry out mission work in Puerto Rico. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is in Mayagüez, on the west end of the island, and Fountain of Life Lutheran Church is in Ponce, located on the southern coast.

The work of witness and mercy at these two locations is currently receiving support from members of the LCMS and the Minnesota North District.

These two congregations serve as hubs of mercy to help meet the needs of residents who are rebuilding in the wake of the hurricane. Efforts with these partners has led to the distribution of about 200 bags of food items each month, as well as providing roofing materials for 15 to 20 homes.

On Sept. 20 and 21, a FORO was held at the Minnesota North District offices in Baxter. FORO is a Hispanic term that finds its origin in our understanding of a “forum.” The FORO served to update the district and other LCMS partners on the work being done in Puerto Rico, as well as to offer an opportunity to collaborate on plans to address present and future needs for both mercy and witness.

Mercy work is ongoing and of cen-

See **MERCY**, page 3

Trinity celebrates century of blessings

Rev. John Ramsbacher leads the congregation in worship on Sunday, Sept. 16



Trinity Lutheran Church, Appleton, celebrated its 100th anniversary with a special day of worship, programs and fellowship. While the congregation's actual anniversary date was April 3, the members of Trinity elected to hold the celebration on Sept. 16 in conjunction with the city's Applefest celebration

as the festivities bring many people to town.

It seemed to be a wise decision as the Rev. John Ramsbacher, Trinity pastor, preached the Gospel to a packed house for the Sunday worship service.

After the worship service, a brief break for coffee and cookies was followed by the anniversary program. The program began with a welcome by Pastor Ramsbacher and Peter Behlen, congregation president. The Rev. Jeffrey Lee, Mission facilitator for the Minnesota North District, extended greetings from the district.

Following slideshows depicting Trinity's history, former pastors reflected on their memories of serving the congregation. They included the Revs. George Sagissor III, Tim Renstrom, Robert Flohrs and Robert Friedrich.

The program was interspersed with congregational hymns and singing by the Trinity choir, which was pleased to include the voices of several former members in its ranks. The morning was concluded with a catered meal served by members at noon.

God has blessed this congregation for 100 years and certainly made the day of celebration a blessing and delight.

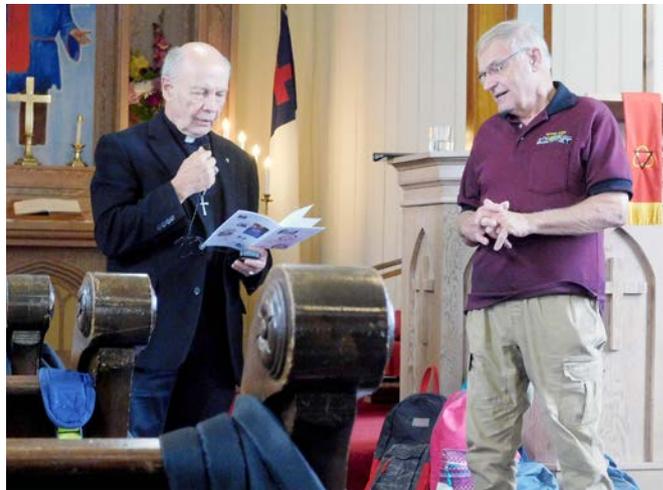
125 years of Zion

Zion Lutheran Church (North Germany Township), rural Sebeka, celebrated 125 years of the Lord's blessings with a festival service on Aug. 19. Zion pastor Rev. Ray Hendrickson served as the officiant. A Mission Festival was held in the afternoon with Gene Paske speaking on the work of Orphan Grain Train (OGT).

An in-gathering was taken during the Mission Festival — 29 backpacks, which will be distributed by OGT to those in need.

May the Lord continue to shower down His blessings on the members of Zion and, through them, to their community for many years to come.

Pastor Hendrickson, left, gives the in-gathering of backpacks to Gene Paske of OGT.



New pastor in Grand Marais

The Rev. Jonathan Watt was installed as pastor of Life in Christ Lutheran Church, Grand Marais, on Sept. 23. Participating in the service were, from left, Revs. Nathan Rusert, St. Paul's, Truman, and preacher; John Bonk, Shepherd of the Lake, Two Harbors; Watt; Dr. Larry Harvala; Dr. Daniel Preus, Life in Christ vacancy pastor; Walter Lehenbauer, Hope, Cloquet, and officiant; and Dean Rudloff.



LLL meets in Wheaton



Rev. Nour makes his presentation at the LLL annual meeting.

The Minnesota North District of the Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) and Orphan Grain Train held the 75th annual meeting on Sept. 8 at St. John's, Wheaton.

The Rev. Michael Breach, St. John's pastor, served as liturgist for the opening communion service. The Rev. Jason Wolter, Minnesota North District pastoral advisor to the LLL, gave the sermon.

Those greeting and reporting to the attendees were the Rev. Dr. Don Fondow, Minnesota North District president; Eugene Pasche, Minnesota North District Orphan Grain Train chairman; and Marilyn Hittel, LWML district president.

The event speaker was the Rev. Nabil Nour, LCMS third vice-president and pastor, Trinity, Hartford, S.D. Nour's presentation was on the differences between Judaism, Islam and Christianity. In his lively manner, Nour pointed out that Christianity is the only religion in the entire world proclaiming the truth that mankind is saved by God's grace and not by our good works.

In the afternoon, Glenn Borchers, district LLL president, conducted the business meeting.



A grateful resident smiles as Natalie Howard, an LCMS GEO missionary, distributes food at a community center in April in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

MERCY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

tral importance to mission efforts in Puerto Rico. And as that work of mercy continues, the Rev. Charles St-Onge, LCMS missionary who serves as an area facilitator for the Latin America and Caribbean regions, also conveyed the importance of supporting direct Christian witness in Puerto Rico. He emphasized that the single greatest challenge facing the development and growth of the Lutheran Church in Latin America and Puerto Rico is the lack of strong theological leadership in the region, and stressed the need for identifying and equipping such leadership.

The FORO highlighted many strengths and blessings bolstering the mission work — among these was the strong support given by the Minnesota North District and its congregations. Yet it emphasized many of the ongoing needs and difficulties facing mission work in the region, including the difficulty of integrating disaster relief work with the efforts toward church planting,

Among the participants at the FORO

were Rev. Gregory Walton, president of the LCMS Florida-Georgia District; Rev. German Novelli, president of the Hispanic Convention; and Minnesota North District representatives Rev. Jeff Lee (mission facilitator) and Rev. Dr. Don Fondow, (president).

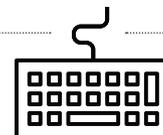
You can help!

Beginning in 2019, servant teams will be sent to Puerto Rico to provide labor to help with the rebuilding of homes and other support as needed. If you are interested in helping and serving on one of these trips, or in discussing how you or your congregation may support the mission work in Puerto Rico in other ways, **please call the district office at 218-829-1781.**



Housing for the servant teams will be provided in Mayagüez. Participants will be responsible to raise funds for transportation and a little extra for meals.

Send news



If you have any announcements, special events or human interest stories that you or your organization would like published, please send submissions to **the.lutheran.witness@mnnlcms.org**. You may also mail your submissions to Peace Lutheran Church, PO Box 60, Finlayson, MN 55735, attn. Rev. Philip Hoppe. Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.



Preparing for life's losses

Fifty-four women attended the 2018 LWML Retreat in August at Lutheran Island Camp under the theme "Good Grief," based on Job 1:21b. Seventeen of them were first-timers. The weekend provided an opportunity for everyone to be engaged in God's Word through Bible study. How refreshing to be inspired by Rev. Matthew Vrudny, pastoral counselor, and Chaplain Steve Breitbarth, and to enjoy the fellowship of sisters in Christ, worship with fellow believers and absorb the beauty of God's creation.



Zion LWML, Detroit Lakes, recently treated its pastors' wives to a luncheon. Most of the pastors and their wives are retired, but remain active in their church and LWML. From left, Joan Buchhop, Emily Roberts, June Abrahams, Joyce Rehborg and Gwen Noennig. Not pictured is Helen Wippich.



Fruits of a servant event

Carol Sorenson, 92, (right) began making a mat from plastic bags at the district convention servant event in June. The directions say that between 700 and 800 bags are used to complete the mat, and each bag makes about five strips and each strip makes about four stitches. Barb Speck (left) helped with cutting some of the bags into strips and in preparation. Both ladies are members of the Ladies Aid at Trinity, Bemidji. The mat will be donated to Orphan Grain Train.

Counselor's Corner

Gradual for the Day of Thanksgiving

"The eyes of all look to you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." ... "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever." — Ps. 145:15-16; 118:1

Many Christians take God's preserving the universe, which includes the earth, for granted. And certainly non-Christians take for granted that our God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — holds the universe together, for preservation and

food. Non-Christians may perceive or acknowledge that a higher being is accomplishing this. They just don't know who it is. This Gradual is telling you that it is God who provides your "food in due season."

God is the One who is responsible for and sustains all of creation — Christian, non-Christian, beast, livestock, birds of the air, fish in the sea and so on. Our God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — conveniently attends to and supports or maintains each of His creatures from the lowest of all to the highest.

So, you, His chosen, can "give thanks" not only for God providing all of your earthly needs, but also arranging for all of your eternal needs. It is His untiring, steadfast and resolute commitment to you. By providing for your redemption,

you see its completion in the cross of your Savior, Christ Jesus.

You see this dear saint in Christ, through the perfect life, innocent suffering, bitter death and His glorious resurrection and ascension. You should not only give thanks on Thanksgiving Day, but you should give thanks to God every day for all that He has done and still does for you.

Rev. Donald Klatt
Lakeland Region Pastoral Counselor



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