



/ DECEMBER 2020

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH

Rally Day in Isle



The Sunday school students and older youth of Trinity, Isle, recently gathered to begin a new season of Bible study and activities. They are pictured at left watching a puppet show (above), narrated by Laura Horsch, Sunday-school superintendent. She is pictured with Kate Peterson, instructor. The puppets' voices were acted out by Sharon Maunula and LeAnn Gregoire, Kettle River circuit youth worker.

Blessings in Monticello

On Oct. 11, Alive! Lutheran Church, Monticello, gathered for worship at Ellison Park, along the Mississippi River. This setting allowed for plenty of space for more of Alive's members to gather. Many friends made through online services were also invited.

This gathering also gave an opportunity for Seth Ludwig and Mason Drewelow, who completed their confirmation instruction last spring, to be admitted to the Lord's Table. These students were examined by means of an essay they wrote in response to a series of questions posed to them by Rev. Christopher Lieske. Each student read their essay to the assembly, giving them an opportunity to publicly confess the faith. Having been examined and having confessed the faith before the congregation, the students were invited to Holy Communion. A formal Rite of Confirmation is being delayed until a later date.

Although the wind made the morning a little chilly, the members and guests of Alive! enjoyed the opportunity to see their brothers and sisters in Christ receive God's gifts together and share fellowship.



DISTRICT NEWS

INSTALLATIONS



Rev. Noel A. Herr was installed as pastor of St. John's, Madison, on Sept. 6. From left, Revs. Kent Borglum, Matthew Canon, David Tilney, Noel Herr, Kirk Lee, Dean Rager, Keith Brustuen and Robert Friedrich.

Rev. Sam Pitsch was installed as senior pastor of Our Redeemer, Moorhead, on Sept. 20. From left, (front row) Revs. George Krueger, Jay Weideman, John Christensen, Sam Pitsch, Dr. Don Fondow, Craig Palach, Craig Fenske; (back row) Clark Jahnke, Adam Harvala, Gary Rehborg, Bernie Worrall, Steve Schulz, Brett Hartwig, Roger Lange, Brian Shane and Ross Fritz.



Sewing at Zion, Pine City



The women of Zion, Pine City, had started a sewing project making bags that attach to walkers and wheelchairs, to be donated to a nursing home and assisted living center, when the pandemic began. They since have made about 400 masks that have been given to Zion members and others in the community. Some were also sent to Lutheran World Relief. In the meantime, they have kept plugging away at the bags and have made more than 30. They get together for sewing once or twice a month.

Home devotions to begin in January

In January 2021, the Minnesota North District will once again encourage its members to bring the Word of God into their homes. This year's emphasis is called "Bring it Home — Life of Christ." The district will provide six weeks of family devotions covering the life of Jesus Christ to be used in the home. There will be five devotions each week, with Bible readings, background information, discussion questions and prayers.

If you have younger children, "Bring it Home" allows for the use of Arch Books to review the life of Christ with them. Normally Arch Books from Concordia Publishing House are \$3 each. Through a special discount arranged by the district, you will be able to purchase an entire set of 30 Arch Books on the life of Christ for \$45, including shipping.

Ask your pastor for more details and the special code to use at cph.org to order the books.



Reformation cookies

The Kettle River Circuit youth met in October to continue their enjoying life together. LeeAnn Gregoire, circuit youth worker, three pastors, numerous youth and adult leaders from three of the circuit's congregations met at Trinity, Isle to study, have fun and encourage one another.

The afternoon began with an activity called "sit and spin," which helped those gathered get to know one another better.

The youth then talked about how the Scriptures relate to their daily life. In particular, they were encouraged to speak to God about

times when it seems like all sorts of bad things are going on in the world. The adults, in a separate time of study, spoke about vocation, focusing on how husbands and wives and parents and children are to live with and love each other daily.

The day concluded with a cookie decorating contest. One challenge was to make a cookie that had a Reformation theme. Winning designs included cookies with a huge 95, reminding of the theses posted by Martin Luther; a chopped up cookie turned into Luther, his theses and the castle door; and a Luther Rose Seal.



Aria Mueller of Trinity Lutheran Church, Isle, shows off her contest winning Luther's Seal cookie.

Support for church workers



Rev. Paul Cloeter

For the past several decades, our Minnesota North District has offered support to its church workers and their families through the Church Worker Care Coordinator (CWCC). After retiring as a pastor, Rev. Paul Cloeter started serving in this position.

Cloeter sees his role as CWCC to be an additional source of care to our commissioned and ordained workers by providing personal and confidential consultation. This care could include anything from listening and prayer support to referrals. While not being a mental health professional or trained therapist, as a career pastor having served most of those years in the district, he is able to bring a "been-there-done-that" perspective to the unique issues church workers face.

Although the CWCC falls under the auspices of our district's Ministerial Health Commission and is accountable to our district president, his contacts with church workers remain confidential.

Since Cloeter remains fairly new to this position, he is currently attempting to introduce himself to build relationships with our called workers. He is available to attend and share at gatherings such as circuit winkels and conferences. He can be contacted at paul.cloeter@mnnlcms.org or 320-333-6319.

New paraments in Bruno



New green paraments were blessed at St. Paul's on Aug. 2 in memory of former member Mary Jo Jensen, who passed in 2019. The paraments were designed and made by Ecclesiastical Sewing, a company run by a family in the Brainerd area. They feature the artwork of Edward Rojas, an LCMS member and renowned artist in Michigan. The altar features three symbols representing each of the persons of the Holy Trinity. The symbols on the lectern and pulpit are symbols of the church, a house built on the Rock and an ark amidst stormy seas.

Share your news with us!

We love to feature a wide variety of events occurring in all of our district congregations. All that is needed is a brief description of the event and one or two photos.

Please send submissions to the.lutheran.witness@mnnlcms.org. You may also mail your submissions to Peace Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 60, Finlayson, MN 55735, attn. Rev. Philip Hoppe.



Together again

The LWML of Lord of Glory Lutheran Church, Elk River, gathered for their first meeting since COVID restrictions were put in place. The ladies were so thankful to gather together in God's Word again! The meeting was held with physical distancing and was available online for those who weren't ready to gather in person. Jessica Nelson, Rum River Zone president, was the guest speaker.

From left, Rev. Marty and Anissa Mably, Jessica Nelson, Shirley Olson (seated), Karena Lapolice and Susan Archuleta. On screen are Jonel Leiding and Lindsay Leiding. Missing from the photo is Lucinda Messman.

District seeking YWRs

Two Young Woman Representatives (YWR) are being sought to attend the LWML 39th Biennial Convention June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky. YWRs must be a member of a Minnesota North District congregation and have not previously attended a national LWML convention as a YWR.

The age preference is 18-35. A candidate will have a deep love and devotion for her Lord Jesus Christ and be willing to participate in the full scope of the convention, including all YWR activities. The two YWRs must also commit to providing a convention report at the LWML Minnesota North District Convention in 2022.

For an application, go to lwml.org/ywr. Applications were also sent out in the fall packet, and are due by Jan. 1. For more information about YWR activities or how to apply, send an email to youngwomen@lwmlmnn.org.



Happy birthday!

Vivian Miller celebrated her 99th birthday in August. She is the oldest member of the LWML of St. John's, Barnesville. She is also the oldest member of the congregation.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

God's great love

In normal times, the weeks leading up to Christmas Day would include many gatherings and parties — with much food and fellowship — to celebrate. But these last nine months have not been normal, have they?

Hopefully during this pandemic, we are now a little more aware of what we should value in this life beyond material gifts. If a loved one has been infected by this virus, would you not trade all your Christmas presents for the opportunity for them to recover and be with you for another Christmas Eve worship? Of course! That's because God's gift of life is precious, and by faith and His Word, He has made us desire and value this life. This is not just because we recognize this as human life and that such life is sometimes fragile and fleeting, but because God has revealed how much He values it by securing salvation for all who have this life.

The Lord has spoken to us about our worth to Him in passages like Gal. 4:4-5:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Before Christmas was most known for the unwrapping of gifts, God's great love and mercy of a Savior was promised and then unwrapped for the whole world to enjoy. This is the same Good News we had to share in 2019. I wonder if that Gospel of Christ Jesus feels even more precious during this 2020 Advent and Christmas season, when thinking and speaking about the value of saving lives has become so common? I hope so.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you and your household!

Rev. Matthew Vrudny • Park Region Pastoral Counselor