



# DISTRICT NEWS

## MINNESOTA NORTH

### BRING ON WINTER!

In a year full of challenges, one Minnesota North District congregation has decided to take on winter worship, cars facing forward. Zion, Detroit Lakes, never stopped having outdoor worship even as the weather changed.

As winter's icy grip took hold, the pastors committed to preaching on-site and outdoors for those not comfortable with worshipping inside. On Sundays, regardless of weather, you would have found a pastor on stage preaching the Word from Zion's outdoor chapel — bundled up. That is until the compassion of God's people led them to build an accessory for the chapel.

"We felt sorry for the pastors," said

Mark Glawe, head usher and sermon shanty co-chief engineer. So with the ingenuity of ice fishermen, a small and determined band of do-it-yourselfers — Glawe, Lindy White and Travis Schwarz — put their heads together and built a beautiful, heated fish-shanty-inspired perch for Zion's pastors to bring forth the Word of God.

"Bring on the winter!" said Rev. Bruce Noennig, Zion associate pastor. After thanking the congregation for their ongoing support and involvement,

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Rev. Guy Roberts preaches inside the heated outdoor pulpit that was decorated for Christmas



### Music in the streets

Most years, members of Peace, Finlayson, spread the message of Christ's birth by singing Christmas carols in places like nursing homes, hospitals, senior-living apartments and the homes of shut-ins. That was impossible in 2020, so the choices were cancel the event or find another way.

Being in a small town, members decided to take the Good News for all people to the streets — literally. On Dec. 20, a group of carolers of all ages walked most

of the streets in town.

They had placed flyers on doors to let people know they would be out, and encouraged them to put their porch lights on if they wanted the carolers to be sure to stop by their house. They sang throughout the town and several people came out of their homes and listened as the carolers sang from the street.

It was a joy for the carolers to be together and bring the joy of Christmas to their neighbors!

# Breakfast at Bethlehem

Lord of Glory Lutheran Church, Elk River, held its second Breakfast in Bethlehem community outreach on Dec. 5 as a drive-thru only event. Unsure of what the community's response would be, the volunteers were thrilled that nearly 120 people attended.

Each person received a Bethlehem Treasure Bag, which contained family devotions, crafts and a water bottle; and also a breakfast bag for the families to enjoy. Many Bibles were also distributed as a majority who attended were not members of a congregation.

Attendees donated toys and financial gifts, which were used to benefit a toy drive and several community organizations. They were serenaded by the live Nativity singing Christmas hymns.



While the event was offered on a much smaller scale than last year's inaugural breakfast, the congregation was excited to offer a positive experience to community members in a time when many churches and organizations are having

to restrict or cancel events. Besides the great opportunity for volunteers to serve Christ and their community, the volunteers appreciated spending time celebrating Christmas and enjoying fellowship with one another.

# Family grows in Millerville



Trinity, Millerville, welcomed new members on Nov. 22. They are Chelle and Bret Elmer and their children, Merick, Brielle and Eilee; and Heidi and Jason Elmer and their children, Mia, Grayson, Ashlyn and Kendall. Also welcomed but missing from the photo is Mary Kay Schwardt. Each of these new members are unique in how they arrived at Trinity. Mary Kay was an adult confirmand. Heidi and Jason were welcomed by Profession of Faith and Chelle and Bret transferred from Good Shepherd, Alexandria. A new member reception and dinner was planned, but was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. It will be held when possible.

## PERCH

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Rev. Guy Roberts, senior pastor, laid down a challenge encouraging people to name this unique pulpit. Proposed ideas so far include The Sermon Shack, Pastor's Pen, Penalty Box, Portable Pulpit, The Preaching Porch, COVID Cabin, Hymnal Hut, Homily Hangout and many more.

Regardless of what the name ends up being, the creation and installation of this four-by-six-foot wooden box has provided joy and assurance that no matter what may come, God's Word will be heard.

If you would like to submit a name idea or are interested in how to mobilize your congregation for a winter drive-in worship, please contact Zion at [zionlutherandl@gmail.com](mailto:zionlutherandl@gmail.com).

# IT'S A WRAP!

St. John's, Kimball, again wrapped Christmas packages for the community at no cost. With many parents working and helping their children with distance learning, there doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day to get it all done. The St. John's members enjoy wrapping gifts and this is a service it offers to everyone in the area.

The congregation has been fortunate enough to get oodles and oodles of paper, ribbon and other supplies as a result of generous donations. A Bible verse is attached to each wrapped package.

Church members wrapped well over 200 packages this year.

Member Diane Harff wrote the following poem for the event:

We deliver near by, won't you give us a try?  
We wrap, we stack we do all of that!

Happiness and joy are wrapped with every toy.

Love and care is something we share.

In every gift, on every tag, the message of Christ we brag.

It's not about the charm or bling, it's about Christ we sing!

So bring your gifts, bring your treasure,  
We'll wrap them all, it's our pleasure!  
We'll wrap, we'll stack, we'll do all that!



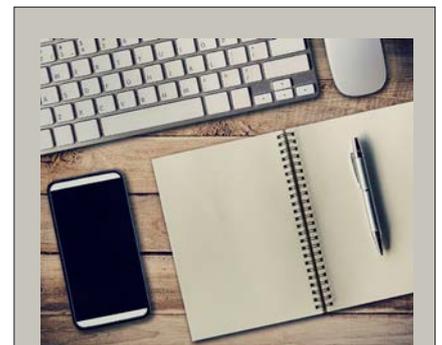
From left, Jayne Harff, Carol Marohn and Judy Thompson.

On a tag we'll share a message fair  
about a child so meek, so mild.

He came for me, He came for you!  
This blessed child who grew.  
He died, He rose so to Eternity we go.

Please share this gift, this perfect treasure.

It's a wrap! And all my pleasure!



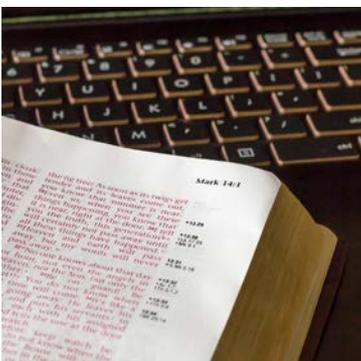
## Share your news with us!

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@mnlcms.org*.

You may also mail your submissions to Peace Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 60, Finlayson, MN 55735, attn. Rev. Philip Hoppe.

# Bible Bowl 2021 has been canceled



The Minnesota State Bible Bowl was to be held on April 17 at Concordia University, St. Paul. The focus of this year's event was to be the books of Romans and James.

Because many of the teams have not been able to get together in person to study and practice this year, the decision was regrettably made to cancel the event for this year. It will be back in 2022.

The yearly event is actually two competitions in one for LCMS members in grades 7-12. There is a fast-paced, double-elimination team contest, and then players also gather in the auditorium for an individual competition. This portion of the competition is a 50-question, multiple-choice test.

**COUNSELOR'S CORNER**

# Thoughtful Holy Days

Did you know that many of our modern holidays are loosely based on Christian pastors from the past? How odd then that we have turned them into nothing more than chances to indulge the desires of the flesh.

St. Nicolas was a bishop at Myra in modern day Turkey. He may (or may not) have used his wealth to help the poor and needy. The story is told of him throwing gold down a poor family's chimney, where it may (or may not) have landed in some socks that were drying over the fire. The story is also told of him being present at the Council of Nicaea, where he smacked the heretic Arius for denying the full deity of the Son of God.

About the only thing we know for certain is that St. Nicolas was a pastor who preached Christ. That alone would be better to teach our children and grandchildren than a legalistic, hypocritical Santa Claus who doesn't even follow his own rules (for example, even naughty children get gifts).

As with St. Nicolas, we do not know much about St. Valentine. There are seven different "Valentines" identified as martyrs in the early Christian church. But again, we may rightly wonder how we moved from stories of men who gave their lives for their confession of Christ to a day dedicated to chocolate, flowers, and romantic affections.

There are stories of a Valentine who was a priest in Rome while Claudius reigned. Supposedly Valentine tried to convert the pagan emperor, but because of his effort he was killed. Another story says that St. Valentine, while visiting his members in prison, befriended the jailer's blind daughter. He shared with her the Christian faith. On the night of his execution, he sent her a little note saying, "Love, your Valentine." Wouldn't these



possible (and probable) stories be a better Christian witness of love than our regular rituals? Maybe we should visit the jails on Valentine's Day or be a witness of Christ to our leaders.

We do know much about St. Patrick. He also was a pastor. Are you beginning to see a theme? Patrick was born in Britain around 390 A.D. As a teenager, he was taken captive by Irish raiders, sold to an Irish king and made to work as a shepherd. Patrick was raised Christian, but it didn't mean much to him. Alone in the hills, he spent much time praying and seeking God.

After six years in captivity, Patrick escaped. He walked 200 miles, then boarded a ship for Britain and returned home. But he was a changed man. He became a priest and then a bishop. Thirty-six years after leaving Ireland, he returned as a missionary to his enemies and, by God's grace, helped convert thousands of Irish people to Christianity. You will have to research about how we got from Christ, grace and missionaries to green beer, leprechauns and hidden pots of gold.

How sad that our holidays are everything but holy. These legends are far more helpful to us, our children and our faith than Santa, chocolate and leprechauns. They give us examples of faithful pastors who brought Christ to a dying world, and who gave their lives for the One who gave His life for them and for us. May God grant us not happy holidays, but thoughtful holy days.

**Rev. Bruce Timm** • Arrowhead Region Pastoral Counselor



## 2021 Prayer Service now available

The 2021 Prayer Service, written by past LWML Pastoral Counselor Rev. Robert Mundahl, is "He Prayed with Them," based on Acts 20:36b.

When was the last time you prayed with someone? Not for someone, but with someone? We are encouraged in Scripture to be people of prayer, and prayer

marks us as children of the heavenly Father. He has promised to hear us and to answer our prayers. May the 2021 Prayer Service encourage and expand our life of prayer to include praying with others.

The LWML Prayer Service is available to download at: [lwml.org/prayer-service](http://lwml.org/prayer-service).