



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH



IN PHOTO: Peace members Leroy and Donelda Thurn serve up the famous "Lutheran" burgers on July 4 in Finlayson.

From service to serving

Members of Peace Lutheran Church, Finlayson, went to work doing what they do every July 4 for the community's celebration of American independence. They endure the heat of a grill to flip burgers, which have come to be a must-have for many who attend the celebration.

Others members grill onions and prepare the other condiments. Still others serve drinks and collect the money. Near the end of the line, homemade pies made by church members rest in a glass-fronted refrigerator, ready for purchase.

Peace also gives away Bibles, Luther's Small Catechism and various tracts freely to anyone who desires them.

Since the 2021 celebration was on Sunday, workers headed right from Divine Service to serve burgers shortly after 10 a.m. Rev. Philip Hoppe also served as the announcer for the parade and other activities held in the afternoon. Finally, many people parked at Peace to watch the fireworks that a community club organized.

Dual parish welcomes pastor



Pastor Bursdorf prays at the altar on the day of his installation.

First Lutheran Church, Ely, and its sister-church, The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Babbitt, installed Rev. Zachariah Burgdorf as their pastor on Aug. 22. He is a recent graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind.

Pastor Burgdorf met his wife, Claire, at CTSFW. Claire, who was in the deaconess program, serves as director of Development at David's Harp, a group that seeks to reach people all over the world with the message of Christ in the rich hymns of the Lutheran church.

They have two sons: John Elijah (1) and a newborn, Apollos James, who was born on July 31.

Pastor Burgdorf was ordained on June 13 at Bethany, Fort Wayne. After the installation, members and guests shared a meal at the Junction Inn & Suites in Babbitt.

Ladies meet again

Trinity Lutheran Church, Isle, was able to present once again its annual Girls Night Out, sponsored by the LWML, after canceling last year. More than 70 members and their guests enjoyed an evening of conversation, salads, door prizes and entertainment.

The theme was “JOY” and emcee Miriam Mueller opened with biblical references. She also invited attendees to provide an example of what joy means to them. One person summed it up this way: “Joy is giving gratitude to God for bringing us through the pandemic and enabling us to gather again.”

Trinity LWML also resumed its annual Bible Study Retreat after a one-year hiatus. The Bible study focused on justification and sanctification and was led by deaconess student and Kettle River Zone youth worker LeAnn Gregoire and long-time Trinity LWML member Karen Roeschlein.



From left, Joan Erickson, Miriam Mueller, LeAnn Gregoire and Annette Haggberg sing the closing hymn.



Pictured at the study retreat are, from left (front row) Carol Ann Sander, Laura Determan, Sharon Maunula, Evi Moss; (back row) LeAnn Gregoire, Karen Roeschlein, Laura Frostad, Jean Read, Debbie Weeda, Donna Dobbelaire, Jennie Determan, Glenna Zortman, Delores Hagen and Micki Tangen.



Hymnals available

St. John’s Lutheran Church, Grey Eagle, has *Lutheran Worship* hymnals available for free ... 46 are in good condition, 97 have been repaired and 12 are newer editions.

Also available are two organist books, one large-print hymnal and one large print Liturgy book.

Interested? Call Rev. Michael Bitz, St. John’s pastor, at 320-429-1684.

Burger nights at Redeemer, Wilmar

Since June 4, members of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Willmar, have been serving cheeseburgers to the residents of the community every Friday.

The event began with a small number of patties being given away, until a record number of 286 was given away on a single night in July. The idea came about during Zoom meetings as members were discussing what could be done as our world was still navigating a pandemic.

Members also noticed a decline in the health of those in the neighborhood and decided to help provide for the physical, mental and spiritual needs of others through grilling. The line for burgers gave attendees an opportunity to write a prayer request for the congregation to petition God both privately and during Sunday morning services.

Arch Books were also given away, including to those of different religions.



Pastors are forever students



Pictured are the pastors who attended a continuing education course at Faith, Silver Bay — from left, Revs. Dean Rudloff (emeritus), Richard Langhorst (Giese, Sandstone), James Cerdanola (Philippines), Rob Franck (Duluth), Gifford Grobien (instructor), Bill Traphagan (Alden, Iowa), Jay Weideman (Fergus Falls), Johnathan Watt (Grand Marais), Troy Peperkorn (Silver Bay) and Dennis Schutte (emeritus).

What end are we trying to reach? What are virtues? What role does the Law fill in morality? Faith Lutheran Church, Silver Bay, hosted a continuing education course led by Rev. Dr. Gifford Grobien of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., Aug. 2-6. He discussed these and other questions, and lectured and led discussion on methods in moral theology while the students drank too much coffee and ate too many delicious pastries.

Dr. Grobien taught that life with Christ is the ultimate end or good for the Christian, a gift from Christ. Life with Him lived out into eternity is the gift He gives. Salvation is by grace and not by works.

And yet, as Dr. Grobien noted, the world has produced a number of schools of thought contrary to this. Some of these ways of thinking were developed or popularized by men like William of Occam, Immanuel Kant and Henry Sidgwick. Their writings present significant departures from godly wisdom. Reason, or the mind, became the means to the ultimate good in their estimation.

And yet while salvation and regeneration are a gift received passively, everyday moral decisions still must be made. The language of virtues, that is, good

works, was discussed at length by Grobien. Martin Luther criticized what was spoken of as virtue in his day because he wrote against those who taught that moral rectitude was necessary for each person in order to be saved.

True virtues are instead things added to saving faith. They are things or desires created by the Holy Spirit through regeneration. The Holy Spirit works new desires. The learning and doing of righteous acts are guided according to biblical wisdom. God's precepts clarify action through concrete direction. His revealed ways align us with the good.

We live in the three estates — our homes, communities and church — as we push toward where we are heading. There we live out the virtues added to faith, following the precepts of God which give concrete direction. In these estates, there are offices of authority given to some. Those given these roles are to use this authority for the purpose of serving those entrusted to them.

We are to walk in God's ways. The book of Proverbs demonstrates that while doing wise things, even if we don't understand the rationale, we will grow in understanding.

Faith, Silver Bay, intends to host another event next summer.



Share your news with us!

We love to feature a wide variety of events occurring in all of our congregations



of the Minnesota North District in this portion of *The Lutheran Witness*. The only way we can do that is if you, the reader, submit events and other interesting items going on in your congregations and communities.

All that is needed is a brief description of the event and a couple of photos.

Please submit anything of note in your congregation, including announcements, special events or human interest stories that you or your organization would like published.

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.

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.

Counselor's Corner



GOD IS GRACIOUS!

In Luke 4, Jesus returns to the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth, opens the scroll of Isaiah and reads:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. ... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then Jesus declares:

“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Because of the divorce of a daughter and the failing marriages of two sons, Elizabeth II, queen of England, pronounced 1992 as “a horrible year.” We are still feeling the year 2020 as a heavy burden around our necks. If the queen’s few family heartaches can make a year “horrible,” what word(s) would describe a time of world-wide virus, an exploited fear of death, political

upheaval, isolation, business failures, lawless riots and chaotic media?

Our Lord is our ever-present help and strength! The Israelites experienced horrible years under forced labor in Egypt and during their 40-year journey to the Promised Land. They also had years of divine favor. Every 50th year was called a “year of jubilee.” People were set free from working contracts, obligations and servitude. The jubilee year was announced by a trumpet blast. Isaiah says this was a foretaste of the spiritual freedom to come with the Messiah.

Jesus fulfills that prophecy. Even to the hometown that rejects Him, Jesus proclaims the “year” — that is, the entire New Testament era — as the time of the Lord’s gracious, Gospel favor. In 2020, the Son of the Most High continued to lead the world toward a life lived out in His favor.

By His Word and Spirit, He continues to walk with us, lead us, bear our burdens, heal our souls, forgive our sins and keep the door of heaven open for all who are baptized and believe in Him.

So now, how does the past year or present year look to you? The world looks fallen and God looks gracious. God’s goodness in Christ will always outweigh our feelings. Our faith outweighs our sight.

The truth of Ps. 23:6 will always declare to us:

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Rev. Matthew Vrudny

Park Region Pastoral Counselor



Women enjoy retreat

Minnesota North District LWML women gathered at Lutheran Island Camp Aug. 13-15 for their annual retreat. There were 50 participants, including 13 first-timers. This year’s theme was “The Way Home — A Study of the Book of Ezra.” The weekend started on Friday night with Bible study, which continued on Saturday as Rev. Bruce Timm led. A prayer service was held on Sunday morning. Despite not having a campfire due to the drought, there was time to enjoy evening snacks in the Fireside Room while visiting with friends. Other weekend activities included relaxing, numerous crafts, touring Christ Serve Ranch and exploring the beauty of the island.