



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH



God bless our workers' wives!

They are a group so important to our district but are not often seen together. They each play their own roles in the lives of our pastors and in their own congregations. They have no specific call from the congregation and yet many congregations have expectations of them that go beyond those of a regular member.

Regardless of the other roles they may or may not play in our congregations, the wives of our pastors and other church workers are important solely based on their vocation as spouse to the men called and commissioned to be our shepherds.

In order to provide relationships between those who share this unique role and to help support them as they live within it, the Minnesota North District has sought to hold a yearly church workers wives retreat. The wives of retired church workers also participate.

This year returned to that normal routine. The wives gathered in late September at Lutheran Island Camp for their annual retreat. These women got together for two days of Bible study, fellowship and service activities, along with the opportunity for respite and time outdoors on the beautiful island at East Battle Lake.

The retreat revolved around a Bible study on Hosea and God's love for His people Israel. The ladies made "plarn" from cuts of plastic bags, which will then be crocheted into mats for the homeless. The women also made spa gifts and participated in spa night with face masks and foot masks. The retreat ended with an encouraging talk from Rev. Dr. Don Fondow, district president, and a devotion.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund each year funds the retreat planning, which allows for some fun, creative and relaxing times for the ladies.

Happy 100 in Vergas



An aerial view shows the original building and the new fellowship hall.

St. John's, Vergas, celebrated the 100th anniversary of its building and dedicated the new fellowship hall on Sept. 12. During the new construction, the congregation was able to re-purpose parts of the original building, including the stained glass which was in the original building's entry. They are now located in the fellowship hall.

The congregation prays that God will continue to bless its facilities, the members and their ministry over the next 100 years, just as He has done for the first 100.

VBS returns in Evergreen

The children and adults who participated in vacation Bible school at St. Paul's, Evergreen, presented a program to the congregation on June 13. The program was followed by a potluck meal. The congregation rejoiced to be able to have its VBS after a one-year hiatus. The theme was "Rainforest Explorers."

The congregation gives God the glory for making this event possible, and for working through it to teach others about Jesus and His love.



Serving the TWO KINGDOMS

Jacob Franck, son of Mount Olive, Duluth, pastor Rev. Robert Franck, is a pre-seminary student at Concordia University Chicago. A junior, Jacob is a theological languages major and philosophy minor. He is planning on attending seminary after college to become a pastor.

But his desire to serve is not limited to becoming a pastor.

"One day the military randomly came up in a conversation, but I couldn't get it out of my head," Jacob said, "and after talking to many different people I felt that God was leading me to join. My goal has always been to become the best pastor I could and I felt that the Army Reserve would be helpful in that goal."

Jacob recently completed basic training and now takes part in monthly drills one weekend a month, and participates in two weeks of training during the summer. He will be going to



Jacob Franck

Fort Lee in Virginia for six weeks of job training as a cook next summer.

As Jacob learned, the goal of basic training is to make sure you can handle the stress of battle. Participants are always under pressure and always under stress. Jacob said this caused him to become much more dependent upon God. During one exercise in learning to shoot a rifle, Jacob had to just put everything in Jesus' hands when he feared he would not successfully complete the exercise. He prayed, "Lord you are in control. If you want me to be here, I will pass and if you don't then I won't, let your will be done. If it be your will, guide my hands as I fire."

Thanks be to God, his bullets went clean through the middle of the target. There is no doubt in his mind that God is the only reason he was able to complete basic training.

Jacob believes it is very important for some Christians to join the military. He saw many people either come back to the faith or find it for the first time during basic training, in which Bibles are given to anyone who wants them. He saw hundreds of people read the Bible for the first time. Some people who care for Jacob had some reservations about him enlisting because world affairs seem to just be getting worse. But Jacob is convicted that Christians shouldn't retreat. They should try and change our world as best they can in whatever vocations God calls them to.

Jacob has not yet officially joined the chaplain candidacy program, though it's a consideration. Even if he does not become a chaplain, he believes that the Army Reserve has helped him in many ways that will make him a better pastor. His experiences will aid him in service to the church and, as God directs, the military as well.



Families have fun in Deer Creek

Trinity, Deer Creek, decided to have a Fellowship Family Fun Night the third Thursday each month during the summer. The event started with opening prayer and was followed by an activity, a song and a closing lesson.

In June, attendees participated in a Bible scavenger hunt in which each group had Bible verses to look up and find the item mentioned. In July, they made kites and had airplanes to fly. In August, they made homemade ice cream using coffee cans.



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.



Vacation Bible school returned to Trinity, Isle, this past summer. The theme was "Jungle Safari" and, in a change from previous evening programs, God's Word was shared with the youth during morning hours followed by a lunch.

Many Trinity adults volunteered to be crew leaders and serve the meal. Children donated 19 pounds of food for the Isle Food Shelf and 12 pairs of used shoes for Lutheran Island Camp. Also, a special offering of \$683 will fund Bible story books, through Concordia Gospel Outreach, for families in Papua New Guinea. The offering included a \$300 donation from Trinity's LWML.

Counselor's Corner

TRASH TO TREASURE



I sometimes wonder if many of the things we value highly in life are what God may consider to be worthless trash. The ability to buy whatever we like, a trouble-free life or good health may all be things we strongly desire, but God ultimately is more concerned about our faith and preparing us for eternity.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:7 (NLT):

These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

For me, the process of turning trash into treasure is ongoing and will continue until God takes me to heaven. But in the meantime, let me share with you how some of that ugly trash — trials at the time — have turned into treasure.

One trash-to-treasure gift God gave me is a new ability to relate to people who have health problems. I experienced the symptoms of a heart attack twice within a six-month period. The pain in my chest was excruciating. It took a shot of morphine each time to take the edge off the pain. Finally, I was diagnosed with esophageal spasms, and with the right medication, I have been symptom-free since.

It wasn't long after this experience that I had a sharp pain in my lung. I went to the hospital and they took an X-ray. I could tell something was

wrong by the tone of the doctor's voice. He said I needed to see my family doctor immediately because I had a spot on my lung. I eventually ended up going to a lung specialist, who proceeded to tell me he thought the spot might be an infection and not cancer and to come back in six weeks and then we would know for sure. If it was simply an infection, the spot would be gone in six weeks. How would you like to wait a month and a half to find out if you had cancer?

About a year later, I had to have my gall bladder removed. No problem ... it's a simple outpatient procedure ... surgery in the morning and home in the afternoon. Never having faced surgery before, my family doctor assured me this was the easiest surgery from which to recover.

Things did not turn out as planned. During the procedure, my liver was nicked and the surgeon could not stop the bleeding. I went into shock from the loss of blood and had to be airlifted to a hospital. I was sedated for two days before doctors were able to control the bleeding and sew me up. After that, I have experienced new levels of empathy and compassion for people going through major surgery that I never could have attained without going through that experience myself.

Through these experiences, I have gained an appreciation for how precious and fragile life is, a more intimate walk with Jesus and a greater appreciation for heaven. What a joy to be able to relate to others who suffer and, best of all, to be able to share the Gospel with them.

Rev. Reed Stockman
Lakeland Region Pastoral Counselor

Supporting our future
CHURCH WORKERS

Congratulations to the district LWML scholarship recipients, who are all studying to be professional church workers.



Madison Patrow
Our Redeemer,
Cohasset
School:
Concordia University,
St. Paul (majoring in
Christian ministry)



Jacob Franck
Mount Olive,
Duluth
School:
Concordia University
Chicago (majoring in
theological languages)



Jacob Lemke
Messiah, Sartell
School:
Concordia University
Wisconsin
(majoring in
theological languages)



Michael Thomas
Immanuel,
Parkers Prairie
School:
Concordia Theological
Seminary,
St. Catherine's,
Ontario, Canada



Bruce Maul
St. Paul's, Vergas
School:
Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis (Specific
Ministry Pastor
program)