



/ MAY 2023

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH

Celebrate 150 years of St. John's, Rush City



The saints of St. John's, Rush City, gather for service in August 2022. The congregation has been in its current building since 1988. The congregation was established in 1873.

St. John's, Rush City, is celebrating 150 years as a congregation in 2023.

The congregation's first building, a log cabin, was located on the eastern shore of Rush Lake. The congregation first held a service on May 11, 1873. From 1873 until 1923, all services were conducted in German. In 1883, a new church was erected.

Later in 1952, the congregation moved to Rush City with a service held on May 4. Groundbreaking for a new church building at a new location began in July 1988. The first service in the congregation's present building was held on Dec. 11 of that year. Laborers for Christ

led the construction with the aid of congregation members.

On Sunday, May 21, St. John's will conduct a joint worship service with St. Stephen's, Braham, to celebrate the anniversary. The theme for the anniversary year is "Sharing God's Word." Rev. Brady Finnern, Minnesota North district president, will be the preacher. The service begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a potluck meal and a short program.

Former pastors have been invited and they will share short remembrances of their years at St. John's. The congregation will dedicate an art piece commemorating St. John's history and years of "Sharing God's Word."

To capitalize on the congregation's early German heritage, St. John's is also planning an outdoor polka service on Sunday, July 30. Musician Rod Cerar will play for the service and also play during a catered German meal of brats, hot dogs, sauerkraut, potato salad, red cabbage and desserts. The cost is \$12.50 per person or \$30 per family. If you would like to attend, please call the church at 320-358-3623 to reserve by July 21. Outdoor games will also be involved, so plan for a fun day!

St. John's invites you to both events. The congregation is located at 980 W. 4th Street, across the street from the Chisago County fairgrounds.



Up in smoke!

St. John's, Vergas, celebrated paying off its building expansion and remodel loan during service on Feb. 12. The loan was paid off in three years. "It was quite an accomplishment, that this has happened and we are grateful to all who were able to contribute in any way and for all the prayers!"



Mighty Mites

From left, Kenley Kohlgraf and Cadence Mueller tightly hold a Christmas stocking after women of Trinity, Isle, deposited their monthly mite box collections at the congregation's Christmas dinner. Trinity's LWML sponsored the event as a way to thank the congregation for its generous and ongoing local, national and international mission project support during the past year. Delores Hagen emceed the dinner, Trinity's Sunday school children sang and the meal concluded with the tradition of Christmas caroling by the attendees.

Sewn with love

Trinity, Deer Creek, has a group of five quilters who together made 76 quilts throughout 2022.

The quilts were distributed to the Empty Stocking Fund, the Lutheran Island Camp auction, a group home, a nursing home, the homeless and those affected by various disasters in the congregation's community.

The quilters include, from left, Alice Schoon, Ardell Lange, Joanne Ostlund and Linda Brown. Missing from the photo is Janet Cigelski.



'Well done, good and faithful servant'

Myrna Thornton has retired as organist of Trinity, Twin Valley, following 51 years of service!

Myrna faithfully played for regular worship services, funerals, the church choir, the Trinity Singers and, on occasion, Sunday school.

Last fall, the congregation thanked Myrna with a fellowship gathering and an organ-themed cake.



Life grants again available

The fourth phase of the 1 John 3

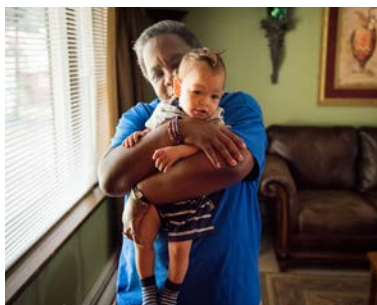
Initiative Million Dollar Life Match is underway, with applications due by June 30.

The initiative, which began in early 2022, seeks to support LCMS congregations involved in providing beginning-of-life care in their local communities. Any LCMS congregation is eligible to apply.

The three-part process, which takes place over a period of months, consists of an application, an award and a follow-up report. The initiative was originally planned to have three phases, but a fourth phase was added to allow a greater window of opportunity for congregations interested in applying.

To date, grants have been awarded to help congregations:

- ▶ Care for families experiencing challenges at the beginning of life;
- ▶ Partner with an LCMS Recognized Service Organization in support of life;
- ▶ Collaborate with local agencies on foster care and adoption; and



- ▶ Collaborate with local pregnancy resource centers and maternity homes.

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Grant recipients are selected via a process that considers a variety of factors, including:

- ▶ Whether the grant is for a new or existing project (both are eligible, but new projects receive more weight);
- ▶ Whether the proposal is complete, clear, specific, feasible and sound;
- ▶ How closely the project is connected with the Word and Sacrament ministry of the congregation; and
- ▶ How well the project provides spiritual, emotional or physical care for families vulnerable to abortion or facing challenges.

Grants will be awarded in September, and reports are due by March 1, 2024.

For more information, or to begin the application process, visit lcms.org/life-grant. Address questions to Kris Freeman, manager of LCMS Life Ministry, at lifeministry@lcms.org or 314-996-1217.

Share your news with us!

Why publicize your congregation's stories in *The Lutheran Witness* district Insert?

- ▶ It reminds people that Christ is active in His church in so many ways.
- ▶ It gives readers a sense of the larger body of Christ, that they have brothers and sisters engaged in the same work.
- ▶ It gives congregations ideas for events and outreach.
- ▶ It helps former members to see what is going on in their former congregations.
- ▶ It aids other congregations in knowing who to reach out to when they need resources or referrals for a project they are considering.

We love to feature a wide variety of events occurring in our district congregations. All that is needed is a brief description of the event and one or two photos. No event or announcement is too big or small.

Send submissions to *the.lutheran.witness@mnnlcm.org*. You may also mail your submissions to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 12, Backus, MN 56435, attn. Rev. Travis Lauterbach.

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution. Send the largest sized photo from your camera or phone. Many email programs will try to resize the photos, but please send the original size.

Counselor's Corner



Around the world we see struggles, conflicts and tensions among different ethnic and religious groups, and among those with different political opinions and worldviews.

Can people so different work together? Can tensions be reduced? Opinions vary. Some say it is hopeless. Others say education is the answer, claiming that the more we know about ourselves and one another, the more we will value what we have.

Is there any hope? At times the cynics seem to be right, that nothing we do will take away the fear and hatred that divide us. Christians, however, look beyond human attempts to solve these larger-than-life problems. There is a unity that binds all people together. All people are creations of God. But all to one degree or another are guilty of acts against God and against one another. That is the common human predicament.

But God provided real hope. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for us. In our place He suffered the punishment and guilt for every act and crime against humanity — for all time. He was punished for us and has opened for us the doors to heaven.

Forgiven, we now strive by God's grace to be forgiving, to recognize each other as God's children, who are brothers and sisters because our Lord died for them.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. GAL. 3:28

This means that we have a mandate from God that all people are valued by Him and should be valued by us.

God's solution to discord and racial, religious and ethnic strife took place at the cross. It was confirmed on the first Easter by our Lord's resurrection. All people are united under the cross, for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Christ died for each of us. If everyone is important to Him, who are we to act otherwise?

Rev. Reed Stockman
Lakeland Region Pastoral Counselor

Balancing Act amid life's challenges

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Cor. 10:31

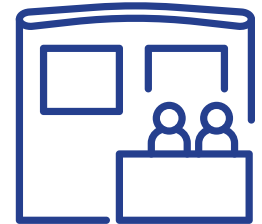
The LWML Minnesota North District Retreat will be held Aug. 11–13 at Lutheran Island Camp. Break-out sessions on various topics will be led by district pastors. Speakers include Deb Vinkemeier, former LWML Minnesota South District president (2018–22) and current LWML Heart 2 Heart Committee member, and Katie Koplin, a writer, Bible study leader and co-host of the podcast "Freely Given."



Worship with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Spend time with your friends and make some new ones. Don't miss this opportunity — it's sure to be lots of fun. More information will be available soon at lwmlmnn.org.

Booth volunteers needed

LWML is looking for volunteers to work at booths in the exhibit hall during the 40th Biennial Convention June 22–25 in Milwaukee. Anyone interested in volunteering will have their choice of available booths during specific periods of time when the exhibit hall is open.



Volunteers will not miss any of the mission speakers, Bible studies or convention events. Once a volunteer has selected their booth(s) and time(s), their name and contact information will be provided to the appropriate committee(s) and instructions will be shared prior to the convention.

People who have helped at past conventions have enjoyed their time meeting convention attendees from across the country and working closely with LWML committee members. If interested in helping at one of the booths, please fill out the volunteer form found online in the March enews.

Thank you for being a part of this LWML experience!t

Scholarships reminder

The deadline for the 2023–24 scholarship application is **May 15**. Scholarships are available to those studying to be full-time church workers. For more information, visit lwmlmnn.org/scholarships.html.

