



/ JANUARY 2024

# DISTRICT NEWS

## MINNESOTA NORTH

### Celebrating new members

On Oct. 8, St. John's Popple Creek, Sauk Rapids, welcomed 29 new members (11 are not pictured). Following the Divine Service, the congregation celebrated with a potluck luncheon in the Fellowship Hall.

Rev. Dr. T.J. Rehwaladt, St. John's pastor, offered, "Praise and glory to God for His grace and mercy!"



### SET APART TO SERVE

LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT

*Set Apart to Serve (SAS)* is an initiative of the LCMS to recruit church workers. Newly developed resources were recently introduced at a virtual event in September. If you weren't able to watch live, you may watch the recording at [lcms.org/sas](https://lcms.org/sas). Scroll to the bottom of the page to view the resources, which are intended for adults to help them encourage youth — and adults — to consider becoming a church worker. The resources will help you talk about church work and guide youth on their journey to a church-work vocation.

You may also learn about the various LCMS church-work vocations and access information directly from the Concordia University System programs that prepare our workers.



# Redeemer, Aurora, life ministry receives grant

Deaconess Maryann Hayter, manager of LCMS Grants Administration, recently announced that Swaddling Clothes of Redeemer, Aurora, has been selected as a recipient of a Million Dollar Life Match grant. The grants have been awarded to support LCMS congregations in providing beginning-of-life care for their local communities.

Swaddling Clothes is in its fifth year of providing much needed items for the care and fostering of infants and toddlers to families in the greater Aurora area. The need for the service continues to grow, evidenced by the numbers of families using Swaddling Clothes, which is open on the second Saturday of each month. In 2022, Swaddling Clothes served 262 families. As of October 2023, over 400 families have received assistance through Swaddling Clothes.

The \$1,200 grant will facilitate the purchase of large items, such as car seats, that are needed by many families. The congregation prays that “God will bless this effort and the families it serves.”

**Applications are now being accepted for grants in 2024.** For more information about the program and to apply, visit [lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant](https://lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant).



## 30 YEARS OF FAITH COMMUNITY

Faith Community, Zimmerman, celebrated 30 years of Word and Sacrament ministry on Oct. 15. The festivities began with a worship service, followed by a sing-along and a catered luncheon. Rev. Jake Gillard, Faith Community pastor, delivered a message based on Rev. 21:5: “He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’”



## ‘The Lord is my shepherd’

The LWML of Trinity, Isle, enjoyed its annual Bible study retreat, held in August. Karen Roeschlein and Sharon Maunula led the group in studying Psalm 23, emphasizing that it is a layered psalm with explanations of how God cares for us in all earthly situations and the special relationship we have with Him from the time of our Baptism, when He makes us His children. Pictured are, from left (front row) Carol Ann Sander, Laura Frostad, Debbie Weeda, Delores Hagen, Linda Brunk; (back row) Nancy Anderson, Jean Read, Sherri Borg, Micki Tangen, Karen Roeschlein, and Rev. Mark and Sharon Maunula.



## Boxes of Christmas joy

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Perham, packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child on Oct. 22. Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse that delivers great joy — especially the Good News of Jesus Christ — to children in need around the world through gift-filled shoeboxes.

The congregation collected items, donated funds and packed the shoeboxes. Each box was filled with toys, school supplies, personal care items, T-shirts and more. St. Paul's packed a record number of boxes this past year — 345 — which was in part in memory of Galen Schultz, a St. Paul's member who entered eternal glory earlier in the

year. Galen was very supportive of the project.

The boxes were also packed with labels in order for the church to track where the boxes are sent each year.

St. Paul's has been packing shoeboxes since 2015. In past years, they were sent to Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Botswana, South Africa, Columbia, Gabon, the Philippines, Ecuador, Haiti, Guatemala and Liberia.



## NOODLE WORK

A Thrivent Action Team of Messiah, Sartell, were busy at work making noodles to sell at the congregation's annual craft sale. The process took two days, after which they were left alone to dry overnight before being packaged.

Counselor's Corner

# 'The Kingdom is at Hand'

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." **MARK 1:14-15**

It's January and the time has come when the Magi along with the creche have been put back in the attic, and the candied hearts of Valentine's Day begin to fill the store aisles. When the time comes for one season to end, another begins and along with it our preparation for that season.

It is amazing how fast we can move on with what comes next. We see this not only with the marketing and glamour of one holiday turning into the next, but also with tragedies. How fast we forget about Ukraine, Uvalde, Maine and Israel. Even in our hometowns, we are quick to forget the news of our neighbor's death, the broken family of our



co-worker, the toll your nephew's use of alcohol is having on your sister, and all the things we do that can't be undone. To be honest, we like moving fast from one thing to the next. It distracts us. It keeps us from not focusing too much on the trials we face.

This is precisely why Jesus' words in Mark 1 are important for us today. He comes to you and I and says, "The time is fulfilled." The plastic baby Jesus may be put away, but what God in the flesh did on Christmas Day is not transient. It does not change, and the power of the words "the Kingdom of God is at hand" still echo into our lives, especially in the present hardships we face.

It is what the widower, the heartbro-

ken co-worker, the defeated family members and our very own souls need to hear. The truth is that our Savior forever changed reality. We are no longer helpless, but He is our very present help in our troubles. These words of Jesus come right before He calls Peter, Andrew, James and John, forever changing their lives and how they relate to the world. These words do the same for us.

Even with the creche packed away, take the message it represents into the lives of those around you. Don't be distracted by the next thing on your calendar. Be present. Be impactful in the lives of those around you who are hurting. Be intentional about the health of your relationships.

But first, to do all that, you must never tuck away the truth that Christ our Savior was born to take away the sins of the world by His dying and rising, and that His love and forgiveness reign in and through our present sorrows. We must all be guided by the words that no matter where you, or your circumstances, the Kingdom of God is at hand.

**Rev. Dr. Patrick Lovejoy**  
Arrowhead Region Pastoral Counselor



On Aug. 22, ladies from the Alexandria Zone, along with friends, met at Alexandria City Park for a potluck meal, *Balancing Life's Challenges Bible Study*, and fellowship. It was a hot and humid evening, but 13 ladies still gathered for a very special evening studying God's Word.



On Oct. 28, Holy Cross, St. Cloud, held its annual Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot. Many participants provided treats or decorated their vehicles and passed out candy. Rhonda O'Hara, a member of the Evening Guild, decorated her vehicle for LWML. Members provided her with bags of candy to distribute to participants. Community members who bring their children for candy were able to talk to Rev. Zach Hoffman and request prayers and receive information about the congregation.