



/ FEBRUARY 2024

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH



Honoring its veterans

During fellowship following the Nov. 19 worship service, the congregation of St. John's—Corliss Township, Perham, honored U.S. Armed Forces veterans and those currently serving. Each veteran was introduced, according to their area of service and military rank. The program also included special guest Dr. Bill

Rose, who spoke about his experience being gravely injured during his tour in Vietnam.

Pictured are, from left (front row) Gilbert Hoehne, David Fiedler, Gerald Wanderi, Norman Brientenfeldt, Dale Huwe, Arlin Wanderi; (back row) Dr. Bill Rose, Elman Becker, Wayne Przepiora, Orville Johnson, Jerome Meyer, Jerry Vroman, Richard Byer, Gary Wanderi, Marvin Swyter, Dennis Huwe and Lawrence Jepson.

'For to us a child is born'

The Active Christian Youth of Zion, Ada, and St. John's, Ada, enacted a living nativity scene in December. Cows, sheep, ducks and chickens were brought by a member family, and the teens enacted the biblical account and participated in caroling. Other community events on the same day helped increase the turnout.



Community gathers for 'Breakfast in Bethlehem'

In a heartening display of community unity, Lord of Glory Lutheran Church, Elk River, hosted its fifth annual Breakfast in Bethlehem. The congregation welcomed over 170 guests, predominantly from the local community.

The Bake Sale and Boutique successfully raised funds for the LWML and a forthcoming mission trip to Camp Penuel in Costa Rica.

The Mens Group's delicious breakfast, along with the creation of 12 tie blankets for donation to Homeless Helping Homeless in St. Cloud, highlighted the congregation's spirit of generosity.

The children engaged in festive crafting, while a new outdoor nativity, featuring a live troupe sporting costumes crafted by the congregation's Sewing Circle, added a visual touch to the event.

"This collaborative effort reflects the true essence of Lord of Glory, providing a warm and festive space for the community to come together during this holiday season," said Debbie Rydberg, who serves on the event committee.



Bringing joy to children

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Parkers Prairie, coordinated the Angel Tree Program in service to the community. Many churches and businesses displayed tags for individuals to take — the tags stated a gift that was needed. More than 700 gifts were donated for local children.



BLESSINGS AT TRINITY, ISLE



Fiala (center) is pictured with congregational president Mike Dangers (left) and Rev. Mark Maunula.

Trinity, Isle, celebrated a Mission Festival Sunday with special guest David Fiala, an LCMS mission advocate. His mission territories include Minnesota and Wisconsin. Fiala served five years as a mission recruiter after spending a decade as a missionary in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary.

Fiala emphasized that more than 200 opportunities are available for mission service, ranging from short-term (from one week) to lifetime. His core message was that we don't need designated titles, but are all missionaries within the congregation, community and the world.



Second graders Jeremy Peterson and Hayden Leach (pictured with Pastor Maunula) received a copy of *The Lutheran Study Bible*. The Bibles, which were personalized on the cover, were presented on behalf of the Sunday school program, LWML and the congregation. Each recipient also received a special message inside the Bible.

NATIONAL24 is July 21-24

The National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference (NATIONAL24) will be held July 21-24 in New Orleans. NATIONAL24 is a standalone youth ministry practitioner conference, but also provides an opportunity to prepare for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering. The four-day conference is a great opportunity for:

- ▶ Adult leaders planning to take a group to New Orleans in 2025 and wanting to familiarize themselves with area hotels, facilities and restaurants.
- ▶ First-time adult leaders desiring to connect with other new and seasoned adult leaders.
- ▶ Adult leaders looking for training and net-

works which support your service as a youth ministry practitioner.

- ▶ Youth (high school) leaders in congregations looking for an opportunity to sharpen their skills and meet other LCMS young leaders through YouthLead training.
- ▶ Young adults (ages 18-25) looking to serve their congregation and the opportunity to serve the community of New Orleans through a young-adult servant event.

Adult participants will receive a complimentary registration to the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Registration for NATIONAL24 will remain open until the event fills or on July 1. Visit lcmsgathering.com/national24 for more information.

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@mnnlcms.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



God's melting pot of the ages

The idea of America being a “melting pot” may go back to the early 1900s. What a wonderful experiment in a national identity.

With God-given rights and freedom, peoples from many nations can come together to live in mutual support,

individual pursuits and peace. But without love this melting pot can only be a boiling cauldron. Without true love man's old nature bubbles to the surface with selfishness and pride, bias and prejudice, strife and bitterness.

But how can this be among those who

know Christ, the One who died for all? The same Savior who loved us has loved the other woman or man, no matter where they are from, or how different their language or culture, or how underdeveloped their faith. How can we hate, or even wish ill upon, any person for whom Jesus has loved and died?

The idea of a melting pot is a good one and is far older than America. The cross of the Son of God is the melting pot of the ages, where smoldering hatreds, ignorant biases and long-lasting enmities are melted in the all-embracing love of Him who first loved us. Paul is very bold to declare that “the love of Christ controls us” (2 COR. 5:14), and John writes to keep our old nature pushed down:

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 JOHN 4:11

In reliving our season of Lent, we are being renewed in the life-changing effects of Christ and Him crucified. Since our peace has come to us in our Savior's wounds, so we are learning to live at peace with all our sisters and brothers, aren't we? Yes, we are!

Rev. Matthew Vrudny
Park Region Pastoral Counselor



The St. John's LWML, Ada, ushered in the Advent season with an Advent by Candlelight dinner on Dec. 3. The ladies decorated the tables and prepared the meal, and invited the congregation and guests from two nearby LCMS congregations as well as other community members. A total of 46 enjoyed a dinner of chicken kiev with rice and green beans, and cheesecake for dessert. A program was presented with a devotion and singing, and the volunteers of the congregation were acknowledged. The event was funded by the LWML and a Thrivent grant.

LWML Minnesota North District 31rd Biennial Convention

“Walking as Children of Light” (Eph. 5:8)
June 3–5 • Cragun's Resort, Brainerd

Registration will open late March or early April, and all registrations will be online through Cragun's Resort. For more information visit lwmlmn.org/districtconven.html. The keynote speaker will be Katie Schuermann, author of several books, including the *Anthems of Zion* series.