



/ FEBRUARY 2017

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA NORTH

'Making all things new'

Historic church is refurbished

Mount Olive Evangelical English Lutheran Church has a rich history. The church building was originally an Episcopalian cathedral built in 1908. Mount Olive purchased the church in the 1950s and have taken great care to treat it with love.

This brownstone church seats nearly 200 people and is full of character. The congregation received a mortgage loan from Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) about 22 years ago and then embarked on a project to "re-verse" the sanctuary, according to the Rev. Robert Franck, Mount Olive pastor.

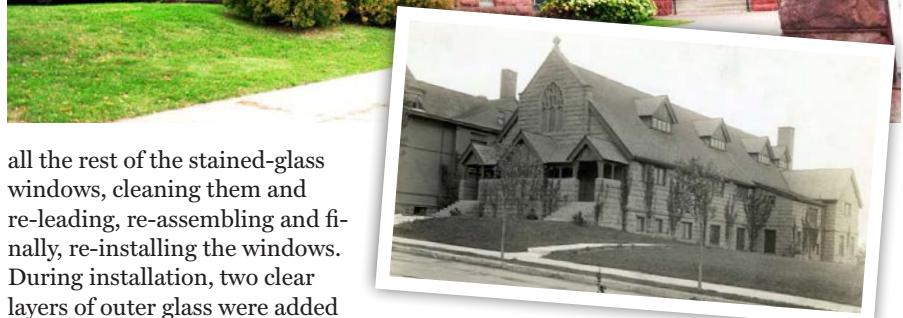
"The congregation needed a larger narthex," Franck said. "It wasn't possible to add on to the original front of the church facing the street."

The solution was quite ingenious. By reversing the sanctuary, the congregation was able to add new front doors, which opened to a large narthex. Offices and classrooms were also added.

After paying off the loan early, several other projects needed attention. In addition to generous gifts from current members, an LCEF loan helped fund repairs that included a new furnace, a new stained-glass window in the chancel and, most ambitiously, removing



Mount Olive Lutheran Church today, and in 1920 (below).



all the rest of the stained-glass windows, cleaning them and re-leading, re-assembling and finally, re-installing the windows. During installation, two clear layers of outer glass were added for protection and energy efficiency, especially for the winter months.

"They look like new," said Julie Jones Mount Olive secretary.

The side windows — some of which are more than 100 years old — also had screens installed so they could be opened to provide better air circulation during the heat of the summer. To this day, the building does not have air-conditioning, and so prior to the most recent project, the summer services could be uncomfortably warm.

The original stained-glass windows

feature several apostles. When the congregation realized that it would need an entirely new window for the "new" front of the sanctuary, it chose the image of Jesus. The new window is a beautiful complement to the older stained-glass images along the sides.

The new and old aspects of this church building appear to be in great harmony. According to Franck, the congregation was even recognized by the Duluth Preservation Alliance for maintaining the architectural integrity of the structure amidst such a large renovation.

DISTRICT NEWS

CONFIRMATION RALLY

Law and Gospel; strikes and spares

Brainerd Circuit congregations met together on Sunday, Nov. 27, for the second of five planned confirmation rallies.

Pastors, parents and youth from six area congregations — St. John's, Wright; Our Savior, McGregor; Gloria Dei, Pequot Lakes; St. John's, Motley; Emmanuel, Backus; and Zion, Brainerd — gathered at Zion Lutheran Church for games and pizza.

While the kids enjoyed their pizza, the Rev. Stephen Rutherford, Emmanuel, Backus, pastor, taught a lesson on the Ten Commandments. The lesson focused on what sin is, what God requires of us in the Law and how His Law always ends up showing us how great our sin is against God and our neighbor — so that we recognize our need for God's mercy.

Since the kids, like all people, had no hope of knocking down God's 10 commands perfectly, everyone packed up and headed down the block to Jack's House Bowl to knock down 10 of something else instead: bowling pins!



The parents and kids all enjoyed the opportunity to have fun with their friends from church and to make new friends from other churches. And, of course, some groups of youth enjoyed trying

to see if their congregation produced better bowlers than others. Everyone is looking forward to the ice skating and focus on the Lord's Prayer that is planned for the next rally.



Supplying gifts for warmer hands — and heads

One thing we all know too well in the Minnesota North District: Winters are cold up here!

Because the weather gets very frightful, every year the Ladies Aid group of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Backus, holds an ingathering of mittens, hats and scarves to donate to the Pine River—Backus food shelf for distribution to families in need.

But the ladies put an extra Christmas twist on this clothing drive. Shortly after Thanksgiving, the ladies put up a Christmas tree (pictured) in the fellowship hall, where it remained until shortly before Christmas. The tree became more and more heavily decorated between Thanksgiving and Christmas as people brought their clothing donations and hung them on the tree.

This year, the ladies gathered three large bags of clothing for charity.

Send us your news

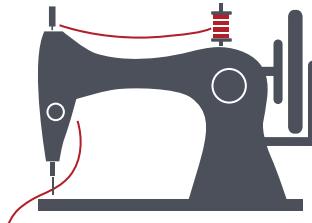
If you have any announcements, or if you would like to report on special events or human interest stories from your congregation or organization, please send submissions to the.lutheran.witness@mnnlcms.org.

You may also mail your articles to:
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 12
603 State 371 NW
Backus, MN 56435
attn.: Rev. Stephen Rutherford

Convention-al banner

A favorite staple of going to conventions is receiving the cloth bags that are decorated with the convention's theme and used to hold all the advertisements and free promotional goodies from the organizations renting booths. And as anyone who has attended a convention knows, those bags are useful for many different purposes long after convention is over, including serving as grocery bags and extra storage containers.

But sometimes it is good to think outside the bag. Several ladies from St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Henning, looked at the stacks of bags they had collected over the years and saw a very different possibility:



A banner waiting to happen.

So JoAnn Reineke and Doreen Salvog gathered some of the convention bags they had collected to see what could be done. Marlene Stueve set her needle to work and created this wonderful banner displaying many important themes of our life and mission in Christ.

The banner was finished in time for the Wadena Zone LWML Fall Rally and is now gracing the fellowship hall at St. Paul's.

It goes to show that a creative set of eyes gifted by God with talented hands can make some beautiful and significant work out of otherwise "conventional" things.



Our Christian faith in the public square



The Lutheran Women's Missionary League Kettle River Zone Fall Workshop was held at St. John's Lutheran Church, Kroschel.

Four pastors were among the 54 attendees. Pictured with the zone banner from last June's Minnesota North District LWML Convention are, from left, Susan Ziege, Arrowhead I region vice-president; Carol Ann Sander, member, Trinity, Isle, and zone

president; Sharon Nelson, St. John's, Kroschel, LWML president; and the Rev. George Morris, pastor, St. John's. Morris led the Bible study, "Christian Citizenship: Faith in the Ballot Box."

The workshop was helpful for all who attended as resources to help think through the implications of our Christian faith in the exercise of responsible citizenship were made available.

Former president has new role



JoNette Brogaard, former LWML Minnesota North District president, has consented to serve as the archivist-historian for our district.

We welcome her and thank her for her dedicated service to the LWML. You can contact her at historian@lwmlmnn.org.

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COUNSELOR'S CORNER

God's amazing love

"What great love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are." (1 John 3:1a)

This verse was our convention theme this past June and speaks of God's love that is bestowed on us and the reason He makes us His children. It is also a needed verse in February, when many people celebrate love, but not a love as great and glorious as the love of God our Father.

For the worldly love looks for that which pleases self, that is, we love those who can offer to us what we enjoy: A good sense of humor, great cooking ability, wonderful conversation, etc. God's love gives to us what pleases Him, that is, He works through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ to make us holy, giving us Christ's righteousness, working in us the ability to love as He loves us.

What amazing love — to love the unlovable and through that love, to transform us into the likeness of Christ Jesus! For that is also what God's love does for us. He does not leave us in our self-centered condition, but His love recreates us to be selfless rather than selfish, to be holy and not sin-centered. His love creates in us the desire to thank and praise Him. His love works in us a caring love for all people.

What great love! God the Father loves us so much that He calls and re-creates us to be His children. He does this through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, His dear Son. We are the children of God!

Rev. Anthony Cloose
Park Region Pastoral Counselor

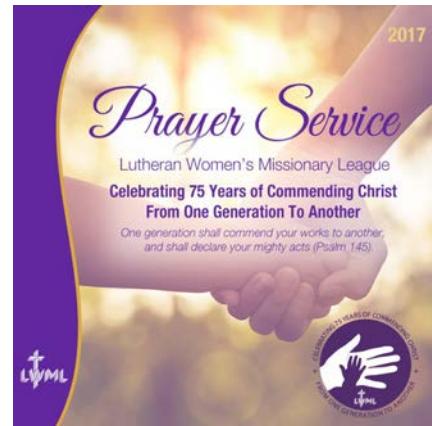
2017 LWML Prayer Service

"We are gathered here today as women and men of the church who are in our generation to be witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of us lament 'the generation gap' that seems to be growing with the acceleration of changes in our culture.

"There are times when we long for the 'good-old days.' Our worship for today is to remind us that God continues to work in our days. That He is the God of all generations!"

(By the Rev. Dr. Steve Turner, Prayer Service author and president, LCMS Iowa District West.)

Downloads for the 2017 LWML Prayer



Service and cover artwork are available at lwml.org/prayer-service. If you are unable to download the service, please contact the LWML office at lwml@lwml.org or 1-800-252-5965 to obtain a paper copy.



Cookies galore!

The ladies of Trinity Lutheran Church, Appleton, held their annual cookie and bake sale on Saturday, Dec. 10. Those who stopped by to shop were able to choose from a variety of cookies for the Christmas season. Many congregational members and people from the community came to enjoy fellowship, and sample and purchase cookies.



Special thanks



We thank the Rev. Anthony Cloose for serving on the LWML Minnesota North District Board of Directors for these past four years.

Cloose served as the Park Region pastoral counselor (2012-16).