



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

Through my window

'FOOLS' FOR CHRIST

The last time it happened was in 1945. This year it happens again — Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day fall on the same day.



Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy
District President

On Feb. 14, many of us will not only open a Valentine’s card, but also receive ashes on our forehead. If that’s not a strange enough convergence, consider that in 2018, Easter will share April 1 with April Fools Day.

For most Christians it is a double intrusion. It’s hard enough these days to get the faithful to focus on the church’s cadence of time with the day of resurrection at its summit. Now the first day of Lent will compete with chocolates, flowers and sweetheart dinners, and Easter will contend with practical jokes and hoaxes.

Certainly Valentine’s Day has its Christian overtones. Traditionally the holiday observes the martyrdom of a saint about whom we know little. Many

beautiful legends swirl about St. Valentine, not the least of which is his healing of a young blind girl and his sending her a message signed, “Your Valentine.”

It’s not too long of a leap, therefore, to suggest that being marked with a cross of ashes reminds us that, like St. Valentine, to bear the cross of Christ is to risk persecution and even death. One who experienced the connection between ashes and martyrdom on April 1, 1945, was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He was martyred eight days later. He said it well in *The Cost of Discipleship*:

“The cross is laid on every Christian. ... When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”

Ashes certainly symbolize Baptism, death, rebirth and repentance. They also mark us as those who bear the cross of Christ even unto death.

But April Fools Day on Easter Sunday? We can probably thank Pope Gregory XIII for April Fools. In 1582, he decreed the adoption of the “Gregorian calendar” — named after himself — which moved New Year celebrations from April 1 to Jan. 1. Those who didn’t get the message and continued to celebrate on April 1 were ridiculed and, because they were seen as foolish, they were called “April Fools.” By the 18th



LCMS/Erin M. Lunsford

century, especially in England, the day was given over to pranks and put-ons.

Even here, though, just as Christians are marked from Baptism with the “ashes” of dying and living with Christ, we are also still seen as fools. The apostle Paul described our faith in the crucified and risen Christ as “foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:27).

We look and sound like fools to those who do not understand and share our faith. That has always been a problem for us, resulting in the martyrdom of cross-bearers like Paul of Tarsus, Valentine and Bonhoeffer.

Given that history, I suspect we followers of Christ will be sure that Ash Wednesday and Easter dominate their respective days. In our conversations, though, it will not hurt to welcome this year’s intruders, finding love and cross-bearing in our ashes and joy in being fools for Christ.

Kaleidoscope Fund announces \$52,000 grant for MNS District

A \$52,000 grant for the Minnesota South (MNS) District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) was awarded by the Kaleidoscope Fund, a granting program established by Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF).

Having identified a need for emergent leadership training and continued education, the district plans to offer need-based scholarships with the grant funds. These scholarships will allow church leaders to attend intensive leadership training programs to help equip them to better serve God.

The Rev. Bob Schulze, Minnesota South District executive assistant to the president, received a check from Kai Larson, LCEF district vice-president, during the district Board of Directors meeting on Dec. 5 at the district office in Burnsville.

“It is a pleasure to present this check to the Minnesota South District,” said Larson. “These funds will be put to great use to further God’s Kingdom.”



Schulze, left, receives the check from Larson of LCEF.

In November, the Kaleidoscope Fund announced its 2017 grant recipients. The fund awarded a total of \$601,000 to 11 LCMS ministries throughout the United States.

Visit lcef.org/kaleidoscope to learn more about the Kaleidoscope Fund and see additional recipients.

Supporting Christian education

The To All Generations (TAG) appeal was started to enhance the quality of Christian education in our schools and congregations.

The following are responses from leaders whose organizations have received TAG grants.

“We launched our new childcare ministry — Kingdom Kids Learning Center — at Family of Christ in Ham Lake in Oct. 2017. We know the Holy Spirit will richly bless the spiritual, intellectual and social growth of countless children via this Christ-centered ministry throughout the future.

“We are extremely grateful to be recipients of the To All Generations grant to help us effectively market and promote this new early childhood center. We look forward to many children and families being connected to Christ and His church through this new venture. Thanks for your partnership!”

Rev. Keith Grimm,
Family of Christ, Ham Lake



“Our prayer is that our relationships to our sister schools and congregations will be strengthened through this collaborative effort. We pray that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be shared boldly and that our schools and congregations will be allowed to share Jesus with more souls.”

Rocky Sandcork, Hope Lutheran High School, Winona

“We are excited to collaborate with LCMS churches and schools in the North West Metro to explore the

possibility of starting a Lutheran high school.

“The goal of this new Lutheran high school would be to provide an excellent Christ-centered education within a nurturing and innovative environment that would enable all learners to develop their full potential supported by a strong, caring community where people are valued and respected.”

Kelly Lamkin, Shepherd of the Grove, Maple Grove





Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

From left, Kelsey, Sam, Emmylou and Eli Fink enjoy a picnic on the Concordia Seminary grounds.

Dear ladies of the LWML Minnesota South District,

Thank you for your gift to help fund the Food Bank at Concordia Seminary (St. Louis). Our family has been living at the seminary for over a year and a half now. I can honestly say that one of the most unexpected blessings in our time here has been the Food Bank.

One week I had stumbled upon a recipe I wanted to make, but figured the meat it called for would be quite pricey. I went to the Food Bank to shop, and it

just so happened that meat was in the freezer. In our time here, our family has collected countless stories like this. Stories of provision and the unique and intimate care of our God.

But the story I really want to tell is this: Shortly after moving to the seminary, my husband and I were in the grocery store with our children. We were walking down the cereal aisle and our daughter asked if we could buy the bee cereal (Honey Nut Cheerios). We told

her we couldn't buy the bee cereal. She started to cry. She asked why. We told her we didn't need it because we had other cereal at home. The reality is that the bee cereal is expensive, and seminary budgets rarely allow for such things. We didn't tell her that.

As we left the aisle, I thought about the sacrifices our 3-year-old daughter is making for her parents to follow God's call. I thought about how hard it must be to not understand exactly what is going on. I went to the Food Bank later that week and rounded the corner of the final aisle — the baking and cereal aisle. I was near the end, and there sat one lone box of Honey Nut Cheerios. Tears welled in my eyes. I couldn't wait to get home.

I walked in the door and pulled the box of bee cereal out of my shopping bag. As my daughter hugged the cereal and jumped up and down, she shouted, "you remembered, Mom. Thank you. Thank you for remembering the bee cereal." I said, "Oh, honey, we need to thank Jesus for that bee cereal." And thank Him we did.

Your gift of money, your care, your encouragement, your prayers mean more to seminarians and their families than you could ever imagine.

**With gratitude and in Christ,
The Fink family
Sam, Kelsey, Emmylou and Eli**

Ladies serve Bethesda residents

In 2017, one of the mission servant activities of Trinity Guild at South Shore Trinity Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, was making clothing protectors for the residents of Bethesda, a Christian organization that provides homes and services for people with developmental disabilities.

Members of the Guild and other ladies of South Shore Trinity enjoyed making a total of 114 clothing protectors.



Make plans to attend CONVENTION

The 27th Biennial LWML Minnesota South District Convention will be held June 29-30 at the Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato.

The theme is "Grace Above All," based on 1 Cor. 15:10:

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain."

For more information and convention updates, visit mnslwml.org/events/convention/2018.

Acting out our faith

By Rev. Dr. William Utech
Assistant to the President: Missions

Because I am blessed to serve as our district's Mission executive, I get to spend a lot of Sundays every month traveling around (usually with my wife, Lori) and visiting the new ministries and church plants that are up and running in Minnesota South. As a result, I get to see and hear and experience some pretty awesome things! The picture here is an example of that.

We are known as a teaching church, and rightly so. We understand and value the place that right teaching plays in the life of our congregations. But it was while I was serving at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (a place where right teaching is held in high esteem), that my seminary colleagues and I came to realize and accept that as valuable and important as teaching is, learning is even more important and more valuable.

We learned that as critical as it is to pay attention to and keep track of what is being taught, it's even more critical to pay attention and keep track of what is being learned. Because while teaching has the potential to change hearts and lives, learning has even more!

So, for example, we can, should and do teach about the miracle of Christmas



Children at Woodbury Lutheran Church's Liberty Ridge campus act out the Christmas story.

— the miracle of the incarnation — the miracle of the Word made flesh coming down from heaven for us and for our salvation. We should always teach that.

But what can we do to ensure that people hear it, see it and learn it? Again, the picture above provides a clue. The children you see there are participating in the life of the Christmas story and are learning that story in ways that will stick with them and their parents (and everyone else in the room, for that matter) for a long, long time. We watch those kids act out a very familiar story and they help us to hear it new, see it fresh, and receive it once again with joy — as a Gift to us from heaven above.

Likewise, there are ways and opportuni-

ties for all of us to be involved in telling, sharing and showing the Good News about Jesus. Every day, God puts people in our path for this very purpose. The more our words and deeds demonstrate and “act out” His love for all people, the more people there will be who actually learn of Him, hear Him and receive Him.

So this new year, please look for ways to “act out” your faith. In so doing, you will show people that you have a Lord and Savior who first loved you, and you will give them reason to learn more about Him.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Dec. 31, 2017

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Actual receipts | \$287,454 |
| Budget receipts | \$207,174 |
| Over (under) amount | \$80,280 |

Year-to-date receipts

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|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Actual receipts | \$2,254,090 |
| Budget receipts | \$2,486,000 |
| Over (under) anticipated amount | (\$231,910) |

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

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|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 50% remitted to Synod (YTD) | \$848,770 |
| 100% remitted to Synod (YTD) | \$78,534 |
| 50% for district operations (YTD) | \$848,770 |
| 100% for district operations (YTD) | \$478,016 |
| Total receipts | \$2,254,090 |

Mission receipts—2017 vs. 2016

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|--|-------------|
| Mission receipts — YTD 2017 | \$2,254,090 |
| Mission receipts — YTD 2016 | \$2,367,927 |
| Over (under) last year | (\$113,837) |
| 2017 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,486,000 | |

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

November 2017

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|-------------------------|-------------|
| New investments | \$1,449,810 |
| Withdrawals | \$1,939,167 |
| Net increase (decrease) | (\$489,357) |

Year-to-date July 1, 2017–Nov. 30, 2017

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| New investments | \$5,817,534 |
| Withdrawals | \$8,030,863 |
| Net increase (decrease) | (\$2,213,329) |



DISTRICT OFFICE

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