



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

Q&A

with

REV. DR. LUCAS WOODFORD

After serving as pastor of Zion, Mayer, since 2007 and as district second vice-president since 2015, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford begins his first term as district president on Sept. 1. He shared his thoughts about his new position and the district with Billy Schultz, communications director of the Minnesota South District.

Tell me about your family and what you enjoy in your free time.

I have been married to my bride, Rebecca (“Becca”) for 20 years. We have six precious children: Isabella, 14, Thaddaeus, 11, Aletheia, 9, Ekkklacia, 6, Soteria, 3, and Titus, 10 months. With an active young family, I enjoy spending my time fulfilling my vocation as a husband and father with the simple things of life, teaching and reading to



my children, playing games as a family, being in the outdoors together, perhaps getting in the deer stand (bow hunting) when I have a chance, watching a movie with my bride, exercising and reading all things theological, political and organizational.

When and how did you experience a call into the ministry?

My background isn’t all that different than any kid growing up today I suppose. But when I was in eighth grade, my pastor’s wife (also my Sunday school teacher for a time) saw something in me and told me I should think about being a pastor. My parents were also supportive of the idea, though they never pressured me.

So that’s what I set out to do. From then on, I thought as long as I could still play football in high school and college (which I did), and the Lord continued

to make it possible, I would prepare to become a pastor. That goal was fulfilled when I received my first call into the ministry from First Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in Cedarburg, Wis., in 2003.

What are some of the highlights of your ministry to this point?

Relationships with people are always the highlights for me. My consistent approach to ministry is to love the Lord, love people and love our Lutheran theology — in that order. With that in mind, over the years I’ve had some very rewarding relationships with those whom I’ve had the privilege of loving and caring for in the name of Jesus.

In my experience, that approach covers the gamut of both evangelism and pastoral care. I’ve had relationships with life-long faithful believers, all kinds of school-age children whom I taught and new believers I catechized in the faith. Frequently there were people in the community I desired to come to faith but remained unwilling. Yet because I loved them in the name of Jesus, they still allowed me to talk with them about Jesus and what it means to be a Christian from our Lutheran perspective.

Other highlights include the wonderful collegial and meaningful relationships with other pastors and church workers as we partner in the Gospel, a mission trip to multiple countries in Africa and support for missionaries over there, and simply witnessing the tears of joy that came to the eyes of either a new believer

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or lifelong believer who just had the sweetness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ wash over them in the thick of life.

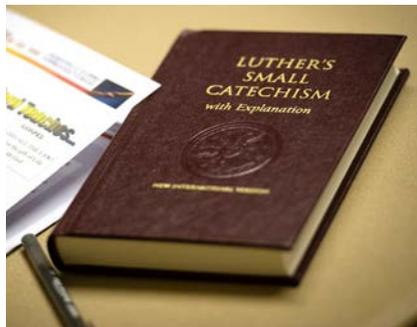
What excites you about serving as district president? What challenges do you see?

I consider it a great honor and privilege to serve the Lord and our Minnesota South District. There are tremendous opportunities for us to go about loving the Lord, loving people and loving our Lutheran theology here in our district.

The Minnesota South District is providentially poised for mission opportunity. We are strategically situated among a vast diversity of people and cultures: rural and inner city, suburban and small town, multi-ethnic and intergenerational. All these diverse settings are full of sinners who need to hear the Word of Law and Gospel. With our confession of Scriptural truth, we are uniquely positioned to bring a tremendous Word of hope and truth to both believers and unbelievers living a chaotic and secular world.

The profound strengths of our robust theology, our confession centered in Christ crucified and our zeal to share that with others make me excited to be a Lutheran; they make me utterly excited to lead and work together with all the wonderful congregations, schools and church workers of our district for the growth of God's kingdom.

Yet I realize we also face some challenges in our times. Population in rural areas is dwindling. We face the reality of churches that are closing and Lutheran



schools that are shrinking. We face the reality that we live in a world increasingly hostile to the Gospel. Of course, the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh attack us, mislead us and deceive us so that we point fingers at each other and blame one another for these challenges as if we are enemies rather than brothers and sisters in Christ.

Yet amid all these challenges I remain confident in the truth of Scripture: For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). Christ remains victor; the devil is a defeated enemy. Jesus has promised His saving presence, and He will build His church despite the formidable obstacles. As such, I remain excited and confident that even though we may have differences among us, we can work together as brothers and sisters in Christ for the good of God's Kingdom, united by our Lord Jesus Christ, who promises that even "the gates of Hell will not prevail" against His Church! (Matt. 16:18).

Therefore, it's my goal to face all these challenges head on with an intentional plan of principled realism, confident that Christ will always remain the Lord of the Church.

What do you see as the role of the district president and staff in relation to her congregations?

I believe my role as district president is first to give thanks to the Lord for our people and their lives of faith and regularly to intercede for them. Secondly, I also see the role of district president and his staff as people who regularly and intentionally thank the Lord for the faith of all of our church workers, as well as to thank them personally for their work and partnership in the Gospel and actively encourage them.

I want to be a pastoral president who teaches and encourages pastors, teachers and other workers with the Word of God at every opportunity. As the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians says:

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

— PHIL. 1:3-6

The current mission statement of the district is "Cultivating Leaders Intentionally Engaged in the Mission of God." Recognizing this mission statement, and aside from the other



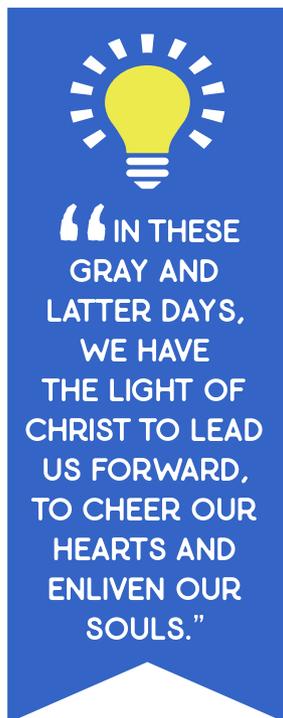
“TEN YEARS FROM NOW I SEE OUR GRACIOUS LORD CONTINUING THE WORK HE HAS ALWAYS DONE IN HIS BELOVED CHURCH. I SEE INFANTS AND ADULTS BEING BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT...”

ecclesiastical supervision responsibilities of the district president, the district relates to her congregations by cultivating ministry leaders and partners through intentional training, education and encouragement, as well as ministry collaboration and networking for our partnership in the Gospel and the furthering of God's Kingdom.

Whether a struggling congregation, a flourishing congregation, a church plant, small or large, district leaders and staff pledge to come alongside our congregations, love them, serve them and assist in cultivating leaders within them for the good of Christ's kingdom.

What do you see the mission and ministry of the Minnesota South District looking like 10 years from now?

Ten years from now I see our gracious Lord continuing the work He has always done in His beloved church. I see infants and adults being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I see new catechumens from many ethnicities and languages, young and old, gathered at the altar together with life-long members to receive the holy body and precious



blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith.

Ten years from now I see our Minnesota South District leading the way in Synod as an exemplary champion of the two great strengths of our confession: faithful, uncompromising teaching of the biblical faith coupled with vibrant outreach with Christ's saving Gospel.

I see us equipping moms and dads and grandmas and grandpas to teach their little ones to embrace and actively confess the faith once delivered to the saints despite the world's opposition. I see us continuing our support for missionaries and church plants. I see our churches as houses of prayer and mercy for the suffering and hurting people all around us. And I certainly hear us proclaiming in our churches and speaking in our daily vocations the mind-boggling goodness of the shed blood of Jesus to a world in cultural and moral revolution.

I see the mission and ministry of the Minnesota South District confidently standing on the unchanging truth that Christ has died, Christ has risen and Christ will come again!

REAL.PRESENT.GOD.
2019 LCMS Youth Gathering

Local Volunteer Open Houses

Saturday, September 30
Trinity, Waconia
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 30
Concordia University, St. Paul
2:00-4:00 p.m.

Learn more and apply at
lcmsgathering.com/gathering-volunteers/

CONGREGATION MISSION RECEIPTS

For the period ending July 31, 2018

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Actual receipts | \$183,409 |
| Budget receipts | \$200,000 |
| Over (under) amount | \$(16,591) |

Year-to-date receipts

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Actual receipts | \$1,209,971 |
| Budget receipts | \$1,400,000 |
| Over (under) anticipated amount | \$(190,029) |

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

| | |
|--|-------------|
| 50% remitted to Synod (YTD) | \$455,691 |
| 100% remitted to Synod (YTD) | \$48,135 |
| 50% for district operations (YTD) | \$455,691 |
| 100% for district operations (YTD) | \$250,454 |
| Total receipts | \$1,209,971 |

Mission receipts—2018 vs. 2017

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Mission receipts — YTD 2018 | \$1,209,971 |
| Mission receipts — YTD 2017 | \$1,279,128 |
| Over (under) last year | \$(69,157) |

2018 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,400,000

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF June 2018

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| New investments | \$1,797,441 |
| Withdrawals | \$1,737,470 |
| Net increase (decrease) | \$59,971 |

Year-to-date July 1, 2017–June 30, 2018

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| New investments | \$18,556,567 |
| Withdrawals | \$18,618,049 |
| Net increase (decrease) | \$(61,482) |

Send submissions for the district supplement to:

Billy Schultz
 > billy.schultz@mnsdistrict.org
 > 14301 Grand Ave.
 South Burnsville, MN 55306-5707

Photos sent by email should be in high resolution, at least 300 dpi.

DISTRICT OFFICE
 > 14301 Grand Ave.
 South Burnsville, MN 55306
 > 952-435-2550
 > mnsdistrict.org

Supporting our **MISSIONARIES**

As women of the LWML Minnesota South District, we have “adopted” **Hannah Shull** as one of our missionaries working on our behalf in the Lord’s field. Hannah, through our funds provided to Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa, is serving the Lord as a missionary to Taiwan. She teaches English at Concordia Middle School in ChiaYi. She also helps coordinate evening Bible studies and after-school activities.

Through these experiences, she builds relationships with her students, their families and the local community to share the Gospel with them in Word and deed.

Hannah’s hometown is Evansville, Ind., where her home congregation, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, is located. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis. Hannah has been involved in the Milwaukee community, having helped with inner-city community education and is a pro-life advocate. Her hobbies



include baking, hiking, crafting, singing hymns and exploring new places.

Pray for Hannah as she serves in Taiwan. Ask God to fill her with His incomprehensible peace as she transitions to living abroad and as she learns and understands the culture more fully. Pray that she and the other teachers continue to have zeal and perseverance as they guide and teach their students. Ask God to prepare the minds and hearts of the children at Concordia Middle School, that they are open to hearing the Gospel and then come to faith in Jesus Christ. Let us give thanks to God that Hannah is serving His children in this part of the world.

Good news!

The final mission grant, “Tuition Assistance for Students Seeking a Lutheran High School Education,” **has been paid in full**, as well as the remaining amount due to national LWML.

The mites received in May and June and during our district convention helped us reach and fulfill our 2016-18 goal of \$265,000.

We will now begin to work toward our 2018-20 mission goal of \$265,000 and supporting our 13 mission grants that were selected at the convention.

Remember it’s not just your society that can give to mites. Anyone can give to mites and be a part of our great mission of spreading the Gospel. Continue to pray for our mission grants and share this mission within your congregation.

“But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also” (2 Cor. 8:7).

Action for mites: women think ‘outside the church’

The women of Emanuel, Hamburg, picked up an opportunity to do some fundraising for mites at Coborn’s grocery store in Glencoe. The ladies volunteered to sell brats one day over the Memorial Day weekend and one day in July. Two teams of ladies volunteer for the day, which begins at 10 a.m. and runs until 6 p.m., with each team working a four-hour shift. Information regarding the brat sale reads: “Buy a Brat & Pop at Glencoe Coborn’s today and support Money for Missions.” Emanuel LWML is thinking “outside of the church” for ways to raise money and tell people that “Jesus died so you can live eternally!”

