



# DISTRICT NEWS

## MINNESOTA SOUTH

TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

# The *folly* of measuring distances

Falling short is often difficult to deal with. We don't like falling short, be that in sports, at work, in our homes or in our own personal lives, not to mention our own moral and spiritual lives. In fact, deep down we know that we fall short. But in order to compensate for our shortcomings, we've collectively (as a society) developed our metrics and created a measurable approach to life that gives the illusion that we aren't doing too badly.



**Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford**  
District President

We count our steps. We measure our weight. We count our dollars. We calculate our good works. Yes, we are a society infatuated with measurements.

True, perhaps we are willing to recognize that we've all fallen short of the glory of God, but that hasn't stopped us from measuring distances. ("I'm not as bad as he is!") We're constantly comparing ourselves to others, seeing who has fallen shorter. We're sizing up the competition. Who is closer to God, better behaved, more pious, holy or devout? Rather than using God's Law to diagnose our own sinful condition, we use it as a tool of measurement to see how we compare to others.

Our society remains obsessed with measurements and keeping score. Everywhere we look, life has been turned into a competition and into a game that is all about "winning!" (Remember Charlie Sheen?) Our lives are quantified. How do we measure up? How do we compare? Are we doing enough? What have we accomplished?

This is how we are often pressured to live, sizing up our lives and comparing them to everyone else. And it can wreak spiritual havoc on our lives. It can create the misbelief that we have to turn to ourselves and our ability to please God so that we live life climbing

a ladder of personally produced sanctification, rather than resting in Christ's accomplishments achieved for us and then sacramentally and personally given to us.

The Apostle Paul's words to the Romans give us some startling clarity about our ability to measure up:

"[T]here is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" — **ROM. 3:22-23**

The sad reality is that we always lose when we keep score. We always lose when we try to measure distances.

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## Deressa ordained, installed

Rev. Dr. Samuel Deressa was ordained and installed on Nov. 18 as a professor at Concordia University, St. Paul, during a service that was a beautiful blend of American and Ethiopian cultures for the glory of God. Dr. Deressa, who speaks four languages, also serves four churches regularly, leads LINC's Bible Institute and is the president of Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society (OELMS). The Minnesota South District is blessed by his dedication to Christ and His people. **Top:** Brothers participating in the service were, from left (front row) Revs. Yared Halche, Francis Stephanos, Dr. Deressa, Daniel Bodin, David Maki, Dr. Bob Holst; (back row) Alan Braun, Dr. Tom Ries, Dr. Dinku Bato, Bob Schulze, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Benjamin Griffin and Demelash Yoseph. **Right:** Woodford, district president, ordains and installs Deressa.



## TALKING POINTS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We lose our humility. We lose our humanity. We lose our hope. Sin weighs heavy. Try as we might, our score reads zero. Life has been lost.

But the Good News is there is One who destroys all modes of measure and fulfills all demands to deliver, as Paul reminds us: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-24). The Gospel, you see, is a gift that is beyond all measure. It's not quantifiable. We can't calculate its value or determine its worth in human terms. It goes beyond our ability to measure and our knowledge of arithmetic. The Gospel is a gift that is never earned, bought or won by our efforts. It's purely, beautifully, all a gift. We simply receive it by faith as the gift of grace that it is.

In fact, the love that Jesus has for us cannot be measured. Not because it



“ Our worth is not determined by what we have done or what we will accomplish, but by what Jesus has accomplished for us by His cross, suffering, death, and resurrection.”

doesn't have a measurable value, but because the power and vastness of His love would break every instrument and tool that tried to measure it. His love for us is beyond all measure! He forgives us more sins than we've got. Jesus wipes the scorecard clean and

puts His perfect score in our place.

We are freed from the pressure of having to do more and try harder. Our worth is not determined by what we have done or what we will accomplish, but by what Jesus has accomplished for us by His cross, suffering, death and resurrection. We don't even need to compare our lives to His life because Jesus gives us His life! By faith, Christ Jesus Himself goes to work in us, producing the desire and joy to serve others and do good works without worrying about how we are measuring up.

Rather, by daily exercising our faith, receiving Jesus over and over again (prayer, contrition, repentance, meditation on the Word), He is at work in us by the power of His Holy Spirit to live a sanctified, confident and robust life of faith. With Jesus no measurement is needed. We are His and He is ours. That is the Good News and it is for you!

**In Christ's love,  
Pastor Lucas**

# McLeod Zone holds Fall Rally

Members of the McLeod Zone gathered Oct. 20 at Good Shepherd, Glencoe, for their fall rally. Speaker Amelia Nowak, along with guests Rev. Robert and Bonnie Nowak, reflected on her visit to Haiti. She was overjoyed by the love and acceptance of the orphan children while she helped build a new church and distributed food.

The rally's Gifts from the Heart offering gathered \$1,292 for the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society. Within the past year, the Good Shepherd congregation also sent school furniture and supplies to the Haitian mission school. Deb Vinkemeier, LWML Minnesota South District president, and Linda Butzin, district parliamentarian, also attended the rally.

In top photo, from left, Pam Hunter (VP of Human Care), Bonnie Nowak and Amelia Nowak with rice sacks purchased by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church LWML Ladies Guild; bottom photo, Amelia is involved in projects with children and talking about Jesus; middle photos, happy children appreciate hearing about God's love and the food they received.



The women of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Excelsior, found a fun way to help remember the new 13 district grants for 2018-20 along with the 22 national mission grants for 2017-19. They play "Mission Bingo."

Here's how: Each woman brings her coins to a LWML gathering, but instead of playing cards reading "B-I-N-G-O" across the top of the card, it reads "M-I-T-E-S." Then, of the 25 squares below, the middle square is marked "FREE IN HIM!"

The remaining 24 squares are left blank for each participant to put a district or national grant number in each square. For instance, one square might be D-1 (District Grant #1) and another square N-1 (National Grant #1) and so on. Each participant chooses whatever grant number they want to put on their card. The caller then places 13 small separate sheets of paper listing one of the district grants on in a bowl. The same is done with the 22 national grants placed in a separate bowl.

As grants are drawn and called — alternating between national and district grants — coins are used to cover the appropriate space. The winners could receive a small candy bar and a mustard seed or a LWML Store item. Of course, all the coins used as markers are poured into the "mite-basket" before a new game begins.

# Spouses honored at dinner

On Nov. 18, 175 guests gathered for the 12th Annual Camp Omega Appreciation Dinner to appreciate spouses of professional church workers. Amy Schutte, director of Church Music at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Inver Grove Heights, and Gary Fritz, a faculty member at Concordia Academy in Roseville, each shared life stories relating to the importance of support from husbands and wives of their church-worker spouses.

Rev. Tom Evans, Emanuel pastor and



Gary Fritz and Amy Schutte were featured speakers during the church-worker appreciation dinner.

Minnesota South District second vice-president, shared a message of support from Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president, who at the last moment was unable to attend.

Each year, the focus of this dinner is on

those who serve in mostly unnoticed and oftentimes unappreciated roles.

Camp Omega is owned by and is part of the ministry of the LCMS Minnesota South District and is located on Horseshoe Lake near Waterville.

## Coming to Minnesota: Main Street Living TV program

Main Street Living is coming to Minnesota in January 2019. The program will air every Sunday from 10 to 11 a.m. on WFTC channel 29/9-2.

Each Sunday, viewers who otherwise would not attend worship will watch re-mastered “This is the Life” episodes from Lutheran Hour Ministries and then experience a modified Lutheran

worship service, led by a different Minnesota pastor each week.

Congregations are encouraged to share information about the program leading up to its launch and once it launches. Weekly bulletin announcements are available on the district website. Check out the Twin Cities tab of the Main Street Living website (*mainstreetliving.com*) for more information.

### Send submissions for the district supplement to:

- ▶ [communications@mnsdistrict.org](mailto:communications@mnsdistrict.org)
- ▶ 14301 Grand Ave. South Burnsville, MN 55306

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

## Congregation mission receipts

### For the period ending Nov. 30, 2018

Actual receipts . . . . .	\$161,824
Budget receipts . . . . .	\$200,000
Over (under) amount . . . . .	\$(38,176)

### Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts . . . . .	\$1,866,366
Budget receipts . . . . .	\$2,000,000
Over (under) anticipated amount . . . . .	\$(333,634)

### Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD) . . . . .	\$702,416
100% remitted to Synod (YTD) . . . . .	\$68,386
50% for district operations (YTD) . . . . .	\$702,416
100% for district operations (YTD) . . . . .	\$393,148
Total receipts . . . . .	\$1,866,366

### Mission receipts—2018 vs. 2017

Mission receipts — YTD 2018 . . . . .	\$1,866,366
Mission receipts — YTD 2017 . . . . .	\$1,966,636
Over (under) last year . . . . .	\$(100,270)

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

### MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

#### October 2018

New investments . . . . .	\$3,744,929
Withdrawals . . . . .	\$1,798,327
Net increase (decrease) . . . . .	\$1,976,602

#### Year-to-date July 1, 2018–Oct. 31, 2018

New investments . . . . .	\$7,589,974
Withdrawals . . . . .	\$6,235,365
Net increase (decrease) . . . . .	\$1,354,609



## DISTRICT OFFICE

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