



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

A good conscience



“In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”
— 1 Peter 3:15-16

You and I live in confusing, often hopeless times. People long for purpose and direction, to know what’s right and wrong. But in our media saturated and entertainment-driven society, good is often called evil and evil is called good. Truth is uncertain. Morals are redefined. Confusion abounds.

Tolerance is the supreme value of the culture. Ironically, if you aren’t tolerant, you aren’t tolerated. Traditional virtues are being cast to the side. Common sense is lost in a sea of political correctness. People are more worried about saying the wrong thing than they are about doing the right thing. Consciences are burdened.

Hearts are heavy. The world seems dark.

Yet the Apostle Peter invites you to be beacons of light in a world oppressed by darkness. As Christians, you have the hope of Christ who is the light of the world — a light no darkness can overcome. So Peter invites you and me to be prepared to



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

share this hope with a “good conscience.”

But here’s the thing. What do you do when you are the one with a burdened conscience? What do you do when you’re the one feeling suffocated by the darkness and anxious about the times? What hope can you provide when depression sets in and spiritual oppression kicks in? What do you do when you have a bad conscience because you’ve called good evil and evil good? Yes, people are desperate for hope, and that certainly includes you and me.

Part of the challenge is that many people try to digitally medicate all the hurt, anxiety, loneliness and sin of the world away by wandering aimlessly through a world of handheld devices, social media and empty entertainment. But this only distracts people to death rather than giving a clear conscience and a source of solace and hope.

That’s the goal of Satan. He wants you to live with a bad conscience — one that is so plagued by guilt, by shame and by fear that it immobilizes you. Satan is

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WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU’RE THE ONE FEELING SUFFOCATED BY THE DARKNESS AND ANXIOUS ABOUT THE TIMES?

TALKING POINTS

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notoriously sinister in this regard. He'll work to give you a bad conscience and then he'll accuse you and call you a failure. (His name means "accuser" after all). He wants to drive you to despair so that you finally give up on Christ, who purchased you and cleansed you with His blood.

You see, your conscience is the place where your thoughts and emotions merge together. So if Satan gets you to feel bad about yourself, guilty about your sin and shamed by life, he knows he can get you to think badly about yourself and your life, which will make it difficult to have hope or share hope with the world.

However, where Satan and sin burden your conscience, the Word of God enlightens your conscience. Scripture says the Word of God is a lamp to your feet and a light to your path (Psalm 119:105). It gives clarity to your conscience and fervor to your faith.

As the creator of our consciences, God gave you a conscience so that you would know where you stand with Him, and therefore how to stand in this chaotic world. God designed your conscience so that through it (both your thoughts and emotions) you can listen to His Word and discern His will for you as it is revealed in His Word.

Even amid a world full of chaos and deception, God's will is to give you a good conscience. Baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, God puts His name on you to give you a good conscience. And your conscience is at full throttle when it's governed by faith in God's Word. That's by divine design. God's Law shows you what He wants you to do and where you have failed to do it, while the Gospel shows you what Christ has done, how He accomplished it for you and how He is now at work in you.

He is the very Lamb of God who took all of the sins and hurts of the world into Himself and suffered once for them all to remove them once and



LCHS/Erik M. Lunsford

“As you bear up under the chaos of this society ... you are given a good conscience so that you can live and move and have your being in **Jesus Christ**, being prepared to tell others the reason for the hope you have in Him.”

for all. He silences the accusations of Satan and makes you pure and clean before God.

Yes, crucified, dead and buried for the sins of the world, Jesus walked out of the tomb to forgive sins, cleanse

impurity, defeat the devil, bring order to chaos and give you a good conscience. A good conscience enlivens the soul like nothing else can. It brings light amid darkness, hope to the hurting, confidence for the frightened and security for the anxious.

Having a good conscience is utterly freeing. Your emotions are unbound. Your mind is freed. Suddenly, the world doesn't seem so dark. It's easier to breathe. Your senses seem sharper. Your thoughts become clearer. Your feelings become fuller. Joy is real again. Hope is on the horizon. Life can be lived. That's the power of a good conscience. That's what so many desperately desire. And that's what Jesus Christ gives to you at this very moment.

He wants you to have a good conscience so that, as Peter reminds us, you not only have hope, but are prepared to tell others about the hope that you have in Jesus. Therefore, He gives a good conscience into your ears through His Word, into your mouth through His Holy Supper, into your heart to believe and into your life to live each day.

Jesus Christ gives you a good conscience. That means you are His and He is yours. As you bear up under the chaos of this society, where you're reviled and slandered, told you're intolerant so therefore won't be tolerated, you are given a good conscience so that you can live and move and have your being in Jesus Christ, being prepared to tell others the reason for the hope you have in Him.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Dec. 31, 2018

Actual receipts	\$275,761
Budget receipts	\$200,000
Over (under) amount	\$75,761

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts	\$2,142,127
Budget receipts	\$2,400,000
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$(257,873)

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$813,470
100% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$77,373
50% for district operations (YTD)	\$813,470
100% for district operations (YTD)	\$437,814
Total receipts	\$2,142,127

Mission receipts—2018 vs. 2017

Mission receipts — YTD 2018	\$2,142,127
Mission receipts — YTD 2017	\$2,254,090
Over (under) last year	\$(111,963)

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEE

November 2018

New investments	\$1,932,654
Withdrawals	\$1,560,030
Net increase (decrease)	\$372,624

Year-to-date July 1, 2018–Nov. 30, 2018

New investments	\$9,522,628
Withdrawals	\$7,795,395
Net increase (decrease)	\$1,727,233



We have ended our year's journey of 2018 and have begun our new journey for 2019.

The birth of Jesus is our light that sheds the everyday darkness of this world we encounter. Jesus came to us humbly as a baby — and then humbly and innocently stood in our place and hung on a cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

May we always remember daily that Jesus is the greatest gift we have received.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

— James 1:17

Let us continue to shine among others this coming year and tell everyone what Christ has done! Praying this new year will bring you joy and peace; strength and wisdom to meet all challenges; and the courage to share God's word to the lost and hurt.

May you continue always “To Serve the Lord in Gladness.”

In Christ's Love,
Deb Vinkemeier

President,
LWML Minnesota South District

‘With a cross in his pocket...’

The Whitewater Conference held its Fall Rally on Oct. 13 at St. Matthew, St. Charles. Rev. Andy Audette, a church planter from Remedy Church, Oakdale, spoke to an enthusiastic group of 51 LWML members and five pastors about “Connecting Disconnected People to Jesus.”

At one time, Pastor Audette personally felt disconnected, especially during his college days right out of high school. He shared a story about a very special quilt that had a pocket with a cross stitched inside, given to him by an LWML society. As he laid his hand on the quilt, he felt the outline of the cross, which reminded him that Jesus was there for him. His life experiences led him to helping other disconnected people become connected to Jesus again.

Devotions and Bible study centered around the Bible verse from John 15:5:

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears



much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

Gifts from the Heart donations of Bibles were given to Pastor Audette's ministry. Donations of canned soup, children's socks and underwear were given to the St. Charles Resource Center. The offering total was \$255.

38TH BIENNIAL LWML CONVENTION

Celebrating in Mobile

“In Praise to the LORD!” is the theme for the 38th Biennial LWML Convention June 20-23 in Mobile, Ala.

The theme is based on 1 Chron. 16:23–24a: “Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations.”

Registration materials and more information are available in the Winter issue of *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*.

To register online, visit lwml.org/convention.

Early registration is \$175 through March 13; regular registration is \$195 from March 14 through May 9. As of May 10, registration is \$220 through June 10.

Keynote speaker for the convention will be the Rev. Dr. Brent Smith,

mission development counselor at Mission Central, which supports LCMS missionaries and mission projects worldwide from its home base in Mapleton, Iowa. Smith previously served the Synod as regional director for mission work in Eurasia, evangelistic missionary in Russia and business manager in Central Asia.

Among business items, convention delegates will adopt a new mission goal for the 2019–21 biennium, and choose mission-project grants to support with those funds. They also will elect a new president to serve a four-year term, as well as other national leaders.

Activities include a golf outing, a pledge walk, servant events, a blood drive, “Special Interest Luncheons,” a collection of “Gifts from the Heart” and tours.

New pastor in Richfield

Rev. Mark Moss was installed as pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Richfield, on Dec. 16. The Mount Calvary congregation welcomes Pastor Moss and feels very blessed and excited to have such a dedicated and enthusiastic shepherd. Pictured are, from left, (front row) Revs. Dean Gade, Gloria Dei, Minneapolis; Pete Gueldner, King of Glory, Blaine; Dan Ritter; Moss; John Stern; James Fuchs; Sol Grosskopf, Redemption, Bloomington; Kurt Weber; Golden Valley; (back row) Brendan Prigge, Victory, Eden Prairie; Robert Schulz; Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president; Mark Shockey, St. Peter's, Edna; Don Schmiege; and Dr. Kevin Tiaden, Berea, Richfield.



Send submissions for the district supplement to:

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



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