



/ APRIL 2021

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

‘According to your Word’

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.”

Luke 2:29-31

These verses are used in the liturgy of the church. They are known as the Song of Simeon. In the Latin, they are also known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, stressing the dismissal blessing of the Lord. With a short phrase, Simeon shows us how to orient our lives. “According to your Word...” Our lives are shaped by the Word of God.

God’s true Word brings peace

In Simeon’s case, he was affirming that God had delivered on His promise. His Word was true. “According

to your Word...” Simeon clung to God’s Word by faith and was at that moment holding the Word of God made flesh (a mere infant) in his very arms.

Simeon was now free to depart this life in peace. God’s Word had been fulfilled. The fact that God had kept His promise to Simeon allowed him to face even death with a tranquil calm.

There are not a whole lot of people or words that can give us this kind of peace. But God’s Word does. His Word is faithful and true. It is poignant and powerful.

His Word is never empty and never without meaning. The Old Testament points ahead to our Lord Jesus. The four gospels tell the story of our Lord. Acts records the beginning of the Holy Christian Church. And the epistles give instruction, hope and encouragement for those living a life in Christ. God’s Word is full of life and meaning. It is faithful and true.

Hurt by everyday words

We know all too well what it is like to experience the empty words of someone, maybe from a politician, a boss or a co-worker. We know the offensive words of a spouse or a sibling. We know the hurtful words of someone we called a friend. In other words, we know what it is like to be disappointed by falsehoods and devastated by infidelity. We know what it’s like to feel the pain of a betrayal and the heartache of a broken promise.

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Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

WORD

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We get depressed. We become despondent. We are left forlorn and unfulfilled.

So what's a hurting heart to do?

Let the Word of God fill us until we are full:

- ▶ “Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.” — **Prov. 30:5**
- ▶ “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit...” — **Heb. 4:12**

Solace in God's steady Word

God's Word is steady and true. In fact, His Word reveals the character of God. It tells us who He is and what He does. God's Word not only says what it does, but it does what it says.

“According to your Word...” Simeon reminds us how the Christ Child came as the fulfillment of God's Word. *“According to your Word...”* Leading up to this point, God had spoken to Elizabeth and Zechariah, to Mary and Joseph and to all the prophets foretelling of the Messiah's birth, and now He delivered on His Word.

As God was then, so He is today. The Word of God still speaks. Be assured it still delivers what it promises:

- ▶ **TO THE FORLORN AND UNFULFILLED** Jesus says, “Come to me ... and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).
- ▶ **TO THE DESPONDENT AND TO THE DEPRESSED**, the psalmist gives expression to our voice: “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God” (Ps. 42:11).
- ▶ **TO THE HOPELESS AND TO THE**



“
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HEARTBROKEN, God says, “...I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5).

- ▶ **TO THOSE STRUGGLING IN SIN**, Jesus says, “It is finished...” (John 19:30).
- ▶ **TO THOSE WALKING IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH**, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life...” (John 11:25).

The peace that Simeon received is also for us. Through all of life and even in death, God's Word speaks to us, sustains us and comforts us. God's Word assures us that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39).

Simeon's words become our words, which, in the end, are the Lord's Words: “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.”

New convention dates set

The Minnesota South District Board of Directors has unanimously approved the new dates for the 79th Convention of the Minnesota South District.

The convention will be held June 9–11, 2022, at Concordia University St. Paul.

We look forward to seeing your congregation's representatives next summer.

Stay tuned to the district convention webpage for all the latest updates and deadlines: mnsdistrict.org/convention.





Sarah Dillbern

Rev. Dunavan installed in Woodbury

Rev. Dean Dunavan was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury, on Feb. 14. A specific ministry pastor, Rev. Dunavan will be serving Woodbury's Oak Hill campus in Stillwater. He is pictured on the first step. From left, (middle step) Revs. Timothy Berner (Concordia Academy, Roseville), Todd Stocker (candidate), Lusienie Fofana (Bethel Evangelical, St. Paul), Dr. Lucas Woodford (district president), David Wende (emeritus), Thomas Pfothenhauer (Woodbury senior pastor), Dr. Fungchatou Lo (candidate); (top step) Dennis Bohren (emeritus), Paul Anderson (St. John, North Branch), Benjamin Griffin (LINC Twin Cities), Jonathan Kuehne (Trinity First, Minneapolis), Timothy Marshall (Woodbury associate pastor), Tim Heinecke (New Life Church, Hugo) and Theodore Diedrick (Good Shepherd, Circle Pines).

Rev. Kuehne installed in Minneapolis

Rev. Jonathan Kuehne was installed as campus pastor of Trinity First Lutheran Church and School, Minneapolis, on Feb. 19. From left, Revs. Kurt Weber (Golden Valley Lutheran Church, Golden Valley), Timothy Marshall (Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury), Dr. Lucas Woodford (district president), Jonathan Kuehne, Mark Shockey (St. Peter's, Edina) and Jesse Davis (Faith, Minneapolis).



Sarah Wippich



Have you ever been walking with a friend and were in a deep conversation when someone came up behind you and scared the heebie-jeebies out of you?

I wonder if Jesus scared Cleopas and the other disciple while they were walking to Emmaus and discussing His death (Luke 24:13-24). This Stranger that they don't recognize says He knows a thing or two about what has happened, and He wants to get into their conversation.



Deb Vinkemeier
LWML District President

We may have experienced a similar situation. We may have snubbed someone so that they would walk away and leave us alone. Have you ever thought that Jesus might be that Stranger and wants to walk with us and join in our conversation? Jesus wants to be our friend and give us that burning heart as He did to the disciples when they finally recognized who He was (Luke 24:32).

Our hearts are ignited by being in God's Word daily. We spread that fire by loving and serving the way that Christ loves and serves us. God has given each of us unique gifts and talents that we can use individually or by working with others to help grow God's kingdom. Each day brings opportunities in which we can show and tell others about Jesus, praying they would have a burning heart for Him.

Women and men from all over the world will meet June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky., for the LWML 39th Biennial Convention. Our hearts will be ignited as we focus on Jesus through God's Word and Sacrament and joyfully celebrate our salvation with song and prayer. We rejoice to serve our neighbors together by witnessing and extending God's love through many mission opportunities.

Jesus is alive! This Easter, may our eyes continue to recognize Jesus and focus on Him so that our faith is ignited with a burning heart to be God's witness, until He calls us home to be with Him.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Always quilting in Sargeant



Marge Steele (left) and Sharon Pries are shown with a selection of the quilts that will be presented to those in need at the Ronald McDonald House.

The quilters from St. John's Lutheran Church, Sargeant, have made over 1,000 quilts, and even a pandemic has not slowed them down!

Although the group no longer gathers together at the church, some members continue to work on the quilts in their

homes. Shirley Greeley, Marge Steele, Mary Wildeman and Sharon Pries continue to make quilts which vary in theme from sports, wildlife, floral and fairytale, to name a few. They are then donated to patients and family members who reside at the Ronald

McDonald House in Rochester. The hope is that a quilt of their own choosing will make the residents' stay more comfortable during a difficult time.

— Submitted by Bonnie Williams,
St. John's member

CSP offers tuition guarantee for church work students

Beginning in Fall 2021, full-time students at Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP), St. Paul, Minn., who pursue a course of study leading to a degree in church work will pay no more than \$6,000 in tuition each academic year. The new guaranteed rate is available for all incoming and current full-time church work students enrolled in any of the following CSP programs:

- ▶ Director of Christian Education
- ▶ Director of Christian Outreach
- ▶ Director of Parish Music
- ▶ Lutheran Classroom Teacher
- ▶ Pre-Deaconess
- ▶ Pre-Seminary



Scholarships and grants from a student's home congregation, LCMS district and local community may be stacked on top of this guarantee to further reduce the cost of tuition and living expenses.

CSP President Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich said the tuition guarantee is intended to give "even more students ... the opportunity to prepare to serve in LCMS congregations and schools. We pray that this university-wide investment will be joyfully received by the church and again demonstrate CSP's deep commitment to making known the Good News of Jesus Christ on campus, throughout the LCMS and around the world." CSP Christian Ministry major and Director of Christian



CSP's church work tuition guarantee ensures eligible students enrolled in church work programs will pay no more than \$6,000 in tuition each academic year.

Education program student Madison Patrow ('22) of Grand Rapids, Minn., said, "This is an extraordinary gift ... [and] another example of the amazing dedication and care CSP faculty and staff have for their students. ... I am incredibly grateful."

For more information, visit csp.edu.

Full-time in the fall!

I'm excited to announce that Concordia University St. Paul will return to full campus operations for the upcoming fall 2021 semester. While CSP has offered face-to-face instruction since the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, we plan to move forward to support full occupancy in our residence halls and lift the restrictions to on-campus experiences that connect our community in important ways.

With the Governor's announcement of vaccinations being broadly available to all who want them by mid-summer, CSP is making the announcement to move back from the hybrid model to full face-to-face classes for our campus-based programs. The health and safety of CSP's students, faculty, staff, and extended community remains our



priority. We will continue to implement the safety measures we have in place and our CSP COVID Response Team will continue to monitor the pandemic and evolving guidelines set by local, state, and federal governments, the NCAA, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

In addition, as a community, we will continue to adhere to and uphold Comet's Commitment which includes wearing masks inside all campus

facilities and during classes, physical distancing, and good hygiene practices. Our collective dedication to these guidelines has allowed us to operate on-campus with low transmission rates.

As we speak, our internal teams are working on detailed plans for fall operations and we will share those plans with you as soon as possible so our students and employees are equipped with the latest information.

Lastly, I would like to thank the CSP community again for their diligence and dedication to our safety guidelines over the past year. It truly makes our ability to instruct face-to-face possible and we are blessed to have the opportunity to plan for more connection this fall.

Yours in Good Health,

Eric E. LaMott

Provost and Chief Operating Officer
Concordia University, St. Paul

‘I cannot do otherwise ... may God help me.’



“Luther at the Diet of Worms” by Anton von Werner. © Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 and used with permission.

LCMS to celebrate ‘Here I Stand’ Sunday

ON APRIL 18, 1521, three and a half years after he nailed the 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Martin Luther made his historic stand at the Diet (official meeting) in the German city of Worms (pronounced “Vorms”). Accused of fostering heresy, he was directed by Charles V and other leaders to recant his teaching about the pure Gospel or face death.

As recounted in his collected works, Luther concluded his statement to the Diet with the words: “Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.

“I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God

help me, Amen” (LW 32:112–13).

On April 18, 2021, the Synod will commemorate the 500th anniversary of Luther’s defiant defense of the pure Gospel by observing “Here I Stand” Sunday, as called for by the adoption of Resolution 4–09 at the 2019 Synod convention. The resolution reads, in part:

“WHEREAS, Scripture gives us encouragement with these words: ‘Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful’ (Heb. 10:23) ... therefore be it Resolved, That April 18, 2021, be declared ‘Here I Stand’ Sunday throughout The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, its districts, circuits, and congregations ... and be it finally Resolved, That our churches and people be encouraged to spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to continue to bless the proclamation of the Gospel.”

Congregations and individual contributors have also received further Synod communications on how they might participate in the gathering of a Synodwide thank offering, as called for in Res. 4–09, as part of the anniversary celebration.

- Find resources and ideas for celebrating: lcms.org/here-i-stand-sunday
- Learn about the history of the Reformation: lutheranreformation.org



HERE I STAND SUNDAY
IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT
Jesus



Trinity members share random acts of kindness

The boards of stewardship, education and evangelism at Trinity, Elgin, worked together on a project for Random Acts of Kindness Week Feb. 14-20. Together they packed 320 bags with candy treats and distributed them to the Elgin Fire Department, Elgin Ambulance Service and the Wabasha County Sheriff's Department. Members also took bags home to share random acts of kindness with others. — Submitted by Patty Zabel-Duden



Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Feb. 28, 2021

Actual receipts.....	\$198,670
Budget receipts	\$166,666
Over (under) amount	\$32,004

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$409,890
Budget receipts	\$333,332
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	\$76,558

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$157,462
100% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$16,274
50% for district operations (YTD)	\$78,692
100% for district operations (YTD)	\$44,870
Total receipts	\$409,890

Mission receipts—2020 vs. 2019

Mission receipts — YTD 2020	\$409,890
Mission receipts — YTD 2019	\$387,929
Over (under) last year	\$21,961

2021 congregational receipts budgeted at
\$2,100,000

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

January 2021

New investments	\$1,521,903
Withdrawals.....	\$1,116,177
Net increase (decrease).....	\$405,726

Year-to-date July 1, 2020–Jan. 31, 2021

New investments	\$13,073,305
Withdrawals.....	\$10,726,538
Net increase (decrease).....	\$2,346,767



DISTRICT OFFICE

- ▶ 14301 Grand Ave. S.
Burnsville, MN 55306
- ▶ 952-435-2550
- ▶ mnsdistrict.org



COMING SOON

Engaged in Mission

VIDEO SERIES

Join us in conversations with various multi-ethnic leaders across the Minnesota South District. Learn about their faith journey, how they are engaged in the mission of God in each of their unique contexts, and how you can support them in that mission.



Pictured, left to right, top row: Jeanetta Cooper, Rev. Samuel Deressa, Alfrieda Baldwin, and Rev. Johnny Vang; bottom row: Rev. Vue Lee, Daniel Thao, Kia Thao, and Nader Alaraj.