



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



MORE THAN A CARPENTER

Jesus is Lord of Lords — and truly our Messiah

(Jesus) went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. — **Mark 6:1-3**



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

I have always enjoyed the smell of fresh cut wood. My dad was a man of many skills and introduced me to carpentry early on. I learned the various textures and feels of the different types of lumber. I came to appreciate the beauty of its grain. Then there was the joy of working with my hands and the skill of shaping a piece of wood into a beautiful work of art. It is all the business of a carpenter.

By definition, a carpenter is a skilled craftsman who works with timber to construct, install and maintain buildings, furniture and

many other objects. It is a manual labor, often a labor of love, and done both outdoors and indoors. From cabinets to closets, from picture frames to framing a house, carpenters are artists and craftsmen. I appreciate the craft.

JESUS AS CARPENTER

Jesus was a carpenter. Have you ever wondered, "What did Jesus make?" What was His specialty? I imagine that being the Son of God, He may have been a glorious carpenter. But that would only be speculation, of course.

Do you think He ever hit His thumb with a hammer? (And if He did, what do you think came out of His mouth?) Though we can't know for sure, I'm guessing He had a niche for crafting beautiful objects. In fact, it seems His work had become well known by some standards: "Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3).

Apparently, He made a name for Himself with His work. However, we find out it was not about His carpentry work. When Jesus began His ministry, we find many people had become indignant about the type of work He was doing.

Even in His hometown, Jesus made people uncomfortable. The people simply knew Him as a carpenter, nothing more. However, the work Jesus was now doing went beyond the craftsmanship of a carpenter. He crossed professions. Rather than sanding lumber or carving a cabinet, He had become a

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CARPENTER

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fisher of men, a physician of souls and a masterful teacher.

Each of you have various professions of life. You might be a carpenter or a teacher, a pastor or a doctor. But your vocation is not limited to the job you work at and get paid for. It also includes the various stations of your life. Among them is your place in your family (a husband or wife, a son or daughter, a mother or father), as well as your place in your community (a neighbor or friend) and congregation (a fellow baptized believer).

Each of these vocations is important, God-pleasing and good for you to fulfill. No one vocation is better or more holy than the other. When you serve your neighbor (e.g., your fellow human-kind), you are doing a wonderful and God-pleasing act, regardless of the vocational role.

Jesus had multiple vocations, too. He was not only the Son of God, but He was the son of Mary and Joseph, who He called mother and father. He had neighbors and was a member of His church community (synagogue), in addition to learning His craft of carpentry.

JESUS AS GOD

It is interesting to think how Jesus is different from other craftsmen, and especially from religious leaders. Why don't the names of Buddha or Muhammad, or Confucius offend people like the name of Jesus? Many people like to say they are spiritual, but the moment you start bringing the name of Jesus into things, they start to squirm. Why is that?

These other religious leaders didn't claim to be God.

But Jesus did.

The things He said and the things He did were far beyond what a simple carpenter does. Think about it. Telling people to repent; healing the sick; casting out demons. "Who did this simple carpenter think He was?" Of course, He was no simple carpenter.

It didn't take long for the people to



“
Like a carpenter
knows the feel
of each type of
wood, the grain
that they show,
and the character
they have, so
the Lord knows
you intimately
well. ... And
craftsman that
He is, now
makes you into
His workmanship

”

realize that Jesus was making some astounding claims. It became clear He was identifying Himself as more than just a carpenter. Jesus claimed to be God (John 10:38).

In fact, He was presenting Himself as the only way to a relationship with God: “No one comes to the Father except by me” (John 14:6). He claimed that He was the only source for the forgiveness of sins and taught that “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

These exclusive claims did not sit well with people. Nor do they sit well with the politically correct and culturally woke times we are living in. The people of Jesus' day sent Him to the cross for these claims. They wanted Him “canceled.”

In a secular culture, the vocation of Christian is one that some would like to see canceled. If your professional vocation has you in the secular workplace, it is not always easy to bear up under the pressure to conform to a secular worldview that is hostile toward the Christian worldview of morality. There is increasing pressure to cancel anyone, especially Christians, who does not embrace the new progressive way of life. The irony, of course, is that if you are not tolerant, you will not be tolerated.

JESUS AS SACRIFICE

Jesus knows what this feels like. He was despised and rejected by many, especially those in the professional religious vocations of the day. He went from being accepted in His earthly approved role — a carpenter — to being completely rejected in His heavenly role — the Messiah. Yet the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus did not affect the outcome. Rather it fulfilled prophecy across all of His vocations:

► **Ps. 118:22**

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

► **Is. 53:3**

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hid

Continued on next page

their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

► **Ps. 69:8** I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother’s sons.

Perhaps it is a bit of divine irony that a carpenter who was so familiar with the texture and feel of wood would be nailed to it in order to bring forgiveness to you and me. Do you think He noticed what kind of wood it was? Had He worked with it before? Did it give splinters? Was it a particularly sturdy wood?

JESUS AS REDEEMER AND MESSIAH

To be sure, Jesus is more than a mere carpenter. He is the Lord of all Lords. Crucified, dead, and buried for you, He is now risen and reigning to all eternity. He truly is our Messiah.

Jesus remains the Lord of our lives and the Lord of the church no matter the times we live, the government in control, the current culture or the vocation you have. And just as He was opposed and persecuted, there will be those who oppose us as we follow Him. He tells us this in John 15:20:

“If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

Yet we remain steadfast, chosen as His own, knowing that persecution grows our faith (James 1:2-4). Just as Jesus is anointed as Messiah, He has anointed us in the waters of Holy baptism, calling us by name as His own no matter the vocations of life we possess. Like a carpenter knows the feel of each type of wood, the grain that they show, and the character they have, so the Lord knows you intimately well. He knows your life. He knows your grains and stains of life, and yet has called you by name. And craftsman that He is, now makes you into His workmanship, redeemed, forgiven, beloved and precious, now ready to do the work He has made for you to do in the daily stations of your life. He is more than a mere carpenter. Jesus is the Lord of your life.



New pastor installed in WASECA

Rev. Paul Lauer (below) was installed as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Waseca, on Sunday, April 25. Above, Rev. Stefan Wismar, executive assistant to the president, performed the installation. The service was followed by a welcome brunch for Lauer and family as well as several new church members.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending April 30, 2021

Actual receipts.....	\$184,127
Budget receipts	\$166,666
Over (under) amount	\$17,461

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$776,172
Budget receipts	\$666,664
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	\$109,508

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$288,228
100% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$28,705
50% for district operations (YTD)	\$288,228
100% for district operations (YTD)	\$171,011
Total receipts	\$776,172

Mission receipts—2021 vs. 2020

Mission receipts — YTD 2020	\$776,172
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Mission receipts — YTD 2019	\$667,057
Over (under) last year	\$109,115
2020 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,100,000	

Minnesota South District LCEF

March 2021

New investments	\$4,152,637
Withdrawals	\$1,411,239
Net increase (decrease).....	\$2,741,398

Year-to-date July 1, 2020–March 31, 2021

New investments	\$18,586,445
Withdrawals	\$12,800,561
Net increase (decrease).....	\$5,785,884



◀ A family from Family of Christ works together to build a play kitchen for the K4 classroom.

'CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER'

Congregations gather as Christ's servants to give Minneapolis school needed updates

By Rev. Jon Kuehne
Campus pastor, Trinity First
Lutheran School, Minneapolis

On Saturday, April 16, over 35 members from Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Ham Lake, and Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury, joined together for a special work day at Trinity First Lutheran School in the Phillips neighborhood of downtown Minneapolis.

Trinity First has a unique ministry, serving a demographic in which 75 percent are below the poverty line, 46 percent are immigrants and 60 percent are non-churched. At Trinity First, families from all backgrounds experience high-quality education, from kindergarten-3 through eighth grade, and have access to helpful tools like parenting classes. They also frequently hear the message of hope and salvation in Jesus.



A Woodbury Lutheran Church member puts together furniture for an office.

In this unique and special ministry, 95 percent of the income from Trinity First comes from generous donations. Thus, there are always opportunities to serve

and empower the ministry God leads at Trinity First.

As disciples, we are better when we walk together as we follow Jesus, supporting and caring for one another.

During this half-day event in April, the Family of Christ and Woodbury members did just that, completing more than 40 projects. Fresh paint was added. Doors, cubbies and carpet were cleaned. Files were sorted and new internet wires were installed. New office and classroom furniture was assembled. Rich dirt was added to school gardens that help feed families connected to the school. Repairs were made to cabinets and school playground equipment.

People of all ages worked together to make an incredible impact on the ministry God is leading at Trinity First. Thank you Family of Christ and Woodbury Lutheran.

To learn more about the ministry of Trinity First Lutheran School, visit trinityfirstschool.org.



Two Woodbury Lutheran Church members install a shelf in a storage closet.



Members from Family of Christ clean cubbies for fourth and fifth grade.



Pastor Jon puts together a table and chairs for the K3 classroom.



▲ Members of Woodbury Lutheran and Family of Christ remove ceiling tiles to run a new Ethernet cable to a staff office.

▼ A member of Family of Christ preps a wall to anchor cubbies for the K3 class.



All photos on this page were taken by Anna Gruen. On page 4, top left photo is by Jon Kuehne; top right photo is by Anna Gruen; and bottom photo is by Todd Breiholz.



Getty Images

Avoiding stumbles and falls

"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night keeps these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

While the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has no official motto, this is a popular tribute to America's postal workers. Being a U.S. postal carrier for 28 years, I had my good days and I had my bad days, such as having dogs coming after me and being bit.

I was appointed to a variety of delivery routes, which sometimes included



Deb Vinkemeier
LWML District President

walking door-to-door. I would multi-task by fingering the mail while I was walking to be ready for the next door delivery. At times, not knowing what lay in front of me, I would trip, stumble and fall. I would trip over someone's garden hose or a hole in the ground covered with leaves, or not see a step. There I was lying flat on the ground. Feeling foolish, I hurried and stood up, looking around to see if anyone saw me.

We have falls every day in our life. Not the ones in which you land face-down on the ground, but falls into sin. Our

path can become narrow and winding in our journey and cause us to trip and fall when we want to do things our way. Jesus wants us to focus on Him. Prov. 3:5-6 directs our steps to God's plan for us:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

We read about the God-fearing leaders in the Bible who also stumbled and fell by doing foolish things. These stories instruct us that we are all vulnerable to temptation when we take our eyes off Jesus. There is one special step between Jesus and us — and that step is faith. With that step of faith, He will keep us on level ground, protecting us from falls.

We will have our stumbles and falls in our lifetime, but God promises us that He never intends for us to stay down. He is there to pick us up again and again.

The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand. — Ps. 37:23-24

God gives us a fresh start each day in His promises. He rescues us from sin, death and the devil with the gift of His Son. With God's gracious help, we will continue to walk in His way, staying focused on Jesus to avoid the hidden obstacles that cause us to stumble.

Gathered for service

The North and South Carver zones held their Spring Rally in the format of a servant event on April 17 at St. John's-Hollywood Township, New Germany. The group, under the direction of Barb Hoernemann, assembled 252 layettes for Lutheran World Relief. Each layette consisted of two lightweight cotton T-shirts, two sleepers, four cloth diapers, one jacket or sweater, a baby cap, two pairs of socks, one hand towel, two bars of gentle soap, a small quilt, two receiving blankets and two diaper pins. All items were neatly wrapped in one of the receiving blankets and secured with the two diaper pins.

With 36 ladies in attendance, they made quick work of putting the kits together while Barb's husband (the "CEO," who "Carries Everything Out"), along with several other gentlemen, neatly packed the layettes in sturdy boxes and loaded the trailer, bound for shipment to third-world countries for distribution to mothers of newborn babies.



Pictured are, from left, Helen Anderson, South Carver Zone president; Shelah Burandt, North Carver Zone president; and Barb Hoernemann, Human Care chairman of the North Carver Zone.



Division has new officers

Dear Orphan Grain Train friends,

This letter is to inform you that your Minnesota South Division remains strong with new mission-minded leaders.

First of all, Cindi Trahms is no longer our chairperson. Doyle Benson has taken that position. To contact Doyle, call him at 320-583-7695 or email him at doylebenson321@gmail.com.

Cindy Krenz, our former treasurer, has finished her earthly chores. On Sept. 4, she joined our Lord in heaven and is missed on our team. Darlene Fretham is our new treasurer.

Our local warehouses are still in place, but with new contact persons. Our longtime Mayer warehouse manager, Louis Honebrink, has also finished his earthly chores and is also missed on our team. To store something in Mayer warehouse for delivery to OGT in Norfolk, Neb., call 952-657-2379.

Our Fairmont warehouse's contact person is Larry Krenz at 507-236-5616. There is an Orphan Grain trailer parked at Cliff Sales, about a quarter mile north of Truman along Highway

15. If you have something to donate, please call Robert Sitzman at 507-236-1638 or Skip Henton at 507-236-7572. Skip and Robert have volunteered to take our shipments to the international warehouse in Norfolk.

A third warehouse is being started in Stockton. The warehouse manager is Rev. Mark Meier, who can be reached at 608-341-6017. Pastor Meier is also trying to restart the Mayo Clinic warehouse, which will need more volunteers near Rochester, from 7 to 10 a.m. on Wednesday mornings.

Unfortunately, we have not found any replacements to conduct fish boils, which is our main source of financial support for our OGT branch. Many congregations will remember that Larry and Cindy Krenz and Cliff and Charlotte Dobie and their teams were at your churches to set up for your fish boil fundraiser dinner on Sunday mornings.

As always, our needs are great around the world, but especially now with the coronavirus threatening our health and economic systems. Therefore, please

remember Orphan Grain Train with donations or memorials.

Some of the most sought-after donations are bedding (quilts), bicycles, school desks and chairs, hygiene products for females and babies, along with wash clothes and towels. In many countries, bicycles are the main mode of transportation. OGT in Norfolk has a volunteer who provides some maintenance on bicycles before they are sent.

We have learned that the quilts that our church ladies make so patiently are sometimes the recipient's only personal possession. OGT has recently shipped four containers of Mercy Meals to chronically malnourished people.

To make a donation to our Minnesota South Division, you can mail it to Darlene Fretham at 611 First Ave. NW, Winnebago, MN 56098, or call her at 612-715-4029. One of the main uses for our funds is to cover transportation costs to send items worldwide.

Sincerely,
Minnesota South Division Board
 Orphan Grain Train

Congratulations ... and welcome!



Help us welcome the following Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL) and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind., students who received vicarage placements and first call assignments to the Minnesota South District. Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president, thoroughly enjoyed meeting with them over Zoom following their placement services. Here's hoping they soon will be completely back to in-person worship.

Bottom left: **Daniel Langewisch** (CSL) was assigned as vicar to Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury.

Bottom center: **Aaron Beckman** (CSL) was assigned as vicar to St. Mark Lutheran Church, New Germany.

Top right: **Andrew Mussell** (CSL) was called as associate pastor to Zion Lutheran Church, Mayer.

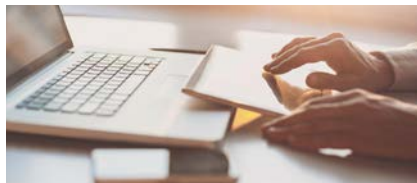
Bottom right: **Zachary Klumpp** (CTSFW) was called as vicar to St. James Lutheran Church and School, Howard Lake.

Please pray with us for each of these men and their families/spouses, that they would continue to serve the Lord as He has called them, glorifying Him in all they do as they grow as leaders intentionally engaged in the mission of God.

Share your news with us!

We are always in need of more submissions for the Minnesota South District Lutheran Witness insert. Why should you send them in? It helps remind us of what God is doing around the district.

It is also a way to share ideas for nurturing those God has already gathered into His church and for reaching those still outside of the flock with the Good News about Jesus. It finally reminds each of us that Christ's church is much larger than just our particular



congregation. Please send submissions to:

- ▶ communications@mnsdistrict.org
- ▶ 14301 Grand Ave. South
Burnsville, MN 55306

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.



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