



/ AUGUST 2021

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Lutheran Clarity, Loving Care

RESPONDING TO CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an academic and philosophical discipline now mainstreamed in multiple segments of American culture. Public schools and higher education, the broader American business world and marketplace, as well as progressive politics are all inundated by it. However, it's also impacting the life of congregations and their members. As Christians, we want to know how to fight against the sin of racism, uphold biblical justice and love our neighbor, all while not letting a dangerous ideology sabotage our trust in Jesus Christ and His Word of truth.

In short, CRT is made up of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power. It expresses the desire to fundamentally alter the control of power between majority and minority groups, particularly in favor of "antiracist" morals. To be antiracist means one

must actively fight against racism, while also holding to the view that white people must admit their social privilege, their fragility in discussing issues of race and that America itself was created by white supremacists who were intent on upholding white supremacy. Therefore, the theory holds that whole systems (and not just people) are racist and need dismantling.

The goal of CRT is to promote a social justice movement that deconstructs and upends power structures in favor of the oppressed and the promotion of equality. Note that CRT interprets "equality" not to mean equal opportunities, but equal outcomes. For instance, an Illinois school district declared that white students would not be allowed in the staggered return to post-COVID in-person classes until after all minority students were welcomed back first. Such discrimination is considered antiracist because it seeks to level a perceived unfair playing field. In other words, CRT claims racial discrimination can be a good thing even if it disadvantages some groups of people — as long as those people are not a minority. However, if a policy merely promotes equal opportunities, it is considered racist and must be eliminated in favor of equal outcomes.

Most important for Christians to understand is that CRT is not just a theory; it is an ideology — an all-encompassing philosophy that directs



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

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thoughts, actions and interactions with others. If that sounds like a religion, that's because it is one. CRT has at its core a creed, one that does not interpret the world in terms of spiritual forces of sin and grace, but in terms of subtle material forces, such as systemic bigotry and diffuse omnipresent systems of power and privilege. Logic and facts play no inherent formal role and are useful only if they can support and intensify the emotion being expressed, as well as make the case for obtaining power to subvert all oppressive forces.

As Christians who believe in objective truth, right and wrong, and good and evil, we need to freely acknowledge the sin of racism, the horrors of slavery and the evils of segregation and discrimination. We must not ignore how injustice, brutality and years of mistreatment of black people have often resulted in a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness and lovelessness. However, seeking true biblical justice cannot mean we embrace a dangerous ideology — CRT — as we defend our neighbor.

The ideology of CRT smacks up against biblical teaching. It fails to see that injustice is due to sin and that not all sin is due to racial bias. Biblically orthodox Christians are right to be concerned about CRT's disavowal of objective truth and the cosmically created order. The fundamental biblical tenets that are displaced by the dogma of CRT are extensive and alarming. They include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Creation, original sin, and actual sin as understood according to the Ten Commandments
- ▶ Objective truth, redemption and salvation through Christ alone
- ▶ Personal accountability and responsibility
- ▶ Vocation and love for our neighbor
- ▶ The role of repentance
- ▶ The new baptismal life that comes from living with faith, hope and love

Lutherans have a clear alternative to this destructive ideology, one that not only prizes biblical justice but provides a clear ethic of faith and life. The Christian lives life at the intersection of two kingdoms: the spir-



This article first appeared in the LCMS *Free to be Faithful* newsletter. If you would like to stay informed on issues related to marriage, life, religious freedom or the establishment of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, please send your name and address to freetobefaitful@lcms.org.



For further study of Critical Race Theory and sensitive pastoral application of biblical principles, Pastor Woodford has published a two-part monograph that dives deeply into this issue. It is available at bit.ly/CRTstudy.



itual kingdom and the temporal kingdom. Here, the object of faith is always Christ (spiritual kingdom) and the indirect object of faith in action is always the neighbor (temporal kingdom). At this intersection, Christians live within their daily vocations, which God designed for us to serve and care for others in our life. Therefore, when we couple the doctrine of vocation with the doctrine of the two kingdoms, we find a vibrant and practical alternative to the ideology of CRT.

Accordingly, there is certainly an ethic that the church and her individual members are to undertake in the care and love of the neighbor, particularly in the face of social injustices and oppression. This two-kingdom ethic of love is subsequently employed in the daily vocations of every Christian. Those daily stations of life begin in one's family and extend to their station as employer, worker, community member, church member and citizen.

We have a robust theology of faith and love — we live always and only by faith in Christ and by love for the neighbor for His sake. Individually and corporately, we are called to the baptismal life, dying daily to sin and rising each day to newness of life in Jesus. As we confront racism and social injustices with God's condemning Law and reconciling grace, we believe, teach and confess a living Lord Jesus Christ who is the light of the world — the light no darkness can overcome.

Installations



Rev. Andrew Mussell was installed as associate pastor of Zion, Mayer, on June 27. Pastor Mussell, who was ordained at St. John, Buffalo, on May 30, is serving his first call after recently graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. From left, Revs. Adam Gless, Robert Alsleben, Keith Perry, Andrew Mussell, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Thomas Colgrove, George Morris II, David Hormann and Gerald Schwanke.

Rev. Martin Cornes was ordained and installed as associate pastor of St. Matthew, Columbia Heights, on May 2. He also serves part-time at Gloria Dei, Minneapolis. From left, Revs. Norman Ruthenbeck, William Hugo, Dr. William Utech, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Martin Cornes, Mark Shockey, Keith Brutlag and Kurt Weber.



Golf in the dark

On June 22, St. John, rural Elmore, hosted its first Full Moon Glow golf event for the newly formed youth ministry group. The fellowship included pizza, decorating golf carts, devotions and a fun night with friends. After sunset, the youth played seven holes of golf — with glow balls — at Minn-Iowa Golf Club. The youth had a great time and look forward to another round!

— Submitted by Carolyn Zierke



Caring for Church Workers

Help available for SABBATICAL PLANNING

The Ministry Sabbatical Resources website provides valuable information for congregations and church workers to help carefully plan and make a ministry sabbatical a regular part of how a congregation cares for its pastors and other church workers. A ministry sabbatical is different from a traditional academic sabbatical. Ministry Sabbatical Resources distinguishes the two from each other in this way:



A ministry sabbatical is a period of time, usually three months, when ministry leaders and congregations set aside the leader's normal responsibilities for the purpose of rest and renewal toward sustained excellence in ministry. A ministry sabbatical is not an extended vacation nor is it an academic sabbatical that normally involves extensive study. A ministry sabbatical is a release from the routine of the call for the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of the ministry leader.

The website also provides two coaches who can help with the planning and they are available free of charge. Funding for the website and coaching comes through the We Raise Foundation (formerly Wheat Ridge Ministries).

Sabbaticals are a wonderful way to provide respite for church workers coming out of the pandemic and fan into flame again their hearts for ministry. This resource is a great tool to help make this happen!

Learn more at ministrysabbaticalresources.com. More information on church worker wellness can be found at mnsdistrict.org/wellness.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending June 30, 2021

Actual receipts.....	\$155,387
Budget receipts	\$166,666
Over (under) amount	(\$11,279)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$1,088,805
Budget receipts	\$88,809
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	\$109,508

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$404,479
100% remitted to Synod (YTD)	\$45,972
50% for district operations (YTD)	\$404,479
100% for district operations (YTD)	\$233,875
Total receipts	\$1,088,805

Mission receipts—2021 vs. 2020

Mission receipts — YTD 2020	\$1,088,805
Mission receipts — YTD 2019	\$963,728
Over (under) last year	\$125,077
2020 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,100,000	

Minnesota South District LCEF

May 2021

New investments.....	\$2,087,719
Withdrawals.....	\$1,745,097
Net increase (decrease).....	\$342,622

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

New investments.....	\$23,036,313
Withdrawals.....	\$17,450,606
Net increase (decrease).....	\$5,585,707



Camp Omega IS GROWING

Guests gather on June 12 for a devotion before ground was broken for a new retreat center.

Camp Omega's annual open house was extra-special this year. On a wonderfully sunny Saturday in mid-June, nearly 250 people gathered for various activities, including archery, kayaking, tomahawk throwing and pontoon rides, a picnic-style barbecue and — perhaps best of all — a groundbreaking celebration for the new Adult and Family Retreat Center.

The groundbreaking began with the hymn “Live the Victory.” It also included words of encouragement and gratitude from various Camp Omega supporters and leaders as well as a devotion by Rev. David Mumme, Minnesota South District first vice-president and pastor of Trinity, Waterville. With this new building, Camp Omega will be able to host more families and events, and share the love of Christ with even more people in the community.

If all goes well, construction on the first phase of the project will be finished in early spring 2022. This first phase includes a new entrance road, parking lot, lobby, conference center/room for 200 guests, and a nine-bedroom wing. The second phase of the project, which includes 16 additional bedrooms, will commence when the remaining funds of about \$1.2 million are received.

Interested individuals can sign up for Camp Omega's eNews at campomega.org to keep up on construction updates. Go to “Get Involved” and select “Join the Omega E-Word” from the drop-down menu.



Participating in the groundbreaking were, from left, Bob LaCroix (camp director 2006-present), Kevin Hall (camp director 1988-2006), Curt Stoltzenow (camp director 1984-1988), and Pam Sweere (lifelong Camp Omega supporter).



Camp staff take part during opening activities.

Photos by William Utech



And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he (Jesus) was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?"

Mark 4:37-38

On June 8, I was awakened at 2:15 a.m. by the weather radio siren. My husband, Bob, slept right through it. While still lying in bed, I heard the wind blowing outside. We have had a lot of high winds come through, so I didn't think too much of it.



Deb Vinkemeier
LWML District President

But this wind sounded different! When I felt the house wall shake, I knew that it was time to get up. By this time, Bob was awake, wondering what was going on. Where do we go? We have no basement! This kind of feeling is what the disciples must have felt on the boat that night on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus wasn't physically here that I had to wake Him, asking, "Don't you care?" I knew Jesus was there in the house with us. I prayed and trusted Him that He was going to get us through this storm. As we waited, the winds stopped howling and the lake went flat.

Even though the storm left its destruction behind, there were no fatalities. Jesus was watching over and protecting everyone on Round Lake that early morning. The storm knows that Jesus is Master when He speaks. Know that He can also calm the storms in your life.

Call for nominations

The LWML Minnesota South District Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for nomination for the 2022 LWML district convention, to be held June 17-18, 2022. More information on the nominations can be found at mnslwml.org. Go to "Resources" and select "Nominations" from the drop-down menu.

You can click the "Nominee Suggestion Form" link for a printable form. Contact info for Darlene Fretham, Nominating Committee chair, is included at the bottom of the form.

Two names are needed for each of the following positions on the 2022 ballot:

- ▶ President (nominee must have been on the Board of Directors)
- ▶ Vice President of Communication
- ▶ Vice President of Gospel Outreach
- ▶ Recording Secretary
- ▶ Financial Secretary
- ▶ Pastoral Counselor (two positions)

Also, one name from each conference is needed for the Nominating Committee.

The deadline for Pastoral Counselor nominations is Oct. 15. All other positions have a deadline of Jan. 15. Please prayerfully and thoughtfully consider who you believe could fill one of these positions. If your zone/conference is having an event, please share this information.

Good works in Christ



Photo by Nina Nygren

Hearing God's Word, making quilts and collecting food and kitchen items for Trinity First Lutheran School and the Dwelling Place in Minneapolis are just a taste of the things the women of Compassion Circle of Glory of Christ Lutheran Church, Plymouth, enjoy doing together.

Led by Eunice McBroom and Zelda Malo, these women gladly

share in God's gift of fellowship while doing good works for their neighbors in need. Pictured are most of the women of Compassion Circle, with donations ready to be distributed. Thank you to God's children at Glory of Christ and Thrivent for their support and generosity.

To God be the glory!

Pictured are those from the Minnesota South District who attended the LWML convention in Lexington, Ky.



LWML 'runs the race'

The LWML welcomed 2,787 people in Lexington, Ky., June 24–27 for its 39th Biennial Convention. The theme was “Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus,” based on Heb. 12:1-2.

The voting body adopted a \$2.15 million mission goal for the 2021–23 biennium. This goal, by the grace of God, will fund 28 mission grants as women and men respond in prayer and mites (offerings) during the next two years. The grants chosen include \$81,680 for deaconess ministry at Dakota Boys and

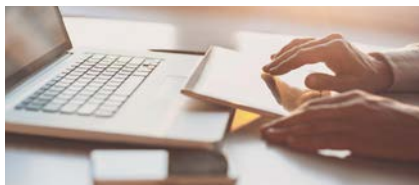
Girls Ranch and \$95,000 for Healing the Invisible Wounds of War through Horses, a ministry of SpiritWarrior in Maine. A mission pledge walk was held to support the new mission goal, with nearly 1,100 individuals taking part in Lexington. Contributions raised totaled \$96,233. Additionally, the Sixth Biennial Tee Up 4 Mites Golf Outing, sponsored by the Lutheran Federal Credit Union, raised \$30,710.

To read a complete summary of the convention, including the full list of chosen mission grants as well as newly elected servant leaders, go to lwml.org/2021-convention.

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.



DISTRICT OFFICE

- ▶ 14301 Grand Ave. S.
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- ▶ mnsdistrict.org



Christ Academy High School

Thanks be to God — Christ Academy High School was greatly blessed this year! From June 20 through July 3, 39 young men and 26 young women participated in the 22nd annual Christ Academy: Timothy and Phoebe School at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. This is a two-week discernment program on the seminary campus for high-school-aged men and women who are interested in theology and who are considering pastoral and diaconal work.

These students are immersed in the daily life of the seminary,

especially through confessional catechesis in the classroom. The Christ Academy students learned from 14 professors from the seminary and abroad, one guest lecturer and a panel of local pastors and deaconesses. Along with daily classes in the study of the Word, the students also worshiped with the seminary community in Kramer Chapel four times a day. They even had opportunities to form lasting friendships through group activities like bowling, a TinCaps baseball game and various team sports throughout the Academy. Lastly, the Christ

Academy students participated in service projects on campus and around Fort Wayne.

We thank you for your dedication in praying for these students and supporting them as they discern future work in the church. We especially thank and praise God for keeping these young men and women steadfast in the true faith. We pray that the Lord would continue to work through the pastors, teachers, and workers of the Minnesota South District to continue to send out laborers into his harvest. To God be all the glory!



Nathan Demlow served as a proctor at the Academy. He is from Mendota and is in the pre-seminary program at Concordia University, Nebraska.

2021 FALL PASTORS CONFERENCE

October 18 - 19, 2021

VISIT MNSDISTRICT.ORG/2021FPC FOR SCHEDULE AND REGISTRATION

2021 FALL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

October 21, 2021

VISIT MNSDISTRICT.ORG/2021FEC FOR SCHEDULE AND REGISTRATION