



/ MARCH 2022

# DISTRICT NEWS

## MINNESOTA SOUTH

### 💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 COR. 1:18

## THE POWER OF WORDS

Words are an essential part of life. They shape our communication with one another. In fact, words are a fascinating occurrence. You can write, speak, whisper, sing and shout them. Words communicate. They tell stories.



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

They travel over phones, through TVs, and speed through emails. Words are powerful. They inspire hope and hurt feelings. They make us feel good and tear us down.

The verse from 1 Corinthians emphasizes “the word of the cross.” It makes clear the word of the cross is the power of God. Power in itself is an interesting word. Say it out loud enough times and it begins to sound funny and foreign. Power. Power. Power.



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Power can mean strength, be that by muscle or by money. Power can give control over lights or over lives. Power is a sought-after commodity. He-Man said he had it. Electric companies give it. Politicians want it.

But God’s power comes through the still, small voice of His Word. As the apostle Paul reminds, it’s not just any Word, but “the word of the cross.” However, the curious thing about this Word is that it’s both powerful and foolish.

This appears to be a bit of a contradiction. But Paul reminds us how this is so:

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly [foolishness] of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but



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# WORDS

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we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly [foolishness] to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 COR. 1:21-24

Jesus Christ is the power of God. Those who know Christ know He is the Word of God made flesh. The connection between the power of God and His Word becomes intimate and incarnational (in the flesh) in the person of Jesus Christ.

So when Paul speaks of the “word of the cross,” He is speaking of Jesus Christ, specifically the life He lived, the words He proclaimed and the message of salvation displayed when the Word made flesh was nailed to the cross of Calvary.

To know the word of the cross is to know Jesus Christ. But the ironic thing is the only way we can know Christ is to be called by Christ — to be called by the Gospel. In plain human terms, to hear and believe the story of Jesus Christ.

And as stories go, this one is fascinating, filled with powerful words, compelling deeds and miraculous events. It’s a powerful story we are called into, not only as hearers (or as readers), but as believers. It’s a story we’re called into, not simply as kids are



invited to listen to a story at school, but one we’re called into even as we live and move and have our being.

The church year tells this story. In fact, we are now entering the part of the story called Lent, where we follow Jesus from His wilderness temptation all the way to the cross and empty tomb. Likewise, the liturgy of the church tells this story. Every week, the worship of the church, through her liturgy, weaves (or speaks) us into the story of Jesus Christ: from birth to betrayal, from miracle to mercy, from Last Supper to resurrected Savior.

It doesn’t make sense to a world bent on its own story. But the secular world’s story is not our story. We have been woven into the story of Jesus Christ. What doesn’t make sense to the world makes beautiful sense to us. As Paul said, “the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

As you rehearse this story week by week, season after season, you are made ready to share it with others, that they too might be wrapped into the powerful words of this story. In the chaos and uncertainty of this world, many are desperate to hear the Good News of this story. It may seem foolish to some, but we boldly speak it because it is the power of God.

God bless you on your Lenten journey.

## LFL has essay contest for students

Lutherans For Life is holding an essay contest for students in grades 6-8 and 9-12. Participants will write a life-affirming essay with the theme, “Blessed For Life,” based on Ps. 41:2.

Any student in a Lutheran school or church is eligible. Lutheran students may also enter through a home school or congregation (for example, confirmation class or youth group), when validated by a pastor or teacher.

**The deadline for submission is April 1.**

For more information including guidelines, go to [thelc.ms/lfl-mns-essay-contest](http://thelc.ms/lfl-mns-essay-contest). If you have questions, send an email to Virginia Flo at [vflo@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:vflo@lutheransforlife.org).

## New pastor in Lake Crystal

Rev. John Hendrickson was installed as pastor of Trinity, Lake Crystal, on Feb. 6. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Paul Lauer, St. Paul, Waseca; John Hendrickson; and Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president.







### Trinity welcomes associate pastor

Rev. Bryan Stecker was installed as associate pastor of Trinity, Waconia, on Jan. 9. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Robert Alsleben, emeritus; Timothy Chase, St. Paul's, Truman; Duncan McLellan, Trinity senior pastor; Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president; Bryan Stecker; Dr. William Utech, district executive, Missions; Joshua Arndt, St. Peter's, Lester Prairie; Adam Gless, Zion, Mayer; David Hormann, St. John's, Winsted; and Andrew Mussell, Zion, Buffalo..

### Rev. Ryan ordained at St. John

Rev. Chris Ryan, Specific Ministry Pastor, was ordained at St. John's, Buffalo (where he also serves), on Jan. 23. Pictured are, from left, Rev. Ryan Clark, St. John's pastor; Rev. Andrew Mussell, Zion, Buffalo; Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president; Rev. Chris Ryan; Vicar Aaron Beckman, serving at St. Mark, New Germany; and Rev. David Taylor, emeritus.





# Travel with joy

In December, we walked the Advent journey to Bethlehem to worship Baby Jesus. In past weeks, we heard about Jesus' baptism and His human life among us.

We are now beginning our Lenten journey with Jesus to Jerusalem. Here we turn our hearts and minds to realizing why Jesus was born. Our Lenten journey with Jesus will help us comprehend more fully the great truth that:

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. *IS. 53:4A*

Every day we are on life's journey. We wonder if our health is going to change. Will I or any of my friends or family come down with a COVID variant? What will my purpose be as I experience new challenges along the way?

At times, all of us travel through life poorly. We lose our focus or purpose, or we get sidetracked from the main destination. I know it has happened to me many times as I planned ahead.

I am now planning for the 29th Biennial LWML District Convention, to be held June 16-18 at the Willmar Conference Center in Willmar. Will there be issues that will come up and change the way I planned things? I am hoping not,



**Deb Vinkemeier**  
LWML District President

but if it does, will I give in to despair?

This is when I go to our convention theme verse:

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. *ROM. 12:12*

It reminds me no matter what tribulations I may face, my heart is full of joy because I have hope in Christ. Patience will prevent me from giving

up before seeing victory, and prayer is something I always do in these situations, knowing God will certainly hear me and that He is always with me.

Think about your next journey. Travel to your destination with hope. When you feel hopeless, God will strengthen you with His Spirit-filled Word and Sacraments. Know that He is on the journey with you.

So as you travel, be filled with joy. Share your journey with others. Your life journey can be wonderful, giving you opportunities to show and tell others about your journey with Jesus this Lent. Jesus died in our place for our sins and He has won complete victory for us in His life, death and resurrection. This is the Christian Gospel by which we live and die. Thanks be to God.

## 'Thank you'

Our mission grant for The Dwelling Place (to be used for general operating support) is in the amount of \$10,000 and was anticipated to be paid in full in February.

LeNae Williamson, Dwelling Place executive director, shared the following information with us:

"In 2020 we successfully housed and served 30 women and 37 children (20 of the women are mothers). In 2021 we have been blessed to house and serve 24 women and 27 children (15 of the women are mothers). Typically, we were at 100% of our capacity.

"We moved out more families to places of their own than any other year; 15 women and their children were able to graduate from our programs to begin their new lives outside of The Dwelling Place. Of the 67 individuals served in 2020, we anticipate at least 80% will leave the cycle of abuse behind and move on to achieve independence and continued healing."

In a letter received from LeNae on Dec. 17, she expressed her thanks: "When we consider the various needs and events of this past year, we are very grateful and encouraged by the steadfast love of the Lord and the faithful support we experienced through LWML Minnesota South District!

"Thank you for joining us in fulfilling the mission of The Dwelling Place to share Christ's love with women and children so they have safe, transitional shelter and the opportunity to heal and gain hope to live free from abuse. Every gift of support you have given has provided for the women and children in our homes, and we rejoice to see the emergence of stability, joy and anticipation for the future as God transforms their lives through His love."

**Carol Hubert**  
Vice-President of Gospel Outreach



## Blessings in Excelsior

On Jan. 22 at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Excelsior, the Lake Minnetonka Zone hosted the Prayer Service, "He Prayed with Them" (based on Acts 20:36b). Rev. Michael Michalk, pastor of Mount Olive, Mound, and Lake Minnetonka Zone pastoral counselor, and Rev. Adam Hengst, senior pastor of Our Savior, Excelsior, and district pastoral counselor, led the service.

Pictured are, from left, Shannon Studenski, Zone Human Care chair; Pam Illies, Zone vice-president; and Elaine Taggatz, Zone president, with Gifts from the Heart, consisting of 64 socks, mittens and hats for children ages 2-5. These will be given to Our Savior Early Childhood Center in thanksgiving for 80 years of the LWML.



### Synod

## Applications being accepted FOR LIFE GRANTS

Applications are now open for the 1 John 3 Initiative Million Dollar Life Match, a program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) that seeks to support LCMS congregations involved in providing beginning-of-life care in their local communities. The program provides for up to \$1 million in matching-fund grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Any LCMS congregation is eligible to apply.

Some possible uses of the funds are:

- ▶ Congregational efforts in pregnancy and infant support (for example, Swaddling Clothes).
- ▶ Congregational partnership with LCMS Recognized Service Organizations in adoption services and maternal and family support (for example, Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries).

- ▶ Congregational partnership with Christian pregnancy resource centers (for example, Care Net).

The above list should not be considered comprehensive or limiting to congregations that wish to apply for a grant. If desired, congregations and circuits may collaborate on a project and application. The congregation completing the application will be the one to receive the grant award.

The Million Dollar Life Match grant process will be conducted in three phases, with the following application deadlines and award dates:

- ▶ Phase 1: Applications are due April 8, with awards made in June and reports due Nov. 15.
- ▶ Phase 2: Applications are due July 1, with awards made in September and



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reports due March 1, 2023.

- ▶ Phase 3: Applications are due April 1, 2023, with awards made in June 2023 and reports due Nov. 1, 2023.

For more information, or to begin the application process, visit [lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant](https://lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant). Address questions to Kris Freeman, manager of LCMS Life Ministry, at [lifeministry@lcms.org](mailto:lifeministry@lcms.org) or 314-996-1217.



## Help make camp more affordable for all

**T**here are gifts that keep on giving, even when our faith becomes sight. Gifts to the Camp Omega Endowment Fund provide camperships to ensure programs are more affordable, or even free, so all can be blessed by our Lord's wonderful and vibrant ministry at our district camp.

Camperships have blessed so many, from so many different communities, helping us to fulfill our Lord's desire to welcome children of all ages in His name (Matt. 18:5). Some who attend are unchurched. There are many times the Lord has used Camp Omega to help bring campers to the baptismal font

and into His open arms in His church.

Only the interest and returns are used from the endowment fund, so your donation truly keeps on giving. You or your congregation can make a gift now or in your future financial planning. If you would like assistance from Camp Omega staff for a future gift in your financial planning, please feel free to contact Camp Omega at 507-685-4266.

Send gifts designated to "Camp Omega Endowment Fund" to:

Camp Omega  
22750 Lind Ave.  
Waterville MN 56096

## Share your news with us!

Why publicize your congregation's stories in *The Lutheran Witness* district Insert?

- ▶ It reminds people that Christ is active in His church in so many ways.
- ▶ It gives readers a sense of the larger body of Christ, that they have brothers and sisters engaged in the same work.
- ▶ It gives congregations ideas for events and outreach.
- ▶ It helps former members to see what is going on in their former congregations.
- ▶ It aids other congregations in knowing who to reach out to when they need resources or referrals for a project they are considering.

We love to feature a wide variety of events occurring in our district congregations. All that is needed is a brief description of the event and one or two photos. No event or announcement is too big or small.

Send submissions to [communications@mnsdistrict.org](mailto:communications@mnsdistrict.org). You may also mail your submissions to Minnesota South District, 14301 Grand Ave. South Burnsville, MN 55306.

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution. Send the largest sized photo from your camera or phone. Many email programs will try to resize the photos, but please send the original size.





2022

## National Lutheran Schools Week



**Faribault Lutheran School:** Students colored door hangers to give to the members of Peace Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault.



**Trinity Lutheran School, Waconia:**

Dan Maser (not pictured), school administrator, led the children's message and talked about Jesus caring for us and being there for us, "In All Things!"



**Trinity Lutheran School, St. Francis:**

God was most certainly "In All Things" throughout Lutheran Schools Week. One daily devotion talked about growing physically and spiritually. While growing spiritually, we can go and tell others in the community about what we know: Jesus saved us from our sins!



## LLL BLESSES MARTIN LUTHER HS

Paul Steinhaus, principal of Martin Luther High School (MLHS), Northrop, accepts a check for \$2,000 from Ed Lee of the Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) to help fund the production of the 2022 *Advent Devotions* that MLHS students and staff publish.

The devotions are distributed locally and throughout the United States. The gift from the LLL will also provide seed

money to purchase fish to be raised by science students in the Aquaponic Greenhouse.

The LLL received the funds from an estate, and were designated for local ministries which mirror the mission of Lutheran Hour Ministries: "Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church." The mission of Martin Luther High School is "Preparing Students for Discipleship Until Christ's Return."



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

## LCEF has grants for elementary schools

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) has opened the 2022 Kaleidoscope Fund grant process to LCMS K-8 elementary schools.

Funds will be granted in amounts from \$10,000 to \$40,000, based on proposals selected by the committee. This year LCEF is narrowing the focus of impact for the grants to Lutheran elementary education, in recognition of the

critical role that Lutheran schools play in impacting the community through Christian education.

The proposal submission deadline is June 1. Please visit [lcef.org/kaleidoscope](http://lcef.org/kaleidoscope) to learn more about the Kaleidoscope Fund and grant opportunity — and explore the ways your school could take part!

## Congregation mission receipts

### For the period ending Jan. 31, 2022

Actual receipts.....	\$152,081
Budget receipts .....	\$170,833
Over (under) amount .....	(\$18,752)

#### Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$152,081
Budget receipts .....	\$170,833
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	(\$18,752)

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

50% designated to district and Synod .....	\$129,382
100% designated to district operations .....	\$18,979
100% designated for Synod operations .....	\$3,720
Total receipts .....	\$152,081

#### Mission receipts—2022 vs. 2021

Mission receipts — YTD 2022 .....	\$152,081
Mission receipts — YTD 2021 .....	\$211,220
Over (under) last year .....	(\$59,139)

2022 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,050,000 (does not include designated to Synod operations)

## MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

#### December 2021

New investments .....	\$2,284,734
Withdrawals.....	\$1,644,304
Net increase (decrease).....	(\$640,430)

#### Year-to-date July 1–Dec. 31, 2021

New investments .....	\$9,570,084
Withdrawals.....	\$9,947,076
Net increase (decrease).....	(\$376,992)



**DISTRICT OFFICE**

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