



/ JUNE-JULY 2022

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



LCMS/Erin M. Lunsford

WHAT HAPPENED TO JOY?



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

Joy is hard to come by these days. It's easy to become disheartened and worried. We ask, "Where has all the joy gone?" We see another sad story in the news, wars and unrest around the globe, civil unrest at home and the never ending partisan political infighting.

It's easy to lose hope, not just for the American citizen, but for every last man, woman and child on the face of this broken planet. Far too many people are walking around with glum faces, seeing only the dark and lonely places. It's like the Pout Pout Fish from the children's book I read to my kids that says:

Deep in the water where the fish hang out; Lives a glum, gloomy swimmer with an ever present pout; And all he can say is, I'm a pout pout fish with a pout pout face, so I spread the dreary wearies all over the place.

That's what it feels like these days. The dreary wearies are all over the place. Everywhere we turn it seems like there's bad news, unrest, division and hatred. In fact, we're now living in a "cancel" culture. One wrong move, one wrong statement, one wrong belief and you are canceled! In other words, condemnation is all around.

Throw in a pandemic and societal unrest and watch the chaos multiply. We're told to trust the science, trust our doctors, trust politicians, trust the police and trust the government. Yet confidence in each is at all-time lows. Which means trust is at an all-time low. When there is little trust, there is no shared meaning or positive movement forward. Kindness is replaced by suspicion, love is replaced by power and hope is covered by darkness.

In the face of it all, we long for some Good News. We're tired of all the *condemnation*. What we want is some positive *motivation*. Yes, we want some divine *inspiration*!

The message of Jesus Christ is just that. In the Gospel there is a compelling story that brings mountains of joy and oceans of hope. At its core is the message that "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (ROM. 8:1). The divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant word of God testifies again and again to the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the

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MESSAGE

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body and the life everlasting! Because of our sin, He stood condemned in our place. Yet, by His cross, He canceled our debt.

This is more than simply a point of *information*. Jesus is about more than mere moral *education*. He brings unending and eternal *inspiration*. He is full of love and grace. He brings every reason to trust Him and follow Him into a world of hurting and needy people.

At the heart of this inspiration is the mind-boggling goodness of the Good News. It's the understanding that joy in life comes from Christ's presence in your life. This means joy is far more than the fleeting and arbitrary moments of happiness. Happiness is nice, but happiness comes and goes. Joy, however, is lasting and capable of being present when you are anything but happy. And when you have this divine source of joy, it inspires others with hope and compels them to action when they see Jesus Christ at work in you.

You see, amid all the dreary wearies of this world people want some joy. They want something that when you hear it you can't help but respond with exuberant *jubilant* because it is so replete with utter *inspiration*. So let's test that thought. You want joy? You want hope? You want inspiration? Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

There is something utterly invigorat-



People may ask, where has all the joy gone?

We answer,

'IT'S IN CHRIST!'

Amid all the dreary wearies of this world, the light of Christ shines brightly as a beacon of jubilation and beam of inspiration."

ing about the joy of the resurrected Christ. No, He doesn't promise you a rose garden, but there is something immensely powerful about a Savior who walks through death, comes back to life, calls you by the Gospel, baptizes you in His name, wraps the arms of His Holy Spirit around you and says, "I know you. I know you inside and out, and I love you. I laid down my life for you. You are mine!"

Yes, the resurrected Jesus is on the loose, running wild, pouring out His Holy Spirit (Pentecost is June 5), speaking His Word of grace, baptizing babies and adults. He is ever at work inspiring young and old by His Word of truth, bringing joy and feeding the spiritually hungry with His presence under bread and wine.

That's the Gospel! It's the Good News. Jesus loves you day in and day out. Amid every failure, flop and fault of your life, you live under a banner that says, "It is Finished!" Christ has conquered. He shed His blood. He's paid your price. He forgives your sins. You can trust Him. And when you trust Him, it frees you to love others and serve others in His name.

People may ask, where has all the joy gone? We answer, "It's in Christ!" Amid all the dreary wearies of this world, the light of Christ shines brightly as a beacon of *jubilant* and beam of *inspiration*. We trust Him. He inspires us. Joy is present in our life. As a result, we in turn inspire others so that they might trust in Him. Alleluia! Christ is risen!



Share your news with us!

We are always in need of more submissions for the Minnesota South District *Lutheran Witness* insert. They help 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.

Please send submissions to:

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

SET APART TO SERVE

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), held Call Day services in late April. The Minnesota South District received five candidates and two vicars. Please keep these faithful servants and their families in your prayers!



Alexander and Esther Goodwin (CSL)
Called as associate pastor,
Immanuel, Fairmont



Andrew and Madeline Asp (CSL)
Called as campus pastor,
Concordia Academy, Roseville



Aaron Beckman (CSL)
Called as pastor, St. Mark, New Germany



Christian and Kristen Einertson (CSL)
Called as pastor, Trinity, Farmington



Vicars assigned to the Minnesota South District are (left) **Jackson Scofield** (CTSFW), St. James Lutheran Church and School, Howard Lake, and (right) **Samuel Smith** (CTSFW), University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis. They are pictured with Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, Minnesota South District president.



Jordan and Kaytlyn Schut (CSL)
Called as associate pastor,
Holy Cross, Rochester



The grand opening of Omega Lodge will be June 11, Camp Omega Day.

Celebrate with district, Camp Omega

Prior to the decision to move forward with a new adult and family retreat center, the Minnesota South District and Camp Omega conducted a feasibility study. The study revealed that congregations desire assistance in providing encouragement and support to families.

Due to its central location in the district, it was determined that Camp Omega in Waterville would be the site for the retreat center. Thus, the plan for the Omega Lodge was developed, and this hotel-style building with a nine-bedroom wing, conference room for 200-plus guests and large open-space lobby is now a reality.

Please join us for Camp Omega Day on June 11 to celebrate the grand opening and commissioning of this beautiful facility. Activities begin at 10 a.m. and include a picnic-style barbecue to be served from noon to 1:30 p.m., swimming, pontoon boat rides, archery, canoeing, kayaking, hatchet throwing, arts and crafts and other camp staff-led activities for the family. RSVPs are requested for the free event, but not required. To RSVP, contact the camp office at info@campomega.org or call 507-685-4266.

We thank God for this opportunity and pray that Omega Lodge will be a place where families can grow in their relationships with one another and with their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.





It's the end and the beginning.

That sounds a little backwards, doesn't it?

On June 18, my four-year term as LWML Minnesota South District president comes to an end. I will soon pin the new LWML district president and turn over the gavel. Another chapter of my life ends, and a new chapter in my life begins. I'm not sure what that new chapter will be, but I know the Lord has it planned for me:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." JER. 29:11

If they are as rewarding as these last four years, I will be excited in looking forward to His plans.

I will honestly say it was not a smooth and paved path, these four years. There were a lot of bumps, potholes, curves and some flat tires along the way. Changes happen, some good and some not so great. The biggest changes were the LWML gatherings when COVID arrived.

We were unable to gather in person and, instead, had to learn technology to hold Zoom meetings. To stay in contact and inform everyone of what was happening, we used more emails and snail mail. COVID impacted our enthusiasm and fellowship, distracting us from our focus to serve in different



Deb Vinkemeier
LWML District President

ways. It caused a spiritual numbness, a feeling of distance and disinterest from the members. Our LWML almost came to a standstill.

It was like we were forgetting the wonders of what God had already accomplished in the LWML and what He still wanted us to do.

I have to say there were regrets: some societies becoming inactive while trying to keep them serving the LWML, canceling zone events, losing potential leaders and not having a 2020 district convention.

Would I have accepted God's call if I knew all these things lay ahead of me? Jesus' disciples did not have a clue what was in store for them when they accepted His invitation to follow Him. But Jesus tells His disciples — and us — that we need to take up our cross and follow Him (Matt. 24-16). He is the Savior who will defend us when we are judged, a Savior who is always with us.

Those words, my friends, have helped me get through my spiritual numbness and regrets these four years. The gifts of God's Word, grace, forgiveness and hope, as well as trusting in Jesus, gave me strength. I now have a stronger relationship and faith in Jesus. This I will never regret. I will continue to carry this blessing with me in the next "new beginning" of God's plans for me.

Thank you for the prayers, encouragement and support you have given me. May our Lord Jesus bless you by the power of His Holy Spirit and give you the grace to heed His call to faithfully follow Him, as we serve our Lord with gladness and joyfully proclaim His redeeming love.

Rejoice in Hope!

YWR Spotlight

Helping involve more YOUNG WOMEN

For those of you who attended

the LWML national convention in Lexington, Ky., in 2021, you may remember our Minnesota South District Young Woman Representative (YWR), Erin Diedrich. She will bless our upcoming district convention (to be held June 16-18 in Willmar) with her report on her participation at the national convention.



Erin Diedrich

When asked what she has been up to since the national convention, here is what Erin shared:

The national convention in Lexington seems like a long time ago, but then I look at the calendar and realize it has been almost a year ago. Time really does fly!

So, what has this YWR been doing over the last year? Since Lexington, I have had the opportunity to speak at a fall rally with the Minneapolis Zone. As I'm writing this, I have two spring rallies I'm preparing for in April.

I'm excited as I've been asked to lead a discussion on how to involve more young women. Along with the others on the YWR Committee, we are in the process of planning activities for the young women at the district convention. I'm looking forward to how the Lord will continue to grow this ministry to reach more young women!

Shirley Volk
VP of Communication

St. Johns offering summer education

Sessions begin June 13

St. Johns Lutheran School, Wykoff, is Fillmore County's only Christian elementary school. Beginning this summer, it is launching a new program with academic and recreational courses.

These courses are open to any student entering kindergarten through eighth grade this fall, from any school or district, and will run for seven weeks during the summer, beginning on June 13. Students can attend the duration of the summer, or choose only the weeks desired. They can also choose to attend full or half days with the price based on their selection. This program is intended to both prompt continuing education during summer and to provide child-care, which many families need.

Mickey Angerman, St. Johns principal and teacher, says: "As an educator, I know kids can get rusty over the summer. We want to attract students from throughout the community and help them stay sharp, and even give them a little extra attention if needed. And it's summer — we also want to have some fun!"

Angerman also notes this is the only offering of its kind in the county.

The days will be broken into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning session will focus on core academics, including math, language arts, reading and social studies. It will also include a brief, daily Bible study. Afternoons will still embrace learning, but be leisurely and fun, including art, crafts, cooking, movies, games and sports.



For more information, visit stjohns-wyckoff.org/summer-program, call the school office at 507-352-4671, or send an email to school@stjohns-wyckoff.com.

Camps have something for everyone

Concordia Academy, Roseville, Summer Camps help elementary, middle and high school students use their talents to shine while they learn together, strengthen skills, build relationships and make new friends. Students dance, run, shoot, score, sing, create, investigate, cook, code, repair, act, pitch, bat, lift, construct, grow, explore, worship — and have the times of their lives.

In 2022, almost 40 summer camps are offered, including old favorites like Boys and Girls Basketball, CSI, Cardboard Creations, G3 (Genuinely Great Girls), Stop Motion Magic and Youth Worship Team. But there are also lots of exciting new camps, including Beginner Photography, Fastpitch Defense, Fastpitch Fundamentals (grades 6-10), Fastpitch Hitting, Fun with Photoshop, Housing and Interior Design, ICE Lab and Wrestling.

Other offerings include Colorful Creative Creatures, a fun, creative art camp for students in Grades 2-5; and Playmakers, for students who love the stage. This camp will go from auditions to a performance of a full show in just one week!

The first camps begins in early June. Visit concordiaacademy.com/camps for more information, schedules and to register. You may also send an email to camps@concordiaacademy.com.



Pastors Wives Retreat

BE STILL AND KNOW



Certy Images

The 2022 Minnesota South District Pastors Wives Retreat will be held Oct. 7-8 at the Home-Town Inn and Suites in Belle Plaine.

The presenter will be Deb Burma, Christian author and speaker from Columbus, Neb., who “has a passion for sharing God’s extravagant grace in a creative, engaging style, touching the hearts of women, meeting them in the moments of their everyday lives, and engaging them in His Word.”

Many of you may already be familiar with Deb’s ministry via her blog, women’s retreats and numerous speaking engagements throughout the country. Her assortment of books and devotionals include multiple best-selling Bible studies “JOY: A Study of Philippians,” “Living a Chocolate Life,” “Sip, Savor, and Drink Deeply,” and most recent-



Deb Burma

ly (the topic of this year’s retreat), “Be Still and Know.” She is a follower of Jesus, a pastor’s wife, a mom and a self-proclaimed coffee/chocolate connoisseur. Above all, she is a grace-filled child of God who loves to share the Good News!

The retreat will begin on Friday, Oct. 7 (early evening, supper optional) and conclude on Saturday at 3 p.m. We look forward to a time of relaxation, refreshment and encouragement! Mark your calendars and watch your summer e-mail for a complete schedule, including details regarding registration (Sept. 1 deadline). We are trying to keep postage costs down, but if you do not use email and wish to receive a printed copy, please contact Darlene Fretham at 612-715-4029. And if you have recently changed your email address, please contact her at darlenefretham@gmail.com.

DISTRICT CONVENTION PRAYER

As we approach the 79th Minnesota South District Convention, to be held June 9-11 at Concordia University St. Paul, please support our voting delegates by offering up this prayer:

O Lord God, Father of Lights and the Foundation of all Wisdom, in the days of the apostles You sent Your Holy Spirit to guide and sustain the gathering of Your Church at Jerusalem. Look mercifully upon us and so bless the delegates to our District convention that, through their deliberations and decisions, Your Church, preserved in the true faith, in godly discipline, and in fervent zeal, may be enabled to move forward in proclaiming the Gospel both near and far. Hear us, in the name of and for the sake of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending April 30, 2022 (unaudited)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Actual receipts..... | \$195,332 |
| Budget receipts | \$170,832 |
| Over (under) amount | \$24,500 |

Year-to-date receipts

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Actual receipts..... | \$744,844 |
| Budget receipts | \$683,328 |
| Over (under) anticipated amount..... | \$61,516 |

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 50% designated to district and Synod | \$567,310 |
| 100% designated to district operations | \$152,920 |
| 100% designated for Synod operations | \$24,614 |
| Total receipts | \$744,844 |

Mission receipts—2022 vs. 2021

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Mission receipts — YTD 2022 | \$744,844 |
| Mission receipts — YTD 2021 | \$776,172 |
| Over (under) last year | (\$31,328) |

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

March 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| New investments | \$1,645,318 |
| Withdrawals..... | \$1,815,597 |
| Net increase (decrease)..... | (\$170,279) |

Year-to-date July 1, 2021–Feb. 28, 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| New investments | \$14,152,143 |
| Withdrawals..... | \$14,754,894 |
| Net increase (decrease)..... | (\$602,751) |



DISTRICT OFFICE

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