



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

The Gift of Life

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT HARRISON



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

As I sat in the hospital room holding my first granddaughter the week before Thanksgiving, I wondered what the world would have been like if my son and daughter-in-law had bought into the lie sold to them by their adversaries, the devil, the world and their own sinful flesh.

Their sinful selves would not have chosen to have a baby. The old Adam does

not want anyone to be dependent on him but instead wants to enjoy the soft, self-indulgent life. And old Eve would never, of her own will, choose to endure the life-and-death ordeal of childbirth. She, like Adam, would prefer to stay safe and comfortable, “curved in” on herself. Bringing a child into the world is an act of rebellion against the old sinful Adam and Eve, one that calls the new people in Christ out of their selfish existence.

The world would have this young Christian couple believe that adding another person to the 8 billion who already exist pushes the earth ever closer to a climate crisis. It would have them believe that the way to serve their neighbor is to prevent more children from crowding out the ones who are already here. And it would have them believe that adding another mouth to their fledgling family would jeopardize the life they share as husband and wife. Shouldn’t they keep it simple and adopt a dog from a shelter first?

Then there is the devil, who absolutely hates babies as he hated Christ and the innocents of Bethlehem. Every baby — especially every baby born to Christian parents — is a potential citizen of heaven, a candidate for Baptism, one whom Jesus will raise from the dead on the day of His return. The devil hates babies because babies are an act of resistance against his regime of death and decay. He seeks to convince this couple of these lies and convert them into evangelists for his demonic cause.

The devil knows that those 10 little fingers of my new granddaughter will very soon fold in prayer and seek her heavenly Father’s protection against the devil’s wiles. He knows that her little ears will continue to be totally receptive to the Word of God, over which he has no authority. He knows she’ll be in church from the get-go, hearing the Gospel in the liturgy, and that it will stay with her until the day she passes from this life to await the resurrection.

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LIFE

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The devil knows that my granddaughter's parents will bring her to the baptismal font and, in her stead, renounce him and all his works and all his ways. He knows that she will be instructed in the clear Word of God until she is ready to confess with her lips — which cannot yet articulate words — that Jesus is Lord. He knows that the first word her perfectly formed little lips will say in church is “Amen!” He knows that the crucified and risen Jesus wants more mouths to feed with His body and blood. And he knows that some day the children of this little baby girl will place her body in a grave “in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection” unto life everlasting.

The devil hates babies. The devil hates it when mothers in crisis are cared for. The devil hates it when Christians provide for moms, babies and dads. The devil hates it when we supply what young mothers need to turn a crisis situation into a blessing. The devil hates it when a young couple marries and welcomes a child. The devil hates adoption, thousands upon thousands of which happen via our Lutheran agencies. The devil hates it when courageous parents welcome and love a child with developmental disabilities. The devil hates it when children are celebrated at church; loved by their extended church family; and taught the liturgy, catechism, hymns and Bible stories.

Young Christian couples continue to stick it to the devil every time they are open to God's gift of another child into their family. It's little wonder that we see so many young Lutherans with big families. We were amazed a few years ago when a study found that our LCMS young married couples were having more children, on average, than Roman Catholics!

Meanwhile, those who are not



Register to march for life with other Lutherans at lcms-onm.org/need.

On the page is a link to MCCL March for Life, to be held at noon on Jan. 22 at the Minnesota State Capitol grounds in St. Paul. A chapel service will be held at 10:30 a.m. at Graebner Memorial Chapel on the campus of Concordia University, St. Paul.

IN PHOTO: Lutherans gather in front of the U.S. Supreme Court following the March for Life 2017 in Washington, D.C.

This letter is reprinted from the January 2022 *Reporter*.

called to the vocation of mother or father stick it to the devil every time they embrace life, however they are called to do so, in their own vocations — by helping care for and teach the young, esteeming the old, and upholding and defending the sanctity of life at every opportunity.

Throughout this month, I'll join with many of you in person and in prayer as we march for life. The LCMS will be at the March for Life in Chicago on Jan. 8 and the National March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 21. We won't be there because, as some say, we're opposed to women or we're single-issue voters. We'll be there to carry out our baptismal vows to renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways. We'll be there to give voice to the vulnerable and unborn. We'll be there to pray and proclaim the Word against the forces of hell that would oppose life, children, mothers, fathers, marriages and families. We'll be there to counter lies with truth, shine light into darkness, and oppose the devil with the love of Jesus.

In the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, when Jesus came in the flesh and was revealed as the Savior for all people, we rejoice that, though His life was opposed by many, He was brought safely into the world. And we draw great comfort and courage from His sacrifice for us on the cross. “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (1 John 3:16).

I give thanks for you and for the courageous ways you promote life in a culture of death. May God grant you strength and encouragement in these gray and latter days.



Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
LCMS President



Hope in the New Year

Rejoice in Hope!

What do you hope for in 2022? What will you rejoice in?

Maybe it's that COVID will go away, that our government leaders will work together or that we will respect each other's opinions.

No matter what we hope for, confusion and uncertainty remain, which can make us feel hopeless.

On June 16-18, the LWML Minnesota South District will hold its 29th Biennial Convention at the Willmar Conference Center, Willmar. Our theme is "Rejoice in HOPE!" Those attending will hear from mission speakers, participate in Bible studies and receive special messages about how in the midst of our struggles, we can persevere in prayer and rejoice in hope.

God does not want us to live in hopelessness. The Bible gives us the message that God is a God of hope — and He gives us hope. We have just celebrated Christmas, the birth of Jesus. This heavenly gift provides us a hope that lasts forever. We receive the forgiveness of our sins and the blessings of eternal life. Our living Savior has taken care of this. This gives us the hope we need for what lies ahead of us this year.

May you carry with you these words of Christ as you walk in hope with Him:

"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." **Matt. 28:20b**



Deb Vinkemeier
LWML District President

HURRY!

Mission grant applications due Jan. 7

Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) serves the Minnesota South District in supporting mission ministries with grants funded by the contributions of Lutheran women putting their coins and dollars into mite boxes.

Mission Grant proposals are currently being accepted until the Jan. 7, 2022, postmark deadline to be reviewed and recommended for placement on the June LWML Minnesota South District Convention ballot. The application form and instructions for Submitting a mission grant proposal are available at mnskwml.org under the Missions tab. Select "Mission Grant Proposal" from the drop-down menu.

Consider the following guidelines

when requesting a mission grant:

- ▶ Will sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ be an integral part of this program?
- ▶ What is the specific and current need?
- ▶ What is the time frame for using the grant, and is it ready to be implemented?
- ▶ Is it mission-focused and in alignment with Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod doctrine?
- ▶ Will the program budget use multiple funding resources so as to be sustainable after the LWML grant is expended?

Send the completed forms to Carol Hubert (Gospel Outreach chairman), 2269 Silver Leaf Trail, Cologne, MN 55322, or email the forms to vp_go@outlook.com.



New shepherd in Gibbon

Rev. Karl M. Grant was installed as pastor of St. Peter, Gibbon, on Dec. 11. From left, Revs. Wayne Bernau, Harold Storm, Karl Grant, Dr. Lucas Woodford, James King and John Grein.



Blessings in Eagan

Rev. Jared Cooksey was installed as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Eagan, on Nov. 20. He previously served at St. John's First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bridgeton, N.J., his first call after graduating from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. in 2020. From left, (front row) Revs. Tom Evans, Old Emanuel, Inver Grove Heights; Dr. Lucas Woodford, district president; Jared Cooksey; Bob Mitchell, emeritus; John Stern, emeritus and former Christ pastor; (back row) Tom Aadland, emeritus; Ted Diedrick, Good Shepherd, Circle Pines; Merle Lebahn, emeritus and former Christ pastor; Stephen Wismar, district executive; Kurt Klaus, Messiah, Lakeville; Christopher Horton, St. Johns, Rosemount; Don Schmigge, emeritus and former Christ pastor; Michael Heggen, emeritus and former Christ pastor; Tom Gundermann, campus pastor, Concordia University, St. Paul; Dr. Bob Holst, emeritus and former Concordia University, St. Paul president; and Dennis Drews, emeritus and Christ vacancy pastor.

CONGREGATION MISSION RECEIPTS

For the period ending Nov. 30, 2021

Actual receipts.....\$146,976
Budget receipts\$166,666
Over (under) amount(\$19,690)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....\$1,935,679
Budget receipts\$1,833,326
Over (under) anticipated amount.....\$102,353

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD).....\$724,482
100% remitted to Synod (YTD).....\$77,287
50% for district operations (YTD)\$724,482
100% for district operations (YTD)\$409,428
Total receipts\$1,935,679

Mission receipts—2021 vs. 2020

Mission receipts — YTD 2021\$1,935,679
Mission receipts — YTD 2020\$1,831,421
Over (under) last year \$104,258
2021 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,000,000

LCEF

October 2021

New investments.....\$1,079,356
Withdrawals.....\$1,555,726
Net increase (decrease).....(\$476,370)

Year-to-date July 1, 2021–Oct. 31, 2021

New investments.....\$6,105,721
Withdrawals.....\$6,620,441
Net increase (decrease).....(\$514,720)



DISTRICT OFFICE

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mnsdistrict.org