



/ SEPTEMBER 2022

DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

Introducing the *Go First!* Initiative

History shows that culture changing movements are often led by those willing to go first. That, of course, was the foundation of the New Testament church. It was made up of those who were willing to go first. However, they were simply the first to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself was always ready to go first.

Jesus *goes first*. That's who He is. His was a life and ministry of going first. He went first from eternity in Heaven to time here on earth. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, so He could save us. To rescue sinners, Jesus *goes first*.

He didn't wait for the apostles to find Him. Jesus went first and called them to follow Him. Jesus didn't wait for lepers to heal themselves. He went first and healed them.

Jesus didn't wait for the outcasts and marginalized to overcome their oppressors. He went first and spoke a word of



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

hope to them. He didn't wait for the tax collectors and sinners to first straighten out. He went first and loved them. Jesus goes first.

He goes first for you, too. He didn't wait for you to get your life in order before loving you. He went first to the cross to pay for your sins and to show you the depth of His love.

He didn't wait for you to get your theology straight before He justified you. Jesus went first to the Heavenly Father to intercede for you with His shed blood.

He didn't wait for you to comprehend His greatness before extending you His grace. He went first by sending His Holy Spirit to call you by the Gospel, enlighten you with His gifts, sanctify you and keep you in the true faith.

Jesus didn't wait for you to plumb the depths of His magnificence before giving you hope. He *goes first* to the tomb and then destroys death to bring you

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Pastor Woodford is pictured up front during service with Rev. Bekele Sankiko, pastor of Peniel Evangelical Lutheran Church, an Ethiopian-immigrant church plant of the district. The congregation worships at Trinity Lone Oak, Eagan.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Jesus didn't wait for you to comprehend the vastness of Heaven before offering it to you. He went first to prepare a place for you so that when He comes again, He will take you to Himself, so that where He is you may be also.

Jesus *goes first*! I'd like this to be the foundation for our work together in our district for this coming triennium. I call it the **Go First! Initiative**. Since our Lord *goes first*, we can trust Him. And because we trust Him, He inspires us to go first. We go first to Him in prayer. We go first to Him in repentance. We go first to Him because He first loved us.

Then He points us to our neighbor, to our life with one another, to love people, including unbelievers, where we also *go first*. This is based upon the Christ-centered principle of Trust and Inspire, in which we trust Jesus to inspire us to action, which in turn allows us to trust others and inspire them to action.

The goal is to unleash the potential of our congregations in the name of Jesus. Going first means we want to bless, not to impress, like Gloria Dei of Minneapolis, which went first to offer their building as a place to meet for the Royal Family multiethnic church plant.

Going first means we want to grow and not simply show, like Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran, Eagan, which went first to enter into a facility agreement with our Ethiopian-immigrant church plant, Peniel Evangelical Lutheran Church. Trinity's leaders and pastors went first by attending, praying for and blessing this church plant at their initial launch service.

Going first means to want to complete each other rather than compete against each other, like Emmaus Lutheran Church, St. Paul, and Bethel, St. Paul, which went first to begin a cooperative and collaborative youth ministry together.

My desire is for us to be a fellowship of Trust and Inspire rather than of Com-

mand and Control; to stress the power of the Gospel rather than the compulsion of the Law; to collaborate on how to inspire rather than to require. It goes past the idea of asking each other what I can do for you and what you can do for me. Rather, as a district we ask one another, "What can I do with you for the sake of God's kingdom?" And that begins by being willing to *go first*.

Like Glory of Christ Lutheran Church, Plymouth, whose senior pastor and a layman (a lawyer) went first to help one of our new immigrant church plants develop their constitution and understand the *Lutheran Service Book*. Like Cross View, Edina, who went first to create a Community Light School of Discipleship open to all. Like St. John's Lutheran Church and School, Wycoff, which went first and opened a summer academic and recreational program to their whole community.

Going first helps us unleash the potential of our congregations and schools in

the name of Jesus. Yet, each of us can also go first individually.

If you have a disagreement with someone, *go first* to talk to them and work it out. Trust the Lord and His Word to lead you. If you want a doctrinal practice addressed, *go first* and model collegiality and inspire fraternal dialogue about why we love our Lutheran theology and practice. Trust the Lord's Word to lead you. If you have a dream of serving the community in the name of Jesus, *go first* and set the tone for others to follow. Model in your behavior that which you want to inspire others to do. *Go first*!

In the months ahead, more will be coming about this initiative and how we in the Minnesota South District can *go first*! In the meantime, let's trust one another and inspire one another by outdoing one another with kindness and going first, all in the name of Jesus!

He is our inspiration. Jesus *goes first*.



Heat, humidity no match for St. Peter teens

Youth from St. Peter, Watertown, attended the LCMS Youth Gathering, held July 9-13 in Houston. Among all the other activities, the group completed a community service project by installing a gravel path for a church in Houston. The northern farm kids held up to the challenge of finishing the task in searing summer weather ... looks like they barely broke a sweat!



Rev. Christian Einertson was ordained and installed as pastor of Trinity, Farmington, on Aug. 7. This is his first call after recently graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL). From left, (front row) Revs. Einertson, Robert Kieselowsky, Kurt Klaus; (middle row) David Kind, David Mumme, Jeremiah Johnson, Nathaniel Brown, Matthew Nix, Tom Aadland; (back row) Jim Kroonblawd, Ralph Rokke, David Hahn, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Chris Horton, Mike Heggen; and Nick Wagenknecht, a fourth-year CSL student.

Rev. Aaron Beckman was ordained and installed as pastor of St. Mark, New Germany, on July 17. This is his first call after recently graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. From left, (front row) Revs. Stefan Wismar, Mark Loder, Aaron Beckman, Dale Kohrs, Chris Ryan, Dr. Gerhard Bode; (middle row) Ryan Clark, Robert Jarvis, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Tyler LaGrave, Dave Taylor; (back row) Dean Mahlum, David Hormann, Tom Colgrove and Eric Nelson.



Rev. Jordan Schut was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Holy Cross, Rochester on July 24. This is his first call after recently graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. From left (facing Pastor Schut), Revs. David Mumme, Jeff Niederstadt, Fred Morck, Bruce Schut (Jordan's father), David Preuss, Adam Koglin and Bill Otte.



CELEBRATIONS



Madison Patrow was installed as **Director of Christian Education at Messiah, Lakeville**, on July 17. She is a recent graduate of Concordia University, St. Paul.

Jacob Yatckoske was installed as **Executive Director of Trinity Lutheran School, St. Francis, on July 24.**



Rev. Mark Biebighauser was installed as **pastor of Hosanna, Mankato**, on July 24. He previously served congregations in Medford and Detroit, Mich.



CORRECTION

In the August edition, a name was inadvertently omitted from the list of the incoming Board of Directors. **Rev. Keith Grimm**, senior pastor of Family of Christ, Ham Lake, was re-elected as the district secretary. Please excuse the error.



Rev. Alexander Goodwin was ordained and installed as **associate pastor of Immanuel, Fairmont**, on July 24. This is his first call after recently graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. From left, (front row) Revs. Wade Daul, Alexander Goodwin, Eric Goodwin (Alexander's father); (back row) Matthew Lorfeld, Tony Bertram, Greg Volbrecht and Dennis Heiden.

The 40th ordination anniversary for Rev. Dr. Robert Gehrke was celebrated July 31 at South Shore Trinity, White Bear Lake, where he serves as senior pastor.



From left, Revs. Kevin Froelich, Dr. Robert Gehrke and David Gunderson.



Pastor Gehrke's two sons, Rev. Aaron Gehrke and Seth Gehrke, their wives and a friend were the praise band for one of the services. Rev. Aaron was also the organist and serves as pastor of St. Peter and Paul, Houghton, Mich. Seth is music director and worship leader at St. John, Cypress, Texas. From left, Pastor Aaron and Abby, and Emily and Seth. Phil Carlson (hidden) is the drummer.

MERCY FOR Ukrainian refugees

The Minnesota South District's school mission project chosen for the 2022-23 school year is Ukrainian Refugee Support. **Mission Central**, the largest mission network providing support to the LCMS offices of International and National mission, is working hard with our missionaries to make sure that food, clothing and medicine get into the right hands. In turn, our missionaries are working hard to share the joy and hope they have in our dear Savior, Jesus. District schools are invited to join us as we work together to help support Ukrainian refugees.



Read more about Mission Central at missioncentral.us, and more about Hearts for Jesus at mnsdistrict.org/hearts-for-jesus.

Another great way to support Ukrainian refugees is by purchasing a Bible. Many families had to flee their homes quickly and did not have the time or space to pack their Bibles. These families are

asking and looking for Ukrainian Bibles.

Thankfully, **Lutheran Heritage Foundation** is assisting in this effort. With your help, a family will receive a Bible storybook, Small Catechism (or other Bible resource) written in their own language. To donate, visit thelc.ms/lhf-ukraine-bible.

Pastors, laity attend CTSFW class



From left, (front row) Marshall Kuntz, Ginny Valleau, Wendy Zaborowski; (middle row) Rev. Dr. William L. Keller II, Rev. Peter Haugen, Lil Spilde, Rev. Adam Matheny, Laura Daede; (back row) Dan Anderson, Rev. Christopher Horton, Rev. Dr. Gifford Grobien, Paul Spilde, Rev. Marc Freiburg, Ron Daede and Clearance Zaborowski.

Methods in Moral Theology was the subject of a Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW) Continuing Education class held at Grace Lutheran Church, Rochester, in June. Rev. Dr. Gifford Grobien, CTSFW associate professor of Systematic Theology, led the class of laity and clergy through different ways of thinking about good and right actions, according to law, purpose and virtue, yet also in view of the Christian stance toward good works.



◀ The pews of St. John's, Norwood Young America, were covered with 180 quilts made by LWML members. Eighty quilts were given to halfway houses to be used by men just out of prison; 100 were given to Orphan Grain Train.

▼ The St. John's, rural Elmore, LWML/Ladies Aid handed out 80 bottles of water at the Elmore Horse and Buggy Days parade. The children helped attach the labels.

What's your 80?

The LWML was founded in July 1942 at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Chicago, by delegates from 15 districts. For the past year, LWML groups across the country have been celebrating the 80th year of the organization.

The members were encouraged by Debbie Larson, national LWML president, to reflect God's love by blessing others with 80 of something, doing an activity that was done 80 years ago, or remembering moments from the past 80 years. We were asked to take pictures of our "What's your 80?" activity and send them to LWML. These creative ideas will be celebrated at the national convention in Milwaukee next June.

So ... what have the ladies in the Minnesota South District done?

At one church, ladies collected socks for individuals leaving prison or transitioning from shelters or homelessness. They



Lisa Kamrath
LWML District President

prayed for 80 pairs to be donated and received 400 pairs of socks!

Another group wanted to bless mothers, so they collected 44 footed sleepers, 20 outfits in size 0-2 and 26 packages of diaper wipes (each of the packages had 80 wipes in them).

Collecting extra mite offerings, making way more than 80 quilts, distributing 80 water bottles at a parade, bringing 80 items to the food shelf and bringing Bibles for prison ministry have kept many hands busy serving the Lord.

Some LWML groups celebrated their current and honorary members 80 years and older with a Bible study, coffee, treats and a small gift bag for the honored guests. Time was also spent visiting and remembering the past events. In other groups, there was time spent visiting shut-ins and people in nursing homes, taking food to first responders, making Chrismons for the church Christmas tree, and making beaded witness bracelets for MOST Ministries.

At the district convention in Willmar, Gifts from the Heart collected Bibles



for prison ministry, with many groups ordering them in groups of 80. Joy Anderson, VP of Christian Life, was the purple hat lady who gave away 80-plus LWML items from the recent and distant past.

President Deb Vinkemeier made a goal of 80 banners to be displayed at the district convention. It did not seem like we could gather that many banners. The evening before the convention began, however, over 90 banners graced the convention center's walls, surrounding us with many beautiful and powerful passages from God's Word.

The LWML is thankful to God for the 80 years He has blessed this mission-minded organization — 80 years of God's grace and 80 years of serving the Lord with gladness.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! ... For the LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Ps. 100:1-2, 5

Camp Omega

Cross country meet is Sept. 30

Lutheran schools in the Minnesota South District are invited to attend Camp Omega's 40th annual Cross Country Meet. Overlooking Horseshoe Lake, the course winds through Camp Omega, offering spectacular views of the beautiful fall colors.

Family and friends are welcome to attend as spectators. Fun and effort are the emphases of the race.

Race information

The meet will be held on Friday, Sept. 30, with registration beginning at 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$3 per runner (there is no longer a meal being served after the race.)

Race Orientation begins at 2 p.m., and races begin at 2:30. An award ceremony follows the races.

Events are :

- ▶ 1500m (4th grade)
- ▶ 1500m (5th and 6th grade)
- ▶ 3000m (7th and 8th grade)

(Fourth graders place individually but do not count toward the team score. Third graders may race exhibition with fourth grade but will not place.)

Awards will be given to the first- through fifth-place finishers in each race.



Ethiopian church thriving in MSP

The Twin Cities has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the United States, and it is growing rapidly. For years the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area (MSP) has been the welcome place for refugees from several countries, and the home for diverse populations from Asia and Africa.

Did you know:

- ▶ MSP has the largest Somali and Hmong populations in the U.S.
- ▶ Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center have among the largest Liberian populations in the U.S.
- ▶ It is predicted that a large number of Tibetan refugees could make their way to Minnesota in the next few years.
- ▶ MSP alone is home to more than 20,000 Ethiopians.

A strong community of Ethiopian people

Since the 1970s, Ethiopians have come to call Minnesota home. Over the years, many Ethiopians have formed communities of support for one another to share in their unique culture and struggles as they work to assimilate into American culture while still maintaining and celebrating their Ethiopians roots.

LINC Twin Cities is honored to work with several Ethiopian leaders and ministries that love Jesus and want to make His name known right here in Minnesota! Here are a few of the amazing things our Ethiopian brothers and sisters are up to around our city.

Power of Gospel (powerofgospelchurch.org) has a huge vision to plant thousands of churches here and in Ethiopia. We are collaborating on an effort called "One

here, One there" to multiply new Gospel-centered church movements in the Twin Cities and abroad!

Vicar Hunde Takele is in his last year of distance seminary education. He is working in partnership with St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Power of Gospel and LINC to launch a new English-speaking multi-ethnic church. His heart is to see the next generation know Jesus!

When **Perazim Church** launched in late 2019, they could not have predicted the coming pandemic that would completely upend their plans for their multi-ethnic church plant. But by God's grace, they found ways to connect, to serve their community, and to come together along the way. Many prayers were answered when they were able to celebrate their two-year anniversary and relaunch in August 2021!

Rev. Demelash Yoseph's church has grown from 20 people to well over 200. This has come through new connections and merging with another church. They are a leader-cultivating machine. They have mentored and sent church planters across our city, our country and our world. They have started nearly 30 churches in the last five years and we are so honored to walk with them in taking this movement to an even greater impact.

A plentiful harvest

This is just a snapshot of the amazing Gospel work that is going on in the Twin Cities Ethiopian community. Please join us in prayer as we support them in their call to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our city.

For more information, please visit linc.org/twincities.



Considering being a pastor or deaconess?

There are several opportunities for prospective students to visit Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), this fall. Take part in a Prayerfully Consider Visit Oct. 13–15 or Christ Academy: College Oct. 27–30. Both programs provide an opportunity to explore the CTSFW campus, interact with students and faculty, experience fellowship and worship, and contemplate the vocation of pastor or deaconess. Find out more at ctsfw.edu/pcv or ctsfw.edu/ca.



District offering grants to attend ministry conference

Both personal experience and formal studies speak to the simple truth that Christian congregations are most effective in reaching new people for Christ and in bringing current believers to a greater maturity of faith when they are intentionally engaged in acts of service that touch the lives of people in their community. In other words, when Christians exercise their faith through joyful and loving actions aimed at benefiting others without selfish motives, new relationships with people outside the circle of faith begin to form. In these relationships, the Gospel is shared.

One effective method to move individuals and whole congregations toward this attitude of Christ-like service is to help them experience extravagant acts of hospitality and service for themselves. In fact, this is the “formula” we find consistently advocated in Scripture:

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” **JOHN 13:14**

At the Minnesota South District, we believe that experiencing such extravagant hospitality can be transformational. Teams from multiple congregations across our district have shared this experience in their attendance at the Best Practices for Ministry (BPM) Conference.

The next BPM conference will be held Feb. 16-18, 2023, in Phoenix. The district will again sponsor a limited number of congregations that desire to send a team of leaders to BPM.

This year we are encouraging a new approach in the grant application process. Preference for grant recipients will be given to congregations with designs on a new ministry partnership. Participants are encouraged to consider how they might use what they learn at the conference to build or strengthen a community outreach ministry in partnership with another community school, congregation or organization.

Our hope, prayer and expectation are that this community outreach ministry will be used by the Holy Spirit to encourage planting and watering of Gospel seeds to nurture a desire for outreach where it has already taken root.

Interested congregations should submit the Conference Grant Proposal Form by Nov. 1. Funds will help cover travel and housing costs to and from the conference. The form, and more information, are available at mnsdistrict.org/missionformation. You may also contact Dr. Phillip Johnson, district assistant to the president for Mission Formation, at 952-223-2161 or phillip.johnson@mnsdistrict.org.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending July 31, 2022 (unaudited)

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Actual receipts..... | \$214,007 |
| Budget receipts | \$170,832 |
| Over (under) amount | \$43,175 |

Year-to-date receipts

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Actual receipts..... | \$1,236,777 |
| Budget receipts | \$1,195,824 |
| Over (under) anticipated amount..... | \$40,953 |

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

| | |
|--|-------------|
| 50% designated to district and Synod | \$935,114 |
| 100% designated to district operations | \$256,131 |
| 100% designated for Synod operations | \$45,532 |
| Total receipts | \$1,236,777 |

Mission receipts—2022 vs. 2021

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Mission receipts — YTD 2022 | \$1,236,777 |
| Mission receipts — YTD 2021 | \$1,296,247 |
| Over (under) last year | (\$59,470) |

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

June 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| New investments | \$1,430,657 |
| Withdrawals..... | \$2,864,071 |
| Net increase (decrease)..... | (\$1,433,414) |

Year-to-date July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| New investments | \$19,281,116 |
| Withdrawals..... | \$22,165,360 |
| Net increase (decrease)..... | (\$2,884,244) |



DISTRICT OFFICE

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