



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

Soul Care: *Go First!*

Every year Advent prepares us to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. This sacred church season cries out, “The King is coming!” It reminds us that Jesus came first by way of the womb and manger.

You might say Advent is a reminder that Jesus goes first — of how He went first from heaven to earth. That He might save us, Jesus goes first in a very profound way. He humbled Himself and became human, walked around in our flesh and bore our sin. The apostle Paul put it this way:

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law. GAL. 4:4-5

Thus Advent is a celebratory and preparatory time of waiting and watching. It communicates the message of hope we have through Christ.

The color associated with this season is blue. It's the color of the sky and helps convey this powerful message. Namely, our faith and “life together” rests on



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

the hope that Jesus Christ, who came into history assuming our flesh, will also return on the last day of time from that same blue sky He ascended long ago (see logo below and last month's Talking Points).

This is the hope at the heart of the *Go First!* initiative. For us poor, sin-ridden souls — we who are guilt afflicted and shame-ridden — Jesus

goes first. He so intensely loves every soul that has walked the face of this planet that He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary. The color of His redeeming blood captures the second block of the *Go First!* logo.

As His blood stained the cross red, the redemption He won for you

See **MESSAGE**, Page 2



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

baptismally stains you with His everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. That is the emphasis of this second block in the *Go First!* logo. It highlights the soul care that the church gives to others is rooted in how our Lord Jesus Christ goes first to care for our souls.

Lutherans have a tremendous confession of faith that catechizes and strengthens believers to bear up under the pressures and temptations that come from the devil, the world and our sinful nature. Likewise, we confess that day by day we need the care of Christ for the wounds and heartaches we suffer in this fallen world. We sin and we are sinned against. Week after week, we must deal with the guilt and

the shame, along with the hurt and the heartache, that comes from living in a broken world.

But the good news is Jesus cares for our hurting and afflicted souls here and now. Through His Word and Sacrament, we hear of and receive the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin (1 JOHN 1:7); it removes our guilt and puts away our shame. It gives us our identity. It fills us with hope, and it leads us forward with courage and confidence.

There are so many hurting and lost souls who need the compassion and healing of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus went first for you, you are free to go first to care for the hurting and souls of this world — those who are “lost” as well as those already “found.” All souls are precious to our Lord. You are free to paint a picture blue with the hope of

Christ and red with the redemption of His blood. You are free to *Go First!* and declare the King is coming!



Photos Erik M. Lunsford



The Minnesota South District office will be closed Dec. 23, 26 and 30.

Congratulations!



Andrew Dramstad was installed as DCE at St. John's, Sherburne, on Oct. 9.



Sean Martens, district Assistant to the President, Education and Commissioned Ministers, is pictured with Brenda Lovhaug, director of Loving Shepherd Early Learning Center.

Loving Shepherd Early Learning Center, Golden Valley, is the first Minnesota early childhood center to receive National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) with the new process specifically developed for early childhood schools. The NLSA early childhood process is officially recognized by the State of Minnesota and has the same standing as National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAECY), the accrediting body most

widely known and respected.

NLSA programs are eligible for a streamlined process to earn a Four Star Parent Aware Rating. Early childhood centers can receive the full benefits from the state programs without having to subscribe to secular accrediting agencies. Lutheran early childhood centers can instead choose to be schools of quality in a decidedly Lutheran context in all aspects of their program.

On Oct. 23, Redeemer, New Ulm, celebrated its 75th anniversary. We praise God for the many blessings poured out upon this congregation! Pictured are Redeemer pastors past and present at the celebration, from left, Revs. Grant Bode (2003-present), Alfred Luehmann (1975-83) and Keith Wachter (1983-93).



Rev. Howie Krienke celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination into the pastoral ministry on Oct. 8. He currently serves at Zion Lutheran Church, Hopkins, as a visitation pastor. He previously served St. Paul, Beach, N.D., and St. Peter, Belfield, N.D. Pastor Krienke and his wife, Linda, have four children. Thank you for your many years of service to our Lord!

A legacy of teachers

LUTHERAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION CONVOCATION

Oct. 6-8 • Milwaukee

One of my favorite parts of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA) convocation is the opportunity to reconnect with others and to be refreshed. As a product of Lutheran schools, I am proud to be a part of a strong legacy of Lutheran educators who started that faith formation as a student at Immanuel Lutheran School, affectionately known as Silo, in Lewiston.

When I am at the LEA convocation, I have the chance to see many of our former students carrying on in ministry. And the thought that was impactful to me this year in particular was to see how far the mission of our school truly extends. We have former students now serving in Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and in several locations in the Minnesota South District. Through the extended work of these individuals, we're making disciples for life throughout the Midwest.

I also really appreciate gathering together with some of my own teachers I had as a student in elementary school, and seeing colleagues that have taken calls and relocated to other states. This year at LEA we decided to take advantage of a photographer who was in the exhibit area. We spread the word to any teacher who had a connection to Immanuel – Silo and took pictures of current and former staff members. It was neat to be able to introduce current and former staff to one another and know we share a common bond of all having been at Immanuel at one point or another.

The connection to Lutheran educators from near and far is one of the greatest things about LEA. We're reminded we are all in this together, serving our Lord!

Submitted by Emily Anderson
Administrative Assistant,
Immanuel Lutheran School – Silo



Pictured above and below are current and former educators of Immanuel Lutheran School – Silo, Lewiston (parenthesis includes where former Silo educators are now serving).

Above, from left, (seated) Kristen Mueller, Emily Anderson, Krista Hillman (St. Peters, Reedsburg, Wis.), Deb Gebhardt (St. John's, Seward, Neb.), Jill Meinert, Tannis Steinberg; (standing) Carly Ebersole (Immanuel, Wentzville, Mo.), Katie Paszkiewicz (St. Martin's, Winona), Amy Triplett, Trisha Schultz, Kim Burns (Peace, Antigo, Wis.); Paul Wickre (Rochester Central, Rochester); Kevin Meyer and Felicia Meyer. Missing from the photo is Julie Mueller, (Emmaus, Fort Wayne, Ind.).



From left, (seated) Laura Ellinghuysen (St. John's, Corcoran), Sofia Sandcork (Concordia University, St. Paul, student), LaDonna (Ressie) Peterson (Immanuel, Lakefield), Emily Anderson (Silo); (standing) Kyle Peterman (St. John's, Corcoran), Gretchen (Mauer) Gosch (Zion, Dennison, Iowa), Felicia Meyer (Silo), Ramona (Wachholz) Ragland (St. Paul, Westlake, Ohio). Missing from the photo is Megan Tews (Sheboygan Area Lutheran High School, Sheboygan, Wis.).





Rochester Central Lutheran School educators who attended the LEA Convocation are Gabby Reese, Lonnie Strohschein, Danielle Thomas, Dan Kuball, Katie O'Brien, Tim Gullicksrud, Cindy Anderson, Elizabeth Homme, Kim Schauer, Paul Wickre, Kathy Schroeder, Gretchen Schwartz, Lynn Schoppers, Matt Meier, Becky Gustafson, Missy Tjosaas, Stephanie Murray, Christin Fry, Kathrine Rieck, Corey Nelson, Trevor Redlin, Zeffie Woods, Bailey Bautch and Carol Wickre.



Pastors' wives gather for 'REST AND REFUGE'

Pastors' wives have a unique role in the lives of congregations. Each year, they enjoy a retreat together to collaborate and refresh. This year's retreat was held Oct. 7-8 in Belle Plaine.

Author Deb Burma (third from left), herself a pastor's wife, led the attendees through her book, "Be Still and Know: A Study of Rest and Refuge," which was also the theme of the weekend. Thank you for supporting your pastor's wife throughout the year!

Home devotions for Advent

LCMS Worship offers Advent devotions that fix our attention on the three comings of Christ:

- Once in the flesh;
- Today in His Word and Sacraments; and
- On the Last Day for judgment and resurrection — all to save us.



You are invited to make use of these devotions as you prepare for the Feast of the Nativity later this month. You may wish to use an Advent wreath. Light one candle the first week, two the second week, three the third week and four the fourth week. If a rose candle is used, it is lit the third week for Gaudete ("rejoice") Sunday.

LCMS Worship also offers a variety of other Advent-themed resources. Find them all at lcms.org/advent.



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

The greatest gift

Sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, for the past 38 years, our family has sent out a Christmas letter. We share the events of the past year and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and happy new year.



Lisa Kamrath
LWML District President

It is fun to read through Christmas letters from long ago and review what life was like with five younger sons and how busy we seemed back then. So many things have changed over the years. The boys have become men, husbands and fathers. They no longer live at home but have their own homes, some near and some far. They have their own families and are raising our grandchildren. The house has become quieter ... except when they all come home.

And even though our lives have changed, God has not changed. God continues to be faithful, true, forgiving and sure. As we celebrate Jesus coming

to earth as a baby, dying on the cross to redeem us and rising from the grave to overcome sin, death and the devil, we know our hope of eternal life is secure. That is the greatest gift already given to us, and it is what we celebrate during this season.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **JOHN 1:14**

God's greatest gift to man was the gift of His Son. It's not a gift that we earned, but one that was lovingly and lavishly given to us so we could have forgiveness of our sins and an eternity spent with Jesus in heaven.

Share that message with the people you spend time with this Advent and Christmas seasons. Please include it in your Christmas cards and make it part of your gift-giving. We have the greatest gift of all to share with everyone around us. The next time someone says, "Merry Christmas," respond with "Yes, it is! Let me tell you why ..."

Merry Christmas!

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Oct. 31, 2022 (unaudited)

Actual receipts.....\$165,870
Budget receipts.....\$170,832
Over (under) amount.....(\$4,962)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....\$1,673,594
Budget receipts.....\$1,708,320
Over (under) anticipated amount.....(\$34,726)

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod ..\$1,291,451
100% designated to district operations ...\$328,224
100% designated for Synod operations\$53,919
Total receipts.....\$1,673,594

Mission receipts—2022 vs. 2021

Mission receipts — YTD 2022.....\$1,673,594
Mission receipts — YTD 2021.....\$1,788,703
Over (under) last year.....(\$115,109)

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

September 2022

New investments.....\$1,517,100
Withdrawals.....\$1,420,625
Net increase (decrease).....\$96,475

Year-to-date July 1, 2022–Sept. 30, 2022

New investments.....\$3,958,733
Withdrawals.....\$4,217,190
Net increase (decrease).....(\$258,457)



DISTRICT OFFICE

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Seniors attend a gathering at Camp Omega on Sept. 20.

S.A.G.E.S. returns with mini gatherings

Saints Alive, Growing, Ever Serving (S.A.G.E.S.), the older adult ministry of the Minnesota South District, is back! After canceling the annual May Gatherings in Mankato for the past three years, an alternative format was created and offered. It took the form of one day Mini-Gatherings in various locations around the district: Concordia Academy, Roseville (July 17); Mayer Lutheran High School, Mayer (Aug. 7); Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rochester (Aug. 17); and Camp Omega, Waterville (Sept. 20).

The featured presenter, Rev. Mark Jeske, senior pastor of St. Marcus, Milwaukee, and former speaker of the "Time of Grace" program, had agreed to be the

featured speaker for the 2020-2022 Gatherings, which were all canceled. However, the SAGES Board is thankful to Pastor Jeske for his willingness to participate in this alternate format. He produced a three-part video series, "Ministry With, To, and By Seniors." At the host locations, trained leaders introduced each video segment and facilitated large- and small-group discussions following the viewings. Lunch and breaks were included.

The response to these Mini-Gatherings was encouraging and heartwarming! There was a mix of people who had previously attended a Gathering and those who had not. Old friends and new acquaintances came together to

hear new ideas and share experiences as fruitful topical discussions were intermixed with enjoyable fellowship.

The SAGES Board thanks all who attended, the facilitators and the host facilities. Plans are underway for a full in-person Gathering May 1-2, 2023, with Dr. Rich Bimler as featured presenter. Dr. Bimler served as president/CEO of Wheat Ridge Ministries for 15 years, as a ministry consultant with Lutheran Church Charities, and is the author of "Joyfully Aging," published by Concordia Publishing House.

Pastor Jeske's 3-part video series is available to congregations to use in their own settings as a whole series or individually. For information, contact S.A.G.E.S. at minnesotasouthsages@gmail.com.

Find out more about S.A.G.E.S. at mnsdistrict.org/sages.

Minnesota STATE BIBLE BOWL 2023

Get your teams together for the Minnesota State Bible Bowl, to be held April 1 at Concordia University, St. Paul.

The competition is open to students in grades 7-12 who attend an LCMS church or school in the Minnesota North or Minnesota South districts. The topic will be "The Life of Moses," based on Ex. 1-20 and 32-34 (ESV).

The team competition, made up of 3-4 players, is a double elimination, verbal, fast-paced quiz format. The individual competition is a written 50-question,

multiple-choice test. There are no limits for four-person teams per church, but there is a limit of 3 three-person teams per church.

The cost is only \$40 per team! Send the registration fee (checks payable to MN State Bible Bowl) and the names of each participant **by March 15** to Rev. Rudy Maurer; c/o St. John Lutheran Church; P.O. Box 37; Good Thunder, MN 53037-0037.

For more information, contact Pastor Maurer at 507-278-3169 or visit mnbiblebowl.org.

Our blessed Lutheran camps

Do you have any fond memories of going to a Lutheran camp? We are fortunate to have two such treasures in Minnesota — **Camp Omega** on Horseshoe Lake and **Lutheran Island Camp** in Henning.

My first experience going to camp was during junior high school. We traveled from the Twin Cities down to Camp Omega on a Friday evening and returned on Sunday afternoon. It was a time of learning about our faith mixed in with some creative games and fun. We learned new songs around the campfire and dinner table.

On another weekend trip back in the 1970s, our church hosted a camping party with tents, pop-up trailers, travel trailers and small, van-style motor-homes. We didn't have all the amenities of today's campers, but enjoyed the out-in-the woods experience. One of our pastors drove down to conduct a worship service for us. I still have fond memories of those days.

When it came time for my children to

experience Lutheran camp, my wife and I returned to Camp Omega. We made use of its weekend camps that fit our busy schedule. Our children always came back excited and bubbling over from the experience.

I was recently talking to a young man at our church. I was telling him I was headed up to Lutheran Island Camp for Clean-up Weekend. His eyes lit up as he told me that in a few weeks he would be going up to camp for his school's yearly Outdoor Education program. We had made a great connection.

It has been a few years since I was last at camp, but I was as excited as he was. My excitement came from anticipating what had changed since my last visit. Upon arriving at camp on a Friday evening, I reminisced and gave thanks for those who saw a need and completed the projects.

Today, our two Lutheran camps are needed more than ever. While the camps may have started as summer camp programs, they are now open

year-round for all ages. Several years ago, I attended a mens retreat and a father/son weekend. Each trip was a faith walk. Many today visit the camps to spend a few quiet moments away from our busy lives. Why not schedule your next church retreat at one of our camps? At the same time consider doing a service project.

Our church body joyfully serves our communities. Camp Omega and Lutheran Island Camp are also part of our LCMS community. If God has blessed you like me over the years, we all have the physical resources, tools and talents that can be used to serve.

Please join me and others to give our children, teenagers and families a place to find rest and renewal in a beautiful, Minnesota-friendly atmosphere.

When I look at our Lutheran camps, it brings me back to my teenage years and my first camp experience. As a grandfather today, I look forward to the day I can send my own grandchildren to camp and listen to their stories, too.

Submitted by Rev. Peter Gueldner
Pastor, King of Glory, Blaine,
and Alive!, Monticello (Interim)



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we are humbly reminded that God's love is unending and His mercy endures forever.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund
› where investments build ministry

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