

Why be Thankful at a Time like This?



Few in our world would affirm that this year is a year of celebrating in the slightest way. Emotions have turned sour in most people and nerves are frayed. But the Lord who did warn us that in this world we would have tribulations also reminds us that He has overcome the world. (Gospel of John). Everything that happens, therefore, is under His control. He has a purpose in what happens even if we cannot always see it; and admittedly it is hard indeed to see a hand of blessing in the year of 2020. But it is there.

In fact, let me tell you of some things I have observed in our New England Congregations and among our professional Church Workers.

1. Our Pastors tell me that, yes, they are indeed feeling the strain of things – they have spent months learning technologies and they have done everything including preaching to an empty Church on Sunday due to restrictions while the service and message are video-streamed or taped. But they also indicate that because they are home a lot more often they are spending a bit more quality time with family. One Pastor told me that he takes long walks with his wife – he never did that before. Perhaps as the Coronavirus has altered your schedule as well you might have found a slower pace of things and spent more time in the quietude of home rather than the hectic endlessly driven lifestyles we all knew a year ago.
2. School Enrollments are up – We appreciate our Church members in our congregations who work in education and teach. But because the government has wrestled with school schedules and how best to approach a Coronavirus invasion of the teaching environment many parents have turned to our elementary schools in New England. A year ago a number of our schools were struggling with enrollment and were facing a bleak future with prospects of closing (our pre-schools admittedly still confront this reality to some degree). But in a way none of us anticipated I have heard phrases at our elementary schools such as: We haven't had these numbers in two decades – we have waiting lists for some of our classes. Only the Lord could have used a pandemic to help our school enrollment, grim as that pandemic is and whose end is something for which we pray.
3. We are reaching people in different ways. Pastors who might have gotten 10-20 members to show for a Bible Study at Church report that they have fifty to one hundred viewing the same online, or joining in on a weekly devotion in record numbers. One Church reported to me of a man who now lives in Austria overseas. He said he hadn't been in Church in years – but he watches the livestream of the worship every week now. A sister in the Lord who is a Pastor's wife said something wonderful: "The Lord has driven us out of our Churches." She

NED NEWS is published for members and friends of the LCMS churches throughout New England.

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THE MISSION OF NED is to encourage and assist its congregations in their ministry of Word and Sacrament to build up the body of Christ and to make disciples of all peoples.

Please keep all articles under 250 words. All submissions are considered available for use by the New England District for any district communication piece including digital and print.

The next deadline is January 15

Email submissions to NEDcommunications@ned-lcms.org

Digital photos need to be high resolution and unedited (no reformatting or cropping) NED Staff and Editors reserve the right to edit articles and submissions for clarity and space.

meant it not in a negative way but in a thanksgiving for the myriad of ways we are now doing outreach via technology and alternatives to physical worship in our physical buildings.

4. I myself have thrived on the GoTo meetings our District has regularly set up with our Pastors to see how things are going for them. I know nothing replaces face to face but I marvel at how I am able to speak to the Pastors of our District in one fell swoop in a GoTo meeting !! Likewise, we just had our first GoTo meeting of the Pastor's wives and that was a joy; also a much needed time that our sisters needed to have with each other. Even after the Pandemic passes by God's mercy and grace I believe I still want to do this kind of thing with our clergy and Church Workers.

5. We are sending more than ever before men and women who have chosen to begin studies for professional church work. Every month our District Interview Committee seems to have an interview with a prospective seminarian and the result is that these men have gone off or will go off soon to one of our seminaries to begin studying to be a Pastor – or via Long Distance Education which our District supports financially by the thousands of dollars --the training is coming to prospective workers here. Deaconess prospects are appearing out of nowhere and we are delightfully providing for them to begin their studies. In short, maybe these times have made some of our saints do an evaluation of their current lives and answered the question of whether Church work is for them with a big YES !

To be sure I do want an end to 2020 and an end to the Pandemic and Social upheavals of these days. But I am also in reverent awe of the Savior Who is in control, is not caught off guard, but is working even now in His wonderful way to reach us and to reach the lost. To Jesus alone be the praise!

Rev. Pres. Timothy Yeadon
New England District LC-MS

Save the Date!

New England District Convention
June 3-5, 2021 at the Sheraton Hotel, Springfield, MA

The convention will begin with the opening communion service on Thursday, June 3rd at 7:45p.m.

Convention business sessions will begin Friday morning and conclude Saturday afternoon by 2:00p.m.

Due to possible Coronavirus state regulations, further updates will be announced as we draw closer to our convention.

THE RETIREMENT PARTY THAT ALMOST WASN'T

The Rev. Paul Nielsen retired from the ministry after 27 years of faithful service at the same congregation, the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Waterville, Maine. Rev. Nielsen was a non-traditional seminary student entering Ft. Wayne at the age of 32 and graduating in 1993. He delivered his final sermon on August 30th and his retirement celebration was scheduled for September 13th. Then along came COVID-19 with all its pandemic regulations and restrictions. The party had to be scaled down and revamped. Several venues were selected and then changed. The next to last one actually closed its doors and canceled just weeks before the event.



Finally, the Proper Pig, a restaurant in Waterville offered its outdoor tent. By scheduling three sessions for 40 people each, each session with the same program, the dinner occurred without a hitch. The farewell remarks and presentations were delivered via recorded video and all guests wore face masks and maintained social distancing.

Farewell greetings came from LCMS President Matthew Harrison, NED President Timothy Yeadon, Rev. Alan Taylor, Rev. Ben Akers, and Rev. Nielsen's children Eric and Sarah. All present agreed that it was a fine reception and a good way, in trying times, to offer their well wishes and goodbyes.

Thanks be to God for His continued blessings.

The GIFT OF LCEF DURING THIS COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LCEF has been able to help our church workers, congregations, schools and organizations with resources to help them to continue ministry during this COVID-19 pandemic. These are just a few...

- Formed a COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) to seek out the needs of borrowers
- Deferred \$5.47 million dollars in loan payments for those struggling borrowers
- Provided online streaming kits within the districts
- Providing over 20 "Ministry Moment" videos designed to move ministries forward
- Hosted Educational webinars with subject matter focused on early childhood centers
- Donated \$1million dollars, through Synod's Soldiers of the Cross to help our church workers

LCEF has been blessed with gracious investors, and it is because of those investors that LCEF can share our love for Christ. The New England District gives thanks to God for the availability of these funds to support our church workers, congregations and schools.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund

> new england district

LCEF's CHURCH IMPROVEMENT LOANS

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) offers Church Improvement Loans to LCMS congregations that can be used for critical repairs that can lead to substantial damage if not fixed in a timely manner; upgrades that enhance your church's appearance and comfort as well as projects that improve energy efficiency and save money in the long term. The Church Improvement Program and Loan is designed to help churches fund critical church repairs and upgrades.

If you would like more information in regards to LCEF Church Improvement Loans as well as our regular traditional loans, please contact Brenda Bacon at 413-783-0131 ext. 10 or Brenda.Bacon@lcef.org.

For additional information, please visit LCEF's website at <https://lcef.org/church-improvement/>



HAPPY *Thanksgiving*

"Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" — Psalm 106:1

Lutheran Church Extension Fund is thankful to support ministries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by ensuring that financial resources and related services are available now and in the future.

We pray that God will continue to bless you in this Thanksgiving season.

 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**
> where investments build ministry

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MESSIAH LYNNFIELD'S LCC COMFORT DOG LYDIA BEING FEATURED ON NBC BOSTON

Lydia Comfort Dog of Messiah Lutheran in Lynnfield, MA has been doing virtual visits during the pandemic shut down. With the loosening of restrictions in some Massachusetts towns, Lydia was invited to visit in person with residents of Colonial Gardens in Beverly, MA. The residents met in a large common room so social distancing was possible. Christa Leger, the activities director for Colonial Gardens, said that depression has been a very real struggle for the residents. Visits of any kind have been restricted for 7 months due to the coronavirus.

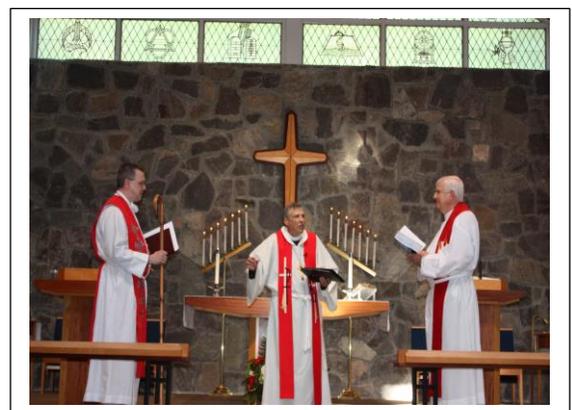
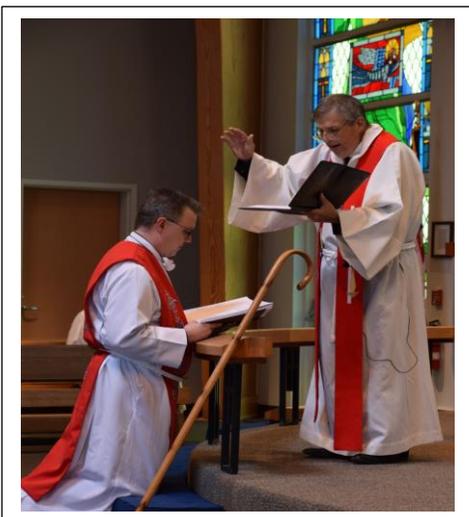
An added excitement to the visit was the presence of a camera crew & reporter Nia Hamm from NBC TV Boston. They were doing a story on Comfort Dogs coming back to work after the complete lockdowns of the pandemic. This link will take you to the story that aired on TV.

<https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/therapy-dogs-sidelined-by-coronavirus-pandemic-returning-to-work/2210991/>

We continue to pray that the coronavirus will be contained soon & that the personal visits so important to the emotional health of our elderly will resume. We invite your prayers as well.

REV. AARON STINNETT INSTALLATION

On Sunday Morning, August 9, 2020, the Rev. Aaron Stinnett, was installed as the new pastor of Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Smithfield, RI. New England District President, Rev. Timothy Yeadon officiated at the installment and Rev. Robert Schipul assisted. A special message was read by the Head Elder David Droste from former Interim Pastor Rev. David Boyd in honor of the calling of Pastor Stinnett to serve Our Redeemer. "God grant you, Pastor Stinnett, the strength, the courage, the boldness, the humility to announce, in good times and bad, the Good News of Jesus Christ, and serve His Meal to hearts hungry for the peace of God that is beyond all human understanding."



REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNOUNCES DEDICATION

The Pastor and People of Redeemer Lutheran Church 321 Village Hill Road of Lebanon, CT are pleased to announce the dedication of their Memorial Park on Sunday September 13th. The park is where the original footprint of the Church used to be. The masonry wall backdrop was part of the original foundation of the church, and is located where the Sanctuary used to rest. In August of 2012, the Congregation moved the church building from its original site to its current location across the street. A plaque on the wall shows the garden/park is dedicated to the memory of the courageous Charter Members who purchased the vacant Village Hill one-room school house and created a Church that stood there from 1944 until 2012, and continues to serve the spiritual needs of God's people. The site has two park benches, one dedicated to the loving memory of Eric Rudin, son of Ralph and Elizabeth Rudin. The other bench was donated by Walter Stebner in honor and loving memory of his family. Town Residents are welcome to come and enjoy the simple beauty of the Village Hill area, and, to find spiritual peace and solitude in this holy place.



CHRIST ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL



Concordia Theological Seminary's Christ Academy: Timothy and Phoebe School program took place this summer from July 26-August 2, 2020. Christ Academy consists of three important elements: confessional catechesis, liturgical worship and a fun life together. This tradition of learning, worship, and fun provides an incredible experience for young men and women in high school, especially for those considering a future in church work.

We were delighted to have one student from your district attend Christ Academy this summer! The student was Melia Manor, who is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in New Hartford, CT. You will find her photo attached to this email, which you can share or distribute as you are able. We thank you for your work and service to all the congregations, pastors, and members of the New England District!

In Christ, The Christ Academy staff

LWML



It is with joy that I am able to report that we have funded our first Mission Project. Our treasurer has sent a check for \$5,000 to Orphan Grain Train, New England Branch. Our prayer is that our gift will be a blessing to the many who receive the much-needed supplies shipped by Orphan Grain Train.

We are currently working on our next Mission Project: Reach Me! Teach Me! Trinity Christian School in Keene, NH. Trinity School reaches out to the children and families in their community with the love of Jesus and the Good News of salvation. How important is their mission? It has eternal consequences! How important is it that we support them with our mite offerings? In last fall's issue, President Yeadon cited that the top five most post-Christian cities in America were in New England. The New England states consistently appear at the bottom of any list of the most "churched" or "religious" states in our country. Thank you for your past support of our mission efforts, and I would encourage you, as you have been blessed, to help us support Trinity School's outreach to the mission field of New England.

Donations can be sent to our Treasurer, Susan Lastowski, P.O. Box 626, Holyoke, MA 01041.

More information can be found on our website, lwml-ned.org. During this time, we place our trust in our loving Father as St. Paul reminds us in Romans, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." Romans 8:35, 37.

Sharon Dever
LWML-NED President

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New England District Circuit and Regional Breakdown

REGION I

REV. JAMES BUTLER, VICE-PRESIDENT

CIRCUIT NO. 1

- CIRCUIT VISITOR — Rev. Don Colageo, Immanuel Lutheran, Manchester, NH
- Pastor Christopher Bartell, Regeneration Lutheran, Exeter, NH
- Pastor Edwin Harkey, Trinity Lutheran, Keene, NH
- Pastor George Ruwisch and Associate Pastor Bryan Stecker, Grace Lutheran, Nashua, NH
- Pastor Dagan Siefert, Our Redeemer Lutheran, New Ipswich, NH
- Pastor David Mueller, Good Shepherd, Peterborough, NH
- Vicar Ed Schneeflock, Christ Lutheran, Troy, NH
- Pastor Paul Nielsen, Hope Lutheran Church, Bangor, ME
- Pastor Timothy Sandeno, Redeemer Lutheran, Gorham, ME
- Pastor Ben Akers, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Waterville, ME
- VACANT, Williamstown Lutheran Church, Williamstown, VT
- Pastor Matthew Rasmussen, Community Lutheran, S. Burlington, VT

CIRCUIT NO. 2

- CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Paul Gramit, Trinity Lutheran, Clinton, MA
- Pastor Eric Sahlberg, Mt. Calvary Lutheran, Acton, MA
- Pastor Jonathan Manor, Lutheran Church of the Savior, Bedford, MA
- Pastor David Jacoby, Messiah Lutheran, Fitchburg, MA
- Pastor Jeremy Pekari, Messiah Lutheran, Lynnfield, MA
- also serving Messiah Lutheran is Specific Ministry Pastor Dave Brezina
- Pastor Steve Vekasy, Trinity Lutheran, W. Roxbury, MA
- VACANT, Our Savior Lutheran, Topsfield, MA
- Pastor Peter Gregory, Our Savior, Westminster, MA

CIRCUIT NO. 3

- CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Paul Lantz, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Hanover, MA
- Pastor James Hopkins, First Lutheran, Boston, MA
- VACANT, St. James Lutheran, Canton, MA
- Pastor James Butler, St. Luke's Lutheran, Dedham, MA
- Pastor Steve Law, Lutheran Church of Wollaston, Quincy, MA
- VACANT, Lutheran Church of The Way, Raynham, MA
- Pastor Joe Nollet, Christ Lutheran, Scituate, MA
- Pastor Leon Schultz, St. Paul Lutheran, Providence, RI
- Pastor Aaron Stinnett, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Smithfield, RI

REGION II

REV. SCOTT SCHUETT, VICE-PRESIDENT

CIRCUIT NO. 4

- CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Michael Coons, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Enfield, CT
- VACANT, St. Paul's Lutheran, New Hartford, CT also served by Specific Ministry Pastor Kevin Mongeau
- Pastor Jim Rice, Trinity Lutheran, Easthampton, MA
- Pastor Randall Bessette, First Lutheran, Holyoke, MA
- VACANT, Trinity Lutheran, Springfield, MA
- Pastor D. David Riley, St. John's, Westfield, MA
- Pastor Randall Pekari, Our Savior, South Windsor, CT
- VACANT, Good Shepherd, Suffield, CT
- VACANT, Lutheran Church of the Deaf, W. Hartford, CT

CIRCUIT NO. 5

- CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Phillip Booe, Christ Lutheran, Amston, CT
- VACANT, Hope Lutheran, Storrs, CT
- VACANT, Trinity Lutheran, Ashaway, RI
- Served by Pastor Bob Mikulastik, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Coventry, CT
- Pastor Timothy Gordish, Faith Lutheran, Groton, CT
- Pastor Scott Schuett, Redeemer Lutheran, Lebanon, CT
- Pastor Volker Heide, Lutheran Church of Madison, Madison, CT
- Pastor Greg Dwyer, Zion Lutheran, Manchester, CT
- Pastor Mark Valigorsky, St. Matthew's, New Britain, CT
- Served by EILT Pastor Gem Gabriel, Our Redeemer Lutheran, New London, CT
- Pastor Paul Scheyder, Christ Lutheran, Niantic, CT
- Pastor Steve Bartell, Bethany Lutheran, W. Hartford, CT

REGION III

REV. ROBERT BEINKE, VICE-PRESIDENT

CIRCUIT NO. 6

- △ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Mark Clow, Grace Lutheran, Middletown, CT
- Pastor Kevin Karner, Immanuel Lutheran, Bristol, CT
- Pastor Scott MacDonald, St. John's Lutheran, Meriden, CT
- Served by Pastor Kevin Mongeau, Shepherd of the Hills, Morris, CT
- Served by Pastor Greg Wismar, St. Paul Lutheran, Naugatuck, CT
- Pastor Christian Bunzel, Trinity Lutheran, New Milford, CT
- Pastor Joel Kotila, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Terryville, CT
- Pastor Robert Hass, Zion Lutheran, Wallingford, CT
- Pastor Joel Kotila, St. John's, Waterbury, CT

CIRCUIT NO. 7

- ▲ CIRCUIT VISITOR — Pastor Rob Morris, Christ the King, Newtown, CT
- VACANT, Holy Cross Lutheran, Trumbull, CT
- VACANT, Zion Lutheran, Bridgeport, CT
- Pastor David Rowold, Cheshire Lutheran, Cheshire, CT
- Associate Pastor Christopher Chandler, Immanuel Lutheran, Danbury, CT
- Pastor Justin Smith, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, New Fairfield, CT
- Pastor Evan Scamman, First Lutheran, Greenwich, CT
- Pastor Robert Beinke, St. Peter's Lutheran, Norwalk, CT
- Pastor Jacob Benson, Zion Lutheran, Orange, CT

