



FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

My dad, Bill, has been struggling with his health since Christmas. Several awkward falls, removal of an infected gallbladder, and complications post-surgery have caused his hospitalization for three out of the last six weeks. In between he has gone to my brother Greg's home to convalesce, and the other siblings have taken turns to travel and lend assistance in his recovery.

As I sang the verse above which announces the Gospel during Lent, the image of returning to spend time with Dad ran through my mind. Dad was not always "slow to anger" but had plenty of opportunity to show mercy, grace, and steadfast love.

Now let me first acknowledge that there are many people who struggle with their relationship with their earthly father or the lack thereof. The consequences of sin in this world are heartbreaking. My heart cries for you if this is your personal struggle. No earthly father is perfect. My father is a wonderful example of a baptized child of God, but he is not perfect. My children will freely admit that I am not perfect. But our Heavenly Father is. He is perfect, slow to anger, merciful, gracious, and abounding in steadfast love.

Situations in our lives, events in our world, and sin in our hearts lead us to question if He truly is abounding in steadfast love. But the beauty of His creation, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of His Son, and the gift of faith poured out in Word, water, and Supper, the love and communion of His holy family the Church, just to name a few things, clearly show His abounding, steadfast love.

Lent is another call of God to return. In Mark 1, Jesus calls us to repent and believe the Gospel. That word *repent* is found throughout the scriptures. We tend to think of repent as a word of sorrow and regret for things done. But the real sense of this word is to turn around...to return. God doesn't love us for the grovel. He simply loves. He paid the price for our forgiveness. He gifts you with faith. He nurtures that faith.

Return. Repent. There is no demand. There is no threat. There is no fear. There is simply a gift. He empowers our faith and return.

I am planning another trip, another sibling turn, to be with Dad. I am glad to do so. I am honored to do so. He welcomes me with mercy, grace, and steadfast love. He is even a little slower to anger.

May God bless you in this time of Lent as you return to the Lord your God and His mercy, grace, and love.

Renewed in Christ,
Richard Snow, President, Nebraska District LCMS

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS DEADLINE

Thrivent investors should act now to designate their Thrivent Choice Dollars before the March 31 deadline. Like many District congregations and schools, the Nebraska District LCMS is eligible for your Choice Dollars, and we put them to work in support of multicultural ministry, campus ministry, church worker care, and more throughout the Nebraska District.

ABOUT US

Nebraska District LCMS
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152 S Columbia Ave
Seward, NE 68434

Contact us at
1-888-643-2961
or info@ndlcms.org

News items, congregational anniversaries, and ministry stories for the *Reporter* are always welcome. Please submit items to reporter@ndlcms.org or by mail. Visit our website at <http://www.ndlcms.org> for more information or to subscribe to the *Reporter* by email.

NEBRASKA DISTRICT CONVENTION DELAYED UNTIL JUNE 2022

As announced on February 16, the LCMS National Convention has been delayed for one year to 2023. For more information from Synod, visit <https://blogs.lcms.org/2021/congregations-vote-to-delay-synod-convention/>. In response to Synod's delay, **our Nebraska District Board of Directors has approved a delay of the District Convention from 2021 to June 24-25, 2022.**

This delay will create many changes in the preparation and information required for the convention. Please read through the following carefully.

TERMS: Those currently in office will serve an extra year on their term, now ending in 2022. The regular 3-year triennium will continue from there for those elected in 2022.

NOMINATIONS: All current nominations submitted for 2021 will stand. Individuals on the ballot will be contacted to confirm willingness and eligibility to remain on the ballot. Nominations for both processes will reopen for new submissions. Congregations who have submitted their certified nominations for Process #2 (District President/Vice Presidents/Board of Directors) will have opportunity to submit amended nominations. Congregations who did not submit nominations will have opportunity within the new timeline.

CIRCUIT FORUMS: Circuits will need to meet (in-person or virtually) to re-affirm or change their selection for Circuit Visitor by January 31, 2022.

OVERTURES: Overtures submitted for 2021 will stand. Those who have submitted overtures will be contacted to confirm that they would still like those overtures to be presented. The submission period will open September 2021 through January 2022 for any new overtures.

DELEGATE INFORMATION FORMS: A letter will be sent to all congregations noting information that was submitted for 2021 with names of certified delegates (pastor, lay, alternate, lay advisory, etc.). Congregations will either need to re-certify those same delegates or submit a new form.

WORKBOOK REPORTS: A request will be sent to all who submitted reports to update and add to their report, so it includes the additional year.

Due to the many changes in response to this delay, it will be more important than ever for congregations and church workers to carefully read all communications that are sent regarding convention, paying special attention to all deadlines. If you have questions, please contact Candi Menze, convention coordinator, at candim@ndlcms.org or 402-643-2961 x1010. Updated information will also be provided on our website at <http://convention.ndlcms.org/>

CONGREGATION STATISTICAL REPORTS

Church offices should have received notification of their login information needed to submit an electronic congregation statistical report for 2020. Each congregation is encouraged to complete the online form and submit it by **the deadline of March 31**. Congregations are encouraged to keep a printout of the information submitted for their records. This report will allow convention assessments to be made, so prompt attention is appreciated. Contact Kim Hofer at the District Office at 888-643-2961, ext. 1014, or kimh@ndlcms.org with questions.

FREE SPANISH RESOURCES FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation (a recognized service organization of the LCMS) has a variety of free new resources available in the Spanish language, including *Luther's Small Catechism*, *The Bible with Small Catechism* (combined volume), *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, and "Jesus Never Fails" devotional tract. These materials are available to any LCMS church, mission or individual who wants to share the Good News with their Spanish-speaking neighbors. To order, send an email to info@LHFmissions.org or call the LHF office at (800)554-0723.

IT'S TIME TO START APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND TUITION ASSISTANCE

Nebraska District financial support is available to anyone preparing for full-time service in the church. Applicants must be enrolled at a Concordia University System school; Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; or Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Applicants must demonstrate financial need and have completed their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The Concordia University System consists of the 7 LCMS-operated universities. Application forms may be printed from the link below or requested from the universities and seminaries. The deadline for completing the application process is May 1 for the first semester and December 1 for the second semester. Only one application is needed per academic year. Access the application on our website at <http://www.ndlcms.org/education/scholarships/>.

There are also several other scholarships offered through various groups in the Nebraska District.

LWML Nebraska North Scholarships: The LWML Nebraska North provides scholarships for students preparing for careers in full-time church work on the basis of residence in the LWML North region, financial need, and full-time enrollment in the Concordia Education System. The Nebraska District Student Aid Committee administers these grants, and the application is the same as the District Aid Application Form. That form may be obtained from the financial aid offices of the universities and seminaries, with May 1 and December 1 deadlines.

LWML Nebraska South Scholarships: The LWML Nebraska South offers assistance to students from the LWML Nebraska South region who are going into full-time church work. Information and applications may be obtained from the student's local LWML society, at www.lwmlnesouth.org, or from Randi Warneke at 1228 Heritage Dr., Hastings, NE 68901, or rjwarneke@hotmail.com. Completed applications are due June 1.

Nebraska District Lutheran Laymen's League Scholarships: The Nebraska District Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) provides scholarships for students studying for full-time church work, including pastor, DCE, DCM, deaconess, liturgical arts, and education. Applications for the current school year are now available. For more information, guidelines, and an application, visit <http://www.ndlcms.org/education/scholarships/> to print and complete the forms. Applicants may also contact: Virginia Von Seggern at 87127 512th Ave, Orchard, NE 68764; 402-655-2254 or 402-360-4060; or virginia.vonseggern251@gmail.com. Application deadline is May 22 of each year.

The Gil and Blondie Vogt Scholarship Fund: The Gil and Blondie Vogt Scholarship Fund is designed to assist Nebraska students preparing for LCMS church vocations at any LCMS university or seminary. An applicant for this scholarship must be a current resident of Nebraska; a member of an LCMS congregation; pursuing educational training in preparation for an LCMS-related vocational position; attend an LCMS college, university or seminary; demonstrate a substantial financial need; and must not be in a vicarage year at seminary. Requests for an application can be made after January 1 for the following school year. Application deadline is April 15. To request an application, contact: King of Kings Lutheran Church, attn: Vogt Scholarship Committee Chairperson, 11615 I Street, Omaha, NE 68137.

LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND TAKE HEART SCHOLARSHIP

The Take Heart Scholarship was developed for Y.I. Club members who are high school seniors and will soon advance to the next level of higher education. During these times of excitement, anxiousness, and uncertainty, "take heart!" As Christians, we cannot anticipate that life will be perfect or familiar, but when we feel that the world has become difficult, we can take comfort in knowing that our God has overcome it all!

The Take Heart Scholarship includes up to three awards of \$3,000, \$1,000 and \$500. **Applications close April 19, 2021.** Winners will be announced on May 7, 2021. Click here for further information: <https://lcef.org/scholarship/>

CALL ACTIVITY IN THE NEBRASKA DISTRICT

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Jeffrey Duncan (StL'01) Lutherans For Life, Nevada, IA, to assistant pastor, Mt. Calvary, Omaha

Calls Declined

Rev. Fred Hoover (StL'99) Christ Memorial, Malvern, PA, to Zion, Grant

Rev. Donald Peterson (FtW'05), Emmanuel, Lake View, IA, to St. Paul, West Point

Status Changes

Rev. Burt Garwood (StL'99) candidate status, Kansas District, to candidate status, Nebraska District

Installations & Ordinations

Rev. Jeffrey Duncan (StL'01) as assistant pastor, Mt. Calvary, Omaha, February 28 (Rev. Duncan will also continue his work with Lutherans For Life)

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted and Declined

None at this time

Other Transactions

Justin Bangert (S'08) candidate, Nebraska District, to candidate, Oklahoma District

Jamie Bitterman (MQ'02) candidate, removed from the roster

Ellen Glanzer (S'CQ'87) emeritus, called to glory, January 15, 2021

Riley Hubach (S'98) candidate, removed from the roster

Kimberly King (S'08) candidate, removed from the roster

Alyssa Kirby (S'14) candidate, removed from the roster

Jonathan Kohlmeier (S'95) candidate, removed from the roster

Kayla Preto (S'07) candidate, removed from the roster

Paul VonKampen (S'11) candidate, removed from the roster

Susan Warneke (SP'81) candidate, resigned from the roster

Joshua Weishaar (S'15) candidate, removed from the roster

Leah Werner (S'19) candidate, removed from the roster

Scott Wilcox (S'93) candidate, removed from the roster

Sharon Witt (S'95) candidate, removed from the roster

Tamara Witt (S'97) candidate, removed from the roster

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 8-9, 2021, Spring Pastors' Conference, Virtual, Gathering in Circuits, <http://www.ndlcms.org/pastors-conference/>

March 27, 2021, Nebraska District Lutheran Laymen's League Convention, Zion, Hastings

June 24-27, 2021, National LWML Convention, Lexington, Kentucky

October 21-22, 2021, All Professional Church Workers' Conference, Younes Center, Kearney

June 24-25, 2022, Nebraska District Convention, Younes Center, Kearney

ROSTERED CHURCH WORKER DEBT RELIEF FUND AND APPLICATION WINDOW

Student loan repayment grants will once again be available for church workers in the Spring. If you are a rostered Nebraska District church worker with at least one year of service and have an outstanding student debt from undergraduate or seminary studies, visit <http://www.ndlcms.org/rostered-church-worker-debt-relief/> for more information and the application forms.

Applications are due by May 1 of each year.

To make a donation to this fund in support of church worker debt relief, you can send a check with a note that it is for the "Church Worker Debt Retirement Fund" to:
Nebraska District LCMS
PO Box 407
Seward, NE 68434

Or you can pay online through our secure payment portal by clicking the "Donate and Pay" button at <http://www.ndlcms.org/>. Choose the option "restricted gifts" and fill in the amount of your gift and "Church Worker Debt Retirement Fund" in the space next to that.