



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA

Pastor or president?

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is a continuation of answering questions that are brought to my attention.



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

The Lord has blessed me in the past year to serve both the North Dakota District as president and the flock of St. Paul's as pastor. But I will be the first to admit that I have not been able to serve either position to the full capacity that I would desire, and I am especially not doing justice in being the husband to my wife, Doris, as I should and she deserves.

As I write this, I am working on getting things together for the district convention coming up. I just got through the busy Christmas celebration in the church and I am tired and looking forward to focusing on one or the other.

Again I say, by the time you read this, I will be either district president or pastor of St. Paul's. I will be content because I have enjoyed serving the Lord in both capacities this past year.

And now I am going to answer this month's question, brought to me by a member of St. Paul's: If I am elected as president of the North Dakota District, then God will provide another pastor for the congregation of St. Paul's.

The Lord uses His pastors to serve the congregation with a "hope and a future" for however long that may be in one location, and then maybe at another location or in another position. Maybe the pastor has reached and served all that he was called to at a congregation and now it is time for another pastor with a different personality and gifts to serve for a "a hope and a future."



The ministry should never be about the man serving as its pastor. The ministry is always about the pastor serving God's people with His Word and Sacraments. That means the Lord has plans that we do not see or know, but that we can trust that He has "plans to prosper you and not harm you."

If I am not elected, then St. Paul's will have its pastor of 16 years back in full capacity serving them with God's Word and Sacraments, as a pastor is called to do by God through the congregation.

Now as for you, the district pastors and congregations, if I am not elected district

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This month's question is:

? Pastor, what is going to happen to us if in January you are elected district president at the district convention in Dickinson?

I am writing this February *Lutheran Witness* article the day after Christmas, a month before the district convention. Therefore, at this time, I do not know if I will be the district president or if I will remain a pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minot.

Either way, I will be very content to serve the Lord wherever and however He sees fit for you, His people. For the Lord has declared and promised for all of us in Jer. 29:11:

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Shop at Amazon and support camp!

We are excited about this summer at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads. The theme for the year is "A New Creation," based on 2 Cor. 5:17:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Brochures will be delivered in the mail to congregations and past campers soon. If you would like to receive a brochure, please call 701-244-5225 or send an email to director@shretreat.org and I

will include you in the mailing.

We are also excited to announce a new way to support Shepherd's Hill while you shop online! Do you shop at *Amazon.com*? Amazon has a service called AmazonSmile, which allows you to support charitable organizations when you shop, and at no cost to you. You can designate a charity of your choice to receive .5 percent of



eligible purchases.

Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads is now one of those entities that can benefit while you shop at smile.amazon.com. Type "Shepherd's Hill Retreats Inc" in the search bar, or go to smile.amazon.com/ch/45-0436427.

In Christ
Rev. Jon Bonine, executive director

LYF SPRING RETREAT



FAITH During Times of ↑↑↑↑↑ TRANSITION



The North Dakota District Lutheran Youth Fellowship (LYF) Retreat will be held from 7 p.m., Friday, March 16, to 4 p.m., Saturday, March 17, at Chieftain Conference Center, Highway 281, in Carrington.

The retreat is for students in grades 8 and up. The registration fee is \$75, which includes breakfast, lunch, snacks and lodging.

Registration is due by Sunday, March 11.

Topics will include:

- "Storms of Change"
- "Built on the Rock"
- "Ordinary People"
- "Rooted Identity"
- "Unchanging"
- "Sharing the Rock"
- "Action Plan"
- "Know Your Identity"
- "Dig Deep Roots"

The retreat will also include a guest musician, student-led devotions, worship, a servant event and more.

For more information or to register, contact Pat Sebastian, retreat registrar, at:

- patsebbis@aol.com
- 701-471-3289
- 3000 Bernell Dr., Bismarck, ND 58503

The registration form is available at ndyouthonfire.org.



Retreat presenters (from left):

- **Sophie Semanko**
District LYF president and member of Immanuel, Fargo
- **Kelli Fiechtner**
District LYF treasurer and member of St. Andrew, West Fargo

Congregations:

Please report your stats

Congregations should have received a mailing from LCMS Rosters, Statistics and Research Services on reporting your 2017 statistics. The mailing provides information on how to submit online figures for such things as membership, worship attendance and contributions from members. Reports are due by Feb. 28.

Congratulations Austin!

Austin Bieri, a member of Concordia, Jamestown, was presented the 2017 Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) North Dakota District \$1,000 scholarship on Dec. 31 by Tami Ulland, LCEF district vice-president.

Austin attends Minnesota State University – Moorhead and is studying film production. He is very active at Concordia and serves as president of

the district Lutheran Youth Fellowship (LWF).

“Austin’s ability to successfully juggle school, work and a state office is a testament to his responsible and serving nature,” said Tammy Mullowney, Austin’s English teacher and National Honor Society advisor at Jamestown High School. Read more about Austin’s story at lcefcentral.org/news-feed.



Get convention results online

The North Dakota District Convention was held Jan. 21-24 in Dickinson. Results are not in this issue because of printing deadlines, but you can find out what happened, including the election for district president, at nodaklcms.org/district-convention.



MESSAGE

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president, then God has a plan with whomever He places in that position through you and for your “hope and a future,” and “plans to prosper you and not harm you.” Again, may it not be about the man himself serving as district president, but rather about his faithfulness with God’s Word and the Confessions we believe, teach and confess as a body of Christ in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Pray for that man to be a faithful steward of God’s Means of Grace.

I know there is one person that will be happy at the time you read this — that would be my wife, Doris. She will have her husband back to fulfill his vocation as a husband to her, a father to their children and a grandfather to their children.



Through it all, remember: we have “a hope and a future” through our Lord Jesus Christ, who removed our sins so that we may have life and salvation.

God's Grace

ANNUAL AUCTION CELEBRATION

March 10, 2018

DELTA HOTELS BY MARRIOTT FARGO
CRYSTAL BALLROOM
1635 42ND ST S, FARGO, ND 58103

REGISTRATION & PRE-SWIPE/SILENT AUCTION
5:00 PM

A PLENTIFUL ARRAY OF GOURMET HORS D'OEUVRES
5:30 - 7:30 PM

LIVE AUCTION
7:45 PM

TICKETS: \$40/PERSON
PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE OR BY
CALLING: 701-232-7747

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND BUT WOULD LIKE TO HELP
SUSTAIN THE MISSION OF GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL,
PLEASE CONTACT US AT 1025 14TH AVENUE SOUTH IN
FARGO, OR EMAIL US AT JHAGGE@GRACELS.COM.
MUST BE 18 TO ATTEND.

Grace Lutheran School
CHRIST • CHARACTER • COMMUNITY
<http://gracelutheranschool.org>

Register for DBGR luncheons in Arizona by Feb. 12

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch (DBGR) is celebrating more than 60 years of service to children and families this year. In order to accommodate its faithful donors, two DBGR Annual Donor Appreciation luncheons will be held in Arizona:

- **Wednesday, Feb. 14 • Mesa**
Apache Wells Country Club,
5601 E. Hermosa Vista Dr.
- **Thursday, Feb. 15 • Sun City West**
Briarwood Country Club,
20800 N 135th Ave.

At both luncheons, punch will be served at 11 a.m., with the program and lunch to follow. A former resident of DBGR will give a testimonial.

DBGR is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS. Its mission is to help at-risk children and families succeed in the name of Christ. As an RSO ministry partner, you are encouraged to visit DBGR's updated website at dakotaranch.org for more information on its ministry of serving youth and their families.

For luncheon reservations, you and any friends you wish to bring are asked to register by contacting DBGR's Minot office at 1-800-344-0957 or send an email to l.cole@dakotaranch.org. Please RSVP no later than Monday, Feb. 12, and indicate which luncheon you and your guests plan to attend.

See Bible come to life in Kentucky

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Fargo, invites you to join congregation members for a trip to Kentucky to visit Ark Encounter and Creation Museum.



The motorcoach leaves Bismarck at 8 a.m. on Sunday, April 15, and returns on Saturday, April 21.

Ark Encounter features a full-size Noah's Ark, built according to the dimensions according to the Bible (510 feet long, 85 feet wide and 51 feet high). The Creation Museum features 75,000 square-feet of state-of-the-art exhibits, botanical gardens, a petting zoo and more.

After leaving Kentucky, the group will visit Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind., and the Wisconsin

Historical Museum in Madison before returning to Bismarck.

The trip includes seven nights lodging, seven breakfasts and four dinners, admission to Ark Encounter and Creation Museum and more. The cost is \$765 per person for double occupancy; add \$260 for single occupancy. For more information or to make reservations, call Ed Bean at 701-261-9687. Payment is due this month; call Ed ASAP to let him know you are going. You may also visit nodaklcms.org/blog/ark-encounter-tour.

LHM LENTEN DEVOTIONS

Learn from the 'silent witnesses'

Do you ever wish that you could have been there at Jesus' passion? Imagine what it would be like to:

- **HEAR** the crowds shout "Hosanna!" as Jesus rode into Jerusalem?
- **SMELL AND TASTE** the feast at the Passover?
- **SEE** Jesus carrying His cross to Golgotha?
- **TOUCH** the wounds in Jesus' hands when He rose from the dead?

We cannot do that, but the men and

women who were eyewitnesses of these events have left their testimony in the pages of the Gospels. John tells us:

"These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

John 20:31

But there were also silent witnesses in the Gospels — objects, animals and places that played a part during key moments of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. Though they cannot speak, they can show us something of His love and mercy toward us.

Available to read or listen online, "Silent Witnesses" from Lutheran Hour Ministries can also be received as an e-mail subscription throughout the Lenten season. The devotions can also be downloaded, personalized and printed to give to congregation members or use as an outreach tool with guests and visitors. Go to lhm.org/lent.



Send submissions for the district supplement to:

Marie Johnson
news@nodaklcms.org