



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



You see, in order to say “thank you,” there needs to be a recipient of your gratitude. You don’t just sit around alone in your room saying “thank you” to nothing and no one in particular. Or do you?

For many Americans, Thanksgiving is a day set aside for us to give thanks to God for our many blessings. Faith knows that God blesses us with all the blessings we have in this life and in the future life, which is ours already by the faith God has given in the Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. They are absolutely linked together.

The Christian faith is about our rescue from sin, death and hell. Being a Christian — or believing in God — is not a defining characteristic of wealth or success, health or uninterrupted happiness in this world. Faith in the Gospel and believing in Jesus Christ is the way of life eternal, for it receives the blessings which Jesus procured for us by His life and death in our place, and His resurrection to new and everlasting life (of which we are baptized into — Rom. 6:4-6).

Christians still have to deal with this world and ordinary life in it, troubles and all. We just get to have the advantage of knowing how the story ends — or that it does not end, to be more precise. Some of us believers will be wealthy and some of us will be poor. Some of us will be giddy with happiness most of the time and others will wrestle with troubles and sorrows, and even depression, most of the time. Some of us will be so healthy that when we die it will not be of serious illness, and others will fight bad health

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Faith and Thanksgiving

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Love and marriage, love and marriage, they go together like a horse and carriage.”

This ditty comes to mind when I think about things being linked together. Such as this month when we celebrate Thanksgiving. Therefore, I would link together faith and Thanksgiving.



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

When I was growing up, the “thank you” rule was one of the most important in our house. I would venture to guess that your families and mine have this in common. Gratitude is something we learn as we grow, and expressing gratitude is just as important as feeling it.

Over my years of ministry, on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving, I would tell the congregation that they would want to get to church early on Thanksgiving so that they will have “their place” or “a place” to sit due to everyone coming to church to give thanks to God. For how else would you celebrate the day?

LWML helps feed the hungry

FORTY WOMEN FROM ACROSS THE DISTRICT

— and generations — met together at the Chieftain Inn and Conference Center in Carrington Sept. 14-16 for the annual LWML Retreat. Friday evening activities included snacks and a soda bar operated by LWML district officers. A social time with games and other mixers followed, and the evening concluded with devotions led by Mary Harvala, former VP of Christian Life. Saturday morning began with a breakfast buffet followed by devotions and a Bible study. Deaconess Amy Rast, associate director of Deaconess Studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., spoke under the theme: “Vocation Bible School.” Deaconess Rast shared how



we as Christian women with multiple vocations, in today’s world, can use each of these vocations in service to our Lord and Savior. She used the words of Paul in Titus 2:11-14 as her theme verses.

With sessions concluded, the women traveled to Grace Lutheran Church, where they measured, weighed, bagged, sealed and readied for shipment 6,888 Mercy Meals to be shipped overseas. Another bonus of this activity is working side-by-side with our sisters in Christ to accomplish so much more than you can do on your own. Joining together our work and our mighty mites can bring joy and the love of Christ to so many whose

bodies are hungry for nourishment and whose souls are hungry to hear the Word. An offering of \$162 was collected for mites, and an offering for Mercy Meals was collected.

The evening activities included a delicious banquet, the ever popular no-talent variety show including the talents of our young women emcee sisters, an appearance by Katie Luther and a devotion. The retreat concluded Sunday morning with worship at Grace, Carrington.

A financial ingathering will support Mercy Meals.



The mission of **Higher Things**® is to assist parents, pastors, and congregations in cultivating a distinctly Lutheran identity among their youth and young adults.

Retreats

March 29-30, 2019

- Northwest Retreat at St. Paul’s, Minot
- Southeast Retreat at Zion, Gwinner

Fee: \$50 (covers food, lodging and supplies)

Conference

July 16-19, 2019

Concordia University Wisconsin
Fee: \$700 (cover charter bus, food, Wisconsin Dells water park)

For more information, call Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard at 701-389-0418.

COMING UP:

Which Jesus?

Listen to Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard as he discusses his book “Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?” Pastor Richard not only reminds us who the real Jesus of the Bible is, but also warns against false christs who are embraced, loved, promoted and revered, even by well-meaning Christians.

Dr. Richard, who is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Minot, will appear at Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel at 7 p.m., Nov. 8. The chapel is located at 3120 Fifth Ave. North in Grand Forks, on the campus of the University of North Dakota.

For more information on the book, visit cph.org/realjesus.



Matthew Richard



Messiah Lutheran Church, Mandan, will present the Annual Classical Christmas Concert, “He is Born,” at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16.

Choral works by the Messiah Chancel Choir will include classical music, written by composers of the past and present, and traditional favorites accompanied by piano/organ and trumpet. Messiah’s Handbell Choir will also perform. The audience will be invited to sing along on traditional hymns. Choral selections include “Bethlehem Procession,” “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt” and “He is Born.” Traditional favorites include “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” “See Amid the Winter Snow” and “O Come all Ye Faithful.”

Samantha Henke will perform as guest trumpeter. Messiah musicians include Thomas Wyatt, organ; Quincy Wyatt, piano; and Renae Hoggarth, piano and organ. A reception will follow.

Messiah Lutheran Church is located at 1020 Boundary Road (I-94, Exit 152), directly north of Sanford Health Sunset Drive Continuing Care Center. A free will offering will be taken.

For more information, call 701-663-8545 or visit messiahmandan.org (the link to the Facebook site is at the bottom of the page).

Apply for scholarship

LCEF is blessed to provide annual district scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 to active, faith-filled students who are members of Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod congregations.

The applicant must be a graduating high school senior or current full-time post-secondary

student at an accredited institution with at least one year of courses remaining.

The 2019 scholarship application is now available at lcefcentral.org/scholarships. **The deadline to apply is Jan. 31.**



Blessings in Minot



Rev. Dr. Richard Davis was installed as Intentional Interim Pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Minot, on Sept. 23. Clergy participating were, from left, Rev. Rick Jones, Rev. Joel Brandvold, Rev. Daryl Rothchild, Davis, Rev. Arie Bertsch, Rev. Jon Bonine and Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard.

DOXOLOGY CONFERENCE

Stewardship: thinking biblically and ‘Lutheranly’

“More Than Giving” a conference on stewardship, will be held Nov. 30–Dec. 1 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, St. Cloud, Minn. The conference is sponsored by the LCMS Office of National Mission and DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel.

The conference is for pastors, church administrators, stewardship board members, church leaders and interested laity.



Heath Curtis



Nathan Meador

The presenters are the Rev. Heath Curtis, coordinator for LCMS Stewardship, and the Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador, assistant coordinator. They are also parish pastors who love to preach the Good News of God’s generosity toward us in Christ. They will provide a sound biblical and theological foundation while offering practical solutions for churches large and small. This conference will equip you to develop healthy stewardship lifestyles among your member households and in your congregation as a whole.

For more information and to register, go to thelc.ms/doxology-minnesota-2018.

ANNUAL MEN'S WINTER RETREAT

How **not** to read the Bible

Jan. 25-26 | Shepherd's Hill
at the Crossroads

The Bible is God's loving, self-revelation to the world; and the center of the whole thing is Christ, crucified and risen for the forgiveness of all people.

However, this simple and wonderful good news is often left behind as teachers, preachers and popular Christian authors **twist, distort** and **manipulate verses** in order to make the text say things it simply does not say.

At this year's men's retreat, the Rev.

Dan Suelzle will present "Misquoted: Things the Bible Doesn't Say" and discuss how we read the Bible on its own terms, **looking for Christ on every page**, so that we will have the true comfort that God gives there. We'll also look at a few examples of how the Bible is often misquoted and provide a better way of understanding those texts.

Suelzle, a native of Hazen, is the campus pastor of Wittenberg Lutheran



Dan Suelzle

Chapel, which serves the students of the University of North Dakota. Before accepting the call to Wittenberg, he served for six years at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Eugene, Ore. Suelzle is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He and his wife, Mary, have four children.

The retreat begins with supper at 6 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 25, and ends at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 26. The cost is \$80, which includes three meals, snacks and games.

To register, contact **Corey Isaak** at **701-281-0240** or **corey.isaak@gracefargo.org**.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

for decades before they pass on. And some of us will not have long lives at all, at least on this side of the grave.

But every single believer has the forgiveness of sins. Each one of us, without fail, will rise from our graves and join with the family of God in paradise, to sing God's praises of thanksgiving throughout eternity. And while we live here, we know that God loves us and that we can call on Him for help, for rescue, for strength, for comfort in our troubles.

Many Christians seem to look for something that will help them overcome all obstacles in this world. But the Gospel never makes that promise. God does help us in times of need, but not always in the way we hope He will. Sometimes He has something better in mind. Sometimes He teaches us patience and humility. Now and then, He even shares with our hearts the secret that winning or losing in this world is not truly significant. Standing faithfully, however, is.

If we believe that we have nothing to worry about, that the grave is but a door to fuller and richer and happier life, that this is true because of Jesus, and that God loves us with a deep, powerful and everlasting love, then we just want to

rejoice and give thanks! Today is the day that the Lord has made, and given to us as a gift. It cannot hurt us, for He is our Shield and Protector. Let us rejoice and give thanks!

My point today is that faith and thanksgiving are linked. If you believe God is concerned about you and watching over you, and that He has saved you, the result is you will be brought to thanksgiving. You will *want* to give thanks. No matter what happens, God is with you to keep you. When everyone says that it is all over, with you, it will just be the beginning, for God has given you eternal life because of Jesus Christ. Sickness can only do so much, and then it must let go. Only so much can go wrong, and then you will stand with the Lord. Even when it looks like you are beaten, you win, because Jesus has already won and given you the victory. All that is left for you to do is give thanks!

But you can only honestly do that if you sincerely believe it. If it isn't real to you, then there will be nothing particularly worthy of genuine thanksgiving. If church, for example, is just to help you feel good, then feeling good is all that



"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

1 THESS. 5:16

you should expect. But if you know the truth, you should be comforted even when you don't feel so joyous. And you should know the love of God — the love which He has for you — which gives you not just comfort, but hope even in difficult situations.

When trouble cannot do any real damage, you just want to give thanks. When danger cannot really hurt you, you just want to give thanks. When sickness can no longer really frighten you, you just want to give thanks. When you believe that the world is stacked to your advantage by

the great love of God, you want to give thanks. It is the work of the Spirit, and the clear will of God.

Like love and marriage, faith and thanksgiving just naturally go together! "Rejoice always! Pray without ceasing!"

Happy Thanksgiving!

Send submissions for the district supplement to:

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