

DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



**Don't forget mom ...
or Mother Church!**

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

In case you forgot, Mother's Day is this month (May 12).

It would behoove you not to forget. I speak from experience. My excuse is that as a pastor, Sunday is my busiest day of the week. I once forgot to call my mother on Mother's Day. Monday morning the phone was ringing and I said to my wife: "Don't answer it. It's my mother calling me for Mother's Day!"

It was quite evident that mothers stick together. My wife answered the phone and said to me: "It's your mother!" I was a bad son (again). The woman who brought me into this world, nurtured and took care of me physically and spiritually — I forgot to call and thank on a special day for her.



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

And then, on the other hand, in the busyness of our lives with so many things to do, so many places to go and so many people to see, and as we seek to please others and probably, more honestly, as we seek to please and satisfy ourselves, Jesus and the Words of His teaching in church take a back seat.

While trying to squeeze out every drop of pleasure, accomplishment and personal fulfillment, along with and in the midst of the setbacks and disasters that inevitably confront us, we may put aside the more important things like mothers and especially Mother Church.

And, sad to say, we seldom find joy in that Jesus is in heaven while we are left behind here in this veil of tears. No, we look for joy and gladness almost everywhere else first. Do you need proof?

Memorial Day is coming soon. What happens to our church attendance as individuals and as a congregation during the summer months?

Very few congregations even celebrate the recognition of the Ascension of Our Lord on May 30 — one of the great festivals of the Church because of its importance in showing the divinity of Christ — simply because it falls on a Thursday, a day when we have other things that take precedence.

Think of the many reasons we use to convince ourselves that it is less than necessary on any given Sunday to attend church and receive the Sacrament for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith:

- ▶ I really need my sleep, it was a tough week and Sunday is a day of rest.
- ▶ It's the only day I have to do yard work.
- ▶ Our guests from out of town will be here until Sunday afternoon and we only see them every other year or so.
- ▶ I can go to church any Sunday, but the camping/fishing/hunting/football/fill-in-the-blank season only lasts so long.
- ▶ We need to spend time as a family today.
- ▶ I can worship God in nature.
- ▶ You don't have to go to church to be saved.

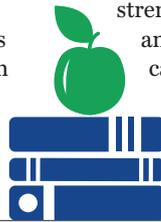
Now please, don't think I am only pointing fingers, because the truth is, in my own sinfulness and weakness, there are Sundays when the only reason I go is because *I feel I have to*.

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Supporting the mission of Grace Lutheran School

Our association churches and the Board of Education have always kept Grace Lutheran School, Fargo, at the center of our efforts to reach out and share the Gospel at our school. The school is the mission of the churches and as such will be supporting children and their families through the ministry of the school.

Supporting a mission doesn't always have to be overseas or in our area. In fact, in supporting Grace Lutheran School, you can see first hand where your gifts go and you can even take part in the ministry of



Grace by volunteering or helping students further their education in the classroom by sharing your experiences. After all, Scripture tells us many times to share His word to all generations (Ps 102:18; Joel 1:3; Luke 11:50; Matt. 28:19-20).

We sponsor two main fundraisers to strengthen our budget — Giving Hearts and the Annual Grace Auction. You can also support our ministry through your Thrivent Financial Choice Dollars. You are also able to support the school by investing in an LCEF account.

JOHN HAGGE, PRINCIPAL | JHAGGE@GRACELS.COM | 701-232-7747 | GRACELUTHERANSCHOOL.ORG



LCEF has prepaid Visa cards

Lutheran Church Extension Fund is blessed to sponsor the LCMS Youth Gathering again this year, and is looking forward to seeing you there.

Before you go, be sure to check out how LCEF can make your Gathering experience much less stressful with free prepaid Visa cards, youth group Steward Accounts® and more.

Check it out at
lcef.org/youth-gathering.

MOTHERS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Now with Mother's Day, can you imagine substituting camping/fishing/hunting/football/fill-in-the-blank for honoring mom, and telling your mother that you can honor her in those places when she is not even there? Can you imagine even thinking you don't have to have a mother to live?

We need church as much as a child needs a mother. She (the Church, the body of Christ) bore you through the waters of Holy Baptism, nurtured you with Word and Sacrament to sustain you, and strengthened and maintained your faith through life. We confess in the Third Article of the Creed:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

What this means is:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His

gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

The Church is to the baptized, to the Christian, what a mother is to her children. Let us not fool ourselves dear baptized! We cannot make much of a claim to love Jesus or His Word when there are so often so many things that we place before Him and the place where He gives His Word to be publicly proclaimed for the forgiveness of sins.

But thanks be to God, He loves you and me! In our sin we do *not* love Him as we could or should. Yet, in Rev. 21:27, we read that our names "are written in the Lamb's book of life."

This is why God sends His Holy Spirit to minister to us in Word and Sacrament, to wash us clean and give to us again everything we need for our salvation and the building up of our faith so that we may

be made holy for Him and His eternal kingdom.

And rather than leave us convicted of our lack of love and obedience, He leaves us forgiven.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

— JOHN 14:27

This peace He gives through His Holy Christian Church, the mother of all believers. For Christ's church is a revelation of heaven on earth. Christ's church is the place where, even today, as Revelation tells us it will plainly be at the resurrection of dead, "its lamp is the Lamb, the light by which people from all nations walk with God, where Jesus is the gate that is always open, and where there is no night" (Rev. 21:23-24).

So whether you are coming or going, God is here to forgive, renew and lead you, and is with you always in His Church, the mother of all believers, even to the end of the age.

Happy Mother's Day Mom — and Church!

Your servant in Christ,
Rev. Arie D. Bertsch



Higher Things

District youth gathered at two locations March 29-30 for the 2019 Higher Things Conferences. Top, Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard led the group at St. Paul's, Minot; while, below, Rev. Daniel Voth taught the group at Zion, Gwinner. For more information, visit higherthings.org.

Celebrate with Shepherd's Hill!

You are invited to join Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads on Saturday, June 29, to help celebrate three special anniversaries. Festivities begin at 1 p.m.

The Crossroads location was opened 45 years ago and the chapel building complex was dedicated 40 years ago. Shepherd's Hill Retreats, Inc. began 25 years ago.

Shepherd's Hill is bringing the three celebra-



tions together to praise God for all the work He has done through the ministry of Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads. The celebration will include an open house including fellowship, tours, games, adventure course, campfire songs, guest speakers, historical displays, a meal and chapel service.

Camp registration is open! Register at shretreat.org today!



Send submissions for the district supplement to

Marie Johnson at
news@nodaklcms.org

Please send photos in high resolution, minimum of 300 dpi.

Television ministry is thriving!

In 2002, Main Street Living (MSL) started out small, but God had bigger things in mind. MSL is the televised worship service you are helping to make available to our region. It began in Sioux Falls, S.D., on the NBC network affiliate. Now, 17 years later, it is being aired on eight television stations in a five-state area.

It is aired out of Fargo on KVRR (Fox) and WDAY (ABC). Along with Fargo and Sioux Falls, it is broadcast out of Lincoln, Neb.; Esko, Minn.; Sioux Center, Iowa; and Burnsville, Minn.

The program consists of a locally produced worship service with a different pastor each week,

selected by pastors in each broadcast area. The broadcast also includes an episode of "This is the Life," an Emmy award-winning program from Lutheran Hour Ministries, which was aired from the 1950s through the 80s.

The program is viewed by thousands of homebound people and is also becoming popular with non-Lutherans and others who are not attending services. Therefore, this ministry might be the only connection some people have to the saving grace of Jesus.

For more information, to watch archived episodes and to donate, visit mainstreetliving.com.



Our Savior members overwhelmed by mission trip

A group of 11 members of Our Savior, Minot, were in Juarez, Mexico, Feb. 26 to March 2 for a mission trip. With Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care (YLM) of El Paso, Texas, they built two homes for local families in great need. The project was funded through fundraisers held throughout the year.

First-time attendee Matt Geinert shares about his experience: "To be humbled is a gift in and of itself; going to Juarez and seeing the state and way of life will humble you to your core. These are people with smiles on their faces and joy in their hearts, and by our 'standards' they have nothing. At the end of the week, you are given so much more by these people than you give. We may have given a home, but



they gave us the gift of love, the gift of faith and the gift of perspective."

After going on the mission trip for the last three years, Ryan Schaan reflects: "The lack of simple comforts like running water, heat or even a solid floor make Americans think of the settlers on the wild frontier. The families of the shantytowns of Anapra survive in little more than pallets covered in cardboard. A spliced extension cord overloaded with the lights of four or five neighbors. Hungry dogs littered with ticks run wild. This place exists just past the Mexican/Amer-

ican border, but it may just as well be halfway around the world. In the middle of it all a salesman, a trucker, a retiree, a couple of high schoolers and an oilfield worker come together joined by the same faith and compassion. This is where you see your faith grow. Together for five days we wrestled to build what to us would be a large shed with power. The families watch as it takes shape. The team and families crowd into the dwelling for a few songs and prayers. A small cross is hung over the threshold. Now it hits me, and I am humbled. This isn't a shed or a house. This is a home. A warm, safe place to raise a family, to share memories and laughs. The structure is the physical gift. But the emotional, spiritual gift is so much more."

Six-year veteran Bonnie Rennich says: "Our team prayed together daily that the Lord Jesus would make us useful in the work of His kingdom. And He was faithful, as always. The people became so important to us in such a short period of time. Their faith and ours was strengthened as we built not only two homes, but Christ-filled relationships. It's difficult to leave at the end of a week, but we entrust them to the Lord and that He will continue the 'building' that we began in His name."

A little becomes *a lot* when Jesus is in it! Though sponsored by Our Savior, this yearly mission trip is open to anyone in the district. Feel free to contact Our Savior at 701-852-6404 for more details on this opportunity to share God's love with others.

Celebrate 125 years with Zion

Join the members of Zion Lutheran Church, rural Claire City, S.D., at 11 a.m. on June 16 for their 125th anniversary. Rev. Arie Bertsch, North Dakota District president will be the guest preacher.

A noon meal will follow the service.

The church is located at 45697 101st Street.

Helpful services available

Consider the following services from members of the North Dakota District. Do you provide a service that you would like to advertise in the eNews? Contact Marie at news@nodaklcms.org today.

- ▶ Have a book which needs repairing? Want to have something printed and bound? Contact Rev. Zelwyn Heide at facebook.com/heidebook

or send him an email at zelwyn.heide@gmail.com for a quote.

- ▶ Need shirts for your youth group or special event? Coffee mugs for your church? Other special printing needs? Wholesale pricing is available for churches. Contact Alisha Schieber at info@thehymnustree.com or visit thehymnustree.com.