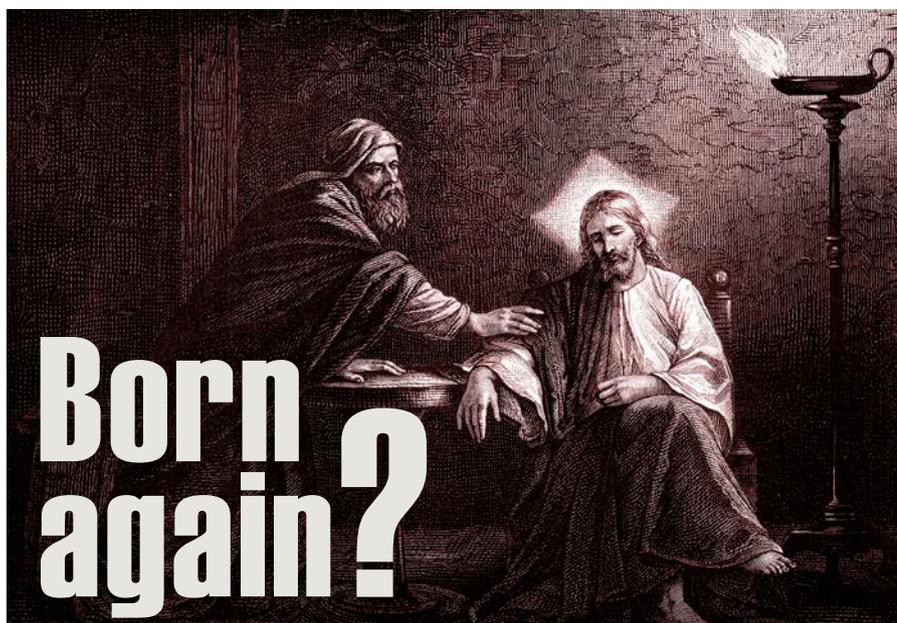




DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



An artist's rendition of Nicodemus seeking Jesus by night.

In John 3:3-6, and also in 1 Peter 1:3 and 23, we are taught that born again is an opposite of unbelief. The difference is between being born of the flesh (which gives birth to death) and being born of

the Spirit (which gives birth to life). To be born of the Spirit is to have everlasting life, which comes from God. The point is that the flesh cannot give birth to something spiritual, therefore, if we are to have the kingdom of heaven, it must come from God — His work on

you either by His Word or by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Thus for a Lutheran, when we hear the phrase “born again,” we should mention the day we were baptized and/or when we heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believed that what it said was for our salvation through Him.

When someone asks “Are you a born-again Christian?”, their question implies that your faith is dependent upon a moving experience that you had; or when you gave yourself to or made a decision to accept Jesus Christ. In other words, if you haven't had a moving experience or feeling, you may not be a saved Christian.

While it is true that there are levels of maturity and degrees of commitment among Christians, that should not be confused with the simple matter of belief or conversion. Everyone who believes in Jesus' work on the cross for the payment of their

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Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

While growing up, I always knew that I was a Christian, a child of God. I remember when I ventured out from my home and community, I had the questions asked of me: “Are you a born-again Christian?” or “When were you born again?”

I was confused. It caused me to question if I had missed something in my Christian upbringing. It also caused me to dig deeper to see if what I had been taught was wrong, or if something was left out.

Actually, there should be no question as to what the phrase “born again” means. It is accurately defined and explained in God's Word. It is amazing, therefore,



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

that within Christendom — all Christian denominations — there has developed some confusion as to the meaning of the phrase.

The confusion is in the question “Are you a born-again Christian?” The Bible speaks of “born again” as a conversion. In other words, “born again” and “Christian” are synonyms. If someone is born again, then that person

is a Christian. If that person is a Christian, then he or she is born again. The two are identical. The question implies that you can't be a Christian without being born again. Or it implies that you are a Christian, but you are missing something called “born again.”



Blessings in Hillsboro, Hope

Rev. Allen Kramp was installed as pastor of St. John, Hillsboro and Trinity, Hope, on Oct. 6. The service was held at St. John. From left, (front row) Revs. Allen Kramp, Arie Bertsch, district president; (middle row) David Suelzle, Richard Biberdorf, Dennis Neels, Chris Waldvogel, Dan Voth, Clark Jahnke; (back row) Daniel Suelzle, Steve Schulz, Leo Deitemeyer, Bernie Worrall, Adam Harvala and Brian Shane.



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

sins, regardless of how weak their faith may be, has been born again.

Never forget, faith is always a gift of God. As Eph. 2:8-9 clearly tells us:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

If faith is produced by our feelings or is a result of our feelings, or we get faith on the day we say we accepted or decided for Christ to be “born again,” then it becomes a work of our own instead of a work and gift of God by the work of the Holy Spirit working through the Means of Grace of Word and Sacrament.

So the next time you are asked “Are you a born-again Christian?” say “Yes.” Then give them the date of your Baptism, which was God’s work on you and His promise to you that you have been connected to Christ’s death and resurrection and read to them Rom. 6:3-6:

“Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him



through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.”

This is truly something to be thankful for this Thanksgiving!

Pastors invited to pre-Lent retreat

A retreat for North Dakota District pastors will be held Jan. 6-7 in Bismarck. Rev. Bernie Worrall, senior pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Fargo, will present on Hebrews 11.



Worrall

Worrall writes: If you’ve ever been to the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., then you’ve seen the statues in the hallways. Each state has two statues. North Dakota has John Burke, who served as its 10th governor and as a state Supreme Court justice, and as U.S. treasurer; and Sakakawea, who traveled with the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Hebrews 11 also has a great hallway of faith filled with living memorials of those who have walked in faith before us. Heb. 13:7 says:

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”

For more information, go to nodaklcms.org/calendar-news/news and scroll down.



Ladies, guests renewed at retreat

About 70 women, along with a few husbands and children, gathered for a retreat at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads Sept. 20-22. The attendees enjoyed the time away from the hustle and bustle and learned more about perseverance.

Donna Pyle led the women in a study of Nehemiah through her new book, *Perseverance: Praying*

Through Life's Challenges (A Nehemiah Battle Plan).

Dr. Becky Grossmann of Lutheran Bible Translators told attendees about the ways that LWML mission grants have helped LBT to share the Word of God to the people of Liberia, Africa.

God's beautiful fall colors were showing in the trees around Shep-

herd's Hill at the Crossroads.

LWML North Dakota District members were also able to participate in the dedication of the new playground at Shepherd's Hill. This playground is the fulfillment of a mission grant selected at the 2014 district convention.

Visit ndlwml.org/retreat for more pictures and information.



Valerie Biberdorf, LWML district president, cuts the ribbon during the new playground dedication. To her left is Rev. Jon Bonine, Shepherds Hill at the Crossroads executive director.



Scholarships available

Scholarships for LCMS high school seniors and college students, each in the amount of \$1,000, will be awarded to at least one applicant from each district in the LCEF Central Region.

Learn more at lcefcentral.org/scholarships.

What is LCEF and how does it fit with the Church?

Since 1978, LCEF has been the chief mission enabler of the Church by being a Christ-centered servant partner of the LCMS. Our mission is to ensure that the Church has the funds and resources she needs.

Partner with LCEF because we share your Lutheran beliefs. We also share your love of the Church. Yesterday. Today. Always.

To learn more, visit lcef.org, call 800-843-5233 or contact Tami Ulland, your LCEF district vice-president, at 701-360-1469.

Submit your milestone celebrations!

We would love to celebrate with you, our congregation members! In years past, the district's supplement to *The Lutheran Witness* mentioned birthdays of our congregation members who were 90 years or older, and wedding anniversaries of 50 years or more.

It's time to start sharing such wonderful milestones again, but we need your help. Please let us know if anyone in your congregation has a milestone coming up. The articles need to be submitted about

six weeks ahead of time. By starting with January 2020 celebrations, articles have to be submitted to us by Nov. 20. Pictures are optional and would depend on available space each month.

If you have any other articles or ideas for the supplement, the North Dakota District *eNews*, or *Message in the Pew*, please submit to Tami at lcms.nd.busman@gmail.com, Vicki at fargoofficndlcms@gmail.com or Marie at news@nodaklcms.org. Thank you!

HORSE-INSPIRED HEALING

From chaos to calm



Ranch helps at-risk children

If you'd see 14-year-old Jackson* in a lighter moment, you'd see he loves a good joke and is quick to laugh.

But he came to Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch recently because he had great difficulty managing his behavior, especially his anger. He also had significant problems staying focused and functioning well in school. Much of this was because he often refused to take his ADHD medication.

His personal struggles were so overwhelming that he fought thoughts of suicide. His parents simply weren't equipped to deal with Jackson's challenges.



In the company of horses

Each child at the Ranch is given the opportunity to spend time at the stable with the horses. Horses are highly sensitive and have a unique ability to read human emotions. Sometimes they provide comfort to a child who is anxious or depressed. Other times they mirror the child's emotions by backing away or becoming skittish if the child is feeling anxious or angry. This cues the child to identify their emotions and to discover what they might be doing to make the horse feel unsafe.

Regulating and controlling their emotions is difficult for most Ranch kids. Once they discover ways to be calm around their horses, they can use those skills in other parts of their lives.

Jackson found that working with these intuitive animals helped him relax and manage his anxiety.

"When I first got here," he says, "I tried to intimidate the horses. They'd get hyper and didn't want to be near me. Now I know to be calm around them and treat them with gentleness."

Jackson has really bonded with a horse named Weaver. He's so excited to go to the stable and spend time with his special friend. They've really bonded. Their relationship is helping him deal with the challenges that brought him to the Ranch.

"When I go to the stable, it changes my mood completely," Jackson said. "It makes me feel good about myself and helps me cope with my troubles. My horse gives me the opportunity to be the best I can be."

Healing trauma through movement

The abuse and/or neglect experienced by most Ranch children stunts the development of gross motor skills that allow them to sit upright, stand, walk, run, lift, throw and kick. Horseback riding helps build core strength, balance, coordination and leg strength, which all aid in the development of those gross motor skills. It also helps to release the trauma that is stored in the body.

The activities kids do with the horses depend on the needs of each child and may include riding groups, behavioral health therapy and occupational therapy.

Bless a boy or girl with your gift

We want to continue this long and wonderful heritage of pairing gentle horses with at-risk kids. But horse therapy must be completely funded by partners who recognize that horse therapy can be so beneficial for a child.

Won't you give today — as generously as you can — to make horse therapy a reality for a child? Give online at DakotaRanch.org. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch at 701-237-3123.

**Name changed to protect confidentiality*



Send submissions for the district supplement to Marie Johnson at news@nodaklcms.org