



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



fountains of water. Pain, death, sin, sickness, poverty, hunger, persecution and hatred are wiped from their memories and their tears from their eyes.

Even though this church spans two worlds, there are not two churches; one here on earth and another in heaven. Rather, we “believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church” (from the Nicene Creed). The oneness of the church is not destroyed even by the separation of death. For where Jesus is, there are the saints — those here on earth and those who have “come out of the great tribulation” of life in this world. The church on earth and the church in heaven unite around the throne of God and in the presence of the Lamb.

When we gather around the altar for Holy Communion, or Sainly Communion, we know that our deceased relatives and friends who have likewise “washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb” are right there with us. We are on this side of the communion rail and they are on the other side.

When we sing “Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,” we sing along with the countless Christians of every age. When we sing “Holy, holy, holy,” we do so with billions of the faithful from every time and place. And when we come for the body and blood of the Lord, we are united with those whom we wish we could speak to, but can’t. We join with those whom we love but can no longer embrace. We are not only in the presence of Jesus, but are

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The Communion of Saints



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

As you read this article, you may have already celebrated All Saints’ Day. In the Apostles’ Creed we say, “I believe in the communion of saints.” I have been often asked, “What does this mean?” Here is my answer.

The communion of saints spans two different worlds. Here on this earth, the communion of saints struggle with life in this sin-soaked world. We are the Church Militant. Even though Jesus has defeated Satan with His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, Satan still fights and the Church Militant is the battlefield. We continuously look to our Champion, Jesus Christ, to give us the victory.

Then there is the Church Triumphant gathered at the throne of the Lamb, “the ones ... (who) have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14). They are in Paradise. They are without sin, without hunger, without misery, without tears and without death itself. And the one called the Lamb is their Shepherd, who leads His own lambs to living



Mercy for Liberian children

Messiah Lutheran Church, Mandan, was a busy place on Sept. 25 as 26 volunteers packed 5,616 Mercy Meals — 26 boxes — which will be delivered by Orphan Grain Train to children in need in Liberia.

These meals consist of dried vegetables and rice, which need only boiling water to prepare. The nutritious, well-balanced meal provides a source of protein, carbohydrates and vitamins needed to reverse malnutrition.



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

also surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, this host arrayed in white, those who fall on their faces night and day before the Lord Himself.

A saint is not someone who is nicer or more religious than anyone else. A saint is someone who is on the most important list of all, the Lamb's Book of Life. The saints are those both dead and alive who have been forgiven by Christ Jesus. The Lamb's Book of Life has the names of all those who you knew that have died in the faith of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

All praise and glory and honor to the Lamb who has written your name in

His Book of Life. The Lamb's Book of Life is His promise that you and the whole company of heaven, including those who you knew and know, and who you loved and love the most, will praise and glorify the Lamb with you in that incredible place of light and safety and beauty forever.

There is yet one more thing that needs to be stated about those who have departed in faith and are around the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Over and over again I hear in music, in poetry and, sadly, often in obituaries — and from believers — the idea that those who have departed are looking down on us. This is not true! Their souls are in heaven protected from all of this on earth until Judgment Day, when body and soul are reunited to be as they were

meant to be. The Bible assures us that the departed have no more pain or sorrows or tears. If they were able to look down on us, they would be sad to see us sad at their death and departure from us. Also, they would be sad to see us sinning and jeopardizing our chances of being with them in heaven for eternity.

Even though we do not pray for them, they pray for us, according to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXI. Scripture also encourages us by teaching that the angels (Zech. 1:12), Jesus (Rom. 8:34) and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26) also pray for us.

May these truths bring you great joy about your loved ones, who are now with the Communion of Saints, until you join them also in great joy!

Archives has material from pastors conferences

Every May and October, our North Dakota District pastors gather for three-day conferences, which include study, support and fellowship. In our vault, we have study topics from these conferences going back to the 1930s.



An interesting topic from the 1930s was “The Movie and Radio — a hindrance in our school work (especially in religion).” Another interesting topic presented in 1952 was on “Mixed Marriages” (marriage between an LCMS member and a spouse from another religion). The 1960s had several topics regarding Lutherans and lodge membership. A

topic in 1976 was “Alcoholism and Drug Dependency.” The 1980s studies were filled with pastor writings on gambling, women’s roles in the church, farm crises and Satanism.

The files are organized by year with the topic title and who wrote the article. Perhaps you are looking to find an article written by your former pastor? Just call the office at 701-293-9001 and maybe we can help. If any pastor has papers from the 2005-15 conferences, I would love to put them in the vault. Thank you.

Vicki Peihl • Office Manager,
North Dakota District

North Dakota District CONVENTION

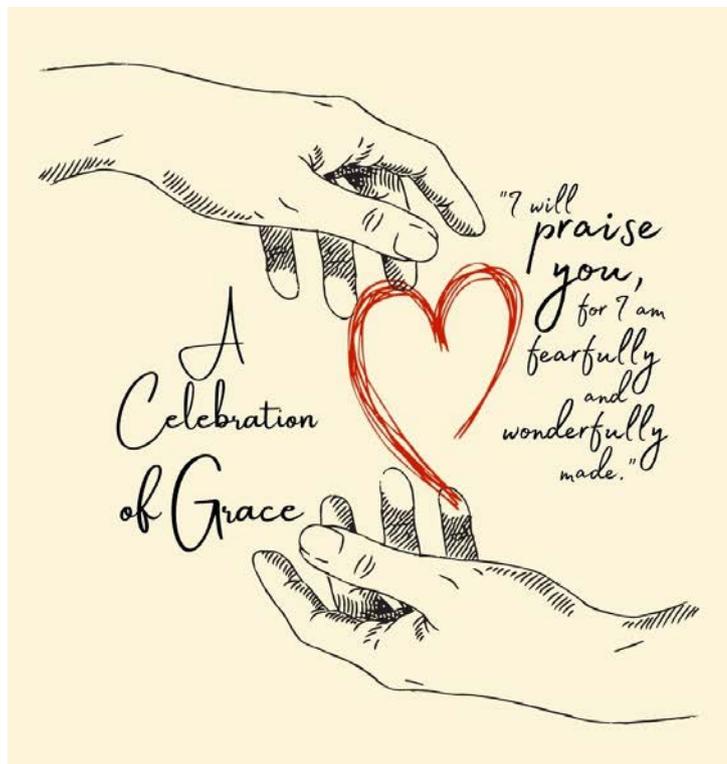
Jan. 23-26
Ramada Hotel • Fargo

Highlights include Opening Divine Service at Immanuel, Fargo; ministry updates; Synod and district updates; Bible study with Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS president; hymnody essays, rejoicing in witness, mercy and in the Lord; daily Matins and Vespers; resolutions; elections and installation of officers.

DISTRICT MEN’S RETREAT

Jan. 14-15 • Shepherd’s Hill at the Crossroads, St. John

Our world doesn’t have to look far to see the effects of sin on our fallen world. Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler (pictured), speaker of “The Lutheran Hour,” will encourage attendees to find hope in a hopeless world. For more information, contact Corey Isaak at corey.isaak@gracefargo.org or 701-281-0240.



*Social Hour, Dinner,
Live and Silent
Auctions*

+

*November 12, 2021
5:30 pm*

+

*Sanctuary Events Center
670 4th Avenue North, Fargo*

*Tickets available at
www.gracelutheralschoolfargo.com*

+ **Grace** Lutheran School
CHRIST • CHARACTER • COMMUNITY

AMERICA'S IDOLS and the REAL GOD

A Higher Things Retreat • March 25-26, St. Paul's, Minot

When we hear the word "idolatry," it's easy to imagine primitive people bowing down to gods made of carved stone. But we'd be naive to think that idolatry only happened with primitive people long ago.

What are the idols of America? What are your idols? Ask yourself, "What do I find security in, and what do I boast about and defend the most?" The answers — money, sports, fame, even ourselves — are your idols.

Maybe you think that idols aren't that big of a deal. Rev. Justin Woodside, associate pastor of Bethel and Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck, will explain why idols cannot love us, pursue us or bleed for us. They cannot protect us from the grave. Only Christ can — and that's a big deal.

Registration opens on Nov. 15. Spots are limited. Visit higherthings.org/retreats#Minot.

Help always appreciated

Several congregational groups helped us over the summer. These groups helped refurbish the Shiloh cabin, paint picnic tables and the dining hall floor, clear trails, remove old fences, fix the plumbing and electricity and remove damaged and dying trees.

There is more work that can be done. Let us know when your group will be arriving!

Thank you for supporting us through your donations of items, time, talents and attendance at our Annual Quilt, Craft, and Culinary Arts Auction on Sept. 11. Your sup-



**SHEPHERD'S HILL
AT THE
CROSSROADS**

ST. JOHN, NORTH DAKOTA

port helps in so many ways. The quilt auction raised over \$18,000, which goes toward keeping events happening at camp.

Rev. Jon Bonine, Executive Director
director@shretreat.org • 701-244-5225



SEND SUBMISSIONS for the
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Marie Johnson at news@nodaklcms.org

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is to ensure you have the financial resources and related solutions available to fulfill your call for God's glory **now and in the future.**

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Rev. Craig Michaelson
Faith Community Lutheran Church
Las Vegas, Nev.

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