



# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH DAKOTA

# The eighth day

**H**appy New Year and 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

**? This month's question is:**  
Pastor, why do we have church on New Year's Eve?

Many of you may not recognize the significance of New Year's Eve and Day in the Church. So I will give an answer to the question with the hope of raising your understanding that we should cherish this day in perspective to Jesus rather than because of the start of another new year and football.

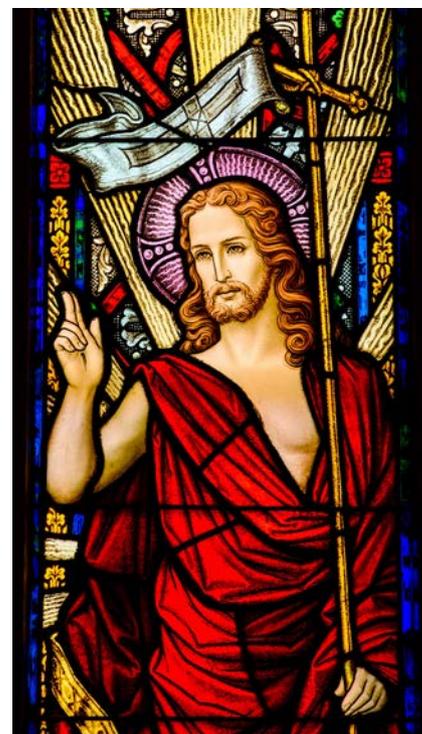
First of all, I don't think it pays to try and have a New Year's Day church service because many are tired after bringing in the new year, and there's also trying to compete with football games on New Year's Day. Thus we have a New Year's Eve service.

Now for the Christian aspect of the new

year: In the Old Testament, God demanded that His people would circumcise the boys on the eighth day. Therefore, on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, we focus on the circumcision of our Lord. Jesus was brought to the temple by His stepfather, or adoptive or earthly father, Joseph, and His mother, Mary, to fulfill this eighth-day command of God. Counting the Jewish way, we count the day of the celebration of Jesus' birth and we end up with Jan. 1 as the eighth day.

Now the next question might be: Why celebrate the circumcision of Jesus? The answer is: Your God always has worked through means. That is, He works through stuff that we can see, comprehend and grasp. God who made all stuff, who sustains all stuff, also works through the stuff of His making for your good! In the Old Testament, God attached His Word to external inanimate objects, to stuff. In circumcision, however, God attached His Word of promise to man's flesh, literally. It wasn't just spoken to you by a priest, but done to the flesh. Circumcision was God's promise that He would look upon you in grace and mercy and not in wrath against your sin.

But circumcision was a sacramental sign pointing ahead to a future fulfillment. That fulfillment came in the circumcision of Jesus, eight days after His birth. Jesus had no original or actual sin, yet He submitted Himself for you and me



in circumcision of His innocent flesh by shedding his first drops of blood. Jesus, therefore, submitted Himself to the Law to keep it for us as we fall miserably short.

Because of Jesus' circumcision in the flesh, you are God's child today. This is not by the shedding of your blood, but by faith in God's Word of promise in the flesh, Jesus Christ. He submitted Himself under the Law to fulfill it by dying in your place and rising from death. By this death and resurrection, He gives new and eternal life to all who are born again with Him in Holy Baptism and faith. As

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## MESSAGE

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St. Paul writes in Rom. 6:3-5:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead we too might walk in newness of life. And if we have been united with Him like this in His death we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.”

The new life began on the eighth day, the day of our Lord’s resurrection, which reinforces the connection between circumcision on the eighth day and Holy Baptism. As Col. 2:9-12 clarifies for us:

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were

also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

**“Because of Jesus’ circumcision in the flesh, you are God’s child today. This is not by the shedding of your blood, but by faith in God’s Word of promise in the flesh, Jesus Christ.”**

In the Church, the number 8 is symbolic of the fulfillment of God’s work of recreating His sin-broken humanity. The new life begun in Jesus’ resurrection on the eighth day will never end. The eighth day is literally the day on which the sun will never set (Rev. 22:5). That is the day and new life into which you are baptized. Therefore, to be baptized is literally to be born again, to a new life

that will never die.

As the world celebrates the beginning of a new year and remembers the passing of the old, so the Church celebrates the new life in the innocent, shed blood of Jesus Christ. In Holy Baptism and faith you are connected to the blood of Christ.



## Meet our new business manager

The LCMS North Dakota District Board of Directors has hired a new business manager, Tamara (Tami) Ulland. Tami will also represent Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in North Dakota.



Tami is a graduate of the University of North Dakota with a bachelor’s degree in management. For the past 23 years, she has worked for the city of Minto as the city auditor. She handled all aspects of city government as the only office employee. She has also worked for Harriston Industries; Life Skills and Transition Center; Grand Forks County; and Midwest Federal Savings Bank.

Tami lives in Minto with her husband, Doug. They have three grown children, Ryan, Haley and Brock. The Ullands are members of Zion English Lutheran Church, Grafton, where Tami is the youth director and the LWML president.

She served the North Dakota District this past triennium on the Board of Directors. Tami also serves as the vice-president for the Northeast Zone LWML. Tami grew into her faith at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Willow Creek, which is still “home.”

## Please report your stats

Congregations should be on the lookout this month for 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.

BRIEFS

Time for convention

The North Dakota District Convention will be held Jan. 21-24 at Astoria Convention Center in Dickinson. The theme is "Unity in Christ," based on Eph. 4:1-16.

More information is available at [nodaklems.org/district-convention](http://nodaklems.org/district-convention).

Transition at camp

At the fall Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads Board of Directors meeting held Nov. 18, a call was extended to **the Rev. Jon Bonine** to serve as the executive director for the camp. Bonine accepted the call and is now serving.

The Rev. Joel Brandvold, whom Bonine replaced, will serve as an advisor to share his years of experience in outdoor ministries.

Bonine expects to reach out to the congregations and pastors of the district as the camp moves forward with this transition. Please keep an eye out in your congregation and the district news for more information about the upcoming camp events and summer 2018!

Mark your calendar...

Popple Ridge Pickers will hold a concert at 4 p.m. in the All Faith's Chapel at the Life Skills and Transition Center in Graf-ton on **Jan. 14**. This event is in support of Project 24 Child Care.

**HURRY:**  
LCEF scholarship deadline is near

Do you have a high school senior? Applications for a \$1,000 LCEF scholarship are now being accepted. **The deadline is Jan. 31.**

For more information, go to [lcefuppermidwest.org/scholarships](http://lcefuppermidwest.org/scholarships).

INSTALLATIONS

Blessings at Beautiful Savior, Fargo



**The Rev. Chris Waldvogel** was installed as senior pastor of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Fargo, on Nov. 12. Pictured are, from left, (front row) the Revs. Samuel Majak, Charles Johnson, Waldvogel, Arie Bertsch; (back row) Adam Harvala, Leo Deitemeyer, Steve Schulz, Daniel Mapur, Clark Jahnke and Paul Bunkowske.



**The Revs. Daniel Mapur, left, and Samuel Majak** were installed in September as pastors of Sudanese ministry. In the center is the Rev. Arie Bertsch, North Dakota District president.

# 'Clothing Jesus' Littlest Lambs'

In September, ladies at Immanuel, Grand Forks, began a project called "Clothing Jesus' Littlest Lambs." They made clothes (that aren't doll clothes) that are easy for nurses to clothe babies who die far too soon. This gives a chance for the parents to hold their child before burying them.

The grieving parents can even use the clothes to bury their child in if they so desire. The clothes fit babies from just under a pound all the way to newborn-size. These little clothes were made for Altru in Grand Forks as it was in need of more clothing that's easy to put on the fragile infants.

We pray that they never need to be used, but please pray for the parents and families that will be benefiting from these clothes.

**In Christ,  
Deaconess Faith Swenson**



## On the horizon: District Annual Men's Retreat

"Beyond 500: Why the Heart and Sola of the Reformation still Matters" is the theme of the North Dakota District Annual Men's Retreat, to be held Jan. 12-13 at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads in St. John.

The featured speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Jim Gimbel, president of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His presentation will focus on the four Solas of our Lutheran heritage: *Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fides, and Solus Christus.*

The retreat begins at 6 p.m., Friday, Jan. 12, with supper and ends at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday. The cost is \$80, which includes three meals, snacks and lodging.

Bring a Bible, bed-roll, personal items, warm clothing and friends. **Contact Corey Isaak to register at 701-281-0240 or [corey.isaak@gracefargo.org](mailto:corey.isaak@gracefargo.org).**

Gimbel, who is from Minnesota, began his career in ministry at Zion, Kramer and Gardena, in 1985. During that time, he also helped Faith, Towner, organize before moving to serve as campus pastor at North Dakota State University in Fargo and youth pastor at Immanuel, Fargo. He eventually became senior pastor at Immanuel.

He was heavily involved in district youth ministry, including servant events

at the prior Shepherd's Hill location. In 1996, he accepted the call to serve as senior editor of youth, family and Sunday school materials for Concordia Publishing House (CPH).

He accepted the call to be professor of Leadership and Ministry at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. (CSP) in 2002.

During those years at CPH and CSP, out of a deep love for parish ministry, he served seven vacancy and interim ministries. In 2014, he was elected president of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, the western seminary of Lutheran Church—Canada.



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