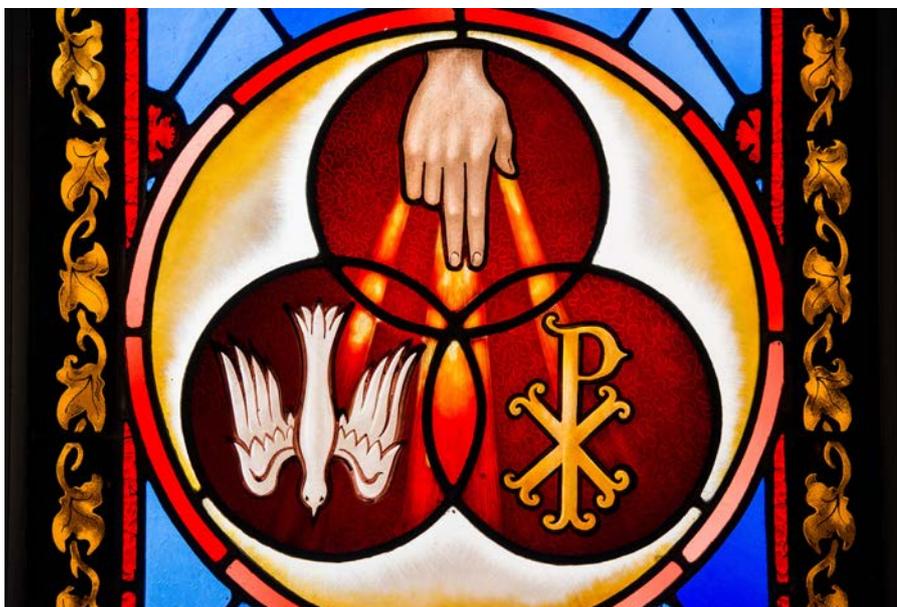




DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



THE HOLY TRINITY

Seven little children dressed in green; Tried to fly to heaven in a flying machine;
 The flying machine busted and all of them fell;
 And instead of going to heaven they all went to ...;
 Now don't get excited and don't get misled;
 Instead of going to heaven, they all went to bed.

The meaning behind this bedtime rhyme is: Don't try to fly up to heaven. You can't. Don't try to figure out God. You can't. Don't think that you can find God by your own spiritual powers. You can't.

God must reveal Himself to you. That is the only way you will ever know Him. God must come to you as He chooses to come. There and only there can you meet, know, trust in, love and serve Him.

We Christians worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. The Holy Trinity is God. God is the Holy Trinity. There is no God but the Father, who has begotten the Son from eternity, and from whom

the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds. There is no God but the Son, who is begotten of the Father from eternity, and from whom the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds. There is no God but the Holy Spirit, who from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son. Yet there are not three gods; but one God.

We did not invent this God. We know that God is triune because of the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures. We confess that God is triune in the creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian. We know that God is triune because God tells us He is in the words of Holy Scripture.

All Christians are Trinitarian. Jesus sent out the disciples with the command to teach and make disciples of all nations. How? By baptizing and teaching. Baptizing and teaching go together. When God baptizes you, He lays claim to you by putting His name upon you. We don't choose God's name for Him. He is our Father. We are His children. Thus, His name comes before our name. His name is who He is. As He said to Moses, "I am who I am." Therefore, when Jesus says to His ministers that they are to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, He is saying that God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The name of God identifies God.

That God would identify Himself by name and then join His name to us means that we are His children. Holy Baptism is how God makes you His child. You are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. You are not baptized in the name



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

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of the Creator and of the Redeemer and of the Sanctifier. You are baptized in the name that God chooses; not the name that you choose. That's because Jesus, who is God in the flesh, is the One doing the baptizing. We know this by what He says to His ministers whom He sends out.

He says:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them..." — **Matt. 28:18-20**

Jesus is laying claim to all authority as He is sending out His disciples to baptize and to teach. This means that when Christ's ministers baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Christ is the one who is doing it. Ministers do what they do by His authority, and He has all authority in heaven and on earth. You see, God baptized you. And yes, it is true that He used the hands and the voice of a man; but it was God who did the baptizing.

Sometimes I hear people say I was baptized Lutheran, or I was baptized Catholic, or I was baptized Methodist, or I was baptized Baptist. Any Christian church that baptizes in the name of the Triune God baptizes you into Christ and not into a church. A church cannot save you; only Christ can do that. You or their false understanding about Baptism does not make you baptized into a denomination. It was not a decision you made or an act that you performed that saved you.

In your baptism you are connected to Christ's death and resurrection. Because He died you cannot. Because He lives so shall you. If you do not understand your baptism, it means nothing to you. If you do understand your baptism, it means everything to you.

I can't figure out God and neither can

you. If you have ever read or listened to Jehovah's Witness propaganda against our Christian religion, you may have noticed how strongly they attack our belief in the Triune God. They argue that the doctrine of the Trinity is impossible to understand, whereas their god is easy to understand. Perhaps that's a reasonable argument, but it's a false one.

We Christians don't claim that you must be smart to be a Christian or to know God. That God is three distinct persons and one divine essence is not a theological problem to be figured out by super-smart theologians. In fact, our faith in the Triune God is very simple. We look to Jesus on the cross dying for our sins, and there we see the Holy Trinity. There is the Father's love. There is the Son's forgiveness. There is the Spirit's power. Three is the number of God throughout the Holy Scriptures. The word for God in the Hebrew is *Eloim*, which is a masculine plural noun meaning three.

St. Athanasius was a great defender of the trinity of God and the true deity and humanity of Christ. The creed that the church has named after him stands as one of the most beautiful confessions of the Christian faith ever written. (I recently heard a confirmation student, of the church I served as pastor and am still a member, recite the Athanasian Creed for me. It was amazing).

When God shows Himself to you as He really is so that you can worship the unity in trinity and the trinity in unity, He shows you how much He loves you. He doesn't leave it up to you to figure Him out. We can't. When He puts His name upon you in Holy Baptism, He forgives you all your sins. That forgiveness is not just a onetime pronouncement on the day you were baptized. It is a river of grace flowing through your entire life, keeping you pure and holy by washing you in the blood of Jesus every single day. In your baptism you claim the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as your God — and He claims you, now and forever.

Alora Woodruff is LCEF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



"Her attitude with each artistic project she begins is always a positive one, which makes teaching her a joy," writes Cyndy Robinson, art teacher, in her letter of recommendation for Alora Woodruff, the 2020 Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) North Dakota District \$1,000 scholarship recipient. The daughter of Rev. Brandon and Carrie Woodruff, Alora is a member of Peace, Garrison. In the fall, she plans to attend Valley City State University, Valley City.

In addition to Alora's positive spirit, she is a responsible young adult embracing leadership positions such as treasurer and county ambassador of her 4-H club. She is also a piano teacher for 14 area children.

At her church, Alora provides special music, accompanies Divine Service and helps teach music for Sunday school, VBS and Faith Builders — an after-school kids program.

"We are all so blessed by our faith-filled young people like Alora," said Tami Ulland, Lutheran Church Extension Fund district vice-president. "We wish her all the best as she continues her education."

Annual LCEF district scholarships

LCEF is blessed to provide annual district scholarships to active, faith-filled Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod students. Those interested in the 2021 LCEF district scholarships can learn more at lcefcentral.org/scholarships. Applications will be available online beginning in September. To learn more about LCEF, visit lcef.org.

CHRIST'S HANDS IN MEXICO



Members of the St. Andrew Mission Society, West Fargo, embarked on their annual mission trip to Mexico March 6-15. As the bus traveled south, people from South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Texas joined the North Dakotans for their destination of El Cercado, Mexico.

The people of the small congregation in El Cercado have recently put a great deal of time into building the exterior of their new worship space. Members of the Mission Society team helped pour the concrete floor inside the structure, paint the metal frames of the windows and doors, install light fixtures and apply

stucco to the interior and exterior walls.

Each day, team members hosted a Bible school for the village children, who heard about how God created the world, sent His Son as a baby, Jesus' journey to the cross to die for the sins of all people, and His resurrection from the dead.

The Mission Society team gave backpacks containing various school items to the children. They also hosted a carnival for the children to play fun games and receive prizes of stuffed animals, dolls, soccer balls and assorted toys. While the children were enjoying the games, parents had time to choose clothing or shoes for their children or themselves from items donated by the team members' congregations. Each family that attended the carnival also received a quilt that had been donated.

Team members from North Dakota were Kirk and Judy Rosin, St. Andrew, West Fargo; Bill Rahlf, Zion, rural Binford; and Brian and Roxanne Rosin, Zion, Bismarck.

If you would like more information or would enjoy a presentation about this trip for your group or congregation, please email Kirk Rosin at KRosin@juno.com.

SHEPHERD'S HILL AT THE CROSSROADS

If all has gone as planned, Camp has begun. Praise the Lord! We plan to continue with our camps as scheduled. We have worked and are working to adjust for keeping more social distancing during camps.

You can still register for your favorite camp at shretreat.org, or get a brochure at your church. If you have any questions, please call 701-244-5225. Please mark your calendars for our Annual Golf Outing on Aug. 1. We are working out the plans for a fun "socially distant" day on the links at the Rolla Country Club, followed by a steak dinner at the retreat.

Also, mark your calendar for our Annual Quilt, Craft and Culinary Arts Auction on Sept. 12. People from all around the state have donated quilts, craft items and delectable baked goods to be auctioned off. We aren't looking for bargains at this auction; we make a donation and get to take some awesome items home as a result. Shop for that special wedding coming up or that new grandchild, or buy some goodies to share with the neighbors!

Rev. Jon Bonine, Executive Director
director@shretreat.org | shretreat.org | [facebook.com/shretreat](https://www.facebook.com/shretreat)

District Convention canceled

After much prayer and discussion, the LWML North Dakota District Board of Directors voted to cancel the district convention, which was scheduled for June 26-28 in Fargo. It was a very difficult decision to make, but it was decided that canceling was best for the safety of everyone during this time. Voting for officers and mission grants will be done by mail with ballots being mailed out on June 26.



Please look for more details in the April-June *Messenger*, which will be coming out soon.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. — Is. 41:10

For more information, visit ndlwml.org/convention-2020.
 The 2022 convention will be held at Delta Hotels in Fargo.

Congratulations candidates, vicars

Call Day 2020 was one for the record books. Everything was different, yet still the same. The Word of God was preached, hymns were sung, vicarages and deaconess internships were assigned, and pastoral candidates were given their first calls.

Each of the two seminaries had their own way of making the virtual service work. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), held Call Day on April 28; Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind., held its service one night later.

Call Day services have been livestreamed for the past few years, however this year the pews were not filled.

Here you will find not only the men/families coming to the North Dakota District, but also the men/families that have ties to the district. If you were unable to watch the services, you may access them at each seminary website:

- ▶ CSL – csl.edu/callday
- ▶ CTSFW – callday.ctsfw.edu

PASTORS CALLED



Justin Woodside (CTSFW), who served as vicar at Bethel and Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck (2018-19), will now serve as shared assisting pastor at Bethel and Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck.



Brock Schmeling (CTSFW) is from Mandan and served as vicar at Zion, Bismarck (2018-19). He was called as pastor of Trinity, Great Bend, and Peace, Barney.



Nathanael Biberdorf (CSL) is the son of Rev. Richard and Valerie Biberdorf of Carrington, and will serve in the Minnesota North and North Dakota districts. He was called as pastor of Zion, Browns Valley, Minn., and Zion, Claire City, S.D.



Brian Doel (CSL) was called as associate pastor of Our Savior, Minot.



Jonathan Jahnke (CSL) is the son of Rev. Clark and Susan Jahnke of West Fargo. He will serve Iowa District West as associate pastor of St. Paul, Fort Dodge.



Timothy Roggow (CSL) served as DCE at Immanuel, Fargo (2000-02), and was called to serve in the Oklahoma District as pastor of Zion, Alvo, Okla.

VICARS ASSIGNED



Benjamin Ramthun (CSL) will serve at Zion, Bismarck.



Caleb Worrall (CSL) is the son of Rev. Bernie and Carolyn Worrall of Fargo and he will serve in the Ohio District at St. John, Dublin, Ohio.



Charles E. Nemecek (CTSFW) is from Hillsboro, Texas, and will serve in the Indiana District at Redeemer, Highland, Ind. He is engaged to be married to Christianna Eckstein, the daughter of Rev. Tom and Andrea Eckstein of Jamestown.



Eric D. Souer (CTSFW) is from Venetia, Pa., and will serve the North Wisconsin District at Faith, Green Bay, Wis. He is married to Becca (Trautman) Souer from Immanuel, Fargo.