



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



Why is it a **MERRY** Christmas?

To answer that, first of all I want you to remember that Adam and Eve were created in the image of God. They had it all — perfect bodies, perfect minds, a perfect place to live and no sickness, no hurt of body or mind, no war, no worry regarding their next meal. No abuse of any sort was to be found, self-inflicted or from others. Best of all, they were in perfect harmony with each other and, especially, with God.

And then Adam and Eve, in their foolishness, traded all the good, perfection, pure joy and contentment they had been given. They traded it all for a lie. They



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

bought into Satan's promise that they could be like God. Actually, they thought that they could be God themselves. They needed only to abide by what God had forbidden them to do, to eat fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And, of course, they did just that. They fell into sin and lost everything that was handed to them on a silver platter, their being in

perfect harmony with each other and with their Creator. All of that was gone.

And yet, "In the cool of the day" God comes searching for Adam and Eve after they had broken faith with Him and fallen

to temptation. Pathetically, on their own, they try to undo the horror that they had unleashed on the world. They tried to hide their nakedness in sin. They even tried to hide themselves from God. But rather than kill them on the spot for their betrayal of His love and good gifts, God promises to send a Savior, a Redeemer who would make right what they had made wrong. God promised a Savior when He said to Satan in Gen. 3:15 (which Adam and Eve were present to hear):

"I will put enmity (conflict) between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel."

This Coming One would restore everything that had been thrown away by their willful sin.

Since then, the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve had to live with the consequences of their first parents' sin. Sickness (COVID-19), war, frail bodies, abuse of all sorts — self-inflicted and from others — now are to be found everywhere. Those descendants — every man, woman and child — not only must live in the sin-fallen world that their parents created, but they also contribute to it, very often eagerly and willingly.

Yet God in His love and mercy does not abandon His children. He provides for their earthly needs, and even gives them "the promised land" of heaven for eternity. They live in this hope until they are fully redeemed from their sin and free from this fallen world.

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IN MEMORIAM

**Rev. Lyle
Kath**
1950–2020



Rev. Lyle Kath was called to glory on Oct. 8 at the age of 69.

He graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., with a Master of Divinity degree in 1992, and accepted his first call to Our Savior's, Eyota, Minn. He had to resign his call after a diagnosis and difficult recovery from throat cancer.

Pastor Kath and his wife, Jody, returned to Wahpeton in 2014. From 2014 to 2019, he served as the Fargo-Moorhead Area Lutherans For Life pastoral advisor.

With his tenacious attitude, Pastor Kath refused to be sidelined and continued to

share his strong faith. He wrote several devotion and worship books and created a daily "Pearl" email ministry.

He accepted a call as associate pastor from his home church of Immanuel, Wahpeton, in 2018. He conducted Bible studies and worship services with help from technology. He loved watching sports of all kinds, especially the Minnesota Twins and Vikings.

Pastor Kath loved life, but did not fear death. He was at peace with and had full trust in the Lord to call Lyle home at the time of His choosing.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Still, in the face of God's continued promise and provision of their earthly needs, His people find false gods to follow time and time again, from generation to generation. Although there is no real and lasting peace, joy or contentment to be found in such things as money, possessions, illicit sex or drugs or earthly power and prestige, God's beloved children remain literally hell-bent on pursuing them.

All of these things rightly ought to give God even more cause to abandon His people to their sin. He could let us go merrily on our pigheaded, self-destructive path away from Him, His promises and His love.

But He doesn't! He continues to have patience with us, letting us live in His grace, giving us time to repent and once again to walk with our Creator as He always intended for us.

St. Paul writes in Gal. 4:4-5:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son, born of woman, born under law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

When the time was right, God remembered His promise given to fallen Adam and Eve and all their children. He sent His beloved one and only Son into the world to be born of Mary. Although He was almighty, true God from eternity, by

and large He set His majesty and dominion aside so that He might live among His beloved fallen ones. The Divine One chose to be born in poverty in a stinking stable, in an even more stinking world, rotting in sin.

The perfect world that He had created was hardly recognizable any longer because greed, corruption, jealousy, hate and self-centeredness had changed everything. But enter our world He did to rescue it — to rescue the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve from the "body of death" that each one had become.

This Child of Mary, this Babe of Bethlehem, this unique man who is both God and man, grew to adulthood. Through word and deed, that is, through powerful preaching and mighty miracles, this Child, this Babe, brought the kingdom of God to the fallen earth.

Jesus of Nazareth, as He was known, showed mercy and compassion to those who heard His preaching and looked on Him in faith. But He had the harshest condemnation for those who continued to reject Him, those who thought they had no need for Him, those who thought they could still hide from their sins as Adam and Eve had pathetically — and futilely — tried to do.

This Jesus willingly took on the task for which He had been born to Mary. On the night of His miraculous birth, Mary had pondered in her heart what it all meant for Him, for her and for the entire world. But at the foot of the cross, her pondering was no more.

For as she gazed up at Him — suffering and dying for the sins of all people of all time — she saw her Son, who is also the Son of God, in all His glory, the long-promised Savior had come to make right what Adam and Eve and their children had made wrong.

Adam and Eve had traded a perfect existence, perfect harmony with God, for a lie. Jesus, the Child who we gather on Christmas to worship and honor, traded His perfect self, His very life, for your freedom from sin and everlasting death in hell.

God in a manger! God on a cross! God dying for you! That's the reality, even when we consider our conduct. What these hands have engaged in doing! What words have come from my mouth! And what thoughts have I allowed in my mind! Nothing too noble!

And yet, your loving God sends this Child of Mary. This Son of God truly has restored the lost perfection and blessed harmony that Adam and Eve once had.

One day you will see it. And it will be as it was meant to be, and even better. By God's grace and in His love, you will have it better than did your first parents.

Adam and Eve were in paradise, but still on earth when they were in Eden. When you have finished your time here on this earth, you will live forever and ever in heaven itself because Jesus, the Promised One, has come to make payment for your sin, and where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation.

That is why it is a Merry Christmas!

Happy 95!

Inez Liegman, a member of Messiah, Mandan, celebrated her 95th birthday on Nov. 9. Inez has been an active member of LWML and Messiah Quilters.



The pandemic has forced her to stay at home, but Inez has made over 25 quilt tops during the pandemic, most of which will be donated to missions in Mexico, nursing homes in Bismarck and Mandan, and Orphan Grain Train.

A former member of St. Paul's, Wimbledon, and Concordia, Jamestown, Inez has four children, Duane (Char) Kamphuis of Mandan; Renae (Vern) Hoggarth of Bismarck; Mark (Jan) Kamphuis of Bismarck; and Kevin (Elsa) Kamphuis of Valley City. She has 10 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

— Submitted by Renae Hoggarth



Standing by the quilts are, from left, Inez Hackett, Shelia Bethel, Peggy Trondson, and Terry Hillman. Missing from the photo is Eloise Krueger.

Quilts made with love

In October, the Sewing Disciples quilting group from Our Savior, Minot, shipped 78 quilts and 72 school kits to Lutheran World Relief. Thrivent provided a grant to purchase the backpacks, and Our Savior members donated the school supplies for the kits. Through this outreach endeavor, the Sewing Disciples have made an impact around the world. In the past, quilts have gone to Nepal, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Burkina Faso, Angola, and Niger. School kits have gone to Jordan, Tanzania and Senegal. "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40).

Pray for our district servants

As we prepare for the North Dakota District Convention, let us remember our district servants. We pray for our Board of Directors and Task Force chairmen who take time to meet and discuss the needs of the North Dakota District. Pray for each of them and give thanks for the years they have served, especially for Leon Bladow, treasurer; Rev. Tom Marcis, board chairman; and John Riley, board vice-chair, whose terms have expired after serving for nine years.

District:

- President—Rev. Arie Bertsch (4 years)
- Business Manager—Tamara Ulland (3 years)
- Communications Manager—Marie L. Johnson (10 years)
- Office Staff—Blenda Dahlien (4 years), Vicki Peihl (13 years)
- First Vice-President—Rev. Kirk Peters (3 years)
- Second Vice-President—Rev. Steve Schulz (3 years)
- Secretary—Rev. Josh Reimche (6 years)
- Youth and Young Adults—Pat Sebastian (26 years), Rev. Jon Bonine (3 years)

- Nominations Committee: Sue Corwin, Rev. Clark Jahnke, Greg Nelson, Rev. Josh Reimche, Rev. Dr. Matthew Richard, Robert Wurl

Board of Directors:

- Members at large—Paul Huber, Kay Kreklau, Kirk Rosin (3 years); Tom Langer, Rev. Daniel Voth (1 year)
- Appointed members: Tina Davidson, Jason Paradis (7 years)

North Dakota District Convention

Jan. 24-27 • Fargo

Rejoice in the Lord Always!
Rejoice!

Delegate registration forms are now available at nodaklcms.org/convention-2021



Jan. 4-6

- Pre-Lent Retreat—St. Andrew, West Fargo

Jan. 15-16

- Men's Retreat—Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads

Jan. 24-27

- District Convention—Fargo

March 5-6

- District Lutheran Youth Fellowship Retreat—Carrington

March 26-27

- Higher Things Retreats—St. Paul's, Minot, and Immanuel, Wahpeton

June 29-July 2

- Higher Things Conference, "Forgiven"—NDSU, Fargo

Support mission in Chile

The Iglesia Luterana Confesional de Chile (ILC-Chile), a confessional Lutheran church body, was created in 1954 as a mission and became a legal entity in 1992, though is not self-sufficient. The church has communities in Santiago, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Talca and Constitución.

The North Dakota District supports the mission congregations in the Maule Region. These churches are located in Talca and Constitución. Rev. Omar Kinas holds weekly services at Lamb of God in Talca. Once a month, he travels to Concepcion, the newest mission congregation in Chile. The Resurrection in Constitución is served weekly by Rev. Adrian Ventura.

The ILC-Chile is responding to Christ's mandate to "Make disciples ... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

Please prayerfully consider if you are being called to donate funds



Students from the North Dakota District painted this beautiful mural on a wall leading to the entrance of the church in Constitución.

to this worthy district mission. At our convention in 2018, our district voted to support Chile in prayer and financial support of \$25,000 a year for a total of \$75,000 for the triennium.

Lenten workshop is Jan. 4-6

Zechariah? For Lent? Indeed!

You are invited to attend a three-day Lenten workshop, "Zechariah: Your Kingdom Come," to be held Jan. 4-6 at St. Andrew, West Fargo.

Based on Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing's forthcoming commentary on Zechariah, to be published by Concordia Publishing House, this Lenten workshop will demonstrate how this post-exilic prophet abounds with stunning portraits of our Savior.

Jesus serves as the prophet's interpreting messenger throughout the first six chapters. Zechariah calls Jesus a "shoot" (3:8; 6:12), "servant" (3:8) and "stone" (3:9). It is in his last six chapters, though, that the prophet describes Jesus in more compelling ways. Jesus is righteous and humble (9:9). The blood of his covenant sets prisoners free (9:11). He is the church's "cornerstone," "tent peg" and "battle bow" (10:4).

Then, in a dramatic twist of fate, Christ

is detested (11:8), sold for 30 pieces of silver (11:12), struck so his sheep scatter (13:7) and finally pierced and killed (12:10). In the end, however, God's kingdom comes — finally and permanently, in pristine beauty (14:9, 16, 17).

The cost is \$75, and includes resources (sermons, PowerPoint slides, orders or worship and an accompanying Bible study). To register, contact Rev. Clark Jahnke at pastorjahnke@standrewlcms.org or call 701-282-4195.

Retreat to focus on forgiveness

The 31st Annual North Dakota District Men's Retreat will be held Jan. 15-16, 2021, at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads.

The Bible has many images for forgiveness and six of those images are the essence of the book "Flowing From the Cross: Six Facets of God's Forgiveness," written by Rev. Dr. Daniel Paavola, retreat presenter and professor and chair of theology at Concordia University Wisconsin. Dr. Paavola will cover three pairs of contrasting pictures of forgiveness:

"Clean and Covered," "Fixed and Far" and "Many and One."

The event begins with a meal at 6 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 15, and ends at 2 p.m. the following day.

The cost is \$100, which includes three meals, snacks and lodging. Bring a Bible, bed roll, personal items, warm clothing and friends. Father-son groups are welcome.

To RSVP, send an email to corey.isaak@gracefargo.org or call 701-281-0240



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