



# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH DAKOTA



tell sinners how they can be liberated from their sins and perceive a merciful God. When they have been released from the power of an evil conscience, joy will result naturally."

In other words, knowing that sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ, your Savior, and that where there is the forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation, you can rejoice always! Even when there is no gold or silver, eating or drinking, strength or health, skill or wisdom or power or honor, there is rejoicing. These are temporal things to rejoice in, but they are far from the eternal rejoicing that is already yours.

Part of that rejoicing is demonstrated in our churches' great hymnody. Our hymns tell of life's problems and how the Lord takes us through them. And then most hymns place us in heaven. In my study of the hymnody in our *Lutheran Service Book*, I have discovered that over 50 percent of our hymns place you in heaven in the last or second-to-the-last verse. Very often, heaven is mentioned in the second verse when the doxology (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is in the last verse. During the district convention, I will make a presentation on this, which you are welcome to attend.

So St. Paul tells us to "rejoice always" and not just part of the time when things are going well, but at all times. As St. Paul writes in Rom. 8:35, 37-39: Who shall separate

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**Rev. Arie Bertsch**  
District President

"Rejoice in the Lord always! Rejoice!" is the theme for the North Dakota District Convention, to be held Jan. 24-27 in Fargo. The theme is based on Phil. 4:4.

Now you may ask, "How is it possible to 'rejoice in the Lord always?'" For it is easy to rejoice when things are going well in life. But what if things are not going so well?"

In his sermon for the fourth Sunday in Advent, Martin Luther said:

Joy is the natural fruit of faith. ... Until the heart believes in God, it is impossible for it to rejoice in Him. When faith is lacking, man is filled with fear and gloom and is disposed to flee at the very mention, the mere thought, of God. Indeed, the unbelieving heart is filled with enmity and hatred against God. Conscious of its own guilt, it has no confidence in His gracious mercy; it knows God is an enemy to sin and will terribly punish the same. Since there exists in the heart these two things—a consciousness of sin and a perception of God's chastisement—the heart must ever be depressed, faint, even terrified. It must be continually apprehensive that God stands behind ready to chastise. ... It must be the just and the righteous who are to rejoice in the Lord. This text, therefore, is written, not for the sinner, but for the saint. First we must

**North Dakota District Convention**  
Jan. 24-27 • Fargo  
Delegate registration forms are now available at [nodaklcms.org/convention-2021](http://nodaklcms.org/convention-2021)

# Trinity celebrates 145 years

In 1875, Trinity Lutheran Church, Great Bend, was incorporated, thus becoming the first LCMS congregation in what was then the Dakota Territory. Now 145 years later, the congregation is still offering residents in southeast North Dakota an opportunity to hear the Gospel preached.

In celebration of this milestone, the congregation held an anniversary service on Sept. 27. Those who were comfortable with gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic shared in the service of appreciation for all of God's blessings throughout these 145 years.

The service was conducted by Rev. Brock Schmeling, who was recently ordained and installed as Trinity's pastor. Rev. Arie Bertsch, president of the North Dakota District, delivered the sermon.

Trinity is already making plans to celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2025.

"This service helped to remind us that God continues to be with us through times like these, just



as He had been with our forefathers," said Sam Stein, who serves as congregation president. "The event also gave us an opportunity to consider how we want to celebrate our 150th."

**Revs. Bertsch and Schmeling and acolyte Charlie Malmberg lead the recessional.**

# Grace school is growing

The staff of Grace Lutheran School, Fargo, is blessed to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with 80 students from 60 families this school year. Your support of the ministry is a great blessing to the growing school.

This year's theme is "God's People, God's Purpose," based on 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV):

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

## Celebration of Grace

The Celebration of Grace event will be held online on Friday, Nov. 20. What does that look like? Friends of Grace will be able to register for the auction for free and bid online several days before the program. Grace staff has much to be thankful for and cannot wait to share all the wonderful accomplishments made possible by generous friends and families.

For more information and if you would like to donate to the silent or live auction, send an email to [secretary@gracels.com](mailto:secretary@gracels.com).

# MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So even though at Thanksgiving we are usually very verbal in thanksgiving to

God for all the blessings of this life, we can especially be thankful for the blessing of eternal life in Christ.

In a recent devotion I read a writing from Benedict of Nursia that seems to fit well here:

I will sing praise to You in the sight of angels (Ps. 138:1). Therefore, let us consider how it benefits us to behave in the sight of God and His angels, and let us then stand to sing, that our minds may be in harmony with our voices.

Again, Luther:

Thus rejoicing, even if we should sometimes fall into sin, our joy in God will exceed our sorrow in sin. The nat-

ural accompaniment of sin truly is fear and a burdened conscience, and we cannot always escape sin. Therefore we should let joy have rule, let Christ be greater than our sins. John says: "If man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1-2). Again: "Because if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John 3:20).

This is why St. Paul writes that we can "Rejoice in the Lord always! Rejoice!"

**Happy Thanksgiving and blessings on rejoicing in Christ • Pastor Bertsch**



The women of the LWML North Dakota District enjoyed being able to get together for a one-day retreat, held Sept. 19 at Concordia, Jamestown. While the ladies were unable to gather for convention this summer, spending the day together was a great blessing.

A quilt was given to Valerie Biberdorf, outgoing LWML district president. The quilt was lovingly designed and crafted by Sue Hartley Wolfgram and members of the LWML district Board of Directors. From left, Biberdorf, Audrey O'Brien and Paulette Huber.



▲ Four generations were ready to work on packing Mercy Meals at the retreat. Pictured are, from left, Sharon Smelser, Sue Smelser Lanum, Ali Smelser Arndt, and Estelle and Julia Arndt.

◀ Ali Arndt (left), VP of Communication, is pictured with Sue Corwin, VP of Mission Grants and supervisor of the Mercy Meals event.

## 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](mailto:pastorjahnke@standrewlcms.org) or call at 701-282-4195.



**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

## SHEPHERD'S HILL AT THE CROSSROADS



### Chapel roof completed!

**P**raise the Lord! Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads (SHCR) is excited to be able to announce that the chapel roof is rebuilt and shingled.

The roof looks fantastic and will withstand many more years as the main building at SHCR. Visit and see the roof for yourself. There are a few more retreat opportunities available this fall and winter, or you may rent a cabin and set your own schedule.

Thank you to those who donated and prayed for the ministry through the years. Your donations help staff at Shepherd's Hill to spread the Gospel to

those who visit this gem in the Turtle Mountains.

Please continue to pray for SHCR, including for the updates that are ongoing.

Thank you to everyone who donated and attended the annual Quilt, Craft and Culinary Arts Auction on Sept. 12. Your support and donations totaled over \$17,000. People were also able to join in on Facebook Live.

Thank you for your continued support!



- [shretreat.org](http://shretreat.org)
- [Facebook.com/shretreat](https://www.facebook.com/shretreat)

## MILESTONE

### Happy 97, Babe!

Melvin "Babe" Kunkel, who turned 97 in October, has been a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Devils Lake, for more than 70 years.



Going to church every Sunday was important to him, and he rarely missed a service. He sat in the same pew with his wife, Julie, until her death in July 2016. The couple lived in Devils Lake since 1947, one year after their marriage.

Their 74th wedding anniversary would have been this month. They have two sons and two daughters.

After Julie's death, Babe lived with his daughter for two years and still enjoyed being able to attend church at St. Peter's. With his dementia getting worse, Babe moved into the Good Samaritan Center in Lakota. Staff bring him to church services when he is able.

Members of St Peter's have voiced they miss seeing Babe in his pew.

## Retreat to focus on forgiveness

**T**he 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:



Daniel Paavola

"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](mailto:corey.isaak@gracefargo.org) or call 701-281-0240



**Send submissions for the district supplement to Marie Johnson at [news@nodaklcms.org](mailto:news@nodaklcms.org)**