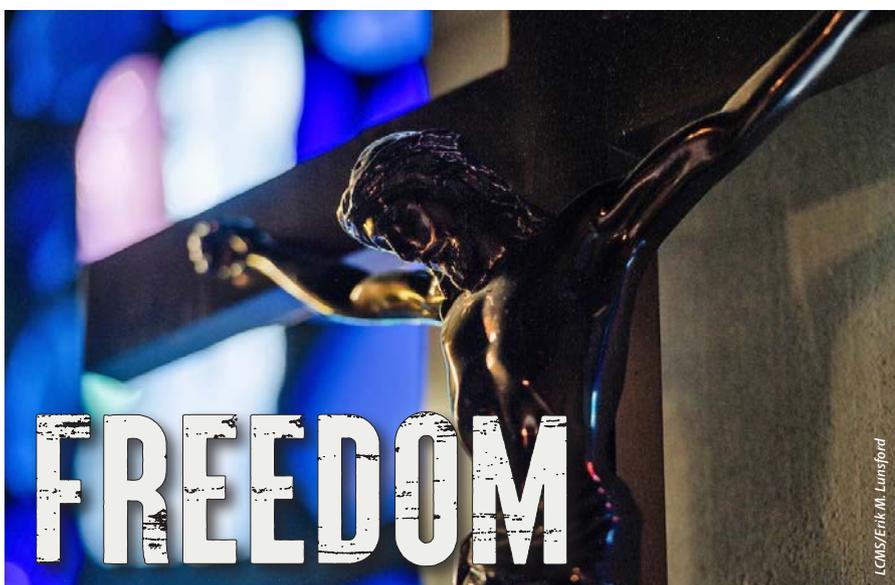




DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



Because we were in July, which is known for Independence Day, I thought this is what I would write about.

First of all I prefer to refer to July 4 as Independence Day (and not “July Fourth”). Call me quirky, but what does July Fourth say? In my thinking, nothing! Now when I say Independence Day, that says something. It says that we are independent or free from something.

It is quite amazing how many people do not know who and what we are free from. It is commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. There it was that the Continental Congress declared that the 13 American colonies regarded themselves as a new



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

nation, the United States of America, and were no longer part of the British empire. In other words we were free from paying taxes and living under the rule of another nation. Of course obtaining that freedom cost many lives in battle. Much blood was shed.

Because of that freedom we have the religious freedom to worship the God we want and believe in. For us Christians, that God, would be the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are free to practice and speak of our Christian religion. But in these latter years that is being challenged and threatened as we see any symbolism of Christianity being removed from the public square of our country. That is because Christians have become

afraid to speak up for their Christian freedom and are allowing these Christian symbols to be removed, even though it is part of our history. You see, if it is only the fourth of July and not Independence Day that we celebrate, the meaning of the day is lost.

Because of Independence Day you have had the freedom to start a business of your choosing, retire when you want to retire, eat what you want and pursue your dreams whatever they may be. And of course, that is all fine and dandy for this short pilgrimage that we have here on earth. But there is even a greater freedom that we have and can celebrate every day of this life and for eternal life, and that is freedom from our sin. Sin is the Original Sin that we are born with, inherited from our ancestors all the way back to Adam and Eve, who were deceived and committed the first sin that brought death. As King David writes in Psalm 23, “I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”

No matter how good this life has been or is, even though we celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and so forth, there is always hovering over us this shadow of death. But that is only an earthly physical death. You have freedom from the eternal spiritual death. You have independence from the eternal spiritual death through your Savior Jesus Christ. God would not have you independent of Him, so He sent His Son, your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to set you free from eternal separation from Him.

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Congratulations Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch!

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch received the most votes among the 28 Mission Grants that were selected at the LWML 39th Biennial Convention, held June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky. The ranch was granted \$81,680 to support its deaconess ministry.

Thank you to everyone from the North Dakota District who voted, and who stopped by the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch booth at the convention.



Pictured are those from the North Dakota District who attended the LWML convention in Lexington, Ky., in June.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

That is the message of all of God's Word from the time of the original sin. When I look up all the passages of God's Word that use the words "free," "freed," "freedom" or "freely," they all speak of this independence from death won by the shedding of holy, innocent blood.

Listen to these:

- ▶ **Ps. 146:7:** The Lord set the prisoners free.
- ▶ **Is. 58:6:** To let the oppressed go free.
- ▶ **John 8:32:** But the truth will set you free. (Jesus is the Truth, the Life and the Way).
- ▶ **John 8:36:** If He sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- ▶ **Rom. 5:15:** But the free gift is not like the trespass.
- ▶ **Rom. 5:17:** The free gift of righteousness

- ▶ **Rom. 6:7:** Anyone who has died (with Christ in Baptism) has been freed from sin (the wages of sin is death).
- ▶ **Rom. 6:22:** You have been set free.
- ▶ **Rom. 6:23:** The free gift of God is eternal life.
- ▶ **Rom. 8:2:** The Spirit of life has set you free.
- ▶ **1 Cor. 7:32:** I want you to be free from anxieties.
- ▶ **Gal. 4:26:** The Jerusalem above is free.
- ▶ **Gal. 5:1:** It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.
- ▶ **1 Peter 2:16:** Live as people who are free.
- ▶ **Acts 13:39:** Everyone who believes is free.
- ▶ **Rev. 1:5:** To Him who has loved us and has freed us.
- ▶ **Rom. 8:21:** Obtain freedom as the children of God.

- ▶ **2 Cor. 3:17:** There is freedom in Christ.
- ▶ **Gal. 2:4:** Our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus.
- ▶ **Gal. 5:13:** For you were called to freedom.
- ▶ **1 Cor. 2:12:** The things freely given us by God.

In this earthly life we have fought, are fighting and will always fight for earthly freedoms. But thanks be to God He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ over eternal death, and we have life and salvation because Christ Jesus has paid the price for our sins with His holy, precious blood.

Eternal life is to be independent from pain, death, sin, the devil and all evil, and having no more pain or sorrows or tears. Happy Independence Day this day and always through Christ Jesus! Amen.

Welcome to North Dakota

All Day 2021 services were held at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind., and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), in late April. The North Dakota District was blessed to receive **Aidan Moon**, a CSL student, who was assigned as vicar at Zion, Bismarck.

Also, three candidates with ties to North Dakota received calls. **Richard Dailey** (CTSFW), who served as vicar at Bethel and Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck (2019-20), was called as pastor to Trinity, Okmulgee, Okla. (Oklahoma District).

Tanner Post (CTSFW) and



Naomi and Aidan Moon

Stafford Thompson (CTSFW) attended Immanuel, Fargo, while they were students at North Dakota State University. Tanner was called as pastor to the dual parish of St. John's and St. Paul's, Sumner, Iowa (Iowa District East); and Stafford was called to serve as pastor at Hope, Munger (Cloquet), Minn. (Minnesota North District).

Pastor honored with celebration

Rev. Paul Nelson, pastor of St. John, Kongsberg, and St. Martin, Anamoose, celebrated his 40th ordination anniversary on July 18. A picnic was held in his honor in Kongsberg following worship.



College bound?

Reminder: If you have students in your congregation beginning college at the University of North Dakota or North Dakota State University this fall, please pass along their information to Rev. Dan Suelzle (Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel, Grand Forks) or Rev. Steve Schulz (Immanuel, Fargo) so that they can hopefully get them involved in campus ministry.

Contact Dan at dsuelzle@me.com or 701-215-2592; or Steve at steve.schulz@live.com or 701-639-0542.

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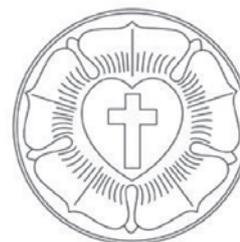
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Mercy committee members sought

Rev. Les Wolfgram, senior pastor of Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck, was recently appointed chair of the sub-committee that will focus on mercy care for North Dakota District congregations and communities. A goal of this sub-committee is to highlight what various congregations across our beloved district are doing to care for the physical needs of our neighbors and community.

Shepherd of the Valley (SOTV) has a Human Care Committee that provides direction in its mercy efforts. The committee identifies a ministry or help agency to support each quarter, and one percent of congregational giving goes to support that ministry. Along with financial support, this effort increases awareness of how these vital ministries touch lives with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the third quarter of 2021, SOTV's focus is Food For The Poor.

SOTV also hosts a Little Free Pantry that provides food and personal care items for those in need. The pantry is supplied by congregation members and several individuals and families in the south Bismarck community. Shepherd of the Valley also provides opportunities to volunteer and support other food distribution venues in the area. Please share your story of human care in your congregation and the impact those efforts are having in your community with me so that I can pass them on to others.

As Pastor Wolfgram looks to build this sub-committee, he is seeking those who have a passion in caring for people in need. If you are interested in serving on the sub-committee or know of someone who might serve well, please contact him at pastor.wolfgram@gmail.com.

Milestone

Schillings celebrate 50 years of marriage

Gaylord and Marilyn Schilling were married at St. Mark's, Minot, on July 24, 1971. They are now members of Beautiful Savior, Fargo. They have two children. Kristy is married to

John Hendrickson and they have two daughters, Hattie and Sadie, and live in Lakeville, Minn. Greg is married to Trish and they have one daughter, Gracie. Greg and Trish live in Halstad, Minn., and Gracie lives in Fargo.

Marilyn is a retired dental hygienist and Gaylord retired from sales, but has returned to work part-time as a delivery driver. They spend three months in the winter in Destin, Fla.

Volunteers needed at GLS

Do you have a day off with no plans? A quiet weekend? A rainy day that's keeping you inside? Are you retired and looking for a creative outlet?

Grace Lutheran School, Fargo, needs volunteers to do light maintenance projects and painting. Other projects include organizing its curriculum room, repainting and repair of the Holiday Lights nativity display, and in August teachers will need assistance preparing their classrooms for students.

All materials will be provided. Send an email to secretary@gracels.com or call 701-232-7747 if you are interested in any of these projects.

The landscape makeover is looking

great! Trees were planted in May and sod was lifted to make way for groomed garden beds and plants. At the June Work Day, landscape pavers were laid and plants planted. Photos can be found at [facebook.com/GraceLutheranSchoolFargo](https://www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranSchoolFargo). Anyone interested in helping purchase plants should contact the office.

The 2021-22 school year starts on Wednesday, Aug. 25. Pre-kindergarten class is re-opening this fall after a one-year hiatus. School staff is looking forward to welcoming many new families and seeing all those who are returning.

Back to School Night will be held Aug. 23 (time to be determined).



Aug. 5-7

- District Lutheran Youth Fellowship Gathering, St. Andrew, West Fargo

Sept. 17-18

- LWML district Fall Retreat, Concordia, Jamestown

Oct. 21-23

- District Middle School Gathering, Ramada Inn, Fargo

Jan. 23-26

- District Convention

Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads

The annual **Quality, Craft and Culinary Arts Auction** will be held on Sept. 11. Please let us know if you have items to donate and will join us for the auction.

The **Homeschool Retreat** will be held Sept. 12-14.

The **Men's Retreat** will be held Jan. 14-15. Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, speaker of "The Lutheran Hour," is planning on attending and presenting on Christian hope.

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