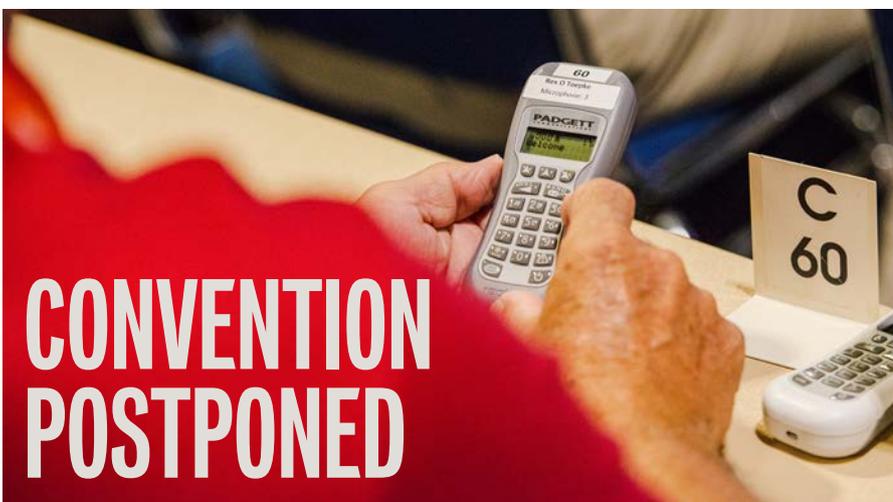




# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH DAKOTA



### CONVENTION POSTPONED

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” — James 4:13-15

Visiting with the district vice-presidents, Rev. Kirk Peters (first vice-president) and Rev. Steve Schulz (second vice-president), about this Scripture reading from James and tying it in with the convention being postponed, Pastor Schulz wrote and I quote:

As you know, the children of God live with a dilemma (even when planning district conventions!): On the one hand, we need to live as though we will die tomorrow or that Judgment Day will come tomorrow. On the other hand, since the Lord may not come for centuries, we need to plan and work on the assumption that we will live a long time yet and that our congregations and districts must survive for centuries. James is presenting here only one side of that dilemma. He is not condemning long-range planning committees (or saving for retirement). What he is condemning is ignoring the fact that our Lord has the final



**Rev. Arie Bertsch**  
District President

word on all the decisions that we make – including the district convention. God is displeased with the boasting and bragging about what people think they are going to do. He alone knows the future, and he alone governs the present.

Our North Dakota District Convention was to be held Jan. 24-27, so I thought it would be good for me to explain why it is not happening at this time and when and how it may go from here.

First of all, there were some concerns the North Dakota District Board of Directors had regarding the restrictions that would or could be in place in Fargo at the time of which we were to have the convention. For instance, we were planning on having the opening service at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Fargo. Due to present restrictions on gathering sizes in the church, we would not have been able to have service with all of the delegates in the church. Next, we were not sure how or if the hotel convention center would be able to hold and serve the convention due to the restrictions imposed on them.

Also, I received concerns from individuals in the district, such as:

- ▶ With Fargo having restrictions on the size of gatherings, doesn't the Fourth Commandment compel us to follow the governing guidelines of the city where we will meet?
- ▶ How will the reputation of the North Dakota District be portrayed statewide if we ignore the safety recommendations and gather anyway?

See **MESSAGE**, Page 2

# Retreat is now online

The 31st Annual North Dakota District Men's Retreat, originally scheduled for Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads, will now be held online from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Jan. 16.

The retreat theme is forgiveness. 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."

A free-will offering for Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads is encouraged.

To register, contact Corey Isaak at [corey.isaak@gracefargo.org](mailto:corey.isaak@gracefargo.org) or 701-281-0240.

## Concordia student updates



Grace Wolfram



Dane Wolfram

I am writing to update you on the exciting status of our daughter, **Grace**, a student at Concordia University Nebraska (CUNE). She received her Director of Christian Education internship assignment in late October and will begin her internship this month at St. Paul, Sioux City, Iowa. **Our family is grateful for the support our church work students receive from the North Dakota District.** Thank you! Also, our son, **Dane**, will receive his internship assignment in the spring as he completes his senior year at CUNE.

In Christ, Rev. Les Wolfram • Pastor, Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck

## GivePlus+ now available to support district

Visit [nodaklcms.org/giveplus](http://nodaklcms.org/giveplus) for a new way to support the work of the LCMS North Dakota District. Submit a one-time donation or set up an automatic recurring donation. Check out this new feature today! There is also a mobile app. More information can be found on the website.

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- ▶ Recognizing that the longer we put off a decision, the cost of canceling the venue could rise as we get closer to January, why are we waiting?
- ▶ How will we explain ourselves to our own congregations if we go forward and some delegates get the coronavirus, and possibly even die?
- ▶ How many delegates are at high risk?

I was in a Zoom meeting with the LCMS Council of Presidents (COP) in November. The COP is comprised of the district president from each district, the LCMS vice-presidents and LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison. We had an extended discussion about the district convention schedule for 2021. First, let it be known that it is not up to the COP to postpone district conventions, but some district presidents were unsure if their convention could convene at all this year.

The COP voted unanimously to encourage President Harrison to put before congregations a proposal to delay the 2022 Synod convention a year to 2023, extending the window for district conventions to include the calendar year 2022. The vote, which requires participation of at least one quarter of the Synod's congregations, will conclude Feb. 15.

Therefore, because of the unanimous vote of the COP to extend the 2021 district convention cycle because of COVID-19, and because our district convention was scheduled to be held before the conclusion of the congregational vote, I postponed our 2021 district convention to January 2022.

What this means is that all elected officials will remain in office to continue the work of the district for one extra year. Term limits will not be affected. District conventions and the LCMS convention will still be held every three years, with this triennium having four years instead of three.

I thank all of you who have made overtures, chose delegates and planned on being at convention. We will begin the process all over again in March 2021 for the January 2022 convention.

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact me.

Blessings in Christ • President Arie D. Bertsch



## Raking in Wimbledon

Members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wimbledon, gathered on Nov. 4 in service to their congregation. The volunteers raked leaves off the church property and had fun doing it. All volunteers were 65 and older, except for their pastor, Rev. Robert Hill.

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



**Jan. 4-6**

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

**Jan. 15-16**

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

**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

The North Dakota District Convention, scheduled for Jan. 24-27, has been postponed until January 2022.

HIGHER THINGS

# Retreats: What is Church?

Two Higher Things youth retreats will be held March 26-27 at St. Paul's, Minot, and Immanuel, Wahpeton.

Is church just a building? Is it where people come to pray? Does a church have to have stained glass windows and a steeple? Is church better if there are more people and loud singing?

What is the purpose of the church and



why should we even go? Do we go to church to give God our best, or do we go to receive God's best in Christ via the Word and Sacraments?

For more information or to register, contact Rev. Dr. Matt Richard (for the St. Paul's retreat) at [pastor@anchoredminot.com](mailto:pastor@anchoredminot.com), or Rev. Matthew Tooman (for the Wahpeton retreat) at [looktoxp@reagan.com](mailto:looktoxp@reagan.com).

## Archive news

Our postponement of the district convention made me wonder what happened during the 1918 flu pandemic.

Researching the topic on the internet, I found that many districts postponed or shortened their conventions. Churches were closed and people were told to have family worship at their homes. Back then, there



was no internet, no Zoom ... no electronic way to hear His word. Pastors encouraged families to have devotions since they couldn't attend churches.

They got through it back then, and we will get through it now. Without your church history, how would we know what took place during such events?

Send your stories to PO Box 9029, Fargo, ND 58106. Thank you.

— Vicki Peihl, Fargo Office Manager

# Need a getaway?

Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads has several options for you and your family to retreat at a cabin! Come and see the winter wonderland and get out of the house for a while.

We have several cabins that have their own kitchen for your cooking needs, or talk with us about meals. Call today to reserve your space.

**Rev. Jon Bonine, Executive Director**  
• [shretreat.org](http://shretreat.org)  
• [director@shretreat.org](mailto:director@shretreat.org)  
• 701-244-5225

## OGT thankful for LWML support

Orphan Grain Train and Mercy Meals were chosen by the North Dakota District LWML as Mission Grant recipients for the next two years.

"We thank God for those grants as they will help us to pay for shipping the containers and getting supplies for Mercy Meals," said Sue Corwin, Orphan Grain Train board member and volunteer.

For more than 77 years, the LWML has focused on affirming each woman's relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global missions.



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

**ARE YOU READY TO ♥ SERVE?**

Find your opportunity to serve at [lcms.org/servantevents](http://lcms.org/servantevents).