



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

The fullness of the Gospel

Here we are in March and it is the season of Lent, and April 4 is the Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter). Who would have guessed that we would still be under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Oh, some of you have had COVID, some of you have loved ones who have died with or from COVID, some of you have been vaccinated for COVID and some of you have chosen not to be vaccinated, and so we continue to live under the influence of this pandemic.

It may be that we are still encouraged to wear a mask or keep our social distance. As I visit with pastors and congregations, the larger concern is how do we get God's people back into the church building?



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

There is fear for those who have stayed away, that they will fall away. Some of the concern may simply be out of the desire of pastors and congregations to gather together again.

Over the years as a pastor, I often hear that those who were absent from church are reading their Bible and praying at home, and they are content with that.

Since this pandemic began, some are hearing God's Word in the comfort of their home by watching the service online, and they are content with that.

Allow me to address these concerns as an understanding of the "Full Gospel" and "the Fullness of the Gospel."

The Gospel is fully contained in the Word. The Holy Spirit's sanctifying work brings

us to, keeps us in, and strengthens us in Christ through the Word. In other words, the full Gospel is delivered when the Word is preached and heard. Therefore, whether in church or not in church, when hearing the Word of God, the "Full Gospel" is delivered.

Rev. A. Trevor Sutton wrote the following for the forthcoming LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations Large Catechism project:

And, yet, there is also a longing for the fullness of the Gospel that comes in other ways. Luther explains this as follows: "We further believe that in this Christian Church we have forgiveness of sins, which is wrought through the holy Sacraments and Absolution (Matt. 26:28, Mark 1:4, John 20:23) and through all kinds of comforting promises from the entire Gospel. ... In short, the whole Gospel and all the offices of Christianity belong here, which also must be preached and taught without ceasing" (LC II, 54). Not negating the full Gospel that comes through the Word proclaimed, Luther recognizes the fullness of the Gospel that comes in the Sacraments and through all kinds of comforting promises from the entire Gospel. In the Word, the Holy Spirit brings us to Christ and we receive the full Gospel. In the Sacraments, Absolution, and "all kinds of comforting promises" given within the Christian Church we receive the fullness of the Gospel.

And again from Rev. Sutton:

This is where Luther's writings in the

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LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

LCMS offering technology grants

By Stacey Egger
LCMS Reporter

The LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM) has announced a new grant opportunity to assist congregations in funding technology, software, equipment and training that will help them fulfill their mission to proclaim the Gospel to their members and the world.

Under the Esther 4:14 National Grant Program, approximately 100 grants of up to \$1,500 each will be awarded to LCMS congregations seeking to advance their technological capacity in “such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). Grants may be used to fund:

- ▶ Technology (cameras, mixer boards, etc.);
- ▶ End-user equipment (tablets for shut-ins, etc.);
- ▶ Software or software subscriptions (Microsoft Teams, Zoom Pro accounts, editing software, etc.); and
- ▶ Other equipment or training to meet congregational needs.

Deaconess Maryann Hayter, manager of LCMS Grants Administration, said the grants are especially needed during a time when physical gatherings have been severely limited due to COVID-19.

“This grant is not the large-dollar award that would fund a state-of-the-art film studio or other leading-edge professional technologies,” Hayter

said. “However, we hope to encourage congregations to fill the need of the church to proclaim the Gospel in new ways and to creatively increase ‘people contact’ in a meaningful way during such times as these.”

In recent months, many LCMS churches have experienced an increased need for technology to carry out their mission. Such technology can be expensive, however, and many churches — especially smaller churches and those that were already struggling prior to the pandemic — have been limited in their efforts by financial concerns. This grant opportunity is designed to ease those limitations.

Grant recipients will be chosen by a grant committee, with preference given to congregations that:

- ▶ Demonstrate financial need;
- ▶ Show the ability to meet an unmet need with grant funds;
- ▶ Provide evidence of thoughtful planning; and
- ▶ Document the actual costs of desired equipment or technology.

Applications for Esther 4:14 grants will be accepted through April 5, with awards announced in May.

Visit [lcms.org/esther4-14](https://www.lcms.org/esther4-14) for more information and to submit an online application.

MESSAGE

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Large Catechism can be particularly helpful since it allows us to speak of both the full Gospel and the fullness of the Gospel. In the midst of a pandemic, when many people must remain home and listen to a live-streamed message, the full Gospel is proclaimed. The Holy Spirit can and does work through the Word proclaimed — even when that Word comes to us through invisible waves, speakers, and screens. Yet, this does not negate the fullness of the Gospel that can only be experienced in the physical gathering of the local congregation as they go about baptizing, partaking of the Sacrament of the Altar, administering the Office of the Keys, and through the mutual consolation of the brethren. We are able to say that there is a fullness of the Gospel that can only be experienced in the assembling of the Christian Church.

“The physical gathering of the local congregation as they go about baptizing, partaking of the Sacrament of the Altar, administering the Office of the Keys, and through the mutual consolation of the brethren” ... all of them together constitute the “Fullness of the Gospel” as it has been given by God to His people. If pastors and the people of the congregations can understand this, we can understand our own concerns and our concerns for those who we would like to be back in the church building, congregated together.

Virtual church with the “Full Gospel” is just not the same as assembling together for worship for the “Fullness of the Gospel.” In the Word, the Holy Spirit can bring the treasure of the “Full Gospel” to our homes through the internet. In the Sacraments and the assembly of the local congregation, the Holy Spirit delivers the comforting promises of the “Fullness of the Gospel.”

I pray that this helps you understand your concerns and are able to share the joy of the “Fullness of the Gospel” with those you have concerns about, and that encourages them back to congregating together.

Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens.
— Ps. 150:1

STUDENTS: Submit essay for LFL contest

On behalf of the North Dakota Lutherans For Life (LFL) Board of Directors, we invite your Lutheran school or church or homeschool to have students participate in an essay contest in support of life.

The theme for this year's essay contest is "God Chose You" from John 15:15:

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit."

Details for the essay contest and the rubric for your church or school to evaluate the essays can be found at nodaklcms.org.

Schools, we ask that you would include this essay contest in your curriculum or make it an extra-credit assignment. Churches, we ask that you would include this essay contest in your confirmation or Sunday-school classes or as part of your youth group program.

Each school or church should select their best essay from grades 6-8 (400-word maximum) and grades 9-12 (750-word maximum). The essay should be in Microsoft Word or Google Docs and sent to Rev. Matt Thompson at mt@midco.net by April 1.



The first-place prize of \$100 and a second-place prize of \$50 will be awarded by North Dakota Lutherans For Life for each grade division. First-place winners will have their essays submitted for LFL's national essay contest, in which winners will receive \$250 and a free registration for the 2021 Regional Conference of their choice, plus a one-night stay at the conference hotel. Regional Conferences will be held in South Dakota, Nevada and North Carolina this year.

God's blessings to your church or school as you join with Christ in defending human life. And please contact me with any questions.

Youth workers conference scheduled for July

The National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference is a standalone youth ministry practitioner conference held every three years. This event, organized by LCMS Youth Ministry, also provides a wonderful opportunity to prepare for the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering. The conference will be held July 11-14 at the Hyatt Regency Houston.

Pat Sebastian, National Youth Gathering district coordinator, encourages volunteer adult leaders and high school students from North Dakota to attend this conference for the valuable training and networking experiences. For more information, and if you would like to share hotel rooms and travel together, contact Pat Sebastian at 701-471-3289 or patsebbis@aol.com.

To connect with LCMS Youth Ministry, visit lcms.org/youth.



Wanted: Gathering volunteers

In All Things, the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering, will bring over 1,000 loving, energetic, flexible and faithful volunteers to Houston. The volunteer team is composed of folks from all over the United States, of all ages, gifts and abilities.

You are encouraged to serve a few hours or the entirety of the Gathering as a Young Adult Volunteer (ages 19-25) or an Adult Volunteer (25 and older).

Volunteers are a highly valued and deeply needed element of the Gathering experience and its overall success. Youth Gathering staff



hopes you will consider serving at the 2022 Youth Gathering and seek to help all Gathering participants experience the joy of Jesus In All Things!

Visit lcmsgathering.com/volunteer for more information. **The deadline for volunteer applications is March 15.**



Hope in troubling times - Project 24



John Kissinger Nyang'au, director of Project 24, chats with children at the Tumaini ELCK Project 24 site in Kisumu, Kenya, in 2015.

During the troubling times last year, it was easy for the Project 24 students and extended family members in Kenya to become discouraged and less hopeful. It was therefore so important that they were able to receive the promise of God's Word in addition to the food and provisions that were delivered each month.

Many of the children's extended families and caregivers had never heard His Word. As our partner church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) worked to deliver the food and provisions each month; they could also begin to form relationships with these extended family members. These Lutheran pastors, evangelists and deaconesses would often stay after the deliveries were made and use the time to deliver the Good News to those that were there!

They would pray together, read from the Bible together, and learn about God's saving grace together. Even through the hardships, God's love continued to be shared!

For more information about Project 24 or to learn about sponsoring a student through Christ's Care for Children: Kenya, please contact Jennifer Hummel at 314-996-1326 or jennifer.hummel@lcms.org.

SUMMER IS COMING!

The Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads summer theme is "Be Strong in the Lord."

The brochures with registration forms will be going out to congregations and camp families soon. You may also register online at shretreat.org.

There are a few spring weekends with

openings. Reserve a spot for a get-together, an escape or a family reunion. Call or email to reserve your space!

Join us for the annual meeting of Shepherd's Hill Retreats, Inc., at 1 p.m. on April 10 in the chapel to learn more about the work happening at SHCR and how you can help.

Rev. Jon Bonine, Executive Director

• shretreat.org • director@shretreat.org
• 701-244-5225

IN MEMORIAM

Fern V. Tegtmeier, 81, of Watertown, Wis., passed away on Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021, at her home in Watertown, Wis. She was born on April 10, 1939, in Jackson, Minn. She served as a nurse on a college campus, at summer youth camps, a family retreat center, hospitals in Seattle, Wash., and Fargo, and was an instructor at the School of Nursing at St. Luke's Hospital in Fargo.

In 1969, she married Rev. Victor Tegtmeier, who served in Sawyer and LaMoure, and at Grafton State School in the 1960s, 70s and early 80s.

Fern was an accomplished musician; she studied music to prepare herself for teaching piano lessons and serving as a church organist. She sang in church and community choirs and choruses.

Fern was a student of the Bible, teaching Sunday school whenever she could and instructing her children and encouraging them in their faith life. She was a member of the LWML and served as an officer locally and for the district.

She is survived by Pastor Victor, two sons, three stepchildren, 13 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. She developed lasting friendships wherever she went. Among her many friends, one stands out as unique — a Sunday school pen pal for 72 years.



March 5-6

- District Lutheran Youth Fellowship Retreat—Carrington

March 10-14

- LLL Booth at the Winter Show, Valley City

March 26-27

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

June 29-July 2

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