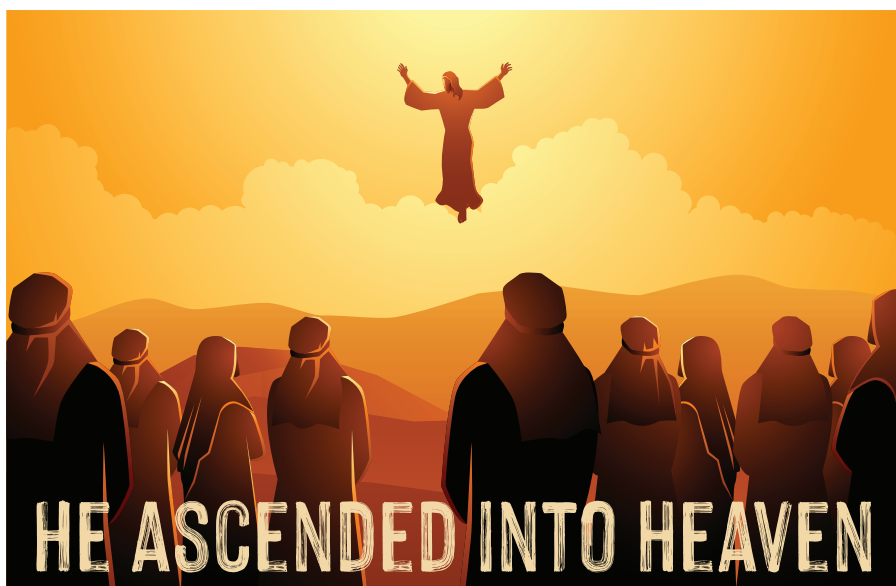




# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH DAKOTA



**MAY 13** will be the 40th day after Easter — Ascension Day. Jesus' ascension is one of the most important celebrations of the church year. You might not realize this because it's a rather neglected celebration by most of Christendom these days. The fact is Ascension Day is right up there with Christmas and Easter in its importance. For on Ascension Day, our Lord takes our flesh with Him into heaven, where He sits at God's right hand with all authority.

You may be asking: Is it that important? Or: Does it matter and help me in my day-to-day life? Because, honestly, we do have issues day-to-day on earth. So, really, how important is a pie-in-the-sky ascension of Jesus into heaven? Such as, when you have problems at work or with



**Rev. Arie Bertsch**  
District President

workers? When your health or the health of someone you love is failing? When age seems to be taking its toll and life is no more fun? Really, how much does Jesus' ascension mean for all of that?

In fact, very much if your eyes are open wide to see what Jesus Himself has done for your day-to-day life. Especially if you understand that in your

Baptism, you are connected to Jesus' death and resurrection. In other words, you are now the body (the church) and He is your head. Wherever the head goes, so does the body. So if your head, Jesus Christ, has lived and died through all the things that were mentioned earlier, so do you, His body.

Consider: If Jesus has risen from the dead — *and He has* — then so shall you.

If Jesus ascends into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, so shall you. You see, it matters, and the ascension of Christ to the throne of God is a feast to celebrate.

Therefore, open your ears and open your minds to know of and remember Jesus' Ascension Day, for it is relevant and important to you. Jesus suffered, was crucified and died for our sins, and on the third day rose from the dead. He walked on the earth for 40 days.

And he (Jesus) led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. — **Luke 24:50-51**

This is what we celebrate: The Son of Man is now ascended into heaven. Jesus will always be your Savior and your God, both in flesh and in divinity. But He has also lifted you up so that you once again have a perfect fellowship with God. Jesus is the man the Father intended man to be, and yet He is the only begotten Son from all eternity.

Jesus' ascension into heaven does not mean He is physically restricted. Just because your senses cannot perceive Him does not mean He is not present. You know He is with you, and to help our feeble faith

He does provide something tangible to grasp and hold, such as bread and wine, to go with the promise of His Word. He is truly present in, with and under the bread and wine. We call it a real presence. Not in a carnivorous chewable

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# LEM equips pastors in Mexico, Guatemala

**R**ejoice with us! God in His grace has answered our prayers and granted our requests through the generosity of His Holy people.

Lutherans Engaged in Missions (LEM, a mission society from the Bismarck-Mandan area) has procured all the funds necessary to purchase 390 Spanish copies of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. The Spanish catechisms were sent directly to Latin American Lutheran Mission, based out of Laredo, Texas. The books arrived just in time for Christmas!

During our LEM mission trip in February 2020, Yael Mendez, a trip coordinator, asked if we could possibly help out with the purchase of 39 Spanish copies of the *The Book of Concord* for pastors of new mission starts in Mexico and Guatemala. The use of this book would help steer these fledgling



congregations toward conservative, Bible-based Lutheranism.

By the grace of God, we were able to fulfill that request. This led to the second stage of purchasing 10 copies of Luther's Small Catechism for each of the 39 congregations. Concordia Publishing House graciously gave a discount due to the quantity of the order. We praise God for St. Paul Lutheran Church, Beach, and several congregations from North Dakota that came together to aid in raising the final funds for this purchase.

A third stage of this effort is planning to provide Spanish Lutheran Study Bibles for the 39 pastors. God continues to work and to move in our midst for the praise of His holy name. What a privilege it is to be used by Him in His kingdom. To God alone be the glory!

**Rev. Kevin Zellers**  
Pastor, Messiah, Mandan

## CSL workshop to be held in West Fargo

The Prof Insights: Faculty-Led Workshop Series from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), is coming to the North Dakota District. "Confessing Christ and Living His Mission: Pre-Constantinian Theology and Practice for Our Post-Constantinian World" will be held June 15-17 at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, West Fargo.

The workshop will be taught by Rev. Dr. Benjamin Haupt, CSL associate professor of Practical Theology.

Many would argue that we live in a post-church, post-Christian culture marked by increasing hostility to Christian theology, waning protection of political freedoms of the Christian church,

increasing biblical illiteracy and the list goes on. How should Christ's church conduct itself in such a climate? This workshop will address how we got to this place and then look at where we go from here. The workshop will explore various frameworks to understand the interaction of Christianity and culture. Participants will then explore how the early Christian church engaged a culture similar to our own.

The workshop is open to pastors, church workers and laypeople. The cost is \$100, which includes continuing education credits for pastors.

For more information and to register, visit [csl.edu](http://csl.edu), go to the "Resources" tab and select "Workshop Series" from the dropdown menu and scroll down to the link.

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and drinkable way, but in a sacramental way. It is like the air we breathe or the radio, cell phone and TV waves around us. Just because you cannot see them doesn't mean that they are not real and truly present.

So Jesus is truly present with you as He has promised, when you gather in His name. He did not leave you or I to run things in the church as we see fit. That would decapitate the church, the body of Christ, of its head, Jesus Christ. Always remember, He is especially with you in church where His Word is preached and His Sacraments are administered.

In Luke 24:50, Jesus spreads His hands over the disciples to bless them and slowly, majestically and mightily rises into heaven. Jesus is in heaven with the same body that died on the cross and that laid in the grave. But He is not confined to heaven. He is at the same time wherever He has promised to be according to both His human and divine natures.

As Jesus ascended, so shall He return! He departed visibly, He shall return visibly. He went to heaven, He shall return from heaven. He went away bodily, He shall come back bodily. He will return in all His glory with all the angels for the final judgment. Every eye shall see Him when He returns. He still carries the marks of His crucifixion. He is the Lamb who was slain. He is your Ascended King!

Also, remember Jesus' words in Matt. 24:27:

"For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

A little side note for you about this: That is why people are facing east in most cemeteries. When you rise from your grave you will see the Lord in the east and you will ascend with Him.

Therefore, grace and peace to you from our risen and ascended Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.





From left, Deb Kuhn, Arnie Donat and Joyce Rutten fit pieces of stained glass in the window.

## Messiah members build stained glass windows

Members of Messiah, Mandan, have recently completed eight stained glass windows that will be framed and illuminated in the walls of the church.

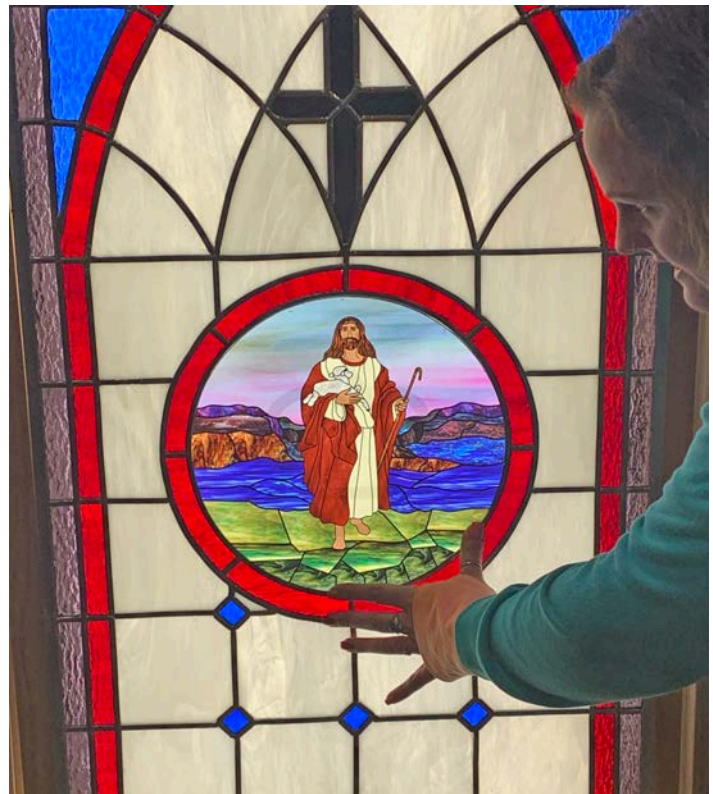
A dedication service will be held at 3 p.m. on June 13. Rev. Arie Bertsch, North Dakota District president, will be the guest preacher. A light supper will be served after the service. For more information, contact Messiah at 701-663-8545 or [messiahmandan.org](http://messiahmandan.org). All are welcome to attend.

Planning meetings began in June 2018 to determine the size, design and colors to use to create the stained glass windows. A small group of members helped plan the project, including Rev. Kevin Zellers, Arnie Donat, Dave Schepp, Dick Ames and Chuck Hyatt.

Several members volunteered to help with the project. In September 2018, the stained glass committee met to begin the project to beautify the church for many years to come. In addition to those listed above, volunteers who worked on the stained glass pieces are JoAnn Dilger, Kristi Dilger, Stephanie Dilger, Renae Hoggarth, Deb Kuhn, Jessica Kuhn, Matt Kuhn, Robyn Kuhn, Joyce Rutten and Anthony Steele.

Woodworkers include Adam Ames, Jerry Scheitel and Dave Schepp.

The committee members didn't know anything about stained glass, so Pastor Zellers offered his expertise and skill. He taught the class how to design, cut and grind glass among the many other steps needed to complete the project.



A decal is being held in place in a window that's almost completed.



## Thank you LWML!

Orphan Grain Train (OGT) and Mercy Meals of North Dakota were chosen as recipients of LWML North Dakota District Mission Grants for the 2020-22 biennium.

"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, OGT 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. Their primary focus is on: "Nurturing Faith in Christ – Making Our Faith Meaningful – Sharing Encouragement."

## 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.



## 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, encourag-

es 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](mailto:patsebbis@aol.com).

To connect with LCMS Youth Ministry, visit [lcms.org/youth](http://lcms.org/youth).

### MILESTONE

# 105!

Matilda (Tillie) Wiederrich, a member of Zion, Ellendale, celebrated her 105th birthday on March 23.



## Life luncheon for pastors is June 9

Dakota Hope Clinic is holding a free luncheon for pastors and their plus-one on June 9 at St. Mark's, Minot, with pro-life speaker Mike Spencer.

For more information about Spencer, visit [projectlifevoice.com/about-mike](http://projectlifevoice.com/about-mike).

For more information on the luncheon, call the Dakota Hope Clinic office at 701-852-4675 or send an email to Nicole at [reception@dakotahope.org](mailto:reception@dakotahope.org).

## Register for Higher Things conference

"If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven." — John 20:23

"I forgive you" are the three most powerful words in the universe. They don't just change the universe for someone. They change someone's eternity. They change your eternity!



"Forgiven" is the theme for the Higher Things youth conference to be held June 29-July 2 at North Dakota State University in Fargo.

To learn more and register, visit [higherthings.org/2021-forgiven](http://higherthings.org/2021-forgiven).