



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



The joys of WORSHIP

confessing your sins and receiving absolution. Being cleansed from sin, you enter into the joys of the particular festival day or Sunday. But the worshiper finds that earth still has its burdens and sorrows, both present and future. Life, death, and eternity, with all of their bitter fruits and consequences, threaten you as you journey to the heavenly kingdom. Worries burden you and keep burdening you. But no longer does sin torture you, no longer do you fear evil, no longer do you sigh longingly, but joyful confidence fills your soul. You sit beneath the face of the Lord. In the sermon you begin to experience the blessed communion of the saints who rejoice in the Lord. The worshiping congregation experiences itself as the Bride of the Lord, rich not only in and through Him but also in and through one another. The congregation, in its fullness, thinks of the special needs and miseries upon the earth, delights in all good things, and goes before the altar of the Lord with intercessions, petitions, and prayers. All worshipers are blessed and approach the throne of blessing knowing they are worthy. The worshipers realize that the Church is one unit both here and everywhere. Pilgrims are one in their prayers and are cleansed with all of the blessed saints in heaven.

Blessings to all of you as we endure here on earth without fear knowing that in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

Here we are, starting the third year of being in this COVID-19 fear. Yes, I say fear because it seems to be controlling so much of our lives — in the world and in the church. In the “Treasury of Daily Prayer” from Concordia Publishing House, the Jan. 2 entry is written by Rev. J.K. Wilhelm Loehe. He was born in 1808 and served as a pastor in Bavaria, Germany. I hope you find this writing as enriching as I did.

In worship the congregation experiences its Lord most intimately. Here it lives in nearest proximity to its Groom in a heavenly life on earth, and earthly life in heaven. Worship is the most beautiful flower of earthly life. Just like land in the middle of an ocean, the Word and the Sacraments stand in the inner life and worship of the congregation. You have one week behind you, a new week lies in front of you. Between these two weeks is the day of Communion Sunday. You desire to draw near to God with the congregation. What do you, whether you are a shepherd or a sheep, have to do first? You do what all religions say is necessary for the soul: you cleanse it like feet that have become dirty from the activity of daily life. In other words, you prepare yourself for worship by

Happy birthday!

Rosella (Gust) Debele has been a faithful organist at Zion Lutheran Church, Kramer, since she was a teenager. The Zion congregation thanks and praises God for her, and wishes her a happy 85th birthday, which she celebrated on Jan. 21.



Farewell



St. James Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, closed its doors for the last time on Dec. 12 after 115 years of worship and kingdom work. The North Dakota District gives thanks for the Word and Sacrament ministry provided over the years by St. James to Golden Valley and Mercer County. St. James was served by Rev. Kirk Peters, who is pastor of St. Matthew, Hazen, and district first vice-president. Pictured is Rev. Arie Bertsch with congregation members Melvin Schlender, congregation president, and Shirley Stern, who served as organist.

FROM THE ARCHIVIST

St. James photos sought

Happy New Year! Let's pray that in 2022 the spread of COVID eases and that *all* our LCMS members can return to attending church in person.

Sadly, another LCMS church in North Dakota had to close its doors in December. St. James, Golden Valley, was organized in February 1907, along with congregations in Neusatz and Friedental, and became a parish. However, there are no records in our vault with any information on Neusatz or Friedental.

St. James church was originally built in the town of Sofia, nine miles northeast of Golden Valley and moved to Golden Valley in 1946. There was a big 100th anniversary celebration held at the church in September 2007. A blessing meal was held, followed by a worship service and fellowship, including cake and a German sing-along. If anyone has pictures of the 100th celebration, please send copies to our Fargo office. I didn't even find a picture of the church to post.

The closing service of St. James was held on Dec. 12. We pray for the members of Golden Valley as they attend a different church for worship.

We had our 59th district convention in January. If anyone has workbooks from the conventions in 1951, 1952, 1954, 1957, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1982 and 2006, please contact me at fargoofficendlcms.com. Thank you for helping preserve our North Dakota District history.

Vicki Peihl • District Office Manager



Pancakes for Pamela

Members of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rugby, hosted a “Pancakes for Pamela” breakfast on Dec. 12. The breakfast, supported by a Thrivent Action Team, raised \$1,200 to sponsor Pamela Atieno Osango, a student who attends Tumaini school site in Kenya through the LCMS Christ’s Care For Children: Kenya program. This will be the third year the congregation has sponsored Pamela. The congregation also receives reports from Pamela. To learn more about the program, visit lcms.org/make-a-gift/christs-care-for-children-kenya.



The 28th Annual Pre-Lent Retreat was held Jan. 3-5 at St. Andrew, West Fargo. Pictured is Rev. Brady Finfern, who presented on “My Savior’s Love to Me: Proclaiming God’s Grace During Lent in Song.” Rev. Finfern serves as pastor of Messiah Sartell, Minn., and as Minnesota North District third vice-president. He is also host of “Thy Strong Word,” the Bible-study program on KFUE Monday through Friday.

Lenten hymnody brings the richness of God’s call to repentance and His full forgiveness in Christ. Generations have proclaimed the truth of His Word in song for the care and comfort of souls. We often sing these blessed hymns without understanding the background and the fullness

of the theology packed within each stanza.

In our hymnody we “make a joyful noise” and proclaim His truth. As the hymn “My Son is Love Unknown” reminds us that our Lord Jesus’ love is “to me” (LSB #430), we focused our attention on God’s love in Christ. Each midweek and holy week service has a chosen hymn to not only sing, but also to help us dig into the history, context and preach the Christ-centered glories of God’s Word’s within.

The Pre-Lent retreat began in 1991 with a workshop on Isaiah 53 led by Rev. Dr. Michael Middendorf, who was then serving as pastor of Concordia, Jamestown. He is now a professor of theology at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.

Students: Proclaim life with essay

On behalf of the Board of Directors for North Dakota Lutherans For Life (LFL), we invite your Lutheran school, homeschool and Sunday school student to participate in the 2022 LFL Essay Contest. The theme for this year's essay is "Blessed for Life," based on Ps. 41:2:

The LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies.

For more information, including guidelines and how the essays will be evaluated, visit nodaklcms.org/blog/north-dakota-lutherans-for-life-essay-contest.

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 two divisions: grades 6-8 (400-word maximum) and

grades 9-12 (750-word maximum) and submit them digitally, in Microsoft Word or Google Docs files, to Rev. Matt Thompson at mt@midco.net by April 1. Also, please contact me if you have any questions.

The first-place prize of \$100 and a second-place prize of \$50 will be awarded in each division by North Dakota LFL. First-place winners will have their essays submitted in LFL's national essay contest for a chance to win \$250 and free registration to a 2022 regional conference and a one-night stay at the conference hotel.

God's blessings to your church and school as you join with Christ in defending human life.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Matt Thompson
Board Member, District LFL

'Trek' through Scripture



Has one of your goals been to read through the Bible in a year? If so, 2022 is the year you can still it happen!

Rev. Tom Marcis and Vicar Aidan Moon of Zion, Bismarck, are leading a "Trek Through the Scriptures" this year. The journey began on Jan. 1, but it's not too late to join.

They will use helpful apps for this journey: ReadScripture provides a daily reading schedule plus

helpful, supplementary videos. Through YouVersion, you can listen as the verses are read aloud to you. Both apps can be found in your preferred app store.

The daily reading list and more information can be found at zionbismarck.org (scroll down to find the links). Each week, Pastor Marcis and Vicar Moon will reflect on the upcoming week's readings through a podcast made possible by a grant from Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

AMERICA'S IDOLS and the REAL GOD

A Higher Things Retreat
March 25-26, St. Paul's, Minot

What are the idols of America? What are your idols? Ask yourself, "What do I find security in, and what do I boast about and defend the most?" The answers — money, sports, fame, even ourselves — are your idols.

Maybe you think that idols aren't that big of a deal. Rev. Justin Woodside, associate pastor of Bethel and Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck, will explain why idols cannot love us, pursue us or bleed for us. They cannot protect us from the grave. Only Christ can.

Spots are limited. For more information and to register, visit higherthings.org/retreats#Minot.



Send submissions
for the district
supplement to
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