



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA



Songs vs. hymns

“REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS! REJOICE!” was the theme of the LCMS North Dakota District’s 59th Convention, held Jan. 23-26 in Fargo. The theme is based on Phil. 4:4-9, which reads:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

results appear on page 2). But for those of you who were unable to attend, I want to share with you parts of my presentation on “Songs vs. Hymns.”

In our theme text for this convention we hear, “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” When I hear these words I think of “Rejoicing in music!”

Now for many of you that know me you might find that interesting. I do not play an instrument. Actually, I had seven years of guitar lessons before I figured out that I would never play the darn thing. No rhythm! For 20 years I sang solo in the front of the church as a pastor. I could sing my heart out and no one could hear me unless I forgot to turn my mic off. Doris (my wife) would then be in the congregation doing the sign language of cut. Now sitting in church next to Doris, at times she is motioning me to speed it up, sing higher, sing lower and so forth. That’s OK! I have been a work in progress for almost 44 years. But I love good music and good hymns in church.

This love of music and hymns in church has caused me to do a study on songs vs. hymns in our LCMS congregations in the North Dakota District.

The study was done on 414 songs used in the district in comparison to 414 hymns from *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*. For your information: The LCMS Consti-

I wrote this article before we gathered for convention. (*Convention*

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Convention roundup



Rev. Arie Bertsch, who was elected to his second full term as district president, installs into their positions, from left, Tana McKenna, Kay Kreklau, Rev Dan Voth, Rev. Lester Wolfram and Rev. Dr. Adam Filipek.

District President

Rev. Arie Bertsch

First Vice-President

Rev. Steve Schulz (East)

Second Vice-President

Rev. Kirk Peters (West)

Secretary: Rev. Daniel Voth

Treasurer: Kay Kreklau

Board of Directors

Ordained: Rev. Dr. Adam Filipek

Rev. Lester Wolfram

Lay: Marty Visto

Thomas Langer

Tana McKenna

Eric Popinga

Scott Pfennig

District Nominations Committee

Ordained: Rev. Philip Beyersdorf

Rev. Clark Jahnke

Lay: Robert Wurl

Jonathan Buchhop

Susan Corwin

Greg Nelson

Circuit Visitors

Central Circuit: Rev. Paul Preus

Eastern Circuit: Rev. Chris

Waldvogel

NE Circuit: Rev. Michael Suelzle

NW Circuit: Rev. Brandon

Woodruff

SE Circuit: Rev. Matthew Tooman

SW Circuit: Rev. Jonathan Walla

Resolutions Adopted:

1-1 "North Dakota District

Encouragement for
Shepherd's Hill"

1-3 "Encouraging Continuation
of Message in the Pew"

2-1 "Support for Christ Care for
Children: Kenya"

2-2 "To Continue International
Mission Opportunities in
Santiago, Chile"

2-3 "To Explore an Ongoing
Ministry Partnership
Between the North Dakota
District and Lutheran
Family Service"

2-5 "North Dakota District
Support of Abortion Pill
Reversal Advertising"

3-1 "Constitution Bylaw
Resolution"

3-2 "To Update the LCMS North
Dakota District ByLaws"

3-3 "Support Historic
Communion Practice of the
Synod Affirmed"

3-4 "To Adopt the LCMS North
Dakota District Guidebook
and Resources"

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

tution insists upon the "exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school" (Article VI, point 4, from the 2019 LCMS *Handbook*).

As I visited congregations I have noticed that on special Sundays, such as The Baptism of our Lord, Ascension Day, Lent or Advent, there are no songs that correlate with those special days. Could this be because the resources that are used for picking songs don't emphasize or have these teachings as theologically important?

I chose hymns from *LSB* randomly. As I went through *LSB*, I would take two hymns and skip one so that I would not pick only the hymns I wanted or liked. Having these 414 songs and 414 hymns, I would read the text of the song or hymn and then ask a total of 47 questions to score and grade them. Now I can't sing or read a hymn or song without running 47 questions through my mind.

One observation was that "heaven" was revealed 74 times from the texts of songs. Although in 51 of those revelations there was only a desire and never assurance, and the word "heaven" was not used! That leaves 23 times in which the word "heaven" was actually used.

In the hymns from *LSB*, the word "heaven" or the assurance of heaven was given 332 times (80 percent). Of the 332 times that heaven was mentioned, 272 times it was in the last or second-to-last verse of the hymn. When it was in the second-to-last verse, it was usually there because the last verse ended with the Triune God doxology. Over the years it has been mentioned to me, "Why do we have to sing all the verses?" My response was: "I don't want to leave you out of heaven."

My big question has been why? Why wouldn't these songs from outside of our hymnal sing about and proclaim heaven? I had asked many people and no one really had an answer for me. I finally concluded that the authors of the other resources of these songs rely partly on themselves to know of their salvation. If one is going to rely on himself, he is never quite sure if heaven is for him. He is not relying on the concrete Gospel, that in Christ alone there is heaven because He has made the payment of sins for us, and where there is the forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation.

From the songs that I scored and studied, there were 100 songs that had false theology in them.

I want to help the pastors, leaders and musicians in our churches with this presentation, now and in the future. Just ask! I do love music and hymns even though I cannot hold a tune or have any rhythm.

Rejoice in the Lord Always! Rejoice!

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 nodaklems.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



125 years of GOD'S BLESSINGS

The congregation of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Rolla, celebrated its 125th anniversary on Jan. 9. Pictured are, at right, Rev. Scott Ramey, Immanuel pastor, and Rev. Arie Bertsch, district president. Immanuel was established on Dec. 31, 1896.



'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 make 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.



District welcomes Pastor Zeigler

Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, speaker of "The Lutheran Hour," made a presentation called "Caught by Jesus" with those gathered at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Minot, on Jan. 13. Pastor Ziegler also spoke about "Christian Hope" at the Men's Winter Retreat at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads Jan. 14-15.

From the archivist

A PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY



Rev. T. Hinck



Rev. Joseph Klausler

How many presidents have there been in the LCMS North Dakota District?

The first president of the original North Dakota-Montana District was Rev. T. Hinck, elected in 1910. Rev. Joseph P. Klausler was elected our next president in 1924. During his 17 years in office, the district membership grew from 11,400 to 16,500.

Unfortunately, J.P. and his wife died in a car accident in 1941. Rev. Arnold Grumm then became the next president and served until 1950, when he was elected as LCMS fourth vice-president. During Rev. Grumm's term, North Dakota and Montana each became its own district in 1945.

Rev. Walter Cordts became the next president in North Dakota, moving up from vice-president. He served until 1954.

We will continue with our presidents next month. Stay warm!

Vicki Peihl • District Office Manager



Rev. Arnold Grumm



Rev. Walter Cordts

SUMMER CAMP

Summer camp brochures are available at churches and online registration is open.

Plan to join us this summer or schedule your own trip to see the beauty that is the Turtle Mountains.

Rev. Jon Bonine
Executive Director,
Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads

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- 701-244-5225 | 701-389-9033
- shretreat.org
- [facebook.com/shretreat](https://www.facebook.com/shretreat)



Send submissions for the district supplement to **Marie Johnson** at news@nodaklcms.org