



# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH DAKOTA



# Reason to rejoice

As I write this article, I do so with great joy as it is shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* on June 24.



**Rev. Arie Bertsch**  
District President

Allow me to explain: Back in 1983, when my wife, Doris, and I were dairy farmers, she had been to a meeting one evening and she came home all concerned. She said that it is legal for a woman to abort her baby. I said, "No way!" She said, "Yes, it has been legal for 10 years!"

This was 11 years before I went to the seminary to be a pastor. I guess I was too busy working and not paying attention to the news and things happening in the world around me.

Doris then became the first president of the James River Valley Lutherans For Life Chapter (LFL). From that time on Doris and I would visit area churches to give presentations for LFL.

After all these years Doris and I rejoice that the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, asserting that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion, and returned the issue to the states.

We the people of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) have

always advocated for the value of human life, which is made in the image of God. Thus, the church rejoices in this ruling while also praying for those who are hurting and afraid.

I felt that it was important for you to read the message that LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison wrote on decision:

"This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).

Today is a monumental day, a day on which we simultaneously rejoice, pray, give thanks, lament, repent and weep. The Supreme Court reversed *Roe v. Wade* and returned the responsibility for protecting life to the states. "Held: The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; *Roe* and *Casey* are overruled; and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives."

"[The Lord] has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate" (Luke 1:52).

Today is also the Church's feast day, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. These two events are a happy convergence.

Today we celebrate the birth of the one who, before he was born, leaped in joyful Spirit-inspired confession when his mother met the mother of his unborn Lord. Today we take comfort in our Lord's unborn forerunner and in the unborn Savior. We also rejoice at the resounding victory for life in the United States. Many of us long doubted it would ever come. The Lord has had mercy upon us, even us, sinners all, even in these times.

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# 140 years of St. Paul!



St. Paul Lutheran Church, St. Thomas, celebrated its 140th anniversary on June 26.

Some interesting statistics about St. Paul include:

- The original church was a 16x24 building constructed in 1883
- A new church was built in 1889, and then again in 1951 as membership grew
- There have been 1,204 baptisms, 845 confirmations, 257 marriages, and 366 members laid to rest in 140 years
- The congregation has had 13 pastors with an average of eight years per pastor.

May the walls of St. Paul continue to echo with glad words of salvation so that all who continue to enter will be blessed by God, and join in blessing His name faithfully until they are gathered before His throne in His heavenly temple to sing forever the praise of Him who has called them by His name.

This is most certainly true!

Among those seated with the congregation are Rev. Mark Chepulis (right side), St. Paul pastor; and Rev. Arie Bertsch (left), district president.

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## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Today we continue to speak out against the evil of abortion, which many will continue to practice and advocate in states bent on death. Many who have been misled by the father of lies and the culture of death greet this day with weeping and gnashing of teeth. Today we continue to sing that the Lord "has visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68).

Today we pray for unborn children who remain unprotected in many states.

Today, in many places, the abortion industry continues to kill unborn children and welcomes those from states where such killing is illegal. Today we take comfort that by the Lord's hand "we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us" (Luke 1:71).

Today we repent of our own lack of love for the least, the last and the lost, for mothers in need and families facing crises. Today we celebrate God's gift of the one

He sent to "go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:76-77).

Today we recommit to love all, unborn and born. Today we receive the sunrise from on high, "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79).

Today we proclaim: Repent and believe the Good News that Jesus Christ, conceived by the Spirit, formed in the womb and born of the virgin Mary, died and rose for sinners. That includes all of us. Today we give thanks for John who preached repentance and pointed to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Today we lovingly invite all to listen to Jesus' call, "repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). If you have caused an abortion, the taking of life, there is forgiveness in Jesus! Don't be hardened in sin or advocate for more sins. Today you have hope in the One whose way John the Baptist prepared. Jesus is for sinners.

Come join the rest of us forgiven sinners! Jesus is for you! You need not have a bad conscience! Repent and believe the Good News of God's love for you in Jesus.

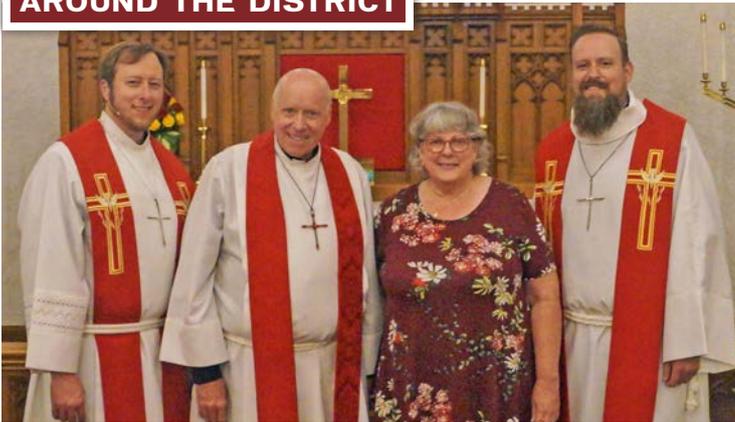
Today we lament that the U.S. Supreme Court continues to deny the unborn the legally recognized right to life. Even though *Roe v. Wade* has fallen, states can still allow the killing of unborn children. Today we pray that more unborn will leap for joy in the womb, as St. John did.

Today, even as we rejoice, we weep that U.S. policy continues to promote abortion globally. Today we bend our knees in prayer.

O Lord, "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). The Lord preceded His Son, our Savior, with a forerunner. We pray that today's decision points ahead to the day when every state advances the cause of life and expands protections for unborn children.

Lord have mercy upon us.

## AROUND THE DISTRICT



A special worship service was held on June 12 at Grace, Fargo, to celebrate the 40th ordination anniversary for Rev. David Suelzle. From left, Rev. Michael Suelzle (St. Andrew, Niagara; St. Peter, Devils Lake; and Grace, Lakota), Rev. David and Ronda Suelzle and Rev. Daniel Suelzle (Wittenberg Chapel, University of North Dakota). Michael and Daniel are both his sons.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Rev. Edward J. Rutter 1921-2021



Rev. Edward J. Rutter, 101, was called to glory on June 16. Born April 19, 1921, in China Township, Mich., Pastor Rutter served many North Dakota District congregations from 1954 until his retirement in 1991. His wife of nearly 75 years, Marian, died in March 2020. Their funeral service was held on July 14 in Alexandria, Minn., and burial was on July 15 at Prairie View Cemetery, Wimbledon.

In June 1942, Ed and his brother, Allan, enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and were called to active duty in March 1943. Ed was commissioned as 2nd lieutenant and piloted a B-24 heavy bomber. He served in Europe, completing 33 combat missions over Germany.

Ed and Marian heeded the call to the Holy Ministry in September 1949 and moved to Springfield, Ill., where Ed attended Concordia Theological Seminary. He graduated in June 1954 and was ordained and installed at St. Paul, Wimbledon, and Zion, Courtenay. In 1957, Pastor Rutter began serving St. Paul, Kensal, as vacancy pastor and was eventually installed as pastor. In September 1964, Pastor Rutter accepted the call to Immanuel, Wahpeton, where he served for 12 years. In 1976, Pastor Rutter accepted the call to Lynch Immanuel (next to Minot Air Force Base), where he served for nine years. In 1985, he accepted the call to serve Holy Cross, Lidgerwood, where he served for six years.

Pastor Rutter also served the North Dakota District as secretary, youth pastoral advisor, New Rockford and Southeast circuit counselor, Board of Education chairman, and first and second vice-president.

Following retirement, Ed and Marian moved to Wahpeton, where they lived for 26 years. They moved to Ortonville, Minn., in 2017.

The Rutters are survived by six children, 17 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren, with another due in November. They are preceded in death by two sons and their first grandchild.

To read more, visit [nodaklcms.org/blog/rev-edward-j-rutter](http://nodaklcms.org/blog/rev-edward-j-rutter).



Confirmed at St. John, Hillsboro, on May 22 were Chase Haffely, Natalya Gietzen and Olivia Rage. They are pictured with Rev. Allen Kramp.



**SHEPHERD'S HILL  
AT THE  
CROSSROADS**

ST. JOHN, NORTH DAKOTA

## WORK GROUPS WANTED AT CAMP

Let Rev. Jon Bonine, camp director, know that you would like to set up a date for your group. ([director@shretreat.org](mailto:director@shretreat.org) or 701-244-5225).

# DISTRICT NEWS



Twelve youth confirmed their faith at Our Savior, Minot, on May 15. "We are so proud of these young men and women for proclaiming their love and devotion to our God," said Rev. Brian Doel, associate pastor (at left). Congratulations to Jetta Awalt, Kamryn Gullicks, Alexia Schaan, Hailee Conklin, Abbey Slaughter, Guy Gadue, Aubrey Ball, Caden DeMakis, Vianne Jayne Strandlien, Laken Mikkelson, Kenzie Wellstad and Luke Anderson. At right is Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe, senior pastor.

These youth were confirmed in the faith at Crosspointe, Fargo, on, May 22.



**Congratulations!**  
**Isaac Woodside**  
SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**  
where investments build ministry

## Coming events

The district **Middle School Gathering** will be held Oct. 20-22 at Ramada Inn in Bismarck. The event includes four Bible studies, interest sessions, worship, a variety show, music, servant events and much more. The event is held in conjunction with the Family Convocation (Oct. 21-22 at Bethel Lutheran Church and Ramada Inn, Bismarck).

The **LWML Fall Retreat** will be held Sept. 16-18, at Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads. Lodging is \$70 and registration is \$70. Reflect on God's Word as Rev. Chris Waldvogel, senior pastor of Beautiful Savior, Fargo, leads the Bible study "Consecrated," based on Jer. 1:5. For more information, go to [ndlwml.org/events/retreat](http://ndlwml.org/events/retreat).

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