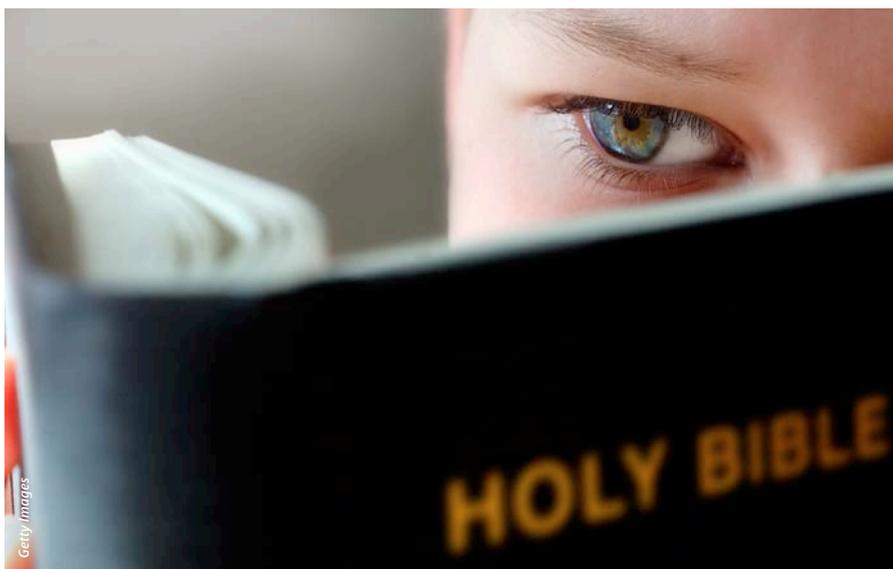




DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH DAKOTA

Anchored in Christ



church. It forced me to look deeper into the certainty of what I had been taught and the certainty of what I believe.

The heading for the text from Hebrews is “The Certainty of God’s Promise.”

What I found was that the certainty of God’s promise for me is outside of me; it is an anchor for the soul. Notice that the anchor is outside of ourselves; it is anchored on God’s promise. Think about it. To be anchored in yourself provides no stability.

It is June and my thoughts are on fishing. That’s what I do for vacation. Therefore, let us say you are out fishing in a boat and you find the place where you want to fish. Do you throw the anchor to another place in the boat? Of course not! That makes as much sense as marking your fishing spot by putting an X on the floor of the boat. You throw the anchor overboard to be anchored to something other than yourself. If you try to anchor to yourself, you end up floating along, driven by the current and the wind.

Many years ago I received a great lead on some good perch fishing: Head for this certain landmark, and soon as the water reaches 19 feet deep, throw your anchor overboard. It worked! My wife, Doris, and I caught a nice catch of large perch. We could anchor at that point because it had been tried. It was a certainty, as was promised.

So often, however, we would rather try to anchor on ourselves, or rely on our work of making a decision ... in other

Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. **HEB. 6:17-20A NIV**



Rev. Arie Bertsch
District President

Growing up I always knew that I was a Christian, a child of God with a Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for my sins. Then when I got out into the world, I started having questions put to me like: “When did you decide for Christ?” “When did you choose Christ?” “When did you ask Jesus into your heart?” “When did you accept Jesus?”

As a young man out in the world, I began to wonder what I had missed in Sunday school, my four years of confirmation, and in

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MESSAGE

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words, “faith in my faith.” We try to do what is right and live by the Ten Commandments for our salvation. Or we try to anchor on earthly, temporary things that give way and don’t hold us firm in the driving winds or currents of this life. Or maybe we are tempted to rely on our positions in the church.

How many people have thought that their health, job or education would be an anchor to hold them in a place of success? With God’s blessing, this will happen. But forget about who gave you the ability or the blessing and you may become unanchored. For if you don’t give thanks and pray to God for continued blessings, He may throw the anchor back in your boat. That’s where you want it anyway — if you don’t thank and praise God.

Of course God sometimes will pull up your anchor and carry you to a different body of water for better fishing, or for the purpose of meeting someone else and sharing the blessings you have had in the past while anchored in Christ.

When Doris and I had anchored in the spot that was recommended, we were able to swing back and forth on that anchor rope to enjoy the whole area around us. So it is in your lives. When you are anchored in Christ, you can enjoy all the pleasures of life. And when the winds and currents seem to be carrying you away, you can be sure that you are anchored on the solid ground in what God has done through His Son Jesus Christ.

You can be sure that you are anchored on the certainty of God’s promises given in His Word and Sacraments. For these Means of Grace are outside of ourselves and where you receive what God has promised — forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Think about it. In Baptism you are anchored into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God has promised that you are His child and you cannot be ripped loose from Him by Satan or anyone else. Although, you can cut the rope of faith that holds you to that anchor by severing yourself from

God’s Word and the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

A rope’s strength is determined by how many strands it has going through it. The more strands there are, the stronger it is. For even if a strand or strands are damaged, it can still hold. Your rope of faith tied to the anchor of Christ by God’s work and promise needs to be repaired and strengthened so that it will not tear lose from the anchor. There is nothing more frustrating and helpless than to see the anchor rope tear or come lose from the boat and disappear out of sight. Been there! Done that! The anchor is still there; you are just not attached to it. Another scary situation is when the anchor rope isn’t long enough for deep waters. What good is a rope of faith that is 30 feet long when you are in treacherous 50-foot deep waters? Been there! Done that!

At the Lord’s Supper you strengthen and lengthen the rope of faith to the anchor of Christ. The rope of faith is strengthened and lengthened as you are assured again with all of your bodily senses that you have received what Christ promised: “Take eat ... take drink ... this is my body and my blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”

Also, nowhere in His Word does God ask you to anchor in yourself. Nowhere does He say anchor your salvation for eternal life in what you have done. Nowhere does He say anchor yourself in your weak, fluttering feelings. Nowhere does He say a weak faith or a short rope of faith is all you need. For as soon as the winds and currents of earthly life get stronger, you will be washed away and end up going over the waterfalls that will kill you eternally. Once you have started over the falls, there is no effort on your part that will stop the tumbling and impact at the bottom.

No, we don’t anchor anything in this life or for eternal life by anchoring in ourselves. We have this hope in Jesus, who went before us to die the death of separation from God so that we don’t have to. He went on our behalf. Christ is the anchor for the soul — your soul, my soul and the souls of all in the world. He is the anchor, firm and secure so that we

can approach God in this life and then for eternal life.

He is the anointed High Priest who can take your prayers and sins behind the curtain of the inner sanctuary. That is what you see happening every Sunday and what you are being anchored to. You go to church to call upon your God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — into whom you have been anchored in Baptism. You then call upon God for the forgiveness of sins anchored in Christ’s redeeming payment for those sins. Without that anchor of Christ we could never approach God in His inner sanctuary. For when Christ died, the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom so that now, anchored in Christ, you can approach God in His holy of holies here on earth and then for eternity in heaven.



Celebrate 140 years of St. Paul

St. Paul Lutheran Church, St. Thomas, will celebrate its 140th anniversary on June 26. Divine Service begins at 11:15 a.m., followed by a meal.

The 140th anniversary service begins at 2:30 p.m., with bars and coffee to be served following the service. Please join the faithful to celebrate God’s mercy in St. Thomas.

- LWML District Convention
June 24–26, Delta Hotel, Fargo
- District LYF Gathering
Aug. 4-6, Location TBA
- Philippians Workshop
Oct. 13, Messiah, Mandan
- Junior High Gathering
Oct. 20-22, Bismarck
- Family Convocation
Oct. 21-22, Bethel Lutheran Church and Ramada Inn, Bismarck

SET APART TO SERVE

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), held Call Day services in late April. The North Dakota District received one candidate and one vicar, who are pictured below. Also pictured are those with ties to the North Dakota District who received calls and assignments. Please keep these faithful servants and their families in your prayers!



Charles and Christianna Nemec (CTSFW)
 Called as pastor, Redeemer, Lubbock, Texas
(Christianna is the daughter of Rev. Tom and Andrea Eckstein, Concordia, Jamestown.)



Jason Kohm (CSL)
 Assigned as vicar, Zion, Bismarck



Christopher and Mary Durham (CTSFW)
 Called as pastor, Redeemer, Lisbon
(Christopher served his vicarage at Zion, Bismarck, 2019-20)



Eric and Rebecca Souer (CTSFW)
 Called as pastor, St. John's, Barnesville, Minn.
(Rebecca is from Immanuel, Fargo.)



Owen Duncan (CSL)
 Assigned as vicar, Hope, Plant City, Fla.
(Owen is from Immanuel, Fargo.)



Benjamin Ramthun (CSL)
 Called as pastor, Our Savior, Escanaba, Mich.
(Benjamin served his vicarage at Zion, Bismarck, 2020-21.)



Caleb Worrall (CSL)
 Called as pastor, Shepherd of the Lake, Garrison, Minn.
(Caleb is the son of Rev. Bernie and Carolyn Worrall, Immanuel, Fargo.)



Joseph and Faith Greenmyer (CTSFW)
 Assigned as vicar, Zion, Mitchell, S.D.
(Joseph is from Stirum.)

Congratulations!



North Dakota Lutherans For Life recently held its Essay Contest in support of life. The theme for this year's contest was "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.

Connor Olson of Zion, Gwinner, was the first-place winner for grades 6-8. He is pictured at left with Rev. Aaron Filipek, Zion pastor. Audrey Weidner of Grace Lutheran School, Fargo, and a member of St. Andrew Lutheran Church, West Fargo, was the second-place winner. She is pictured at right with DCE Ken Koehler.

CHALLENGE MADE

Help spruce up Shepherd's Hill June 10-12

Members of district congregations are super excited about the Shepherd's Hill Work Weekend, to be held June 10-12. What is this Work Weekend, though?

Last year, St. Paul's, Minot, took 40 to 50 volunteers to Shepherd's Hill at the Crossroads to tackle many projects. With financial help from Thrivent and St. Paul's for supplies, along with the manual labor, the volunteers shingled a cabin, trimmed trees and painted, among other tasks. The work was estimated to be a \$25,000 equity improvement to the camp in just three days.

Messiah, Mandan, also brought a group last year to finish projects, and are poised to bring more people to get even more done this time.

Members of St. Paul's and Messiah would love to have more congregations involved. St. Paul's has set up a special page on their website for project details and ways to get registered. Visit anchoredminot.com/work-weekend.

Let Rev. Jon Bonine, Shepherd's Hill director, know that you would like to set up a date for your group. Contact Jon at director@shretreat.org or 701-244-5225.



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

From the archivist

A presidential history *(continued)*

Rev. Alwin Reimnitz was the district's longest serving president to date (1967-91). He replaced Rev. John Fritz. Rev. Victor Tegtmeier was the district's first full-time chaplain and was placed at the state school in Grafton (now the Life Skills and Transition Center). Rev. Roger Leonhardt served as a chaplain at the North Dakota School for the Deaf in Devils Lake. Donna Horter was named the district archivist, the first woman to hold this position in the LCMS.



Rev. Alwin Reimnitz

Pastor Reimnitz served as president during doctrinal unrest at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and a constant turnover of pastors in North Dakota District.

Several congregations, including Shepherd of the Valley, Bismarck; Our Savior, Minot; and Beautiful Savior, Fargo, were planted. A new district office was built in Fargo as part of the Beautiful Savior church. Reimnitz served as part-time pastor of Zion, Bismarck, until 1985, when the district in convention voted to make district president a full-time position.

Computers were bought and placed in the district office. District conventions went from every two years to every three years.

Pastor Reimnitz served until 1991, when Rev. Norman Sincebaugh was elected president. Reimnitz passed away in 2005 while serving as visitation pastor for Zion, Bismarck. We will continue with Pastor Sincebaugh's history as president in an upcoming issue.

Vicki Peihl • District Office Manager