



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



Getty Images

God declares each day of creation to be “good.” Yet on day six, the day human beings are created, He intensifies that description:

God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good. **GEN. 1:31**

Good — pleasant, agreeable, excellent, superb. That’s how we think about God’s declaration, as an adjective that describes His act of creation. But good is also a noun. Good — decent, blameless, upright, moral, righteous.

So which is it here? I’d argue for both. One that describes the beginning of all that there is, the other that describes the origins of all that there is.

What’s the difference? Beginnings start and end. But origins are foundational and remain. You have a personal



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

beginning on the day that you are born, but then you grow and age, and move past that beginning. Your origin, however, stays with you all your life. Your origins are the parents who conceive you and the genetics and DNA that make up your body. They are your foundation and go with you through all of life.

In the beginning God declares all creation good. It both pleased Him and it was good in itself, which meant it was decent, blameless and righteous. There was no sin, no fighting, no earthquakes, accidents, disease or death, so it was all very good.

Yet when we look around the world today, we see so many things that are not good. We see plenty of things that are not pleasant or decent, people who are not agreeable or blameless, individuals who are not upright or moral

— the breakdown of marriage and the family; the physical and sexual abuse of human trafficking; racial divisions and hostility; sexual perversions and transgender bodily mutilations; the political divides that teach us to hate others; the diseases that afflict us; and the death that surrounds us.

All demonstrate how the goodness of creation was lost when Adam and Eve first fell into sin. Not only was the beginning that God declared good now tainted and stained, but the origins of humanity are perpetually forgotten and dismissed. Humanity is now turned in on itself. We look to find fulfillment in anything and everything other than what our beginning intended and what our origin provided.

To be sure, there is much in our world that is not good — both as an adjective and noun. Recently the U.S. Surgeon General raised the alarm about the devastating impact of loneliness. In fact, loneliness has been declared an epidemic in the United States. Far too many people are quietly suffering from loneliness. Perhaps that includes you.

It is rather telling that in the perfection of creation’s beginning, the one thing that God says is not good is for man to be alone (**GEN. 2:18**). So God makes a helper fit for him. Eve is given as helper and wife to Adam. From the beginning, the good of companionship is established with its origin in God Himself,

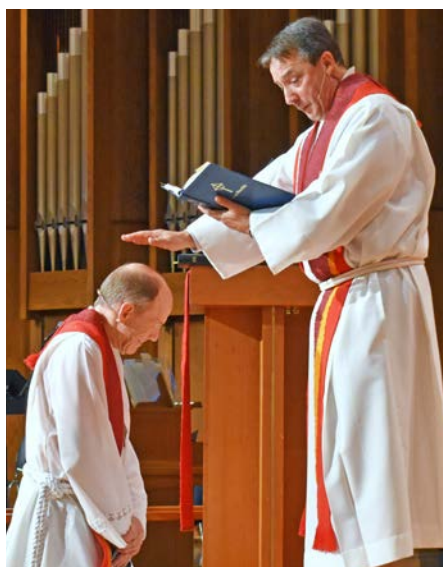
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INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Josh Hoffman, was ordained and installed as associate pastor of St. John's, Norwood Young America, on June 17. Pictured are, (from left) Revs. Vue Lee, Aaron Kuehn, Joe Behnke, David Winter, Josh Bernau, Josh Hoffman, Bill Trosien, David Kind, Mark Halvorson, Layton Lemke and Eric Zacharias.



Rev. Joshua Moldenhauer was installed as pastor of Trinity, Elgin, on June 11. From left, Revs. Jon Vollrath, Dale Kohrs, Dr. Lowell Sorenson, Tyge Zucker, Joshua Moldenhauer, Phil Augustine, Robert Burmeister and Fred Morck.



Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing was installed as associate pastor of Cross View Lutheran Church, Edina, on June 4. He is pictured being installed by Rev. Steve Wheeler, Cross View senior pastor.



Rev. Derek Broten was installed as associate pastor of Beautiful Savior, Plymouth, on June 4. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Joe Behnke, Stefan Wismar, Ben Griffin and Derek Broten.

Rev. Kyle Lewis was ordained and installed as associate pastor of St. Martin's, Winona, on June 25. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. John Dolde, Richard Moore, Kyle Lewis, David Mumme, Herbert Mueller; (back row) William Meilner, Mark Meier, Aaron Beckman, David Baumgarn, Ryan Eden and Jacob Eichers.



Happy 50!

Rev. Michael Heggen, a member of Trinity, Farmington, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination. The milestone was commemorated on June 18 during the Divine Service and a reception attended by members of Trinity and members of other congregations in which Rev. Heggen served. He is pictured with his wife, Kathy. Thank you for your ministry, Rev. Heggen!

PASTORS: Conference is Oct. 2-3

The Minnesota South Fall Pastors Conference will be held Oct. 2-3 at Messiah, Lakeville. The honored guest speaker is Rev. Dr. Adam C. Koontz, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Denver. He will lead the pastors through the Book of Acts, looking at how the church's proclamation relates to the Gospel's movement through different people groups and life situations, and will connect these to modern contexts such as families, ethnic groups and unbelievers.



Rev. Dr. Adam C. Koontz

Rev. Koontz previously pastored and planted congregations in Pennsylvania and taught New Testament courses at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. He and his wife, Jennifer, a native Minnesotan, have eight children.

This is a *required* conference. All pastors actively serving are required to pay the registration fee, regardless of attendance.

LCMS Bylaw 4.8.2.d.1

(d) *All ordained and commissioned ministers on the district rosters are expected to attend meetings of their official conference or present a valid excuse.*

(1) *Attendance at the official conferences shall be obligatory for ordained and commissioned ministers serving in congregations and parishes.*

Why do we offer conferences? And why are they required?

- The Synod and, therefore, the district bylaws indicate they are required;
- They promote mental well-being, with a chance to rejuvenate and recharge away from a person's normal setting and pastoral duties;
- They provide camaraderie with fellow pastors and the opportunity to connect with friends, past and present;
- They help pastors engage with others who share the same interests, joys and struggles of ministry;
- They are a great platform for networking, finding others who are doing similar things or, conversely, who are doing ministries where your congregation would like to move toward, and then sharing those ideas;
- They include education to encourage a pastor to increase their knowledge and skill set for professional growth; and
- They offer the opportunity to worship together without leading!

For active pastors unable to attend, please email a letter of excuse to Rev. Keith Grimm, District Secretary, at kgrimm@foclutheran.org.

WANTED: Mission grant proposals

By Molly Loder

VP of Gospel Outreach

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” MATTHEW 28:18-20

How encouraging it’s been to hear and read so many inquiries regarding the mission grant application process! Word is certainly getting around. And through the process, God’s Word will “get around” as well. In fact, that’s the focus of everything we do as Lutheran Women in Mission, isn’t it?

Jesus speaks about His authority, which is His right as the only begotten Son of God. His obedience to His Father caused Him to be born of the virgin Mary, suffer under Pontius Pilate and be crucified for us. But the authority He has over sin, death and the devil was truly accomplished when on the third day, He rose again from the dead. He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we have the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation by grace through faith in Him.

When Jesus gave us a command to go and make disciples, to baptize and to teach, it’s this message He wants us to share. He also equips us and goes with us always. What greater encouragement could there be?

So how does the Word — *this* saving Word — get around? One way is through the mission grants we support with our mite offerings. And *now* is the time to apply! The most common inquiries I’ve received are related to what kinds of projects can receive mission grant funding. In other words, brothers and sisters in Christ want to know, “How do I know if this project is eligible to receive a mission grant?” and “Should I even bother to apply?” As you’re prayerfully considering whether



The Food Co-op at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is a 2022-2024 district mission grant recipient. Applications are now being accepted for mission grants for the next biennium.

to apply on behalf of a project, organization, school, church, missionary or another entity, ask yourself if the following guidelines can be met.

- ▶ Is it mission in emphasis, extending the ministry of God’s Word? This is of utmost importance! If God’s saving Word is to “get around,” the Gospel must be the focus of any mission project we support.
- ▶ Is there a clear Lutheran identity to the teachings, materials and work? We teach grace alone by faith alone, found in God’s Word alone.
- ▶ Is it current and ready for implementation? Additionally, is it ongoing in nature, with assurance of continuation after the grant funds are expended? The committee will need proof of these criteria.

Here are several other factors to bear in mind:

1. The mission grant application process is only the first step. Once all applications are received on or before Jan. 5, 2024, the Gospel Outreach Committee meets to go over each application with much prayerful consideration. Input from our district and Synod mission leaders, as well as from our district pastoral counselors; district president, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford; and district president, Lisa Kamrath, helps guide the process as well.

2. The applications that pass this first step will be placed on the ballot at the 30th Biennial LWML Minnesota South District Convention, to be held June 20-22, 2024. Delegates will select the mission grants they’d like our district to support, based on input from their local groups and zones.
3. Finally, those mission grants with the most votes and which fit within our approved mission grant goal (dollar amount) for the next biennium will be funded over the course of two years by our mite offerings.

The application, which can be found at mnskwml.org (click on “Missions”) should clearly state the purpose and how the money will be used. Much more detailed instructions can be found on the website as well.

We place our trust in an almighty God, who can and does use fallible humans to accomplish His good purposes (ROMANS 8:28) and spread His Word at home and abroad (ISAIAH 55:11). He can and does work through applications, committees and voters. Commit all of these things to Him in prayer and trust Him to answer according to His good and gracious will.

Reach out to me with questions at vpgospeloutreach@mnskwml.org.



Nurses gather at CUW

“Compassionate Service” was the theme for the 31st Annual National Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries Conference, held May 17-18 and hosted by the Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) School of Nursing. The theme was based on Colossians 3:12: “As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”

The conference was blessed with 88 attendees, including parish nurses, pastors and lay ministers, from 23 states. A variety of speakers shared information on mental health programs and resources; self-care and stress re-education for church workers; fall prevention; finding happiness; providing compassion; and effective ways to serve long-term patients and caregivers. We worshiped, prayed, read Scripture, laughed and shared.

From “What is A Parish Nurse” (lcms.org/health): “Parish nurses in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod enjoy a vocation that allows them to provide professional health care in the context of faith in Christ and His church. By sharing in Christ’s healing love to people of all ages, parish nurses promote a stewardship of health. Parish nursing is a wonderful complement to good pastoral care and assists the Body of Christ in outreach to their communities.”

Parish nursing is an extension of Christ’s health ministry. Christ’s compassion and love for His people led to His suffering and death to make people whole in body, mind and soul. The conference encouraged us to continue to serve Him in all we do with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

— Submitted by Sandi Baert, RN, Certified Parish Nurse, St. John’s, Buffalo

Future church workers?

Elijah Berthiaume (left), a member of Grace, Becker, was a student and **Nathan Demlow** of University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, was a proctor at Christ Academy High School, held June 18–July 1 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. The program provides high schoolers who are considering pastoral or diaconal vocations an opportunity to immerse themselves into the life of a seminary community.



Attendees worshiped with the seminary community in Kramer Chapel four times a day and learned from many professors and a panel of local pastors and deaconesses. They had opportunities to form lasting friendships through group activities like bowling and other team sports, and a formal banquet dinner followed by English country dancing. Lastly, the Christ Academy students participated in service projects on campus and around Fort Wayne.

For more information, visit ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/christ-academy. Encourage others to consider ministry vocations! Read about *Set Apart to Serve* at lcms.org/sas.

OGT UPDATE

Many important agenda items were discussed at the June Orphan Grain Train (OGT) meeting.

We will continue to wait for a safe port to open up in Haiti in order to ship a container. We think it is going to be available soon! The wait gives us extra time to collect the funds needed for shipping, as it should be near \$15,000 to send one container there. We will need to purchase another set of 24,000 Mercy Meals at a cost of \$4,000. Thanks to regular packing at Grace, Stockton, and our single-event packing at Martin Luther High School, Northrop, we are nearly finished packing our second set of meals! Besides the original meal cost, there is an additional cost of \$7,000–\$15,000 to ship the Mercy Meals.

All who want to help in these missions should send their donations to our treasurer, Darlene Fretham, at 611 1st Ave NW; Winnebago, MN 56098.

Our Minnesota South OGT annual meeting will be held on Sept. 13 at Grace, Stockton. We will pack Mercy Meals from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and start the meeting at 4. All are welcome.

To God be the glory!

— Submitted by Doyle Benson, Minnesota South OGT branch manager



East Africans bless Trinity VBS

Trinity, Rochester, held Vacation Bible School, “Babylon: Daniel’s Courage in Captivity,” June 18–22. The congregation intentionally reached out to East Africans living in Rochester, Austin and Zumbrota. More than 60 of the 120 registered were Anyuak, Dinka or Nuer children who were invited by Rev. Robert Porisch and Vicar Desalegn Gamme, who is a student in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) program. Pastor Porisch, in particular, has visited many immigrants in their homes and neighborhoods and has developed meaningful relationships with them.

Since most of the parents of the children work in the evening,

Trinity received a TAG grant to rent vans in order to provide transportation. The children enjoyed a week of learning about Jesus, chapel time, Bible-story learning, singing, crafts, recreation and food. The congregation provided supper and VBS activities each evening.

This month, Trinity will use grant money to sponsor “How to Raise Your Children in the Christian Faith” workshops for East Africans and any other interested immigrants in Rochester and Austin. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

— *Submitted by Rev. Nathaniel Schwartz, Senior Pastor, Trinity, Rochester*



A TAG grant allowed Trinity, Rochester, to rent vans to take children to and from VBS in June.

To All Generations (TAG) grants encourage a renewed emphasis in Christian education by making available grants to target new ideas and strategies beyond the scope of normal church/school budgeting. Read more at mnsdistrict.org/tag.

Support for college students

As students leave for college, please forward their contact information (name and email address) to the campus pastor so they will be cared for while away from home. Remember to get the student’s permission before providing their information to ensure their privacy. To find nearby campus ministries, visit lcms.org/lcmsu.



Rev. David Kind, pastor of University Lutheran Chapel, leads Vespers at Luther House next to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Golf benefit is Aug. 8

The golf tournament to support Camp Omega will be held at 1 p.m. at Faribault Golf Club on Aug. 8. For more info, contact Russ at russ@campomega.org or 507-384-7947.

Fall retreats/conferences

Pastors Wives Retreat "Beautiful Feet" | Oct. 6-7

HomeTown Inn & Suites
331 Enterprise Dr. E.
Belle Plaine, MN 56011

Join with other wives, widows and fiancées at this year's Pastors Wives Retreat.

Centered around the theme verse: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:15), attendees will explore various ways of walking with the Lord. Get more information and the registration form at mnsdistrict.org.

LWML Fall Retreat "Promised Rest" | Sept. 15-16

Omega Lodge | Camp Omega
22750 Lind Ave.
Waterville, MN 56096

The retreat's special guest speaker is author Michelle Diercks, who will lead the participants in her Bible study, "Promised Rest." Open to all women, junior-high age

and older, this time together presents a chance to be refreshed by God's Word in a beautiful setting. Find out what to bring, get accommodation information, and register at https://mnslwml.org/2023_district_retreat. The registration deadline is Friday, Aug. 25.

Circuit Visitors Retreat Sept. 11-13

Christ the King Retreat Center
621 1st Avenue South
Buffalo, MN 55313

District Board of Directors Retreat

Sept. 25-26
Concordia University
1282 Concordia Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104

Parish Workers/Educators Conference

Oct. 19 (8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending June 30, 2023 (unaudited)

Actual receipts.....\$140,542
Budget receipts\$170,832
Over (under) amount (\$30,290)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....\$946,659
Budget receipts\$1,024,992
Over (under) anticipated amount.....(\$78,333)

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod\$726,569
100% designated to district operations ...\$193,314
100% designated for Synod operations\$26,776
Total receipts\$946,659

Mission receipts—2023 vs. 2022

Mission receipts — YTD 2023\$946,659
Mission receipts — YTD 2022\$1,022,770
Over (under) last year(\$76,111)

2023 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,050,000 (does not include designated to Synod operations)

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

May 2023

New investments\$2,325,264
Withdrawals.....\$2,573,716
Net increase (decrease).....(\$248,452)

Year-to-date July 1, 2022–May 31, 2023

New investments\$23,935,957
Withdrawals.....\$22,478,814
Net increase (decrease).....\$1,457,143



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Harrison re-elected

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison was re-elected president of the LCMS on the first ballot after receiving 52.32% of votes cast, surpassing the required majority needed to win, the LCMS Office of the Secretary announced on June 21.

Voting delegates — one pastor and one officer from each congregation regularly cared for by one pastor or pastor[s] (Bylaw 2.5.5) — cast their votes in the first round from June 17-20. There could have been up to four rounds of voting until a candidate received more than 50% of the votes.

Happy 5!

Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford is celebrating five years as president of the Minnesota South District on Sept. 1. We praise God for his ministry in our district! You are invited to share letters of appreciation for his service. Please send them to debbie.borchardt@mnsdistrict.org or: Minnesota South District LCMS; Attn: Debbie Borchardt 14301 Grand Ave.; Burnsville, MN 55306



DISTRICT OFFICE

- ▶ 14301 Grand Ave. S.
Burnsville, MN 55306
- ▶ 952-435-2550
- ▶ mnsdistrict.org

MESSAGE

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who is in eternal companionship as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

However, not all people are given to marry in this life. We should be especially mindful of the single people in our lives. Even if someone does not marry, God did not intend for humans to be alone. Conversely, even if someone is married, they can be lonely.

Loneliness is used by the devil as part of his sinister plan to thwart our faith; to isolate us and tempt us to think and feel like there is no one who cares, no purpose to life and no hope in life. Satan

wants us alone, left to our misbeliefs, lost in our questions and frustrations, to give in to our doubts and to reject God.

But Jesus Christ came as the beginning and origin of life incarnate that we would not be alone. In fact, He was not just good; He was very good — both adjective and noun! And that means all that is bad in this world could not overpower His goodness. He came to rescue and restore us to our origins and to fill us with hope.

This is not just good news; this is very good news! It goes straight to your life right now. It declares that you are a precious creature of God, created in His image. The fall into sin may have



corrupted our parents' beginning in the Garden and damaged our origins, which inevitably leads to the very bad ending of death and damnation. But by faith in Christ Jesus all that is very bad is overwhelmed by all that is very good.

The heartache of this world is overrun by the joy of His life. The defilement of sin is met with the cleansing of His forgiveness. The sorrow you have from a loved one lying in a casket is overwhelmed by the resurrection power that He brings. The good Jesus brings is meant for you today!

In fact, each day can be greeted as a new beginning from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. In a world that has forgotten its beginning and ignores its origins, our Triune God brings the goodness of creation and redemption into your life that you can become a witness to the world.

So how can you bring hope to a fallen and lonely world? How can you bring the good of God's created order to bear upon a bad world?

- ▶ You lift up the good of being male and female. You exult the good of being a husband and a wife, of being a father and mother.
- ▶ You show the world its origins and speak of how the Triune God brings all that is good to bear upon your life right here and right now.
- ▶ You bring the good of God's redeemed world to single people, married people, those caught up in sexual sins or the transgender craze.
- ▶ You bring the good and kindness of your presence to a lonely world to show the life we have — from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit — is indeed very good.



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