



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

STAND FIRM

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. PHIL. 3:20-4:1

Paul exhorts the Philippians to stand firm in the face of an unbelieving and deceiving world. He reminds them of their heavenly citizenship, while also championing the power of the one who fights for them — Jesus Christ — noting that He will one day change their mortal bodies into resurrected glorious bodies like His. It is the essence of Christian confidence still today.



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

Yet, standing firm is not always easy, nor is it always a pleasant experience. We no longer live in an age when Christian values and morals are the assumed foundation of society. Our American culture has not only transitioned to being secular, but is increasingly pagan, in which the indulgent values and claims of other belief systems have replaced Christian morality and truth. Workplaces have gone from being able

to openly express Christian beliefs to being politically correct, to now silencing Christian beliefs and forcing sensitivity training upon its workers to conform to alternate views about human identity and basic human truths. Standing firm when it may cost you your job is no small task.

But it's not just for the Christian worker. Standing firm is also for the Christian student, the Christian parent, and the Christian neighbor. Graciously standing firm in our Christian convictions across our various vocations of life certainly takes fortitude. The student athlete who refuses to participate in crass language or porn-surfing with teammates has conviction. The student who kindly, but clearly, resists the transgender social contagion of her classmates has stamina. Standing firm in the face of peer pressure is hard.

The parent who articulately refuses to go along with the crowd and the latest social ideology has courage. The neighbor who remains kind, caring, and compassionate but refuses to affirm a neighborhood demonstration embrac-



L.CMS/Erik M. Lunsford

ing sexual immorality has resolve. We must encourage one another in the face of difficult times, while also remaining kind and reasonable toward those with whom we disagree.

Even more, the Christian who has given in to temptation and sinned, yet willingly repents and confesses that sin, asking for forgiveness, has humility and strength. All are examples of what it means for us to stand firm. All are wrapped into Paul's encouragement.

I don't know about you, but some days are better than others for me. Some days I have confidence and courage, while others I find myself battling against the same old worries, temptations, and weaknesses. So, where do we find the strength to stand firm? Paul reminds us. The simple answer is Jesus.

There is something very reassuring when we hear the power of Jesus. He is the Lord of all lords, and the King of all kings. He walks on water and raises

See **MESSAGE**, Page 7

INSTALLATIONS

Andrew Crist, left, was installed as Director of Retreat and Summer Ministries at Camp Omega. Also pictured are, from left, Rev. David Mumme, District First Vice-President and pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Waterville; Shelly Schwalm, Concordia University St. Paul, DCE program director; Dr. Phillip Johnson, District Assistant to the President, Mission Formation; Rev. Dr. Richard Carter, Professor Emeritus, Concordia University St. Paul; and Rev. Jonathan Vollrath, pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Eyota.



↑ **Rev. Mark Biebighauser** was installed as senior pastor of Hosanna Lutheran Church, Mankato, on April 23. He is pictured with his family, from left, Andrew, Lauren, Joni and Kristen.



→ **Katie Borlaug** was installed as a second-grade teacher at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Prior Lake, on April 23. She is pictured with Rev. Gregory DeMuth, St. Paul's pastor.



Rev. Jeffrey Hagen was ordained and installed as associate pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Sherburne, on April 30. Pictured are, from left (front row) Rev. John Meier, Rev. Anthony Bertram; (middle row) Rev. David Fretham, Rev. Jeffrey Hagen, Rev. Steven Wilson, Rev. Michael Holmen; (back row) Rev. Russell Reimers (Circuit Visitor), Rev. Dale Hedstrom, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford (District President) and Rev. Dennis Mercer.

Welcome!

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), held Call Day and vicarage/deaconess intern assignment services in April. Pictured are the students who were called or assigned to serve in the Minnesota South District. Please keep these faithful servants and their families in your prayers.



Daniel Langewisch (CSL) was called as campus pastor of Woodbury Lutheran Church, Woodbury. He is pictured with his wife, Kali, and daughter, Naomi.



Kyle Lewis (CSL) was called as associate pastor of St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Winona. He is pictured with his wife, Holly, daughter, Amelia (20 months), and son, Alan (6 months).



Nicholas Wagenknecht (CSL) was called as associate pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Stewartville. He is pictured with his wife, Hannah.



Scot Missling (CSL) was called as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Paul. He is pictured with his wife, Veronica, and daughter, Sophia.



CTSFW students assigned as vicars are, from left, Logan (and Clarissa) Smith, Trinity Lutheran Church, Waterville; Michael (and Meagan) Speckhard, St. James Lutheran Church, Howard Lake; and Rod Stewart, University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis.



Josh Hoffman (CSL) has been called as pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Norwood Young America. He has been serving St. John's as vicar.



Frederick Limmel (CSL) has been called as pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Excelsior. He has been serving Our Savior as vicar.

Youth test their Bible knowledge



Twenty-five youth from four congregations in the Minnesota North and South districts made up the seven teams that competed in the Bible Bowl at Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP), on April 1.

The competitors studied “The Life of Moses” and gathered to share their knowledge at the boards and on a written test. Parents, drivers, counselors, pastors, chaperones, and coaches joined the youth for the day’s activities. Following registration, the Bible Bowl opened with devotions.

Results

Double-elimination team tournament
(15 questions per game):

First: First Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids: Lillian Lovejoy, Jack Clairmont, Kate Clairmont, and Regan Lattimore; Coach Rev. Patrick Lovejoy.

Second: Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault Team A: Nevaeh Weeg, Martha Kuehne, and Janessa Franklin; Coach Philip Simonson.

Third: Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault Team B - Maggie Reindl, Lydia Schreck, and Giovanni Giacomini; Coach Philip Simonson.

Fourth: St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Perham Team A: Gary Steeke, Avalee Brown, Bryce Brown, and Jacqueline Holzer; Coaches Jeff Brown, Tracy Brown and Shari Brown.

Fifth: Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault Team C: Braxton Weeg, Andy Peterson, and Gabriel Giacomini; Coach Philip Simonson.

Sixth: St. John Lutheran, Aitkin: Natalie Crowther, Braden Bartel-Wagner, Quinn Crowther, and Jace Novotny; Coaches Tony Flerlage, Kara Crowther, and Paige Beaufeau.

Seventh: St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Perham Team B: Jackson Brown, Peter Brown, Samuel Brown, and John Steeke; Coaches Jeff Brown, Tracy Brown and Shari Brown.

Individual competition
(49 written questions)

First: Janessa Franklin, Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault

Second: Maggie Reindl, Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault

Third: Jack Clairmont, First Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids

Fourth: Lillian Lovejoy, First Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids

Fifth: Braxton Weeg, Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault

Sixth: Avalee Brown, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Perham

Seventh: Nevaeh Weeg, Trinity Lutheran Church, Faribault

Following the competitions were the presentation of team and individual trophies, closing prayer, the singing of the Doxology and the trip home.

Thanks to all who helped with the 2023 Bible Bowl! Your efforts contributed

Continued on next page

to the growth of brothers and sisters in Christ throughout Minnesota. Thank you to all who served as quizmasters, scorekeepers, and timekeepers. Special thanks go out to:

- Paula Paulson (promotion)
- Janelle Breitbarth and Rev. Mark Palmer (for writing the questions)
- Autumn, Kevin and Becky (chart and errand runners)
- Breanna Winnes (CSP admissions counselor, contact person)
- Drew Deas, Chad Horrmann and other CSP staff (for providing the participants and fans with the facility and lunch)

All praise and glory be to God for everyone's hard work to ensure a successful event! All praise and glory be to the Father who created us, the Son, Jesus who redeemed us, and the Holy Spirit who enables us to believe and live our faith! Thanks be to God who blesses those who study, believe and live His Word! Everyone in the Word is a winner!

Bible Bowl contacts:

- Rev. Rudy Maurer, 507-278-3169 or rudymaurer@aol.com
- Rev. Steve Breitbarth, 218-929-1110 or s.breitbarth@mchsi.com



Bible Bowl winners were, from left (front row) Jack Clairmont (third), Maggie Reindl (second), Janessa Franklin (first); (back row) Nevaeh Weeg (seventh), Avalee Brown (sixth), Braxton Weeg (fifth) and Lillian Lovejoy (fourth).

— Submitted by Rev. Rudy Maurer, pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Good Thunder

HAPPY
4th of July

The Minnesota South District office
will be closed July 3-4
in observance of
INDEPENDENCE
DAY



Officer nominations needed

Nominations are now being accepted for the following officers: Vice-President of Christian Life, Vice-President of Human Care, Vice-President of Servant Resources, Treasurer, Nominating Committee members (one from each conference) and two pastoral counselors.

Nominations of candidates are for the Minnesota South District LWML Convention, scheduled for June 20-22, 2024.

Deadline for nominations for pastoral counselors is Oct. 15, 2023. Deadline for other officer nominations is Jan. 15, 2024.

Nominee Suggestion Form for LWML MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT OFFICERS

Nominator does not need permission from nominee.

Deadlines for submitting names: Pastoral Counselors.....Oct. 15, 2023

Other officers Jan. 15, 2024

VP of Christian Life - VP Pres. of Human Care – VP of Servant Resources
Treasurer - Nominating Committee

Your Name _____ Phone _____

Your address _____
(street address) (city) (zip code)

Your email address _____

I suggest the following person for office (please fill in as much information as you can):

For the office of _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Church Name & City _____

LWML Zone and Conference _____

Mail/email: Kathy Kohner, Nominating Committee Chair
1345 49th Avenue, Winona, MN 55987
Email: nominatingchair@mnslwml.org
Cell Phone: 507-450-0138

Please photocopy this form as needed



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

the dead. He is the creator of this world and can do whatever He pleases with just a snap of His fingers. Yet, He is more patient and loving than those who typically wield such power.

Consider Marvel's comic book villain, Thanos, who chose to oppress the universe and destroy half the population with a snap of his fingers. He represents the truth of how power-hungry individuals are notorious for abusing that kind of power. History is full of such characters: Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot, just to name those of recent memory. But you could add social media, news outlets, and influencers to that list as well. Our digital age has brought a new kind of power player to bear on our lives. The cruelty

of despot rulers is of one kind while the digital rulers of our age brings another.

Jesus, on the other hand, wraps His eternal power in flesh. He humbled Himself by becoming an infant baby, growing into a man who let Himself be crucified on a cross. That certainly took fortitude and humility. But He did it with you in mind, so that you might have the same ability to stand firm in the face of those who want to destroy your faith.

In fact, Jesus gives you the power to stand firm through some very specific means. Not by some fictional infinity gauntlet filled with some magical infinity stones. But by the infinite power of His Word, a word that is also combined into water and spoken over bread and wine, to fill you with faith and strengthen your resolve with His grace.

He knows the worst this world can

bring. He knows the worst you and I can bring. Yet Jesus endured the cross, scorning its shame, so that you and I might have hope and confidence to face this fallen and broken world and share the Gospel with others as we make our way through it.

The Romans tried to destroy Him. The devil tried to bury Him. And sin tried to devour Him. But He stood firm; death could not hold Him! On the third day He came out alive.

Christ stands firm. He fights for us, even as we stand firm on the truth of His Word. We stand firm to the end, come what may, knowing we will receive the crown of eternal life. Death does not win — our bodies will be transformed, and Jesus will reveal His power to subject all things to Himself. We stand firm because Jesus stands firm.



The New Freedom Store is an outreach ministry of Jehovah Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Paul. It supports a number of local ministries including homeless shelters and halfway houses (like Damascus Way), as well as other Christian charities. A main focus is the needs of those coming out of the state correctional system who have the desire to serve others.

The New Freedom Store distributes food, gift cards, Bibles, hygiene kits, quilts, blankets, and men's clothing. These gifts are given freely not only to prisoners, but to anyone in need. The items are rather basic, but greatly appreciated. Following are some of the common kits and other items that are always needed. Congregations and groups are encouraged to choose any of these as opportunities to serve those in need.

Welcome kits: Includes a pocket Bible, several pairs of socks and some hygiene supplies such as a comb, razor, shaving cream, soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant and washcloth. Many welcome kits are distributed to the homeless, immigrants, refugees, and those returning from prison. Churches and schools from around the district participate, as does the Lutheran Women's Missionary League and a few corporate sponsors such as Metro Dental and Hanes.

Giving to the poor is biblically based:

For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land. **DEUT. 15:11**

Quilts: Every year, hundreds of women across the district take the time to craft a quilt for a twin-size bed. The quilt is a very special donation — a permanent reminder of Christian kindness given when needed most. Quilts are another gift for those who find a home.

Move-in kits: Given to those who find some sort of housing. It includes a pillow, pillowcase, twin-size sheet set, bath towel (or two) and washcloth. These items should be enclosed in a large laundry bag. Some of those who donate will put everything inside a large trash bag to keep everything clean and dust free. The kit is a perfect complement to the lovely quilts.

Target gift cards: These have been a Godsend, especially during the pandemic when so many people lost their jobs. They are given especially to refugees and immigrants who are starting a new life.

Gifts can be sent to Dr. Jim Seemann at 1075 Burgess Street, St. Paul, MN 55103. Or to arrange a delivery (or more information), contact Jim at seemann@csp.edu.



YOU'RE NOT JESUS
(And that's quite a relief!)

Attendees of the Parish Professionals retreat participate in a bonding exercise.

Look at your neighbor and tell them: "You're not Jesus."

Having someone look you in the eye and speak those words is uncomfortable. And also a relief. As Christians, the weight of passing on the faith is often heavy and overwhelming. Add a pebble of apathy from the people around you, a concrete block of perfectionism and a boulder of your own sin? All of a sudden, the scale is tipped, with a breakdown inevitable. In ministry, hearing and understanding you are not Jesus removes the weight and balances the scale.

A group that often feels the weight of passing on faith is ministry workers. It's their job after all, right? The Minnesota South District Parish Professionals gathered April 20 at Camp Omega for their semi-annual retreat. The retreats are an opportunity for all ministry workers, called or not, to gather and be fortified in their faith and ministry.

Professionals connect with others from across the district and are able to take what they've learned back to their own ministries.

Rev. Greg and Susan Finke of St. Paul led the attendees in a discussion about the Finkes new book, "Joining Jesus as a Family." Over the course of four hours, workers were encouraged to lean back on what they know: they are baptized and beloved. That's the beginning of what is needed to start passing on your faith: to fully know and understand that Christ died for your boulder of sin. He died for the pebble of apathy. He died so you don't have to — you're not Jesus.

You don't have to be perfect to share your faith with others. To start, live in grace knowing you're not Jesus — and praise God you don't have to be.

— Submitted by LeAnn Miller, DCE, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Gibbon

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending April 30, 2023 (unaudited)

Actual receipts.....	\$186,813
Budget receipts	\$170,832
Over (under) amount	\$15,981

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$664,332
Budget receipts	\$683,328
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	(\$18,996)

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod	\$498,196
100% designated to district operations ...	\$148,141
100% designated for Synod operations	\$17,995
Total receipts	\$664,332

Mission receipts—2023 vs. 2022

Mission receipts — YTD 2023	\$664,332
Mission receipts — YTD 2022	\$744,844
Over (under) last year	(\$80,512)

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

March 2023

New investments	\$2,566,948
Withdrawals.....	\$2,379,148
Net increase (decrease).....	\$187,800

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

New investments	\$18,454,673
Withdrawals.....	\$15,743,228
Net increase (decrease).....	\$2,711,445



DISTRICT OFFICE

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