



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



Go First! With Resurrection Confidence

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” LUKE 24:6-7



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

“Remember how he told you...” That’s what the angel invites us to do. Easter celebrates how Jesus triumphantly went from death to life. Easter revels in His relentless love, His glorious victory and His resurrection power. Easter invites us to scream from the rooftops, Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

“Remember how he told you...” That’s what the Christian life is all about — regularly remembering the words of Holy Scripture and boldly believing the words of Jesus. They are central to our faith and essential to our discipleship. God’s Word *contains* the content of our faith, it *maintains* our journey through the faith and it *sustains* us through all the challenges of this fallen and broken world. That includes the painful reality of death. And no matter its form, death is always hard to accept. Whether it’s the death of a job, the death of innocence, the death of your purity,

the death of a marriage, the death of a loved one or your own impending death, facing death is no easy task.

Dying to sin can hurt. That’s why we remember what Jesus has said. That’s why we remember what Jesus has done; how He went first! He walked on water, calmed storms, healed the sick, loved the outcast, died for our sins and rose from the dead. Jesus is ready to give ordinary people His extraordinary strength to get through all the madness and the chaos of this dying world.

“Remember how he told you...” The words of the angel to Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, are instructive for us still today. Jesus told them His death would come and that He would rise. His resurrection shouldn’t have come as a surprise. However, death is so disturbing, so intensely emotional and such a shock to the system, that our senses become overwhelmed with anguish. “Remembering” what Jesus said gets lost amid the intensity of our emotions. But the angel draws us back into the words of Jesus.

“Remember how he told you...” The crucifixion of Jesus was necessary. To be sure, it revealed human life in all its darkness. It was a commentary on the truth of the human condition. Where humans are, there will be cruelty and death. Where humans are, suffering abounds. Relationships fracture and dissolve. Communities come apart. Leaders fail and disappoint. Children fall ill. Dreams crumble. Hopes are dashed. The Messiah is executed. The

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St. Michael's has new pastor

Rev. Hunde Takele was ordained and installed as pastor of St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Bloomington, on Feb. 26. Pastor Takele (center) is pictured with his colleagues at St. Michael's, Revs. Patrick Simmons (left) and Ryan Alvey.

GO FIRST (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

disciples desert Him and flee. Life loses. Death wins. And yet.

"Remember how he told you..." Easter declares that the resurrection of Jesus shows a world destined for redemption. Easter gives us hope as we deal with the reality of death. This hope is the mark of an existence that faces the truth of death but hangs everything on the resurrection. In other words, it is a living hope (1 Peter 1:3)!

That's the surprise of Christianity — that we can bring good news in the midst of a vastly complicated world; that we can go on living confidently even as we face headaches, heartaches, suffering and death. This hope generates the thinking and practices of life that embrac-



es God's active, creative and recreational work even among the brokenness and hurt of our society. It puts Christians in the world as a way that the Lord's goodness can be tasted and seen by both lost and found. Yes, it allows you to go first! To remember the resurrection hope of Christ that's been baptized into your life and to live sharing that hope with others in your words and deeds.

Blessings in St. Paul

Rev. Hailu Gorobo was installed as pastor of Evangelica Mekane Yesus Church Fellowship in Minnesota on Feb. 12. Pictured are, from left, (front row) Revs. Dr. Sam Deressa, Vue Lee, Hailu Gorobo, Francis Stephanos, Yadessa Dhaba (former president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus); (back row) Dr. Rich Carter, Steve Bielenberg, Chris Weber, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Dr. Josh Miller and Dr. Bob Holst.





SEEKING MISSION GRANT PROPOSALS

By Molly Loder

VP of Gospel Outreach,
LWML Minnesota South District

“Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last.” **MATT. 20:14-16**

Generosity was important to the owner of the vineyard in the famous parable, and Jesus doles out His grace and mercy generously to all of us. We respond to this generosity each time we give cheerfully and freely of our firstfruits in our tithes, offerings and mite donations, which in turn help to spread His saving grace through Word and Sacrament ministry here and abroad. From mite box to mission grant, generosity flows from God!

Now is the time to begin thinking about submitting a Mission Grant proposal for the 2024 LWML Minnesota South District convention ballot, especially if you know of a mission project or mission-focused organization that could benefit from some of that generosity. The application and instructions are available at mnslwml.org. Go to “Missions” and select “Mission Grant Proposal” from the drop-

down menu.

Who should consider applying? Anyone! Individual members, groups, zones, conferences or LCMS-affiliated organizations are all able to request funds, up to \$30,000.

What are the criteria for receiving funding from an LWML mission grant?

- ▶ Be mission in emphasis, extending the ministry of God’s Word.
- ▶ Fit into plans and projections of the LCMS.
- ▶ Be current and ready for implementation.

If you have an ongoing mission project in need of some additional financial assistance, please consider applying, even if you’ve never done so before. Our mission-minded members rejoice in the opportunity to be a part of spreading God’s Word and His great love to those in need!

Much more information can be found in the instructions, and additional questions can be directed to me at vpgospeloutreach@mnslwml.org. The application deadline for Mission Grant proposals is Jan. 5, 2024.

God’s will be done!



From left, Elaine Hartl, Ricarda Reinhart and Pam Radloff display their work with ordinary plastic bags.

From plastic bags to useful mats

A question often asked is, “what can we do with all those plastic bags we get when we go shopping?” The LWML members at Messiah, Lakeville, have made great use of them by cutting them into strips and crocheting them into mats. The mats are eventually used by the homeless.

The work is primarily done individually, but the ladies also gather to work together. One of the members, Ricarda Julich Reinhart, has crocheted over 100 of these mats. We ask, “What’s Your 80?”, but we know that Ricarda has already met and exceeded that number. “What’s Your 80?” is a way for LWML members to celebrate the organization’s 80th year in 2022. Members have been asked to bless others with 80 or more of something (lwml.org/80).

For the plastic mat project, clean bags are cut into strips, looped together, and rolled into a ball. It takes about 500 to 700 bags and about 20 to 35 hours of crocheting to make one mat, depending on the volunteer’s skill. Part of the construction also includes stitching a Bible verse onto each mat.

After the mats are completed, they are taken to a church in Rosemount, where some of the ladies, like Pam Radloff (in the photo), deliver them for distribution to the homeless. The mat not only provides a bit of a cushion for the user, but also provides a waterproof barrier so he or she is not lying directly on concrete or grass. Crocheting plastic bags into sleeping mats has become a small, but powerful way to express the love of Christ to others.

Submitted by Darleen Harens • Messiah, Lakeville

Best Practices 2023



Strength in partnership

District attendees to build on working together beyond Phoenix conference

By Dr. Phillip Johnson
Assistant to the President, Mission Formation

“You are Not Alone” was the theme of the Best Practices for Ministry (BPM) conference held Feb. 16-18 at Christ Church Lutheran, Phoenix. More than 2,700 people from across the LCMS gathered for learning, support and encouragement as Christian disciples and witnesses to Jesus Christ. From across our Minnesota South District, over 150 people from various congregations, schools and other organizations traveled to Phoenix, joining with fellow called and lay leaders at BPM.

As part of the Minnesota South District, you helped to sponsor teams from Rochester Central Lutheran School; Zion, Mayer; Holy Cross, Austin, and Our Savior, Brownsdale; St. Peter’s, Gibbon; and Immanuel and St. John’s, Gaylord. These five teams were selected from more than 17 congregations and schools in our district that submitted grant requests to receive financial support.

Each team met in advance of the conference to choose which of the many workshops members would attend,

and each team will meet to report what each member learned. Then each team will join together to launch one or more new ministries designed to impact people beyond their current membership. Finally, these five teams will meet together this fall to present the progress they have made in their new ministry and to encourage one another in their ongoing efforts.

Through it all, the conference theme, “You Are Not Alone,” has taken on real significance. Our Lord has promised us He will never leave us, and He has called us to be part of His church — His body — joining us together so the various gifts might be used for the benefit of others. Congregations across our district are discovering they are much stronger when they join in partnership with others, working together for the sake of the Kingdom of God. You are not alone!

Want more information about how you might be able to send a team to BPM in 2024? Want to explore what a ministry partnership in your community or in your circuit might look like? You are encouraged to visit mnsdistrict.org/missionformation or contact me at phillip.johnson@mnsdistrict.org to arrange an exploratory conversation with your congregational leadership team. Together we can identify what your next steps in mission and ministry might be, to the extension of the Kingdom of God and all to the glory of God.



Pictured are many of the Minnesota South District members at Christ Church Lutheran, Phoenix, for the Best Practices Conference. More than 150 from the district attended.

LLL/LHM convention is April 15

Attendees will pack Mercy Meals

The Minnesota South District LLL/LHM invites you to their convention on Saturday, April 15, at Martin Luther High School, Northrop.

The agenda consists of:

- ▶ Packaging of Mercy Meals for Orphan Grain Train (OGT). If you can put together a group of 16 volunteers to help, please contact OGT branch manager Doyle Benson to let him know at 320-583-7695 or doylebenson321@gmail.com.
- ▶ Afternoon breakout sessions consisting of "The Depth or History of the LLL." Presenters include Dr. Phil Johnson (district Assistant to the President, Mission Formation), and representatives from Rural and Small Town Mission and LHM's Gifted for More.
- ▶ Jayson Matasovsky, featured pianist, performing at 4:30 p.m.
- ▶ Banquet at 5 p.m. with presenter Paul Steinhaus, principal of Martin Luther High School.

The cost for lunch is \$10; and for the banquet is \$20.

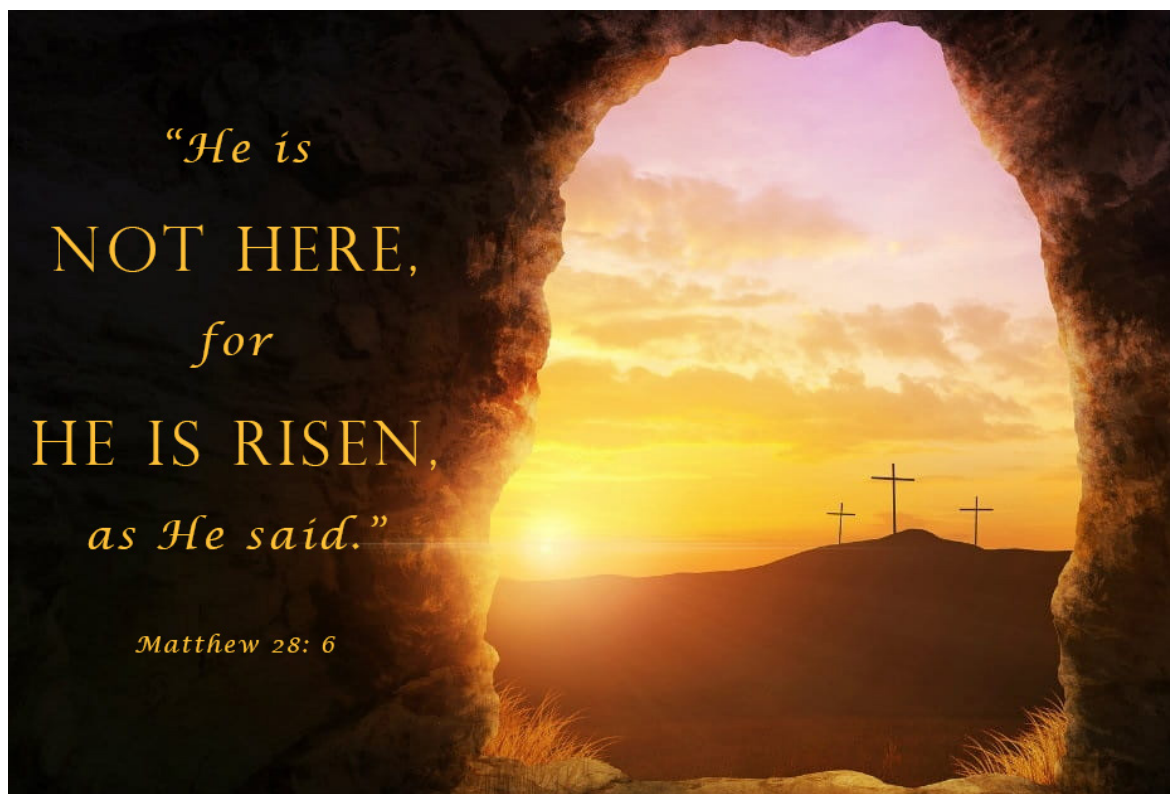
To register, contact Doyle Benson at doylebenson321@gmail.com or 320-583-7695.



CONVENTION TIMELINE ANNOUNCEMENT

Until May 27, interested parties may submit comments to the LCMS Secretary on reports and overtures in the *Convention Workbook* (published by May 6) for consideration by floor committees. Comments may be sent to lcmssecretary@lcms.org.

The 68th Regular Convention of the LCMS will be held July 29–Aug. 3 in Milwaukee.



The Minnesota South District staff wishes you a very blessed Easter as you rejoice in our risen Savior! He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! To observe our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, the district office will be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Pastors Conference

‘Take Heart’

Pastors from around the state will meet for a joint conference May 8-10. We are excited to be back at Madden’s on Gull Lake in Brainerd for a time of devotion, worship, learning, business, socialization and recreation.

Throughout the conference, pastors will experience a portion of the Take Heart! Respite Retreat offered through DOXOLOGY, the Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel. These retreats are “intended to provide respite, rest and renewal for pastors” and “provide encouragement, enhance confidence, and strengthen pastors for ministry.”

DOXOLOGY staff will be the presenters at the conference.

Dr. Beverly Yahnke, executive director for Christian Counsel, will lead:

- ▶ “The Cost of Caring: A Quiet Epidemic”
- ▶ “Pastoral Resilience in a Time of Adversity and Challenge I”
- ▶ “Pastoral Resilience in a Time of Adversity and Challenge II”

Rev. David Fleming, executive director for Spiritual Care, will lead:

- ▶ “A Pandemic of Loneliness and Isolation: Help for Us and Others”
- ▶ “Prayer, Meditation, and Lament: Spiritual Self-Care”
- ▶ “Responding to Judgment: The Matter of Conscience”

For a full agenda, instructions on lodging reservations, and conference registration, please visit mnsdistrict.org/2023pc or follow the QR codes. Active pastors are required to attend this conference. Emeritus pastors, chaplains, vicars and candidates are not required to attend. If interested, however, please go to the website for important information.



Dr. Beverly K. Yahnke, DOXOLOGY executive director for Christian Counsel, and Rev. David C. Fleming, DOXOLOGY executive director for Spiritual Care, are the primary presenters for “Take Heart” retreats. Previously held for pastors, the retreats are now also available for commissioned workers. Visit doxology.us.



Photos: CMSY Erik M. Lunsford

QR code for conference registration



QR code for Madden’s reservations



There is still time to register for the Confirmation Retreat at Camp Omega, to be held April 14-15.

Join other confirmation groups for a fun-filled weekend of Christian growth, songs, group building and games.

Camp Omega staff will lead two Bible studies, evening and closing service, and morning devotions. Outside activities include large group games, archery, canoeing and other events, all weather permitting. Come for fellowship, fun and time to praise God.

The event runs from 6:30 p.m. on Friday to 4 p.m. on Saturday. The cost \$89 per person. One adult for every 10 youth participants is required.

To register, go to campomega.org/event/confirmation-retreat.

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT PARISH PROFESSIONALS RETREAT

April 20 • Camp Omega (22750 Lind Ave., Waterville)

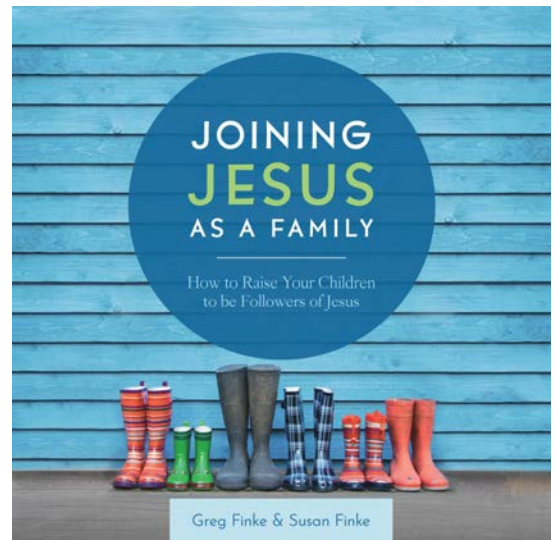
Rev. Greg and Sue Finke will present “Joining Jesus as a Family: How to Raise Your Children to be Followers of Jesus.”

Doors open at 9 a.m. for a social hour. The event begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m.

The retreat is free. Use the QR code to register

The deadline to register is April 10.

Pastor Finke is founder of Dwelling 1:14, a non-profit ministry which travels around the world, training congregational leaders to disciple their people in joining Jesus on His mission in the places they already live, work and go to school. The Finkes reside in St. Paul.



WANTED: Future church workers

SET APART TO SERVE

LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT



Set Apart to Serve is the intentional effort of the LCMS to identify, encourage and form future church workers for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ until His return.

Your congregation can help spread the word about this effort and point interested future workers in the right direction by sharing information about the *Set Apart to Serve* initiative within your congregation. To download bulletin inserts and presentations, and to learn more about the initiative, visit lcms.org/sas.





Scholarships available

Students enrolled in Lutheran colleges, universities or seminaries, or who have a Young Investors Steward Account through LCEF, have several avenues of financial aid or tuition guarantee available to them. Please take note of the requirements, application instructions and deadlines for each source.

The Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of North Minneapolis Scholarship was established to provide financial awards to eligible candidates pursuing a career as a commissioned or ordained minister of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). It provides aid to students who are members of congregations within the Minnesota South District.

Up to five awards between \$5,000 and \$10,000 will be given for the 2023–24 school year. Scholarship recipients will be determined by a Scholarship Committee of Minnesota South District staff and notified by July 1. Scholarship awards are sent directly by the Minnesota South District to the educational institution where the recipient will attend.

The application deadline is **April 30**. Instructions and all forms and applications are available at the district website. Go to mnsdistrict.org; from the “Resources” tab, select “Scholarships & Financial Aid” from the drop-down menu.

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) offers the Take Heart Scholarship. It is open to high school seniors who have a Young Investors (YI) Steward Account with LCEF, which will present up to three awards of \$3,000,

\$1,000, and \$500. Applications are due by **May 7** and recipients of the scholarship will be announced on May 23. To learn more and apply, go to lcef.org/scholarship.

The Minnesota South District has financial aid available to communicant members of a district congregation who are studying to become a full-time church worker. The amount of student aid provided is determined on the basis of district policy and funds available. Funds will be sent directly to the school and credited to the student’s account. Applications must be submitted by students to the Financial Aid office of their institution by **June 1**. For details, go to mnsdistrict.org; from the “Resources” tab, select “Scholarships & Financial Aid” from the drop-down menu.

Concordia University, St. Paul’s (CSP) church work tuition guarantee ensures that eligible students enrolled in church work programs will pay no more than \$6,000 in tuition each academic year. This move further supports CSP’s commitment to preparing more workers for the church as the most affordable church work option in the LCMS Concordia University System. Learn more at csp.edu/churchworktuitionguarantee.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Feb. 28, 2023 (unaudited)

Actual receipts.....	\$165,023
Budget receipts	\$170,831
Over (under) amount	(\$5,808)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$287,688
Budget receipts	\$341,664
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	(\$53,976)

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod	\$231,393
100% designated to district operations	\$50,965
100% designated for Synod operations	\$5,330
Total receipts	\$287,688

Mission receipts—2023 vs. 2022

Mission receipts — YTD 2023	\$287,688
Mission receipts — YTD 2022	\$358,414
Over (under) last year	(\$70,726)

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

January 2023

New investments	\$3,442,475
Withdrawals.....	\$2,479,107
Net increase (decrease).....	\$963,368

Year-to-date July 1, 2022–Jan. 31, 2023

New investments	\$13,897,439
Withdrawals.....	\$12,013,977
Net increase (decrease).....	\$1,883,462



DISTRICT OFFICE

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