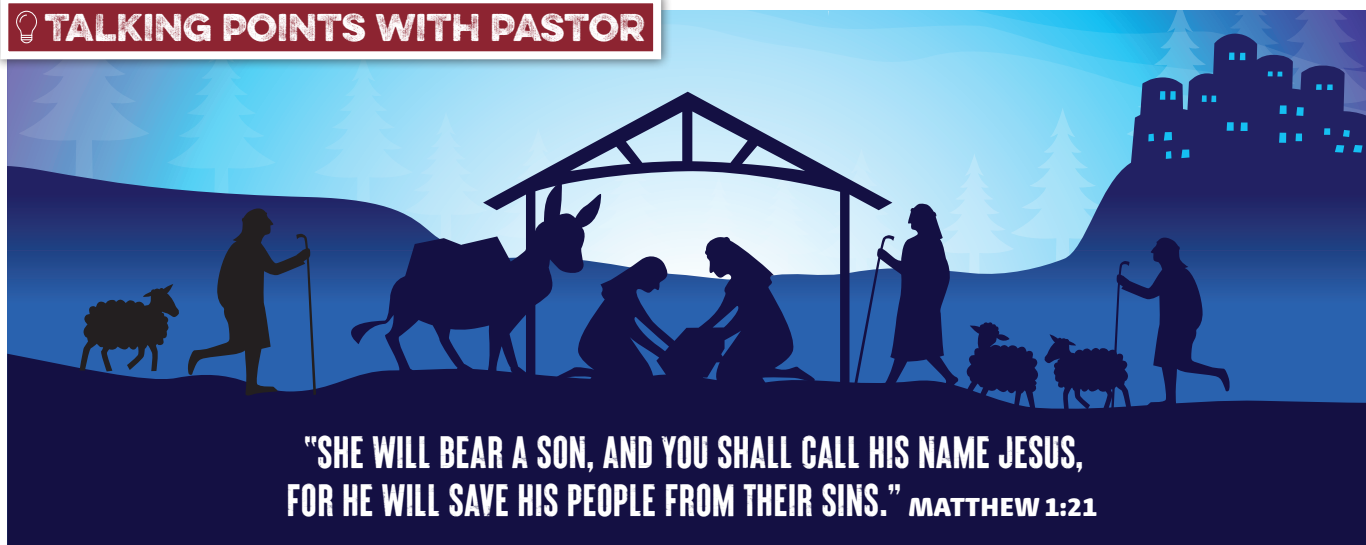




DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



"SHE WILL BEAR A SON, AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS, FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS." MATTHEW 1:21

The name of Jesus



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

How do you identify a famous person? What do they need to be known by others? Said another way, what one thing makes them be known wide and far? What is it? They need a name. Without a name their fame won't stick.

Without names history would be lost, events would be changed, and learning would suffer. Without names we'd get things like: "In 1492 some guy sailed the ocean blue." Instead of the Washington Monument we would have the "Pointy Brick Monument." Instead of the Lincoln Memorial we would have "The Sitting Guy Memorial." And instead of Mozart Hall we would have "Musically Talented Guy Hall."

Names are important. They carry meaning. They give identity, designate reputation, and define accomplishments, achievements, shame, and fame. In fact, names can evoke such power, emotion, and meaning that they move people to action. Consider just a few: Walt Disney World (vacation here we come!); Martin Luther King Jr. (inspiration and civil rights cham-

panion); Osama Bin Laden (terrorist extraordinaire). Names carry emotion. They carry power.

The name of our Savior is no different. "Jesus" is *Yeshua* in the Hebrew, which when put into English is Joshua. Joshua means the Lord saves — hence **"you shall call His name Jesus, for he will save His people from their sins."** However, Jesus is also called Immanuel. The Bible gives us the meaning of this name — God with us. Yet Jesus is also called "the Christ," which means the anointed one.

That Jesus had multiple names is not too odd. Many people have first, middle, and last names. In fact, many people are named after others in order to carry on a name's sake. Thus, the many names of Jesus are not unusual. However, what is extraordinary about His names is their divine meaning and how they point to what He would do. Jesus Christ, Immanuel — said another way, "God is with us; His anointed one saves."

This is comforting, particularly if you consider all the hurtful names we have been called or all the hurtful

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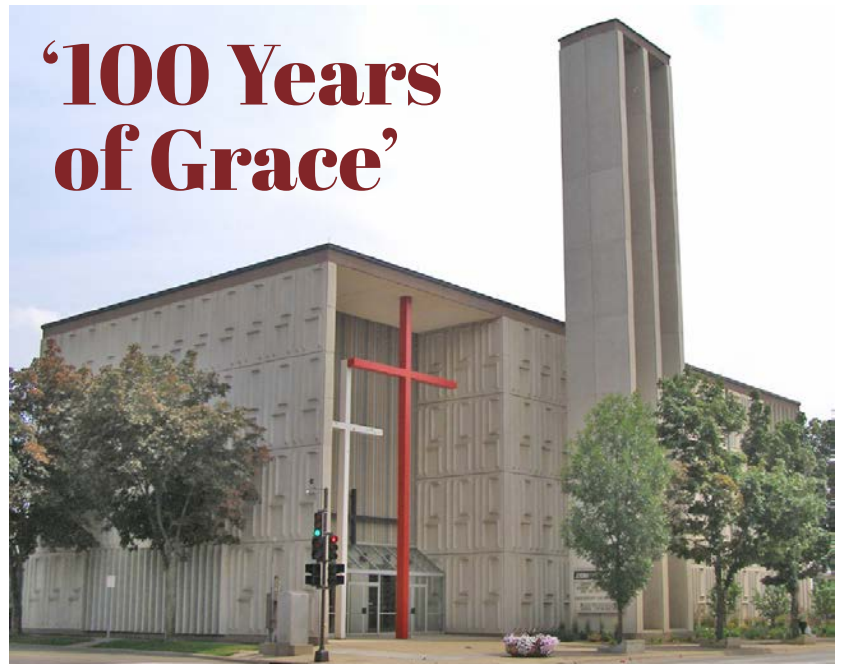
CELEBRATIONS

Rev. Timothy Smith was installed as associate pastor of Trinity, Rochester, on Oct. 22. Pictured are, from left (front row) Rev. Dr. Scott Fiege, Rev. Nate Schwartz, Rev. Timothy Smith, Vicar Desalegn Gamme, Rev. Brad Smith; (middle row) Rev. William Otte, Rev. William Natzke, Rev. Scott Johnson, Rev. Adam Koglin, Rev. Jordan Schut; (back row) Rev. Fred Mork, Rev. Robert Lentz, Rev. David Mumme, Rev. David Frederickson and Rev. Jeff Niederstadt



Rev. Benjamin Rucker was installed as pastor of the dual parish of Zion, Springfield, and Trinity, Sanborn, on Oct. 15. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Russell Reimers, Benjamin Rucker and Wes Hafner.

‘100 Years of Grace’



Jehovah Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Paul, began a yearlong celebration of its centennial on Reformation Sunday, Oct. 29, with a birthday cake following worship and a presentation on the congregation’s first years.

The congregation has chosen as its centennial theme "100 Years of Grace: Walking Together at Jehovah Lutheran." Celebration events will continue in 2024 — on Transfiguration Sunday, Feb. 11; Pentecost Sunday, May 19; Rally Sunday, Sept. 8; and again on Reformation Sunday, Oct. 27.



Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, recently bid farewell to **Rev. Kevin Oster**, who accepted a call to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tillamook, Ore. From left, Mitch and Jane Miller, Pastor Kevin and Reyne Oster, and Lisa and Keith Kamrath.



Sam Jopp, a junior at Mayer Lutheran High School, was the winner of the 2023 Lutherans For Life (LFL) National Essay Contest for grades 9-12. He is awarded the certificate by Virginia Flo, LFL Volunteer Relations director. Congratulations, Sam!



The Minnesota South District staff wishes you a very Merry Christmas as we celebrate our Savior's birth!

The district office will be closed Dec, 22, 25, and 29, as well as Jan. 1.



Meet our new **BUSINESS MANAGER**

Josh Wagner joined the Minnesota South District office in October to oversee business functions such as Finance, Human Resources, Legal, IT, and Facilities management. He recently completed a master's degree in Leadership in Complex Contexts from the University of Gloucestershire (Redcliffe College), which built on his five years in Human Resources and his bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

Most recently, Sierra Leone (West Africa) was home to the Wagner family for seven years of their service with Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT). Josh's wife, Ruthie, continues as an instructor with LBT for the Kerewe translation team in Tanzania. The Kerewe team is working on the New Testament for their people group that primarily lives on an island in Lake Victoria. Ruthie teaches remotely and travels periodically to teach in person.

Josh grew up in the Minneapolis area, where he and his family were involved with inner-city ministry. Ruthie is a third-generation missionary and grew up in Bangladesh. The couple met at a Bible translation meeting and married in 2009.

Josh and Ruthie have four children and live in Northfield. They all enjoy playing strategy games together. Josh enjoys editing photos in Lightroom, listening to theology podcasts, and using clicky keyboards to do inscrutable techie things.

‘Quality Christian education’

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) encourages and recognizes Lutheran schools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous improvement. Congratulations to the schools which have recently received their NLSA certificates. We commend them for this accomplishment as they witness to the students, families, and community!



Martin Luther Junior/Senior High School, Northrop
Pictured are Stephanie Zellmer (left), MLHS Board of Directors secretary, and Emily Anderson, NLSA District Commissioner



Zion Lutheran School, Mayer
Joshua Baumann (left), Zion principal, receives the certificate from Sean Martens, district Assistant to the President, Education and Commissioned Ministers.



St. Martin's Lutheran School, Winona
Rocky Sandcork (left), St. Martin's principal, is pictured with Sean Martens.

Encourage others at Go First! Conference

“Aw shucks, it was nothing.” Most of us have heard these words, some of us have used them. Someone needs help with a challenging task, a person who will pitch in to help complete a project, or maybe a listening ear and encouraging word when they are confused or hurting. The efforts may seem small,



but the impact for another person can be very real. We don't believe we have done very much, but their words of thanks are sincere. Oh sure, we took a little risk or went out of our way, or we found a way to set aside our insecurities in order to be helpful. But it's not a big deal, is it?

Encouragement comes in many forms, but it is best expressed when we share some of ourselves with someone else who can really use the assistance. This is what the **Go First! Ministry Conference** is all about. People from all over our Minnesota South District will gather April 19-20 for an opportunity of learning, collaboration, and encouragement. Teams of lay people, parish professionals, and pastors will share with others what they have learned about Life Together, Soul Care, Collaboration, and Outreach. And it's not because they have everything figured out and are working perfectly, but because they have been encouraged to try something new. Now they want to pass along that encouragement they received to others, all for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Does your congregation have a program or practice that seems to be making a difference? Do you have a story to tell about trying, and failing, and then trying again? If you do, and you are willing to share that story with others, you are invited to share what you have learned at the conference. Go to the Go First! tab at mnsdistrict.org and submit your **break-out session proposal**. Even if your first thought is, “aw shucks, it's nothing,” your encouragement might be just what others need to help them take their next step!

Perhaps you have the gift of organization or hospitality. We will need **volunteers** with these gifts, among others, before, during, and after the conference. At the Go First! website, a link will take you to the descriptions of the volunteer opportunities. Then prayerfully consider how you can help and check the box(es) in which you would like to serve.

If you have questions about the Go First! Ministry Conference, contact Phillip Johnson at phillip.johnson@mnsdistrict.org or call 952-223-2161. Individuals and teams, lay leaders and called workers — everyone is invited to participate, so submit your break-out session proposal or volunteer today!

Wanted: Mission Grant proposals

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**

The mission of the LWML mite boxes is to reach out with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Mites support organizations, schools, churches and other ministries that have the Gospel as its focus and a clear Lutheran identity to the teachings, materials and purpose. The project receiving mission grant funds must be ready for implementation and have proof of continuation after mission grant funds have been distributed.

As Lutheran Women in Mission we have a wonderful opportunity every two years to choose ministries or projects which will receive mite money. At the 2022 district convention, 13 mission grants totaling \$270,000 were adopted for the 2022-2024 biennium. Since then,



pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars have been collected in mite boxes by LWML groups and zones. The mites are sent to the financial secretary. At the end of each quarter, the total amount of mites is given to the VP of Gospel Outreach. The Gospel Outreach Committee recommends how the mite dollars will be disbursed to the mission grant recipients. Their recommendation is voted on by the LWML Minnesota South Board of Directors; then the money is sent to the mission grants.

We are nearing the end of 2022-2024 and are planning for the 2024-2026 biennium. This means we are accepting mission grant applications, which will be voted on at the district convention in June. Now is the time to apply — the deadline is Jan. 5. The application and more information can be found at mnskwml.org (select “Missions”). Please

share specifically the purpose and plan for the use of the mite money. If you have any questions regarding this process, reach out to Molly Loder at vpgospeloutreach@mnskwml.org.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. **1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18**

We trust God to hear and answer our prayers for mission grants in the 2024-2026 biennium according to His good and gracious will.

Join us in the LWML Mission Grant

Prayer:

Almighty God, Lord of the nations, You have called us to witness that, through Christ we are Your children. Open our hearts to the needs of people around us and open our eyes to the opportunities to share Your truth and love. Holy Spirit, guide the ministries of the mission grant recipients and help them as they proclaim the Good News of salvation. Bless the gift of our mite offerings so Your Word may be spread throughout the world and bring all nations into Your holy kingdom. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen

Submitted by Lisa Kamrath

LWML Minnesota South District president

MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

names we have called others. You know the phrase, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.” It isn’t true, is it? And the saying, “I’m rubber and you’re glue, whatever you say bounces off me and sticks to you.” That doesn’t work so well either, does it? “Four eyes, fatso, metal mouth, weirdo, and loser” — these are just a few of the PG names kids have used. They destroy us inside. The R-rated names I can’t say, but we all know how bad they hurt and how easy they can roll off the tongue. They are brutal.

The name of Jesus Christ is far more powerful. Baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit means one has the name of Jesus Christ upon them. There is no getting around it; when you are baptized, His name is upon you! By this name, He binds up the broken hearted and forgives the sinner. By this name hope is given. You now go by names like *Beloved*; *Precious*; *Baptized*; *Child of God*. That’s you! As His children, we call upon Jesus’ name in every trouble. By His name we pray, praise, and give thanks.



Jesus — by no other name is salvation found. His name is Immanuel because He is God with us. He comes to us as a baby born in a stable; teaches us throughout His ministry on earth; and then completes His earthly mission through His crucifixion, death, and resurrection from the dead. His name goes out as Savior of the world. It is the name we confess to others who ask us for a reason for the hope we have or the “reason for the season.” His name is Jesus because He saves us from our sins. Gloria in excelsis Deo!



Pastors' wives recharge at retreat

The wives and widows of pastors and vicars occupy a unique position in the lives of their congregations. While in one sense they are simply church members, they can also experience challenges and stress as a result of their husbands' calling. The annual district Pastors Wives Retreat, held Oct. 6-7 at the Hometown Inn & Suites in Belle Plaine, provided an opportunity for them to gather to share their lives, support one another, and grow in their faith.

Each year several women volunteer to organize the event. This year's event was led by Rachel Hinz, who presented on "Beautiful Feet," a devotional written by Deb Burma, fellow LCMS pastor's wife and author. Suffused with Scripture, the study considers different kinds of shoes as emblematic of the differ-

ent roles, needs, and experiences of Christian women as they help share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those around them. Hymn singing, prayer, informal chats, and an early morning walk rounded out the weekend's refreshing variety.

Mary Hedstrom served as emcee, and other key roles were filled by Trista Bodin, who prepared lunch; Darlene Fretham, registrar; Laurie Meyer, fellowship coordinator and table decorator; and musicians Molly Loder on keyboard and Polly Rapp on guitar. Hinz also prepared jars of foot scrub for each participant, and Fretham helped launch the retreat sessions by singing "Beautiful Feet" by Gloria Gaither and Sandy Patti. Twenty-seven women and two infants attended.

Pictured are, from left (front row) Mary Hedstrom (Lakefield), Becky Amen (Pipestone), Miriam Carter (St. Paul), Emily Malm (Dodge Center), Alissa Baker (Hardwick), Kristen Einertson (Farmington), Veronica Missling (South St. Paul), Davina Ethridge (Fulda); (middle row) Polly Rapp (Green Isle), Rachel Hinz (Gaylord), Shirley McCourt (Arlington), Meaghan Speckhard (Howard Lake), Trista Bodin (White Bear Lake), Katie Barry (Chaska), Anna Hines (Mankato), Trudy Wiechmann (Mankato), Donna Bernau (Courtland); (back row) Fran Swenson (Windom), Hope Grabau (North Mankato), Darlene Fretham (Winnebago), Chris Krentz (Savage), Molly Loder (Howard Lake), Larissa Rucker (New Ulm), Nancy Sajban (Windom), Ann Sorenson (Minneapolis), Rachel Eden (Winona), and Laurie Meyer (Janesville).

ON THE LINE
WITH PASTOR BRYAN STECKER
SUBSCRIBE ON YOUTUBE!

Welcome to *On the Line*, your destination for thoughtful exploration at the intersection of Christianity and culture. Every Monday at 9 a.m. CST, the podcast presents a new long-form interview with a noted expert, while daily clips offer insights to ponder throughout the week.

The mission is clear: to cultivate honest, thoughtful, and rational Christians. With content and discussions firmly anchored in Christian teachings, listeners are encouraged to engage, reflect, and grow in their understanding of Christianity's impact in our modern age.

DECEMBER SCHEDULE:

Dec. 4 | Rev. Daniel Broaddus
Pastor Broaddus is a candidate for a Ph.D. in early church and patristic studies. Trained in logic and rhetoric, he specializes in symbolism in literature and modern media.

Dec. 11 | Dr. Ryan MacPherson
MacPherson is an acclaimed professor, author of several books, dean of students at the new Luther Classical College, and director of the Center of Apologetics and Worldviews.

Dec. 18 | Rev. Joshua Arndt
Born blind, Pastor Arndt has mastered the art of perseverance and determination, and self-discipline. He's worked fasting, cold showers, and up to 300 pull-ups into his daily practices.

Dec. 26 | Rev. Dr. David Scaer
A professor of systematic theology and author of several books, Scaer is recognized as one of the most prolific and influential figures in the Lutheran church over the last century.



Singles gather in Iowa

The Lord’s blessings poured out abundantly upon a weekend retreat of 19 Lutheran single adults, who gathered at Camp Okoboji in northwest Iowa Oct. 20-22. The weather was pristine and Lake Okoboji was calm with beautiful blue water.

The young adults arrived from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and Oklahoma. Rev. Dr. Keith Schweitzer, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Greenfield, Iowa, and Faith Lutheran Church, Winterset, Iowa, facilitated the weekend.

Pastor Schweitzer was prepared with the traditional icebreaker activities but as things turned out, there was no “ice” to break. As the young singles arrived, the gathering took on the ambiance of a class reunion. The group became fast friends and immediately began to bond together as if they had always known each other. Having a common faith in the Lord Jesus will do that for a group.

Friday-evening activities included a bonfire and roasting smores, card games, and much visiting, laughing, and more fellowship. Saturday activities included prayer, meet-and-greet time, a Bible study led by Pastor Schweitzer in the Bethel Retreat Lodge, and watching the Nebraska Cornhuskers football game and a movie about Martin Luther. The day concluded with Vespers.

Sunday began with Divine Service held in the beautiful camp chapel. The group did not have an organist, but they didn’t need one; their acapella singing was truly gorgeous! The offering was designated for LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Everybody packed up, cleaned up the retreat lodge, and made plans to meet again next spring.

A feature of the retreat was personal photo-shoots of each of the young people and a group picture at the end of the retreat. In a fallen and sinful world, this weekend was closest to perfection this side of eternity. It was a truly fabulous weekend in every respect.

— Submitted by Rev. Dr. Keith Schweitzer

MN South
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 ▶ mnsdistrict.org

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Oct. 31, 2023 (unaudited)

Actual receipts	\$167,296
Budget receipts	\$170,832
Over (under) amount	(\$3,536)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts	\$1,572,443
Budget receipts	\$1,708,320
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	(\$135,877)

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod ..	\$1,201,976
100% designated to district operations ...	\$325,753
100% designated for Synod operations	\$44,714
Total receipts	\$1,572,443

Mission receipts—2023 vs. 2022

Mission receipts — YTD 2023	\$1,572,443
Mission receipts — YTD 2022	\$1,673,594
Over (under) last year	(\$101,151)

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

September 2023

New investments	\$1,932,945
Withdrawals	\$2,063,072
Net increase (decrease).....	(\$130,127)

Year-to-date July 1, 2023–Sept. 30, 2023

New investments	\$4,722,816
Withdrawals	\$5,763,958
Net increase (decrease).....	(\$1,041,142)

DISTRICT NEWS

YOUR DISTRICT MISSION GIFTS AT WORK

St. Paul Outreach Center

The St. Paul Outreach Center (SPOC) is a new ministry supported by the Minnesota South District. SPOC aims particularly to support new immigrants and other neighbors in need through after-school programming, health resource center connections, and service projects. SPOC is a joint ministry of the St. Paul Circuit congregations and is hosted at Jehovah Lutheran Church in the Midway neighborhood of St. Paul.

The Outreach Center has held weekly soccer, starting last July and continuing each Friday afternoon in the St. Paul city park across the street from Jehovah. Ashe Hailu, a member of the Mekane Yesus congregation at the Jehovah campus, has been leading this weekly activity that serves up to 12 neighborhood children each week.

Our official kick-off event was an international potluck on Sept. 8 at Jehovah. Six of the St. Paul Circuit congregations and the Concordia University, St. Paul campus ministry partnered in holding this celebration. About 100 people attended, including congregational



People line up for the winter-clothing giveaway. (Scan the QR code to give to the outreach center.)

members, CSP students (including international students), and neighborhood guests.

Wednesday after-school activities began in mid-September, led by Katie Miller and Susan Nance from King of Kings school. The activities include art projects, homework help, and soccer. Attendance has ranged from five to 28 each week. District funds for the Outreach Center are supporting needed upgrades of Jehovah's indoor recreation facilities so our after-school programming can continue in the winter months.

SPOC churches, CSP, and Concordia Academy joined to offer a winter clothing give-away on Oct. 14 at Jehovah. The partners donated 350 winter coats

and many hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves. The event was publicized with flyers and on social media. Fifty people were lined up at the door half an hour before we opened! We were blessed to serve over 100 neighbors, running out of our donations in just over an hour.

We were blessed to make authentic connections with guests, including an adolescent girl attending with her mother who asked if she could be baptized!

During Advent (starting Dec. 6), the Outreach Center will add a 5:30 p.m. meal and 6:30 service on Wednesdays. CSP theology professors Revs. Drs. Joshua Hollman and Samuel Deressa, and Rev. Dr. Joshua Miller, Jehovah pastor, will preach.

We are planning another clothing give-away for mid-winter, and expanded offerings in the Lenten season. The St. Paul Outreach Center is delighted with our positive beginning. We welcome the prayers and involvement of our brothers and sisters in Christ in supporting this new ministry.

— Submitted by Dr. David Mennicke, SPOC Coordinator

Merry Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we are humbly reminded that God's love is unending and His mercy endures forever.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund
> where investments build ministry

Kai Larson

Minnesota North & South District Vice President
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