



# DISTRICT NEWS

## MINNESOTA SOUTH

### 💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



veins bleed it. These people were desperate for this hope.

Perhaps you know what that's like. Maybe you're grabbing, pushing and grasping for something — anything — that will give you some hope. Jesus gives it. Still today, His Word speaks hope into your ears. Still today, the blood He shed for you drips with a death defeating hope. Where you are broken by sin, Jesus offers forgiveness. Where you are frightened by failure, Jesus shines the light of His hope. When you are lonely and longing for companionship, Jesus sends His Holy Spirit. And when you are full of anxiety, Jesus says, "Come to me and I will give you rest" (MATT. 11:28).

That sounds nice, doesn't it? To be able to get away and rest for a while — wouldn't that be wonderful! Our digital lives are so jam packed and so fast paced, we often forget what it is just to get away by ourselves and rest awhile. We live by the clock, and if the clock isn't working in our favor, we try to cram 32 hours into 24 until we start walking blurry eyed and sleep deprived, hoping that maybe tomorrow will be a little better.

As He did for those people on the shore, Jesus does for you — He has compassion on you. So breathe easy and rest for a moment. Soak in the solace of Jesus' words. Rest a while in the grace and mercy of Jesus. Even more, savor the satisfaction that comes with Christ's sacramental body and blood. Let your burdens be lifted as Christ is lifted to

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## Hope and Compassion



**Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford**  
District President

Now when Jesus heard this [about the death of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. MATT. 14:13-14

**W**hat is it about someone who makes thousands of people drop everything to race after Him? Jesus was dealing with some bad news that was sad news. His cousin, John the Baptist, had been murdered by Herod and He needed some time to process it all. As was often His practice, He went away to rest and pray. But when He gets ashore, there is a massive crowd already waiting for Him.

When people are desperate for hope, they'll flock to someone who gives it. Jesus, of course, is full of hope. His mouth speaks it. His touch delivers it. His body pulses with it. His pores sweat it. His

# INSTALLATIONS



**Rev. Nick Wagenknecht was ordained and installed as associate pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Stewartville, on July 2.** From left, (front row) Revs. Dr. Ralph Blumenberg, Jordan Schut, Jeff Niederstadt, Justin Kumfer, Nick Wagenknecht, Bill Otte, Kyle Lewis, Daniel Langewisch, Scot Missling, Dr. Art Eichhorn, Dr. Mark Schuler, Dr. David Preus; (back row) Andrew Asp, Adam Koglin, Dr. Jim Heining, Kenneth Boudreau, Jon Vollrath, William Natzke, Nathaniel Schwartz and Josh Bernau.



**Rev. Scot Missling was ordained and installed as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Paul, on July 23.** From left, (front row) Revs. Vue Lee, Dr. Joshua Miller, Brian Scoles, David Kind, Scot Missling, Doug Wanderer, Christian Einertson, Aaron Beckman, Dr. Richard Carter, Randy Asbury; (back row) Steve Benson, Richard Her, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Steve Bielenberg, Nick Wagenknecht, Kyle Lewis and Chris Weber.



**Rev. Todd Stocker was installed as senior pastor of Living Christ Lutheran Church, Chanhassen, on July 30.** From left, Revs. Ben Griffin, Todd Stocker, Paul Pfothhauer and Randall Neal.

## Congrats!



Dr. Phillip Johnson is celebrating 10 years as Assistant to the President, Mission Formation, of the Minnesota South District on Oct. 17. We praise God for his ministry in our district!

You are invited to share letters of appreciation for his service. Please send them to [christina.krentz@mnsdistrict.org](mailto:christina.krentz@mnsdistrict.org) or

Minnesota South District, LCMS  
Attn: Christina Krentz  
14301 Grand Avenue | Burnsville, MN 55306





**Rev. Daniel Langewisch was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Woodbury Lutheran Church, Valley Creek Campus, on July 16.** From left, (front row) Revs. Steve Wheeler, Dr. Bob Gehrke, David Langewisch, Daniel Langewisch, Nick Wagenknect, David Wende; (middle row) Paul Pfothauer, Tim Wendelin, Dr. Tim Berner, Tim Marshall, Dennis Bohren and Vue Lee; (back row) Vicar Joel Symmank, Revs. Dean Dunavan, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Mark Heine, Tom Pfothauer, Robert Nikl and Dr. Dean Nadasy.

**Rev. Weslie Odom was installed as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Morristown, on July 2.** From left, Revs. Travis Loeslie, Juan Palm, John Henry, Mick Mathews, Weslie Odom, David Mumme, Dr. Gene Chase, Matthew Moss, Harold Storm and Kristian Bjornstad.





# We are **HIS!**

We live in a climate in which the seasons change on a regular schedule. Experiencing the cycle of spring, summer, winter and fall helps us keep track of time and prepare for the next season.



**Lisa Kamrath**  
LWML District President

The LWML has a schedule as well. The first year of the LWML Minnesota South District 2022-2024 biennium is done. The 2022 fall zone events, 2023 spring zone events, and national LWML convention are completed. We began the district biennium with 13 mission grants and a mission goal of \$270,000. We have been blessed by God to have received \$152,786 in mites, allowing us to fully fund three mission grants and partially fund the other 10.

The next year of the biennium has begun and we continue to serve the Lord with gladness by preparing for zone conference rallies this fall. Information on these rallies can be found at [mnslwml.org](http://mnslwml.org). This fall would be a great time to reach out to the women in your congregations and invite them to attend the rallies with you. Offer to pick them up and introduce them to the ladies at the rallies.

Our trained Heart to Heart Sisters, Evelyn Boltmann and Coral Rose, are excited to begin meeting with our sisters of all nations in the Minnesota South District. Their desire is to share how our multicultural sisters can be active partners in the LWML mission. As a district, we want to intentionally welcome, mentor and encourage these sisters of all nations in our LCMS congregations. We pray they would join us in joyfully proclaiming Christ, supporting missions and honoring God by serving others.

It is an exciting time as we, Lutheran Women in Mission, join together this fall to prepare for the next year of being *HIS* — Held by His Word, Inspired to share His Gospel, Surrounded by His grace. We are young and old; from many cultural backgrounds; single, married and widowed; sisters, daughters, mothers and grandmothers.

We are all part of the body of Christ and strengthened by God to serve His church.



Pictured are those in the Minnesota South District who attended the 40th Biennial LWML Convention.

## Joy in Milwaukee

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man. **PSALM 33:12-13**

Women from all over the United States gathered to “Celebrate the Lord of Nations” at the 40th Biennial LWML Convention, held June 22-25 in Milwaukee. The Minnesota South District was represented by over 170 women who met at the district caucus Thursday evening, before the start of the convention, to see our Young Woman Representatives (YWR) and Heart to Heart Sisters (H2H) being pinned by Lisa Kamrath, our district president.

The convention officially started Thursday evening with a Communion service that had over 4,000 attendees. On Friday morning, the convention festivities began with a procession of banners. Led by then

LWML president Debbi Larson carrying the national banner, each district president, assisted by their YWRs, carried the district banners throughout the meeting hall.

On Saturday morning, past LWML presidents led the procession of our mission flags, which were carried by the H2H Sisters, YWRs, and other volunteers. These flags represented the 83 countries where the LWML has supported missions and the spread of the Gospel over the last 80 years.

Early each morning, attendees were able to wake up with the Word by attending Bible study. Convention proceedings officially started a bit

Continued on next page

HEARTS FOR JESUS

# Supporting students in Cambodia

Each year, the Minnesota South District education department chooses a ministry to support with their prayers and offerings throughout the school year. The project is called Hearts for Jesus, and provides a wonderful opportunity for Lutheran schools and childhood centers to support the designated mission outreach ministry.

For the Hearts for Jesus project for the 2023-2024 school year, our Minnesota South District schools will spread the Good News of Jesus with children and their families by helping to furnish Garuna Christian School #8 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, and to provide transportation for students. There are nine Garuna Christian schools open in Cambodia, a country where only 2% of the population trust in Jesus. Each school averages about 200 kindergarten through sixth-grade students, who are called “Garuna Kids.”

The schools are operated by the Garuna Foundation (an LCMS Recognized Service Organization), which also supports the Cambodia Lutheran Church by encouraging church plants and Bible studies at the school sites.



Students at a Garuna Christian school in Prey Veng, Cambodia, read through Bible stories during the first week of the new school year in early August.

The mission of Garuna is “to support and encourage the proclamation of the grace, mercy and compassion (*garuna*) of Jesus Christ to the peoples of Thailand, Cambodia and surrounding countries.”

Through the Luther Institute of Southeast Asia (LISA), Garuna is also focused on training indigenous church leaders, pastors, deaconesses and lay

leaders for the emerging Lutheran churches in the region.

The Minnesota South District is encouraging schools to use Garuna Christian schools for the 2023-2024 Hearts for Jesus project. To help you, feel free to use the flyers available at [mnsdistrict.org/hearts-for-jesus](https://mnsdistrict.org/hearts-for-jesus) in your promotion. In addition, Garuna will provide chapel materials. Schools will receive access to videos, PowerPoint presentations, object lessons, student worksheets, parent notes and more.

Families and individuals are also encouraged to support Garuna. You can give to Hearts for Jesus through your local Lutheran school. You may also prayerfully consider sponsoring a Garuna Kid, a LISA student, or a Garuna Christian school teacher.

For more information, visit [garuna.org](https://garuna.org).

## CONVENTION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

later when Kaye Wolff began her Bible study titled, “Blessed are the Nations,” focusing on Psalm 33:12-13. Afterward, Dr. Dina Vendetti, retired Lutheran teacher, led the assembly in song before business commenced. Throughout the convention, attendees were able to hear about Mites in Action and the Mission Grant recipients, and had an opportunity

to continue the conversations through Mission Impact luncheons.

In his keynote address, Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, challenged us to be modern-day Esthers.

Attendees celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Young Woman Representatives and the 20th anniversary of the Heart to Heart — Sisters of All Nations program. Saturday evening, attendees were entertained by the hosts of the

Lutheran Ladies Lounge podcast. They had us laughing and celebrating being a Lutheran lady.

During the next biennium, the LWML has a goal to raise \$2.35 million in mites to continue supporting missions around the globe.

The next national convention will be held in 2025 in Omaha, Neb. Join us to see how our mites have worked!

— Submitted by Wendy Rogotzke



# SERVANT EVENTS



**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Owatonna**, sent a group of 29 youth and six adults to Niagara Falls, N.Y., in July. We worked with YouthWorks, Habitat for Humanity and Kids Club to serve the community in a variety of ways, including beautification projects and serving those in poverty.

A highlight of the trip for many of the youth was the conversations they had with community members. These conversations helped them to better un-

derstand the impact of their work and create lasting memories. Youth commented that they felt God's presence in their life during this trip. They grew in relationships with one another and with Jesus. They had opportunities for personal devotions in the morning and worship services at night.

As a church, we find great value in offering youth mission trips each year. Year after year, we've heard from youth about how they enjoyed serving others

and connecting with fellow believers. Time away from regular routines allows us to slow down and reflect on our lives. Many youth share that they are thankful for time without their phones because they are able to have conversations and build relationships that matter in their lives. Mission trips force us out of our comfort zones and, many times, that is where God grows us.

— Submitted by Kelly Gentz, Youth Director, Good Shepherd Church



The youth group from **Grace Lutheran Church, Rochester**, spent a week at Shoshone Mountain Retreat in north Idaho in July for a servant adventure! Five youth and four adults spent a week traveling, experiencing camp life and serving communities in the Silver Valley of Idaho.

We served by painting a middle school, clearing land of brush, helping homeowners, and talking to people who loved interaction. We also got to experience a wonderful road trip with each other as we studied God's Word and His "road trip for life."

Participants' comments include:

- ▶ "The chance to be God's hands and feet made quite an impact on me. I loved sharing God's Word with the people I served. It helped me see how God was present in our service and in our community in Idaho."
- ▶ "We did Bible studies each evening in

Idaho, and even focused specifically on prayer one night. Being in worship with other Christians in Idaho really helped me see a much bigger 'community of believers' that we're all a part of!"

- ▶ "When I think about service to God, it's really more about relationships you form with others — even more than the service you provided! Building relationships was the biggest part of strengthening my faith. More than seeing beautiful landscapes and traveling and using our skills to help others, connecting to other Christians in relationships is the most important part. We are the body of Christ!"
- ▶ "The people we served were truly in need of our help. It's always great to realize that there are Christians all around the country. It's awesome to see young people like myself who are motivated to live out their faith."
- ▶ "Our group became closer together by traveling so far. We discovered how

well we work together and how well we collaborate."

— Submitted by Corey Nelson, teacher, Rochester Central Lutheran School

## 'Go first' on servant events!

From our district initiative, *Go First!*, Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford describes intentional outreach as "acting upon the conviction that Christ has called us to be light bearers and hope mongers in a broken and dysfunctional world. ... Therefore, the Holy Christian Church reaches out to both the lost and the found with the hope and love of Jesus. ... We bring the mercy of Jesus Christ rooted in His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary for the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. He reaches out with love and mercy and inspires us to do the same." Servant events are an example of how intentional outreach can be done!

# PASTORS: Conference is Oct. 2-3

Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz will be the honored guest speaker at the Fall Pastors Conference, to be held Oct. 2-3 at Messiah Lutheran Church, Lakeville. His address entitled, "The Growth of God's Word: Gospel and Church in the Book of Acts," will look at how the church's proclamation relates to the Gospel's movement through different people groups and life situations. He will connect these to modern contexts such as families, ethnic groups and unbelievers.

Dr. Koontz is pastor and evangelist of Trinity Lutheran Church, Denver. He has pastored and planted congregations



Rev. Dr. Adam C. Koontz

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 and live in Lakewood, Colo.

All active pastors are required to attend or provide a valid excuse to Keith Grimm, District Secretary ([kgrimm@foclutheran.org](mailto:kgrimm@foclutheran.org)).

[foclutheran.org](mailto:kgrimm@foclutheran.org)).

Complete information, including cost, lodging and meals can be found at [mnsdistrict.org/mns-pc](http://mnsdistrict.org/mns-pc) or by scanning the QR code.



## Congregation mission receipts

### For the period ending July 31, 2023 (unaudited)

Actual receipts.....	\$178,682
Budget receipts .....	\$170,832
Over (under) amount .....	\$7,850

#### Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$1,125,341
Budget receipts .....	\$1,195,824
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	(\$70,483)

#### Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod .....	\$860,361
100% designated to district operations ..	\$233,942
100% designated for Synod operations .....	\$31,038
Total receipts .....	\$1,125,341

#### Mission receipts—2023 vs. 2022

Mission receipts — YTD 2023 .....	\$1,125,341
Mission receipts — YTD 2022 .....	\$1,236,777
Over (under) last year .....	(\$111,436)

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

## A treasure and blessing



Rev. James Akuwa of the Lutheran Church of Uganda in 2021 arrived in Minnesota to further his leadership and organization education. Now that he is done, he can return home to his wife and children and train those at Ugandan Lutheran congregations.

A week before returning home, Pastor Akuwa contacted Rev. Vue Lee, Minnesota South District Assistant to the President for Missions, asking for a used communion set. Pastor Lee reached out to our district congrega-

tions for assistance. Rev. Mike Michalk, pastor of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Mound, gifted individual communion trays and cups. Rev. John Meyer, pastor of Trinity, Trimont, and Immanuel, Ormsby, gifted a traveling communion set that belonged to a military chaplain.

Pastor Akuwa was so ecstatic! He received these gifts the night before he returned to Uganda. He said, "These will go and bless at least five villages." What sits in our storage becomes a treasure and blessing to others!

### Send submissions for the LW district insert to:

► [communications@mnsdistrict.org](mailto:communications@mnsdistrict.org)



► 14301 Grand Ave. South Burnsville, MN 55306



### DISTRICT OFFICE

► 14301 Grand Ave. S. Burnsville, MN 55306

► 952-435-2550

► [mnsdistrict.org](http://mnsdistrict.org)



## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

your lips. Let your worries melt away as Jesus pours Himself into you. Rest awhile with your Savior. Taste the hope He pours into you.

That's why the people flocked to Jesus — they couldn't get enough of Him. They had so much need; so much hurt. So many were longing for hope that thousands came to rest with Jesus at this desolate place (some 5,000 men alone). They simply couldn't get enough of Him.

How about you? Can you get enough of Jesus? That's a curious question, isn't it? Can you ever get too much of Jesus? Would you ever say, "No more, Jesus. Thanks, I've had enough of you today." Sounds funny, right? But here's the deal: though you may not think you'd ever really say this, you and I often act like it. "Yes, it'd be nice if Jesus was here, but since He's not, my computer, or my credit card, or my house, or my favorite TV show, or my political party, or my way of life will do just fine." We start to fill the void with something else — something that's inevitably hollow and empty.

We see it all over our culture. In fact, some say it's the paradox of our time in history. We have so much, yet remain so dissatisfied. We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers. We have wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less. We buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses, but smaller families. We have more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees, but less sense. More knowledge, but less judgment. More experts, and yet more problems. More medicine, but less wellness.



There's so much dissatisfaction in the world, so much emptiness, and so much gloom. It's unsettling for many, especially unbelievers. They need the hope of Christ just the same! When that void of this fallen world presses down, it leaves us all stumbling under the weight of it all.

But there's One who's already bore this. His name is Jesus. He brings hope to all who are near and far. Tired and hungry as He was from the day when He saw all the people gathered on the shore, He didn't turn around or run the other direction; He loved them. The Bible says He had "compassion on them." And that is what He does for you.

Still today, Jesus sees you with eyes of love and affection. Even when you're tired and forlorn, weary from your

burdens, beat down by life, looking for some hope, Jesus sees you with eyes of compassion. He knows your hurts. He feels your pain. He sees your anger. He understands your fear. Even more, He's felt the burden of your sins and the weight of the world nailed to His very own body on the cross.

“  
**Crucified, dead and  
risen again,  
Jesus  
baptismally wraps  
His nail-pierced  
hands of love  
around you in the  
name of the Father,  
Son and Holy  
Spirit.”**

Crucified, dead and risen again, Jesus baptismally wraps His nail-pierced hands of love around you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He removes your guilt. He frees you from shame. He brings

contentment to your life. He satisfies your soul. Trust Him, believe in Him, love Him — and share this Good News with others. They need it just as much as you do. He sees you, and them, with eyes of deep compassion and loves you all without reservation.

The Minnesota South District  
office will be **closed on**  
**Monday, Sept. 4**, in  
observance of **Labor Day**.

