



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR



You are not alone



“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’”

— Gen. 2:18

The elephant in the room is that there are men and women who are alone. By circumstances of life, by choice, by divorce or by death, there are people who are alone. There are also people who are surrounded by others yet still feel utterly alone. Either way, there is much hurt and sorrow in that aloneness. Loneliness has its own distinct bitterness to it — this COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding lockdowns have brought that out abundantly. Extrovert or introvert, loneliness strikes a piercing and isolating blow to your being. And Satan desires to isolate and torment you in your loneliness.

To be sure, this verse of Genesis certainly confesses God’s creation of marriage, but it also acknowledges God’s creation of



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

companionship. Likewise, the church of God is to be a place that cultivates bonds of friendship, not just marriages. True friendship is losing its luster in our digitally distracted and wirelessly plugged-in society. We are losing the art and the patience of just sitting and listening to a friend. We’re trading face-to-face conversations and in-the-flesh interaction for a digital world where we can be surrounded by people and yet be more alone than ever.

However, as the church of God, men and women alike can again lead the way for what it means to have the great bonds of friendship and fellowship, to be confident and comfortable in showing God-pleasing male and female affection. This is especially needed as we battle the social effects of a pandemic.

The church needs to be a bastion of Christian friendship. It’s to be a place where we can bear one another’s burdens in the name of Christ. It’s where we need to come alongside one another in the midst of loneliness, especially those who are single for whatever the reason, and help chase away the coldness and darkness of being alone.

The liturgical post-Communion prayer of “fervent love toward one another” needs to be embodied — literally — within the church so that we do not leave our fellow man and woman living in the loveless shards of technology. Our expressive individualism has destroyed the

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LONELINESS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

faith of the church being together. And now we find ourselves alone together.

“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone.’” Why is it not good? Because loneliness can eat you alive. Aloneness can swallow every last ounce of hope that you have to spare. It feasts upon any happiness that you have left, leaving behind an empty carcass, full of despair and memories that you can’t seem to hold onto anymore. Loneliness takes your heart into its claws and seems to squeeze out of you every last bit of life that you have circulating through your veins. It leaves you desperate for relief!

Loneliness desires for you to suffer a life without any warm hands embracing you, or any shoulders for you to cry upon. This beast wants you to long for and feel those cold fingertips merely tracing your soul, seemingly getting closer, only to leave and abandon you once more. Loneliness is suffocating, stifling, and miserable.

But from the very beginning, this is not how we were meant to be. God created us to be in fellowship from the beginning — as He says clearly in Gen. 2:18. And that fellowship and union points to the union we have with our Lord Jesus Christ. After all, He was sent into this world to root out every lonely corner and seek out every isolated soul.

In Christ, you have an ever-present Lord who not only understands your hurt, but has endured the very soul-searching, gut-wrenching and heart-breaking devastation of lonely suffering. He knows the pains you bear, the emptiness you feel and the longing you have. He’s suffered it with you. On the cross of Calvary, our Lord Jesus Christ endured the utter agony of rejection.

He dripped with the blood of aloneness, casting His soul into the deepest, darkest depths of loneliness imaginable. He has gone into the depths of loneliness, stood upon the brink of despair and lay dead, sealed in a tomb so that you would have a Lord who knows what it is like,



but who also in the end will bring you out alive and well because He came out alive and well.

Friends, you are not alone!

Jesus loves you and promises to be with you through thick and through thin — when you’re sick and when you

sin. Jesus gives you hope on this day. He brings you a good Word of solace, one that’s filled with His forgiveness and resurrection power. By it, He crushes aloneness and thwarts temptation. With it, He baptismally washes you and cleanses you. Putting His name upon you, He declares that you will never be alone in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

You are not alone.

Your brothers and sisters are here and ready to be Christ-in-flesh to you, bearing your burdens and walking alongside you. As we begin a new year, let’s remember that we the church have a divine calling to walk in fervent love toward one another.



“**In Christ, you have an ever-present Lord who not only understands your hurt, but has endured the very soul-searching, gut-wrenching, and heart-breaking devastation of lonely suffering. He knows the pains you bear, the emptiness you feel, and the longing you have. He’s suffered it with you.**”



MN South
DISTRICT OFFICE

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Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford was installed as part-time associate pastor of Trinity, Farmington, on Nov. 22. This call supplements his ministry as district president and follows in the long tradition of district presidents concurrently serving in the parish. From left, Revs. Christopher Horton, St. John, Rosemount; Ken Boudreau, Hope, Hastings; David Mumme, Trinity, Waterville; James Markworth, emeritus; Dr. Woodford; Andrew Herzberg, Trinity, Farmington; and David Hahn, candidate and Trinity member.



Rev. Christopher Amen was installed as pastor of St. Paul, Pipestone, on Nov. 22. From left, Revs. Charles Boeder, emeritus; Jesse Baker, Zion, Hardwick; Shawn Ethridge, St. Paul, Fulda; J.J. Stefanic, Good Shepherd, Marshall; Dennis Brech, emeritus; Amen; Robert Moeller Jr., St. John/Trinity/Our Saviour's, Trosky/Jasper/Pipestone; and David Petrich, St. James, Holland.



Rev. Dr. Phillip Booe was installed as pastor of St. John, Luverne, on Sunday, Nov. 22. From left, Revs. Charles Boeder; Jesse Baker, Zion, Hardwick; J.J. Stefanic, Good Shepherd, Marshall; Dr. Booe; Gary Klatt, St. John, Luverne; Shawn Ethridge, St. Paul, Fulda; Robert Moeller Jr., St. John/Trinity/Our Saviour's, Trosky/Jasper/Pipestone; Dennis Brech, emeritus; and Christopher Amen, St. Paul, Pipestone.





Getty Images

BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING



But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”

— Luke 18:16

Some of us think that effective ministry should be to only adults. We tend to forget that Christ Himself called out children and rebuked the disciples when they were trying to dismiss those children away from Him.

Personally speaking, unconsciously I have put all my focus and efforts on adult ministries, and I forgot that the little ones are more receptive to the Gospel than the grown-ups. Theoretically, I thought I knew some of God’s way, but He always goes beyond the scope of my understanding and expectations. It’s always hard to frame God’s work in a few sentences.

In fact, God works under the surface in the hearts and minds of the little ones. He works in ways that we don’t comprehend at first. But when we look to the whole picture, it makes perfect sense:

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

— Rom. 11:33

A few months ago, a Muslim family that lives in town had to travel to a different state for heart surgery for their nine-year-old boy. In their absence, the family asked us to take care of their house and collect their mail while they were gone. They didn’t know for sure how long the trip would take.

Their medical trip took 45 days. We were in contact with them all the time, receiving updates about their son and updating them with any news as they were

expecting important immigration paperwork that would need an immediate response.

When the family came back from this trip, the mother urged us to meet as she had good news. She couldn’t tell us over the phone the nature of the news — she wanted to meet us in person. Once we were together, she told us that when her son woke up from 23 hours of surgery, he told her that he saw Jesus in his dream and Jesus spoke to him. Jesus told him, “Don’t worry. I love you, and I will heal you.” The boy didn’t repeat this again, and she didn’t ask him about it as the rest of the family was surrounding him.

The mother came with a big faith that God performed a miracle and granted life to her son. Previously the boy had participated in two consecutive vacation Bible schools at one of the LCMS churches in town. The boy seemed very quiet, and I thought for a while that he didn’t understand what was going on due to the language barriers, but God has surprised me as well as the rest of us that He works beyond our understanding. He works under the surface in the heart and mind of this boy.

Please pray for this boy as this lifetime experience remains in his heart and for him to witness to others how Jesus healed him.

Christ in you, the hope of glory,
John Gayed • POBLO missionary, Rochester

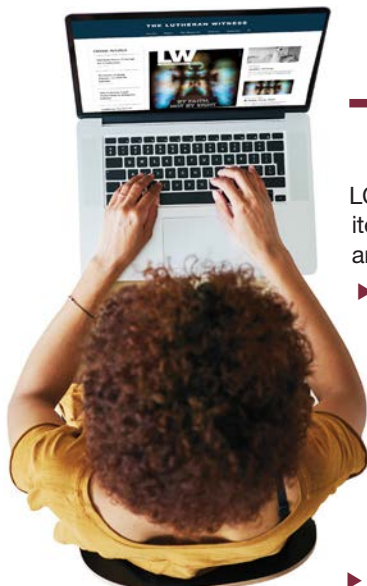


Welcome to the family!

We rejoice with the family of God at Shepherd of the Valley, Hastings. On Nov. 8, Rev. Chad Kirchoff and the congregation welcomed six children — Autumn and Carter Nelton and Michael, Mitchell, Avacyn and Jaina Scharpen through the waters of Holy Baptism. The parents are Michael and Rebecca Scharpen. Praise be to God!



DID YOU KNOW?



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod website, lcms.org, is a treasure trove of information and resources for LCMS workers and laity. If you haven't visited it lately, take time to do so today. Here are just a few of the things you will find.

- ▶ A daily Bible reading and devotion.
- ▶ Upcoming events on the Synod's calendar.
- ▶ The latest stories from *Reporter*, the Synod's official newspaper.
- ▶ Links to the latest Synod resources for both workers and laity, including the *Making Disciples for Life* Internet Resource Center.
- ▶ A link to the LCMS Locator, where you

can find up-to-date information about LCMS churches, schools and workers.

At the top of the LCMS webpage is a search bar where you can enter exactly what you are looking for, and below that are drop-down menus for various categories of interest, such as news, social issues, resources, worship and convention.

At the bottom of the page, you'll find links to:

- ▶ *The Lutheran Witness*.
- ▶ *Lutherans Engage the World*.
- ▶ Concordia Publishing House.
- ▶ The Synod's seven mission priorities, four international regions and auxiliary and partner organizations.

Visit your Synod today at lcms.org.

What will 2021 bring?

Remember when in 1999 people thought computers that stored vital information, including government and bank records, and anything containing some kind of computer chip would crash and cause apocalyptic chaos when we went into 2000? Stores sold Y2K emergency kits with nonperishable food before New Year's Day 2000.



Deb Vinkemeier
LWML District President

This sort of sounds like a reflection of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Stores sold out of toilet paper, paper towels, hand sanitizers and sanitizer wipes. What are some of your reflections on 2020?

With COVID-19 still being among us, we wonder what 2021 will be like. Will it ever be back to what it used to be? Government leaders have changed and economies rise and fall. We have seen many circumstantial changes, and maybe even some permanent changes through this pandemic. We face great uncertainty in 2021, but one thing is certain: God's mercies are new every day.

While our practice of how we do things may have changed, been disrupted or still be in development, God has given us the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control to share with others. Let us put these gifts this year to good use. These gifts are a reflection of God's love to others and can result in a better year.

While even though in 2000 the computers didn't crash, computer systems were upgraded to withstand the supposed millennium bug. While it didn't prove necessary, it did result in better computer systems.

This new year, we must personally invest in, develop and grow in our relationship with God. Do not let the fear of 2020 redirect your life away from doing the work that God has called you to do. Reflect on Jesus who gave His life so we might have eternal life. This is a guarantee of hope and happiness.

A blessed new year! May it be filled with an abundance from God.

Serving in Christ,
Deb Vinkemeier

LWML Minnesota South District President



Halloween fun in Winona

The St. Martin's, Winona, Fall Fun Fest was held Oct. 30 in the new school. Trick or treaters could stop by eight tables hosted by various congregations groups to gather candy or items with a Christian connection. The LWML group sponsored a table and handed out candy, flashlights with the printed message, "Shine God's Light" and Halloween pencils with Christian messages. Pictured above sitting at the table are Annamary Seltz (left) and Ruth Badciong. Also pictured is Marie Hurd, dressed as a chicken who welcomed guests as they entered the school.

LWML 39th Biennial Convention

June 24-27, 2021 • Lexington, Ky.



Scripture verse:
Heb. 12:1-2

Goal: Looking to Jesus, we run the race set before us and proclaim the joy of the Lord.

Hotel registration opens Jan. 5

Early bird convention registration opens Feb. 1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **Heb. 12:1-2**

Convention attendees' objectives will be to focus on Jesus through God's Word and Sacrament, joyfully celebrate our salvation with song and prayer, and serve our neighbors through witness and mission.

Lutheran Women in Mission have a heart for sharing Jesus' sacrifice, and with the Holy Spirit's guidance, we will be "Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus."

Visit lwml.org/2021-convention for more information.

Mercy for victims of trafficking

The Worthington Zone Fall Get-Together welcomed 40 LWML members and five guests on Oct. 24 at Holy Trinity, Lakefield.

Gifts from the Heart included numerous packages of diapers, paper goods and personal hygiene kits, and were given to the Southwest Crisis Center. In addition, \$278 was collected for Mites.

Rev. Dale Hedstrom, Holy Trinity pastor, gave the opening devotion based on the hymn “It Is Well With My Soul” and John 10:10. We had music selections beautifully done by Mary, Sarah and Anna Hedstrom, “It is Well With My Soul” and “Father Most Holy.”

Stephanie Page, co-founder and director of Stories Foundation, which seeks to empower communities to end human trafficking and help survivors, spoke to the group. She is also starting a non-profit coffee shop in Minnesota, which will also have apartments for those rescued from trafficking. The shop will also sell handmade goods, which are crafted by the survivors to



Top, Gifts from the Heart were collected for a crisis center. Left, Stephanie Page of Stories Foundation was the featured speaker.

provide them with an income while also informing the public about trafficking. There are currently about four safe homes (with a total of 70 beds), located in Minneapolis, Duluth, St. Cloud and Forest Lake, where survivors can stay one to three years. In southern Minnesota, survivors are placed in motels for a short time.

These survivors are coming for God’s

redemption! As people of God, our actions show God’s values. We hear the words of Ps. 142:5-7:

I cry to you, O LORD: You are my refuge in the land of the living. Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison that I may praise your name.

You may learn more about Stories Foundation at storiesfoundation.org.

May we all lean on our Lord and ask for rescuing, and may we allow our Lord to be our refuge. In His name we pray.

— Submitted by Vicki Place
Worthington Zone President



Together again

As some congregations begin to meet again in person, so do some of our LWML societies. New Life Women in Hugo got together again to study women of the Bible and gather items for newborns. The women all

sat at opposite ends of tables or at their own table wearing facemasks.

Fellowship with treats and coffee was not held, but the opportunity to study God’s Word was worth not having the treats!

The group is using Concordia Publishing House’s small group Bible study series *Great Women of the Bible*.

Although society meetings will look different, the opportunity to come together as women to serve the Lord with gladness can occur. **Please submit** how your society is serving with gladness during these different times to enewseditor@mnslwml.org.

A perspective on cows



By Dr. Mike Rodewald
Executive Director,
Lutheran Bible Translators

My family and I served with Lutheran Bible Translators in a rural area of Botswana in southern Africa. In those communities, cows play a central role. There are words which describe each animal's color and pattern.

According to a recent survey, 33 percent of those ages 11 to 24 in the United States had never seen a physical cow.

No wonder there is strife in the world. The reader can picture the lack of a common perspective between such communities, especially if the topic is cows.

But there is a commonality:

The years of our life are seventy, or even by the reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. — **Ps. 90:10**

No matter how I see or describe my world, “toil and trouble” does not go away. There is one certainty — time ticks on and each life on earth ends, a highly depressing thought on its own.

But we are not left without hope. God sent His Son Jesus so that “...while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). We have all fallen short of what God would desire us to be, but through faith given we receive life everlasting through Jesus’ death on the cross. We are reconciled. That changes everything!

Life is more than “toil and trouble” until “seventy or eighty years.” It’s more than one’s perspective on cows. My life is lived because of what Jesus has done for me. That is God’s message in Scripture. We are invited into His story of salvation. That is a story worth telling no matter in which community, no matter what language.

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Nov. 30, 2020

Actual receipts.....	\$143,723
Budget receipts	\$175,000
Over (under) amount	(\$31,277)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....	\$1,831,421
Budget receipts	\$1,925,000
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	(\$93,579)

Use of mission receipts (YTD-year to date)

50% remitted to Synod (YTD).....	\$695,456
100% remitted to Synod (YTD).....	\$73,618
50% for district operations (YTD)	\$695,456
100% for district operations (YTD)	\$366,891
Total receipts	\$1,831,421

Mission receipts—2020 vs. 2019

Mission receipts — YTD 2020	\$1,831,421
Mission receipts — YTD 2019	\$1,835,356
Over (under) last year	(\$3,935)

2020 congregational receipts budgeted at \$2,100,000

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

October 2020

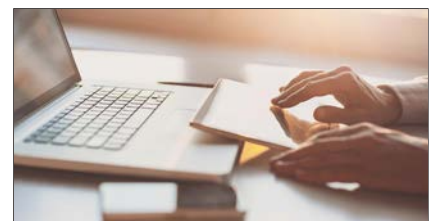
New investments	\$2,199,708
Withdrawals.....	\$1,104,120
Net increase (decrease).....	\$1,095,588

Year-to-date July 1–Oct. 31, 2020

New investments	\$8,787,476
Withdrawals.....	\$6,555,410
Net increase (decrease).....	\$2,232,066

ARE YOU READY TO ♥ SERVE?

Find your opportunity to serve at lcms.org/servantevents.



Send submissions for the district supplement to:

- communications@mnsdistrict.org
- 14301 Grand Ave. South Burnsville, MN 55306