



DISTRICT NEWS

MINNESOTA SOUTH

💡 TALKING POINTS WITH PASTOR

Full...Forgetful...Forgiven

“Stuffed!”

“Full!”

“I’m done!”

Thanksgiving dinners have a tendency to do that. Gone are the cravings for mashed potatoes and the longings for cranberries and turkey. Gone is the anticipation for the great feast. You’ve eaten. You’re full. The hunger is forgotten. It is time for a nap!



Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford
District President

We experience being full in different ways. From your stomach to your gas tank, from your piggy bank to your house — when life is full, it’s easy to forget what it was like to be empty. In fact, when you’re “full,” you often revel in the good life. You loosen the belt, set the cruise control, splurge at the mall and party all night. But being full can also make you forgetful.

God had a word of warning about this for the Israelites:

“Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your



Getty Images

herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God.” DEUTERONOMY 8:11-14

Whether the turkey is cooking or the car is taken; whether the bank is busted or the house has happiness, God’s commandments are to lead us through life. His commands are not to be forgotten for the Israelites nor for us. As Thanksgiving approaches, we are given pause to consider what fills not just our stomachs, but our lives, and then to see if that fullness has caused us to forget any of God’s commands.

Forgetfulness is not usually a good thing. Forget where you put your car keys and you scour the house until you find them (inexplicably in the refrigerator next to the jug of milk). Forgetfulness can be heartbreaking. Forget your daughter’s recital and watch her tears well up. Forget your son’s birthday and hear the sadness in his voice. Forgetfulness can be painful. Forget to move your thumb and the hammer will hurt. Forget your deadline at work and people will doubt your ability. Yes, forgetfulness can even be dangerous. Forget the road is icy and watch your car spin out of control.

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INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Michael Grannis was installed as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Waseca, on Sept. 10. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. David Mumme, Greg Volbrecht, Michael Grannis, Giles Zimmer; (middle row) Kristian Bjornstad, Weslie Odom, Eric Ishimaru (AALC), Jesse Krusemark, Harold Storm; (back row) Dr. Richard Carter, Larry Sipe, Michael Mathews, Dr. Lucas Woodford, Bob Lund, Dr. Eugene Chase and Dan Borkenhagen.



Anna Gruen (left) was installed as Campus Ministry Associate and **Kristi Bauer** was installed as LCMS Placement Coordinator and Colloquy Coordinator of Concordia University St. Paul on Sept. 22. They are pictured with Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, Minnesota South District president, who conducted the installation at the campus.



Hannah Zahrt (holding quilts) was installed as Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry of Cross View Lutheran Church, Edina, on Oct. 8. She is pictured with Rev. Steven Wheeler, Cross View senior pastor.



Rev. Gary Schultz (right) was installed as Intentional Interim Pastor of St. John, Good Thunder, on Oct. 1. He is pictured with Rev. Stefan Wismar, Minnesota South District Executive Assistant to the President.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Owatonna, on Sept. 17 celebrated 40 years of God's grace! Former pastors and charter members were invited to the Sunday worship services. Video greetings were shown from a few of those who could not attend. A celebration lunch serving over 250 people was enjoyed following services.



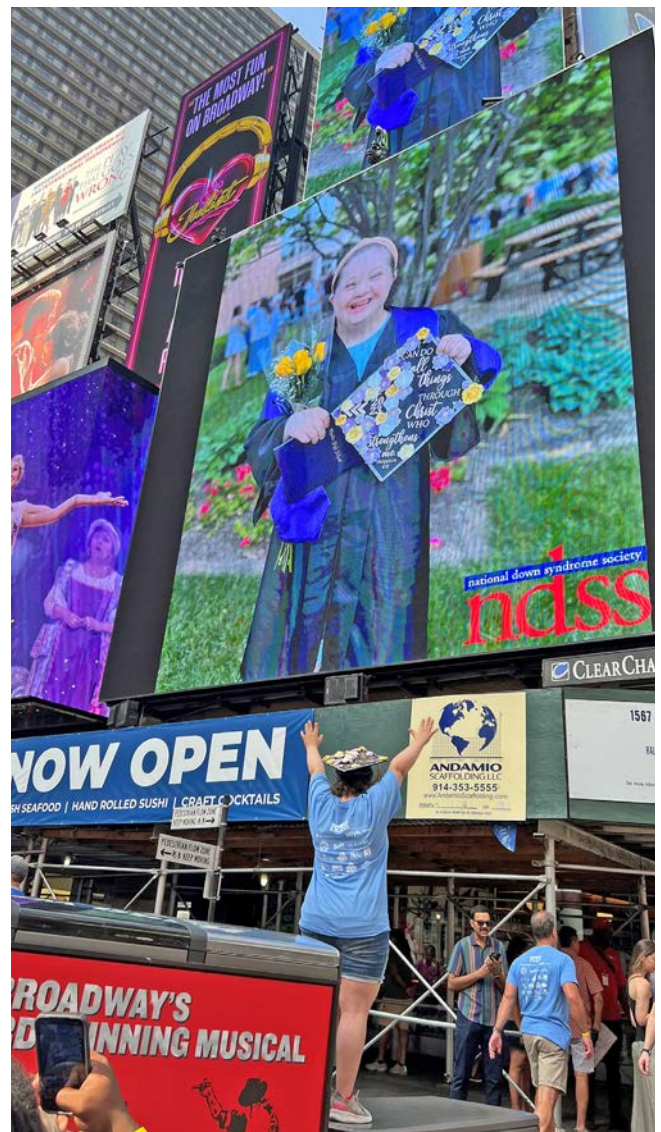
Charter members present were Don and Marlys Overlie, Renata Gordon, Bill and Paula Steinbronn, Kathy Friedrichs, Dave and Verdetta Tusa, Sue and Dave Gerhartz, Cynthia and Al Hammel, Dave and Mary Schenk, and Barb Granowski.

Team Elly shines in New York!

Elly Snow and family participated in the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) Buddy Walk in New York City on Sept. 9. Elly is the daughter of Rev. Greg and Connie Snow. Greg serves as senior pastor of St. John's, Chaska.

Along with the one-mile walk through Central Park and other festivities, 500 individuals are chosen to appear on the jumbo screen at Times Square. In the photo at right, Elly is elated to see her high-school graduation photo on the screen. The Buddy Walk raises funds to help expand NDSS's work to shift public perceptions, provide resources and support to families, and advocate for policies that support the community.

Pictured with Elly below are, from left, Darios and Clara Crawley-Reed (brother-in-law and sister), Connie, Ashley Lenz (sister-in-law), Becky Lutz (adopted aunt) and Greg.



Nominations sought

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)
- Pastoral counselor (2)

Candidate nominations are for the next LWML Minnesota South District Convention, to be held June 20-22, 2024.

The deadline for nominations for pastoral counselors is Oct. 15. The 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.

Your Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

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: 507-450-013

Ladies enjoy FALL RETREAT

Over 100 women from across the Minnesota South District navigated through a thick fog and arrived at Camp Omega for the Fall Women’s Retreat on Sept. 16. Under the theme “Promised Rest,” author and podcast host Michelle Diercks was the guest speaker and led the group through three Bible study and reflection sessions, looking at the names and attributes of God — *Elohim, El Shaddai* and *Jireh*.

Camp Omega’s new Omega Lodge was the perfect setting for the retreat. As the fog subsided, attendees viewed the changing leaves from the highest point at camp. Some even ventured out for a walk around camp to enjoy God’s creation.

Retreat participants were invited to an optional fellowship and servant event Friday evening before the retreat began. The ladies registered early, enjoyed snacks and made cards for the Phil’s Friends Cards of Hope program. Phil’s Friends is an LCMS Recognized Service Organization that provides Christ-centered support and hope to those affected by cancer.

Others brought Gifts from the Heart items of duct tape, paper plates or cups, and toilet paper to help support Camp Omega for year-round ministry.

For many attendees, this was their first LWML district event. Judging by the evaluations, the event was a hit. The women loved Michelle as a speaker and found her authentic, warm and gracious. Michelle shared many personal stories the women could identify with, and related them to the Bible stories being studied. It was no wonder her book *Promised Rest: Finding Peace in His Presence* was a hit, flying off the table that day. Many books were personally autographed by Michelle.

Learn more at michellediercks.com. Make a card or two for Phil’s Friends or donate at philsfriends.org. Check out what Camp Omega has to offer and learn about the new Omega Lodge at campomega.org.

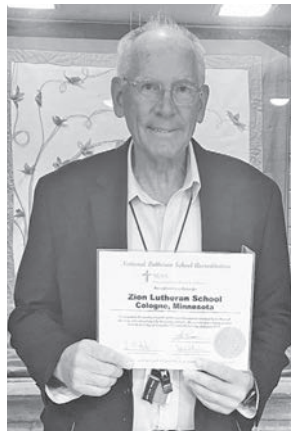
Submitted by Joy Anderson
Vice-President of Christian Life

CONGRATS!

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) encourages and recognizes Lutheran schools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous improvement. It is completely voluntary and is available for early childhood, elementary schools, high schools and any combinations thereof. NLSA helps Lutheran schools evaluate their academic quality and the spiritual dimension of the school in which they serve. Recently, several Minnesota South District schools received their NLSA certificates. We commend them for this accomplishment as they witness to the students, families and community!



**St. John's Lutheran School,
Corcoran**
Kristen Skura, principal



**Zion Lutheran School,
Cologne**
Tom Marcsisak, principal



St. John's Lutheran School, Chaska
Al Dutcher, eighth-grade teacher, and
Kendra Gilmore, principal



WELCOME



Steve Schoenecker has joined the staff of Trinity Academy, Hudson, Wis., as its new principal. Blessings to you and your family in your new school! The school is part of the Minnesota South District.



The ladies took a quick break from Bible study to wave hello from the LWML Fall Retreat, held Sept. 16 at Camp Omega.

Pack items for New Freedom Store

The New Freedom Store is a mission supported by the Minnesota South District. Led by Dr. Jim Seemann, director of Christian Education emeritus, The New Freedom Store works with various ministries such as homeless shelters, halfway houses and other local agencies.

The organization receives many wonderful donations. Perhaps the most special are the fabulous quilts artfully crafted by LWML members. These are given to children with special needs, refugees, immigrants, the homeless, and former felons trying to adjust to life at a new home or treatment house. The quilts will last a lifetime, a permanent reminder of the Christian ethic of caring.

Perhaps a group from your church or community would like to start a collection of items needed at The Freedom Store. According to Dr. Seemann, the items most needed at this time are socks, welcome kits and backpacks filled with hygiene supplies (toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, razors, shaving cream, deodorant, shampoo). As you gather these necessities, please note most of the recipients will be men and items can be obtained wholesale from Bags in Bulk (bagsinbulk.com). The most convenient gift is a \$25 Target gift card (mail to Dr. Jim Seemann; 1075 Burgess St.; St. Paul 55103).

Thank you for your efforts in supporting this mission! To contribute monetarily to this and other district missions, please go to mnsdistrict.org/donate.



"Tis the season" begins early at The New Freedom Store. Dr. Seemann (pictured in center) says: "We have started to pack Christmas presents for those in need. This is a big job. We have 1,200 tote bags filled with hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks. And if you are interested, please feel free to get in touch." Dr. Seemann can be reached at seemann@csp.edu.

OGT UPDATE

The Minnesota South Orphan Grain Train (OGT) branch has continued to take boxes of donations to the warehouse in Norfolk, Neb.. Also, Mercy Meals continue to be packed, mainly in Stockton, along with an event held Oct. 21 in Rochester. OGT is planning to sponsor a shipment of Mercy Meals to Haiti, which is expected to be expensive since there is a supply and shipping cost. The average box costs around \$11 to send internationally, which amounts to an average cost of \$9,000 for a full 40-foot shipping container. Anyone who wishes to financially support that shipment can send donations to our treasurer, Darlene Fretham, at 611 1st Ave. NW; Winnebago, MN 56098).

The LWML and members of Immanuel, Lakefield, will host a fish boil from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Nov. 5. The

Minnesota South OGT meeting will begin following the fish boil. All are welcome to attend!

Thank you to everyone for supporting OGT through hosting events and your donations of time, sewing, funds or goods. May God bless you!

— Submitted by Doyle Benson,
OGT Branch Manager

OGT Fast Facts (reprinted from ogt.org)

- OGT volunteers have given more than 4.3 million hours of work since 1992, including sorting, packing and shipping items. (2022-23 had 140,818 volunteer hours valued at \$1,267,358; if paid, \$9 per hour).

- A total of 274 shipments were shipped in 2022-23: 119 internationally to 23 different countries and 155 domestic. That makes 4,504 shipments worldwide since 1992. During this past fiscal year, OGT shipped about \$44.1 million

worth of reusable goods, aid and food worldwide.

- Charity Navigator, America's premier independent charity evaluator, rated the financial performance of OGT: 98.2% of all donations go toward OGT's mission, and only 1.8% goes toward administrative and marketing costs.

OGT Wish List (more details can be found at ogt.org)

- Prayers for God's blessings
- Cash donations for shipping
- Quilts, comforters, blankets, towels and washcloths
- Gently used or new clothing
- Infant supplies
- Medical equipment and supplies
- Hygiene supplies
- School supplies
- Sports equipment

Minnesota South OGT warehouses are in Mayer, Fairmont and Stockton.

Make plans to attend Go First! Conference

The first Minnesota South District Go First! Ministry Conference will be held April 19–20, 2024, at Concordia Academy, Roseville. Pastors, parish professionals, educators and lay people are all invited to experience the encouragement and inspiration of this two-day event.

Break-out sessions will be led by individuals and congregations involved with ministries that can be replicated in your congregation and community, and are focused on one or more of the Go First! areas of Life Together, Soul Care, Intentional Outreach, or Collaboration. Plan now to spend time with your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ — learning, growing and being encouraged in your life of service.

Please visit mnsdistrict.org/



go-first-initiative regularly to receive updates on ways you can register to attend, offer to lead a break-out session, and even volunteer to help make this an event to remember. Save the date!

Congregation mission receipts

For the period ending Sept. 30, 2023 (unaudited)

Actual receipts.....\$112,508
Budget receipts\$170,832
Over (under) amount (\$58,324)

Year-to-date receipts

Actual receipts.....\$1,405,147
Budget receipts\$1,537,488
Over (under) anticipated amount.....(\$132,341)

Use of mission receipts (year to date)

50% designated to district and Synod ..\$1,077,160
100% designated to district operations ..\$291,488
100% designated for Synod operations\$36,499
Total receipts\$1,405,147

Mission receipts—2023 vs. 2022

Mission receipts — YTD 2023\$1,405,147
Mission receipts — YTD 2022\$1,507,724
Over (under) last year(\$102,577)

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

MINNESOTA SOUTH DISTRICT LCEF

August 2023

New investments\$1,149,677
Withdrawals.....\$2,073,907
Net increase (decrease).....(\$924,230)

Year-to-date July 1, 2023–Aug. 31, 2023

New investments\$2,789,871
Withdrawals.....\$3,700,886
Net increase (decrease).....(\$911,015)

WANTED: Future church workers

Do you want to be an influencer? Many professional church workers were encouraged to pursue their vocation from members of their family or congregation. Perhaps you can inspire someone to become a pastor, Lutheran school teacher, deaconess, director of Christian Education, director of Christian Outreach, director of Family Life Ministry, director of Parish Music or director of Church Ministries. You can learn more about these professions and the programs that prepare students for church work at lcms.org/sas.



Photos: LCMS/Erin M. Lunsford



DISTRICT OFFICE

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- ▶ 952-435-2550
- ▶ mnsdistrict.org

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Forget the Lord your God and you will die an eternal death. That's what God told the Israelites:

"If you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish." DEUTERONOMY 8:19

It's what He tells us still today.

The sins we commit and the sins committed against us are signs of human forgetfulness. It makes life a mess, and it's more than a "cranberries fell in the gravy" or "the pie crust isn't flaky" type of mess. It's more like gossiping over the gravy followed by a slice of prideful pie type of mess. These behaviors ruin more than just the meal. Words that wound, attitudes that offend and actions that are idolatrous ruin relationships, destroy discipleship and angers the Almighty.

But then comes our table prayer:

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good and his mercy endures forever."
PSALM 118:1

The words the psalmist prayed long ago are now prayed by you. They are a reminder of what God has done for sinners.

God has mercy upon sinners. Where we often forget about God, He sends Jesus to shed His blood so He can forget about our sins. You might call it an arrangement of divine forgetfulness. Thanks be to God for it! With Jesus, there is heal-

ing for those broken by sin — for you, for your family, for your friends. Through Jesus, there is wholeness given to those hurt by sin — for you, for your family, for your friends. With Jesus, there is a Thanksgiving meal (after all, *Eucharist* means to give thanks) that fills you full of forgiveness, life and salvation.

"Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good and his mercy endures forever."



Giving thanks
to *Almighty God* for investors, partners, the church and her workers.

During this season of *thankfulness*, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) gives thanks to those who allow us to support LCMS churches and workers.

May the *Lord* bless you as you come together for *Thanksgiving* with those you *cherish*. We pray that His presence will grace your gathering, and He will fill your hearts with His *love*.

From the LCEF family, may your family have a *Happy Thanksgiving!*

 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**
where investments build ministry

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