



/ JANUARY 2023

DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH WISCONSIN

EPIPHANY IN PERU

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. **ISAIAH 60:1-2**

Happy Epiphany!

For hundreds of years we have remembered the Wise Men who journeyed to Bethlehem to worship the Christ Child. The passage from Isaiah is a reminder that Jesus came for the Wise Men — and all Gentiles — as well as the Jews.

During this season it is a good time to pay special attention to missions. Our 2012 district convention approved supporting a mission project through the LCMS. We have been aiding mission efforts in Peru with financial support, usually to support the work happening in Lima. It has been my privilege to travel there to witness what is going on, support the missionaries who have come



Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck
North Wisconsin
District President



Rev. Jeancarlos Ramírez leads chapel at Castillo Forte Mercy House in Lima, Peru. His wife, Deaconess Caitlin, is in the group at left.

and gone, and attend FOROs, where those who support the Peru mission gather to learn what is happening, and give support and insight.

When mission work in other countries takes place, one of the hopes is that eventually the mission workers and financial support from the United States will no longer be necessary as the church is strong enough to be on its own. Right now the work in Peru is moving in the right direction. On Oct. 23, an important step was taken when Rev. Jeancarlos Ramírez, a native of Lima, was ordained and installed as pastor of the church in La Victoria, an industrial area of Lima. Pastor Ramírez, who was surrounded by family and friends for his installation, also serves as chaplain of the Castillo Forte Mercy House in La Victoria.

Jeancarlos graduated from Concordia Reformer Lutheran Seminary in the Dominican Republic. His journey began in the kitchen of Castillo Forte. It was there he became interested in what the children were being taught, which eventually led him to go to the seminary. It did not hurt that he was also falling in love with Deaconess Caitlin, who has been serving there since 2013. The result? They are married with two children. Deaconess Caitlin is back doing her work and providing leadership in the Lima ministry.

Castillo Forte Mercy House reaches out to children in the neighborhood. They learn about Jesus, study Luther's Small Catechism, attend chapel services and are fed. As chaplain, Pastor

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Pockat installed in Mattoon

Rev. Steven Pockat was installed as pastor of St. John's, Mattoon, on Oct. 20. Pastors who participated in the service are, from left, Revs. Don Engebretson, Matthew Christians, Dan Kohn, Leonard Wildauer, Steve Pockat, Todd Jerabek, Dr. Dwayne Lueck and Clifford Kessen.

Redeemer celebrates centennial

On Nov. 6, Redeemer, Amery, members and friends celebrated the congregation's 100th anniversary. A worship celebration was held, followed by a program that included testimonies of how members have impacted lives; funny stories of days gone by; and messages from former pastors.

The congregation invited the Amery community to celebrate the legacy and foundation that so many have helped create, and on which they hope to build the next 100 years.



District offers WORKSHOPS

The annual **Lay Leader Training** event is scheduled for 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 17, at St. Paul, Bonduel. This event is for congregational lay leaders serving on ministry boards and their pastors. Attendees will learn best practices and be better equipped to address the issues that arise in the congregation. Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck and his staff will cover strategy, finances, policy and servant leadership.

The **Team Ministry Workshop** is scheduled for Jan. 31 at St. Mark, Wausau. This event is for ministry teams large and small, including pastor and DCE; pastor and principal; pastor and early childhood director; pastor, principal, EC director, DCE, and business manager; and others depending on your team.

The event will explore the characters and lessons on leadership from the book *Our Iceberg Is Melting*. Part of the day will also include best practice discussions led by teams currently leading organizational change.

Registration for both events is open at nwdlcms.org. Click "Events and Info."

MESSAGE

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Ramírez provides spiritual care for the children and their families. Hopefully we will be able to create more unity between the church and the afterschool program so that families attending Castillo Fuerte may also enter into the church family and benefit from the gifts God has for them.

Pastor Ramírez is not the first native of Lima to become a Lutheran pastor. One year earlier, Rev. Elvis Carrera was ordained and installed as the "first" native Lima Lutheran pastor. The majority of

his ministry is at Los Olivos, with an emphasis on outreach to children.

COVID has hurt the ministry. Not all the children that were coming before COVID are back. But that has not detained the effort. A lot of time was spent reaching out and staying in touch by using technology.

Rev. Walterson Siewert is another missionary in Lima, and his is focusing on the San Borja area. He has been making progress in drawing people to worship or Bible study. It is at that location where the church's office is located, and where visitors sleep, eat and gather.

So if you want to join me and see what is going on, let me know. Want to take a mission team? We were provided a list of opportunities for congregations or groups in the United States to participate. Visit servenow.lcms.org/latin-america or send an email to mission.teams@lcms.org and Erin will provide more information and answer your questions.

Praise God for the work in Peru. Take time during Epiphany to explore what mission opportunities there are around the world or in your own backyard, and "Let your light shine!"

LWML

Random acts of kindness

Have you ever done a random act of kindness and wondered about the recipient? I think we all have done this in one way or another.

Recently my husband, Roy, and I went shopping at Menards. After waiting in the checkout line a little longer than usual, we were finally able to have our items scanned. Just as the cashier gave us our total, a gentleman whom we did not know stepped in and asked to pay for our items with his rebate voucher. He actually paid for our entire order. We were stunned, but also very grateful.



Joan Berquist
LWML District President

This got me thinking. As women of the LWML, you are doing an act of kindness when you support our mission grants with mite giving. How do the recipients feel about receiving grant money from LWML North Wisconsin District? They have applied for the aid, but they haven't earned it. The funds are given to them.

I imagine that like our incident at Menards. The ministries we support are grateful that the generous army of women known as the LWML have supported their mission.

As Christians, every day we experience God's gift of salvation that has come to us through the work of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Not as a random act, but as the fulfillment of God's promise to us. When the Holy Spirit works faith in us, we repent and believe in Jesus as our Savior. We haven't earned this gift of salvation. We simply receive it from our loving God. For this we are truly grateful.

As Lutheran Women in Mission we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions and equip women to honor God by serving others.

Wellness Corner



IMPACT

Jesus taught using parables. These were short stories that contained spiritual truths. One of those parables was the story of a sower and his seed. There is timeless truth in Jesus' words.

We look at this parable within the context of an average audience coming to hear the Word in a worship service in our culture today. We find four different hearers (soil types) of the Word (the seed).

"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches chokes the word, and it proves unfruitful.



Rev. Dan Kohn
District Counselor

As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty"
MATT. 13:19-23

A pastor preaches the Word. The message does not change regardless of the ears and heart condition of the four kinds of hearers. It is the impact that varies.

Satan, the world and our flesh are opposed to the Word. Individually and collectively, they can diminish the impact of the Word. Life circumstances also play a part.

Using the context of this parable, only one in four hearers will prove fruitful. They gain understanding and they spread the Word to other hearers who become a part of the bountiful harvest.

Pastors can be discouraged as they focus on the impact of their ministry. They see so many whose lives remain unchanged. So few are bold messengers of the Word. They wonder, where is the bountiful harvest?

These pastors need to meditate on the words of the apostle Paul and Isaiah, who likely faced the challenges noted above.

And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. **GAL. 6:9 (ISAIAH 55:11)**

Contact me at revkohn@gmail.com or 715-610-2400.

Concordia University Wisconsin

Engineering majors wanted

Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) has announced that, beginning in Fall 2024, CUW students can enroll in a Bachelor of Science program in chemical or industrial engineering. CUW's engineering programs are anchored in the liberal arts and designed to prepare engineers with a Lutheran worldview.

"Engineering has been on our radar for several years," said Dr. Leah Dvorak,

CUW interim provost. "In addition to our exceptional faculty in the STEM areas and the abundance of updated labs and available workspace on Concordia's Mequon campus, a significant portion of the engineering curriculum is existing coursework, so our entry into this high-growth field is already rooted in expertise and experience."

The creation of these programs responds to a dire need for more engineers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 2,000 openings for chemical engineers annually. Wisconsin

has the third-highest concentration of industrial engineer jobs in the U.S., with an especially high need in counties within driving distance of CUW's Mequon campus.

"The jobs of the future are in STEM, particularly engineering," said Dr. Sarah Holtan, CUW special advisor to the president and architect of the engineering programs. "We see engineering as an investment not only in our university but also in the broader community. Our graduates will make a real impact on the state and nearby counties."

Have news to share?

We are always in need of more submissions for the North Wisconsin District insert of *The Lutheran Witness*. They help remind us of what God is doing around the district. It is also a way to share ideas for nurturing those God has already gathered into His church and for reaching those still outside of the flock with the Good News about Jesus. It finally reminds each of us that Christ's church is much larger than just our particular congregation.

We welcome pictures and stories of congregational events, youth events, outreach events, installations, events from your men's or women's group, servant events, conferences, anniversaries, church renovations or additions, and much more. If you would like an upcoming event publicized, please make sure we have the information at least two months in advance.

Send news to:

Karol Selle (715-677-4877):

► 3177 State Hwy. 66;

► selleks@gmail.com

Rosholt, WI 54473

Hearts For Jesus to support LeadaChild

Many schools, early childhood centers and Sunday schools participate in Hearts For Jesus every February. This school year we are supporting LeadaChild, which is an LCMS Recognized Service Organization.

LeadaChild is dedicated to "sharing the Good News of Jesus' love to children through Christian education in third-world countries.

"We gather gifts and donations from supporters and use the funds to provide scholarships, school registration, and supplies for children so that they can attend Lutheran schools and after school programs. We also provide professional development for leaders and teachers at our sites, with an emphasis on effective ways to share the Gospel and teach biblical truths to children.

"Whether our students experience modern classrooms with computers and desks, or are surrounded by woven grass walls, they are hearing about a Heavenly Father who loves them, A Son who has redeemed them from sin, death, and the devil, and a Spirit who fills their hearts with hope and salvation."



For more information, visit **leadachild.org**.

For resources to promote the ministry, include a parent's letter, chapel talks, coloring pages and videos, click the "Resources" link at the top of the page.

