



# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH WISCONSIN

# Get your shot!

This morning I received my flu shot. It is November right now. By the time you read this, you will have been informed about another shot of interest, the one that is to arrest the spread of the coronavirus. The latest information shares a list of who will receive it first, which is most likely our health-care workers.

After I received my flu shot, I was given an information sheet with questions and answers. The first question is rather obvious: “Why get vaccinated?” Answer: “Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza (flu).” It goes on to say that anyone can get the flu, but it is more dangerous for some people and it lists those most at risk. Since March, we have been learning who the term “high risk” refers to. The sheet also shares that the flu causes all kinds of physical discomfort.

The final paragraph of the answer to “why get vaccinated” states: “Each year thousands of people in the United States die from flu, and many more are hospitalized. Flu vaccine prevents



Getty Images



**Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck**  
North Wisconsin  
District President

millions of illnesses and the flu-related visits to the doctor each year.”

Over 250,000 have died from the coronavirus and many are hospitalized. Many people are working at home and students are learning virtually. Restaurants, bars and other businesses and sporting events are operating differently. Churches have learned how to have worship in different ways, whether it is virtually, in

the parking lot, or, if inside, by worshippers spreading out. Many are choosing not to attend worship and receive the Sacrament, even if the congregation has returned to in-person worship. Pastors have shared concern that there are members who will not return when things get back to normal.

The reality for us as Christians is that we know why we need to hear God’s Word. “The wages of sin is death.” That is true for everyone. We will all die; maybe not this year, but our death is

a certainty unless our Lord descends first. Sin separates us from God. That is the bad news. The Good News is that whoever believes in Jesus, our Redeemer, will be saved.

Why do we need to go to worship? To gather around Word and Sacrament. In his explanation of the Third Commandment, Martin Luther said: “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.” It is at worship where we hear God’s Word. We live in a world that does not share much about the love of God in Christ Jesus. We live in a world that says: “Who are you to tell me what to think or believe or that I am wrong?” In our present day there is no absolute truth.

We need to hear God’s Word. The apostle Peter shares what God’s truth means for the baptized:

As obedient, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. — **1 Peter 1:14-15**

God’s Word is the vaccine we need to prevent us to be like the world, and to be the children of God. Peter went on to say (2:12):

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

People are watching you and me. People are watching our congregations and

See **MESSAGE**, Page 4

## 2021 HEARTS FOR JESUS recipient

### Garuna Foundation



Students pray before class in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The mission of the Garuna Foundation is to support and encourage the proclamation of the grace, mercy and compassion (*garuna*) of Jesus Christ to the people of Thailand, Cambodia and surrounding countries. The Garuna Foundation focuses its ministry in Southeast Asia. Over 500 million people live in this region.

Garuna has established a system of Christian tutoring schools in Cambodia. At present, six schools form the Garuna Christian School (GCS) system, serving 1,028 students in grades kindergarten through six. The goal of the schools is to provide a daily, year-round opportunity for children to learn about Jesus while also studying Khmer (Cambodian), math and basic English. These schools are in communities where only 2 percent of the population are Christians and most have little or no knowledge of Jesus.

Garuna partners with the Cambodia Lutheran Church (CLC) by encouraging church plants and Bible studies at the school sites. The Garuna schools are sometimes built next to an existing Lutheran congregation with movable walls to allow for outreach activities for the community, or next to a church plant where a Lutheran church does not currently exist. In this way, the entire community can enjoy the blessings of an excellent education in a Christian school while learning of the love of Christ.

The Garuna schools operate for half-day sessions, for 3.5 hours in the mornings and afternoons. This complements the Cambodian government schools, which are in operation for half-days, allowing students to attend both schools. This

arrangement allows for mutual respect and appreciation between Garuna schools and the communities they serve while providing students with needed educational support.

The schools serve as a safety net for young children who might otherwise be unsupervised or endangered while their parents must work. The schools employ 45 indigenous workers, who are in weekly Bible study, and many are enrolled in, or have completed, Garuna's Luther Institute Southeast Asia Bible-training program.

The following was shared by Cheryl Ehler, Garuna director:

#### Dear friends in the North Wisconsin District,

We are very excited to know that the Lutheran schools in the North Wisconsin District have chosen Garuna as your February 2021 Hearts for Jesus offering recipient. We want to make this a fun month for your students and teachers as you partner with the Garuna Christian (Lutheran) Schools in Cambodia. Though far away from Southeast Asia, we pray that you will feel connected as you share your love and gifts with the Garuna kids.

Your offerings will help buy desks, chairs and other furnishings for our newest school being built in Phnom Penh. We will furnish you with some fun resources to help share about the ministry during February. We will direct informational mailings and emails to your attention and ask you to share them with your school and church team. We are thankful for you and your school. Please share our "Greetings from Cambodia" with everyone!

## Support for 'stand-alone'



By DJ Schult

District Administrative Assistant

Our North Wisconsin District has a strong school system. "Strong" means dedicated staff proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to students and families, strengthening faith and preparing outstanding servant leaders for our communities. We do it for infants through high schoolers, and we do it well.

Our ministries have unique challenges, especially those with a school. Our stand-alone preschools and daycare centers have unique challenges that have been intensified during COVID. Many run on a tight budget during a healthy year; now those budgets are strained. Additionally, the mental-health impact of COVID — especially upon our directors, who are asked to do more with less — is very real. The list of challenges for the stand-alone is simple, but the solutions are complex. Please consider how you can help your church ministry support the stand-alone preschools and daycare centers in your circuit.

**Congregational:** The stand-alone is often seen as a lessee or renter. Concerns about space usage are often raised. The only real metric for success is if they are in the red or black. Church members know little about the staff or the ministry, and are seldom involved with outreach to school families.

**Funding:** Salaries are often based on available funds (will the program run in the black?), rather than a ministry investment by the congregation. Checks or payments are expected from the

See **SCHOOLS**, Page 4

# Blessed

Happy new year!  
Welcome to 2021!

Even though I do not know what this year will be like, and what changes will happen because of COVID-19, one thing I know for sure is that God is unchangeable: "For I the LORD do not change."  
— **Mal 3:6**



**Becky Haltaufderheid**  
LWML District President

He is omnipresent and this is comforting.

"Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD." — **Jer. 23:24**

As I entered 2020, I thought I would have a clear picture of events and activities planned. But I was blindsided many times. I wonder how many times God smiled at my plans knowing He had other plans already made. My trust in His promise to be with me always grew and became stronger.

As I enter this year, I thank Him for walking with me through all the changes that 2020 have brought to me and so many of you, too.

## Spring retreat

Looking forward, our district LWML has planned to gather at Camp Luther in April for the spring retreat. It will be hosted by the Heart to Heart Sisters Committee under the theme "Connecting Cultures and Generations."

Make plans now to attend. Enjoy some ethnic foods made by our Heart to Heart Sisters, gather for Bible study and hear from Debbie Suchyta on human trafficking. Heather Ruesch, nationally recognized speaker and author,

will be the keynote speaker. She share on connecting cultures and generations in the body of Christ. You won't want to miss this event. Watch for the spring *Mission Tidings* for more information.

It will be great to spend time in the new Community Center at Camp Luther, which was a 2020-22 Mission Grant recipient. This \$20,000 grant has been paid with mite offerings and a special gift from the estate of Esther Karolus. Esther's daughter-in-law, Shelly Karolus (aka Indigo), works at Camp Luther as director of Donor Relations. Esther was a faithful LWML member who had a passion for missions. I'm sure she would be happy to know her gift will help Camp Luther serve many in years to come.

I wish each and every one of you a blessed new year. We don't know what 2021 will bring, but we trust in Jesus as He leads us each day.

Blessed by you and serving the Lord with gladness!

## The Counseling CONNECTION

# Broken, but not forgotten

He was a broken man. His bravado was shattered. We find this man alone and weeping bitterly (Luke 22:62). Peter was a chosen disciple. He had been through three years of training under Jesus. He



**Rev. Dan Kohn**  
District Counselor

was in line to be the lead apostle in Christ's ministry. Now, when his Master needed his faithful presence, Peter vehemently denied he even knew Jesus (vs. 54-60a). Three times he protected himself and would not defend his Lord.

One can only begin to imagine the emotions that erupted when Jesus' eyes met those of Peter as that rooster crowed (vs. 61a). His shed tears give us a clue.

Peter's life was at a crossroads. He could have taken the route of Judas, the disciple who betrayed Jesus. The former took his life (Matt. 27:5), overcome by the depth of his despair over his actions against his Lord. He saw no hope.

The Gospel writers don't tell us what Peter's survival strategy was between Friday and Sunday. It appears evident that somehow he held on to hope.

This hope was sparked on Sunday morning when the women shared their report of Jesus' missing body, which Peter checked out for himself (Luke 24:11). Sunday evening that hope was fulfilled when Jesus came with grace (vs. 36-40).

Jesus had not forgotten His disciples. There was still kingdom work to be done. Peter was personally reinstated in ministry by his Lord (John 21:15-16).

Yes, HOPE can be that Heaven-sent Option Providing Energy. When life seems overwhelming and a person is emotionally drained, HOPE can be the connecting bridge to renewal and readiness to step forward with and for Christ.

A verse from Paul is worthy of reflection here. It is especially fitting for those, like Paul, who are in strenuous ministry, needing encouragement and focus:

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**

"For such a time as this," church workers have been called. The Holy Spirit will continue His equipping work toward fulfillment in ministry. So we close with these words from Paul regarding that joyous end God has planned:

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. — **Phil. 1:6**

Stand tall ... step forward with HOPE!

Contact me at [rekohn@gmail.com](mailto:rekohn@gmail.com) or 715-610-2400.

## Housefellow reflections

When I first started attending Peace, I never would have thought that I would be serving as a housefellow. Through Peace I have gained a lot of experience in planning events, going on mission trips, working with a chainsaw, being a part of our music team and so many other things.

Peace has played such a big role, not only in my college life, but beyond as well. Peace is a very important place for me and I want to make it an important place for others, whether that be our Sunday service, Bible study on Tuesdays, Vespers on Wednesdays or the fun activities we have planned throughout the week.

Through being a housefellow, I feel like I am developing more of a sense of responsibility through taking care of the building of Peace; and also being there for those who attend the campus center. I hope to continue to both learn and grow as a person and in my faith. I feel very blessed to be given this opportunity



**Matt Staiert**



**Myles Erb**

ty and pray for a good year to come.

— **Matt Staiert**

Peace, in truth, is a big reason that I even remain a student at UWSP. I underestimated its role until recently. When I first came, I was fresh off of a summer of working at a Christian youth summer camp. So my faith was active, especially through music. I joined the music team and have only added other responsibilities since.

For a time, I only thought of my

involvement at Peace as something that kept Christ in my life, without digging much into why I continued to attend. That was until I realized that everyone I met at this place, and everything we did together, had created a community for me to be a part of and enjoy. When I thought about this, I realized I was doing very little to return the favor to Christ for bringing me to such a place.

As I see it, my role as a housefellow is to do all that I can to help provide the same kind of community to those who attend

its events and services. As a housefellow so far, I've made a lot of important discoveries about my faith. Many of the roles I'd filled before taking on this one had been in service to maintaining the Peace campus grounds, but not nearly as important as serving the people who come here. This aspect of the life we live in faith toward God has only continued to gain importance in my way of thinking about my service, and I truly look forward to seeing what it can bring to the wonderful community here.

— **Myles Erb**

## SCHOOLS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

preschool to the congregation. Investing financially in people, especially talented leaders, is seldom implemented.

**Leadership:** Talented directors are expected to give over and above, yet salaries are ridiculously low. Directors are seldom respected as the school professional who provides valuable insight on tough decisions. Board positions are often filled with current parents who are doing what's best for a parent rather than serving as an advocate for the ministry and staff.

**Staffing:** Turnover is ongoing. Salaries are the main reason. Our strongest programs have the most tenured staff. Care for the health of the stand-alone staff is seldom intentional, especially during COVID, when their service is exponentially more complex and stressful.

**Competition:** Free public 4k is still growing in some communities. While other private centers have similar struggles, parents keeping children at home throughout COVID has caused a lack of revenue in our centers.

These stand-alone preschool and daycare centers meet an important ministry need in the community and allow church members to live out the commands of Jesus, to "Let the little

children come to me" and "make disciples of all nations." Consider how to best strengthen the relationship with centers in your area, how to tilt the balance to ministry rather than business and how to encourage those who serve.

Finally, pray for the needs, that the centers in your district and Synod will continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

## MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

noticing if we are following the latest guidelines at worship. Congregations are hearing from those who are watching if your church is following the "rules." The point is ... people are watching! What are our Christian lives telling the world outside the church? Peter encourages us to "be holy in all your conduct." That is a high standard! That is a high expectation (read 1 Peter 4:8-11).

Get your shot! Everyone can get it now! Worship. Hear God's Word. As Jesus said:

"Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it."

— **Luke 11:28**