

District Resources

NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

the Happenings



The President's Message – February 2018



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FEBRUARY 14, 2018 – IMPORTANT DAY THIS YEAR

Two very important things take place this year on Wednesday, February 14, 2018. For Americans the important date – Valentine's Day. For many Christian Americans, February 14, this year marks the beginning of Lent and Ash Wednesday.

Valentine's Day – It is a day many people exchange cards, candy, gifts or flowers with their special "valentine" and it's the more romantic day of the year. If you want all of the history of Valentines' Day, go read it on Wikipedia. Chaucer in the 14th century receives the credit for the romantic link between Saints Valentinus and romantic love. It has become a big day. What has happened is that 23% of people (61% men) purchase flowers (mixed flowers #1). Over 150 million cards are sent; not to mention what takes place digitally. The latest figure is that \$131 is spent on a loved one. It is a day you do not want to overlook.

Ash Wednesday – It is the first day of Lent. It is exactly 46 days before we celebrate Easter. Lent lasts 40 days. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness to fast and pray. During this time, He was tempted. (Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:12–13, and Luke 4:1–13). This name goes back to a custom of the Bible times. When someone wanted to show sorrow for sin, they sprinkled ashes on their head.

One Lutheran resource puts it this way: "*On Ash Wednesday the entire liturgy should be celebrated with a note of austerity to reflect the character of the day. Ash Wednesday is a day of solemn corporate confession when the congregation laments the sins of God's people and commits itself corporately to assist each member in preparing for a godly celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ in liturgy and life.*" (*Proclaim*, CPH, 1999 p.116)

Both of these events on one day revolved around love. Valentine's Day is a day to remind us, especially for husband and wives, of the love that they have for each other. Ash Wednesday and Lent revolve around reflecting on what God did for us out of love. As Luther put it – He "redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death." It is a time for us to look at our sins, think of our sinful lives, repent of our sins, and look to the promise of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Valentine's Day requires effort on our part to show love to our loved ones. Lent is a time to take time to attend Ash Wednesday and the midweek Lenten services. For some, more effort is given as people "give up" doing something special for Lent or during Lent. (Suggestion: Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John... about 100 chapters or two chapters a day during Lent.)

May God bless your celebration and worship on Wednesday, February 14, 2018. It's a great day to celebrate with your Valentine. Go to your church and worship at the Ash Wednesday service. And who knows – your church may be offering a meal that night you could take your spouse to. Take the money you would have spent at a restaurant and give it as a special offering to your Lord who also loves you. Happy 2/14/18! Just wait till April 1, 2018 – another 2fer.

Rev. Dwayne M. Lueck, District President

Across My Desk: DJ Schult

The following article is an excerpt from a new resource on the NWD website. The new page called Worker Wholeness provides important resources for Professional Church Workers. This article tackles the issue of Resiliency. Check out the full article at...

<http://nebula.wsimg.com/57256334acc12b4ec84784671ee5c8c8?AccessKeyId=DD83FE257D5FCD8E2536&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>

Seven Strategies For Sustained Resiliency

1. Consistent boundaries in one's schedule. This is enhanced by proper delegation of duties to others. Making room for "No." Acknowledge and express personal limits. [Also see the section on page 6 regarding "boundaries.]"
2. A priority placed on resiliency. Beyond God as a Primary Resource, this places a strong emphasis on friendships, support and accountability.
3. Transparency when it comes to areas of stress and tension. Have a "go to" confidant that is accessible.
4. Personal, daily devotion time.
5. Proper use of "care-frontation" ("speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15a)) in addressing conflict.
6. Accepting one's limitations when it comes to expectations. Work within one's God-given skills and spiritual gifts. God never endowed any leader with "all things for all situations."
7. Never be afraid to say "I need help". Being a part of a pastor support group, or counseling, can be valuable.



News and Events

2018 NWD Convention - June 3 & 4, 2018

Central Wisconsin Convention & Expo Center
10101 Market Street - Rothschild, WI

IMMEDIATE ATTENTION:

If you haven't already done so, please complete your Voting Delegates(A) form (pastor, lay & alternate) and return it to the District Office as this form was due Feb. 2nd. Our next mailing to all "Voting" delegates will go out at the beginning of March and in order for you to receive the information you need to vote at convention, we need these forms returned as soon as possible. Also, no need to send any money as all congregations will be receiving an invoice for their Voting Delegate registration fee in February; the only form "Voting" delegates need to complete is Voting Delegates(A).

Coming Soon:

- Convention information including housing, transportation, etc. to all registered Voting and Advisory Delegates
- Convention registration and information for all Emeritus church workers and the District Board of Directors
- Convention invoice for voting delegate fees

As always, if you have any questions, please call our office. A link to [convention details](#) can be found on our [homepage](#).

Church Statistics Due

It is that time again. Dr. Sias has mailed out annual statistics and Congregation Lay Leader forms to congregations, including website and password access. Please complete online by February 28, 2018. Online reporting is intended to help congregations honor their commitment as members of the Synod, as confirmed by the 2016 LCMS Convention in Bylaw 1.3.4.3:

1.3.4.3 Congregations of the Synod, to enable the Synod to plan current and future ministry efforts and to lend accuracy and integrity to the Synod's delegate representation and voting processes, agree to provide annual membership and statistical information to the Synod.

Your congregation's timely response will also help to make the service of the Secretary of Synod, of your district president, and of your circuit visitor "a joy and not a burden" (Heb 13:17), as these are all now charged by the Bylaws to supervise, promote, and pursue "unanimous participation by congregations in the submission of annual statistical reports as an expectation of membership in the Synod" (Bylaw 4.4.8; likewise, Bylaws 3.3.3.2 [e] and 5.2.3 [h]). It will also contribute to the Lutheran Annual and to other statistical and research work of the LCMS Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services, which aims to provide timely, reliable, and fruitful analysis to help guide the labors of Synod and its districts, in service of and on behalf of your congregation.

Timely submission of congregational statistics is especially important this year, as preparations for the 2019 convention of the Synod, already underway, depend on this year's submissions. Without your congregation's data being submitted by the deadline, those preparations will suffer delay.

Anyone requesting login information to input their statistics online; may email rosters.stats@lcms.org or call the LCMS Church Information Center at 888-843-5267.



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News and Events

Reformation 500

Reformation celebrations continue in the NWD! Faith Appleton's special event will be held on Palm Sunday, March 25 at the church for their 8am and 9:20am services. Scripture, Martin Luther's Easter Book and choral music accompanied by orchestra will provide the foundation for the service.

Commissioned Worker Openings

Have you seen the multiple openings for teacher, principals and early childhood directors in the NWD? Do you know of an outstanding church worker who wants to serve in the NWD? Quality Christian educators to fill our openings are becoming harder and harder to find. Check out the list of openings on the School Resources page at <http://www.nwdlcms.org/school-resources.html>.

Hearts for Jesus 2018 - LSEM

This February we are connecting with three other LCMS districts to make a big difference for Lutheran Special Education Ministries. They have created special resources for our Hearts for Jesus effort this year. Their program, called Fearfully and Wonderfully Made-Psalm 139:14, provides videos, chapels, devotions, lesson plans and music, everything your ministry needs to celebrate HFJ. Check out the resources, share them with your staff, and consider how you can help LSEM. <https://luthsped.org/heartsforjesus/>

Mission Mini-Grants Are Back

Looking for some extra financial resources for a meaningful outreach event at your church? NWD Mission Mini Grants are back for the 3rd year, providing \$200-\$1,500 to support your witness and mercy outreach. Program details and application form can be found on the homepage of the District Resources website at nwdlcms.org. With more NWD ministries applying for these limited funds, it is important to include all of the asked for details in the application. Contact DJ with questions at dj@nwdlcms.org.

District News—Do you receive the Lutheran Witness? If not, you can access the North Wisconsin District News section of the LW from our website. Also... why not sign up to receive our Church & Finance Happenings and our weekly Guiding Connection devotional thought? Just visit our [Publications](#) page.

Pastors' Conference — Save the Date

- Spring 2018 - April 16-17, Camp Luther, Three Lakes
- Fall 2018 - Sept. 24-26, Metropolis Resort, Eau Claire

FREE Church Worker Retreats

As part of Camp Luther's ministry and interest in supporting healthy church workers, church worker marriages and families, Camp Luther offers FREE cottage retreats to full time professional church workers and their families. [Learn more.](#)

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." -Jesus



News and Events

Rostered Church Workers - Called to Glory

- Rev. Donald O. Wesener, 87, Emeritus Pastor - <http://taylorfuneralhome.net/tribute/details/2010/Rev-Donald-Wesener/obituary.html#tribute-start>
- Allen Hoyer, 75, Shawano - http://www.memorialsolutions.com/memsol.cgi?user_id=2022947

Peru

Please pray for all those in the mission field. The NWD supports the LCMS missions in Peru. Find Peru updates on the [Missions tab](#) of our website or the [LCMS site](#).

The Lutheran Fathers' Conference

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 20, 9:30am-3pm at Zion Lutheran Church—Chippewa Falls. After a wonderful introduction to the *Augustana*, based on a little book by Theodore Graebner, *The Story of the Augsburg Confession*, we now begin our study of the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*. Pastor Dan Pfaffe is our study leader using the Kolb Wengert translation (Fortress Press, 2000), although at least some of us will have older translations along. In preparation, read or at least look at the first three or four articles—article four in the *Apology* is rather lengthy. We begin with fellowship at 9:30, Matins at 10:00, study at 10:30, break for lunch at nearby restaurants, and conclude by 3pm. There is no cost and prior attendance is not required. These meetings are open to all pastors, laymen, and laywomen. If you have questions or need directions, please contact the church office at 715-723-6380 or zionluther-ancf@charterinternet.com. Please come and join us!

Early Childhood Directors' Gathering

The annual EC Directors' Gathering is Friday, February 23rd in Wausau. Our centers are building strong leaders who share and promote God's story and the unique story of their own EC center. What is your "elevator story" about your center? This theme "Telling Your Story" will also jump start our regional EC teacher events, replacing our annual EC conference in August. Special thanks to Early Childhood educator Dian Schlichtmann from Immanuel WI Rapids for facilitating our time together!

Principal Gathering

NWD principals will gather on Wednesday February 28th to learn and grow as professionals. The principals will welcome Sharon Schmeling, Executive Director from the Wisconsin Council for Religious and Independent Schools (WCRIS), to share legislative updates and WCRIS services for our schools.

Youth Bible Bowl 2018

It's not too late to get a team together and open the Bible to Genesis (ESV) in preparation for the competition in the Statewide Wisconsin Bible Bowl. Youth in grades 7-12 will come together on Saturday, April 7, 2018 at Rib Mountain Lutheran Church in Wausau and we hope YOU can join us! If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Mark Palmer at St. Paul, Bonduel—715-853-5225 or m.palmer@stpaulbonduel.com. The information page, rules, and registration are available on the [NWD website](#). Don't miss this one & may God bless your youth today, tomorrow, and forever!



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Ministry Corner

JUST A THOUGHT and a BOOK.... for dying churches!

In the North Wisconsin District, we have over 80 congregations that have formed a "dual parish". It appears that we will be having more than less. Many times dual parishes come about because they can't afford a pastor on their own as salaries go up, benefits go up, the age of our congregational members increases, the number of children in Sunday School is going down and the stewardship issue is not addressed. Our culture is certainly not a friend to our local parishes. The reality is that some of our churches are dying. It is not just a North Wisconsin District concern as it is also going on in the LCMS and all church bodies in the USA.

Recently there was an article that I read "What Dying Churches Have in Common" (Thom Rainer). There were seven things mentioned that dying churches have in common:

1. Anger at change
2. Nostalgia on steroids
3. Confusion of methods and facilities with the gospel
4. Little to no interaction with non-Christians
5. Deflected blame
6. Refusal to see reality
7. Very little time left for survival

These are questions that leaders should address at every congregation. What and how are we going to get the Gospel to the members of our congregations and reach out with the Gospel to the people of our community? If a congregation is dying – maybe something has to change.

Recently Ted Kober, a fellow LCMS member who works with congregations to deal with reconciliation and trains our synod's reconcilers, wrote a book - BUILT ON THE ROCK – The Healthy Congregation (CHP, 1977) - after visiting some healthy churches in the LCMS. What did he learn?

Two main characteristics that distinguish healthy from unhealthy:

1. Members and leadership regularly engaged in God's Word (familiarity and application to conflict). (About 20% of worshippers are in weekly bible study.)
2. Members and leaders model reconciliation through confession and forgiveness.

One pastor shared with me that he bought this book and started going through it with his elders. He said it has started to make a positive difference with his elders.

Maybe it is worth your time to read and use. Dying? Nothing is impossible with God!

Dwayne Lueck
District President



Counselor Corner

The Shepherd's Shepherd

We know it well. But another retelling, with a new twist, could be beneficial for we who are called shepherds. May Psalm 23 speak to you.

"The Lord is [the shepherd's] Shepherd; I shall not want," (vs.1)

The "caring one" needs the "Caring One." It's built into the calling. The cleric who comforts and directs needs One who offers the same in times of personal need.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul." (vss.2-3a)

For those feeling the pressure...for those who are losing focus...for those who are spiritually dry—the Shepherd invites...encourages...joins with...restores. Come and find rest in your deepest being!

"He leads me in the paths of righteousness
for his name sake." (vs.3b)

The very essence of what the Shepherd desires to find in us...is where He leads. We are the blessed recipient...He the all-knowing, all-loving Guide. He even has a plan to address our straying...back into His arms of joy.

"Even though I walk through the valley...
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me..." (vs.4)

The "valleys" of disappointment...discouragement...despair—sometimes to the point of feeling spiritually dead—the Shepherd is ever-present...with loving support. Even when there is a need for correction, or redirection—His "rod" and "staff" serve as "tools" of hope. There is a way up a new mountain with Him.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
forever." (vs.6)

Every day has a "God filling." And earth is just prep time for what lies beyond when we will have face-to-face communion with God and His eternal love... forever. The shepherd's Shepherd awaits you.

Pastor Dan Kohn
District Counselor
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Rural & Small Town Mission

To check out the latest 'Reaching Rural America for Christ' Newsletter [click here](#). This month's edition includes the following article entitled...

Midweek Ministry

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." PROV. 22:6

So, you want to start a midweek program for children in order to "train up a child." Good for you! These endeavors can prove to be excellent ways to reach out to a group that is all too often difficult to reach and underserved with regard to faith training. However, there are a couple of things you should consider in your planning.

First, is this a viable demographic for your congregation? Churches all over consistently yearn to "reach out to the young people" of their community. This is all well and good, but if there isn't much of a "young people" population to reach out to, it may not be the best utilization of your precious and finite resources.

If you find that a children's midweek effort does make sense, I encourage you not to start a program. Instead, I would encourage you to think of it as a ministry. A quick internet search will show you the difference. Programs are a planned series of future events, whereas ministry places the focus on planning activities through which Christians can express or spread their faith. If we as the Church endeavor to have as our goal anything but sharing our faith and the love of Christ in and through our activities, we are losing sight of what we are truly about. Once we have this as our focus, then it will be easier to determine why we are endeavoring to do this and what our desired outcome will be so we can determine whether it is accomplishing what we want or not.

Another major consideration before you embark upon much detailed planning is to determine what exactly it is that this group of young people might need or desire. Many ministry activities have been planned, funded and carried out with little success. This wasn't because they were ill-planned or poorly thought-out ministries but because they were simply not something the community or the people needed or desired. Ask around, survey the community and find out where the assets and strengths of your congregation overlap with a need. This way, the congregation will be best suited to carry out the ministry that will be best received by those they desire to serve.

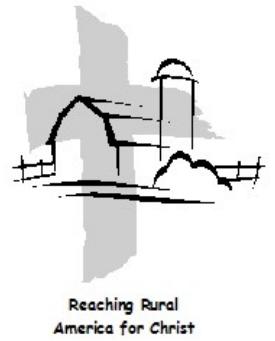
Now that you have accomplished your demographic study, determined why and to whom you'll reach out, and figured out what makes sense, another consideration might be what parties might be partnered with in order to carry out the ministry. It is OK to "go it alone," but if there is an opportunity to partner with some other entity, that might just increase interest and compound resources. Perhaps there is a neighboring congregation, a school, the county health department or some other entity that has a vested interest in the same population. Here, we could develop a win-win situation as well as extend the reach of the ministry.

There might also be an opportunity to partner with someone who is already doing this activity or that has expertise that would benefit the whole endeavor. A great source of expertise would be partnering with a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS. A quick search of the directory (lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/recognized-service-organizations/directory) shows that there are more than 50 agencies listed as having children and youth as a portion of their area of service. Remember too that this doesn't have to be a full-blown partnership, but these agencies are often ready and willing to share direction, advice and resources. Another avenue for assistance in this arena may be found through other LCMS entities such as LCMS Youth Ministry (lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/youth-ministry), LCMS School Ministry (lcms.org/schoolministry), LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission (lcms.org/rstm) and many others.

Of course, it can't go without saying that all of this must be approached with much prayerful consideration and with an eye toward how it fits into the overall mission and ministry of the congregation and its strategic plan.

Contributed by Rev. Todd Kollbaum, director, LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission, and Angela Kollbaum, youth director, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo.

LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small-town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament. Learn more about RSTM at lcms.org/rstm or by calling 888-463-5127. "Like" us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/lcmsrstm.



- ⇒ Click [here](#) to read the latest articles from Concordia Plan Services. Articles include:
- Huge New Benefit for Workers
 - A Great Reason to Join the CHP
 - Help Out With Savings Resolutions
 - Continued Good News for Church Plans
 - Workers Should Be Checking Mailboxes
- ⇒ Check out the [CPS website](#) for a wealth of information or head right to the '[Blog & News](#)' section.
- ⇒ Visit the NWD website for a CPS corner listing the main contacts for churches using CPS, as well as links to the most important news and answers found on the CPS website. Bookmark it so you have it! <http://www.nwdlcms.org/concordia-plan-services.html>

NWD Financial Box Score

January financials were not available at the time of print & will be included in March.

North Wisconsin District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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