



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH WISCONSIN

OH, GIVE THANKS!

November is here, and in Wisconsin that means deer hunting and celebrating and Thanksgiving Day. We also celebrate Veterans Day on Nov. 11, honoring those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. It was also Friday, Nov. 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Remember where you were when you heard about it? I was in fifth grade.



Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck
North Wisconsin District President

On a chilly afternoon, Nov. 19, 1869, at a field near Gettysburg, Penn., President Abraham Lincoln delivered a speech at the dedication of Soldiers' National Cemetery. It was the site of one of the bloodiest battles in American history. The three-day engagement had more than 50,000 estimated casualties. Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address. Winston Churchill called it "the most sublime speech in history."

Only 250 words long, it is a speech that many students have memorized. Why? It is praised for talking about freedom, liberty and justice to a country torn apart by the Civil War and paying tribute to the men "who here gave their lives that that nation might live." It was a short but powerful speech. The speaker before Lincoln spoke for two hours.

In the last few years, our nation has had a lot of talk about equality, and that all be treated fairly. This debate has been going on for a long time, back to the Civil War. The Union army won the war, and slavery in the United States was abolished. Was everyone treated fairly after that? History would say no.

What about us as Christians? What does our God think? I have read that it was Martin Luther who stated that John 3:16 was "the Gospel in a nutshell." Just as the Gettysburg Address was concise and to the point, so is John 3:16. If there is any single sentence that captures the nature of God, this verse does the job.

God so loved...

God is love. How comforting it is that He is a God of love and



not hate. Everything that God does and all that God is — is grounded in love

the world...

Is God fair? As the song states, "He's got the whole world in His hands." God loves all — every individual regardless of skin color, past and future. All are precious in His sight.

that he sent his only begotten son...

God lived out His love by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to be with us. Jesus is God's gift to us. We celebrate that gift of life at Christmas. God did not have to send His one and only Son, but because of His love for us, He sent His Son to redeem us. This gift of Jesus is the central element of the Gospel. We gladly take this gift with praise and thanksgiving.

that whosoever believes in Him will not perish...

This gift is ours when we believe it — that God sent His Son to die for us. We see Jesus as our Savior through believing eyes.

but have everlasting life.

The result of faith is knowing that death is not the final blow, but rather a doorway to eternity because of our faith in the resurrection of Jesus, who conquered death for us by rising from the dead. The fruit of God's Word means life for the believer.

It is only one verse, but it is a verse filled with love, life and hope.

November gives us a day to give thanks for veterans, and a day to give thanks for all the blessings we receive from the hand of a gracious and loving God, who loved us enough to send His Son.

"Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good!"



Welcome new workers!

Our district's new church workers (except teachers) gathered at Camp Luther, Three Lakes, for a day of encouraging, networking and equipping. They met the district staff, discussed the district's culture, reviewed ministries and enjoyed Camp Luther. New teachers meet every other year.

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."

Installations



▲ Rev. Michael Mathey was installed as pastor of St. John—High Steeple, Edgar, and Bethlehem, Milan, on Aug. 27. He is a graduate of Concordia University Chicago (with a director of Christian education degree) and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. From left, Revs. Don Bruce, Mark Schwalenberg, Frank Giebel, Ryan Fehrmann, Michael Mathey, Vicar Dustin Ridings, Don Engebretson, Shawn Andersen and Dr. Dwayne Lueck.

◀ Rev. James Groleau was installed as pastor of Trinity, Spencer, and Zion, Colby, on Sept. 18 at Zion. Pastor Groleau graduated from Concordia University Wisconsin and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. From left, Revs. Chris Schwanz, Ralph Shorey, Michael Mathey, James Groleau, Don Bruce and Dr. Dwayne Lueck.

LWML

GIVING THANKS



LCMS/Erik W. Lunsford

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 THESS. 5:18

When our children were small, our family's favorite holiday was Thanksgiving. Relatives would come from out of state for the weekend and we would seat a large group around our table.



Joan Berquist
LWML District President

My husband was always in charge of preparing the turkey, and years ago as our young daughter was perched on a stool watching him with fascination she declared, "That's one big chicken!" I'm not sure how old she was or what year it was, but that memory has always made me smile!

This is the season of remembering and giving thanks for everything that God has done for us and the gifts He has given us. One of those gifts is the many ways we can provide service to the LWML, including putting offerings our mite boxes; attending society meetings, rallies and conventions; and serving on a committee or being an officer. The beauty of the different levels is that we can support the mission of telling others about Jesus with a little or a lot of time, money or service.

We are so thankful for those who have previously served, those that are serving now and those who will serve in the future so that the mission of the LWML will continue according to God's good and gracious will.

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

Wellness Corner

Empty the backpack



Getty Images

A special ceremony is held at the close of pastor retreats at Shepherd's Canyon Retreat in Arizona. Each participant is given a smooth stone on which they write a "burden" they are leaving at the retreat. They place the stone at the foot of the cross in the prayer garden. A part of the load they came with is lifted.



Rev. Dan Kohn
District Counselor

Jesus extended His arms and shared these timeless words of invitation:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (MATT. 11:28)

The burdens of ministry can be heavy. They can be cumulative. They can get in the way of vibrant ministry. Yet there is hope. As one of the chaplains at Shepherd's Canyon, I can attest to the renewing and re-energizing that takes place.

The following exercise can represent the process of "letting go." Picture a backpack on your back. In it are "rocks" that represent the burdens of ministry. The weight is heavy, making ministry more daunting. The time has come to "empty the backpack." One "rock" at a time is

removed and given to Christ.

Words can be shared: "I come to You, oh Lord, to confess that I have carried this burden for too long. I place it in Your hands. Now I pray that I find and celebrate the rest You freely offer. Amen."

This action is repeated until all the "rocks" are removed. Then the hymn "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" can be sung. Then you walk away and not look back.

An alternative strategy is to have a "rock" partner. This is a fellow sojourner with whom you meet on a regular basis to "empty the backpack." In a space of grace, a conversation comparable to the above exercise is had. Now there is "Christ with flesh on."

It is valuable to use words that are biblical and Christ-centered for added impact. Words like "confess," "heavy laden," "rest" and "cross" can add an extra measure of meaning. God is well aware of the burdens of ministry. He sees the unhealthy impact that takes place in ministers and in ministry. He offers help and hope.

For more information on Shepherds Canyon Retreat, call 800-783-3079 or visit shepherdscanyonretreat.org. It is located near Phoenix, and pastor retreats are offered every month.

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'A tree God made in time'

The congregation of St. Paul, Green Grove, lost a tree in 2018 that carried memories for many. According to Joyce Hamann, "Many generations enjoyed mission festival activities around that tree as well as children attending vacation Bible school throughout the years." The tree was about 95 feet tall and 150 years old when it was cut down.

The tree was a young sapling when the first church was built. It grew for years, but

deterioration called for its removal. The tree was cut down and the longer logs were sawed into lumber and finished to be used for church projects.

Among the items constructed were kitchen cabinets, shelves, tables and a bench. But the beautiful wooden clock, along with the actual tree photo reproduced in metal, welcomes all into the narthex of St. Paul. The clock weighs 60 pounds and has a diameter of 43 inches.

St. Paul, Luxemburg, rededicates sanctuary

On Sept. 18, the congregation of St. Paul, Luxemburg, gathered for a Rededication Service of the refurbished church. Rev. Dr. Daniel Olsen, St. Paul pastor, was the liturgist while Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck, North Wisconsin District president, was the guest preacher. A congregation member said, "It was a beautiful morning for worship as we were finally able to get back in our newly remodeled church. Thanks be to God for everyone who worked so hard all summer on this project."



Thank you!

College students who are members of district congregations and are preparing to be professional church workers have received over \$100,000 in tuition grants for the 2022-23 school year. Here is a thank you from one of those students:

"I am writing to thank you for your generous \$4,000 grant. I will be attending Concordia University St. Paul in the fall. I plan to become a Lutheran teacher, where I will share the love of Jesus through my work. I cannot thank you enough for helping me toward my future goals. By awarding me this grant, you have lightened my financial burden that allows me to focus more on the important aspect of school: learning. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me." **Lorien S.**

Congrats!

On Aug. 21, members of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Almena, honored their pastor, Rev. Preston Paul, with a celebration for his 20th ordination anniversary. "It was deeply humbling and profoundly joyful," Rev. Paul said. Rev. Ryan Fehrmann (pastor of Zion, Wausau, and North Wisconsin District second vice-president) led an inspiring Bible study and proclaimed an outstanding sermon. My parents were also with us as they continue their ever enduring love and support." Pastor Paul also serves as district third vice-president.



From left. Becky and Rev. Ryan Fehrmann; Sarah and Rev. Preston Paul; and Beverly and Rev. Dr. Gary Paul, emeritus.