

District Resources

NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

the Happenings



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The President's Message – November 2017

CORN DRIVE

In the words of the Carpenters, "We've only just begun." 500 and counting. It was 500 years since Luther posted the 95 theses on the Wittenberg church door. 500 years ago and now the celebration is over. If it is anything like Christmas, it means putting away the life size poster of Luther. Maybe you have a copy of the Luther film and will put the DVD on the shelf and bring it out for your new confirmands or show it again next year at Reformation time. People made their pilgrimage to Germany this year. Now it is time to move on.

If there is something the celebration of Reformation 500 taught me, it was not that I learned more about Martin Luther but that Luther really was trying to emphasize Jesus. The Reformation was not about Luther. The LCMS Reformation theme was correct – "It's *Still* All about Jesus!" It always has been and always will be but there are things that get us sidetracked. One of those things is taking Jesus and our faith for granted. We cannot stop sharing that it is about Jesus. We have to keep going.

Right now in many churches, it is stress time. Leaders are attempting to put a new budget together for next year. The cost of ministry is rising. Leaders struggle with rising salaries and health care costs and the income from the Sunday morning offering plate is not keeping up. Preachers fear bringing up stewardship, which equates to money....as people do not want to hear about money again. Church workers remain silent or leave the room when next year salaries are discussed.

Somewhere, someone has to bring up that it is about Jesus. Someone needs to share that Jesus is the reason for the stewardship season. Why now? Because it is harvest time. Now is when the crops are brought in from the harvest. In my first parish, we had the CORN DRIVE. The idea was to share some of the corn crop for the Lord, for Jesus, in thankfulness for what Jesus had done. Hopefully it was a tenth of the crop like in the Old Testament days. I hope it was made in grateful response for what our heavenly Father did for the world through the sending of His Son to redeem all people.

November is a time to be thankful. Thankful for our Veterans on November 11 and for their commitment to protect our freedom. It is a time to celebrate our national holiday of Thanksgiving and all the blessings God showers on us. (Take a look at the meaning of Luther's First Article.) In Wisconsin, it means breaking out the blaze orange and deer hunting for nine days and getting the big buck. Praise God for all of that.

Let it be a time to remind people, as you discuss next year's budget, that their offerings are not given to a budget, but to Jesus and what He has done for them. The Apostle Paul said, **"He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again"** (2 Cor 5:15). Encourage your pastor to remind people that their giving, that their response, is to what God has done for them and the offering they give is given because God gave it to us in the first place. How true are the words that many of us have sung at offering time...

We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

Happy Thanksgiving! Happy giving!

- Rev. Dwayne Lueck, District President

Across My Desk: DJ Schult

Growing Young: A Book Review by Sean McDowell

The recent NWD-LCMS Professional Church Worker Conference handed out the book Growing Young to participants. Below is a review of the book for your consideration.

We have all heard the grim news: Church attendance is declining across denominations and young people are disengaging the church. In an effort to address this problem, the team at Fuller Youth Institute has released a new book: *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* (Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin).

What makes *Growing Young* unique is that it is based upon an in-depth study of scholars, national ministry leaders, youth ministry experts, as well as research and visits to 363 diverse congregations who have effective ministries to young people. Like their previous book *Sticky Faith*, this book is based on careful research and analysis.

There are a few things I particularly appreciate about *Growing Young*. First, the authors recognize that there is hope for the church today. All is not lost. There are congregations truly engaging and equipping the next generation. Second, young people should not be an add-on to the church, but the heart of the church. When this is done right, it brings a true vibrancy to the entire congregation. As the author observes, "The good news is that when we bridge generation gaps, everyone grows young." And third, at the end of each chapter there are practical steps for church leaders and volunteers to take to help their church "grow young." This is a book of research, stories, and application.

Here are ten of the more interesting findings from their study:

1. Young people regularly expressed that they desire relationships not just with young youth leaders, but with more seasoned leaders as well.
2. US teens are not hostile towards religion, but they do not care much about it either.
3. Churches that successfully engage students don't water down the gospel or the cost of following Jesus.
4. Young people seemed compelled by a faith that promises reward in Heaven, but also renewal and transformation in the present.
5. Effective youth-focused churches embrace tough questions and give students room to doubt.
6. Rather than merely inviting students to volunteer, youth-focused churches help students participate in the life of the church.
7. Nearly twice as many pastors as students list worship music as vital to church effectiveness.
8. The highest response of what kept young people in church was personal relationships and warmth.
9. Churches that are growing young genuinely prioritize young people and their interests in programs, budget, participation, and emphasis.
10. Few students expressed that they stayed in church because of a "Superpastor."

Although *Growing Young* is primarily aimed at church workers, I found it immensely helpful in my own work with students (as a professor, part-time high school teacher, parent, and youth speaker). The church today desperately needs to learn how to engage and equip young people, and this book offers some helpful steps how to do so.

Sean McDowell, Ph.D. is a professor of Christian Apologetics at Biola University, a best-selling author of over 18 books, an internationally recognized speaker, a part-time high school teacher, and the Resident Scholar for Summit Ministries, California. Follow him on Twitter: @sean_mcdowell and his blog: seanmcdowell.org.



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NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

News and Events

2018 NWD Convention - June 3 & 4, 2018

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

In early March a third mailing will share pertinent information such as convention agenda, lodging, speakers, etc. As a reminder, overtures may only be submitted by a member congregation, the Board of Directors, an official district conference of ordained/commissioned ministers, or a forum of a circuit. Overtures must be submitted using the overture template on our Convention page. The deadline to submit overtures is February 2, 2018. Overtures received subsequent to that date will not be considered unless a committee consisting of the District President, the First Vice President and the District Secretary agree that it is a matter of importance and urgency not adequately covered in other documents already before the convention. If you have any questions, please call our office. A link to [convention details](#) can be found on our [homepage](#).

Leadership Meetings 2018

Annual Leadership Meetings are coming to a circuit near you this January. These meetings offer lay leaders an excellent opportunity to hear about ministry in the North WI District and receive training in an area of their choosing. For details on session topics & presenters, check out the link on the [NWD homepage](#).

Circuit	Date	Time	Host	Location
04	January 8	7-9 pm	Rev. Craig Zandi	St. John – Ladysmith
05	January 11	7-9 pm	Rev. Phil Beukema	Rock of Ages – Minocqua
09	January 15	7-9 pm	Rev. James Whatley	Peace – Eau Claire
10	January 18	7-9 pm	Rev. Jeffrey Lambrecht	Bethlehem – Milan
18	January 22	7-9 pm	Rev. Daryn Bayn	Christ – Marshfield
16	January 25	7-9 pm	Rev. Dan Thews	Faith Appleton

Please RSVP for one of the sessions above by calling or emailing Lori (715) 845-8241, ext. 103 or lori@nwdlcms.org OR Sandie (715) 845-8241 ext. 100 or officeadmin@nwdlcms.org.

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/>

Early Childhood Directors' Gathering

The annual EC Directors' gathering is earlier this year, coming Friday February 23rd in Wausau. We 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. Watch for online registration in January.



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Student Grants

Forty-one students received over \$99,000 in student grants for this school year! Funds come from a collection of gifts given to the NWD to support future professional church workers. One recipient, Andrew H., wrote, "Once again, I and my whole family, express sincere gratitude for all the financial support from the NWD. Your help makes it possible for us to go to school and focus on our studies. Please pray for the seminary class of 2018 as we finish our last year." Consider an end of the year gift to add to the fund that supports our professional church work students. Contact President Lueck with questions. More information re: financial aid is available on the NWD website under [Financial Resources](#).

LCEF Scholarships

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) - Central Region Scholarship applications are available now through Jan. 31, 2018. NWD graduating high school seniors and current college students are encouraged to apply. All the details & the on-line application are available on the [LCEF Central Region](#) site.

The Lutheran Fathers Conference

The Lutheran Fathers Conference is meeting on Tuesday, November 21, 9:30am-3:00pm, at Zion Lutheran Church in Chippewa Falls. Our study is the Augsburg Confession, partly as a complement to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and partly because it is always good to get back to the basics. Pastor Dan Pfaffe is leading our study based on a little book by Theodore Graebner, *The Story of the Augsburg Confession*. We will discuss chapters 11-13. If you didn't already receive the Graebner readings, they will be forwarded on request at lwildauer@centurytel.net. These Graebner readings are delightful reading and provide the basis for much of our discussion. 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. Call Zion, Chippewa Falls with any questions, 715-723-6380 or zionluther-ancf@charterinternet.com. Please come and join us!

PCWC 2017

The NWD Professional Church Worker Conference was held Thursday, October 26th under the theme THRIVE. Called workers from our NWD churches and schools gathered at Mt. Olive in Weston for the conference held once every three years. Presenters shared their experiences regarding ministry to Millennials and families. Participants received a copy of the book Growing Young and heard best practice topics gathered from the book's research. The worship offering of \$1,177 was collected for Pilgrim Lutheran School in Houston, TX to support them in disaster recovery.

Student Achievement Cohort Meets

A small group of outstanding Lutheran school teachers from across the NWD spent a day gathered as a professional learning community, talking about student academic success. The teachers explored best practice teaching and learning, specifically around the areas of curriculum development, formative assessment, and effective interventions. The group will be in contact as a support to each other as they carry out their new plans for a specific grade and subject area. Great job teachers!



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Counselor Corner

GIANTS FALLING

The battle line was drawn. The two opponents appeared ill-matched. But there was a Third who would play a decisive role.

Goliath was the "giant" who had come to decimate and destroy. How could David, the unseasoned warrior, compete. Surely he would fall.

But David had what Goliath lacked. The former placed his confidence in the Hidden Warrior who never lost a battle. David's battle cry summed up where his confidence lay—"the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47b). This was the day that the giant Goliath fell (vs.50)... and God was the Victor!

This all proves an introduction to another battle ground. Now the "giant" holds another name—Addiction. When allowed to grow to "giant" size he may appear undefeatable... fully capable of destroying.

But God has other plans. When He is placed at the center of the battle strategy a remarkable reversal can occur. God holds the victory plan!

Using the opening battle between Goliath and David as a template let's consider this beginning battle plan (a modification of the opening steps of the successful "12-Step" strategy)—

Step One—I admit I am powerless over the enemy before me.
My solo, human plans will fail.

Step Two—God alone can conquer this "giant." He holds the power.

Step Three—I will turn this battle over to the Lord.
To Him be the victory and the glory.

God is not deterred by the size of the "giant." He is well aware of the vulnerability of the "small" addict. God specializes in overcoming that which appears insurmountable. Giants fall before Him!

It brings to mind the words of the apostle Paul. He faced an unknown "thorn in [the] flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7b) (his "giant"). He summed up God's strategy this way—

"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses,
so that Christ's power may rest on me." (vs.9b)
Yes, the "battle is the Lord's!"

For more information on overcoming addiction, give me a call, or email. Also, for a helpful book, read *Goliath Must Fall* by Louie Giglio.

Pastor Dan Kohn

District Counselor

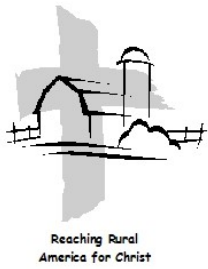
(715) 610-2400 / revkohn@gmail.com



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Rural and Small Town Mission

The 'Reaching Rural America for Christ' Newsletter provides insight into how success in our daily lives, in our work and even in the church should be defined. Check out the [November 2017 RSTM Newsletter](#)!



- ⇒ Click [here](#) to read the latest articles from Concordia Plan Services:
- Help Your Workers Save Today!
 - Spread the Word about Savings
 - View additional articles under '[Blog & News](#)'
- ⇒ [Check out](#) the CPS website for a wealth of information.
- ⇒ 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 **October 2017**

October Offering	\$143,275.42
October Budget	\$187,880.00
Year-to-date total offerings	\$1,301,533.81
Year-to-date budget	\$1,925,000.00

North Wisconsin District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

3103 Seymour Lane
Wausau, WI 54401

715-845-8241 | www.nwdlcms.org | www.facebook.com/nwdlcms



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