



DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH WISCONSIN



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Anticipation

Back in the late 1970s, Heinz used the song “Anticipation” by Carly Simon in a commercial to highlight how slowly its wonderful ketchup came out of the bottle. “Anticipation, anticipation is making me wait (late)” sang Carly while a hungry boy was pouring ketchup on a hamburger.

Anticipation is a good word to describe Advent. It is the time of year when we prepare for the coming of Jesus. Advent is when the holy Christian church begins the church year by looking forward to the birth of God’s Son.

During Advent, we hear about Zechariah’s meeting with an angel and learn that he and Elizabeth, in their old age, would have a son who would “make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”



Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck
North Wisconsin District President

His son was to be the fore-runner for the anticipated Messiah.

During Advent, we hear about Mary’s meeting with Gabriel and learn that she had “found favor with God” and would “bear a son” to be named Jesus. “He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32).

Advent is a time of anticipating the birth of the Christ child. There are many of us

who as children had the aid of Advent candles on our table. Every week we lit the candles to help us anticipate Jesus and not material things. It still is a way for us to prepare ourselves and our homes for the coming of Jesus. Lighting the Advent candles, watching the flames during the reading of the Advent devotion, and blowing out the candles

were a thrill as a child. We did not burn candles for any other devotions — only during Advent.

The significance of the Advent flame is it helps us think of the light that the birth of Jesus brought to a world of darkness, brought about by sin. The collect from the third Sunday in Advent in *The Lutheran Hymnal* stated it this way:

Lord, we beseech Thee, give ear to our prayers and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Thy gracious visitation.

During the season of Advent and Lent, it is customary to not sing the “Gloria in Excelsis” in the liturgy as it is another way we prepare and anticipate the birth of the Christ child. Advent is a time to reflect again that the birth of Christ means that our sins are forgiven because of His death and resurrection. That was the message of the angel to Joseph:

“You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
—**Matt. 1:21**

The joy of waiting, the anticipation for the slow-flowing ketchup, is the flavor it adds to our hamburger or hot dog. The joy of Advent is the anticipation of the celebration of the Christ child on Christmas, and then to celebrate Christmas as the angel shared with the shepherds:

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,

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A library is revitalized in Marshfield

By Kailyn Speth

Christ Lutheran Church, Marshfield

My “COVID Project” has been reviving our church library. The librarian keys were turned over to me in February, just before the pandemic really started, and then I took advantage of the few weeks I was laid off in March to weed out the bookshelves of outdated and forgotten nonfiction books and started replacing them with modern, theologically sound materials.

I received recommendations from my pastor (Rev. Andrew Belt) and searched for interesting titles from the Concordia Publishing House (CPH) catalogue. I also spruced up the children’s area with a new bulletin board and two colorful childrens’ bookshelves, which will greet Sunday-school kids once they return to in-person classes.

Thanks to donations of books and funds, the church library has added about 60 new materials since the spring. This includes many modern nonfiction books from CPH. On a personal level, this project has kick-started my own passion for theology as I make my way through each new book, stumbling like gold upon theologians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote in his work “Life Together” this relevant statement for our socially distant times: “The physical presence of other Chris-



Updated bookshelves, including this section with titles for children, are helping members of Christ, Marshfield, get their hands on Lutheran resources.

tians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer.”

I keep tabs on what might be helpful for a 2020 theologian. For example, I purchased the new CPH title, “Faith in the Shadow of a Pandemic” that was just released and soon checked out using our old-fashioned card system. There are many great resources out there with more to come.

A church library can be a great resource! In fact, each of our eighth-grade confirmation students will choose one of the new books to do a report on this coming year. They are meeting in small groups once a month.

I added signage and a new young adult section, too. The old books are part of an ongoing book sale with proceeds going to the Library Fund.

Caring for ‘God’s precious children’

St. John Lutheran Church and School, Merrill, recently began a daycare program. A \$2,000 award from the district’s mission grant program helped fund the ministry by supplying start-up salaries for the teachers prior to opening.

The daycare officially opened to care for God’s precious children on Aug. 10. In one short month, the ministry is booming with 17 children enrolled, nine of which are infants, and three infants and two toddlers on the waiting list.



Kris McGarigle, daycare board member, shared, “We are excited to be able to share God’s love with the children and their families through the daycare. Prayer is included at each meal. We share God’s love for them with music, stories and encouragement in how they treat each other throughout the day. The teachers also find ways to look for simple things, such as looking for ‘red things God made’ when they take a walk outside.

“We are excited to be able to share the love of God while also meeting a great need in our community.”

Hope

Hope ... I have been hearing this word over and over during this pandemic. Perhaps you have too. Are you hoping life gets back to normal in 2021?



Becky Haltaufderheid
LWML District President

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines hope as: “To cherish a desire with anticipation; to want something to happen or be true.”

The LCMS online cyclopedia (cyclopedia.lcms.org) defines hope as: “The well-grounded expectation of things desired. The ground of Christian hope is the Word of divine promise. Christian hope is essentially faith con-



cerning things to come; faith looks into the heart of God for a promised hope which is sure and final, the crowning glory of all faith.”

Ps. 130:5 reminds us:

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His Word I hope.

We read in Rom. 5:3-5:

More than that, we rejoice in our

sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

LWML women love to be together with their sisters, to hug, read God’s Word and pray together. They hoped to be together for rallies and retreats. But the pandemic has caused every large gathering to be canceled. We are suffering from “purple peep separation”!

Even though we have been apart, we have continued to gather our mite offerings, be in virtual Bible studies and pray together. I commend each of you to continue the business of the LWML as we come to the close of the year. You are a blessing to many, through funding the mission grants, praying for those who are going through tribulations or simply

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The Counseling CONNECTION

A Bible ‘wellness’ story

It is a remarkable short story — with Christ at the center.

We are referring to the familiar story found in Luke 10:38-42. This is Jesus’ visit to His friends Martha and Mary. In these five verses we will find timeless lessons regarding wellness.



Rev. Dan Kohn
District Counselor

We begin with Lesson One — the value of relationships. Jesus intentionally sought out friends with whom He could find connectedness. In this case it was two sisters who made Him feel welcome. They too had wellness needs.

Jesus took a break from His busy ministry. It was a mini-sabbatical, a time to

relax and be refueled for the work still to come. Herein we find Lesson Two.

We also find a countering lesson. It was Martha’s busyness and related stress. This friend was preoccupied with preparing a meal for their guest.

Here we find a “Don’t” lesson in wellness. Don’t let your life priorities get out of balance so that your own well-being is negatively affected. Our daily activities need to stay in balance.

We find Mary in contrast. She took the time to “sit at the Lord’s feet and listening to his teaching” (v. 39b). Mary portrays a quiet spirit who took the time to listen and be nourished in the Word. This is Lesson Four.

Christ was the center of Mary’s attention. What a model for us today. What a

pivotal element in the wellness journey! Lesson Five positions Christ at the center for us as well.

Later Martha and Mary would face a life crisis in the death of their brother (John 11:5-32). Now the relationship with Jesus bore fruit at this crossroad of need.

Lesson Six reminds us that we are being prepared for a future need, ours or that of another “neighbor” whom Christ leads us to.

We might call this Christ’s “Love Circle of Care.” He meets our need. He gives us a model to follow in caring for others. The day is coming when we will have a need ... where He and these others are there for us. And the “Circle” keeps going.

To bring this home we have resources for you. Go to nwdlcm.org and click “Church Resources.” Scroll to “Counseling and Worker Care” and click “Worker Wellness Page” for a wealth of resources.

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

Students focus on 'One Race-Human Race'

St. John Lutheran School, Easton, used a month-long thematic unit on the study of racial intolerance, social injustice and racial inequality as it relates to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The "One Race-Human Race" unit is directly aligned to the newly-developed core values and instructional vision of the K-8 school that strives to demonstrate the servant-leadership model of Jesus Christ, on both local and global scales, with students participating in service-learning opportunities. The unit themes are aligned with the apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians, where he explains that together we are all one in Christ.

Each day of the month, a portion of the academic core-content was linked to this theme. Students took part in

daily book studies, weekly seminars relating to the civil war, the civil rights movement and other current social issues pertaining to race.

The school partnered with the Marathon County Diversity Affairs Commission as well as the Multicultural Coalition Group of Marathon County in hosting a "Diversity Forum" at the school for second- through eighth-grade students. Leaders and representatives from ethnic groups of the Greater Wausau area shared with students experiences on social injustice and racial inequality.

The unit culminated with the students taking part in a multi-media marketing campaign, creating posters with messages that promote tolerance and acceptance, as per Scripture, and remind people of being "One in Christ."

LWML

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checking on your fellow believers in Christ.

We will soon celebrate Christmas with our families. The traditions may look a little different this year, but as we look at hope, we know that Jesus came to us at Christmas. He poured His love into our hearts and we are filled with joy. As we come to the end of this year and look forward to 2021, several verses of a favorite hymn, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (TLH 85), come to mind.

Verse 3 helps me remember that in our sufferings of 2020, God hears our sad and bitter cries:

This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be,
From all your sins to set you free.

Verse 13 is our most familiar verse welcoming the Christ Child:

Ah dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be,
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

I close with verse 15:

Glory to God in highest Heaven,
Who unto us His son has given,
While angels sing with pious mirth,
A glad new year to all the earth.

May each and every one of you be blessed this Christmas, and I hope we can look forward to being together in 2021. Happy and blessed new year!

Serving the Lord joyfully, despite this pandemic.

MESSAGE

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who is Christ the Lord."
— Luke 2:10-11

Anticipate Christmas during Advent. Get that Advent wreath ready. Light that candle. Read the Advent devotion as you prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Have a joy-filled Advent. Have a blessed and merry Christmas.

Merry Christmas

& HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM THE DISTRICT STAFF



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