



/ DECEMBER 2023

# DISTRICT NEWS

## NORTH WISCONSIN

### OUR SALVATION

# Jesus changed the impossible to possible



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

**W**e are hearing the Christmas story again. In the Gospel of Luke, we read about the angel Gabriel's messages to Zechariah and Mary, the reasons why Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and the angel's announcement to shepherds of Jesus' birth. The angels were busy sharing good news of two babies who were on their way.

In the midst of Luke's account we are given two questions. The first one is by Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist. Zechariah is told that his wife is going to give birth to John, who would prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah. So Zechariah asks:

"How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." **LUKE 1:18**

The second question is asked by Mary after learning that she was going to be the mother to Jesus, the "Son of the Most High."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" **LUKE 1:34**

Was there a difference in the questions? Bible scholars would say that Zechariah's question was asked in disbelief. He wanted proof and asked for a sign, while Mary was merely asking how her pregnancy would take place. It was not a question of doubt or mistrust; rather it was a question of "how?" As it states in *The Lutheran Study Bible*:

In contrast to Zechariah's skeptical question (v. 18), Mary wonders in faith. Zechariah walked away, unable to speak, but Mary burst forth into holy song (vs. 46-55) after Gabriel's departure.

One question revealed skepticism while the other asked in faith.

Why was Zechariah skeptical? Simple. "For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." Their days of having children were over. He was not the first in Scripture to ask this type of question. Abraham and Sarah had no children. They were old. God tells them they would have a child. Abra-

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## MESSAGE

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ham asks the similar question:

"Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" **GENESIS 17:17**

Zechariah's punishment was that he would be unable to speak. Mary's question of faith is answered that the child would be born of the Holy Spirit.

The angel Gabriel answers the two questions with:

"For nothing will be impossible with God." **LUKE 1:37**

What happened? John the Baptist was born and prepared the people for the coming of Jesus, who was born and made the impossible possible.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born

of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **GALATIANS 4:4-5**

The reality we face as sinners is eternal separation from God. There was and is no way possible for us to gain our way to heaven. No way! But the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus changed the impossible to the possible for all those who believe in Him. He paid the price for us on the cross. That is what the celebration of Advent and Christmas is all about — Jesus was born. Mary's question was answered and she believed what she was told and it happened. She became the mother of the Christ child. How awesome is that!

Jesus made the impossible ... possible! Our salvation!

Merry Christmas.



**Christmas joy from the North Wisconsin District staff.  
Have a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!**

DJ Schult   Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck   Bill Jordan  
Lori Kavajecz   Sandie Pagel

## LWML



For many of us, preparations for Christmas start long before Dec. 25. There are certain traditions that we hold to as we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. These are good things that help us anticipate the season and build relationships within our families and

communities. Where I live, I sing with the Hayward Community Choir. This group gathers in late September to begin practicing for the Christmas cantata performed in December. Despite the busy rehearsals, many of us have been able to form friendships.

In the LWML, we have several seasons of preparation. Different groups within the LWML sponsor rallies, retreats and conventions. As we prepare for these events, we bond with each other as the tasks get done, such as gathering the mites to meet our district and national mission goals. The teamwork involved and the sisterhood we experience is priceless.

Our next event to prepare for is the spring retreat in April at Camp Luther, which Zone 3 is organizing. In June, zones 12 and 18 will host our district convention, in which we will elect officers and select mission grants to support. There will be a short-term mission trip in August and the district fall retreat in September.

Planning is important and sets the stage for us to be able to enjoy our time together. Take pleasure in your Christmas preparations this year as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.



**Joan Berquist**  
LWML District  
President



## Celebrations



A celebration service and dedication was held for the opening of the new building of **Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Gleason**, on Oct. 15. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Joel Danner, Greg Laska (Luther Memorial pastor) and Dr. Dwayne Lueck.



**Rev. DJ Thomsen** was installed as pastor of St Luke's, New Richmond, on Sept. 24. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Dr. Bob Gehrke, Preston Paul, Aaron Gehrke, Greg Becker, DJ Thomsen, Edward Clemens, Tom Hahn and Dr. Dwayne Lueck.

**Mark L. Schwarz** was installed as pastor of Trinity, Athens, on Oct. 8. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Dr. Dwayne Lueck, Michael Mathey, John Stransky, James Groleau, Mark Schwarz, Mark Schwalenberg (retired as Trinity pastor; also served during vacancy), Don Bruce, Preston Paul, Ralph Shorey, Phillip Beukema and Dr. Gary Paul.



From left, **Revs. Bo Baumeister, John Frahm and Tim Steckling** were recognized for having served 25 years in the pastoral ministry. They are pictured with Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck.

## Three congregations, one body in Christ

The congregations of St. John, Belle Plaine; St. Peter, Pella Opening; and Zion, Embarrass, recently celebrated their joint anniversaries of 145, 145 and 135 years, respectively. Each congregation has its own individual history, and yet are one body in Christ. The history of each congregation has overlap in the families, pastors and, most importantly, their shared love of the Gospel.

The shared unity in Christ is presently being served by Rev. Todd R. Jerabek. Each congregation comes

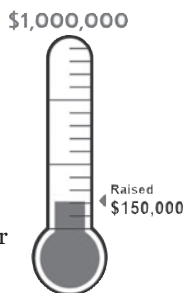
together individually to hear the Gospel from the same pastor's lips. It is the same Jesus who brings comfort, hope, life, salvation and the forgiveness of sins to them all.

On Sept. 16, a joint celebration was held at Wolf River Lutheran High School, Shawano. The speaker was Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. On Sept. 17, the celebration continued as Dr. Rast served as preacher at each of the three congregations.

## Campaign Corner

### Labor of Love

Some congregations and individuals have begun to respond to this meaningful district-wide campaign. The two-year campaign was adopted by voters at the district convention in 2022, urging congregations to help reduce the educational debt of our professional church workers. We give thanks for the gifts and pledges received and encourage others to give.



#### TESTIMONY

“I have often faced financial difficulty and have seen God provide again and again. It is my hope and prayer that you provide me with this relief so that I can continue to afford my daily bread.”

Devan • DCE and past grant recipient

## SET APART TO SERVE

LCMS CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT



*Set Apart to Serve (SAS)* is an initiative of the LCMS to recruit church workers. Newly developed resources were recently introduced at a virtual event in September. If you weren't able to watch live, you may watch the recording at [lcms.org/sas](https://lcms.org/sas). Scroll to the bottom of the page to view the resources, which are intended for adults to help them encourage youth — and adults — to consider becoming a church worker. The resources will help you talk about church work and and guide youth on their journey to a church work vocation.

You may also learn about the various LCMS church work vocations and access information directly from the Concordia University System programs that prepare our workers.

## LAY LEADER

January 30, 6-8pm

St. Paul Stevens Point

For lay leaders on boards

### TWO NWD LEADERSHIP EVENTS

REGISTER AT  
[NWDLCMS.ORG](https://NWDLCMS.ORG)

## TEAM MINISTRY

February 1, 9-3pm, St. Marks Wausau

For church and school staff/teams

## Share your news with us!



Please send submissions to Karol Selle at [selleks@gmail.com](mailto:selleks@gmail.com).

You may also mail your submissions to Karol at 3177 State Hwy. 66; Rosholt, WI 54473.

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.