



/ MARCH 2024

DISTRICT NEWS

NORTH WISCONSIN

WATCH and PRAY!



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

What are you giving up or doing for Lent? One tradition states that the three traditional pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving to help you gain a closer relationship with God.

When we reflect on the passion story, one of the events that certainly reinforces prayer is what took place in Gethsemane.

Jesus and His disciples finished their time in the upper room on Thursday evening and then traveled to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him and tells them to:

"Sit here while I pray. ... My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." **MARK 14:32, 34**

So what happens is that Jesus goes off to pray for strength from His Heavenly Father. He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. Jesus says:

"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." **14:38**

I have thought about this event and have excused the disciples for dozing off. It is evening. It is dark in the garden. They just finished a big meal. It is easy to doze off after supper. Jesus

had a request for them to watch and pray because He knows what is about to happen and what He is going to go through. The disciples did not. He requested their prayers three times and all three times he finds them asleep.

It is interesting that Jesus wakes them and asks them to watch and pray. It is interesting what Mark writes:

"And they did not know what to answer him." **14:40**

Mark is the only Gospel that mentions this. Why did Mark write that? One commentator wrote:

His (Mark's) intention in doing so, however, was to strengthen Christians under persecution in Rome and elsewhere by providing a sober warning that the admonition to watch and pray applies ultimately to all believers, who stand equally exposed to the failure which marked the three disciples.

(from "The Gospel of Mark" by William L. Lane, Eerdmans Publishing Company)

What were the disciples to do in this situation? Jesus had told them. "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Jesus hit it right on the head as to what the problem is — the human flesh is weak and sinful. The disciples were sinful and so are we. The disciples fell short of Jesus' expectations. So do we, just like the disciples.

Jesus said to "Watch and pray." Martin Luther addressed this in the sixth

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St. John's, Almond, welcomes Pastor Bartholomew

Rev. Richard Bartholomew was installed as pastor of St. John's, Almond, on Jan. 6. Pictured are, from left (front row) Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck, district president; Rev. Richard Bartholomew; DCM Caleb Bartholomew, Redeemer, West Lafayette, Ind.; Rev. David Ficken, Beautiful Savior, Plover; (back row) Rev. Tim Ritter, Immanuel, Wisconsin Rapids; Vicar Joseph Eggerman; Rev. Corey Shaffer, Trinity, Port Edwards; and Rev. Joshua Baumann, St. Paul, Stevens Point.



CHURCH-WORK STUDENTS: APPLY FOR DISTRICT AID

The purpose of district student grants is to reduce the financial burden for men and women enrolled at an LCMS university or seminary preparing for professional church work — pastor, teacher, deaconess, DCE, music director or other vocation.

An application must be filed each year. Students simply

need to contact the school's financial aid office to get the district financial aid application and return it to their school before May 15. The form and other information can also be found at nwdlcms.org. Go to the "Financial" tab and select "NWD Resources" from the drop-down menu. From there, scroll down to "Financial Aid."



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

petition of the Lord's prayer:

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into

false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

Luther summed up the good news:

When our hearts are troubled with sorrow, then truly God Himself sorrows, who died that we might be justified, holy, and full of joy. **AE 13:138**

Jesus left that garden and journeyed to the cross to pay for the sins of those disciples and for us as well. Thanks be to God!

So during this season of Lent I hope your habit is to "watch and pray" to draw closer to your Lord and fully live out your baptismal promises.





Photos: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

2024 GIFTS AWARDED

In grateful acknowledgment of the Lord's continued grace and provision, we are pleased to announce that our Labor of Love grant recipients for 2024 have been chosen. Ten grants totaling \$28,000 have been awarded to a diverse group of church workers from across the North Wisconsin District, including pastors, principals, teachers, and directors of Christian education (DCE) and Christian ministry (DCM).

Please note that eligibility parameters will change for the next Labor of Love application window, opening in mid-September, thanks to the generosity of gifts to build the Labor of Love Million Dollar campaign:

- The minimum amount of educational debt allowable per worker will **decrease** from \$20K to \$10K.
- There will be **no maximum limit** on years of called service for eligibility.

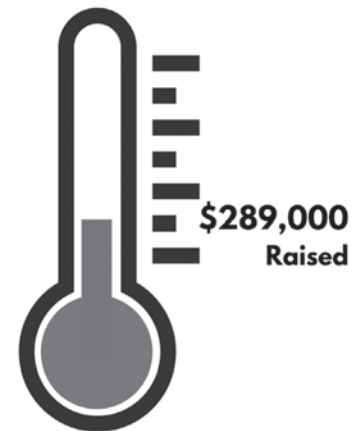
Check out this newsletter and visit nwdlcms.org for more updates this summer. Continue to pray for and support our professional church workers.

Thank you!

The graphic below shows actual gifts through December 2023 to help reduce the educational debt of our district's professional church workers. We give thanks for the gifts and pledges already received and encourage others to give.

There is just over a year left in this campaign, the deadline being the district convention to be held in June 2025. Contact Pastor Lueck about the campaign or how to make a special gift.

Labor of Love
\$1,000,000



The LCMS needs you!

Take this brief survey and help us better serve our neighbor. lcms.org/lert-survey



Share your news with us!

Submissions for the May 2024 issue are needed by March 15.

Send submissions to Karol Selle:

- selleks@gmail.com
- 3177 State Hwy. 66
Rosholt, WI 54473



LWML

Meeting needs

At most LWML gatherings, we collect food, clothing or other items to give to those in need. They are called Gifts from the Heart. At our recent Presidents Assembly meeting in St. Louis, each district president was asked to share what their district gave through Gifts from the Heart during the last year. The list compiled from the North Wisconsin District was amazing. We promote Gifts from the Heart at every rally, gathering, meeting or convention, including those of our national organization.



Joan Berquist
LWML District
President

Here is a summary of what was collected in our district in 2023:

- ▶ Hygiene items, food and clothing for domestic violence shelters
- ▶ Nonperishable food items, paper products for food banks
- ▶ Clothing and bedding for Maui and Ukraine through Orphan Grain Train
- ▶ Cleaning products and school supplies for homeless shelters and schools
- ▶ Eyeglasses and eyeglass holders for MOST Ministries
- ▶ Monetary gifts and support for pastors wives
- ▶ Clothing for foster-care children
- ▶ Clothing to be distributed by public schools
- ▶ Tray favors for nursing/assisted living facilities

We also provided support for after-school care at Salvation Army, and for jail ministry to help those upon release.

There are 40 LWML districts in our Synod. All of the districts collect Gifts from the Heart and this amazes me as we quietly meet the needs of those in crisis!



Bible Bowl is April 6

Sixth- through 12th-graders are encouraged to put teams from their congregations together and compete in the 2024 Bible Bowl, to be held Saturday, April 6, at St. Mark's, Wausau. Registration is at 9:30 a.m., followed by the competition at 10. There will be a break for lunch, and the event will conclude in the afternoon.

The topic is Acts (the ESV will be used). This event provides youth with a terrific opportunity to study the Word of God individually or in groups.

The teams of three or four players will compete in a verbal quiz format, and an individual competition, comprised of a 50-question written test, will also be held. There is no limit of four-person teams per church, and there is a limit of three three-person teams. Teams from the South Wisconsin District will also be competing.

For rules and the registration form, visit nwdlcmcs.org and click the "Events and Info" tab at right. For more information, contact Rev. Mark Palmer at m.palmer@stpaulbonduel.com.

Need help with youth ministry?

While some of our district congregations have a professional church worker leading their youth ministry, many rely on volunteers or a youth board to care for the youth.

The LCMS has many resources to help congregations make a positive difference in the lives of its young people. A great resource for discussion among adult leaders is *7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry*. This research-based tool provides the support, direction and inspiration many congregations need. The resource can be found at youthesource.com; click the "7 Practices" tab at the top.



Me a principal?

The FLAME training event is an effort by LCMS districts in the midwest to recruit and train current teachers to serve as principals. The only cost is travel to Ann Arbor, Mich., where the annual event is held. The three-day training provides an overview of the key tasks a new principal will face. Many current teachers have used this training to explore the possibility of serving in a new role.

For more information, contact DJ Schult, district assistant to the president for schools, at dj@nwdlcmcs.org.