



TEXAS MESSENGER

From the president

We have the gift of prayer

By Rev. Michael Newman
President,
LCMS Texas District
txlcms.org
mnewman.org



You may remember when Peter and John were threatened by the church leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 4). After healing a crippled man, the two disciples were thrown into prison because they were “proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (v. 2). The church officials saw that their power was waning as 5,000 believed the Gospel. As they released Peter and John, they warned them not to speak or teach in Jesus’ name. The apostles replied:

“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

ACTS 4:19-20

Peter and John returned to their fellow believers to report what had happened.

What did their friends do? What would I do? I would probably try to get some photos of the healing on social media. I would write a nice

article with some salient quotes and tweet out links to it. I might also try to brainstorm a strategy that could share the principles of what Peter and John did so their actions could be replicated over a broader area for greater mission impact. And why not set some numeric goals, perhaps working to double the number of believers over the next three to six months while keeping the opposition out of the picture?

Those might be fine and God-pleasing goals. But the believers didn’t engage in brainstorming or strategic planning after they heard the report from the apostles. They responded in a different way. They prayed:

When they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God.

ACTS 4:24

The account of their prayer closed like this:

“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued

to speak the word of God with boldness.” ACTS 4:29-31

Prayer preceded and propelled the movement of the early church. Prayer was first. God was consulted. His answers and directions were awaited. Then steps were taken. Believers surrendered the priority of their will and ideas. They placed themselves in God’s hands and moved as His Spirit led them.

By God’s grace, we have the gift of prayer. It may sound too simple, but in a world that needs the Gospel of Jesus desperately, the first thing to do is pray — and then keep praying. To join the movement of mission prayer in Texas, text “m2c” to 22828.

(Adapted from Pastor Newman’s “Gospel DNA: Five Markers of a Flourishing Church,” p.199-201.)

Questions for reflection:

Read Acts 4:1-35

What stands out most to you about God’s faithful action in this account?

What new prayer commitments do you and your church need to make these days?

Prayer starter: Thank God for the privilege of calling on His name in prayer and for His grace to hear and answer.

SUPPORTING MISSIONS ACROSS TEXAS



PRAY

It is our number one priority. Our goal is to have 10% of the Texas District, LCMS members praying regularly for the mission. bit.ly/missionprayertx



PEOPLE

We need church planters from our seminaries and from local contexts. We need evangelists who can be trained and sent. With more than 400 congregations in the Texas District, much can be accomplished.



GIFTS

No gift to Texas Partners in Mission is too small. We need gifts to reach the thousands of people in Texas with the life-saving Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Every dollar contributed to Texas Partners in Mission goes directly to bringing the Gospel to people who don't know Jesus Christ. Thank you for your dedication to the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ!



Why Matt signed up for the Evangelist Training Course - "I wanted to know more about what it meant when Jesus gave the Great Commission. I wanted to know what that was about and the depth of it, not just being able to go out and witness and talk to someone, but how to do that. How to present his love. Jesus. How to present Him."

GIVE NOW!
txlcms.org/tpim

~ Matt Ivicic, *The Edge*

Want to Increase Your Investment & Double Your Donation?
Learn more about the TEXAS DISTRICT CEF TEXAS TWO-STEP. For more Information visit texascef.org/texastwostep/

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." ~ Mark 16:15



‘That they may be one’



**Rev. Dr.
Yohannes
Mengsteab**

IN PHOTO:
Members and
guests pray
during worship
at the Mother
Church in Addis
Ababa, Ethiopia,
in 2014.

“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.” JOHN 17:11 NIV

When I was called by the LCMS Southeastern District in 1995 as a missionary at-large to Ethiopians and Eritreans, only four LCMS congregations were involved in ministry to African immigrants. My first board members included an African-American who worked for the U.S. government in Washington, D.C., an Anglo-American who worked as an assistant to the senator of Maine, and two Ethiopian Americans, one from the Amhara community and the other from the Oromo community. It was a cohesive board and very supportive of my ministry. The result of their work was eight new starts within six years in the D.C. Metro area and almost 70 ministries around the nation.

A language controversy came out of the group that I served, and was displayed in a big way in the division of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. The office of the Addis Ababa Synod was closed by the national church, and the president was ousted and he immigrated to the United States.

The Ethiopian church struggled for over a decade. Many groups from Europe and the United States and the Ethiopian government tried to reconcile the Addis Ababa Synod and the national church to no avail. It seemed that there was no hope of bringing the two conflicted entities together, until former and present leaders in St. Paul, Minn., de-

ecided to lock themselves in a room and be in prayer. They prayed and cried over the division, and the answer to their prayer was reconciliation, which finally resulted in a stadium-full reunification celebration in Addis Ababa. The church was growing during the time of the conflict, but it grew exponentially after the reconciliation to a church body of almost 9 million members.

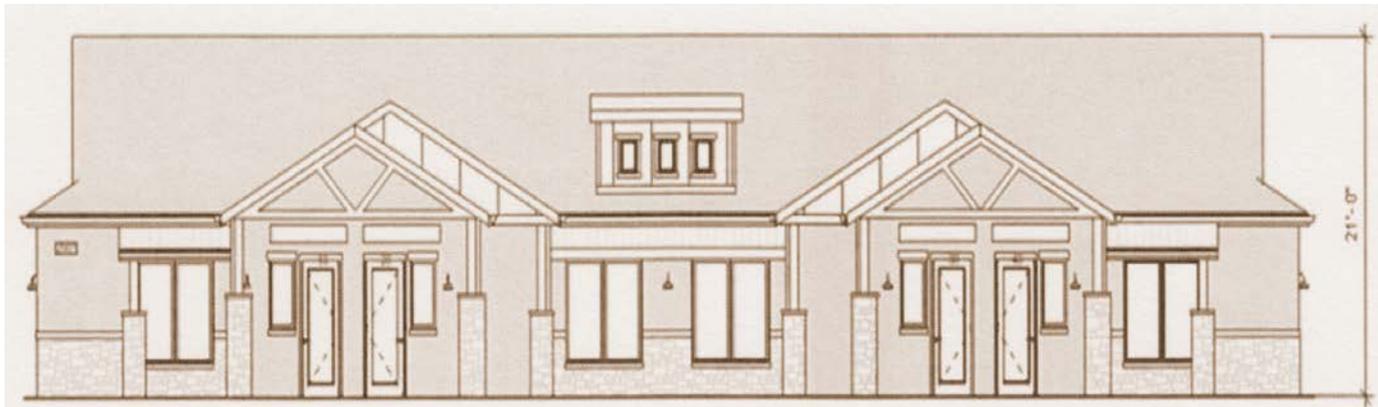
The unity of the church is very critical for our common witness. The Lord is not glorified in our divisions. In fact, the Lord Jesus anticipated such divisions, and He took the time to pray for the unity of those whom the Father gave Him, His disciples.

When there is division:

- ▶ Our energy is spent devouring each other rather than offering encouragement, prayer and support.
- ▶ The devil uses the opportunity to drive people away from the faith, and to hinder those on the fence from hearing the Gospel. Our divisions do not convey the message of reconciliation entrusted to us by our Lord.

The Sunday before the writing of this short message, I preached at one of our congregations in Fort Worth. In its bulletin, the congregation had a quote from (former LCMS president) Rev. Dr. Al Barry’s Pittsburgh convention address: “Get the message right and get the message out.” Getting the message right is not just knowing the right doctrine but also striving to live it out. When this part of the getting it right is in place, our getting it out is clear; it is the pure Gospel unclouded by our own obstacles.

My prayer for our church is that we live in unity, and I am joining all believers who continue to pray for the unity of the church!



Separate location, united mission

As previously announced, the LCMS Texas District will relocate its headquarters to Round Rock after calling Austin home for more than 50 years. This transition is planned for completion during 2023. For more than 35 years, the Texas District has graciously provided operational space in its office building for Legacy Deo.

During this time of new facility planning and transition, Texas District and Legacy Deo leaders prayerfully considered the distinct possibility of future growth for both organizations. The result of these discussions is Legacy Deo's decision to relocate its corporate office to a site separate from the new Texas District facility.

Our new Legacy Deo Planned Giving Center, located at The Corner Village at Caballo Ranch in Cedar Park, will combine two adjoining 1,000 square-foot office condominium units. It is already under construction and scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

Although Legacy Deo and the Texas District will eventually

reside in separate locations, we remain united by a mutually supportive passion for furthering the mission of Jesus in Texas and beyond. Legacy Deo will continue to partner with the Texas District and its congregations, schools and ministries through development and management of endowments and custodial accounts. We will also continue to serve individuals and families through estate planning, charitable trusts and other planned-giving opportunities.

These are exciting times for both organizations! Legacy Deo is grateful for God's provision as new doors open for the expansion of its growing ministry. Awaiting the completion of the location to which the Lord has led us, we trust the Spirit-inspired words of St. Paul in Phil. 1:4-6 for the fulfillment of these endeavors:

I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Soli Deo Gloria!



Getty Images

Legacy Deo

was founded in 1960 as Lutheran Foundation of Texas and is a registered tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization.

It manages about \$60 million through more than 400 charitable giving accounts.

Our mission:

We inspire giving that impacts life forever.

For more information, please visit

legacydeo.org.

PICTURED ABOVE:

An artist's rendition of the new Legacy Deo facility, located in Cedar Park.

BOWIE

Rev. Mark De Young was ordained and installed as pastor of St. Peter on July 3. Participating are, from left (front row) Revs. Dale Snyder, Larry Knobloch, Mark De Young, Steven Brummett, Will Rose, Paul Neuberger; (back row) Lincon Guerra, Jayson Galler, Jason Kaspar, Dennis Keys, Dr. Philip Schielke, Allan Eckert, Dr. Timothy Rosenthal and John De Young.



LUBBOCK

Rev. Charles Nemeč was ordained and installed as pastor of Redeemer on June 26. Brothers participating are, from left (front row) Revs. Jeff Jenkins, Michael Nemeč (Charles' father and preacher), Charles Nemeč, Troy Scroggins; (back row) Eric Hiner, Tom Eckstein (Charles' father-in-law and lector), Dan Hinton, Allan Eckert and Scott Blazek.



PLANO

Faith Lutheran High School student Elizabeth Crawford received an honorable mention for her entry in the grades 9-12 division of the Lutherans For Life (LFL) 2022 Texas State Essay Contest. She is pictured with Dr. Barbara Geistfeld, LFL assistant director of Volunteer Relations.



AUSTIN

Rev. Michael Knippa was installed as family life pastor at Redeemer on July 10. Above, Rev. Kevin Westergren, Redeemer senior pastor, and Redeemer members pray over Pastor Knippa. Right, Pastor Knippa introduces his family – wife Emily and their children, Kai (left) and Keziah.





Photo: Tanner Matthews

DALLAS

Rev. Robert Preece is shown with Zion's youth who were confirmed on May 1. Pray they continue to grow in their faith.

THE GROVE

Confirmation was held on Pentecost Sunday, June 5. With church packed once again, these four young people publicly confessed their faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Shown with Rev. John Heckmann are, from left, Kinsley Wrisk, Arienna Reigle, Brock Winkler and Nathan Michalk.



AMARILLO

Ava Hewes, daughter of Mark and Susie Hewes, was confirmed at Prince of Peace on June 19. She is pictured with Rev. Joseph Andrajack.



WYLIE

Youth confirmed at Faith on June 12 are pictured with Rev. Kurt Ulmer. From left, Leland Gardner, Adeline Ulmer, Audrey Wueller and Reagan Gefaller.



MIDLAND

The 2022 confirmands at Grace are shown with Rev. Robert Pase; from left, Harper Grace Diaz, Hannah Jane Krueger, Cady Ray Lange, Karsen Jewell Mitchell, Mia Jolie Shultz, Kate Avery Stansell and Charlotte Rose Wolfmueller.



LAMPASAS

On May 22, Rev. Tim Ochsner and the members of Grace welcomed into their family, from left, Maverick, Clayton and Shaylyn Meyerhoff (who was also confirmed on that day); Chris Clark; Frida Brewer; Isabella, Wiviane and Michael Beisert; and Debbie and Allen Drake. Missing from the photo are Greg and Kat Wertz.



WINCHESTER

On May 22, seven youth were confirmed at St. Michael's. Pictured with Rev. Nate Hill are, from left, Gillian Smith, Kaitlyn Robbins, Hailey Gonzalez, Kyle Montgomery, Alan Hepner, Grayson Hart and Ethan Hankemeier.

HAPPENINGS



BRENHAM

▲ Grace joyfully welcomed these new members into the congregation. From left, Justin and Robin Elliot and Rylee, Becky and Ken Harvey, Mike and Anna Flake, and Jamie and Lori Lewis and Molly.

▶ Grace also recently honored youth who confirmed their faith. They are, from left, T.J. Hudson, Robert Ross, Carter Poehlmann, Tucker Lunsford, Kason Riske and Madilyn Bean.



CENTERVILLE



▲ On April 10, Our Savior welcomed new members, from left (with Rev. Keith Bowman) Charlie and Kathy Cornelius, and Steve Hammond.

◀ On April 10, Pastor Bowman's daughter, Abigail, was confirmed.



ABILENE

Rev. LaVerne Janssen, pictured with his wife, Betty, celebrated 30 years of service at Our Savior with the members of the congregation.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Send photos, stories and newsletters for *The Lutheran Witness* to:

▶ txmess@tlcms.org

▶ Texas Messenger, LCMS Texas District, 7900 E. Highway 290 Austin, TX 78724-2499



PLANO

On May 15, these new members were welcomed at Messiah. They are pictured with Rev. Dr. Victor Kollmann (left) and Rev. James Otte.



TEXARKANA

First members donated stuffed bunnies, bears and other animals for Easter to the residents of Bentley Nursing Home.

FAIRVIEW



On June 26, Gabriella Grace Graziol confirmed her faith at Immanuel. She is pictured with Rev. Tab Ottmers.



FRANKLIN

On May 8, these new members were welcomed into the family of Shepherd of the Prairie. Shown with Vicar David Blajeski (center) are, from left, Kim and Lynn Cahill and Daniel and Debbie Poole.



Isaiah Edmond Knabach was baptized on June 26. He is the son of Jordan and Kara Knabach and the brother of Peter and Henry.



ABILENE

On June 5, Our Savior held a reception for its high school graduates. Shown are, from left, Michael Calvert, Christian Hoebelheinrich, Hunter Anders, Makaila Koslan and Audrey Benavides.



◀ FREDERICKSBURG

On Sunday, May 22, Resurrection celebrated the paying off of the building debt. A potluck and fellowship was enjoyed.

GETHSEMANE, HOUSTON



Beau Christopher Beckcom was baptized on June 5. Shown are great-grandmother Jean Brooksher and parents Curtis and Brooke Beckcom.



Peter Allen Mosley was baptized on June 26. Shown are, from left, Brandon, Rhett, Sarah and Peter. The Mosleys live in Waco, but Sarah and her parents, Jim and Janet Goodman, have been charter members.

Rev. Richard Schuller, emeritus, and his wife, Gema, were welcomed as new members. Pastor is Rev. Jerry McNamara.



LA GRANGE

Mount Calvary was blessed to welcome new members Daryl and Susie Kinsey on Pentecost Sunday, June 5. Pastor is Rev. Jason M. Kaspar.



BIG SPRING

The Parish Nurse Committee of Alive in Christ hosted a blood drive on May 7. Twenty units of blood were donated, which will benefit 60 individuals.

CONGRATS!

These Lutheran friends of yours celebrated or will celebrate wedding anniversaries of **50 YEARS** or more.

Houston, Gethsemane

Lonnie and Kathy Angst
60 years, Sept. 15

Ernest and Isabell Pali
56 years, Sept. 15

Roy and Sharon Albe
65 years, Sept. 21

Abilene, Our Savior

Robert and Irene Geiser
51 years, Aug. 14

Tom and Kathy Voss
52 years, Aug. 29

San Angelo, Trinity

Ken and Susan Baker
52 years, July 16

The Grove, St. Paul

Lloyd and Brenda Arldt
52 years, Sept. 5

Keith and Mavis Shafer
50 years, Sept. 10

Sy and Sherry Hartgrove
50 years, Sept. 15



Arlan and Jeanie Witt, members of Immanuel, Fairview, celebrated 65 years of marriage on June 17.



Ken and Candy Schoppa, members of Redeemer, Lubbock, will celebrate 50 years of marriage on Sept. 22.



Mike and Mary Dobrasko, members of Christ Our Savior, Lago Vista, celebrated 50 years of marriage on Aug. 12.



Rev. M. J. and Sandy Meyer, members of Beautiful Savior, Austin, celebrated 60 years of marriage on June 29.



Ken and Marilyn Bakenhus, members of St. Paul, Thorndale, celebrated 56 years of marriage on July 8.



Eldee and Dolores Hengst, members of St. Paul, Thorndale, celebrated 66 years of marriage on July 8.



Wyman and Arlene Bess, members of St. Peter, Fort Worth, will celebrate 65 years of marriage on Sept. 7.



Rev. Richard and Patricia Goodwill, members of Redeemer, Austin, celebrated 60 years of marriage on Aug. 18.



Redeemer observed Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day weekend with a display of memorabilia of loved ones who served, at least one of whom gave their all for our freedom. Pictured, from left, are Jim and Marcia Earley, Kathryn Patterson, Shirley Burt, Rev. Scott Blazek, Bernice Fleischhauer, Betty and Richard Holder and Patty Perkins. Those who contributed to the display but not pictured include Tina Cooney, Judy Lingnau, Marion Platten, Steve Platten and Sue Swaengen.

LUBBOCK



Pictured are the 2022 Texas District Administrators Conference attendees in Austin.

Ready for the 2022-23 school year

By Dr. Bill Hinz

Director, School Ministry

Our challenging times don't appear to be going away any time soon. In the midst of personal, professional and cultural challenges, God's Word continues to share — and be — the Truth.

And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. **PHIL. 4:19**

God has walked beside our school administrators, teachers, students and families in this incredibly broken world. In the midst of difficult challenges came incredible opportunities, and many of our schools and centers experienced significant enrollment increases.

We give thanks to God for more and more opportunities to share Jesus and His forgiveness and life.

There were celebrations! New buildings and building projects completed; weddings; births; lots of students; new teachers; baptisms (Redeemer, Austin, had 26 in May); service projects; athletic and fine arts accomplishments; safe schools; graduations; new administrators; teachers and administrators staying; families making positive changes; and students growing in their faith walks.

We are preparing front-line missionaries as our students are equipped with the Word by caring, loving teachers. We thank God for teachers equipped by His power to share His love and forgiveness to students, families and each other. In the midst of a broken world, we have the opportunity to share that true worth and value is not found in the things of this world but in His redeeming work on the cross. We are all called to holy work.

In preparation for the 2022-23 school year, our administrators gathered for leadership training July 18-20 at Redeemer Lutheran School, Austin. We welcomed 13 administrators to new leadership positions in Texas, including two returning to our state.

The conference theme of "Certain Hope for the Future," based on Rom. 5:2b-5 (NIV), was fitting:

And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

We were challenged by our keynote speakers Dr. Leslie Smith of Principal 360 (which provides leadership development for Lutheran educators); Rev. Dr. Patrick Ferry, Concordia University Wisconsin and Concordia University Ann Arbor president emeritus and current Concordia High School, Austin, consulting executive director; and Laura Colangelo, director of the Texas Private Schools Association.

Throughout our conference we were blessed during our times of worship and Bible study, led by Rev. Travis Hartjen, pastor at Crown of Life, Colleyville, and Rev. Anthony Celia, pastor at Waters Edge, Frisco.

Every day our Lutheran school students have the opportunity to experience the love, forgiveness and life that comes through Jesus Christ. Your prayers and support of Lutheran schools, early childhood centers and children's and youth programs in our congregations is critically important in these changing times.

Music program thriving at Concordia

Music has been part of the history and community of Concordia University Texas (CTX) for many years. Continuing a legacy of music education, CTX is excited to welcome Rev. Dr. James Marriott as the new assistant professor of music and coordinator of the music department.



Rev. Dr. James Marriott

“I am honored to join the world-class faculty and staff at Concordia University Texas,” Marriott said. “I look forward to pouring into our students as we grow together in Christ.”

The music faculty at Concordia is well-known and respected within their fields. They are also consistently involved in Austin’s world-class performing arts community and hold other positions with local professional ensembles.

Marriott looks forward to connecting with students, as well as contributing to the faith formation of Concordia students while sharing the love of Christ in word and action.

Music degree at Concordia

The music department serves students by offering performing opportunities to share the love of Christ, develop aesthetic expression, and prepare students for leadership roles. Concordia students can discover an artistic community where they can make lifelong connections, participate in small classes with a flexible curriculum, and engage with faculty members who combine impressive academic qualifications with extensive professional experience.

As a major, students can specialize in one of the following areas:

- ▶ Music education

- ▶ Music ministry
- ▶ Performance
- ▶ Theory and composition

Students can also choose a music minor for any major. The music minor provides some of the same core classes as the major and includes the same access to world-class performance faculty to hone musical skills.

Concordia Community Music Academy

The Concordia Community Music Academy (CCMA) encourages academic, social and emotional development through youth arts activities that have proven outcomes for lifelong success. CCMA welcomes music learners of all abilities, ages and interests to engage in music and the arts through group or individual lessons.

For more information, send an email to ccms@concordia.edu or visit concordia.edu/ccma.



GATHER, GROW, GO

For the 2022–23 academic year, the CTX campus ministry team has launched Gather, Grow, and Go, a new initiative to guide students in unique opportunities to connect in a Christ-centered community. CTX students will be invited to gather to

celebrate God’s goodness in chapel, to grow in faith through group Bible study and to go on missions in God’s community and world.

Learn more at concordia.edu/campus-ministry.



God is enough

By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

It all started back in Liberia in May. The Rock Music Ministry from Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fardell, Liberia, was practicing the song “Jireh.” Their beautiful harmonies and passion for singing praises to God touched my heart in a special way. The words from the song were both convicting and edifying:

I will be content in every circumstance. Jireh, You are enough. Forever enough. Always enough. More than enough.

Do we really believe that God is *enough*? Or do we keep trying to fill our lives with people, places and things to make us feel worthwhile? Do we know Him as Jehovah Jireh, our provider? Do we trust His perfect plan — and timing? Can we roll with the punches when things don’t turn out how we had hoped?

The Concordia University Austin team in Cordova, Alaska (pictured with host Holly West at left), included, from left, Avery Crowell, Pat Fick, Jessica Baltazar, Karla Benliro, Caleb Giese, Kyra Scheetz, Victoria Leffers and Lanz Benliro.

It has been a rather wild ride this summer as we re-engaged in mission trips. I sprained my wrist and crashed my car two weeks before our Liberia trip. COVID tests needed to be taken and oodles of forms needed to be filled out just to gain entrance or exit from each country. The humorous part of this requirement was that COVID testing and using QR codes for the forms were required, but they no longer provided COVID testing or Wi-Fi in the Monrovia airport. But God is *enough*, and He provided people along the way to redirect us to places that could help, or security staff who let us use their phones to retrieve QR codes and fill out forms. Here’s another fun turn of events. The villages we normally serve in Alaska were not ready to have a

team come this summer, but other villages asked for vaccinated teams to come and serve. I’m vaccinated — sign me up!

While serving at Camp Bingle (a beautiful camp located on Harding Lake, about an hour out of Fairbanks), illness tried to steal our joy. Fifteen of the 33 people at camp came down with COVID. But God is *enough*, and we were able to continue to gather around God’s Word by having the COVID-positive people in one location and the COVID-negative people in another. I am also grateful that I came down with COVID earlier, so I was COVID-free in time to meet our Concordia University team and conduct VBS in Cordova, Alaska.

When I think of God providing, I remember the story of Abraham. He waited for 10 long years after God promised him a son before Isaac was even born. Then when Isaac is a teenager, God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son. That’s crazy! But Abraham believed that God is *enough*. He believed that God could raise Isaac if necessary, so he climbed the mountain with Isaac. Abraham said:

“God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” GEN. 22:8

Thank God it was just a test, and God provided a ram for the sacrifice and spared Isaac.

So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide,” as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” GEN. 22:14

Where is God asking you to trust that He is *enough*? Remember that He is Jireh, forever *enough*, always *enough*, more than *enough*! And we can be content in every circumstance!

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. **PROVERBS 22:6**



Every September we have the honor of celebrating our grandparents. The U.S. Congress passed legislation in 1978 proclaiming Grandparents Day the first Sunday after Labor Day. This year, Grandparents Day is on Sunday, Sept. 11.



Raelyn Pracht

Grandparents are special people who can play an important role in teaching their grandchildren about stewardship.

There was a young girl whose grandparents had bought her a bicycle for her birthday. She had never been on a bike before, but she loved it the moment she saw it. The bike was pink, with ribbons on the handlebars as well as a plastic basket decorated with flowers on the front. The bike had training wheels to help her learn safely. She practiced and practiced riding the bike. Time passed and she became good enough to take the training wheels off. She couldn't wait to

show her grandparents that she could now ride the bike without training wheels.

This lesson in learning to ride a bike is much like learning to be wise with money. Children need "training wheels" to help them learn how money works, its value and the importance of financial responsibility. The Texas CEF K.I.D.S. Stamp Program is the perfect way to help them practice.

With a newly designed and re-

freshed look, we invite you to consider involving your grandchildren in the K.I.D.S. Stamp Program. This program is available for all LCMS Texas District congregations and schools. It's an easy way to help kids practice saving early. Each child completes the map in the stamp book with 10 \$1 stamps that they either buy or receive at their congregation or school. Grandparents can buy these for them too! Then they send the completed book back to Texas CEF to either add to an existing investment or to open a new Flex Savings.

If your congregation does not have a K.I.D.S. Stamp Program and are interested in starting one, please reach out to me to discuss this wonderful opportunity to help teach your grandchildren about finances. You can reach me at rpracht@texascef.org or 512-646-1242.

Texas District Church Extension Fund

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Photos: Getty Images

POP-UP BIRTHDAYS

Celebrating every child

Birthdays are a big deal for kids, a time to celebrate becoming a year older and enjoy being showered with attention. But for children who have been parted from their biological families, birthdays can be fraught with mixed emotions.

That's why Upbring recognizes the birthdays of each child and youth in our care so they know they are worthy of celebration. New Life Children's Center, our residential treatment center for pre-teen and teenage girls recovering from trauma, illustrates this beautifully.

New Life partners with Pop-Up Birthday, an Austin-based non-profit whose mission is to provide joy, hope and normalcy to children in foster care through personalized birthday experiences. Every month, the girls with

upcoming birthdays each pick a theme for their special day. The themes are as unique as the girls themselves, from the Dallas Cowboys to Snoopy to Star Wars.

Pop-Up Birthday sends the themed box, complete with everything needed to throw a party, and our amazing warriors get to work. The birthday girl comes back to a decorated cottage, three meaningful gifts and their choice of a traditional birthday cake, cheesecake or cookie cake. Together the girls in the cottage and our New Life warriors sing "Happy Birthday."

Lisa Brown, New Life's director of Volunteer Services, coordinates the celebrations. "Every girl at New Life is a gift," she says. "We love giving them something to look forward to and creating new memories together."

At Upbring, we instill hope in the children we serve. For information on how you can become an Upbring partner and positively impact those who need it most, visit upbring.org/get-involved.



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The blessings of **DISCOVERY**

Summer camp ministry is behind us, but the memories made during summer 2022 at Camp Lone Star are unforgettable. Throughout the three months, campers were exposed to the truth found in the Bible and experienced what it means to have “God as our refuge.”

We were blessed to serve more than 2,000 campers this summer! Campers attended the Bible studies and activities, based on Ps. 46:1-2a: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear.”

All of our songs, skits and activities were all centered around this idea of God being our refuge, and our prayer is that this message will stay with our campers their entire lives.

Our largest week of the summer is Discovery session, which is designed for high school students. This ultimate experience sells out within an hour after registration opens.

For many of our campers, this is a highlight of their entire year. The main event during Discovery is an all-day camp experience called Race for the Kingdom. The day consists of camp activity games, such as basketball, canoeing, flag football, speed rock-climbing, Bible knowledge and many more.

Our campers are split into two teams, Gray Gladiators and Blue Boltz, and they compete to win at each activity. This day is filled with excitement and encouragement from early morning until the night. While competition is fun, the heart behind this day is to learn and practice how to glorify God



Discovery campers participate as members of the Gray Gladiators or Blue Boltz.

through the various talents and abilities He has given each of us.

Seeing this generation of youth take ownership of their faith and boldly speak about the impact this week has had on their faith serves as a constant reminder of how God is using camp ministry to impact and transform lives for the sake of the Gospel.

It was an exciting summer filled with lasting friendships and memories. A summer camper described it best: “A wonderful week of passion, pursuit and praise in God’s creation. Camp Lone Star is always a must in my summer.”

We cannot agree more with how this summer camper described it: passion, pursuit and praise. At Camp Lone Star, our hope is for each camper to experience and know the passion and pursuit our Father has for them and that they can praise Him not only at camp, but when they go back home.

We pray the message of God being our refuge continues to guide each of our campers and those they interact with throughout this year.



♦ CAMP ♦

LONE STAR

LOOKING AHEAD

► **Oct. 7-9**
Embark

► **Nov. 4-6**
Fall Blast

CONTACT US

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Camp Lone Star

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Our ‘rewards’ from God



“**W**hat Lutherans Believe” was the topic for the June/July issue and “Reasons Why We Believe” was the topic of the August issue. This month, the discussion will focus on “The Rewards We Get For Our Beliefs.”

The first thing that comes to mind when we think about rewards from the Lord is our promise of eternal life. That is a very valid thought, but what does that mean?

Believers know that as a child of God, He has a plan for each of us. God is perfect, and His plan for each of us is perfect. God the Father’s bigger plan for each of us is that He appointed you to be His own dear child — that you belong to Him and will receive His love and benefits from the blessings He provides. He promises those who believe that He will provide for their lives as believers serve Him in love and live with Him now and forever in heaven.

Unfortunately, we don’t follow God’s plans quite like the way He

intends for us. Like Jonah, we have made our own plans to go our own way and do our own thing. But just because we have tried to alter God’s plan does not mean He has modified His. He still wants us in spite of our faults.

So God appointed someone who would change our way and bring us back to Him. He appointed His Son. That is another reward for us believers. Jesus is a special gift of God and has shown us His love through His life on earth, His death on the cross for our sins and His remarkable resurrection from the dead as a sure sign of His promise of eternal life in heaven. As a person made new by Jesus Christ, you are put into each arena of life as



His representative to His overall plan. The rewards continue:

- ▶ You have faith, and from this faith grows your desire to serve Him. This is the job of the Holy Spirit in your life.
- ▶ You have a mind and senses that let you see, hear and understand the people with whom you live.
- ▶ You have time. God appoints you to be His person, to use all your time in His presence.
- ▶ You have financial resources. They should be used to share His Word and to care for others.
- ▶ You have special talents. All the various qualities can be used as resources for helping others.
- ▶ You can use what God has given you to serve Him with a grateful heart and to share His love in serving others and telling them about our God.

Sometimes it takes a while to get a reward. Christians don’t always get what’s coming to them right away. People who have been faithful to Christ may find themselves frustrated, hurting and carrying a cross. But we need to remember several pieces of Scripture that state that the day will come when He will return and show His appreciation for our faithfulness. The Lord’s reward to all believers is worth waiting for and it’s a gift that is definitely coming.

Portions of this text come from LHM’s Project Connect booklet *Your Place in God’s Plan* and Bible study program *God Connects*.

- shoplhm.org/your-place-in-gods-plan
- lhm.org/godconnects

Great is His FAITHFULNESS!

More than 400 LWML members, pastors and guests from all over Texas gather for the LWML Texas District 42nd Biennial Convention June 16-18. The theme was “Great is His Faithfulness,” based on Lam. 3:22–23.

A new mite goal of \$390,000 was adopted, with a Mission Grant goal of \$200,000; declared a mission abundance of \$14,527 from the last biennium; and announced the first earnings of \$602 in interest from the Mission Goal Endowment for a total of \$215,129 for mission grants.

Guest speakers included Christina Hergenrader, who challenged us to carry, nurture and spread our faith; Sarah Baughman and Donna Snow, who both started our days by waking us up in the Word; enrichment session leaders Dr. Barbara Geistfield, Rev. Mike and Cheryl Mattil; and our Heart to Heart district leaders Liz Burnett and Giovanne Turincio. Texas District President Rev. Michael Newman gave the sermon during the opening worship service. Revs. David Bass and Mark Moldenhauer led our Bible studies.

Abby Goehring, our humorous interrupter Lottie, kept us laughing and helped us see areas in which we can improve as we reach out to our sisters. “Old ways won’t open new doors!”



Teens (left) and Young Woman Representatives (above) participated in many activities and completed a service project at Abba’s House in Cypress.



Meet your new officers! From left, Joy Cowan, VP of Christian Life; Patti Samsel, VP of Gospel Outreach; Sandra Paniello, Treasurer; Kelly Bernhardt, VP of Communication; Frances Molitor, President; Rev. Dustin Beck, Pastoral Counselor; and Amanda Halbert, Recording Secretary.



Abby Goehring



Christina Hergenrader



Multi-generational convention attendees shown here are Kelly Bernhardt (second from left), who attended with her mother-in-law, Marilyn Bernhardt; granddaughter, Reagan Porter; and daughter, Tasha Porter.

From the president

Let's be **BOLD**

September is here and soon will be followed by cooler, crisper mornings, Friday night lights and the warm colors of fall. Your Executive Committee will meet at Camp Lone Star to plan, propose, project and, most importantly, pray as strategies, goals and visions for the remainder of this biennium are shared. I am genuinely excited and anxious to see where the Lord will lead the LWML Texas District over the remainder of this biennium.



Frances Molitor

I feel His nudge to encourage a reflective look at how the past three years have affected our organization and where and how we go from here. Where do you feel the Lord is leading you? Is He placing an opportunity in front of you to serve in a new and bold way? Has He been preparing you for the role of a mentor to another willing person who's not quite sure if they are ready for the role they have been asked to fulfill? How is your prayer life? Strong and sure, eager to pray for others who may feel the pressures of providing leadership?

Where and what is your niche? Has it changed over the years? Has the Lord been preparing you for another role as part of Lutheran Women in Mission? Whatever it may be — minuscule or huge, or anywhere in between — I pray you have the opportunity to serve the Lord with boldness, sure in the faithfulness of our Lord and abounding in hope. As we have pledged, let us prepare ourselves to be ready and willing to serve the Lord wherever and whenever He has need of us.

May the LWML Texas District continue to see and feel the Lord at work in and through each of us. Together, let us ask for His continued blessings so others will have the opportunity to hear the Good News of the redemption our Savior Jesus has earned for all who believe. It is action time — let's be bold!

2022-24 Mission Grant recipients	
Seminarian Scholarships for Texas Students	\$50,000
Offering Women Hope – Blue Blossom Pregnancy Centers, Houston	\$10,000
ACTS of Love Early Childhood Education Center, Leander	\$25,000
Orphan Grain Train, Houston	\$25,000
Let Your Light Shine – Bethany, Austin Lutheran Special Education Ministries	\$10,000
Homeless to Housed – LINC Austin Outreach, Austin	\$10,000
The Garden Young Adult Ministry, North Texas	\$10,000
Gospel Driven Education – Faith Lutheran High School, Warda	\$20,000
Bible Brigade – Lutheran Disaster Care	\$16,000
The Table of Los Fresnos Mission Outreach, Los Fresno	\$25,000
Each Child Complete in Christ – Faith Lutheran School, Plano (<i>partial funding</i>)	\$14,129
Total (<i>includes \$15,129 abundance from last biennium</i>)	\$215,129

LWML Sunday 2022

“**For Us and With Us,**” is the theme for LWML Sunday 2022 and is based on Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul tells us that each of us has faced challenges and circumstances greater than our own strength (Rom. 8:31–39). But in Christ, who is for us and with us, we are already more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

This celebratory LWML Sunday will encourage all hearers of the victory, which is already ours through Baptism, so we might live each day confidently trusting in Christ.

For more information and to download your LWML Sunday materials, go to lwml.org/lwml-sunday.

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