

TEXAS MESSENGER

From the president

STRUGGLE WELL

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



A few years ago, my nephew was fishing off the dock of my father-in-law's cottage in northern Michigan. With every cast, he was waiting for the big catch, the lunker, the dream fish. He wanted to catch a tiger muskie.

After a hopeful toss of the lure into the lake, he felt a tug. It was probably another tangle in seaweed, he thought. He reeled in his line and felt something pull hard. This was no seaweed.

This was a fish! He kept reeling it in. There was even more resistance. This was the big one! As he pulled, he called for Grandpa, who scrambled onto the dock and peered into the crystal-clear water. At the exact same time, both fishermen saw what was on the end of the line. It was a tiger muskie — over 40 inches long!

My nephew fought the fish and brought it closer to the dock. That's

when Grandpa remembered that he forgot the net in the cottage! Grandpa ran to get the net, but time was wasting.

A nine-year-old neighbor boy was with my nephew and sensed that the moment of victory was about to escape them all. He sprang into action. This fourth-grade kid jumped into the lake! He chased the fish down and lifted it out of the water! He hauled it over to the dock and flopped it onto the wooden structure.

The fish was shocked. It had never heard of these fishing rules! It fought back, and with a mighty flip of its fins it splashed back into the water. The nine-year-old boy wouldn't be denied.

As my nephew held onto his fishing pole and watched with wide-eyed amazement, his buddy went back into the lake. He grabbed the fish again and threw it onto the dock. This time he leapt up on the dock and laid on top of the fish! My nephew told me, "Uncle Mike, he wrestled the fish to the ground!"

After the struggle, the photos and the celebration, the excited and weary fishermen released the be-

hemoth back into the lake. Who would have thought such a fishing adventure could have happened? Who would have imagined this delightful fishing surprise?

You may be on the dock of your life right now, wondering if God is going to come through for you and for His church. Even during this season of Thanksgiving and the promised return of our Savior, you may be convinced that the struggles are too daunting. But God's Word says:

No eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for
those who love him. **1 COR. 2:9**

Let this promise fill your heart with hope. Give thanks for God's love and salvation beyond imagination in Jesus Christ.

(Reprinted from Pastor Newman's book, "Struggle Well: Living Through Life's Storms", available at amazon.com; and available in Spanish (Creciendo en la Adversidad) from CPH and amazon.com.)

Questions for reflection:

Read 1 Cor. 15:51-58

How do these verses provide hope and encouragement as you await Jesus' return?

Prayer starter: Give thanks for five blessings in your life and let God know why His grace gives you joy.

Did you know Texas will continue to grow by 1/2 million (net) people annually for the foreseeable future?

The prayer and financial partnerships of district congregations have enabled great steps forward in our mission work:



More than **112** evangelists have been trained since 2018. These servants are sharing the Gospel and cultivating outreach in local communities.



158 new churches have been planted in the Texas District since 2004—that's one new congregation every 6 weeks!

101 graduates from Texas from Concordia Seminary and Concordia Theological Seminary over the past 11 years.



Led by Vicar Jaime and Deaconess Fabiana Gonzalez, the Expansion Network have (1 evangelist) church planters and deaconesses and has planted 7 churches in 6 years in the DFW area.



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Thank you for your partnership.



TEXAS TWO-STEP

Join the "Texas Two-Step" Program to increase your investment and double your donation.

STEP ONE: An individual opens a new fixed-rate investment of \$5,000 or more and gives a gift of at least 10% of the initial investment amount to Texas Partners in Mission.

STEP TWO: Texas District Church Extension Fund will match the gift 100% to Texas Partners in Mission AND pay an additional 1% APY during the first term of the new investment.

Learn more at: texascef.org/texastwostep

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!

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

EVERY DOLLAR

contributed to
Texas Partners in Mission
goes directly to
support missions in
the Texas District.

Our goal this year is:
\$400,000

Please consider joining us as a mission partner and help more Texans hear the Gospel.

GIVE NOW!
txlcms.org/tpim

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.



‘It’s God’s time’

Everything started with a question. While waiting in the hotel lobby for the district Board of Mission Administration (BMA) meeting during one of our mission field visits, Beth Lauterbach, board member and certified evangelist in West Texas, asked me, “Lincon, have you heard about Immanuel Lutheran Church in Hereford?” Since I’m still relatively new to Area A (West Texas) and just getting to know people and congregations, I replied, “No, not at all. I’m not familiar with either the town or congregation.” This sparked a conversation.



Rev. Lincon Guerra
Mission and Ministry Facilitator, Area A

Beth shared about her involvement at Immanuel as an organ player, and about how the dynamics and membership of the congregation had changed over time — and that those changes would create a great opportunity for a Hispanic ministry. Rev. Joe Andrajack, pastor of Prince of Peace, Amarillo, had been helping with the vacancy at Immanuel and was well acquainted with the state of the congregation. After my conversation with Beth, I felt a good next step would be to visit Pastor Andrajack, who was enthusiastic about it, too.

Hereford, a town of about 15,000 residents in the heart of the Texas Panhandle, is often referred to as the “Beef Capital of the World.” The town’s rich agricultural heritage can be felt everywhere you go, with vast fields of wheat and maize that stretch as far as the eye can see. The community has experienced a significant demographic shift, with Hispanics now making up to 75 percent of the population. A sense of unity is strong and evident in the warmth of the residents and the numerous cultural events annually held.

In the heart of this town stands Immanuel Lutheran Church. Built in 1949, the brick building can accommodate about 100 worshipers and is conveniently located in front of a lively public park filled with the laughter of children and families. In the past, this church was known in the community for its dedicated work with children.

However, there are some challenges. During my first visit, I sadly observed that attendance had declined to about five people. The church building had suffered a lot of damage from a hailstorm.

With limited human and financial resources at hand, Pastor Andrajack and I made a leap of faith, believing that God would provide. I remember in one of our conversations, Andrajack shared: “Lincon, over the past years, many have suggested that we should close this



What is happening here and where is it?

church down for good, but we’ve been praying for this place. I truly believe now it’s God’s time.”

Just a few months later, a team of Hispanic pastors from Dallas helped renovate the building adjacent to the church. A member of a sister congregation generously donated the funds needed to replace the church roof. The youth group of Hope, Lubbock, organized and led a vacation Bible school that was well-attended. Extensive repairs and renovations were done by teams from Hope, Lubbock, and St. John, Farwell. The volunteers remodeled the bathrooms and overhauled the plumbing, replaced the sanctuary ceiling, upgraded entrance floors, fixed the front doors, and made many other improvements.

The Hispanic pastors also made connections in the community, including with residents of an apartment complex for events like a back-to-school backpack drive, thanks to the leadership of Rev. Jaime Gonzalez and evangelists Lauterbach and David Baldner. Exciting plans for more community outreach events are already underway, including a Fall Festival and a Christmas celebration. Yes, prayers are being answered, and it’s just the beginning.

This collaborative effort goes beyond adapting to demographic changes. It’s a powerful testament to the church’s unwavering dedication to God’s mission. As Lutherans and followers of Christ, we are called to embrace and celebrate the diversity of our communities while working together toward advancing God’s kingdom.

I echo Pastor Andrajack’s words: “It’s God’s time.” Amen.

The blessings of gratitude



When I was a young boy my parents and grandparents taught me manners, especially saying “please” and “thank you” when asking for help and receiving things from others. I was also corrected when my attitude wasn’t, shall we say, up to their expectations.



Brian D. Hamilton
Chief
Financial
Officer

In this season of giving thanks, I wonder if we should focus on gratitude instead of thankfulness. Although the words are synonymous and often interchanged, there is a world of difference between them. Being thankful is momentary, situational, fleeting. Gratitude speaks to a posture of the heart that is long-term, lasting, and a continuous flow of thankfulness. Studies prove there is a connection between gratitude and our health and well-being. Being grateful positively affects our spiritual life and emotions as well.

I cannot think of a better embodiment of a life lived in gratitude than that of author, speaker and artist Joni Eareckson Tada. At 17, athletic Joni became paralyzed from the neck down from a diving accident.

Although a Christian, she became angry with God, asking, “If you are so loving, why did you let this happen to me?” For two years she struggled with depression as she maneuvered through her rehabilitation. Along the way, she felt God repeatedly whisper the words “Better ... or bitter?” The choice was hers. With God’s grace, she eventually mustered the courage to turn her focus from herself to others.

Joni learned to express herself through art. With a pen or paintbrush in her mouth, she created works that received acclaim. Her 1976 autobiography became an international bestseller and the basis for a ministry she started in 1979. Joni and Friends was established to address the needs of families affected by disability and to provide them hope through the Gospel.

She later began an inspirational radio program providing encouragement, biblical insights and disability awareness. Through 44 years in ministry, Joni became a global advocate for people with disabilities. She continues in ministry and celebrates God’s grace daily for allowing her to live an extraordinary life, one well beyond the life expectancy of those with spinal cord injuries.

Joni exudes an attitude of gratitude. Her life verse is Eph. 5:20:

Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How might we adopt Joni’s attitude? It’s all about our outlook on life and having a continually grateful spirit for all the God-given gifts and situations we experience. Jesus modeled this for us. My favorite verse from the song “Attitude of Gratitude” by Marshall Stern and Richard Mekdeci (recorded by Joni) says, “When Jesus fed the hungry multitude, He did it with a grateful attitude. Although it looked like there was not enough, He thanked His Father for abundant love.” These are words to live by.

Over the years, scores of families have come to Legacy Deo with a heart of gratitude for the many gifts bestowed on them by our Lord. They have created trusts, endowments and other accounts that bless others and serve as a testimony to God’s grace and faithfulness.


Although the dollar amounts have varied, what has been consistent about those accounts is the gratitude with which they were given. Let us show you how you can live out your own “attitude of gratitude.” It’s easier than you might think!

Brian Hamilton is a Certified Public Accountant and serves as Chief Financial Officer for Legacy Deo. Legacy Deo is not licensed by the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy to practice public accountancy, nor does it provide legal, tax, or financial advice. We encourage you to seek the advice of your own legal, tax, or financial professionals in connection with planning and gifting matters.


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CANYON

Rev. Brian Shane was installed as sole pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church on July 23. Pictured are, front row, (from left) Revs. Troy Scroggins, Dr. Robert Holaday, Brian Shane, Steven Misch, Jeff Jenkins, J. Brown, Lincon Guerra; (back row) John Elser, Eric Hiner, Nathan Misch, Joseph Andrajack, Rick Black and David Rohde.



LARIAT

Rev. William Rose (pictured in center) was installed as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church on Aug. 13. Area pastors along with the community joined together for worship and fellowship.



THE GROVE

Rev. Ryan Pennington was ordained as Specific Ministry Pastor at St. Paul on June 17. Pastor Pennington has been serving Fortress Lutheran Church, a church plant in Harker Heights and a joint project of St. Paul and Grace, Killeen, since Feb. 2021. Pennington was installed as pastor of Fortress on July 9. Brothers pictured at the ordination were, from left (front row) Revs. Tim Ochsner, John Heckmann, Ryan Pennington, Luke Madsen, J. Brown, Alan Abel, Grayson Albers; (back row) Michael Newman, Don Poole, Gerry Harrow, Matthew Mortenson, William Sager and Aaron Kalbas.

FEDOR

Holy Trinity welcomed new members to its family on Aug. 27. Shown are, from left, Chris and Amy Corbitt and their daughter, Harper, who were accepted by transfer; and Don and Michelle Holmes, who were accepted by adult baptism/confirmation, and daughter, Kinsley, by baptism. In center is Rev. Jonathan Meyer.



WACO

On Sept. 10, new members were welcomed to Peace Lutheran Church. Pictured are, from left, Clinton Bray, Zachary Joy, Rene and Mike Reeves, Rev. Garrett Smith (holding Daniel Krock), Frank and Koleen Hassey, Patty and Bill Van Buskirk, and Anna Schmidt. Not pictured are Todd and Carolyn Landsberg.

BIG SPRING



Alive in Christ members, from left, Dolline Budke, Judy and Rev. Bobby Roever, and Steve and Grace Shugrue participated in Scenic Mountain Medical Center's "Teachers' Night Out" on Aug. 3. About 200 teachers received school supplies.



Alive in Christ held vacation Bible school on Aug. 12. Pictured are 10 of the 12 youth who attended. They are, from left, (front row) Lane, Landon, Grey, Parker, Matthew; (back row) Emilie, Collins, Kamryn, Harker and Anna. Not pictured are Alana and Veda.

LUBBOCK



Steelee Sue Patterson was baptized as a child of God at Redeemer. From left, Rev. Charles Nemec, Steelee and her parents, Montana Simpson and Kalum Patterson.



Pastor Nemec's wife, Deaconess Christianna Nemec, was installed at Redeemer on Sept. 10. Charles and Christianna are pictured with Rev. Thomas Eckstein, Christianna's father and pastor of Trinity, Adrian, N.D., and Concordia, Jamestown, N.D.

LAMPASAS



From left, Liberty Potts, Ellie Peiser and Wyatt Potts were confirmed at Faith Lutheran Church on Sept. 3. Pastor is Rev. Tim Ochsner.

DEVINE



Alice Rose Zerr became a child of God through Holy Baptism at Divine Savior on Sept. 17. She is pictured (at left) with her parents, RJ and Lydia; and sponsors Paige Sonntag (holding her son, Arlow) and Anthony Zerr. Pastor is Rev. Randall Wehmeyer.



Eli Zadik received new life by water and the Word in Holy Baptism on Aug. 27. He is pictured with his parents, Edward and Nadia, and his grandmother, Patty.



Following a study of Luther's Small Catechism, Jonathan, Robin and Abigail Shields made the good confession of faith and were confirmed on Sept. 10.

Blessings at Zion, Dallas

On Aug. 20, Zion Lutheran Church and School dedicated a new recreation outreach center, called The ROC. Becca Jones, executive director of the Texas District Church Extension Fund, served as lector and led in prayer. Rev. Dr. Robert C. Preece, Zion senior pastor, presided and served as thurifer. The ROC is to be used by the school, congregation and community for a place to play, a place to pray, and a place to stay, drawing people closer to Christ. The assembly lifted hands in blessings upon the neighborhood and center's desired use.



Zion gave thanks on June 11 for the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Pastor Preece (right). Rev. Dr. John A. Nunes, pastor of Pilgrim, Santa Monica, Calif., preached for the 411 worshipers attending. Pastor Preece served as the celebrant and Rev. Larry Krueger, district vice-president, attended in place of Rev. Michael Newman, district president. *Soli Deo Gloria y Gracias a Dios.*



HAMILTON

Kollyer Cowdus was baptized at St. John on Aug. 6. Pictured are, from left, Rev. Aaron Kalbas and Kollyer's family, parents Kelsi and Zac Clowdus and siblings Payson, Parker and Addyson.



VERNON

Melissa Gfeller was honored for her 30 years as a teacher at St. Paul Lutheran School. Holding the cake, Melissa is pictured with colleagues Sherri Koch, Lisa Aderholt, Patti Scott, Pam Matus and Pam Walker.

Christ's **hands** and **feet** at LSA



Lutheran South Academy (LSA) High School, Houston, students partnered with Orphan Grain Train (OGT) for a service project.

Wyatt Schultz, LSA art teacher, had an inspired idea to sew patchwork quilted blankets for those in need. Schultz held a drive at school to collect used and new denim jeans. Designated work days were scheduled as students formed an assembly line of workers cutting material in squares and then machine-stitching the patches together,

and adding extra warmth with a wool backing. A cross was sewn in the front of each blanket.

During an LSA chapel service the blankets were blessed and then given to Mike Rathje, OGT Houston Branch manager. There is no doubt God will use these blankets to bring comfort and hope to the recipients. OGT Houston is blessed to partner with LSA, and others, as the hands and feet of Jesus. Schultz (left) and Rathje are pictured together in the upper-right photo.



CLEVELAND

Whitley Mae Clark became a baptized child of God at Good Shepherd on July 16. Shown are, from left, Stacy Reinhart, great uncle (sponsor); Lance and Morgan Clark and their children, Kash and Whitley; Rev. Victor Frank and Brett Reinhart, great uncle (sponsor).



KILLEEN

Grace held VBS the last week of June. The theme for was "God's Living Water." The children enjoyed music, Bible study, science projects, crafts, recreation and daily snacks; and were guided by 30 adults under the direction of Ericka Green, Melissa Hamilton and Rev. Andrew Green.

Blessings at Faith, Plano



▲ On May 4, the Faith Lutheran School middle and high school choirs and handbells presented a concert of sacred music. The middle school choir is directed by Nancy Ingram; the high school choir is directed by Rebekah Roundey. Gil Abbott directs the middle and high school handbells.

► Faith church and school families gathered on May 7 for the annual Faith Family Picnic, which featured a potluck dinner, softball game, and games for the children. Rachel Woelmer was recognized for 10 years of service to Faith Lutheran School. She is pictured with, from left, Ben Crawford, congregation president; and her husband, Rev. James Woelmer, senior pastor.



More than 70 students and 60 volunteers gathered at Faith June 12-16 for VBS — “God’s Living Water” — which included Bible stories, games, snacks, crafts and lots of fun. Thanks are given for the amazing volunteers and the many wonderful students.

To God alone be the glory!



Helping those in need in Ukraine

Members of Gethsemane, Houston, gathered at Zion, Pasadena, on June 17 to volunteer their time and talents to pack boxes with necessities for an Orphan Grain Train (OGT) shipment to Ukraine.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Lisa Sitz and Hershel Theilen are shown at Hershel's truck, which transported a garage full of clothes for OGT.

Curtis and Lisa Sitz and Dorothy Krohn are shown with hygiene kits.

Milton and Viola Bade sort and pack shoes.

Dorothy and Lisa help to sort and pack items.

Life ministry grants available

The LCMS Office of National Mission has made an additional \$1 million available in its Million Million Dollar Life Match program, to be distributed over the coming triennium in grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

Since the Life Match began in 2022, LCMS congregations have dedicated \$1,577,133, matched by \$1 million from

the ONM, to projects that support and promote the sanctity of life. These projects have served over a half-million people, with more than 7,000 congregation members serving as volunteers.

Applications for grants in 2024 will open Jan. 1. To apply, visit lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant.



These Lutheran friends of yours are celebrating wedding anniversaries of **50 YEARS** or more.

The Grove, St. Paul
Jerry and Betty Sohns
61 years, Nov. 3

San Angelo, Trinity
Don and Susan
Barnhart
52 years, Sept. 2
Gene and Doris
Wendland
56 years, Sept. 30

**Westfield,
St. Matthew**
John and Janis
Stayton
52 years, Oct. 2

Need church and city
Wayne and Gladys
Schilhab
53 years, Nov. 1



Rev. Robert and Marjorie Gentet, members of King of Kings, San Antonio, celebrated 60 years of marriage on Sept. 29.



Donald and Trudie Dean, members of Good Shepherd, Cleveland, celebrated 63 years of marriage on Aug. 20.



Rev. Rod and Paulette Schliep, members of Our Savior, Sulphur Springs, will celebrate 60 years of marriage on Dec. 29.



Celebrating 50 years

On Aug. 6, St. Peter, Gun Barrel City, was proud to hold the 50-year ordination anniversary celebration and dinner for 1967 Concordia University Austin classmates and friends Revs. D. R. Nelson, emeritus; Dr. Robert Preece, Zion, Dallas; Dr. Bill Knippa, emeritus; Steve Wagner, emeritus; and Dr. Bill Dasch, Bill Dasch Ministries, Mansfield. Also attending the celebration were 1967 classmates Darlene Schultz Cox and Suzanne Socha Mueller. From left, (front row) Wagner, Knippa, Mueller, Dasch; (back row) Nelson, Cox and Preece.



HOUSTON

Doug Pennekamp retired after nearly 30 years of dedicated, joyful service as Gethsemane's organist and choir director. He is pictured at right with his wife, Vicky, and their daughters, from left, Marissa and Adriana Lenihan. At left is Rev. Jerry McNamara, Gethsemane pastor.

Messenger has new editor

I want to let all those who have submitted news for *Texas Messenger* that I really enjoyed working with you all. As of Nov. 1, I will be retired. Chelsey Doering is the new editor. The email address will remain the same (txmess@txlcms.org). Please be sure to note the change in the mailing address. I wish you all God's blessings and give you my thanks for our years of working together. — Lois Wolf

News and photos can also be mailed to:
Texas Messenger — LCMS Texas District,
1221 Satellite View, Round Rock, TX 78665

**“Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and
let thy gifts to us be blessed.”**

Thankful for Lutheran schools!

By Dr. Bill Hinz
Director,
School Ministry



We invite Jesus to be present not just during a meal, but in every aspect of our lives. All we have comes from God. What a blessing we have to pray together in gratitude for Jesus and the life He gives us.

I am thankful for our Lutheran schools! For almost 40 hours a week we get to share Jesus. Lutheran schools are gifts from God, and blessings for our students and their families. Now, more than

ever, our children need to hear of God's love and to learn about His forgiveness. Through our Lutheran schools our students learn to walk in His ways, to share God's gifts with one another and to give thanks for all of His never-ending blessings. Most especially they learn the truth that Jesus Christ loves them, is always there for them and is their Savior from sin and death.

I thank God for our teachers, who share Jesus with our students and help them in developing their God-given talents and abilities. Teachers are front-line missionaries, and are training up front-line missionaries in their students.

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

PROV. 22:6

Thank you for praying for the children in your life. Thank you for supporting the ministries of your church in which the love of Jesus is shared with children of all ages.

We need to live with a sense of gratitude as we count our many blessings and reflect on the goodness that God provides to us each and every day, and not just in the good times, but also when life presents hardships and challenges.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 THESS. 5:16-18



Pictured are students enjoying the day at Redeemer Lutheran School, Austin (left), and Salem Lutheran School, Tomball.

'Follow me'



By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

Last month I wrote about our little Regalito, the little “puppy gift” God dropped in our lap. It has been super fun to watch his playful antics. He loves to grab your shoe and carry it off when you are hoping to put it on. Most mornings I wake up to him scratching at my head to make a cozy nest in my hair. He’s all puppy. And it is adorable!

As I have been watching him, I think there are some great take-aways for how we are to live our lives as Christians.

Puppies learn by following their leader. Regalito follows Sonny and Espi (his new canine brother and sister) around everywhere they go. If Sonny marks a tree, Regalito follows suit. If Espi stops to sniff, Regalito does too. They are quite the little family out on a walk together!

Jesus said:

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Paul said:

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” 1 COR. 11:1

We want to follow Jesus and help others to follow Him. We want to make disciples who will make more disciples.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATT. 28:19-20

Regalito loves to chew. He even took a few bites out of our Thompson Chain Reference Bible (it was on a



shelf a little too low). We need to chew on God’s Word too!

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! PS. 119:103

When we are in God’s Word, it transforms our lives and our witness for Jesus.

I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. PS. 119:11

Regalito is zealous to be in the center of everything. He’s all in at all times. Because of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, we can be zealous to do good and bless others.

Jesus gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. HEB. 12:1-3

To donate to CAN-DO:

Call 512-313-4332 to donate via credit card

Visit thelc.ms/supporting-ctx

Send to

Concordia University Texas
ATTN: CAN-DO MISSIONS
11400 Concordia Univ. Dr.
Austin TX 78726

Playing our part

By Raelyn Pracht
CEF Marketing Specialist

A couple years ago, some Texas District staff members volunteered at the Central Texas Food Bank. It was a way to serve our community and to use our time to help others have at least one decent meal.



When we walked into the food bank, we were immediately assigned different jobs. One of us sorted the food; one checked whether it was expired or not; one placed different components of a meal together into a box; and one carried the box to its proper location.

Working in our specific areas, it was a full day for each of us. All areas were important and, in the end, the final meal for these families in need would not come together if one of those areas was not included. It took us all doing our part to create the whole.

We didn't know those who would pick up this meal. We didn't know their story. All we knew was that by doing our part we would be able to help bless their tables.

This servant event comes to mind when I think about your investments with Texas District Church



Extension Fund (Texas CEF). Although you may never see in person the spaces and places your investments help create, you know that when you invest your money with Texas CEF, your money, combined with the funds of over 10,000 other investors, makes our ministry possible.

You can play an even bigger part by participating in **Texas Two-Step.**

This Thanksgiving, we bring to the table an opportunity to increase your investment and double your donation through the Texas Two-Step program.

Texas Church Extension Fund and Texas Partners in Mission have paired up to increase financial resources available for starting new ministries in Texas. Every dollar contributed to Texas Partners in Mission goes directly to support missions in the Texas District.

STEP ONE:

An investor opens a new fixed-rate investment of \$5,000 or more and gives a gift of at least 10% of the initial investment amount to Texas Partners in Mission. The Jumbo Investment is not eligible.

STEP TWO:

Texas District Church Extension Fund will match the gift 100% to Texas Partners in Mission *and* will pay a bonus 1% interest rate for the initial term of the investment.

Visit texascef.org/texastwostep or call toll free 1-888-951-1233 for more information



Texas District Church Extension Fund

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Marshay King's Inspiring Path

Rooted in Resilience and Lotus Dreams



Marshay dreams of providing a better life for her 3-year-old daughter. Upbring BeREAL was there to help provide the support she needed.

At 24, Marshay King — single mom and college student — is a model of resiliency and determination, and she gives Upbring much of the credit.

Her early life was marked by challenging experiences, such as the absence of a father in the home and her mother's struggle with substance abuse. After being in foster care, living in an emergency shelter and in the Salvation Army, Marshay came to Upbring New Life Children's Shelter in Canyon Lake, where she began therapy and focused on self-improvement.

"I'm more disciplined in my life, which has enabled me to be a junior in college and know how to juggle and multi-task, such as being a parent," shared Marshay.

Prior to her current schooling at Texas A&M University — San Antonio, Marshay attended Texas State University in San Marcos. She said Upbring BeREAL Supervised Independent Living (SIL) program was a lifesaver. "You can have a roof over your head, you can go to school, get a car, go to work — things you thought you couldn't have."

Mothering her 3-year-old daughter and being an Aggie in San Antonio hasn't been easy, but Marshay's mom, who's now on a better life path, and Marshay's boyfriend help her manage the stress.

Looking ahead, Marshay plans to apply her Business Management degree to the automotive industry and maybe live in London some day and work for the car manufacturer Lotus.

"I want to give my daughter a life I never had," said Marshay. "Every time I pass my classes, I'm one step closer to getting my degree and being out of school and making my mom and my daughter and my family proud. It makes me excited about the future!"

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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GivingTuesday



Restoring the Last Resort

The Lord has abundantly blessed Camp Lone Star since it was established in 1941, and as He continues to transform lives through this ministry. A few things have changed over the years: we have new buildings, new devotion sites, new programs and activities, a new campus in Tomball, and much more. However, even with so many new blessings, there are many things that have stayed the same.

Though their purposes have shifted over time, several of the camp's original structures in La Grange have been in use for close to (or more than) a century now. The Nature Center, first built as a home in the mid 1800s, for years has been a spot where campers and outdoor education groups learn about unique artifacts and explore God's creation. The Trading Post originally served as the dining hall and is now where sugary treats and camp merchandise can be found. The Medic also once served as a home. It is now housing again for some of our interns, and in the summer it is where campers receive their medication and are treated for scrapes, bug bites and other minor ailments.

The Last Resort (pictured above) was built in the late 1940s and was first used as one of the boys' cabins

for summer camp, later becoming housing for summer leadership staff, and used for small retreat groups during the year.

Most recently, the Last Resort served as housing for our junior staff, with the boys on one side and girls on the other. The good news is that a recent inspection determined the foundation of the Last Resort is still in sound condition. With this in mind, we have decided to restore this space to once again serve as junior staff housing, and thereby carry on this piece of Camp Lone Star's history.

This GivingTuesday, we invite you to link arms with us and help us raise \$165,000 for the Last Resort project.

We are aiming to complete the renovations by summer 2024 so that our junior staff can return to the Last Resort, allowing for the opportunity to have intentional leadership development and community within their own space. In addition, restoring this housing space will open up doors for us to serve nearly 200 more teenage campers each summer, impacting more lives for generations to come!

These opportunities, enhancing our junior staff's experience and serving more teen campers, are

only possible with your generous support. *Would you prayerfully consider helping us meet our goal?*

If you would like to give to the Last Resort project this GivingTuesday (Nov. 28) in support of Camp Lone Star's junior staff program, you can make a donation at camplonestar.org/givingtuesday or call at 979-968-1657.

We give thanks to God for your partnership in the Gospel!



♦ CAMP ♦

LONE STAR

2016 Camp Lone Star Road
La Grange, TX 78945

PINES CAMPUS

22610 Tuwa Road • Tomball, TX 77375

CONTACT US

**Lutheran Outdoors
Ministry of Texas**

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'FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER'

We have so much to be thankful for.

We celebrate Thanksgiving with family and friends. The original intent of the holiday was to acknowledge the successful harvest of crops by the colonists in the 1600s. However, the need to express our thanks is still relevant today as we approach God during prayer. On Thanksgiving, we are reminded of the wealth of blessings God sends us every day. He freely gives us His Word, His assurance of resurrection on the final day, and our daily gifts of health, safety and all of our needs.

It is good as Christians that we begin our prayers with a “thank you” to God. Many times, we pray for the things we don’t have and forget the things God has given us. Not only are we to pray in times of tragedy and sorrow, but also when life is good, praising God for His blessings we receive each and every day. We can give God praise and thanks for life, loved ones, food, shelter, and all the countless things He has given us. In fact, when we pray, we should begin the prayer with a note of thanks to our God before any petitions or requests are mentioned.

As small children, many of our parents taught us a simple prayer that is often used before meals. It begins Psalm 136:

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;

to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever;

to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;

to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;

to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;

the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever;

the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever.

PSALM 136:1-9

It is not clear whether King David wrote Psalm 136. The 26 verses mention blessing after blessing from God, and each verse ends with “for his steadfast love endures forever.” Martin Luther described the psalm as “truly nothing but grace. ... Gift—free of charge!”

We thank our God both for his daily blessings and for his unending love for us. As repentant Christians, we can thank God for His blessings for hours and hours and still not include them all.

A problem is that while God is good, we sinners aren’t always able to see it. If you are not sure about His goodness, look to the manger, the cross and the empty tomb.

It is a sadness that there are many people who will never — not on Thanksgiving Day, not on any day — get around to thanking the Lord. No thanks are given for earthly blessings, no thanks for preservation. No thanks are given for the Savior who has — with His great sacrifice — forgiven us, redeemed us and invited us into heaven where Thanksgiving Day will be every day. Imagine the joy and the power of living each day in thanksgiving toward Jesus and all that He has done and promised for us. It is Jesus who gives you and me all that we need to live now and forever with Him.

Parts of this article are from sermons by Revs. Drs. Gregory Seltz, Michael Ziegler and Ken Klaus.

Gifting Today to Bless Tomorrow



Have you ever considered if it is possible to leave a legacy for generations of LWML women to come? An enduring impact of this kind can easily be made through contributions (immediate and planned gifts) to the LWML Texas District Endowments.

The endowments provide a steady, consistent and perpetual source of annual income, and enable us to further our impact by providing scholarships for women becoming church workers; support and training for those who serve as our LWML Texas District leaders; and an opportunity to add to our mission goal.

Here is one family's story of how and why they chose to leave a Legacy through gifts to an LWML Texas District Endowment.

After my mom was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer, planning her funeral and all the details that go along with it was the last thing she wanted to talk about. While her faith was strong and she was certain of her salvation, dying is scary and she didn't want to think about it. The morning she passed away, I joined my father and brothers, sitting around the kitchen table with Pastor, as we made the myriad of decisions that I wish she had made long before she became sick. The easiest decision to make was where we should designate the memorials to go. My mom

supported numerous organizations through donations and volunteering but number one in her heart was LWML. She had served her Savior, whom she now had met face to face, through this great organization for decades, holding almost every office at the society and zone level.

She loved serving as zone president, a position she held until the cancer made her too weak to serve. By designating her memorials to go to the Mission Goal Endowment, we have the comfort of knowing that her contribution to LWML will go on forever as that money earns interest to support the mission goal of the LWML Texas District. I am proud of my mom, the work she did, and the example she set for me and my family to serve others. I am thankful to the LWML Texas District for giving us a means to be able to honor her and her service by supporting the Mission Endowment Goal. — Kelli A.

What's your why? How can you participate in *Gifting Today to Bless Tomorrow*? Planned giving can be a wonderful way to stretch your giving dollars. Planned gifts are those for which provision is made in wills and estate plans or by beneficiary designations made on insurance policies, IRAs or other retirement and savings accounts. To learn more about planned gifts you may directly consult with

our funds administrator, Legacy Deo at 1-800-880-3733 or email info@legacydeo.org.

Debbie Curry, Legacy Deo Ambassador, is available for estate planning and charitable giving consultations at no cost. Debbie is also available for presentations to LWML groups and zones. Contact her at debbie.legacydeo@gmail.com to schedule your consultation or presentation. All information shared in individual consultations is kept confidential.

Not yet ready to make a planned gift? You can still participate in *Gifting Today to Bless Tomorrow* by making an immediate gift. In addition, please consider a gift honoring or paying tribute to someone for their birthday, anniversary, graduation or another milestone. Perhaps it is time to remember a mentor with a gift of thanks. Memorials are also an option. What better way to honor or pay tribute to someone than to give a gift that will give into perpetuity? Your gift will continue to educate women, inspire and train members, and support missions.

Visit lwmltxdist.org/endowments. Together we are *Gifting Today to Bless Tomorrow*!



LWML Texas District 43rd Biennial Convention

• June 13–15 • Omni Hotel
Corpus Christi

Mission Grant Spotlight



Faith Lutheran School (FLS), Plano, has been serving their community for more than 50 years. The school serves children in grades preschool through 12. FLS strives to *present everyone complete in Christ* (Col. 1:28) by fostering a love of learning, skills in critical analysis, leadership, independent thinking, and God and neighbor.

An LWML Texas District mission grant will provide tuition assistance for income-challenged families seeking classical Lutheran education for their children. The school catechizes stu-

dents daily throughout all subjects as well as during daily devotions and chapel. Many students and those in their families have been baptized as a result of their children attending the school. Many of those families have gone on to join the church.

Extracurricular activities include football, volleyball, soccer, basketball and archery. In addition, a variety of fine arts opportunities include band, choir, keyboarding, handbells, and art. Faith has a renowned high school choir.

Patti Samsel • Vice-President of Gospel Outreach

GREAT IS HIS *Faithfulness!*



Totals as of August 31, 2023

2022–2024 Mite Goal	\$390,000
Mites Received	\$244,435
Total Mites Still Needed	\$145,565
Mission Grants Paid	\$152,814

Send your mite offerings along with a remittance form to: LWML Texas District Attn: Kathy Walther Financial Secretary, PO Box 124, Giddings, TX 78942

Table Talk



Grab a cup of coffee or tea, and let us visit a moment.

Let's have a conversation about mites.

In several of my previous articles, I discussed the likelihood of mite offerings dropping during the summer months, and that indeed happened. As we pace ourselves toward achieving the mite goal set at the 2022 Houston convention, there was a substantial deficit in August, more than usual. My invitation to you today is to boldly step out in trust and giving. The LWML Texas District website — lwmltxdist.org/aboutmites — is a great resource to reacquaint yourself and your fellow members with the Mite Offering Resources document, which shares more on the various means of offering our mites to the Lord.

Have a required minimum distribution to make? That can go directly to mites. Recognize how blessed you are and want to offer an individual gift to mites? That can go directly to mites. Looking for an additional tithing opportunity? That can go directly to mites. Go to lwmltxdist.org and click the “Donate Online” tab, and mark your gift as mites. Or send a check with a note as “gift for mites.”

Have any questions? Contact Kathy Walther and she will be more than happy to discuss the various means of giving. Those mite box offerings are mighty, but there are numerous ways to give those mites a boost. On the mites webpage is a link to send an email to Kathy.

Most importantly, remain in prayer, always thanking our Lord for the many blessings being shared with the LWML Texas District and that each member, as they are able, finds joy in sharing their blessings with those who desperately need to hear the Gospel. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, I now share with you:

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. **PHIL. 1:3-5**



Frances Molitor
LWML Texas
District President