

TEXAS

MARCH 2024

M E S S E N G E R

The Texas District • The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

12 HAPPENINGS AROUND TEXAS

We want to share what God is doing in your church! Send in your news: txmess@txlcms.org

Texas Missions in Area A

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The resurrection of Jesus buries the dismal darkness of sin and, through the gift of Baptism, you are raised to new life.

Rev. Michael Newman,
President





Easter sneaks in

Easter sneaks into March on the final day of the month. March could very well be a dark and difficult month with the bulk of it devoted to Jesus' final agonizing steps to the cross. But Easter sneaks in. And the day of Resurrection changes everything.

That is true for our lives. Sometimes we start to believe that all we have is bad news — tragedy, war, disasters, violence, family break-ups, relationship distress, grief and chaos. Life can look so dark and depressing. The pain is real, the difficulties are distressing and sin is a formidable force. But by God's grace, Easter sneaks in.

Romans 6 details the surprising Good News: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (vs. 3-4)

Surprise! The resurrection of Jesus buries the dismal darkness of sin and, through the gift of Baptism, you are raised to new life. Yes, Easter sneaks into your life through God's gifts and faithfulness.

Sometimes this assurance is needed for the church. Pundits and statisticians will tell you that the church is on its way out: they claim it is aging, dying, and out of style. Even your own observation may try to convince you that young people don't want to follow Jesus and that local congregations will not be able to survive. But, even into a bleak looking church environment in the western world, Easter sneaks in.

Consider Paul's resurrection encouragement in 1 Corinthians 15: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:56-58)

Surprise! Your labor in the Lord is not in vain. The work of the church is not wasted effort. It brings the greatest blessing possible to the world! Founded on the resurrection of Jesus, the Word will never return empty (Isaiah 55:10-11). Share, tell, and show the love of Jesus! Easter will always sneak in.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the world does not need another dose of pessimism or doubt. This chaotic and hope-starved globe is not craving another group of naysayers or grouches. The world needs Easter to sneak in through you—as you show Jesus' resurrection love, as you help the hurting with His forgiveness and comfort, as you bring His Word to empty hearts and souls, and as you plant the church in new places and among new people. The world needs Easter to sneak in!

See how you can help: www.txlcms.org/tpim/

Rev. Michael W. Newman
President



Questions for reflection...

Read 1 Corinthians 15. What insights about Jesus' resurrection and its impact on your life do you see in these verses?

Prayer starter: Thank God for specific blessings of Jesus' resurrection that you and your congregation can share with people near and far.

SUPPORTING MISSIONS ACROSS TEXAS



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!



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



"This was a perfect fit for me. St. Peter is all about missions. This congregation has a rich history of reaching the community, especially the Hispanic community. And for me just being here in the central location of downtown, right in the heart of downtown...this is where actually the city started. So it was for me a go-go and do it. God was opening doors. God was answering prayers. He was definitely allowing me or confirming that this is where He wanted me to be."

~ Pastor Jose Argueta, St. Peter Lutheran Church

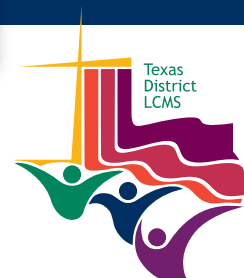
GIVE NOW!
txlcms.org/tpim



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

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



Building bridges

Collaborative mission in west Texas



Rev. Lincon Guerra

Area A Mission & Ministry

Facilitator

BMA Liaison

Hispanic Ministry Coordinator

The church has been called to be a light and bring hope wherever God has positioned her, be it in the countryside or the city. As part of our mission to ***"Go and make disciples of all nations,"*** there is also a call to love our neighbors as ourselves. That is what we aim to achieve in our communities, working together to advance and expand the Kingdom of God.

We have many opportunities for missions in West Texas. However, to reach these people, building bridges with other significant entities in the community is necessary. To achieve this, it is essential to go out and connect with the people around us.



Revs. Lincon Guerra, Jaime Gonzalez, Jaime Durkin and lay leader Arturo Garcia are pictured with participants.

And that is precisely what a group of disciples has been doing in some places in west Texas, in collaboration with local congregations such as Hope, Lubbock; Prince of Peace, Amarillo; and St. Paul, Canyon; and certified evangelists Beth Lauterbach and David Baldner. It's wonderful to see both American and Hispanic pastors working

in unity to impact the community with the powerful message of the Gospel. Thanks to God, we have been able to celebrate four community events in the city of Hereford in partnership with the Blue Waters Apartments.

I vividly recall celebrating the first community event last summer: vacation Bible school. We wanted more families and children to know about this event, so a group of Hispanic missionaries, including Jaime Gonzalez, Arturo Gracia and Jaime Durkin, hit the streets of the town, visiting different locations to invite anyone we found. When trying to put flyers on the bulletin board outside the office of an apartment complex, the manager came out to ask what we were doing. After explaining about the VBS and our desire to invite the community, she invited us to go inside and invite the families living there.

This is how the conversations started. Relationships were established, leading to the August back-to-school event with over 125 backpacks filled with school supplies. We also celebrated the fall festival with games, candies and more. The Lutheran Literacy Project was another success as many children received Lutheran books and reading material, thanks to Margaret Peterson's work on this project. In December, we were blessed to celebrate the first Christmas service, attended by several families from the community.

The Holy Spirit motivates us to continue, knowing that many people need to know God's love and forgiveness. This is evident in the words of a child who participated in the VBS last summer. After numerous Bible lessons from the young people of Hope Lutheran Church, he boldly asked, ***"Who is this Jesus you are talking about?"***

To answer these kinds of questions, we move forward with God's help, building bridges so that the Gospel can reach every corner of west Texas.

Ministry highlights

For the year 2023



Brian Hamilton, CPA
Chief Financial Officer

It was a banner year! Not only did we relocate our office and absorb the assets and accounts of Southern District Lutheran Foundation, the Lord blessed us in other remarkable ways. People are practicing radical generosity!

We invite you to discover how to do that yourself by contacting us at:

info@legacydeo.org



We can help!

\$2.2 million
Distributed to
ministries*

\$241,000
Distributed to
individuals

Total distributions:
\$2.5 million

- \$6.5 million total donations received
- \$47,000 ministry grants awarded
- 28 stock gifts passed through to ministries
- 20 new accounts
- 3 estate plans completed

**more than \$1.9 million to Texas-based causes*

2901 Caballo Ranch Road
Bldg 4 / Unit C and D
Cedar Park, Texas 78641

legacydeo.com

800-880-3733



Happenings Around Texas

Submit your news!

Send photos, stories and newsletters for the Lutheran Witness to:

txmess@txlcms.org
Texas Messenger
1221 Satellite View
Round Rock, TX 78665

Please be sure all photos sent electronically are in color and 300 dpi (high resolution). Also, send your news to us well in advance, if possible.

The Texas Messenger is now available online at txlcms.org.

BASTROP

Epiphany calls its first pastor

Rev. E.B. Holschuh was installed as the first pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church, Bastrop, on Epiphany, Jan. 6.

The installation was held at the historic Refectory in Bastrop State Park, where Epiphany's charter service was held in May 2023.

Since its first service on Feb. 6, 2022, Epiphany praises God for the growth of the congregation, its charter, and Pastor Holschuh's installation.

Brothers pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Gary Johnson, Bernie Schey, Thomas Obersat, Bill Knippa, John Austin; (second row) Isaac Schuller, Jonathan Meyer, Ryan Ogrodowicz, Mark De Young, J. Brown, Ross Davis, Bryan Wolfmuehler, Dale Bohm; (back row) Richard Mittwede, David Mumm, Tom Peterson, John Schmidt, Nate Hill, E.B. Holschuh, Jason Kaspar, David Woelmer, Carl Roth and Nathan Wendorf.



Rev. Woelmer with the Pietsch family (and sponsors)



Rev. Woelmer with the Schatte family



Rev. Woelmer and his family

Holy Baptisms at Grace

Given the new birth of water and the Spirit in Holy Baptism on Dec. 31, were, (top, right) Sarah, Kinsley and Aubrey Schatte; (top, left) Margaret Pietsch, pictured with parents Tanner and Gabbi Pietsch and sponsors; and (left) Henry Woelmer, son of Grace pastor Rev. David and Elizabeth Woelmer.

THE GROVE

Holy Baptism at St. Paul

On the Sunday the redeemed of St. Paul celebrated the Baptism of Our Lord, as well as their Baptisms, they also were blessed to baptize into this same Christian faith in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, young Paul Lee Hitt.

Pictured are, from left, Joey and Sarah Harkrider (sponsors), Paul Lee Hitt, Rev. John Heckmann, and Debbie and Michael Hohle (sponsors).



HAPPENINGS

DUMAS

Holy Baptism at St. John's

Kennedy Opal Friese was recently baptized into the Christian faith and family of St. John's. Kennedy is pictured with parents Brady and Faith Friese and Rev. Troy D. Scroggins.



BRADY

Dedication of new crucifix

Mount Calvary dedicated the new crucifix for their sanctuary on Jan. 7.



FLOWER MOUND

A Celebration of the Baptism of Our Lord

The congregation of Lamb of God celebrated the Baptism of Our Lord on Jan. 14 with a remembrance of each baptism performed in their parish during the previous year. A rock was decorated with each person's name and a unique cross design. The rocks were then placed in the baptismal font so people can pray for the families. Those who were celebrated (pictured with their families), were also able to take home their rock as a keepsake. Rev. Dr. Rance Settle, Lamb of God pastor, noted that it has been amazing to see how many the Lord brought to faith at Lamb of God in 2023.

SAN ANTONIO

Crown of Life's 40th Anniversary

Where do we begin? That's easy — on Sunday, Jan. 15, 1984. That's when the official charter of Crown of Life Evangelical Lutheran Church was signed in the temporary location on Blanco Road, marking the beginning of a new LCMS congregation on the north side of San Antonio.

But the 40 years since were celebrated over the weekend of Jan. 13–14. It was a rice occasion! It was a wonderful occasion! It was a greatly enjoyed occasion! It will be a long-remembered occasion! And our 40th Anniversary Challenge Coin was a perfect remembrance appropriate in our military city, declaring our theme Scripture: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope" (Hebrews 10:23).

On Saturday afternoon and evening, our Community Life Center (CLC) was filled with greetings and hugs, with laughter and smiles, and with stories spoken and enjoyed. Our CLC was decorated with an interesting and informative timeline of Crown of Life's first 40 years.

We were joined by 11 of the original, charter-signing members, who read us psalms when they were introduced. We were also joined by Rev. Paul and Jeanne Short (among those charter members) and heard from Pastor Short the story and various stories of our congregation's beginnings. In addition, long-time Crown of Life member Darlene Dague told us about the Classen-Steubing ranch (her family's ranch since the 1880s), upon which the Stone Oak development and Crown of Life were built.

Also joining us were previous Crown of Life members from nearby and across Texas and far away (including New York, Florida, Missouri, Indiana, Arkansas and Ohio). We were joined by former DCE Tommy Moll and his wife, Laura, and by three of Senior Pastor Rev. Mark Barz's four children, who were all confirmed in the Lutheran faith here at Crown of Life. In addition, several present and former members were with us as musicians: Reilly Murphy (violin), Rev. Ken Bunge (trumpet) and Samantha Levenhagen (harp).

In our Evening Prayer worship on Saturday, our guest preacher was Rev. Jason Kaspar, pastor of Mount Calvary, LaGrange. He is the most recent Crown of Life member to attend seminary. On Sunday morning, the guest preacher in our two Divine Services was Rev. Dr. David Maxwell, the first of eight Crown of Life members attending seminary with prayers and financial support to become an LCMS pastor. Maxwell currently serves as the Louis A. Fincke and Anna B. Shine Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Finally, we were joined by Becca Jones, executive director of our Texas District Church Extension Fund, to help us give thanks for debt freedom after full repayment of our \$1.7 million loan on our Community Life Center. (Although many had a few moments of concern when we learned from Becca that we were — can you believe it? — \$40 short on the final payment.) Thankfully, a number of children and youth and a few adults came forward with the necessary dollar bills!

For all of these reasons and more, it was a time to sing "Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow!"



Debt-free!

Becca Jones, executive director of Texas District Church Extension Fund, assists Rev. Mark Barz (left) and Rev. Brian Kachelmeier in the burning of Crown of Life's mortgage paperwork after paying off their loan in full.

PLANO

100 Days of School

The kindergarten students of Faith Lutheran School, Plano, recently celebrated their 100th day of school by dressing up like 100-year-olds.

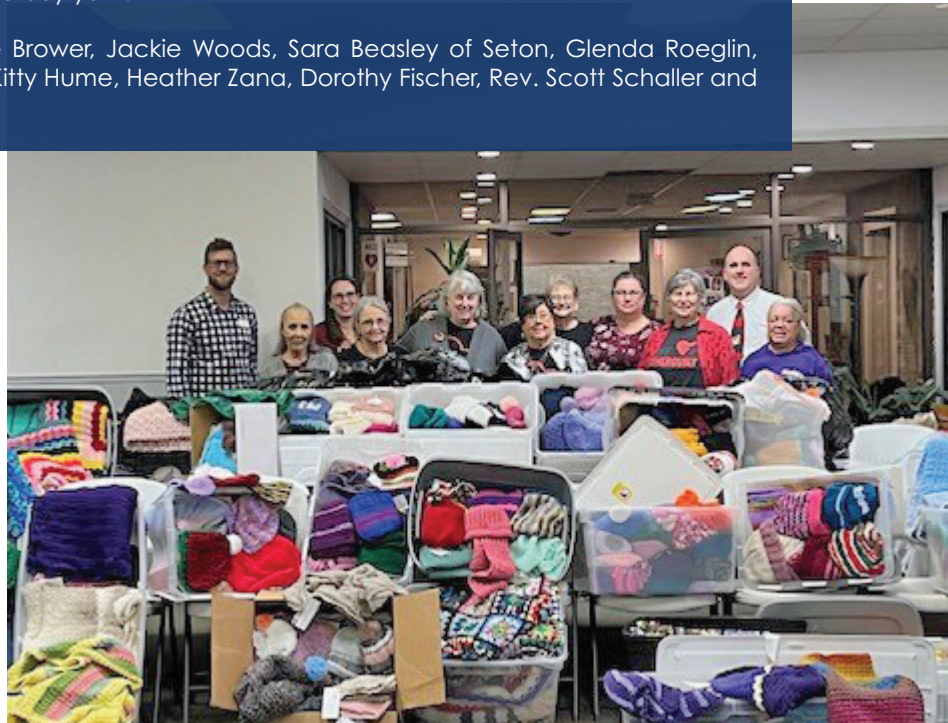


TAYLOR

Volunteers make and donate hundreds of handcrafts

Stitchn' Time, a volunteer group of 18 ladies from Trinity who meet once a week, had a prayerful blessing of afghans, caps, scarves, baby blankets and baby caps by Rev. Scott Schaller and Johnnie Brower. The total for 2023 is 338 baby blankets, caps and sweaters to Ascension Seton Hospital and 494 caps, scarves and afghans to Taylor ISD Coats for Kids. The ladies gladly accept all donations of yarn or money to buy yarn.

Pictured are, from left, Johnnie Brower, Jackie Woods, Sara Beasley of Seton, Glenda Roeglin, JoAnn Crivello, Shirley Eleanor, Kitty Hume, Heather Zana, Dorothy Fischer, Rev. Scott Schaller and Michelle Taylor.



March for Life



More than 150 Lutherans gathered at the Capitol in Austin on Saturday afternoon, Jan. 27, for the Texas Rally for Life. Before the rally, the group joyously marched through downtown Austin, holding signs, singing hymns and proclaiming life.

The day began at St. Paul's for "Life Magnified," which included a Matins service of prayer and repentance, and a lecture from Rev. Laurence White, senior pastor of Our Savior, Houston, who encouraged attendees to always trust the Gospel, to "unsheathe the sword, put on the armor and we will be champions of life in a culture of death."



Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller, senior pastor of St. Paul, Austin, gives the benediction during Matins. Also pictured is Rev. Peter Kolb, pastor of St. Mark, Waco, and Texas District life coordinator, who preached.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Congratulations to the following couples, who are celebrating marriages of 50 years or more:

Concordia, San Antonio

Gary and Debbie Juhl

55 years, March 29



Gary and Debbie Juhl



Archie and Janet Harlow

Gethsemane, Houston

Stuart and Barbara Chase

69 years, March 3



Elwood and Jeanne Harmon

Grace, Killeen

Tal and Carole Anderson

60 years, Jan. 25

Elwood and Jeanne Harmon

63 years, Dec. 30

Ray and Elfie Holloway

60 years, Jan. 31

Mount Calvary, Brady

Archie and Janet Harlow

50 years, Jan. 5

Mount Calvary, La Grange

Martin and Karen Koopman

50 years, March

James and Mary Walker

56 years, March

St. Matthew, Westfield

Bob and Jeanne Langley

51 years, Feb. 17

Gordon and Peg Munson

69 years, Feb. 12

St. Paul, The Grove

Stan and Janice Dake

54 years, March 26

Aubrey and Dorothy Richter

73 years, March 3



Tal and Carole Anderson



Ray and Elfie Holloway

Celebrating Lutheran schools



Dr. Bill Hinz
Director, School Ministry

Our Lutheran schools are a great place to connect with one another — our students, faculties and families, along with our communities. But most important is for us all to be connected as members of Christ's family because of the **life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ**. By His forgiveness we are made brothers and sisters in Christ.

Each year we have the opportunity to celebrate this wonderful connection within our schools. National Lutheran Schools Week was held Jan. 21-27. The theme was "Connected," from John 15:5 — "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Our theme emphasizes the importance of staying connected to God and to one another as we face challenges and difficulties, but also in sharing the joys and triumphs! It encourages Lutheran schools to cultivate an environment of faith, love, forgiveness and fellowship, where students can learn, grow and thrive. This connection is needed now more than ever in today's ever-changing environment.

In celebrating our Lutheran schools, students and classes connect in creative activities. Teachers and administrators intentionally connect with families. Schools and congregations connect in celebrating ministry partnerships. We thank God for all our Lutheran schools — to Him be the glory!

We thank God that in Christ we are all connected by HIS forgiveness.



Fourth-grade students at St. Paul Lutheran School, Fort Worth, write letters to congregation members, thanking them for their support.



Gades kindergarten through sixth of Our Redeemer Lutheran School, Dallas, celebrate National Lutheran Schools week with a western-themed chapel.

Mediator



By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

Fun fact: Did you know that Martin Luther King Jr. Day is the only federal holiday designated

by Congress to be a national day of service? According to an AmeriCorps survey, both Dallas and Houston made the top 12 metropolitan areas with the highest rates of formal and informal volunteering! Yay, Texas! (Information from Census.gov.)

Not so fun fact: Did you know that over 6,000 children die every day of hunger and hunger-related causes? (Statistic shared by Feed My Starving Children.)

With that in mind, Concordia's Service Learning and Campus Ministry departments collaborated to bring a food packing event to our campus on MLK Day. Sixty-five students and staff worked side-by-side to pack nutritious meals made of rice, soy, vitamins and dehydrated vegetables. It was a fun, community building experience that provided 20,000 meals that will be shipped to schools and orphanages across Haiti.

Completing the project and getting the meals to their destination involves hiring a transport company to pick up the pallets of food and equipment. Two trucks were scheduled to arrive at CTX. Upon arrival, they were instructed to call me so I could guide them to the exact location where they could load the pallets. They followed the instructions correctly, but their calls did not come through on my cell phone, and they had no clue where to go. So, Mhari of Mission of Hope contacted me and asked me to try to call them. I'm not sure why, but when I tried to call them with my cell phone, their phones didn't even ring. Then I tried to call them on my office phone, and it went straight to their voicemail. Ugh! Communication consternation, chaos and confusion!



Students help package food for Feed My Starving Children

Our only hope was Mhari. She was the mediator between us. The transport drivers would relay messages to me through Mhari, and I would relay messages to them through Mhari. It was a rather complicated process, but eventually it was successful!

Oxford Dictionary describes a "mediator" as a person who attempts to make people involved in a conflict come to an agreement; a go-between. That, my friends, reminds me of Jesus! **"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).**

Intercessor is a synonym of mediator. Oxford Dictionary describes an "intercessor" as a person who intervenes on behalf of another, especially by prayer. The Holy Spirit does that for us!

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26).

Celebrating in Corsicana



By Raelyn Pracht
CEF Marketing Specialist

It was a chilly and windy 18 degrees on Sunday, Jan. 14, when I arrived at Faith Lutheran Church, Corsicana. The weather outside was a contradiction to the warmth and inviting spirit within the church.

Along with Rev. Joe Mashburn and Faith's new CEF representative, Evelyn Riggs, we held a "Celebrate CEF" Sunday. However, there was an even better celebration to be had.

Before I gave my presentation, the church welcomed a new member into Christ's family through Baptism. As we were watching this little guy, I was thinking about what a blessing it was to be there to witness such a beautiful event.

It struck me how this specific event, this Baptism, was able to happen because of investments with Texas District CEF. Every investment, large or small, recent or in the past, has made this space and place possible. How incredible is it to know that your funds are doing this?

It's a simple concept, really. You place your money somewhere to save it and to earn interest. Have you stopped to consider what it is being used for while it's there? With Texas District CEF, you know that primarily it is being used to help provide low-cost loans to LCMS congregations here in Texas. Your money helps us say "yes" to new buildings, renovations and everything else to provide places for people to hear the Gospel, to provide

spaces for baptisms.

Of course, we know that God's hand is in everything we do. He will make even the smallest investment go far, something to keep in mind as you consider savings with us.

What will God have your money do next?



Pictured is the sanctuary at Faith Corsicana.

Church Initiative

Helps Upbring BeREAL Youth Feel at Home

One of life's rites of passage is getting your first apartment—a place to call your own. At Upbring, we want the apartments we provide the youth in our BeREAL Supervised Independent Living (SIL) program to feel like home, and we have two exceptional volunteers who since 2017 have been making that happen.

As of January 2024, Susan Jensen and Bob Daemmrich and their team of helpers from a local Lutheran church have furnished 90 student apartments in Austin and San Marcos with nearly 1,200 furniture and accessory items. This generous effort is an extension of a church initiative which collects donated furniture.

"Bob and Susan are absolutely amazing," boasts Lanisha Bell, BeREAL Program Director. "They are truly our BeREAL angels and are the real Most Valuable Players (MVPs)."

After Lanisha contacts Susan about an apartment vacancy and when a student arrives, Bob and Susan select appropriate furniture stored in their church basement, and then their team delivers it using Bob's pickup and 14-foot trailer.



Susan Jensen and Bob Daemmrich with the "Volunteer of the Year" award they received from the Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) in June 2023. The basement of St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Austin is the holding area for the church's furniture donations.

Longtime partner Mattress Firm partners with Upbring to deliver a new queen size bed.

Lanisha values Bob and Susan so much, that she nominated them for the 2023 Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) "Volunteer of the Year Award." And guess what—Bob and Susan won for the second time since 2018!

"It's quite an honor," said Bob. "We were overjoyed at the recognition."

"The words, 'Faith in Every Future' ring true for us," shared Susan about Upbring's creed and the church initiative. "We're helping people who had a tough time growing up as children in foster care. We're trying to give whatever help we can for this next phase of their life."

Because of your support and volunteers like Susan and Bob, young adults who age out of foster have the vital care they need to work toward and focus on their goals. To learn more about the BeREAL program, visit Upbring.org/BeReal.

Stay updated with the latest Upbring news and stories by following us today.

Upbring.org

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[t @UpbringOrg](https://twitter.com/UpbringOrg)

[i UpbringOrg](https://www.instagram.com/UpbringOrg)

You are invited to join us this summer!



the midst of God's creation! We can't say it better than you can:

"I know Camp Lone Star is a place I can send my child where she will be surrounded by young men and women of faith, who will lead her safely by example, while providing a ton of fun and a great experience for her." — Robin, summer 2023 parent

All campers ages 5-18 are invited to Camp Lone Star this summer! We offer everything from day camp, 5-night and 2-night overnight

At Camp Lone Star, our mission of transforming lives through adventurous, Christ-centered experiences is lived out by planting seeds of faith, cultivating Christian leaders and growing the kingdom of God. From playing rumble ball and going down the slip 'n slide, where campers get to simply laugh and play; to Bible study and devotions, where campers learn about God and reflect on His Word throughout each day — we believe in the power of camp and that God works in and through every moment as we pursue our mission.

We are blessed to be given the opportunity to provide a safe place for your camper to experience the love of Christ, build meaningful friendships, be intentionally led and encouraged by our summer staff, and spend a week away at camp that is filled with adventure in

camp, opportunities for teens to gain service experience, and more.

Registration for all our summer programs is open now! You won't want to miss out on the adventurous Christ-centered experiences that are waiting for you this summer!

Visit
camplonestar.org
to learn more and register today!

Our journey into Lent

As we “ease” into the Lenten season, our thoughts turn to repentance, our faith and the cross. As Lutherans, we believe that the Son of God is Jesus Christ, who came to earth as the perfect “go-between” between God and humanity. He redeemed us as sinners on the cross and pleads for us before the Father. We also believe that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live the perfect life He requires and to become our substitute.

We are reminded in scripture that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:33). Christ took our sin upon Himself and died on the cross, on our behalf. When we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, He bears our sins and gives us His forgiveness.

The path to victory is sure, but it leads through the land of suffering. Jesus is saying “it is right to call me Messiah; it is also right to call me the Son of Man, and the Son of Man must suffer.” Jesus indicated this plainly. Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross was not an option; it was not an accident. It was necessary so we have a path to salvation. The cross was the plan for victory for all that believe in him.

According to the prophet Isaiah, the coming Messiah’s suffering would bring peace and healing. Jesus suffered on the cross to save people from the consequences of sin. As the apostle Peter wrote: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). Jesus died on the cross to absorb all the wrath that we had built up. He paid our debt.

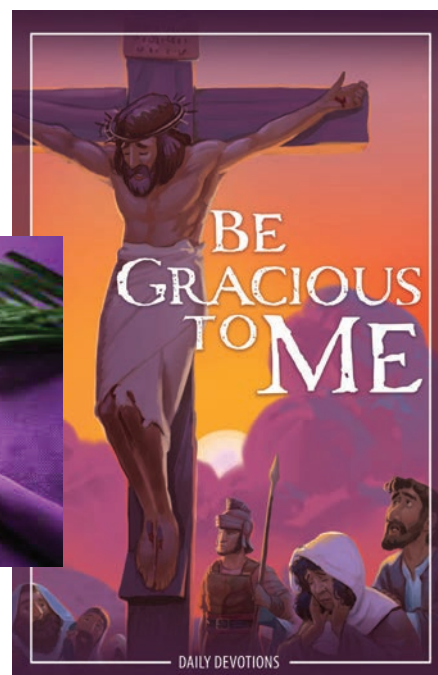
During the season of Lent, we should position ourselves in prayer and repentance through daily devotions and the reading of Scripture. Two Bible studies have been carefully written to acquaint ourselves with the story of the cross and to remind us how important that event was for all of us.

The first is titled “Lamb of God.” This series of Daily Devotions is offered by Lutheran Hour Ministries at lhm.org/dailydevotions. The devotions will help strengthen and encourage your faith as you do the same for others. Have them delivered right to your inbox or listen to audio podcasts — access them on your mobile device through the free app, or listen with Spotify, iHeart Radio, Alexa, or Google Home.

Seasonal devotions for Advent and Lent are available in English and Spanish. Perfect for personal reflection or to share with family, friends and congregations, these seasonal meditations will help prepare you to celebrate the true meaning of these seasons.

The second is “Be Gracious to Me” from Concordia Publishing House: cph.org. This series of Bible stories over 47 daily devotions repeatedly build on Psalm 41 and support Scripture passages that together paint a picture of how David’s words are now your reality through Christ and your Baptism. These devotions, starting with Ash Wednesday and concluding on Easter Sunday, are meant to be used with the “Be Gracious to Me” Lenten preaching and worship series. They are also available in English and Spanish and online.

Please seek out these studies to enhance your Lenten comfort and understanding.



Let us hold fast

t h e c o n f e s s i o n o f h o p e

A letter from the host committee chairman of the 43rd biennial convention

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I invite you to come to Corpus Christi for the 43rd Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League Texas District. The Coastal Bend, Mid Coast, Rio Grande Valley, and North Alamo host zones have been diligently working to provide a time for you to reaffirm that your hope is anchored in Christ as we hold fast to His promises, so that we can boldly witness to others.

We recommend that you arrive on Wednesday, June 12, so that you can participate all day Thursday in our on-site and off-site servant events, visit the exhibits, and browse the LWML store, all before the convention officially begins. Time to do these things on Friday is very limited.

I pray that you will be strengthened in your faith through the Divine Service with Holy Communion on Thursday evening, and as we study God's Word with our pastoral counselors. We will honor God with our Gifts from the Heart, offerings, and participation in servant events.

The convention concludes by noon on Saturday, giving you plenty of time to spend the rest of the weekend exploring the many attractions of Corpus Christi, like our beautiful bayfront and beaches, the Texas State Aquarium, and the USS Lexington Museum on the Bay. You can watch the sunrise over the beautiful bay right across from the Omni Hotel and enjoy eating fresh seafood at local restaurants.

Make your plans now to join us in Corpus Christi for the convention where, through worship and fellowship, all will have the opportunity to leave with a more loving, encouraging, and bold witness of our Lord, reassured that by holding fast (standing firm) in our one sure hope, Jesus Christ, we have the anchor that will sustain us to life everlasting!

Sincerely,

Judy Kunkel
2024 Convention Host Committee
Chairman



Convention Goal: Hold fast in Christ, our source of hope, living out our faith without wavering.

Convention Objective: Attendees will be strengthened in faith through worship and fellowship, honor God by showing love to one another, witness boldly anchored in Christ.

Speakers and Special Guests

Our guest speaker will be Debbie Larson, former LWML president (2019–2023). Debbie will also lead one of the Enrichment Sessions.

Wake Up with the Word will be led by Ruth Meyer – author, wife, mother – who will also lead one of the Enrichment Sessions.

Kayla Winkler, Christian Life Committee member, will present one of the Enrichment Sessions. Kayla is the author of our weekly meditations and monthly Bible study, found at lwmltxdist.org/christian-life.

2024 Convention Details

A QUICK LOOK AT THE SCHEDULE

June 11 – Preconvention EC meeting
 June 12 – Preconvention EC meeting,
 Board of Directors Meeting & Dinner
 June 13 – Registration, Exhibits, Stores,
 On-Site and Off-Site Mission Service open
 Worship Service – 7:30 p.m.
 June 14 – Wake Up with the Word
 Meeting Sessions
 Enrichment Sessions
 June 15 – Moving for Mites
 Final Meeting Session

MOVING FOR MITES

Our event for mites will be a 30-minute low impact stretching session held in the comfort of the hotel on Saturday at 7 a.m. It will be a fun way to start your day while raising money for the LWML Texas District mites.

Hotel information

The Omni Corpus Christi will accept reservations beginning March 1.

The group rate for all blocked rooms is \$149 plus tax and is good for one to four persons per room.

The convention rate is available until 5 p.m. on May 22.

For online reservations, use the direct link on our website at lwmltxdist.org/convention.

Reservations may also be made by calling the Omni's reservation line, 1-800-843-6664, and asking for the Lutheran Women's Missionary League Texas District 2024 room block or give code: 061024LUTHERANWOMENS.

If you need assistance or a roommate, please contact Housing Coordinator Helen Schneider at conventionhousing@lwmltxdist.org.

Registration opens on March 1, 2024

In order to take advantage of the discounted registration fee, registrations must be submitted or postmarked by May 7. Online registration is available at lwmltxdist.org/convention with payment by credit card through May 31. The registration form is available on the website. It can be completed on screen, printed, and mailed to the registrar with payment (check to LWML Texas District or credit card information). No American Express cards will be accepted. Please contact Registrar Alissa Elley at registrar@lwmltxdist.org with questions.

Choir

If you are interested in singing in the choir during Thursday evening's worship service, please check the appropriate box on the registration form. Practice time will be at 2 p.m. on Thursday in the Corpus Christi Ballroom.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Gathering items for this convention and the recipients are: Standard twin sheet sets (fitted, flat, and pillowcase). No twin XL or white color.
 Set of matching towels (bath, hand, and face cloth). No white color. Sheet sets and towel sets for Upbring Children Centers – Bokenkamp in Corpus Christi and New Life in Canyon Lake.
 Full-size body wash, shampoo, and toothpaste for Rainbow Rooms.
 Gift cards from Walmart and Amazon for New Life Refuge Ministries.
 Gift cards from Walmart, Target, and HEB for Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend. Please write the monetary value on all gift cards.

Questions? Please contact Host Committee Chairman Judy Kunkel at CorpusChristi2024@lwmltxdist.org.

Mission Service Opportunities

These on-site servant events will be available on Thursday and Friday: tacking lap quilts, tying fleece blankets, completing breast pillows, marking Bibles, writing notes of thanks and encouragement.

Off-site servant events will be held on Thursday.

There is no cost to participate and bus transportation is provided. The Mission Service Events Committee will contact you for your site preference if you indicate YES on your registration form.

Brookdale Trinity Towers Assisted Living Facility — singing, Bingo, painting fingernails.

Alameda Oaks Nursing Center — singing, Bingo, painting fingernails.

Ronald McDonald House — prepare lunch for the residents.

Hi Again Resale Shop (part of the Pregnancy Center of the Coastal Bend) — sort donations and place them in the store and tidy up the store.