

TEXAS

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M E S S E N G E R

The Texas District • The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Contending?



Rev. Dr. Jon Braunersreuther
District President

Have you ever disagreed with someone in your congregation? Maybe you're one of the blessed few who has NEVER seen something differently than one of your brothers or sisters in Christ, but for most of us, the answer

would be a definitive "Yes." So how do Christians deal with it, when we disagree?

If you've been following this column, you know that in the days since my election last summer, I have been writing about the impelling force that our common convictions have toward our common cause — reaching those who are far from God with the precious Gospel. They are convictions maintained and a cause pursued best when we work together in common community. (See 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Corinthians 5:14ff., Acts 15:1-31, and 1 Corinthians 12:4-31.)

Whenever we're engaged in a common community with others, there's the potential for disagreement. Perhaps the community that we share in our congregations and the disagreements that we have there are particularly emotional. Why? Because what takes place in our

congregations is important, after all. In fact, it's of eternal importance!

In fact, there are some things that are so important in our congregations that we should contend for them. St. Paul urges the Philippians to "(contend) as one man for the sake of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27) and the writer of Jude urges his readers "to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). Our common convictions are critical!

How we carry that out in our common community is also significant. Contend for the faith — yes — but never be contentious (2 Timothy 2:14; Titus 3:9,10), doing so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15), and maintaining a spirit of humility (Philippians 2:3-5). Since we are fallible human beings, we could be wrong, after all!

The many gifts that God gives to his church (1 Corinthians 12:4-31) mean that sometimes we perceive things differently. That's not a weakness. That's a strength of the body of Christ. By conversing with one another in a Christlike manner (Acts 15:1-31), we come closer to understanding — and living out — the absolute truth of God's Word.

Challenging one another in common community in a spirit of love and forgiveness — let's contend for that, too!



Mission stories

Visit txlcms.org/videos for a documentary series that travels the state of Texas, sharing stories about Lutheran ministries, the people who serve them and those served by them. Below are three of the many videos available for viewing.



Rev. Dr. Seth Davidson shares his story of growing up outside the church and how a simple invitation led him to a faith community that would change the course of his life. Through moments of hardship, unexpected support and God's faithfulness, Seth reflects on the people and experiences that shaped his journey into ministry.



"I think that He just taught me that at the end of the day, the only approval that matters is His. He's already proved that I'm proven by Him"

Rev. Ben Gonzales
Texas District Mission Strategist,
Area B



Hear a powerful story of redemption, faith and unexpected purpose as **Chris and Karen Merritt** share their journey from brokenness and church planting to creating a welcoming ministry through their therapy dog, Duncan. From overcoming past struggles to watching God grow Reclaimed Church, this conversation is a reminder of God's timing and grace, and the impact of authentic community.

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. Give now at txlcms.org/tpim. Thank you for your support!

Quiet faithfulness, lasting impact



Patrick Carlove

Chief Executive Officer

There is a kind of generosity that rarely makes headlines. It is not motivated by recognition or applause. It simply asks, "How can what God has entrusted to me serve His people?" Then it quietly gets to work.

That is the story behind a new endowment benefiting the robotics program at Prince of Peace Christian School, Carrollton. The individual who established this gift prefers to remain anonymous. That decision is fitting because the story has never been about one person. It has always been about the Lord's faithfulness and the opportunities He places before His people to serve others.

What began years ago as a grandparent's connection to the school gradually grew into a deep appreciation for its mission. Watching students grow academically while being formed in God's Word inspired a desire to invest in that work.

The first gifts were practical. They supported programs, improved learning spaces and provided resources for students. As time passed, opportunities to serve expanded. Wise counsel, steady encouragement and faithful generosity became a quiet but consistent presence in the life of the school.

Just as important, this generosity encouraged others to join in the work. Faithful stewardship has a way of multiplying. It reminds God's people that everything we possess belongs to Him and is entrusted to us for His purposes.

That conviction eventually led to the creation of a permanent endowment. More than a financial instrument, an endowment is a confession of hope. It says that the work of proclaiming Christ and preparing future generations is worth investing in long after we are gone. It is one way Christians leave a legacy that continues to bear fruit in the lives of people they may never meet.

At Prince of Peace Christian School, this endowment will strengthen the robotics program for years to come. Students will continue discovering their

God-given gifts, developing skills for future vocations, and learning that every talent can be used in service to their neighbor and to Christ.

The donor's name may remain unknown to many. The impact will not.

It will be seen in students who are equipped to serve faithfully in their homes, churches, workplaces and communities. It will be reflected in a school strengthened for future generations. Most importantly, it will point beyond the gift itself to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Our Lord often accomplishes His greatest work through quiet faithfulness. This endowment is a reminder that generosity rooted in Christ does not seek recognition. It seeks to serve.

As we reflect on this quiet act of faithfulness, perhaps the question is not simply, "What did this donor do?" Rather, it is, "What has God entrusted to me?"

Whether through our time, our talents or the resources God has graciously provided, each of us has opportunities to strengthen Christ's church for generations to come. Perhaps your legacy will be known by many. Perhaps it will be known by only a few. Either way, when our generosity flows from faith in Christ, God uses it to accomplish far more than we can imagine.

May we all be found faithful stewards of His gifts, leaving a legacy that proclaims Christ long after we are called home.



NACOGDOCHES



On June 28, Redeemer Lutheran Church recognized Lexie Choate before she departed for U.S. Air Force basic training at Lackland AFB in San Antonio. Lexie hopes to train as a weapons systems mechanic. Pictured are Lexie (center, wearing jacket) with LWML members who prayed for Lexie and blessed her pursuit of service to our nation. She is the daughter of Ashley Choate and granddaughter of Sharon and Pat Choate. The Choates are Redeemer members.

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).

The Texas Messenger is available online at txlcms.org.

HAMILTON



The ladies of St. John once again gathered to prepare meals for the Hamilton Community Center on July 13. These ladies are on the regular rotation to help feed up to 130 residents. They are grateful to serve and feed friends and neighbors in the community.

PLANO



TOP: Faith Lutheran Church welcomed 97 children to its vacation Bible school, held June 15–19. More than 65 volunteers led the students in a week filled with learning, worship and fellowship.

RIGHT: 12 youth were confirmed at Faith on April 26. Pictured are, from left (front) Eden Gefaller, Annalise Brockmann, Angelina Heath, Theadora Martin, William Jamison 2; (middle) Jameson Caffee, Joanna Gefaller, Adam Pace, William Wueller, Kayleigh Todd; (back) Elijah Gefaller, Rev. Mark Taylor, Rev. Timmothy Heath, Rev. Kurt Ulmer and Adelaide Heath.



On May 23, Faith Lutheran School celebrated its 14th graduating class. We are proud of their unwavering faith in Christ and steadfast commitment to the pursuit of what is good, true and beautiful. Pictured are, from left, Tim Merritt (high school principal), Tara Leicht, Michael Bork, Samuel Mahendiran, Colby Taylor, Jacob Cumming, Annaliese Jamison, Noelle Kim and Rev. Brandon Koble (headmaster).

DESOTO

John Hansen was installed as vicar of Cross of Christ Lutheran Church on July 12. Vicar Hansen, who is pictured next to his wife, Hiroko, is a student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. While Cross of Christ has a vacancy, Rev. Dr. Russell Hildebrandt will serve as John's supervisor. Vicar Hansen and 10 other Cross of Christ members have begun evangelism training with the Texas District.

HOUSTON

Five individuals from three families were baptized at Beautiful Savior Our Redeemer Lutheran Church on July 26. Picture are, from left (front) Logan Stockman, Rev. Russell Strimple, Caroline Carvajal; (middle) Eddie Christopher, Oliver Cabrera; and (back) Diego Carvajal.

DEVINE

The saints of Divine Savior welcomed the Sifuentes family into their membership on July 26 through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Rite of Confirmation. Parents David and Mikaela were confirmed while David was also baptized, and their children, Josiah, Nathaniel and Samuel, were baptized. The family is pictured with Rev. Randall Wehmeyer.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!**Gethsemane, Houston**

Ernie and Isabell Pali

60 years, Sept. 15

Lonnie and Kathy Angst

64 years, Sept. 15

Roy and Sharon Albe

69 years, Sept. 21

St. Paul, The Grove

Lloyd and Brenda Arlt

56 years, Sept. 5

Keith and Mavis Shafer

54 years, Sept. 10

Sy and Sherry Hartgrove

54 years, Sept. 15

Bobby Joe and Beverly

Wood

52 years, Sept. 20

Trinity, Old Dime Box

Gene and Elna Moerbe
65 years, July 29

HAPPENINGS

HILLSBORO

On June 28, Nicholas Joseph Davis was baptized at Christ Lutheran Church. His parents, Scott and Marianne Davis, and brother, Noah, were also welcomed into membership. The family is pictured with Rev. Pastor Michael Nemec. At right, David and Cassie Fowler were welcomed as members on June 21.



BASTROP



Epiphany continues to grow! Pictured with Rev. E.B. Holschuh are, (top) Logan and Adalynn Shoemate and their son, Bradley, who were received into membership on June 28; and (right) Ryleigh McElroy, who was received on July 26.



Four Texas District high school students attended **Christ Academy High School (CAHS)** June 14–27 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW). Students attended class, worshiped and enjoyed fellowship, getting a taste of seminary life as they contemplate becoming a pastor or deaconess. From left, Noah Martini (CTSFW student who served as a director), Mitchell Stephens, Dustin Matthaei, Adelaide Rivers, Ethan Matthaei and Rev. Christian Schultz (CAHS director).

PARIS

Rev. Dr. Mike Ramey was installed as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church on June 7. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Mike Mattil, Mark Elliot, Art Farrow, Larry Krueger, Dr. Mike Ramey, Scott Sundbye, Gordon Besel and Dr. Robert Preece.



Blessings at Our Redeemer, Dallas



Becca Jones

Texas CEF Executive Director

Our Redeemer, Dallas, celebrated an exciting milestone in its building expansion as a groundbreaking was held on Feb. 20.

The ceremony included a blessing of the project and remarks from its pastors, Rev. Brent McGuire and Rev. Adam Douthwaite.

Students Amelia Weadon and Ethan White also participated, while Ron Schuldt, endowment chairman and Board of Elders chairman, joined in the ceremonial turning of the soil.

The congregation is grateful for the support of Texas District Church Extension Fund (CEF), which is serving as the lending partner for this significant project.

"Eighty-five-years young, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and School, Dallas, continues to be used by God to advance His kingdom," Pastor McGuire said. "What a joy it is to serve where the goal of saving the lost and strengthening the saved is front and center every day.

"Recent growth has created the need for more Bible class, fellowship and classroom space, and Texas CEF has helped us tremendously in making real the dream of welcoming more into our community."

Additional celebrations at both the school and church occurred in May. On May 1, Dr. Kara Tobaben, head of school, shared on how the new addition — featuring six

classrooms and a multipurpose room — will support continued growth in the prekindergarten–1 through eighth-grade school. Although rain moved the school celebration indoors, students enthusiastically cheered for their school and enjoyed photo opportunities with ceremonial shovels.

The celebration continued on May 3 during the church's annual spring picnic, in which pastors and congregation leaders gathered for commemorative group photos, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the Our Redeemer family.

Our partnership with Our Redeemer demonstrates what can happen when congregations and their members work together to advance God's mission. From the first groundbreaking to the celebrations that followed, it has been inspiring to witness the enthusiasm and vision for the future. We are thankful for the opportunity to support this important project.



Thank God for our school leaders!



Dr. Bill Hinz

Director, School Ministry

Lutheran school leaders are blessed to be life-long learners. In preparing for another school year, our school administrators and their teams attended the Texas District Administrators' Conference, held July 20–22 in San Antonio.

These are unique and challenging times for our Lutheran schools. Each day students get to learn about Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Students study God's Word and learn of His great promises to us, especially the assurance of His forgiveness and new life through His life, death and resurrection.

We strive to continuously help students develop all of their unique talents and abilities. In our ever-changing world, our students need their foundations to be built on Christ through caring, Christ-centered teachers, and through their peers who also are reflecting the love of Christ.

To provide an opportunity for collaboration and learning, our attendees were challenged by our keynote presenter, Ted Neitzke, CEO of CESA6 (an

educational service agency) and mayor of Port Washington, Wis.

Our group was blessed and spiritually fed by our conference chaplain, Rev. Dr. David Bahn, Texas District congregation support specialist.

Patrick Carlove, CEO of Legacy Deo, presented on the federal tax credit scholarship program; and Laura Colangelo, Texas Private Schools Association executive director, shared the latest on the Texas Education Freedom Account program. Both of these programs will provide opportunities for more students to hear about Jesus.

We are blessed to have another group of talented and dedicated administrators and early childhood directors joining our leadership team. There are exciting times ahead, and this school year brings renewed hope and opportunities. We will rely on God and His wisdom and discernment through our prayers. We take heart that He will guide our leaders as they faithfully serve their students and their families and, most importantly, as they share the redeeming love and forgiveness of Jesus.



Quayana agayun



By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

"Quayana agayun" is how the Yup'ik and Chu'pik people of Hooper Bay and Chevak, Alaska, say, "Thank you God!" In these

remote villages by the Bering Sea, the people rely on hunting seals, beluga, moose and walrus; fishing for salmon, halibut and whitefish; and gathering greens, eggs and berries from the tundra. Yup'ik and Chu'pik people are truly grateful to God for the way He abundantly provides for them.

Our mission teams that visit these villages every summer are also grateful to God for how He is working in these villages. It brings a smile to our faces as we get off the tiny bush plane and are greeted with, "Welcome home. We are so thankful you come back every summer!"

We do VBS sessions twice a day for the children, with additional Bible study for teens and for the women of the community. This year attendance was up, and we rejoiced to see people eager to talk about their lives and how they need God's help and guidance. Suicide, alcoholism and abuse are all too common in these remote communities.

Four people shared with me that they had struggled with suicidal thoughts this past year. Three people stopped me on Sunday morning as I was walking through the village just to ask me to pray for their sobriety. JESUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE! He is able to do what no man can do, so please join us in asking God to transform the lives of all who are struggling with addictions, and to comfort those who have lost loved ones.

Psalm 9:1-2 says: "I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of

your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High."

We spend a great deal of time singing praises to God! We use a lot of action songs to help the children learn truths about God and reinforce the messages of the Bible. At the final teen session, I found myself crying as they belted out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship His holy name. Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship Your holy name!" What a privilege to praise God together, and to realize that because Jesus died for us, we will spend eternity praising his holy name! Wow!

Psalm 9:9-10 continues, "The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you."

Quayana agayun for being our stronghold!
Quayana agayun for caring for those who are hurting!
Quayana agayun for never leaving or forsaking us!
Quayana agayun that you are trustworthy!
Quayana agayun that people all over the world are seeking you in your Word!
Quayana agayun that we will spend eternity with you because of Jesus' sacrifice. QUAYANA AGAYUN!



‘Celebrate the Goodness of God’

The LWML Texas District gathered in convention June 11–13 in Austin to “Celebrate the Goodness of God.” All 25 zones were represented with delegates, and a total of 462 men and women drew strength from God’s Word, embraced the power of prayer and found purpose in servant events.

Special speakers included Rev. Dr. Jon Braunersreuther, Texas District president; Eden Keefe, national LWML president; and Deaconess Noemi Guerra, Texas District evangelist development leader. New Mission Grant recipients were chosen and a new mission goal of \$419,406 was approved.

Visit lwmltxdist.org for more information about the convention (go to “News and Events” and look for “District Convention” in the drop-down menu).

New elected officers

- ▶ Wendy Hart, Vice-President of Communication
- ▶ Elizabeth “Liz” Burnett, Vice-President of Gospel Outreach
- ▶ Lisa Snow, Recording Secretary
- ▶ Rev. Kelly Krieg, Junior Pastoral Counselor
- ▶ Terry Frazier, Treasurer

Also, Nancy Beckcom (chairman), Mandy Halbert and Frances Molitor were elected to the Nominating Committee.

Mission Grants adopted for 2026–2028

\$251,932 (includes abundance of \$26,932)

Mission Grant	Amount
Seminarian Scholarships for Texas Students	\$50,000
American Sign Language Jesus Signs Workshops	\$15,000
Sharing Our Savior, One Meal at a Time – Forged by Fire Services, Mandeville, La.	\$7,500
Spiritual Care – Upbring, Canyon Lake	\$10,000
Generating Power of Christ – Camp Blessing, Brenham	\$8,000
Bridge to Belonging – Camp Lone Star, La Grange	\$20,000
Mobile Ministry Van – University Lutheran Chapel, Bryan-College Station	\$20,000
Tailgate Outreach – Lutheran Student Center, Lubbock	\$15,000
Learning Center Flooring – Trinity Lutheran, Riesel	\$20,000
Deploying Lutherans Doing Life Together – Baylor University, Waco	\$20,000
Together We Go, Together We Grow – Expansion Mission Network, Rockwall	\$24,000
#ShineSanBenito Mission – The Table Lutheran Church, San Benito	\$15,500
Spanish Resources – Lutheran Heritage Foundation, Macomb, Mich.	\$12,500
Interactive Classroom Displays – St. Paul, Vernon	\$10,309
Christian Family Discipleship – Concordia Center for the Family, Ann Arbor, Mich.	\$4,123

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