



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Issues from the heart



Rev. Timothy Scharr
District President

For decades the conclusion of many movies, like those shown on the Hallmark Channel and Disney+, including romantic comedies, has been the same. Trust your heart is the perennial theme. Is this good advice? It's drilled into those watching television so often that many might think it is something biblical. After all, doesn't Jesus teach us to love? Hearts and love go together like Valentine's Day!

The Scriptures offer a different view of the human heart:

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child. **PROV. 22:15A**

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" **JER. 17:9**

Jesus understands it:

"But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person." **MATT. 15:18-20A**

Jeremiah warned about false prophets before Judah was taken into captivity:

"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak

visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.'" **JER. 23:16-17**

"How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, who think to make My people forget My name by their dreams that they tell one another?" **JER. 23:26-27A**

Rather than build a life from one's inner thoughts and heart-centered emotions, the Lord asks:

For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD to see and hear His Word, or who has paid



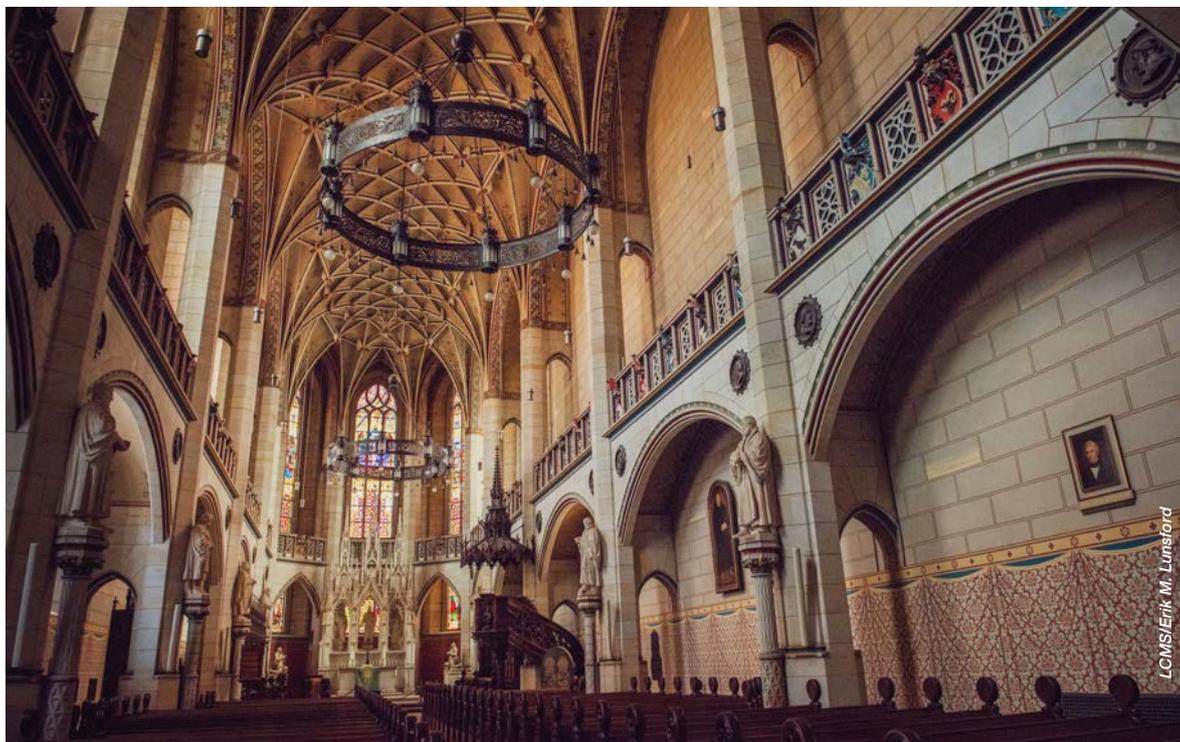
attention to His Word and listened? But if they had stood in My council, then they would have proclaimed My Words to My people, and they would have turned from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds. **JER. 23:18, 22**

Speaking further is Jeremiah, God's spokesman and prophet:

"But let him who has My Word speak My Word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the LORD. Is not My Word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks rock in pieces?" **JER. 23:28B-29**

Those who follow their own hearts are like the chaff which the wind blows away. **PS. 1:4**

See **MESSAGE**, page 8



The sanctuary of the Evangelischen Schlosskirche (Castle Church) in Wittenberg, Germany, is pictured in 2018.

LONSI/Erik M. Lumsford

Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura

Romans 3:23–25 says:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins.

The three common phrases of the Reformation are Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone.

Grace alone

The Law makes us aware of our failure to live as God intends. We need redemption! I repeat from Romans: "Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; we are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."



Jeffrey Fick
Schools and
General Executive

The term justified means guilty but pardoned. In the eyes of God, we are all guilty, we are all sinners. But because of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, God forgives us and pardons us from the punishment that we deserve.

This is the gift of God's grace! It is the gift of God's love. To forgive a misdeed, or to pardon a sin, is a gift of love that comes from the heart. Thus, we are redeemed by the gift of God's grace alone.

Faith alone

We receive this gift of God's grace through faith alone. It is not our faith or belief that saves or redeems us. Faith is God's gift of grace alone that redeems us. Jesus revealed God's forgiving grace when He was nailed to the cross and gave His life to redeem us from our sins. There is nothing we can do to earn or merit the gift of grace. The gift of God's redeeming grace has already been given.

We are not saved by our faith, but through our faith. The word faith means to trust in the promise of God to redeem and pardon us from the guilt of our sins,

because of what has been revealed to us through Jesus Christ. The only thing that we can do is know that God made us His own in our baptism, so that we are heirs of his redeemed kingdom.

Luther knew the guilt of his sinfulness before God. Luther knew that God freely offers the gift of His redeeming grace through Christ. He also knew the humility of reaching out his hand and being led through the gate of death to be in the presence of our risen Lord, as He had promised.

Scripture alone

God's Holy Word is the sole infallible source of authority for our faith. Jesus Christ took on the slavery of the Law and died to atone for our sin. God declares us righteous for Jesus' sake:

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." JOHN 8:36

Luther discovered that freedom through faith in Christ, and the gates of paradise opened to him. We rejoice in our movement from the slavery of sin to living in the freedom of eternal life.



Ready for new school year

The Southern Illinois District Annual Day of Spiritual Renewal was held Aug. 4 at Zion, Belleville. The theme was “Making Disciples for Life,” based on Matt. 28:19–20.

Thank you to Zion for hosting! The day began with a 9 a.m. Divine Service with Rev. Timothy Scharr, district president, serving as preacher. Rev. Dr. Mark Rockenbach, associate professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, gave a presentation titled “Unforgiveness: Forgive and Forget.” The day was a great success with over 200 church workers in attendance to kick off the 2022–23 academic year.



IN PHOTOS

Above: The following new workers were welcomed to the Southern Illinois District, from left (front row) John Shimkus, Holy Cross, Collinsville; Joseph Meador, Metro-East Lutheran High School, Edwardsville; Melanie Cooper, Trinity St. John, Nashville; Scott Moran, Trinity, Centralia; Rev. Matthew Christian, Immanuel, Murphysboro; Tina Kassebaum, Immanuel, Okawville; (back row) Anthea Ybarra, Trinity, Edwardsville, and Zion, Bethalto; Julia Chandler, St. Mark's, Steeleville; Kim Bimler, Trinity, Edwardsville; Amanda Ruhmann, St. John's, Red Bud; Katie Wollenberg, Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Evansville; Fallon Stearns, Immanuel, Murphysboro; and Rev. Brandon Metcalf, Zion, Bethalto.

Left: Dr. Rockenbach makes his presentation.

Hear the Good News with puppet friends

His Little Lambs Puppet Ministry is booking shows for this fall and next year.

Ventriloquist Karen Anders shares the Good News of Jesus using puppets, singalong Christian songs, a Bible story and audience participation with children in Sunday school and Lutheran schools, and other groups.

Karen, a graduate of Concordia University Nebraska, also offers shows for adult groups such as senior citizens and LWML, and special events.

Please contact Karen at chocolatemom3620@gmail.com or 618-806-4896. Leave a message if necessary. Karen would love to share Jesus at your church, school or event.



Help – and hope – for crisis pregnancies

One of the most frequently asked questions since early May, when a U.S. Supreme Court draft opinion that would overturn *Roe v. Wade* was leaked, has been, "How can we help mothers in a crisis pregnancy?"

First and foremost, take a moment to pray. Then consider what you can do to help a mother and her unborn child.

Sidewalks of Hope (sidewalksofhope.com/resources) has created a postcard with a QR code that can help guide a mother in need to many helpful organizations, churches and resources (both sides of the postcard appear below). While not an LCMS organization, Sidewalks of Hope has been well vetted and continues to be. If you are aware of a helpful resource, please let the Southern Illinois District Advocates for Life know and we will add it to our list of resources.

Contact Advocates for Life at sidlcmslife@gmail.com and we will help to supply your church with these cards. — **Monica Shannon, Advocates for Life coordinator**



Advocates for Life
ON THE WEB

- sidadvocatesforlife.com
- facebook.com/sid.lcms.alt




YOU ARE NOT ALONE!
You have options that are no cost, safe and confidential.

Flip this card over and point your "camera" at each QR code then tap the banner at the top to learn more.

COMPASSIONATE
NO COST
SERVICES TODAY!



We understand that you are facing difficult circumstances and may not know where to turn for help. We, the church, are here to welcome you and assist you in finding the help you and your family need. There is help with material and financial resources, as well as physical and emotional support.

During challenging periods in life, we *all* need the care and support of others. For you, a pregnant or parenting woman in need, the real, tangible support of others can provide hope, and help you see a way forward. We care for you and through the combined efforts of the churches and organizations throughout the area, we can help ensure that you find compassionate, loving support and assistance. We are here to help.

'Take Heart'



Retreat for teachers, workers is Dec. 2-4 in Carlinville

All teachers (commissioned and noncommissioned) and commissioned ministers are invited to attend “Take Heart,” a retreat presented by DOXOLOGY and the LCMS Office of National Mission, to be held Dec. 2-4 at Lake Williamson Christian Center in Carlinville.

The “Take Heart” respite retreats invite teachers and church workers to step away for a few days. The retreat will provide rest and renewal for all teachers and commissioned ministers who have served faithfully throughout and beyond the COVID challenges. The goal is to serve the servants, having them return to their schools and parishes refreshed for the work God has given them to do.

These retreats are fully funded by the LCMS Office of National Mission — there is no cost for participants to attend.

PLEASE NOTE: Respite retreat registration is available only

for teachers and commissioned ministers who are actively serving an LCMS church, school or other institution.

The respite retreat features:

- ▶ Worship in which participants can gratefully receive the Word.
- ▶ Mutual conversation and interaction of the participants.
- ▶ Exploration of spiritual care resources.
- ▶ Christian psychological tools/strategies for resilience and application in home, school and parish settings.
- ▶ Table talk among participants for important sharing, debriefing and problem-solving.

This retreat will provide encouragement for and enhance confidence in ministry, and strengthen all teachers and all commissioned ministers. Retreat participants often report, “This is just what I needed!”

Registration is open until Nov. 17 at doxology.us. Click the link at the top of the page.

LCEF holds art contest to mark SYNOD'S 175th



Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) has announced a student art contest in conjunction with the 175th anniversary of the LCMS. The yearlong anniversary celebration, which kicked off on April 26 with a Service of Thanksgiving at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, is being held under the theme “Only Jesus: No Other Name,” based on Acts 4:12.

Any student who attends an LCMS school or is a member of an LCMS congregation is eligible to enter the contest.

Submissions may be two-dimensional (e.g., drawing, painting, collage, graphic design, poster) or three-dimensional (e.g., pottery, leather, metal, beads, basketry) and will be accepted in three age categories:

- ▶ Kindergarten through fifth grade;
- ▶ Sixth through twelfth grade; and
- ▶ College (ages 18-22).

Submissions will be accepted Sept. 5 through Dec. 1, with winners announced in early 2023. Winning entries will be displayed at the LCEF booth during the 68th Regular Convention of the LCMS, set for July 29–Aug. 3, 2023, at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee.

There may be multiple winners in each category. Winning entries will receive:

- ▶ K-5: \$50 LCEF gift card
- ▶ 6-12: \$100 LCEF gift card
- ▶ College: \$200 LCEF gift card

Find out more at lcef.org/art-contest.

Submissions must be postmarked by Dec. 1, 2022. Send submissions to: Lutheran Church Extension Fund; Attn: “Only Jesus” Art Contest; 10733 Sunset Office Dr., Suite 300; St. Louis, MO 63127

Terms and Conditions

- The winners of the contest will be notified by Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Artwork is subject to being displayed at the 2023 Synod convention, the LCMS International Center and/or LCEF headquarters.
- Shipping of artwork is the responsibility of the participant. LCEF is not responsible for loss or damage during mailing. Art will not be returned.
- LCEF reserves the right to keep and distribute artwork as necessary for display.
- If the contestant misrepresents any information, LCEF reserves the right to reject the submission.



HOWARD AND LYNN were age 55 when they purchased some land outside of town. They thought it would be a good investment that they could later sell for a higher price.

Over the years, there had been development near the property and their land is now next to a large commercial store. They rent their property to the commercial store for overflow parking.

Howard: “We have owned this property for over 10 years. It has been a good investment and increased in value. We have received just enough rental income

in the last few years to pay the taxes. However, we now would like to sell.”

Lynn: “It would be nice if we could sell without paying a large tax. Our tax advisor has told us that if we were to sell, there would be a large capital gains tax. We also could use some tax deductions this year.”

The good news is that Howard and Lynn, working with their LCMS Foundation gift planning counselor, were able to create a special trust called a charitable remainder unitrust and receive three very nice benefits:

- ▶ Bypass capital gain
- ▶ Increase income
- ▶ Charitable deduction

Howard: “We are delighted with our unitrust. With our unitrust, we saved about \$36,000 in capital gains tax and almost \$18,000 in income taxes. That is over \$54,000 in tax savings!”

Lynn: “Plus, we increased our income. The land was producing almost no income before. Now, we receive over \$12,000 in income each year. This increased income is one of my favorite parts of the plan.”

Please note: The names above are representative of a typical donor and may or may not be an actual donor to our organization. Since your unitrust benefits may be different, you may want to contact Scott Radden, LCMS Foundation gift planning counselor, at 618-977-4049 or Scott.Radden@lfdn.org to get more information about how a charitable remainder unitrust may work for you.



Scott Radden

Older Adult

Keeping your memory sharp

Seniors with some forgetfulness can use a variety of techniques to stay healthy and maintain memory and mental skills.

Here are tips that can help:

1. **PLAN** tasks, make to-do lists and use memory aids like notes and calendars. Some people find they remember things better if they mentally connect them to other meaningful things, such as a familiar name, song, book or TV show.
2. **DEVELOP** interests or hobbies, and stay involved in activities that can help both the mind and body.
3. **ENGAGE** in physical activity and exercise. Several studies have associated exercise (such as walking) with better brain function. More research is needed to say for sure whether exercise helps maintain brain function, or prevents or delays symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.
4. **LIMIT** alcohol use. Although some studies suggest that



moderate alcohol use has health benefits, heavy or binge drinking over time can cause memory loss and permanent brain damage.

Exercise and hobbies can also help relieve feelings of stress, anxiety or depression. If these feelings last for a long time, talk with your doctor.

Dan Roth • Older Adult Advisory Committee

Blessings at Trinity, Hoyleton



ABOVE: The LWML of Trinity, Hoyleton, observed the 80-year anniversary of the LWML by participating in the annual Hoyleton Hofbraufest 5K on July 9. As one of the event's sponsors, the ladies provided tote bags filled with several donated items and a brochure about their group. LWML is often symbolized by the color purple, and members were happy to give purple T-shirts to all the Hofbraufest 5K run/walk participants.

Trinity's LWML supports

missions around the country and world. They purchase supplies to assemble school kits and personal care kits that are sent to those in need. In addition, they help locally by serving lunch after funerals, collecting food pantry items, supporting seminary students and working at the New Minden Braille center.

As the congregation's mission statement states, the LWML members are compelled by the grace of God to serve in the name of Jesus.



Leah Kleiboeker of rural Hoyleton was excited to receive a certificate and Cardinal baseball tickets as the 80th finisher in the run/walk. In celebration of 80 years of LWML, the ladies offered an award for 80th place. She is pictured with, from left, LWML representative Aggie Boehning, and race organizers Connie Holle and Deb Holle.



ABOVE: Trinity held vacation Bible school this summer, themed "GOD's Wonder Lab," and averaged 65 students per day, who were guided by 40 volunteers. The students and adults brought in \$888 to give to those affected by a massive tornado in Mayfield, Ky., on Dec. 10, 2021.

RIGHT: Trinity's parsonage needed a new roof. A generous group of volunteers worked together to tear off and replace the roof during some very hot evenings in July. Thanks be to God!



Congrats!

St. John's Lutheran Church and School recently honored staff for their milestone service anniversaries. Pictured are (and number of years served), from left (front row) Gerry Thompson (5), Kristi Martel (5), Eileen Seibold (10), Rebekah Liefer (25); (back row) Rev. Mark Nebel (15), Patty Brewer (5), Rachel Miller (30) and Stephanie Valleroy (10).



MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

When Jesus returns:

“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather the wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” **MATT. 3:12**

Salvation never comes from within, given the fallen nature of human flesh and the human heart. Following one's heart is not a spiritually healthy way to live, as we are likely to be led astray.

What is needed is to sit in the council of the Lord, to inquire from His Word. This is the only infallible guide for faith and life. It is why we pray regularly:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to You.

PS. 51:10-13

This is how the Lord handles heart issues with us.

St. John, Chester, celebrates milestone birthday

Henrietta Stallman, a member of St. John, Chester, celebrated her 100th birthday on Aug. 1.

A reception was held at St. John Parish Hall, where family and friends gathered and celebrated this milestone and honored her on her special day. Among those in attendance were her three sons, Don, Paul and Steve, and their families, including nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.



Henrietta Stallman (left) chats with a friend during her 100th birthday celebration at St. John, Chester.



Lutheran Witness District Supplement

Deadline for the December 2022 issue is Oct. 15.

Send news and photos to:
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or LCMS Southern Illinois District
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Belleville, IL 62221



Please ensure all photos sent are high resolution (300 dpi).