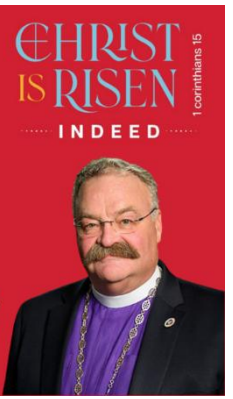
Christ Is Risen Indeed: Gearing Up for Another Convention



by Rev. Matthew Harrision, President of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

"Christ Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!" In 2023, our convention theme was "We Preach Christ Crucified." That was borne especially of the ever increasing assaults on religious freedom we had been experiencing at the hands of various levels of government. Come what may, like Jesus' face set toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), we in the LCMS have our purpose; to preach Christ's death for all and His wonderful Gospel, come what may.

This convention's theme is the resurrection. "He was put to death for our sins and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25, my translation). The resurrection is the absolution of the world (Rom. 4:19ff). The proclamation of that fact is our reason for existence. "Faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17 NKJV)! This world continues, so long as God wills, for that message to be preached and to create faith for eternal life. We will not shut up. We will preach repentance and faith to all, no matter who, when or where. We will not be taken "captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). We believe, and so we speak (2 Cor. 4:13).

LCMS conventions are remarkable events on many levels. I don't know how many times delegates have approached me toward the end of the convention and said, "I was told these were horrible, but I gotta tell you, I've had an amazing time, and I can't believe what our LCMS is doing all over the world." Or, "Pastor, I was prepared to give up on the LCMS before I came this week. My mind has completely changed. I'm proud to be a member of our church body." The LCMS went through terrible times, especially in the '60s and '70s, and our conventions reflected that. And it's taken decades to move past the events of 1974 and the Seminex movement. My main goal as president all these years has been to finally move beyond the pain and confusion of those years past. And God has been merciful.

Are there problems and challenges? Yes. But if you've read 1 Corinthians, Galatians or the Book of Acts, you will notice that the church always has problems of doctrine and life, and always will. The pundits point out problems and allege that the swath of difficulties is out of control. The LCMS is large. With 5,800 congregations, 8,000 pastors and many institutions — every one a sinner or staffed by sinners — there is always something that can be addressed. In times of challenge, I always used to point out that no matter what I've had to deal with, J.A.O. Preus had it a hundred times worse in the '70s. But then, Jack didn't have the internet to magnify issues millions-fold. No one is above thoughtful critique. But you'll be heartened by the faithfulness, unity and commitment to confessing the doctrine of the inerrant Scriptures that occurs at our conventions.

When people say to me, "I wouldn't want your job!", I say that well, frankly, I don't feel much different than I did as a young pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran in Westgate, Iowa. Town of 200, parish of 440, and a few thousand dairy cows. The voters' assembly I deal with is a lot larger, but it's all the same. You just can't please everyone all the time. But you can be faithful.

The convention is a phenomenon. Many delegates have been to multiple conventions and love to reminisce, laugh and recount events of the past. Pastors meet old seminary mates, professors and friends whom they may not have seen in years. Laypeople who are local leaders get a taste of the culture of the LCMS. "You are all unique in the LCMS … just like everybody else." The fact is, despite the hot issue here and there — this year it's the nature of seminary education, and I have no doubt we'll overwhelmingly affirm our residential routes and seminaries, while tweaking things so we can continue to be flexible when needed and not lose our longstanding best-in-class training of pastors — the convention will agree overwhelmingly on the vast majority of resolutions passed. In fact, most will be decided at 90%.

"Midwestern nice" generally prevails. In the first couple of days, things will move a bit cautiously. More time for debate will be allowed. But as the body realizes the pace has to pick up, it will gradually express a desire to move things along. I'll soon urge floor committees to limit significantly the number of resolutions they put before the body so we can have some hope of deliberating important issues more thoroughly. Some will act to slow the process so the convention doesn't get to decisions they might not like. Others — like myself — will encourage us to pick up the pace to get through the business. But the body will ultimately decide the tempo and when to speed up or slow down. Some issues will elicit passion. Characters will surface. Delegates will be hilarious at times without realizing it. Gifted humorists will break up the assembly. I'll make mistakes chairing, and after a few such mistakes I'll designate a peanut section to call me out when I screw up some parliamentary procedure.

Our Bylaws say conventions are to be inspiring. There will be great preaching, worship, choirs, musicians and learning, especially on the Gospel of the resurrection of Jesus. We will sin against each other, and we will forgive. And there will be plenty of recurrent humor.

The convention is king in the LCMS. We'll direct, set goals and decide on priorities. It's vital to realize the LCMS and its convention will not be exactly what any of us think they should be. But they will be what God gives us to be, together, despite our warts and sins and failings, so long as we stick to the Holy Scriptures and our Lutheran *Book of Concord*. And we will go forth, aggressive in our mission; diligent in supporting our congregations and schools, our pastors and teachers and workers; and doing all we can to uphold and encourage all our people to bear faithful witness to Jesus in home, family, neighborhood, church and world. "He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). "Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!" Amen!

In Christ,
Pastor Matthew C. Harrison

This article originally appeared in print in the May 2026 issue of The Lutheran Witness.

THE BIG PICTURE 2023–2026

– Your Synod's Governance Process –

PHOENIX, ARIZ. | JULY 18 – 23, 2026

Alleluia

69TH REGULAR CONVENTION

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED

1 Corinthians 15

1A Pastoral & Lay Delegate Advisory Lay Delegate*

1B Circuit Visitor Nomination

1C Proposed District Overture

Meeting(s) scheduled | Action taken

Pre-District Convention
Visitation Circuit Forum

one voting pastor and one voting lay* per parish

DATE:

District Overture

Circuit Visitor Selection

2A Pastoral & Lay Delegate Advisory Lay Delegate*

2B Officer/Board/Commission Nominations**

2C President/Vice-President Nominations

2D District/Proposed Synod Overture

Meeting(s) scheduled | Action taken

Workbook — Reports & Overtures — Nominations (OTHER THAN PRES/VP/CV)

Comment — Floor Committees — Nominations Committee

Today's Business — Resolutions — Ballot

Comment → **District Convention**

one voting pastor and one voting lay* per parish (plus multi-cong. advisories)

DATE:

Proceedings

Synod Overture

3A Pastoral & Lay Delegate Advisory Lay Delegate*

3B Lay Delegate Nominations

3C Proposed Synod Overture

Meeting(s) scheduled | Action taken

Pre-Synod Convention
Electoral Circuit Forum

one voting pastor and one voting lay* per parish

DATE:

Synod Overture

Pastoral & Lay Delegate

Synod Overture

4A Pastoral & Lay Presidential Voters

President Election

DATE: 6/6/2026

4B Officer/Board/Commission Nominations

4C President/Vice-President Nominations

4D Synod Overture

Meeting(s) scheduled | Action taken

Workbook — Reports & Overtures — Nominations (OTHER THAN PRES/VP)

Comment — Floor Committees — Nominations Committee

Bio Synopses

Today's Business — Resolutions — Ballot

Comment → **Synod Convention**

one voting pastor and one voting lay per electoral circuit

DATE: 7/18/2026

Proceedings

If your congregation is part of a parish with other congregations, it is represented together with them by common delegates and voters and will have to select them by some means.

* Each congregation of a multi-congregation parish that does not send the parish's voting lay delegate may send an advisory lay delegate.

** Districts may use varying approaches for officer/board/commission nominations.

For details on each step, important deadlines for the current triennium, and materials for informed participation, see "congregational governance" and "triennium timeline" at: *lcms.org/convention*

THE 69TH REGULAR CONVENTION OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED

1 corinthians 15

JULY 18–23
PHOENIX, ARIZ.

Alleluia

AVERAGE HIGH/LOW TEMPERATURE IN PHOENIX IN JULY:

106°F/ 82°F

WHO'S COMING?

VOTING DELEGATES	ADVISORY DELEGATES	ADVISORY Reps
985	181	180

TOTAL: **1,346**

DELEGATE BREAKDOWN

Pastors	COMMISSIONED MINISTERS	Laity
668	142	536

GETTING TO WORK

Number of:

68 ELECTIONS at convention

374 OVERTURES submitted to the president

11 FLOOR COMMITTEES

GET INVOLVED FROM HOME

BEFORE CONVENTION

GET the convention workbook and more details at **lcms.org/convention**

DURING CONVENTION

WATCH the livestream: **lcms.org/convention/livestream**

READ live news updates: **reporter.lcms.org**

LISTEN to interviews: **kfuo.org**

STAY TUNED on social media: **facebook.com/TheLCMS**

International Guests

60	40	52
GUESTS	COUNTRIES	CHURCH BODIES

Use It wisely.

COST OF CONVENTION

$934 per min.

CONVENTION TOTALS

CONVENTION BUSINESS

31.25 HOURS OF

WORSHIP

6.25

Convention Hall Exhibiting

35

Convention Essayists

REV. DR. JON BRUSS, president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

REV. DR. THOMAS EGGER, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

REV. KIRK CLAYTON, theology professor at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill

DR. MICHAEL THOMAS, president of Concordia University Irvine, Cal

Sourced from The Lutheran Witness with AI assist

Mental Health Habits (What you should be doing if you want to be mentally well)

I will spare you the alarming statistics and charts on mental health in America today and cut to the chase: We're not mentally well. We have alarming rates of fragile workers, failing students, and fractured families. The causes are many: the deifying of human desires (which has disastrously led us to equate sexual desires with identity), the denial of the body's role in identity (which makes us war against the body), the belief that freedom entails the throwing off of moral restraints (which leaves us listless in a sea of moral nothingness), the disconnection from stabilizing institutions like the church (which leaves us longing for belonging), the wholesale embrace of hook-ups, live-ins, and no-fault divorce (which cheapens and destabilizes relationships and perpetuates injustice against children), the diminishing and distraction of minds by media (which leaves us unable to think deeply and oblivious to the pressing needs of our families, neighbors, and community around us), and many more. In a word, we've rejected the fear of the Lord, giving the creature primacy of place before the Creator.

My purpose for this article, however, isn't to explore *why* we're not mentally well. My purpose is to tell you what you should be doing if you want to be mentally well. Before I tell you, though, I don't want you to think that what I'm going to share is going to make everything in your life peaches and cream. Jesus disabused us of any notion of a trouble-free life when He told us plainly, "In this world you will have tribulation…" (John 16:33). What I'm going to tell you is what we need to be doing precisely because this world is marked by trouble and trials.

If you want to be mentally well, do this:

1. Read the book of Proverbs.
2. Do what it says.
3. Repeat.

Before you scoff at so "simple" a prescription, try it. Start by reading the book of Proverbs. Read one chapter a day. Get acquainted with it. Then read it again. Pay attention to the longer sections and individual proverbs that speak to you where you are, that challenge you or correct you. Get a note card and write them out. Carry the note card in your pocket or post it somewhere you will see it often. Meditate on it. Get it in your head. Walk it through your life. How does it apply to your habits? How does it apply to your finances, your relationships, your spiritual life, etc.?

Then put the proverb into action. In other words, *do it.* Here's what you'll find, the

meditation will ignite the doing and the doing will drive the meditating. They will charge one another, and they will take you into healthy thought patterns and life practices. But here's the key: You have to do it because mental health isn't merely mental.

Good mental health involves wise life habits. Part of good mental health involves evicting false thoughts and establishing true ones. The false and misaligned thoughts need to be dragged out of the darkness of the mind's closets into the light of truth so that the light can expose and diminish the lies and half-truths even as it establishes Truth squarely in the mind's living room. This is precisely what pastors and the mental health counselors of Lutheran Family Service do and why they are so beneficial and necessary. But mental health is not and cannot be limited to the mind. Mental health needs action. Mental health requires doing wisdom, practicing it.

This is not about being "smart." Wisdom has nothing to do with algebra equations or the rules of grammar; wisdom is about living in line with reality, about doing truth. Think of it this way: Intelligence is building furniture or a barn out of wood; wisdom is running your hand along the wood's grain and not against it. Wisdom understands that God has established a moral grain in His world. Running your life against it will give you splinters. Enjoying it requires us to move in line with created reality's moral grain.

To live well in God's world requires practicing God's way. That's where the book of Proverbs comes in. Proverbs seats us before a brilliant teacher offering insights on relationships, wealth, spirituality, sex, and so much more. We are invited, even exhorted, to learn from this wise teacher, to think deeply on the instruction given and intentionally to apply it. Or, as I said above, read, do, repeat. Proverbs calls this *fearing the Lord*:

> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
> and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight (Proverbs 9:10).

This fear is not terror, but a deep reverence for the Lord and a profound appreciation for our place in the universe. We are not God. We do not get to define good and evil, right and wrong. We do not get to define reality and the universe. As creatures, and fallen ones at that, we must have these defined for us. Proverbs invites us to humble ourselves before God in order to learn His definitions, accept them, and apply them to our lives. I must again make this plain: Fearing the Lord is about *doing* His wisdom.

That's what we're driving after in this article, moving meditation on God's Word into action, into doing His Word. Let's consider a few proverbs to get the process started.

The wise teacher says:

> Leave your simple ways, and live,
> and walk in the way of insight (Proverbs 9:6).

Look at the action involved. *Leave* and *walk*. Leave the simple, naïve, foolish ways

endorsed and celebrated by the world and walk in the way of insight, understanding, and discernment. Do this with your finances by making a budget, eliminating the stupid and wasteful purchases that are killing your generosity and financial security (How many fancy coffee drinks from your favorite coffee shop do you need in a week? How many convenience purchases do you need from Casey's in a week?), and by prioritizing your support of Christ's church. Do this and you will experience financial stability and peace.

Do this with your thought life too. Leave the shallow, fake, self-promoting, and permanently insecure world of social media and walk in the way of Bible study. Learn the doctrine of Scripture and the confession of the church. Do this and you will discover a mental framework to see and understand the world as God sees it. And to say what should be obvious, seeing the world as God sees it is mentally healthy.

The wise teacher says:

> A slack hand causes poverty,
> but the hand of the diligent makes rich
> (Proverbs 10:4).

> As a door turns on its hinges,
> so does a sluggard on his bed (Proverbs 26:14).

> The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
> than seven men who can answer sensibly (Proverbs 26:16).

These words assume action (or the lack of it!). A slack, lazy, idle hand brings financial distress. A diligent and dedicated hand brings prosperity. Sometimes poverty happens suddenly through calamity or chance, but as this proverb observes, it often happens through one lazy choice at a time, choosing video games over homework, another hour in front of the TV instead of learning a useful life skill, meaningless scrolling instead of beneficial doing. What makes this poverty worse is the series of lies the sluggard has told himself (*The right job hasn't emerged. The system is rigged. I don't like the hours. The boss is inflexible. The job is boring or hard or pointless.*). He has denied his personal agency and cut himself off from wise counsel (Proverbs is full of wisdom on receiving good counsel) and filled his life with excuses and justifications to the point that he is incapable of seeing the accumulation of his foolish, lazy, (even stupid), choices. One lazy choice after another has led him into poverty and need.[1]

The wise teacher says:

> The vexation of a fool is known at once,
> but the prudent ignores an insult
> (Proverbs 12:16).

[1] These choices, as you may imagine, don't merely affect the sluggard, they also affect his family and his community who are either dragged into want with him or must now provide for him from their hard-earned resources or through higher taxes paid to the government who provides government assistance.

> A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
> but he who is slow to anger quiets
> contention (Proverbs 15:18).
>
> Whoever restrains his words has
> knowledge,
> and he who has a cool spirit is a man of
> understanding (Proverbs 17:27).

Here the proverbs counsel restraint and self-discipline. Giving immediate voice to your anger is foolish. Venting on social media is stupid. The world tells us that "letting your anger out" is therapeutic. It's not. It trains your soul to be angry (In fact, it wires your brain to be angry!). The world tells us spouting off reduces pressure. It doesn't. It trains your soul (and brain) to be constantly loaded and ready to explode.

Wisdom requires restraint. Prudence demands overlooking insults. Understanding calls for a cool head. Think about it. Who are you focused on when you're giving immediate and unrestrained voice to your anger? *You*. Don't you think that might train your soul to have a certain inward bent? Honesty requires an affirmative answer. Does this mean you can never be angry? No. But practicing prudence and restraint will help you be angry less. What should you do with your anger? It depends. You might need to repent. You can always bring it to Jesus in prayer. You can take it to your pastor to receive counsel or forgiveness or both. You can take it to a Lutheran Family Service counselor for guidance. What you can't do, though, is let it out on people. That's foolish and trains your heart and mind in exceedingly unhealthy (even sinful) patterns. And do you expect to discover mental health while pursuing unhealthy and sinful patterns?

Mental health requires action. It requires doing what God teaches. But isn't it wonderful that God has given us such wisdom to do? Isn't it wonderful that God shows us the way to mental wellbeing? But here's the question: Do we believe our Lord? Do we believe, as the proverbs teach, that wisdom is worth more than gold (see Proverbs 16:16)? Are we willing to work harder for wisdom than we do for gold (money)?

I'm reminded of what G.K. Chesterton famously observed, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried." What I've shared is difficult. It may prove to be the hardest thing you've ever tried. But where did we get the idea that wisdom was easy and mental health was the default? These things take work. Fortunately, God provides help along the way. He baptizes us into His church. He feeds us His grace. He surrounds us with people to labor beside us. God is good to us.

I close by returning to where I began. If you want to be mentally well, do this:

1. Read the book of Proverbs.
2. Do what it says.
3. Repeat.

- Pastor Conner

SATURDAY, JUNE 20TH, 2026

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH DES MOINES

2026 IOWA MARCH FOR LIFE LCMS RALLY

9 AM - MATINS PRAYER SERVICE

10 AM - SPEAKER

11 AM - LUNCH

12 PM - RALLY AND MARCH AT STATE CAPITOL

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GUEST SPEAKER
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We show up.
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Keeping in Step with the Spirit (Pt. 1): Love

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." – Gal. 5:22-23

When discussing the fruits of the Spirit, we begin with love because that is where God begins. There is no doubt about it that "love" is a confusing word today, and it carries with it a load of heavy baggage. And, for this reason, it is necessary to attempt to define "love". However, this task is not as easy as you may think. "Love" has eight different possible meanings in Merriam Webster's Dictionary as a noun, and "love" has four different possible meanings as a verb.

And this brings us to the question which the musical group known as Gliese asks in one of their more well-known pieces, "What is love…?" When we ask God what the definition for "love" is, He shows us by example because it is in God's eternal nature to love. 1 John 4:7,8-9 says, "love is from God… God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him"

Here, we receive a glimpse into the true nature and definition of love. The Creator of the universe loved you, O fallen person, so much that He sent His only Son to become like one of us, a creature. He died for you in order that you may live. This is how God defines love in action. This love comes from God, and we receive it only from Him. Similar to a glass which is filled by an external source, so also, we are filled with love from outside ourselves; from God.

The love which comes from within ourselves lasts only a short while. It is an emotion or desire which can come and go, but the love which comes from God is different. God remains the same yesterday, and today and forever. His love never changes, His love never fails, and His love is shown in this: Christ on a cross and an empty tomb.

The love which comes from God looks like what Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7). "Love is focused goodness on those outside ourselves." Love does not serve the self. It serves others, and, if we are to follow the example of Jesus, this means that love is even self-sacrificial.

To the detriment of self, we seek to put the needs and good of someone else above our own wants or desires. This definition of love is counter to the way the world speaks about it. Love is shaped like the cross, and we receive this love from Christ and let it flow through us to those around us. We must focus our eyes on Christ and so learn to love those around us as we desire their good as God has defined it

and not as the cultural norms have chosen for us.

However, many things can get in the way of this kind of sacrificial love. Fear or self-protection can cause us to mistrust others. The reality is that love is not as easy as the world may like to tell you. Those closest to us will hurt us through their sins, weaknesses, and failures. When we receive these injuries, we fear being hurt again and desire to protect ourselves.

However, John writes, "perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). This sounds too good to be true. How is this possible? Love can be difficult especially when you have been burned by it in the past. Prayer is important here to constantly reorient your life around the love of God in Christ Jesus. We let the reality of God's love for us soften our hardened hearts and prickly exteriors so that we may approach those closest to us: husband or wife, mother or father, children or grandchildren without fear.

In place of fear, you take a chance. Leaving the self-serving love of the world behind you, and taking up the cross which tells you that it is okay to be rejected again because God loves you as His beloved child. Then, when we risk being hurt again, we may finally be able to seek the good for the other person outside ourselves. Again, a risk occurs that you may even forget what the good that God has in store for you truly is. In a world filled with media, marketing, and info-mercials, we are constantly told what we really need in life.

However, those things which the world places in front of our eyes as necessary for a good life are, in fact, the same things which constantly seek to undermine the good life outlined in the Scriptures. In order to love one another, we must constantly calibrate our Christ-centered compasses by returning regularly to prayer, to reading and hearing God's Word at home and in fellowship with one another at Church.

"Love is from God." Seek this love from Him in prayer. Be filled with this love in reading God's Word and in hearing it in worship so that you may receive from the one who gives every good gift to those who ask. And so, this is the process to self-sacrificial love for the good of those closest to us. Turn to Christ - who is our example of perfect love.

Ask – in prayer for God to grant you a softened heart so that you may love those around you without fear.

Receive – the love of God for you regularly in worship so that your cup may overflow with love to those around you.

Then Love – in a selfless way seeking the good of those around you.

– Pastor Staehr

"What are you waiting for now? Get up! Be baptized!"(Acts 22:16)
By DCE Kathryn

40 years ago, on the night of May 18th in a NICU bay of Iowa Children's Hospital in Iowa City Iowa, I was baptized into the Lord's family with glucose sugar water. It wasn't in the middle of a church service. It wasn't wearing a beautiful baptismal gown passed down for generations. It wasn't planned. No pictures were taken to remember the blessed event. It was put into motion in a state of emergency, frantic unsure calls being made, unsure that the baptism would even be able to take place before I passed away. Earlier that Sunday morning my parents received a call from my doctor in Northern Iowa that they had just gotten me back after I had coded from heart failure. They didn't know what was wrong, but I had to be life flighted immediately. My parents choose Iowa City and drove frantically to drop my sister off with family praying I would survive the flight. They watched as an unknown to them LCMS Pastor baptized me with the only water readily on hand. NICU glucose water. No pomp, no extended family, no pictures. But that's okay. Because where the water and the word are present God acts! It is not us who choose our faith but it is Christ who has begun the good work in us. He is the author and perfector of our faith.

My parents weren't given the chance to wait for my baptism but also why wait? What is baptismal all about anyway?

There is much debate over when to baptize, at what age, with what type of water. Can you sprinkle, or pour? Or does it have to be a full submersion underwater at the age old enough to consent to baptism? Is it something we choose, something we do to show our obedience to God? What actually is happening? What is the miracle taking place? Is something miraculous even happening or is it simply symbolic?

What is baptism? To put it simply, baptism is the application of water on a person in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (The Holy Trinity). It is not this plain water alone that makes this a scarcement. It is the water with the word together that brings the Lord's promises of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Who gave us this sacrament? Our Lord Jesus Christ after his death and resurrection before his accension into heaven gave the Church the gift of Holy Baptism. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spriit." Matthew 28:19.

Who is baptism for? We all need baptism! "All have sinned and are not good enough for God's glory." Romans 3:23 (NCV). "Indeed, I was born guilty. I was a sinner when my mother conceived me." Psalm 51:5 (GW). We are sinners born guilty in need of baptism for the forgiveness of sins, yes even babies.

This issue has been much debated among the Christian denominations. But Jesus tells us that Baptism is for "all nations." Acts 2:39 states that baptism is "for you and for your children and for all who are far off." Further on in the book of Acts we see that whole entire households were being baptized. This meant all ages were baptized young and old, infant to teen to adult to elderly. Baptism is for everyone.

What does Baptism do? Martin Luther in our small catechism wrote of baptism, "It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare." (SC, Baptism, Second Part). But how can water do such an amazing thing? Martin continues with further explanation in the small catechism, "Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water." (SC, Baptism, Third Part).

Baptism brings us so many treasures. Baptism saves us, makes us holy, cleanses us, brings new birth and renewal, gives us a generous amount of the Sprit, makes us heirs, gives us confidence in that we have everlasting life. Brings us forgiveness of sins and our sins are washed away. How do we know this? Because the Bible says so. Read the following verses and note the bolded treasures there listed.

"Baptism….now **saves you** by the power of Jesus Christ's resurrection." 1 Petter 3:21 (GW)

"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her **holy**, **cleansing** her by the **washing** with water through the word." Ephesians 5:25-26 (NIV)

"However, when God our Savior made his **kindness** and **love** for humanity appear, he **saved** us, but not because of anything we had done to gain his approval. Instead, because of his mercy he **saved us** through the **washing** in which the Holy Spirit gives us **new birth and renewal**. God poured a **generous amount of the Spirit** on us through Jesus Christ our Savior. As a result, God in his kindness has given us **his approval** and we have become **heirs** who have the **confidence** that we have **everlasting life.**" Titus 3:4-7 (GW).

"Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the **forgiveness of your sins.** Acts 2:38 (NLT)

"What are you waiting for now? Get up! Be baptized, and have your **sins washed away** as you call on his name." Acts. 22:16

Why be baptized? "When one is baptized, he or she is joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The old Adam is put to death, and a new person, who lives by faith in Christ, is raised up. This death and resurrection sets the pattern and rhythm for the daily life of the baptized, for repentance and faith. Daily, the baptized child of God of every age is to repent, that is, to turn away from sin. Daily, the baptized then turns to Christ and clings to Him in faith for the forgiveness of sins. This is the rhythm of the new life given in Holy Baptism. It is baptismal living. It is the life of the Christian." (Lutheranism 101, pg. 150.)

To baptize means "to wash with water." There are many different ways to do this you could pour, sprinkle or fully immerse. There are some who insist on full immersion but scripture does not insist on this. We have freedom as Christians to apply the water in Holy Baptism in whatever way is fitting. Most Lutheran churches tend to pour the water. Baptism is for everyone and can be done in a variety of ways with whatever type of water is on hand. Tap, river, pool, or yes even glucose water in the NICU. It can happen right at birth, at a few months old, or at any age.

We all need baptism, and our baptismal birthdays are something worth celebrating! For on that day our faith journey began. It may have been a day filled with great celebration, beautiful white gowns,

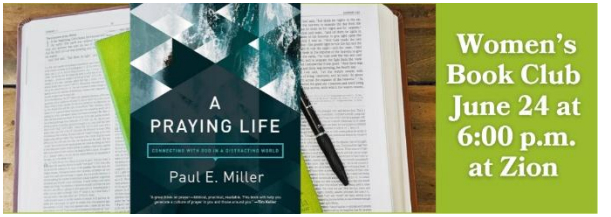
cake, pictures and loads of family and friends around. It may have happened for you at a baptismal font or like some of my former youth kids in a pool in someone's backyard. Where it took place, the details surrounding it are not what is important. What is important is Jesus commanded us to baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Where the water and the word are present God does the work bringing us the forgiveness of sins, rescuing us from death and the devil and giving us the gift of eternal life. Thanks be to God!

If you have more questions or would like to learn more about Holy Baptism, please reach out to Pastor Conner, Pastor Staehr or myself. If you haven't been baptized yet, "What are you waiting for now? Get up! Be baptized!" (Acts 22:16a.) If you have been baptized Luther speaks of reminding ourselves daily of the confidence we have through those waters of baptism in our salvation found in Christ Jesus. He mentions every time you wash you're to remind yourself, but also maybe consider celebrating your baptismal birthday. Message your children and grandchildren on their baptismal birthdays, tell them the details around the day, of the blessings and joy celebrated.

I never really knew the date of my baptism until this year when my dad wished me a happy baptismal birthday. I was in awe that the day I was baptized into the Lord's family was also the day that I was lost for a bit and had to be brought back from heart failure. Dead and given new life, and each baptism is entering into Christ's death. "When we were baptized into his death, we were placed into the tomb with him. As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should live a new kind of life." Romans 6:4. Our baptism brings us new life in Christ Jesus! We can all boldly say thank you Lord for saving me! Not by anything I have done but by everything Christ has done! Out of death into new life both now and for eternity in Christ Jesus! Thanks be to God!

Resources:

Same Page Summer Bible Reading Challenge:
Join us this summer as we read through the New Testament together in our Summer Reading Challenge. Pick up a copy of the plan in the fellowship hall at Zion. Questions? dcekathryn@gamil.com



Zion Women's Book Club:
Join us this at our next meeting Wed. June 24th at 6pm at Zion. We will meet to discuss Part 4 of *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* by Paul E. Miller. Questions? dcekathryn@gmail.com

Pray for our VBS:

June 1st through the 5th will find almost 200 young children entering into the Zion to learn of their Good Shepherd Jesus. Please consider spending time in prayer leading up to, during and after that week using the following prompts and adding to this list as the Holy Spirit guides.

- Pray for the children who will enter into Zion for the first time. That they would feel welcomed to learn about the love of Christ Jesus.
- Pray for every child coming to hear the Good News that they would grow in their faith in Christ Jesus.
- Pray for our many volunteers thanking God that they have given of their time, talents and treasures to share this Good news with all these children. That they would also hear the about our God Shepherd and feel encouraged, edified and grow in their faith as well.
- Pray for good weather, for protection, for safety and for supplies and resources to be abundant.
- Pray for those disconnected from the church to find Zion a welcoming place to join not just for the week but in the weeks and years to come.
- Pray for the parents to come to closing and hear the Good News found in Christ Jesus. That if they are far from Christ, they may hear anew the Good News and that families would grow together in their faith. Soften hardened hearts and let the word not fall on deaf ears.
- If you find you have time in the afternoons or evenings that week considering coming and walking the property to cover it in prayer. Walk the hallway of the Education wing and read the names of each child on the tiny sheep and pray specifically for each child.
- Add to this list and cover this years VBS in prayer both leading up to, during and following that those who have come would continue to come each Sunday and in the fall for Sunday School, Confirmation, Youth Group and Bible study.

Preschool Praises for May

As we wrapped up our school year at Zion Lutheran Preschool this month, we may have only had two weeks left of class, but we certainly packed a lot into them!

We enjoyed our final two chapel times with Pastor Conner, where we learned about the Ascension of Jesus and explored special items in the church, including the baptismal font, the pulpit, and the lectern. The preschoolers always looked forward to chapel and learning more about Jesus and His love for us.

We also spent time practicing songs for our closing ceremony with Miss Kathryn. The children enjoyed singing songs such as *My God Is So Big*, *I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy*, and *Peace Like a River* — which was definitely a favorite!

There was plenty of excitement in our classroom as the eggs we received from the Crawford County Nature Center hatched and our caterpillars transformed into butterflies! The preschoolers loved learning about life cycles and talking about what was happening inside the eggs and chrysalises. On our last day, we released the butterflies outside and watched them fly away. We also had chicks in our classroom for a few days before heading to the farm. The children absolutely loved watching and holding them.

During our final week of class, a few parents helped us kick off our farm-themed closing ceremony by bringing in big tractors and a straight truck for the preschoolers to explore. On our very last day, Matt Blackwell brought several Puck Enterprises barrel carts and gave the children rides around the parking lot and down the trail. There were so many smiles, laughs, and giggles that day!

On Thursday, May 14th, we celebrated our students during our closing ceremony. The preschoolers sang their songs, walked across the bridge to receive their certificates, and celebrated afterward with family and friends in the fellowship hall. This year's theme was *Growing in God's Love*, and that is exactly what happened during our time together at Zion Lutheran Preschool. While I love watching children grow socially, emotionally, and academically, my favorite part is watching them grow in God's love and seeing how much they learn about Jesus and His love for each of us.

With both a grateful and bittersweet heart, I wrapped up my final year at Zion Lutheran Preschool. I have served as the director and lead teacher for the past four years and will always cherish the relationships, memories, and experiences made along the way.

Next year, Melanie Enenbach will be stepping into the role of director and lead teacher. Zion Lutheran Preschool currently has an opening for the assistant teacher position. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Kimber Opperan at zionpreschoolboard@gmail.com.

- Amy Blackwell

ZION
Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

Thank you for loving these children and enabling Zion to share the love of Jesus with them and their families!

God says I am...

Lucy O. and Camden H. smile in the shirts they received from Zion Lutheran Preschool at their closing ceremony.

What a fabulous messgae for our children (and us!) to celebrate and to share!

This is what their shirts say:
God says I am...
Blessed in Jesus (Ephsians 1:3)
Made New in Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17)
Forgiven in Jesus (Ephesians 1:7)
Loved in Jesus (1 John 4:10)
Sanctified in Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11)
Chosen in Jesus (Ephesians 1:4)
Redeemed in Jesus (Galatians 3:13)
Alive in Jesus (Ephesians 2:5)
Justified in Jesus (Romans 5:8)

Thank you Amy, Melanie, volunteers, and preschool board for blessing these children with this message!

Do your end-of-life plans provide for your family and the ministries you care about?

A simple plan today, can bring clarity and peace tomorrow.

Join us for a **free webinar**:

Stewarding God's Gifts

Tuesday, June 16
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM CDT

Led by Leon Schoenfeld
Gift Planning Counselor – Iowa District West

Learn how your will or estate plan can provide for your loved ones and support the ministries you care about.

Scan or register or learn more

Register to receive the recording, even if you can't attend.

LCMS Foundation
TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

HYMNS OF THE SEASON

Three Hymns (30 Mins.)
Season: **Season after Pentecost**
Tuesday, June 16
@ 6:30 p.m. @ Zion

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

Sing and celebrate the hymns of the season!
An informal, family devotion setting. All invited!

Get equipped to be a voice for life.

Celebrate Life!

Learning Session:

Deputy Director of Lutheran Family Service, Kim Laube

Life and Legislation in Iowa

Lutheran Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

Thurs. June 11 @ 6:30 p.m.

Manning Library

LADIES GUILD

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

MANNING, IOWA

Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

Ladies Guild Minutes for May

Pastor Cooner opened the meeting with Proverbs 10, followed by a discussion. Pres. Nancy M. called the meeting to order. This month's birthdays and anniversaries: Happy birthday to Kathryn Schneider, JoAnn Thomas, and Kay Otto. Happy Anniversary to Russ and Cindy Ranniger.

The secretary's report was read and approved. Correspondence from Camp Okaboji indicates they are looking for young people to fill representative openings at the convention that week. Mite prayer read, with the box passed around. Financial reports were passed out for review.

Committee reports: 60 bags of clothing and 88 quilts were taken to the Orphan Grain train. 16 more quilts were given to area fundraisers. There will be no quilting in June and July.

The graduation breakfast will be served to our graduates. Breakfast casseroles and fruit. Becki Ehlers gifted us a Thrivent Card for breakfast costs. Cookie walk donations are needed for June 20th. Snack goodies are also welcome. Can bring to the church kitchen or to the park that morning (June20). Plates of cookies should be on 8 in plates with 6 cookies per plate.

Sue Puck and Cynthia Genzen reported on the district rally held at Coon Rapids. Pastor Riggert was a speaker. Table prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting adjourned. Lunch was served by Sue Puck.

HISTORIC TRINITY SUMMER SERIES

6:30 pm

"EXHAUSTED? REST."

June 25th	"A Look into Anxiety"
July 23rd	"True Rest in Christ"
August 27th	"The Gift of Limitations"

Cookie Walk

@ KINDERFEST: JUNE 20

Leave donations at Zion before 9:00 am on the 20th or bring them to the stand in the park after 11:00 a.m. on the 20th. Call Joni Kienast to help work the stand (712-210-4719) or see the sign up sheet in the fellowship hall.

VOTERS' MEETING @TRINITY

JUNE 6TH

FOR OUR LCMS CONVENTION
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

- INFORMATION ON CANDIDATES
- DISCUSSION
- ALL TRINITY MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO COME AND MAKE YOU VOICE HEARD

May 10th - Trinity gave out stuffed gifts for Mothers' Day given by the Trinity Algona Quilters.

May 16th - Principal Torreson of Unity Ridge Lutheran School (LCMS) came to present at Trinity.

UNITY RIDGE

MAY 2026 @TRINITY

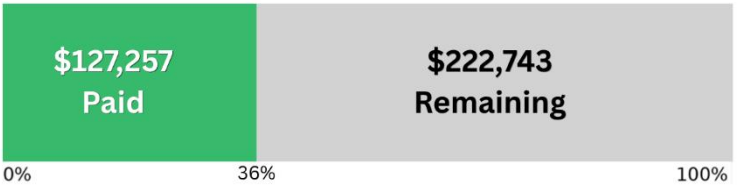
The Gospel according to Matthew

Digging into the Word

Family Bible Class

Roof Loan (20 year note)
Beginning balance: $350,000

Special gifts to the roof are welcome!



The sooner we pay it off, the more resources we have to invest in the mission and ministry.

CFO Update

CFO update:
Thru April Budget income total is $153,245
Thru April Budget expences total is $159,828
Total shortage through April is $6,583. This shortage does not represent total shortage. Council held back not sending budgeted gifts to LFS, Camp Okoboji, and Zion Preschool.

Estimated Monthly budget income needed $41,670. Four month total should be at or above $166,680

April income was typical to past years. As you can see we are still $13,435 short if you include the budgeted gifts that are usally sent out to all our other Mission comitments. Typicly during the summer months giving trails off some. So we are entering the part of the year that a little extra giving per month will have an impact at the end of the year. The council has started to discuss a couple of large expenses that may occur this summer. The repacement of the leaking Nave roof and some of the windows in the education wing. These are challenging discussions because our budget income shortage. I pray and engorage your support on all these nessary building repairs.

Acting CFO, Drew Puck

May Update from Camp

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP OKOBOJI IS STILL OPEN!
Registration information is available online at campokoboji.org.

PERSONNEL:
We continue to be hopeful that God will bring us the staff we need for the summer. We only have a handful of staff signed up. Please encourage youth (at least 16 years of age) and college students to consider serving with us. Those interested in serving at Camp Okoboji, or any LCMS camp in 2026 should complete a NLOMA profile. That is the first step in being considered for a summer position. Visit NLOMA.org for the profile link.

THANKS to volunteers and groups who give so generously of their time and talents in servingCamp Okoboji. Many, Many Thanks to the volunteers that joined us for volunteer weekend! I can't thank enough the volunteers that helped us with the Wittenberg Academy FamilyRetreat this year – we can't do it without you, thank you!

UPCOMING EVENTS:
June 4-7: J.O.Y. CAMP 1
June 10-13: IDW LWML CONVENTION
June 14-18: CUB WEEK 1
June 20: ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION
June 21-27: MINNEBOJI CAMP

Baumann is finally coming down. We're excited about the future, but it was time for the old building to come down. We hope to be able to announce its replacement soon.

UPDATE

www.campokoboji.org

SERVING THE LORD IN

Romania & Eurasia

NEWS FROM THE FERRY FAMILY

The Ferry Family serves the Church's Song near and far. As life finds a rhythm here in the Eurasia region (see last newsletter), the Ferrys are finding the joys and opportunities of serving with this team. In addition to the daily work Charles does of supporting the Regional Director and the overall Eurasia team, the whole family is discovering ways of putting their gifts to use.

Caylee turned FIVE years old in April, her cake from Momma decorated with a unicorn.

Charles and Cheryl traveled together to the first LCMS Eurasia Spain FORO (mission summit gathering) in Madrid, which was also a new country for them. Cheryl provided musical leadership for the daily offices and the Divine Service and introduced the concept of handbells to the Lutheran church in Spain. Charles attended as a member of the FORO and to preach.

Cheryl with her singers and ringers after the Easter Divine Service in Braşov, Romania.

The whole family continues to see that sacred music is a ripe opportunity to serve all over the region, and people are hungry to have theology proclaimed through such a powerful means. We look forward to seeing how the Lord of the Church will use this truth to carry His Truth into more ears all over Eurasia. Thank you for your partnership in this work so we can be here working as these opportunities are presented!

Rev. Charles Ferry serves the LCMS as the Associate Regional Director for LCMS Eurasia. The family has served with LCMS International Mission for 13 years: first in Asia and now in Braşov, Romania.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- The right servants to be raised up and sent to join us in this work, where we have too few at this time!
- Continued health and wellbeing for our grandson, expected in August to Katrina and Caleb

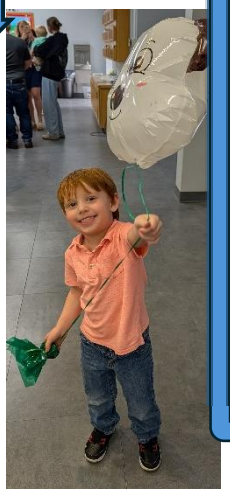
Snapshots of Zion

Leon Schoenfeld, IDW Gift Planning Counselor, joined Zion's council and endowment committee in May. See page 19 for a gift planning opportunity.

Zion fed gathered guests lunch on Memorial Day.

Zion honored our graduating seniors in May.

Zion celebrated our preschoolers in their closing program.



Upcoming Events @ ZION & TRINITY

Please Note! All times and events are subject to change

	Bible Study	**Sunday mornings @ Zion following worship (Digging into the Word: The Gospel According to Matthew)**
	June 1-6	**VBS at Zion (8:45 – 11:30 a.m.)**
	June 11	**Celebrate Life Meeting (6:30 p.m.) at Manning Library**
	June 16	**Hymns of the Season at Zion (6:30 p.m.)**
	June 18	**Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)**
	June 20	**Kinderfest/Cookie Walk (11:00 a.m.) at Manning City park**
	June 24	**Women's Book Club at Zion at Zion (6:00 p.m.)**
	June 25	**Historic Trinity Summer Service (6:30 p.m.)**

June Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. McKensie Bess
   Monica Christensen
   Pastor Jonathan Conner
2. Bristol Hass
   Haley Mullenger
   Janice Ress
3. Grace Asmus
   Dara Jorgensen (T)
4. Alexander Lingle (T)
   Brett Sanford
   Kelli Schultes
5. Warren Puck
6. Angela Albertsen
   Jason Rasmussen (T)
7. Wyatt Bandow (T)
   Jarod Gruhn
   Easton Woebke (T)
8. Adalyn Stribe
   David Vetter (T)
9. Harvey Blackwell
   Hayden Blackwell
   Kristine Bunker
   Jon Saunders
10. Luke Doyel
    Judy Jacobsen
    Hazel Opperman
    Steve Page
11. Jerry Brus (T)
    Ron Bunker
    Luke Ramsey
    Nolan Ramsey
12. Andrew Ferry (T)
13. Jodi Grimm
    Travis Neumann
14. Richard Irwin (T)
    Jessica Lingle (T)
15. Ann Ranniger
16. Michael Gore
    Ashley Hinners
    Greg Peters
17. Paul Boell (T)
    Lily Harris
    Dale (Ernie) Reinke
19. Pastor Daniel Vogel
20. Aubrey Alexander
21. Rodney Kurth
    Mason Vonnahme
22. John Blom (T)
23. Brooklynn Booth
    Bowen Bruck
    Mary Grimm
    Kyler Potthoff
24. Holly Borkowski
    Lana Georgius (T)
    Cooper Kienast
    Kristine Lingle (T)
25. Tanner Hansen (T)
26. Shirley Ahrendsen
    Russell Bruhn
28. Jordynne Bauer
    Carter Ehlers
    Yvonne Klindt (T)
29. Arlo Bornhoft (T)
30. Henry Kienast

Anniversaries

2. Jacob & Mallory Dreier
3. Austin & Kamaya Corbin
6. Ken & Gerry Stripling
7. Ben & Ashley Lorenzen
8. Jason & Kimber Opperman
   Bill & Sheila Simonsen (T)
10. Stan & Nancy Baack
    Brian & Deb Birks (T)
    Ron & Kristine Bunker
    Ryan & Heidi Crawford
11. Mike & Amy Hull
12. Stan & Joleen Spies (T)
15. Lynn & Sonia Nulle
26. Mike & Robin Heaton
27. Jerry & Carla Backhaus
29. Craig & Luann Langel

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Official Acts

Funeral:

Jeanette Ann Lerssen; Died May 4, 2026; Graveside: May 11, 2026; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Michael Robert Bruch; Died May 19, 2026; Funeral May 27, 2026; Pastor Jonathan Conner

In Our Prayers

Gene Mahnke, Gary & Joyce Schroeder, Martin Wanninger, Darlene Vollstedt, Mary Olson (Shelly Gruhn's mom), Carol French, Jim Asmus, Athena Bess, Kaui Meyer, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Sherri Steffes, Judy Reinke (Ernie's sister-in-law), Karen Vollstedt, Stacey Rolenz, Ashley Myers (daughters of Shelly Helmich), Robert Behrens (Dad of Dan Behrens), Amy Hull