

Teaching the Unchanging Truth to God’s Children

“Who are you?”
“I’m a child of God, loved and saved by Jesus!”

Dr. Sam Seefeld, principal of Trinity Lutheran School in Freistadt, Wis., asks this question of students hundreds of times during the school year. And the students willingly respond, often shouting with enthusiasm when appropriate.

Trinity, Freistadt, has been providing Lutheran education for more than 175 years. Yet despite its long history and its deep German roots, the school may surprise those who enter.

The current student body is diverse, including 40% who are non-Caucasian. In 2012, Trinity Lutheran Church saw an opportunity to serve the refugee Karenni population, who were immigrating from Myanmar and Thailand. The pastors, staff and members of the congregation all worked to help them feel at home and, most importantly, to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The school also welcomed the Karenni community and received a grant to bus the Karenni children from Milwaukee to Freistadt. Even after the grant ended, the congregation continued serving the Karenni through both the church and school.

Though the school suffered a period of decreased numbers, Trinity’s current enrollment of 270 reflects a 122% growth over the last three years. Families come from 32 zip codes across five counties. One decision that aided this diverse reach was participation in

the Wisconsin school choice program, which allows families to choose to direct their education dollars to a private school.

Yet, this growth has not changed Trinity’s mission. The school’s values and goals begin with Christ and take seriously each sinner’s identity in Him as a result of His death and resurrection. To this end, Trinity was the first Lutheran school in Wisconsin to adopt the Synod’s national theological standards. Along with this important and explicit focus, Trinity seeks excellence in academics and development of the whole person.

“We teach Jesus. We are unashamedly Christian. ... We talk about how the saving grace with the Gospel is a message that will never change,” said Seefeld. “Even as many of the school districts in our area and really

around the country continue to kind of ebb and flow with the tide of the changing social landscape, we will not change and our message doesn’t change, because it’s rooted in Scripture.”

Clockwise from top right: A student works in class on Oct. 20, 2021, at Trinity Lutheran School, Freistadt, Wis. Students read the Bible during class. Dr. Sam Seefeld, principal, visits students in a class led by teacher Kathy Adams.



Give God Glory...

... for the thousands of attendees at the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering, held July 9–13, who performed countless hours of volunteer service in the city of Houston. Youth groups donated blood, made recordings of books for Concordia Publishing House, and worked with LCMS Recognized Service Organizations like Lutheran Braille Workers and Orphan Grain Train. One service project included building beds — around 50 a day — for children in the Houston area. Read more at reporter.lcms.org/2022/in-all-things-20000-attend-lcms-youth-gathering.



A servant event at the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering

... for the Rev. Dr. Christian and Gudula (Lula) Tiews, LCMS career missionaries serving in Germany. As a missionary pastor, Christian works with the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Synod’s partner church in Germany, to reach out to Germans and Farsi-speaking immigrants from the Middle East. Learn more about the Tiews family at lcms.org/tiews, and read firsthand accounts from their work at facebook.com/christian.tiews.

... for the Concordia Deaconess Conference (CDC), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization that is an association of LCMS deaconesses and deaconess candidates. The CDC provides opportunities for spiritual, personal and professional growth and fellowship for deaconesses, while also supporting diaconal service in Christ. Learn more at concordiadeaconess.org.

One of the priorities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith. This is accomplished under the familiar name of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, which the Synod uses to describe the mercy work directed by the policies of the Boards for National and International Mission and implemented through the programs of the Offices of National and International Mission.

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You Make the Difference through LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You make the ministry described in this newsletter possible! Your prayers and contributions to World Relief and Human Care “Where Needed Most” help deliver our Savior’s mercy to people in need. You bolster tightly restricted donations from others to help fully fund important mercy projects, allowing us to report here the impact you are making in Christ’s name. The courtesy envelope in this issue allows you to send a future contribution as the Holy Spirit leads, when He leads.



Loving and Serving Others in Hong Kong

The members of The Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod’s Yung Shing Mission Station are passionate about serving their neighbors and sharing the Gospel, and not even the COVID-19 pandemic has been able to stop them. Throughout the last two years, some members have gathered at the church to sew face masks and package them with hand sanitizer and Gospel tracts. Then they stand on the busy street outside the church to hand out the packages to people passing by. Since Hong Kong continues to have a mask mandate in place for all public spaces, people eagerly accept this gift from the church.

During this time, church members sewed 1,000 masks, but it wasn’t nearly enough. Ann Siu Woon Lam, a church worker who serves at Yung Shing, was looking for a distributor that could supply a larger quantity. At the same time, Deaconess Carol Halter, an LCMS missionary who has been serving in Hong Kong since 1981, was contacted by an elderly man who used to attend a prayer group with her. The man’s children wanted to donate masks to an organization that would distribute them to Hong Kong citizens. Halter gladly accepted the offer, and two days later 10,000 surgical masks were delivered to her door.



Above: Ann Siu Woon Lam and Deaconess Carol Halter give masks and a Gospel tract to a man at the park. Right: A team from Yung Shing talk with people on the street on Christmas Eve and offer to pray with them.



“What an answer to prayer!” Halter says, noting that the church members have now given out all those masks as well.

“Some of [the people walking by] are quite interested in talking about the Gospel so that we sometimes talk with them for quite a while after giving them the masks,” says Halter. “We have a short survey for them, and then it culminates in telling them the Gospel.”

Last Christmas Eve, a team from Yung Shing talked with 120 people on the street, and 22 of

those accepted the members’ offer to pray with them. Lam reports that between 2021 and 2022, more than 200 new visitors — including 97 children — attended one of the church’s events. The majority of these came from contacts made through this street evangelism.

Thanks be to God that even amid a pandemic, He has continued to provide opportunities for Lutherans in Hong Kong to reach outside of their church walls to love and serve their neighbors.

Give Them the Catechism

We just finished the last of the 35 LCMS district conventions. I was able to attend most of them. Many of the conventions discussed the violence occurring in our nation. What ought Christians do about gun violence, murder or disrespect for the police? How should the church respond to racism?

At the LCMS Nebraska District convention, an elderly farmer pulled me aside. With a depth of sincerity and emotion I haven’t seen in quite a while, he said, “Pastor, I see young people and all kinds of people hurting. ... When I see they’re hurting or know they’re confused about God, I give ’em a catechism.”

I responded, “The little pamphlet of Luther’s Small Catechism?”

“No,” he said, “I give ’em the whole thing.”

“The full *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation*?” I asked.

“Yeah, Pastor. I carry a stack of ’em in my truck. You can’t believe what happens.” Then he shared an amazing story of the comfort and hope the clear Word of God has brought to people to whom he’s given the catechism.

After that, I went down to Concordia Publishing House and bought 10 catechisms (the new version with loads of great info and responses to contemporary problems and issues). Before the end of the day, I’d given three away to people who need Christ.

As I was reviewing the explanation of the Fifth Commandment, I noticed all the fabulous verses teaching us both to not harm

our neighbor and to do good to our neighbor and all people. The Bible and catechism firmly oppose violence. The biblical teaching distinguishes clearly between the role of government, the individual and the church. It condemns hateful thought, speech and action. Scripture rejects all racism and much more. The catechism reflects the Scriptures in asking the question: Who is my neighbor?

What shall we do in these difficult and violent times? Never forget that every day, in half the counties of the United States, LCMS pastors (5,700 active!), teachers and others, including LCMS parents, are using Luther’s Small Catechism to teach young and old that God condemns violence and commands us to care for our neighbor. God’s love is demonstrated most wondrously in the cross of Jesus who, precisely in the struggle of a violent crucifixion and death, worked forgiveness, life and salvation. And that’s why we love all people, especially the neighbor God places right in front of us.

In Christ,

Matthew C. Harrison

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Photos: Carol Halter, LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunford