



# CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT

*of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*

February 2021 mid-month *News You Can Use*

“Who poured the grape juice into this cup and left it on the counter?” I asked. Much of the grape juice had seeped out of the now half-full paper cup and had stained the countertop.

I’m sorry,” confessed my daughter Tina, “I poured it last night and then the phone rang, and I forgot all about it. I’ll clean it up.” After much scrubbing Tina was finally able to wash away almost all of the purple stain. But a faint purple spot served as an enduring reminder of her mistake. Tina and I discovered that paper cups are not designed to hold liquids for long periods of time. Eventually the paper cup becomes saturated and weak, allowing the contents to seep through.

That incident with the paper cup led me to think about the blessings that God gives me. In Psalm 23 David wrote, “My cup runneth over.” I believe he was referring to God’s blessings of hope, peace, strength, and comfort that he richly bestows on us.

God wants us to use our blessings to give him glory, to benefit ourselves and others, and as a witness to others of his grace in Christ. They are not to lie dormant and unused. If we don’t use our muscles, they become weak to the point that we can’t use them. The same is true of God’s blessings. Like the grape juice seeping out of the paper cup, our unused blessings may eventually disappear.

The man in Jesus’ parable in Matthew 25 who hid his talent rather than use it was condemned and punished by his master. His greed and mistrust were sins that stained his soul. If we don’t use our blessings as God intends, they may disappear. And nothing will remain but a stain on our soul.

Through His Holy Word, God is constantly filling our cup with his blessings of love, peace, joy, forgiveness, strength, meaning, and hope. In John 4 Jesus said to the woman at the well, “Whoever drinks of the water I give him shall never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” As we use the blessings of God’s grace, we don’t have to worry that our cup will ever run dry. For, God is continually refilling it!

Neither Tina nor I ever again filled a paper cup and left it on the counter overnight. I pray that this lesson always reminds me to never neglect to use and share my cup full of blessings. If I do occasionally neglect to use them as God intends, I have the assurance that any stains on my soul are completely washed away by His grace in Christ. And, as I again use them as God intends, He will make sure my cup never runs dry. Rev. Jeff Harter

***Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions supported by your church’s Mission Dollars to the District.*** “Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored.” Please remember in your prayers all of the LCMS pastors, deaconesses, and lay ministers that serve in health care settings and prisons as professional chaplains or as volunteers. These front-line workers are often exposed to the same dangers of infection and illness as the nurses and doctors are.

## ***ITEMS OF INTEREST TO SHARE***

**Central Illinois Lutheran Laymen League District Convention on Saturday, March 6 at St. John Lutheran Church, 901 W Jefferson Ave. in Effingham.**

You are invited to join us to learn from Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of the Lutheran Hour®, in a virtual presentation how we are using new technologies to share the same message of hope to all, especially in these difficult times. Registration is \$15 per person, with students and children free. Included in your registration cost is a catered lunch and refreshments. You will also learn more about Lutheran Hour Ministry’s Households of Faith resources and materials along with updates from CID LCMS and LWML representatives and Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty.

Register today – check your church office for registration information or contact Deloris Blessman, by phone (309)361-1461 or by email [delorisblessman@yahoo.com](mailto:delorisblessman@yahoo.com). For more information you can contact church ambassador/CID LLL VP Dale Wetherall by phone 217-259-4728 or by email [dalewet51@gmail.com](mailto:dalewet51@gmail.com). Registration is due by February 25, 2021.

**If you want to attend but are uneasy because of COVID.** We are making it available by Zoom. All you would have to do is contact Deloris Blessman (309) 361-1461 or [delorisblessman@yahoo.com](mailto:delorisblessman@yahoo.com) so she can send you the link. Greg Seltz with the Lutheran Center for Religious Freedom will talk at 11:30 virtually from Washington DC and Speaker Zeigler will present at 1:30. We are asking for a free will donation if you join by Zoom.

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### **LCMS Life Conference**

LCMS Life Ministry will host its first-ever virtual life conference March 19–20, under the theme “Making Disciples: Valuing Life.”

- Be equipped to speak up for the sanctity of life within your community and our society
- Gain ideas on how to care for all human life
- Interact with fellow Lutherans on Life Ministry topics
- Be a part of the LCMS Life Ministry community

The Life Conference includes a few live events, but most of this conference’s content can be accessed by registrants on demand. Basic registration for the conference allows access to content any time on March 19 or 20. An announcement is forthcoming concerning the schedule for the live sessions. Conference registration is open now at [www.lcms-life.org](http://www.lcms-life.org)

**The Lutheran Heritage Foundation** : Free Spanish resources for sharing the Gospel: Great news! The LHF (a recognized service organization of the LCMS) has a variety of FREE new resources available in the Spanish language, including Luther’s Small Catechism, The Bible with Small Catechism (combined volume), A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories, and “Jesus Never Fails” devotional tract. These materials are available to any LCMS church, mission or individual who wants to share the Good News with their Spanish-speaking neighbors. To order, send an email to [info@LHFmissions.org](mailto:info@LHFmissions.org) or call the LHF office at (800)554-0723.