



/ NOVEMBER 2019

# PEAKS AND VALLEYS

## DISTRICT NEWS

# Giving thanks

By Rev. Roger Schlechte  
District President



Several Psalms — for example Psalms 105-107 — begin with the words, “Oh give thanks to the LORD.” Psalm 136 repeatedly encourages the giving of thanks: “Give thanks to the LORD ... to the God of gods ... to the Lord of lords.” Then the psalmist provides reasons why we give thanks.

The writer to the Hebrews in 13:15 says:

“Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”

The encouragement to give thanks — always applicable to Christian living — is certainly appropriate toward the end of November as we celebrate Thanksgiving Day.

Those who travel great distances by automobile or who negotiate crowded airports on some of the airlines’ busiest days of the year demonstrate thankfulness for family. In our Thanksgiving gatherings, because of distance, work schedules, health issues or estranged relationships, not all members of the family may be present. In the midst of heartache and separations — in fact, in all circumstances — our Lord encour-

ages us to give thanks (1 Thess. 5:18). That becomes more challenging when hearts are sad.

Families frequently have traditions established with their Thanksgiving dinner and gathering: preparing traditional foods, checking for Black Friday specials, offering special prayers, enumerating blessings.

One tradition that has developed in our family, initiated by my wife, comes after the meal. While we are still at the table, pencils and pieces of paper are distributed. Each person writes the things for which he or she gives thanks. After these are placed in a container, it is passed around the table and each person draws one out and reads it. Sometimes one easily recognizes the author, other times not. It’s great family relationship-building time.

Those Thanksgiving notations are saved. Last year, we additionally shared the remembrances from several years ago. It was a great activity to see how God had been at work in our family over the past years. There were many



more reasons to “give thanks to the Lord!”

While Thanksgiving Day encourages thankfulness for the physical blessings that God provides, as Christians we also give thanks for the spiritual blessings given by God, especially the gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

St. Paul often gives thanks for the congregation to which he is writing. I give thanks to God for the church, for you who are our church workers and lay people. I thank God for your work in the kingdom. I thank God for the freedom to preach, teach and hear the precious Word of God.

Happy Thanksgiving! May God give you a heart filled with thanks for the physical and spiritual blessings in your life!

Pastor Schlechte  
[rschlechte@rm.lcms.org](mailto:rschlechte@rm.lcms.org)



## DISTRICT NEWS

# Blessings in Frisco



Rev. Larry and Eden McGurer are pictured with their children, Asher, Isaac and Joy.

Abundant love and support for Rev. Larry McGurer and his family were demonstrated in the joyful celebration of Pastor Larry's installation as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Frisco, Colo., this summer. The sanctuary was filled with people and praise! Choral music was offered by Christ Lutheran's choir; handbells by Summit of Peace, Thornton; and praise team singing by members of Renewal and St. John's, Denver, and Peace, Arvada. Rachel Andersen of Mount Zion, Denver, presented a beautiful saxophone solo.

Christ Lutheran Church, Frisco, is high above the hustle and bustle of Metro Denver, nestled in the midst of some of the most beautiful scenery in the Rocky Mountains. God blessed the congregation, which began in 1994, with its own church facility between Frisco and Breckenridge in 1996. Open Arms Childcare and Preschool opened in 2009 and is currently the only Christian preschool in Summit County. Its growing enrollment this year includes Pastor Larry's youngest son, Asher. Older brother Isaac and sister Joy attend the local Summit County grade school.

Please remember Christ Lutheran in your prayers and as you plan your time in the mountains, whether as a new resident or if just visiting. The congregation loves to welcome family-reunion groups, church youth groups, friends and neighbors! For more information, visit [christlutheranco.org](http://christlutheranco.org) or contact Pastor Larry at [larry@wearesalt.church](mailto:larry@wearesalt.church).

# Widmer installed in Pagosa Springs

On June 16, Rev. John G. Widmer was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry and installed at Our Savior, Pagosa Springs, Colo. Widmer is a Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) and will serve Our Savior through Lutheran Mercy Care Ministries, which is a prison chaplaincy and aftercare ministry designed to embrace and teach offenders and people dealing with drug and alcohol addiction about Christ's love for them. Learn more about this ministry at [lmcm.weebly.com](http://lmcm.weebly.com).

Pastor Widmer is also serving as the vacancy pastor at Grace, Moab, Utah.

Six pastors from the circuit and about 100 people from the community were present to witness this joyous occasion. Rev. Richard Bolland's sermon focused on how it is God's Word and His blessing



Rev. John G. Widmer

that sustains a man and produces the results in pastoral ministry.

The Rev. Andrew Packer, Our Savior pastor, ordained and installed Pastor Widmer.

# Schmidt installed at St. Luke's



Rev. Edward Schmidt was installed as pastor of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Golden, Colo., on Sunday, Oct. 6. Participating pastors included, from left, Pete Scheele (circuit visitor), Eli Lietzau, Jonathan Schultz, Schmidt, Dwight Hellmers (district third vice-president) and Robert Macina.

# Church plant is now LCMS congregation

**St. Andrew  
Lutheran  
Church,  
Albuquerque,**  
celebrated  
the official  
recognition of its  
constitution and  
membership into  
The Lutheran  
Church—  
Missouri Synod  
(LCMS) on  
Sunday, Sept. 29.

The church plant was started four years ago when members of nearby Faith in Christ Lutheran Church noticed a “Gospel gap” in southwestern Albuquerque. Several area pastors stepped up to serve the budding congregation during its first few years. Then in mid-2017, the Rocky Mountain District partnered with the Synod’s *Mission Field: USA* initiative to send LCMS national missionary Rev. Adam DeGroot to St. Andrew.

Sunday worship was held every week since April 2015.

“Today we constitute into The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and yet it has been for four years — 1,460 mornings — where the Lord’s mercies have been new each day,” DeGroot said during the service. “The Word of God is and shall be preached in this holy house on this day and every day until our Lord’s return.”

Along with DeGroot, participating in the constituting service were Rev. Steve Schave, LCMS director of Church Planting and LCMS Urban & Inner-City Mission, who served as liturgist; Rev. Roger Schlechte, Rocky Mountain District president, who presented the charter; and Rev. John Heffelfinger, Sandia South circuit



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

**“The Word  
of God is  
and shall be  
preached in  
this holy house  
on this day  
and every day  
until our Lord’s  
return.”**

Rev. Adam DeGroot

visitor, who read the LCMS Constitution membership requirements.

A special video greeting from LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison was viewed by the congregation. The charter was signed by all members of St. Andrew in attendance after the service.

A time of fellowship and food was held following the service, which was sponsored by the LCMS Office of National Mission.

Thanks be to God first and foremost, and also to all who attended and have supported and continue to support St. Andrew and the DeGroot family.



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford



**ABOVE**  
From left, Rev.  
Dr. Steve Schave,  
director of LCMS  
Church Planting  
and LCMS Urban  
& Inner-City  
Mission, and Rev.  
Adam DeGroot,  
LCMS national  
missionary  
and pastor of  
St. Andrew,  
Albuquerque,  
distribute the  
Lord’s Supper  
during the Sept.  
29 constituting  
service.

**LEFT**  
In a modest  
space in a  
strip mall in  
southwestern  
Albuquerque, St.  
Andrew is a place  
where people  
can find Christ’s  
forgiveness and  
salvation.

# Protecting religious liberty

The theme of the 25th annual SOAR Adult Gathering, held Sept. 16-17 at Bethlehem, Lakewood, Colo., was "Religious Liberty—Set Free to Live Freely."

Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C., was the keynote speaker. Dr. Seltz, former Lutheran Hour speaker, made three one-hour presentations and spoke of his concern about how our religious freedoms are under increasing attacks in a secular society.

A related topic was presented on the First Amendment and the separation of church and state. Seltz said he fully supports the separation of church and state because he doesn't want the government to interfere with the church, especially dictating

who the church can hire and for whom a pastor must perform marriage ceremonies. The Lord has given the church the unique commission to proclaim the Gospel into all the world, and the church should not expect the government to do the work God has given to the church.

Robert Hayes serves as the Trauma Nurse Specialist for St. Anthony Hospital in Lakewood. His topic was to discuss and give practical advice on how to stop bleeding in order to prevent the death of an accident victim. After his talk, two tables were set up to show people how to use a tourniquet and how to pack a wound.

Plans are being made for a one-day seminar on Feb. 8, 2020. Mark your calendar and look for information by email and in your mailbox.



Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz makes a presentation during the Adult Gathering.

## DISTRICT CALLS/CHANGES

### Calls extended

- Cordero de Dios, Denver, to **Rev. Juan Hormachea**, Parker, Colo., Rocky Mountain District missionary pastor
- Immanuel/Immanuel, Artesia/Carlsbad, N.M., to **Rev. John Frahm III**, Trinity, Boulder Junction, Wis.
- Mount Calvary, Gunnison, Colo., to **Rev. Matthew Martin**, Trinity, Reeseville, Wis.
- Trinity, Amherst, Neb., to **Rev. Quintin Cundiff**, Calvary, Rio Rancho, N.M.



### Calls accepted

- **Rev. Edward Schmidt**, candidate status, Rocky Mountain District to St. Luke's, Golden, Colo.

### Calls declined

- **Rev. Benjamin Delin**, St. Paul, Durango, Colo., from Redeemer, Cisco, Texas
- **Rev. Karl Schloeman**, Faith, Cottonwood, Ariz., from Mount Calvary, Gunnison, Colo.
- **Rev. Edward Schmidt**, candidate status, Rocky Mountain District, to Immanuel/Immanuel Artesia /Carlsbad, N.M.
- **Rev. Warren Wille**, emeritus, Longmont, Colo.



## January issue deadline: Nov. 15

Send news to Jan Hoener:

> communications@rm.lcms.org  
> 5446 Knoll Place,  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80130

## Rocky Mountain District Office

14334 E. Evans Avenue  
Aurora, CO 80014  
303-695-8001 • rm.lcms.org