



/ MARCH 2022

DISTRICT NEWS

IOWA WEST



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

God's mercy FOR SINNERS

Dear Friends in Christ,

Pastors and teachers often use an object lesson, which is a teaching method using a physical object as a visual aid. An object lesson helps us to see with our eyes what our ears are hearing.

Jesus often used object lessons in His parables in order to teach truths about Himself and the Kingdom of God. The apostle Paul uses himself as an object lesson in 1 Tim. 1:13-14:

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.



Rev. Dr. Steven Turner
District President

With himself as the object lesson, Paul teaches us about sin and mercy. He reminds us that he was a blasphemer — one who speaks evil of God. Paul had spoken against the name of Jesus. He identified himself as a persecutor of Christians. In his lifetime, he put many Christians in prison. He went so far as to cast the vote for the death penalty for Christians. The very fact that his conversion took place while he was traveling to put Christians in jail should be enough to convict him of his guilt. Paul uses himself as an object lesson of who he was before Jesus, a sinner.

But Paul takes the example of himself even further:

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 1 TIM. 1:15 NKJV

He says that “I am the chief of sinners.” Note he does not say “I was the chief of sinners” or even “I will be the chief of sinners.” He says “I am.” He is using himself as an object lesson to teach us about sin. Paul teaches us that we are sinners. It is not that we were sinners, nor that we will be sinners. We are sinners. We inherited sin from our parents. This is the original sin we inherited from Adam and Eve. There is also our actual sin.

We would be lost and condemned by our sin if it were not for the mercy of Jesus. Again, Paul also uses himself as an object lesson of God's mercy. Mercy is not getting the punishment we deserve. What did Paul deserve

See **MERCY**, Page 6

GETTING A GRIP ON



By Toni Larson
Director of Counseling,
Lutheran Family Service

I experienced dark times in my life as a child and at every stage of my growth into and through adulthood. I became a prisoner of my anxiety, especially in my earlier years.

I was gripped by obsessive thoughts and worries; phobias (in my case excessive handwashing to ward off germs); inability to slow my thoughts and worries which interfered with my concentration and sleep; ritualistic behaviors that I thought were necessary to fend off terrible things happening; and intrusive thoughts of frightening situations that had occurred in my life. These symptoms did not happen all at once. They were strung out over time and abated to just a very few occurrences in my mid-thirties.

Anxiety shows itself in all these ways and more. Diagnostically, anxiety disorders include generalized anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder. When we experience anxiety in a manner that interferes with our daily functioning, it is time to look at how to manage this condition.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) reports that anxiety disorders:

- ▶ Are the most common mental illness in the United States, affecting 40 million adults aged 18 and older or 18 percent of the population every year.
- ▶ Are highly treatable, yet only 37 percent of those suffering receive treatment.
- ▶ Develop from a complex set of risk factors including genetics, brain chemistry, personality and life events.

Managing the physical aspects of anxiety along with the thought processes that feed it can be extremely helpful to improve daily functioning and quality of life.

Managing anxiety physically

God created our bodies to respond in “fight-or-flight” fashion when experiencing anxiety. Physiologically, we prepare for battle, though there is no physical battle to fight. Our breathing becomes shallow and rapid; our muscles tense; our heart rate increases; we may perspire; we may experience stomach aches, weakness, headache and shakiness. The more we notice these effects, the more anxious we become, sometimes believing that we may be having a heart attack. While it is essential that we

take potential heart attack symptoms seriously, once we have determined that is not happening, it is time to look at how to manage these anxiety symptoms.

The best way to prepare for reducing the physical effects of anxiety is to practice relaxation so we can be ready when the signs of anxiety first begin to develop. Our body cannot respond in an anxious way if we are relaxed. Practicing progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing exercises are very effective techniques. Progressive muscle relaxation is purposely tensing, then relaxing muscle groups moving from toes to head. Deep breathing exercise is purposely breathing from the diaphragm rather than shallow chest breathing and monitoring inhaling and exhaling to slow down respirations. A great resource for this is YouTube which has videos that can provide hundreds of guided exercises that will address breathing and muscle relaxation. Peruse what is there and find the ones that work best for you.

Here are links for videos with examples of progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing:

- ▶ youtube.com/watch?v=ClqPtWzoxS (progressive muscle relaxation)
- ▶ youtu.be/Wemm-i6XHr8 (deep breathing)

To use these techniques when you need them most, you will need to *practice!* Practice before you are in a state of high anxiety so that when it's time to use these tools, you are familiar with the technique, and you know it works.

Managing anxiety cognitively

The “thinking” portion of managing anxiety involves dismissing irrational thoughts by talking rationally and reasonably to yourself. What do you know to be true, and how can you remind yourself of this truth? This is where my “go-to” Bible verses come in.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all under-

Continued on next page

standing, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. PHIL. 4:6-7

This verse was not in my repertoire when I was younger, but now that my faith has developed and strengthened, it provides me with immediate reassurance. God tells us not to worry. He tells us to come to Him. We can be assured that He will handle our situation in the way He deems fit. We can do our personal part, but beyond that we need to let go.

At a time when my children were high school age, my husband's job of 33 years ended due to reorganization of the company. I was working part-time as I wanted the freedom to be involved in my children's lives while they were at home. With the loss of his job came the loss of insurance benefits. I was able to access insurance through my work, but the cost took most of my part-time paycheck. My husband went almost a year without steady employment despite a wide search. The fact that he was in his mid-50s probably played a role.

As I ponder the situation, there was so little we had control over in terms of his finding another job. It was possible we might not be able to pay bills. We might lose our home, and might even struggle with putting food on the table. As I thought of those things as the worst possible scenarios, I had a sense

of peace that wafted over me. That was the peace of God's promise. If all those worst possible things happened, I was certain that God would take care of us as He always has. The most important part, that we stay together as a family,



There is a time when you may need professional help coping with anxiety.

Lutheran Family Service counselors are experienced, masters-level prepared Christian therapists who are equipped to help from a practical and spiritual perspective. Learn more about mental health counseling or reach out through our web site at LutheranFamilyService.org.

didn't hinge on whether we had our own home. We could manage a life anywhere as long as we were together.

I look at many situations that create anxiety for me now with that perspective: God has a plan for my life, and He will provide for me and my family. When I'm anxious, it means I'm momentarily forgetting God's promises. I can use this awareness as a reminder that I need to return to them. The Bible is filled with these promises. Perhaps several Bible verses are coming to you right now that may help you remember His promises. If not, do an internet search for "Bible verses for anxiety and depression," and you will find a plethora of reminders that God has you in the palm of His hand.

Listen to that voice in your head: what are you telling yourself about the situation that is creating anxiety? Is it true? Likely not! Challenge the negative thoughts and the "ain't it awful" thinking. Replace those thoughts with the promises of Scripture. Our thoughts dictate our emotions. If we can alter what we are thinking about our situation, we can alter our emotional reaction, including anxiety. Practiced daily, this type of thinking along with the physical tools of progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing provide a powerful response to combating anxious feelings.



Bible study is April 23

The Iowa District West Lutheran Laymen's League is hosting its Spring Breakfast Bible Study on Saturday, April 23, at Redeemer, Sioux City (3204 S. Lakeport St. in the Morningside area). The cost is \$15. Registration and breakfast will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the Bible study will conclude around 11:30 a.m. Both men and women are welcome to attend. More details will be in the next *Lutheran Witness* or on the LLL of Western Iowa Facebook page.

The Iowa West LLL board has agreed to again partner with Iowa East to sponsor and man an LHM booth at this summer's

Iowa State Fair. To have this booth, we need to have volunteers who are willing to commit to a three-hour shift on the days that Iowa West is responsible to provide workers for the booth. If you or members of a group in your congregation are looking at the possibility of attending the state fair on Aug. 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20 or 21 and would be willing to volunteer, please contact John Tews at valleyinsjt@gmail.com or 641-740-0126.

We would also like to remind you of our Lenten devotions, titled *Suffering Servant*. In the devotions, we encounter Jesus, the Man sent to redeem a lost world. Born in the flesh, Jesus became like us. Taking the form of a Servant, He emptied Himself. Bearing our sins to the cross, He gives us newness of life through His victory over death won for us by His resurrection of the dead. Visit lhm.org/lent.

Mark Astleford • Secretary, District LLL



Difference makers in California

In the case of the Lutheran Hour Ministries float in the famous Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif. on New Year's Day, one float has made a huge difference. For many years, it has been the only Christian float in the parade and has brought 4,000 to 5,000 Petal Pushers together to help decorate.

Other floats are also decorated by the Petal Pushers. Their hours put in working on other floats pays for the expense of the flowers for the Lutheran Hour float. It's a unique way of helping to make it happen. What is the result? Millions of people throughout the world watching the parade see the message of the love of Jesus.

The first time I took a team to decorate the floats and be part of the exciting and unique experience was for New Year's Day in 2003. Volunteering to decorate floats also allows us to see what happens behind the scenes of this phenomenal undertaking.

IOWAY teams of 22 to 38 volunteers have been involved each of the past 19 years (except for 2020). A huge thank you to Patti Anderson of Holy Trinity, Farnhamville, for her leadership of the recent trip to California Dec. 28-Jan. 4. I planned and organized the details and directed the team online and through text messages. Patti, with her amazing leadership skills, was the "feet on the ground." We made a great team!

Over the many years, the IOWAY team has also participated in a service project. We have worked at many Lutheran

churches in Tijuana, Mexico, with Melissa Salomon. We have made a big impact at the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles, where there are up to 8,000 homeless people.

This year we went in a new direction. We worked with LOT318 (Loving Others in Truth, 1 John 3:18) in Placentia, Calif., which was a great experience for our team. We are excited to support LOT318 with donations that will purchase a computer lab, which will be used by the students and their parents. LOT318 exists to "walk alongside at-risk youth and their community by empowering them to see their worth and purpose in this world."

Following are some comments from our team about their adventure.

"This was a fantastic trip. It is the third time that we have been able to attend. The Lutheran Hour float is a great witness to all who see it. But not only is the float a witness, we had numerous opportunities to share about Jesus. Several people saw our similar sweatshirts and asked what we were doing or who we were." **Matt Warnke**

"Our group was at LOT318 to support students in the Homework Club; others in our group scraped and washed windows at the Gomez Community Center being used by LOT318. I was so happy to see how LOT318 is supporting students through what they offer. Twenty years ago, gangs had taken over the area where we worked with the children, and it has changed for the better. The gangs

are gone from the area, and there is now great hope in this community with the help of LOT318." **Kim Warnke**

"It was fun to meet the different people who worked on the floats. Dick Gast (Petal Pushers chairman) was so appreciative of us hardworking midwest Iowa people and made us feel very welcome. I also appreciated the friendliness of the people who saved our parade seats all night so that we could enjoy our 'ring-side' seats on Colorado Boulevard.

"Letty (Gali, LOT318 founder and director) made quite an impression on me. She was so interesting and enthusiastic on wanting to make a change in the lives of the children who came there. I enjoyed working with the children and telling them about the beads on the Jesus bracelets and what they mean."

Loralee Fink

To sum it up, the Lutheran Hour float the IOWAY Petal Pushers and Letty Gali are making a major difference! I encourage you to be the one who makes a difference in your world.

.....

Ellie Menz

IOWAY Director

► 515-370-1159

► ellie@iowa-districtwest.org

► 807 W South St.
Jefferson, IA 50129



WANTED: Campers, staff

Greetings from Camp Okoboji! Plans are rapidly moving forward for our 2022 summer season. We are still recruiting summer staff and counselors.

Reasons to be on summer staff:

You will have lots of fun while living at camp for a summer, strengthening skills in leadership, followership, management, communication and teamwork. You learn so much about yourself. You're challenged to grow while practicing servant-leadership, creating lifelong friendships and serving in a Christian community. You get a walkie-talkie, a glance of the behind-the-scenes work of Camp Okoboji and free T-shirts.

Reasons to be a camp counselor:

Counselors have lots of fun. You're a role model who gets to make a difference in campers' lives. You learn so much about yourself. You're challenged in similar ways as the summer staff, and you also practice being a Christian leader — leading devotions, Bible study and prayer.

If you have a servant heart and desire to share your time and talents as a member of our summer staff or as a camp counselor, please reach out to Izaak Wendorff, Discipleship director, at izaak.campokoboji@gmail.com or 712-337-3325 or Kirk Warnke, executive director, at kirk.campokoboji@gmail.com or 515-408-5790 for more information.

Registration for our summer camps and family retreats is open and active! Register online at campokoboji.org.

Why youth camps: Youth campers are valued. They develop friendships with like-minded Christians while building up their faith. They are equipped to be faithful disciples in their regular routines with family, community and school.

Why family retreats: Family retreat campers participate in individual and household faith formation, develop Christ-centered friendships with other families and strengthen family relationships while in a Christian environment for rest and refreshment.



**Join us at
Camp Okoboji
this summer
as we live our:**

VISION: Refreshing body and spirit.

MISSION: We provide Sanctuary which connects guests with God and His Creation.

VALUES: Gospel, Safety, Excellence, Wellness, Stewardship, Legacy.

SUMMER

2022 SCHEDULE

June 3-5	Kids' Kamp (K-2nd graders accompanied by parent/relative)	June 26-28	Iowa District West Convention
June 9-12	Joy Camp 40th Anniversary (campers with developmental needs)	July 3-8	July 4 Family Retreat (families of all ages)
June 12-15	Cub Week #1 (grades 3-5)	July 10-16	Junior High Week (grades 6-8)
June 18-20	LWML Convention	July 16	2022 Auxiliary Quilt Auction
June 21-27	Minneboji (grades 4-9)	July 17-23	Cub Week #2 (grades 3-5)
		July 24-30	Youth Week (grades 8-12)
		July 31	Family Retreat #1 (families of all ages)
		-Aug. 5	
		Aug 7-12	Family Retreat #2 (families of all ages)

campokoboji.org

Chronic kidney disease



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The average kidney is as large as a cell phone and weighs 4 to 6 ounces. It receives more blood than all other organs except the liver. Each kidney has 1 to 2 million nephrons, the filtering units of the kidney, and filters about 45 gallons of blood per day.

Chronic kidney disease, also called chronic kidney failure, involves a gradual loss of kidney function. Kidneys filter waste and excess fluids from the body, which are then removed in the urine. Advanced chronic kidney disease can cause dangerous levels of fluid, electrolytes and waste to build up in the body. Treatment focuses on slowing the progression of kidney damage, usually by controlling the cause.

Diseases and conditions that cause chronic kidney disease include diabetes, high blood pressure, recurrent kidney infection, polycystic kidney disease, and prolonged obstruction of the urinary tract.

Potential complications include fluid retention, high potassium levels, anemia, heart disease, weak bones, difficulty concentrating, seizures, decreased immune response, inflammation of the heart sac, and irreversible damage that may require dialysis or transplant.

There are 10 possible signs of kidney disease:

- Fatigue, less energy, and trouble concentrating due to build-up of toxins and impurities in the blood.
- Trouble sleeping due to toxins in the body.
- Dry and itchy skin due to the lack of balance of minerals and nutrients in the blood.
- Need to urinate more often due to damaged kidney filters, urinary infection, or enlarged prostate.
- Blood in the urine from damaged kidney filters that allow blood cells to "leak" out in the urine.
- Excessive bubbles in the urine indicate protein in the urine.
- Excessive puffiness around the eyes indicates loss of protein from the body.
- Swollen ankles and feet due to sodium retention from decreased kidney function.
- Loss of appetite from the build-up of toxins.
- Muscle cramps due to electrolyte imbalances of potassium, calcium and phosphorus.

Early detection might prevent kidney disease from progressing to kidney failure. Your healthcare provider can monitor your blood pressure and kidney function with urine and blood tests.

(Information is referenced from the National Kidney Foundation and Mayo Clinic websites.)

Darlene Rueter, RN, IDW Parish Nurse Rep • drrueter@gmail.com

MERCY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



LONS/Erik M. Lunsford

as a blasphemer? He deserved God's and to be rejected by Him. He deserved temporal and eternal death. Paul says, "but I received mercy."

The mercy of God did not begin when Paul repented on the Damascus Road. God's mercy begins in the heart or the mind of God. It is Jesus who

came to Paul and convicted him of his sin. It is the Holy Spirit who called Paul to believe in the mercy of God. The mercy of God is like a judge finding you guilty and then withholding any sort of punishment. Paul was guilty of his sin. You and I are guilty because of our sin. But God has had mercy on us. The punishment for our guilt was transferred to Jesus on Calvary's cross. We deserve God's anger and we see His wrath on Good Friday. We deserve God's rejection as we hear the voice of Jesus saying, "My God my God why have you forsaken me?" We deserve punishment, but it is Jesus who suffers for us.

The mercy of God, the mercy of Christ, means that we don't get what we deserve. Jesus comes for Paul, and He comes for you and me with mercy. Paul receiving mercy serves as a reminder to us.

I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. **1 TIM. 1:16**



41st Convention
of
Iowa District West
June 26-28

Large group welcomes the Sharps

Wow ... the family of Rev. James and Angela Sharp has grown! We were so happy to welcome the Sharps all the way from Montevideo, Uruguay, on Dec. 28.

This amazing family has served in Uruguay for seven years. Rev. Sharp has done an excellent job of starting Bible classes and has helped in starting a new congregation in northern Uruguay. This country has the fewest number of Christians in South America.

Angela teaches English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) classes to people of all ages. She organizes, directs and provides content for Sunday schools throughout the country and conducts workshops for training new teachers and educational leaders. She was born in Denison, where her home congregation is Zion.

They provided a wonderful program for a group of special visitors from Lincoln, Neb.; Sherburn, Minn. (pictured below); and Council Bluffs and

Mapleton to spend the day for tours of the Lord's Creation Theater and Barn Museum.

God bless our cooks

How in the world do we feed the thousands of visitors that annually visit the Lord's Mission Central? That is a question we get asked a lot here at this miracle place.

The answer is easy — the Lord sends special volunteer cooks! That's what happened on Dec. 28 when the Lord sent wonderful helpers to prepare a meal for the huge group of *not normal* visitors. We have five groups of farm ladies that take turns cooking. They come from Anthon, Mapleton, Ida Grove, Fort Dodge and several other towns in this region.

The reason we can offer these special meals is because of our cooking volunteers. We can't thank them enough for their special help. Our LWML ladies provide the cooking tools and volunteer farmers help provide pork and beef for the meals.



The Sharp family



From left are volunteer cooks Polly Pithan, Lynn Brenner and Sharon Hamann.

'Let the earth bring forth living creatures...'

What a blessing to welcome young and old from all over the country to come hear the story of the sixth day of Creation, when the Lord created all of the animals, each special and every one different!

One family that had recently visited the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter in Kentucky, "We got more out of this Lord's Creation Theater than the display in Kentucky."

Here you see the group from Sheburn, Minn., that came to spend a day. They enjoyed the presentation that includes over 30 animals.



Gary Thies • Director, Mission Central

• 712-882-1029 • gary.thies@lcms.org • 40718 Hwy. E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034



YOUNG INVESTORS STEWARDAccount®

Help Your Child Save for the Future

It's reassuring knowing your child is God's child— secure in His grace and love. When you join the Y.I. Club with a Young Investors (Y.I.) StewardAccount®, your child's savings can help others experience God's love through the sharing of the Gospel. When you invest with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), you are supporting LCMS ministries — without forfeiting competitive rates.

VISIT [LCEF.ORG/YICLUB](https://lcef.org/yiclub) OR CALL 800-843-5233 TODAY!

BENEFITS AND FEATURES

- Minimum of \$25 to open the account.
- Interest compounded and paid monthly.
- Children ages 7-18 can earn up to \$50 a year for community service and good grades.
- Help empower ministries in Kingdom work.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund
> where investments build ministry

Carole White

LCEF District Vice President | Iowa East and West
515-240-2229 | Carole.White@lcef.org

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. StewardAccount access features are offered through UMB Bank n.a. StewardAccount® products are not available to investors in South Carolina. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit lcef.org for details.