

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

In over your head?

In this season of Lenten repentance, ponder this verse from Ezra (9:6):

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens."

Have you ever been "in" over your head? Biblically, it doesn't take much — just one sin. Ask Adam or Eve!

In some locations the land is so flat that the local garbage dump is the only place where there's a hill for kids to use their inner-tubes or snow sleds. Even when those hills are frozen, I wouldn't trust them not to cave in or avalanche and bury someone in garbage.

The prophet describes the predicament of God's people: heaps and piles of sin and guilt, a mountain of transgression. At times, the people treated that heap as a pile of recreation or fun. Only later did they realize that they were in over their heads.

We, too, can get buried under the rubbish of our sins; and with Ezra, it is a proper and real conclusion of the Law for us to fear holy justice. And yet, to whom did Ezra cry? To the only God who has a full history of mercy upon the repentant. The peak of His mercy was seen under a blackened sky, on a heap called "skull hill," where the very Son of God was being sacrificed upon a cross for sinners — all who are spiritually in over our heads. The One who was lifted up has now lifted us up above all our trash, and has forgiven us of all our sins. Praise to His Name: Jesus!

Rev. Matthew Vrudny
Park Region Pastoral Counselor

LWML Minnesota North District

28th Biennial Convention
June 18-20
Sanford Center, Bemidji



Theme verse:

"See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands"
Is. 49:16a NKJV

The keynote speaker will be Cynthia Khan, director of Community Engagement for POBLO (People of the Book Lutheran Outreach).

The Bible study leader will be the Rev. Bruce Timm, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, St. Cloud. He also serves as the Arrowhead Region pasto-

ral counselor for the LWML Minnesota North District Board of Directors.

Entertainment on Tuesday evening will be provided by Slew Foot Family Band of Grey Eagle.

Look for convention information in the April *Minnesota Northern Light*, the district website, lwmlmnn.org/districtconven.html, and the spring packets that will be given out at the spring rallies.

Church work scholarships available

The LWML Minnesota North District awards two scholarships each year. One is for students studying for full-time church work, including teachers, directors of Christian Education and directors of Parish Music. The other is for men studying for the pastoral ministry in the LCMS.

Requirements for each scholarship is the student must be a member of an LCMS congregation in the Minnesota North District, and is attending one of the 10 colleges or universities in the

Concordia University System, or one of our two seminaries. Both scholarships are mission grants of the LWML Minnesota North District, funded by mite box offerings during the 2016-18 biennium.

Applications and more information can be found at lwmlmnn.org/scholarships.html. If you have questions, please contact the scholarships chairman at scholarships@lwmlmnn.org.

The deadline for applications is May 15.

'Wait for the Lord'

Women of Our Redeemer, Moorhead, took time to pause from the "bus-iness" of life and the routines of the day to quiet their hearts and begin preparation for Advent and Christmas.

They gathered for its fifth year of Advent by Candlelight, a festive event that brings women together in fellowship. It begins with appetizers and Wassail tea, followed by an Advent meditation and music to help reflect on the beauty and significance of Advent — a time to "Wait for the Lord," the theme of the evening. The evening ended with the



group lingering over coffee with Christmas confections and fellowship.

"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."

— 1 John 4:9