



Northern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

President's Commentary

Her name was Jennie. She was a widow of a pastor. Most would describe her as outspoken and full of spunk. On occasion, if I had an extra announcement after worship, she might stand up and say, *"Pastor, I have something to say."* We politely listened to her thoughts or comments never knowing what she would say. But she was a woman with a vibrant faith and loved the church.

She grew older and weaker and found herself under hospice care. That same spunk was there as was that lively, Spirit-given faith. She loved the Word, Lord's Supper, and the hymns we sang together. We did this faithfully until she was brought to glory by her Savior ... and she now awaits the final Resurrection.

It was just one picture of *"though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day"* (II Corinthians 4:16). That renewal and life comes from the Lord Jesus who gives us His promises and power by His Death and Resurrection. He gives and so we "do not lose heart." Jennie didn't. **You need not lose heart either.** I'll remind you and you can remind me, please!

We see many serious signs of death, disillusionment, and decline all around us, too. There is weariness, wandering, and wondering near and far. What would Jesus say?

"Repent and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). I have heard a few people in the church say, *"I have nothing to repent of."* Most of us know that is not the truth. *"Godly sorrow leads to repentance that leads to salvation"* (II Corinthians 7:10). To believe the Gospel is to look and trust for Jesus to do what He promises. *"Look, I make all things new"* (Revelation 21:5). Your crucified and risen Lord did not forget Jennie or you ... or His church ... or world.

Don't despair, give up, or give in! That is the work of the devil. One holy work we have is to encourage each other in the Gospel as together we rely on the Word, look to Jesus always, and witness the great and saving acts of God among us.



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Some new things among us in the NID:

- To be better stewards, our new offices at Concordia University Chicago
- A new shared foreign mission field in Belize with other partners
- Congregations finding new partnerships, sharing workers and resources
- Visitation emphasis since we are “Stronger Together”
- New grants for new mission endeavors
- Increase in church worker student support through **Workers of the Word**
- Intentional conversations between laity, workers, and neighbors
- NID Shine week April 14-23, 2023 as we engage, serve, and witness to our communities in the name of Jesus
- Shared NID Scripture study as we did with Colossians in October

Recently, I have been part of some milestone anniversary celebrations in congregations and for workers. What is so uplifting is looking forward, planning new things, and watching God show up doing great and new things. All this because “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8).