



# DISTRICT NEWS

## SOUTH DAKOTA

# When ‘the same’ is best

At the start of a new year, we tend to look ahead in hope for a good 12 months to come. This year, again, we certainly hope that the new year is much better than last year. We hope things will be different — that gas and food prices will drop, that crop, milk and beef prices will go up, and that the virus will finally be brought under control.



**Rev. Scott Sailer**  
District President

But more important than any of this, we hope that we will grow in the “grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). That’s a change we all need in the new year.

Yet so much is uncertain. Sickness afflicts. Blizzards overwhelm. Death dismays.

My life is uncertain. As I write this in November and you read this in January, will I still be the district president? (*The election was Dec. 6. Results appear at the end of this article.*) How will I be doing after a scheduled surgery in December? (Did the surgery even happen?)

“Yes, if it is the will of the Lord,” is the answer to all of the above.

Things can change, some of it good, some of it bad, according to our perspective.

That’s why I take heart in something that is always the same. He never changes:

**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Heb. 13:8**

Jesus is the same.

Aren’t you glad the verse doesn’t say:

- ▶ My health is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- ▶ My church is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- ▶ My life is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- ▶ I am the same yesterday and today and forever?



LCMS/Erin M. Lunsford

You may want things to continue as they are — if your health is good, if your church is doing well, if your life is going well at the moment.

But things will change for you, either for good or for ill. That’s the nature of life in the fleeting time we have on earth.

Good News! Jesus Christ is the same always, and your times

See **THE SAME**, page 2

# Blessings in Redfield, Doland



With great joy, the South Dakota District welcomes back Rev. Kevin Moore and his wife, Sue. Rev. Moore was installed as pastor of Messiah, Redfield, and Redeemer, Doland, on Nov. 7 at Messiah.

The Moores moved from Brewster, Wash., where Kevin was a bi-vocational pastor. He served the congregation of Hope Lutheran Church while also working at a factory. He previously served as pastor of the Emmanuel/Christ/St. Paul, Gettysburg/Lebanon/Seneca tri-parish from 1999 until 2004 (St. Paul, Seneca, has closed).

It's especially a return home for Sue, who grew up in Milbank. The Moores have two sons, Zachary and Zebulun, who live in Washington.



Rev. Kevin and Sue Moore

TOP: From left, Revs. Jordon Andreasen (circuit visitor and pastor of Our Savior, Aberdeen and St. John, Columbia), Scott Sailer (district president), Kevin Moore and Bret Biermann (pastor of St. John, rural Aberdeen; St. Paul's, Stratford; and Trinity, Mansfield).

# THE SAME

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

are in His hands. Listen!

But I trust in you, O LORD;  
I say, "You are my God."  
My times are in your hand;  
rescue me from the hand of my  
enemies and from my persecutors!  
Make your face shine on your  
servant;  
save me in your steadfast love!

Ps. 31:14-15

"Steadfast love" (*chesed*, in the biblical Hebrew) is the mark of Jesus' sameness.

Jesus' love is the same yesterday and today and forever. It's "steadfast."

His forgiveness is the same.

His salvation is the same.

His presence with you always is the same.

Isn't it comforting and encouraging to know that, in this new year, your times are in Jesus' loving, nail-scarred hands? Those hands are connected to the arms of His glorified body, which will one day welcome you to your eternal home.

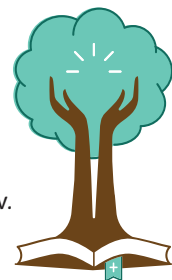
In the meantime, He'll take care of you. He promises. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!

**Your servant in Christ,**  
**Pastor Scott Sailer**  
"Not ashamed of the Gospel"  
Rom. 1:16; 16:25-27

## PASTOR SAILER WAS RE-ELECTED

to serve a third term as president of the South Dakota District during the 62nd district convention in Sioux Falls Dec. 5-7.

Also re-elected were Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, pastor of Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, and Rev. Timothy Rynearson, senior pastor of Peace, Brookings, as district first vice-president and second vice-president, respectively. They both will serve second terms.



## Call Information

### ACCEPTED

- ▶ **Rev. Dr. Michael Kumm**, pastor emeritus, Sioux City, Iowa, accepted a call as part-time assistant pastor from Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes, Nov. 28.
- ▶ **Ray Anderson**, Specific Ministry Pastor candidate, accepted a call as assistant pastor from St. Paul's/St. Paul's, Aberdeen/Leola, Dec. 8.

### PENDING

- ▶ **Rev. Jeremy Yeadon**, St. Peter's,



Brownstown, Ind., received a call from St. John's/Zion, Groton/Andover, Dec 12.

### DECLINED

- ▶ **Rev. David Lindenberg**, Peace, Rapid City, declined a call as pastor from St. John's, Garner, Iowa, Dec. 11.

### VACANCIES

- Groton/Andover, St. John/Zion
- Mitchell, Zion
- Pierre, Faith (*senior pastor*)
- Plankinton/White Lake, St. Paul/Trinity
- Sioux Falls, district office (*executive secretary*)



## Armed with **THE WORD**

Memorial, Sioux Falls, was blessed to give third graders and kindergartners their very own Bibles. Also, the third graders and their parents were invited to a class in which they are instructed on how to read the Bible. Kindergartners receive a picture Bible. Pictured is Rev. Aaron Asmus, Memorial senior pastor, along with some of the students with their parents.



## Congregations bless food pantry

Emmanuel, Creighton, and First, Wall, held their fifth annual Reformation Food Drive in October. Started in 2017, the food drive has become a competition between the congregations. Emmanuel has been the more frequent winner, but 2021 proved to be the year that First would really flex its food-donating muscles. In an exciting nail-biter, First brought in 925 items while Emmanuel donated 923 items — a combined 1,289 pounds — which were all donated to Country Cupboard Food Pantry.

Pictured with the donations are Lillian and Elden Helms. Lillian serves as secretary for First and Emmanuel and pantry treasurer. Elden is a trustee of First.



## PATTY'S PONDERINGS

### TEACH US TO PRAY



**P**rayer may be simple or complex — silent or corporate — memorized or free-flowing from our heart. It is a conversation with God and shows our love for our heavenly Father.

The 2022 LWML Prayer Service, “Lord, Teach us to Pray” is authored by Rev.

Robert Grimm, pastor of St. John, Alma, Kan., and former LWML pastoral counselor for the Kansas District). “Lord, Teach us to Pray,” based on Luke 11:1, looks at various forms of prayer used frequently by believers as we seek to honor Christ, the Lord of the church, with our prayers.



**Patty Peters**  
LWML South Dakota District President

You can download the service at [lwml.org/prayer-service](http://lwml.org/prayer-service). It is designed to be used at any time by large or small groups. It is an abbreviated worship service with eight sections, each on a different type of prayer. Each section includes Scripture readings, ponderings, a hymn and time for prayer. You can also download the leader’s guide, PowerPoint files and publicity materials.

Also at the webpage is a link to prayer services from previous years, including “He Prayed *with Them*,” from 2021.

May God bless your time together in prayer.



**The mission of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League South Dakota District** is to provide women opportunities for spiritual growth and to equip and nurture them to use their God-given gifts to serve the Lord in home, church, community and the world.

[sdlwml.org](http://sdlwml.org)    [lwml.org](http://lwml.org)

## CHAMBERLAIN ZONE report

The ladies of St. John’s, Gregory, hosted the 2021 Chamberlain Zone Fall Rally on Sept. 25. Opening devotions were led by Rev. Marcus Ring, St. John’s pastor and Chamberlain Zone pastoral counselor.

Eighteen were in attendance to hear Rev. Wade Harr present “Life Together,” based on the book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Harr serves as pastor of Christ/Trinity/Zion, Winner/Reliance/Hamil.

Leanne Zirpel, a member of Zion, Presho, was elected zone vice-president, and Patti Greenseth of Messiah, Murdo, was elected zone secretary/treasurer.

Zion, Chamberlain, will host the Spring Workshop.

**Your servant, Susan Swanson**  
Chamberlain Zone President

## Reports are due



It’s that time of year again. Group presidents and secretaries — please send your completed officer reports to your zone secretary by Jan. 15.

Zone secretaries — please compile the group reports and send them to me by Feb. 1.

Zone presidents and secretaries — please compile the zone officer report form and send to me by Feb. 1. I look forward to collecting these reports from you!

You can find the forms under the “Helps and Forms” tab at [sdlwml.org](http://sdlwml.org). Click the “LWML SD District Forms & Helps” link. They are located at the bottom of the Helps page. Please choose the “Society” or “Zone” report, fill it out and email it to me at [heather.m.miller2020@gmail.com](mailto:heather.m.miller2020@gmail.com), or mail it to Heather Miller; 1803 W. 10th Street; Sioux Falls, SD 57104.

**Heather Miller**  
District Secretary

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



CAST AWAY YOUR CARES



**Rev. Clint O. Thorson**  
LWML District  
Counselor

With the way these last couple of years have gone, you would be justified in wondering just what 2022 will look like. Many people are questioning about the future. Some of you might even be asking, “What should we do? Where do we go from here?”

I certainly do not have any financial or business advice for you, but Scripture tells us in 1 Peter 5 that we should give all our anxieties to the Lord. God cares about you in all aspects of your life. He wants you to have a good, peaceful life and therefore will gladly hear your anxieties and worries.

Give those burdens to the Lord and He will care for you. In Christ, your salvation is assured. God even knows the number of hairs on your head. So don't worry. Instead, as a beloved hymn urges, “take it to the Lord in prayer.”

That takes care of your spiritual concerns, but you might also wonder about your physical and temporal needs. Our Lord has made provision for hard times within the church. That is another reason why we gather together regularly — so that we can share the burdens of this life.

Sin and the world will always make things difficult for us, but that is one of the reasons why God put us together. Through our fellowship we remember that we are never alone. God is always with us and will always provide for us through Word and Sacrament, and even through fellowship.

Now, I understand that asking for help is hard and requires humility. But we are called to watch out for one another. If you need help, ask and the church will do what it can to love and support you. This is one place where the LWML shines brightly — hearing the needs around them and responding in love and with appropriate action.

It is my fervent prayer that 2022 be a blessed year for you all. But should you or your loved ones still struggle from all of the things that have taken place in the last couple of years, please don't remain silent. Ask your loving and caring God for help, and share your burdens with your pastor, the congregation and the wonderful ladies of the LWML so that we may help however we can.

You are not alone. You are God's beloved children. God's peace to you and blessings throughout 2022 and all your days.

Make plans to  
**ATTEND CONVENTION**

The LWML South Dakota District Convention will be held June 3-4 at St. John's, Yankton. The theme is “Walk in Love,” based on Eph. 4:32-5:2:

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God

in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us.

There will be servant events, a mite walk, Bible study, special speakers, mission grant reports and voting on new mission grants and the mission goal. Marie Chow, national vice-president of Organizational Resources, will be our guest from LWML.

We will have a 50-year celebration for the Puppet Place. Rev. Andrew Utecht and his family will bring their talents for a Friday night party. We have Puppet Place T-shirts that you can order in commemoration of this special event.

You will soon be able to register and make hotel reservations. Please spread the word and encourage the ladies in your groups and churches to attend.

# Blessed *to be* dependent

Dear friends in Christ,

In this month's article, Rev. Dr. Josh Jones, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Rapid City, shares his insights on living with and caring for a daughter with a disability, and the lessons he's learned from his daughter and Jesus' never-ending love and mercy to His people.

— Rev. Chris Navurskis



**W**hen Pastor Navurskis asked me to share my family's story, as it pertains to life issues relevant to the church, I wrestled with what and how to share. Our 12-year-old daughter, Zoe, was born exceptionally early at 25 weeks with a severe form of cerebral palsy. The three-and-a-half months she spent in the NICU was the easiest time we have had with her. I would like to give you a glimpse into our story via one of the most significant lessons Zoe has taught and continues to teach me, and which runs contrary to popular Christianity.

**"Zoe" is Greek for "life." This means to tell her story is to talk about life.**

While we first thought Zoe had a severe form of cerebral palsy with moderate hearing loss, her doctors now speak of her as one-of-a-kind. She has been given over 25 medications and has had eight surgeries. Our home is set up with equipment to help with her care. Yet every morning Zoe

joyfully wakes up eager to start the day and live the life that God has given her. She never complains and she never asks to change her circumstances.

Shortly before my grandfather died, a family member called me and shared, "All he can do is lie on a bed. Someone else has to feed him and take care of everything he needs. He can't do anything on his own. I wish God would just take him."

Perhaps you have found yourself in a similar situation. But I really wrestled with those words, because what was true about my grandfather was also true of Zoe. While the family member's words were in no way meant to be hurtful, they invited me to consider, "What was different between Grandpa and Zoe?" and, "What was the same?"

Certainly, Grandpa and Zoe were at different stages in life. Grandpa was near the end; Zoe was near the beginning. Grandpa had been active and independent his entire life; Zoe had been completely dependent from day

one. Yet both suffered. Neither could walk. Neither could feed themselves. Both completely relied upon others for their care.

What's more, both lives had inherent value imparted and given by God. Both were forgiven children of God. These answers led me to ask: "Why is there such a marked difference in our hopes and desires for these saints, even among Christians?"

Human creatures are generally averse to suffering. Whenever possible we aim to avoid or alleviate suffering. In Grandpa's case, human logic says that death will alleviate suffering. But should anyone's perceived quality of life be grounds for determining life and death? Can we really alleviate suffering?

Jesus said clearly, "In the world you have suffering" (John 16:33). It may be that death alleviates the suffering of the sufferer, but death does not alleviate suffering in general. Death actually multiplies suffering by transferring its

Rev. Dr. Josh Jones is pictured with his family during Christmas a year ago. Zoe is seated up front with her father, and standing are his wife, Jamie, and their son, Noah. Pastor Jones has served Bethlehem, Rapid City, since 2008.

Continued on next page

agony to those who grieve. The Scripture remains true: Death is an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26).

The kind of suffering described in these scenarios largely has to do with weakness, vulnerability and reliance upon others. Who likes to admit they are weak? Who enjoys being brazenly vulnerable? Who prefers to completely rely upon others? No one!

Well, that's not true. Zoe doesn't mind these things one bit. One would expect her quality of life to be a zero out of 10. Zoe believes it's a solid 10 out of 10.

And this is where we come to the lessons of faith that Zoe has taught me repeatedly over the last 12 years. Through Zoe I have learned that being dependent upon God and others is a joyful blessing (Matt. 19:14, 2 Cor. 1:3-11). Zoe has been a model of joyful contentment in all situations (Phil. 4:10-14). She has shown me how to be thankful in all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:16-18). She has never once complained about her life.

When I feed her, she says, "Thanks for feeding me, Daddy!" When I give her a shower, she says, "Thanks for a great shower, Daddy!" When I change her diaper, she says, "Thanks for changing me, Daddy. That feels better!" And she

does so with her genuine, charming smile. Most of the world would consider her life to be beset with weakness and poor quality. But God has instead endowed her with His power and grace.

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How should we think and behave when God imposes suffering upon us, especially under the forms of weakness, vulnerability and dependence on others? In these difficult situations, we must remember that we live in a broken world caused by our own sin. And so when we experience the futility of creation in suffering, we bring those hurts and pains to God in lament.

Did you know that 65 of the 150 psalms are of lament? There is an entire book about lament aptly named Lamentations. Lament involves four parts that we can remember with the acronym CARE:

**C—Complain to God.**

Tell him what's on your heart.

**A—Appeal to God.**

Appeal to his nature, character, mercy and compassion.

**R—Remind God of his promises.**

"You promised to always be with me!"  
"You promised to be faithful!"

**E—Express faith and trust in Jesus.**

Tell God you trust Him and His wisdom amid sorrow and suffering. Trust that He knows more than you do. Believe that even these difficulties have been taken to the cross of Jesus.

Complain. Appeal. Remind. Express. That's lament. But that's not all.

Suffering leads finally to hope (Rom. 5:3-4) that grief will not last forever, hope that death will not get the last word, hope that the "lame will leap like the deer" (Is. 35:6), hope in resurrection life on the Last Day when all things will be renewed and restored forever. Until that day, may we live as and confess with saints like Zoe and Paul:

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. **2 Cor. 12:10**

Someone is near you who needs your help in the name of Jesus. Have you been blessed to know the difference Jesus has made using your work and witness in His name? I'd enjoy hearing that life story. A fellow worker may need to hear it. Contact me at [pcnavurskis@gmail.com](mailto:pcnavurskis@gmail.com) or 605-352-7121.

**Pastor Navurskis** serves as pastor of Mount Calvary, Huron, and is life coordinator of the South Dakota District.



**National Lutheran Schools Week • Jan. 23-29**



## MSL sponsors pheasant hunt

Main Street Living (MSL), the television ministry broadcast in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Western Iowa, Eastern Nebraska and the Eau Claire, Wis., area, sponsored a pheasant hunt between Burke and Gregory Nov. 5-6.

Pastors from South Dakota and Iowa took down more than 70 pheasants over two days. The hunt is a “thank you” to pastors for their participation in the program.

Huge thanks to the Terry Leibel



family for providing access to their land, as well as offering their guide services and dogs. Thanks also to the Lutheran Youth Fellowship of St. John Lutheran Church, Gregory; Immanuel Lutheran Church, Jamison, Neb.; and Grace Lutheran Church, Burton, Neb., for teaming up to feed the hunters breakfast on Nov.

5. This group of 20 teens and adults will head to the National Youth Gathering in Houston in July. The breakfast was a fundraiser for their trip.



## Share your news with us!



We are always in need of more submissions for the South Dakota District insert of *The Lutheran Witness*. They help remind us of what God is doing around the district. It is also a way to share ideas for nurturing those God has already gathered into His church and for reaching those still outside of the flock with the Good News about Jesus. It finally reminds each of us that Christ's church is much larger than just our particular congregation.

We welcome pictures and stories of congregational events, youth events, outreach events, installations, events from your men's or women's group, servant events, conferences, anniversaries, church renovations or additions, and much more. If you would like an upcoming event publicized, please make sure we have the information at least two months in advance.

**Submissions for the March 2022 issue are needed by Jan. 15.**

Send submissions to Kate Meadows:

- ▶ [kate@katemeadows.com](mailto:kate@katemeadows.com)
- ▶ 420 E. Liberty Street, Rapid City, SD 57701