



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

“For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” PS. 100:5

Spiritual babies, from generation to generation

The word “generations” catches my eye. It deals with family and babies and grandbabies and great-grandbabies.



Rev. Scott Sailer
District President

God’s Word in many places talks about the generations of people who will call upon

Him in faith. God’s Word in several places also refers to the church as a living organism, active, moving, growing, reproducing. The church is alive!

St. Peter says the church is made up of living stones, built on Christ the Cornerstone, with the foundation being the teaching of the prophets and apostles. New believers — spiritual babies — are generated by the Holy Spirit’s taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the hearts of those who are dead in sins. We’re born into God’s family through Spirit-given faith.

I’m a third-generation German Lutheran in America. My grandfather, Hildebert Sailer, and my grandmother, Melita Auwinger, emigrated to North Dakota from Russia (specifically, Crimea). They were German farmers from Russia. My mom’s side of the family is more of a mixed bag. My Catholic grandma, Katherine Funk, was Hungarian, and my grandpa, Reinhold Kraenzel, was of Reformed persuasion from



Germany. All of this German-Russian-Hungarian Lutheran-Catholic-Reformed DNA came together and formed me. But the Holy Spirit made His way through all of that family heritage and made sure that the Christian faith was handed down from one generation to the next and to the next, and from Sarah and me to the next. It was the Spirit who formed me into the LCMS Christian that I am ... and formed who you are as a child of God.

But none of that would have happened without a certain Brother in our family. You know that Brother. His name is Jesus. That Brother. The letter to the Hebrews (2:11-13) describes Jesus as our Brother:

For he who sanctifies (Jesus) and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying,

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Aberdeen ministry granted RSO status

The Rural Gospel Initiative (RGI) is a new organization serving God's kingdom in the Aberdeen Circuit of the South Dakota District. The Aberdeen Circuit is comprised of 15 congregations in northeast South Dakota.

Unique to the Synod in its structure and purpose, the RGI was recently granted status as an LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO). It is currently the only RSO in South Dakota. The concept of the RGI was formed and implemented by Aberdeen Circuit pastors and laity. Outreach goals include:

- ▶ Supporting LCMS rural ministry staffing efforts in northeast South Dakota
- ▶ Supporting ministries to college and university students in Aberdeen

- ▶ Supporting workshops and training focusing on witness, service and more
- ▶ Facilitating ideas to preserve God's kingdom of grace, with the help of the Holy Spirit

The organization recognizes the importance of a faithful, long-term commitment to share the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. The vision of the RGI is to support Word and Sacrament ministry in Aberdeen Circuit congregations now and for generations to come.

For more information, visit ruralgospel.org or send an email to contact@ruralgospel.org. You may also call 605-225-1847 and leave a message. Someone from the RGI board will return your call.

Pictured are Rural Gospel Initiative directors, from left, Rev. Bret Bierman (pastoral advisor), Jerry Schley; Deaconess Dorothy Kranz (LCMS RSO director); Brandon Steger, Ray Larson (chairman), Dave Heidenreich, Denise Melius, Paige Anderson, Dale Kurth, and Mary and Darwin Bettmann. Not pictured are Greg Boekelheide and Dave Daberkow.

Call Information

Rev. Albert Althoff, emeritus, Sioux Falls, accepted a call as part-time assistant pastor of Trinity, Hartford, Oct. 30.

Rev. Bryan Meadows, associate pastor of Zion, Rapid City, is prayerfully considering a call as Zion's lead associate pastor, Nov. 20.

Rev. Darren Olsen, Sioux Falls, declined a call as pastor of Faith, Orange City, Iowa, Nov. 28. He is prayerfully considering a call as sole pastor of Christ, Juniata, Neb., (Oct. 20) and a call as associate pastor of Mount Olive, Anoka, Minn. (Nov. 27).

VACANCIES

- Cresbard, Wecota/Concordia, Immanuel (*sole pastor*)
- Deadwood, Sturgis/Grace, Blessed Emmanuel (*sole pastor*)
- Plankinton, White Lake/St. Paul, Trinity (*sole pastor*)
- Rapid City/Zion (*lead associate pastor*)



Welcome, Pastor Winckler!

Rev. Paul Winckler (front row, fourth from left) was installed as assistant to the president of the South Dakota District on Nov. 20. The service was held at Faith, Sioux Falls. Encouraging our church workers and congregations in their Christian witness and standing alongside our subsidized ministries (Native American, deaf, and campus) are among Pastor Winckler's responsibilities.

The blessings of a DCE

By DCE Joshua M. Schmitt
St. John's, Yankton

What is a director of Christian education (DCE)? What does a DCE actually do? Have you ever asked those questions before? You're not alone if you have!



Many people within Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations are not entirely sure what the role of a DCE is. Simply put, DCEs are caring servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They help pastors in ministry by teaching God's Word to all people, especially the Gospel of Christ!

So how are DCEs a blessing to pastors and congregations?

A DCE is considered a commissioned minister within the LCMS, which means that he or she has received a divine call from God through a congregation to serve its members, just like pastors. Unlike pastors, who oversee Word and Sacrament ministry within a congregation, DCEs are ordinarily assigned to kitchen clean-up ... just kidding! DCEs are typically focused on equipping, educating and empowering the congregation with and by God's Word.

Many DCEs have received formal education in Concordia University System schools and have the skills and competency to correctly teach Scripture in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions.

You may be thinking, "DCEs are only for children or youth." However, that is not the

case. DCEs can serve everyone within the congregation. A congregation may call a DCE to focus on a specific demographic of the congregation, such as children and/or youth, but that does not limit their service to the rest of the congregation.

In fact, depending on how a congregation would like to use a DCE, he or she can focus on all biblical education within the congregation, from children to senior citizens. They can serve the congregation in different ways as well, such as by ministering to (counseling) individuals and families, leading/teaching Bible studies and confirmation and organizing small groups. Their service allows the pastors to focus more on the primary functions of their office — preaching the Word in Divine Service and administering the Sacraments, among their other duties.

DCEs can play a major role in fighting against biblical illiteracy within their congregations. Many Christians in the LCMS and other denominations do not know their Bibles, nor how to adequately apply Scripture in their everyday life. This lack of knowledge — along with sin, the ultimate cause of all of our struggles — explains why so many individuals, families and congregations are confronted with difficult issues and challenges. When DCEs are used properly, they — by God's grace — can be a significant asset in helping children, youth, parents and all individuals within a congregation grow in the knowledge of God's Word. This, in turn, leads to more spiritually mature individuals and families.



Also serving as DCEs in the South Dakota District are, from left, Michael Leapley (St. Paul's, Aberdeen), Liz Peters and Hailey Miller (Memorial, Sioux Falls) and Lorien Petersen (Zion, Rapid City).

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."

And again, "I will put my trust in him."

And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Yes, in order that we might be the children of God forever, our Brother Jesus took on human flesh and blood to pay for our sins. He died. He rose. He ascended. He sent His Spirit to generate faith in you, a very precious person in your generation.

And guess what! Because it's God's Word that is the dynamite, the power of God unto salvation, you have the power to impact someone else for eternity. You can be God's instrument to help someone else become a part of the next generation of those who cling to Christ in faith.

St. Paul was a father in the faith to St. Timothy and others. You, dear friend in Christ, can be a mother or father in the faith to someone else (regardless of whether you are related by blood) as you share the reason for the hope that is in you.

PATTY'S PONDERINGS

Time to register for convention!

“Celebrate the Lord of the Nations” is the theme for the 40th Biennial LWML Convention, to be held June 22-25 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee. The winter edition of *Lutheran Women's Quarterly* (LWQ) and *lwml.org/2023-convention* has the information you need to plan your trip.



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota District President

Registration will be done online. Please see *LWQ* for guidance. Please ask for help if you don't use a computer or if you're having difficulty registering. Early registration will be from Jan. 9 to March 14 and the cost is \$160. Registration is \$180 from March 15 to May 10. Late registration (May 11-June 10) is \$205.

The registration fee covers the sessions, evening activities and entrance to the exhibit hall.

We will have a bus traveling from South Dakota to Milwaukee. Information will be available at *sdlwml.org*. Those who ride the bus will have hotel reservations made for them. Otherwise, hotel reservations can be made on the online convention registration form.

Tours of Milwaukee and the surrounding area will be held. There will also be fun programs and events for children.

We will worship God at the opening communion service, participate in Bible studies, hear Mites in Action reports, vote on the new mission goal and mission grants, and have fun with our friends in the exhibit hall and during the evening activities. It is such a great joy to sing praises to our Lord with several thousand

fellow Lutheran women and men. Talk to your friends and make plans to attend the convention. May God bless our time together.



Zone reports are due

It's that time of year!

Group presidents and secretaries, please send your completed officer reports to your zone secretary by Jan. 13.

Zone presidents and secretaries, please complete both the Group Officer Compilation Report form and the Zone Officer Report form and send them to me by Feb. 1. I look forward to hearing from you!

The forms can be found at *sdlwml.org*. Go to “Resources,” and select “Officer Report Forms” from the drop-down menu. Choose the appropriate report(s) for your group/zone and enter the information. My contact information is on the forms.

Thank you.

Luann Zuercher
LWML District Secretary

CHAMBERLAIN ZONE UPDATE

The Chamberlain Zone held its Fall Rally on Sept. 24 at Messiah, Murdo. Rev. Ray Greenseth led the Bible study, emphasizing “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it!”

Yours truly was elected president. The other zone officers are:

- ▶ Leanne Zirpel (Zion, Presho), vice-president
- ▶ Patti Greenseth (Messiah, Murdo), secretary/treasurer

Rev. Marcus Ring, pastor of St. John's, Gregory, serves as zone counselor. Hope Lutter, a member of Zion, Chamberlain, will be the zone delegate to the

LWML convention in Milwaukee in June.

St. John's, Gregory, LWML will host the zone spring event.

Our zone had the pleasure to work at the Puppet Place at the South Dakota State Fair on Sept. 3, and help celebrate its 50th anniversary. We had volunteers from St. John's, Gregory; Zion, Chamberlain; and Messiah, Murdo.

Let's keep our eyes focused on ways “To Serve the Lord with Gladness!”

Susan Swanson
Chamberlain Zone President

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

NEW DAY, NEW YOU!



Blessed new year to all of you! With all the new year's resolutions floating about, I would like to emphasize something to you that new-year celebrations often bring to my mind. Whether you know it or not, you are a new person. In fact, you don't have to wait for a new year to be a new person. Every day you are new because of what Christ has done for you.

In Eph. 2:10, Paul reminds us of something that I want you to keep in mind, alongside all your new-year goals. You are God's workmanship in Christ, made for good works that the heavenly Father has set aside specifically for you.

From this I want you to hear two things. First, I want you to hear that God created you newly in Christ Jesus. Because of your Baptism, you have been united with Christ in death and more importantly in life. That means you are a newborn Christian every day. As you rise, Christ clothes you with His

righteousness, covers your old sins and makes you a new person to serve in His kingdom.

And second, as Christ has covered you and made you new, God has prepared tasks for you to complete. Paul calls them good works. God loves you enough to prepare the way for you to work for Him. So you are a new person with your work all laid out and ready for you. God created you on His divine workbench and set up your own bench to work with.

That is an awesome reality that is brand new each day. Daily you rise as new people, and God sets up new tasks for you to do for the benefit of His kingdom. You are new! Your sins are forgiven, and your mistakes are left in the past. You are daily God's workmanship, rising to do His work in His workshop. This year I want you to resolve to remember and live that reality.

God makes you new each day by the work of His Son, and He uses your work to extend His workshop, His kingdom. So every day this year, remember it's a new year and you're a new you, with new and wonderfully blessed things to do!

We pray: Lord, make us new every day. Give us the faith and confidence to do your work that you lay out anew for us daily. Amen.



Rev. Clint O. Thorson
LWML District Counselor

Zion honors 80 years of LWML

Fall was a joyous time for the women of Zion LWML, Avon, who celebrated 80 years of LWML in various ways.

Zion celebrated LWML Sunday on Oct. 2 by displaying a new banner representing the theme, "For Us and With Us." LWML ladies served coffee and an 80th anniversary LWML cake following worship services, and attendees received bookmarks. Mite boxes were made available for the Sunday-school children. The ladies acknowledged the day as "Honey Sunday," making order forms available for honey from the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch.

In addition, the ladies set a goal of collecting 80 nonperishable food items for the Bon Homme County food bank. In all, 95 food items were delivered to the food bank on Oct. 6.

Praise God for 80 years of the LWML!



Among those who delivered food to the food bank were, from left, Debbie Brandt, Carol Swier, Lyla Brandt, Brenda Fathke and Margaret Poppe.



Respect for marriage?



Rev. Chris Navurskis
Life
Coordinator,
South Dakota
District

I started this article by dusting off an old book hiding amid our homeschool resources. With countless electronic resources and the “Tools” drop down menu in Microsoft Word, who needs the dictionary anymore? Nevertheless, I turned the pages until I came to words starting with the letter “I” and scanned until my eyes fell on the word “irony.”

In general, irony signifies a “humorous or subtly sarcastic expression in which the intended meaning of the words is the direct opposite of their usual sense.” “Irony,” according to Webster’s, can also refer to the contrast between what a speaker says and what his or her hearers know to be true.

I was struck by a great awareness of irony in all its sarcastic ways as I read the legislation advanced by the U.S. Senate under the title “Respect for Marriage.” The legislation is meant to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and defend married same-sex couples from any consequences that may come from a U.S. Supreme Court overturn of *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Some expect, based on comments made by one justice, that the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* could lead to a similar treatment of *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Essentially, the Respect for Marriage Act protects same-sex marriage by federal mandate for equal treatment in every locale throughout the United States, when the marriage has been lawfully established. As I write this, the act includes protection for religious liberty in Section 6, which promises that there will be “no impact on religious liberty and conscience.”

While one Utah senator called the protections for religious liberty “anemic,” others have confidence in them. This “promise” has made many Christians comfortable with the act. Even Mormons have publicly expressed support for it — though they maintain their official church doctrine that marriage is between one man and one woman! Some seem to have adopted a “live-and-let-live” mindset, while oth-

ers have changed their stance on marriage altogether.

This is where the word “irony” is helpful. The act is meant to build “respect” for marriage while the legislation itself is changing the very meaning of the word. It feels a little like going into a Walgreens for medicine and seeing cigarettes for sale by the cash registers. (CVS pharmacies saw the irony with that display and discontinued tobacco sales in 2014.)

The Respect for Marriage Act is not about marriage. The act is hostile to marriage and creates something different than marriage under the same name, declaring that marriage is property of the state. It is not about the origin or meaning or intent of marriage. If it was about that, it would take its direction from the One to whom marriage belongs. In Matt. 19:4-6, Jesus is tested by the Pharisees on the issue of divorce. He teaches them, saying:

“Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Notice that God’s design for marriage centers on the compatibility between man and woman. Why the compatibility? For what purpose are men and women compatible?

Within a few short verses, Matthew testifies that Jesus places His hands on children and blesses them saying:

“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

Spoken by the One who redeems His bride, the church, by His death and resurrection, these words tell us that marriage is a life issue.

Marriage is a gift from God. Within Christian marriage, mothers and fathers pass along the faith to the next

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generation. By changing its definition of marriage, the government is teaching and encouraging choices contrary to God's design. With those choices front-and-center, the next generation will face values and ideals opposed to the Word of God made clear from Holy Scripture.

Pray that the Lord moves us to respect His institution of marriage. Pray that the Lord causes us to lift our voices in clear proclamation of all His gifts — including marriage. Pray that the proclamation is heard, and hearts are turned toward the Savior. Pray that those who are elected to public office will hear and believe the Word of truth. Pray for our young people who seek faithful spouses, that they may know the joy that comes from having Christ as the head of every household.

I pray that you encounter that joy in your home in the new year and every year until He comes.

Come, Lord Jesus!

**Your friend and fellow worker,
Pastor Chris**

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, or
- ▶ 605-352-7121



Pictured among the donations are Elden and Lillian Helms. Lillian serves as secretary for First and Emmanuel, and pantry treasurer. Elden is a trustee of First. The shelves behind them were soon filled.

Competition benefits **FOOD BANK**

The dual parish of First Lutheran Church, Wall, and Emmanuel, Creighton, hosted its annual Reformation Food Drive in October, challenging one another to donate nonperishable food items in a friendly competition of who can give more. When the food drive started in 2017 as a community outreach, the congregations set an overall goal of collecting 500 items by Reformation Day.

They have upped their goal by one item per year since then, making the 2022 goal 504 items.

Emmanuel was the clear winner this year, with 1,325 items donated. First donated a still significant 695 items.

The real winner, of course, was the Country Cupboard Food Pantry, which received from the congregations a combined total of 1,153 pounds of food.

Thank you to all the members who donated and volunteers who helped transport the food. Praise the Lord!

Higher Things retreat is Jan. 6-7

A Higher Things retreat for high school and college-age youth, "Born That Way," will be held at Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, Jan. 6-7. (The retreat begins at 6 p.m. on Friday and ends at 3 p.m. on Saturday).

When it comes to sex and related topics, our teens are overwhelmed and hearing very different messages from the church and the culture. Rev. Joel Shaltanis, pastor of Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Plano, Texas, will take a practical look at what God's Word says about the

proper role and place of sex (within a marriage) and why it says it (God really wanted you to be blessed).

The cost of \$40 per person covers all Friday night snacks; Saturday breakfast, lunch and snacks; all presentations and activities; and overnight lodging at Faith Lutheran Church.

Register at leader.higherthings.org/events/retreats. **However**, since the publication date of this issue is close to the event, you won't be denied attendance if you arrive without having registered.

Golden girls bless Immanuel



Myrdes Steffen



Mariette Rames

You're never too old to serve your church — especially if you're Myrdes Steffen, 103, and Mariette Rames, 98, members of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Menno. On Nov. 4, these two women, with the help of fellow Immanuel members Trudi Schaeffer and Kay Smidt, spent an afternoon serving in the church kitchen. Mariette helped Trudi, her daughter, organize small items in the kitchen cupboards. Myrdes, whose "pigs in the blanket," or cabbage rolls, have been a favorite at church potlucks for many years, taught Kay the fine art of making her specialty. These four women invited Rev. Brian Mosemann, Immanuel pastor, along with Trudi's and Kay's spouses, to an evening meal featuring the cabbage rolls.



Pastors present for the special service were, from left, Revs. Arthur Drehman, Matthew Wurm, Tom Mueller and Nathan Neugebauer.

Celebrating the Reformation

On Oct. 30, St. John's, Revillo, and Bethlehem, Milbank, hosted a Watertown Circuit-wide service, held at St. John's, celebrating the Reformation and the 175th anniversary of the LCMS. The parishes were asked to host the event because they represent some of the circuit's earliest beginnings. Bethlehem, rural Milbank, is the oldest remaining circuit congregation, having been founded in 1882 with the help of Rev. Friedrich Pfotenhauer, a traveling missionary from Odessa, Minn.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Albee, founded in 1880, was the first and closed in 1962. St. John's, Revillo, is a daughter congregation of St. Paul's and was founded in 1911.

The commemoration centered on the love of God in Jesus Christ through Pfotenhauer's work in our area. A St. John's member donated a pig and prepared it for a "homegrown pulled-pork dinner" following the circuit service.

Got news to share?



We are always in need of more submissions for the South Dakota District *Lutheran Witness* insert. Your stories remind us of what God is doing around the South Dakota District. They also 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 issue are needed by Jan. 15.

Send articles and photos to Kate Meadows at:

- kate@katemeadows.com or
- 420 E. Liberty Street
Rapid City, SD 57701