



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

Lutheran Family Service

WALKING WITH YOU

in your time of need

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1THESS. 5:11

So writes the apostle Paul to the Christians in Thessalonica. What does such encouragement look like? God's people take care of each other. They listen. They pray. They share the Good News of forgiveness and salvation through Christ alone.



Rev. Scott Sailer
District President

Since 2018, the South Dakota District has provided care for our congregations and church workers through the ministry of Lutheran Family Service (LFS), whose mission is "to equip individuals and communities with Christ-centered, life-changing tools, resources and hope to meet the challenges they are facing." Counseling for individuals and families, and presentations on strengthening families and marriages along with



IN PHOTOS:

Above: Kari Smith, a caseworker for LFS, gives a presentation about social media to children and parents; and, left, Grace was recently adopted through LFS' Down Syndrome Adoption Program.

disrupted life in our families, congregations and schools.

Noting the tremendous blessing LFS has been to

many other topics, are among the resources LFS provides.

Another resource, online telehealth sessions, has been particularly helpful the past two years. Using this technology, counselors at the LFS main office in Fort Dodge, Iowa, have been available to support and guide pastors, pastors' wives and others in the South Dakota District, especially during the many months when the coronavirus made its way into our midst and

so many people in South Dakota, the delegates at the December 2021 district convention voted overwhelmingly (91%) to continue and deepen the ministry agreement between our district and LFS for the new triennium (2022-25).

The ongoing agreement will result in the establishment of an LFS office in Sioux Falls and, we hope, in other locations in the state. Counselors will

See LFS, page 3

Music to our ears



Sioux Falls Lutheran School welcomed the Concordia University, Nebraska, (CUNE) Concert Band for a performance on April 7. The band is under the direction of Dr. Kurt von Kampen.

Formed in 1906, the band is the oldest continuing musical organization at Concordia. The Concert Band keeps an active performance schedule both on and off campus, having performed concerts in more than 20 states in the past 20 years. Most recently, the ensemble toured Alabama, Indiana, Texas, the Pacific Northwest, Florida, Illinois and Iowa. In addition to the ensemble's music being featured on broadcasts of "The Lutheran Hour," the Concert Band has released two recordings, "In the Spring" and "Winds from the Prairie."



Colin Thuringer and Maddie Peters returned to their alma mater to perform with the CUNE Concert Band. Colin is a member of Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls, and Maddie is a member of Memorial, Sioux Falls.

Congrats!

Following service on March 27, the congregation of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Watertown, honored its pastor, Rev. Iver Possehl, in recognition of the 40th anniversary of his ordination into the pastoral ministry. He has served Mount Olive since 2004. Pictured is Pastor Possehl with his wife, Kris.



District offers tech assistance

Have you ever had a technology issue and struggled researching and fixing on your own? To help you, the South Dakota District has assembled a small team of tech and media savvy experts. With our years of knowledge and connections to other industry specialists, we can steer your church or school in the proper path for all of your media needs. This may include:

- Consulting
- Designing
- Researching
- Purchasing
- Configuring hardware

The media's umbrella encompasses a wide range of activities. As the demand for media grows, the district office wants to help you with streaming, recording and posting video; online giving; licensing; software; capture devices; cameras; microphones; WiFi; speaker systems and audio enhancement.

For more information or if you have a special media assistance request, send an email to mediasupport@sddlcms.org. Please provide as much information as possible, including images, videos and/or any documentation that would help us. One of our team members will contact you to assess the project. The district will provide basic consulting and ideas to you and your congregation at no cost.

Depending on the project's complexity and timeline, the congregation may be able to acquire further assistance for a fee.

Even if you have a setup that works, do you need a media audit on best practices? Email your questions! The district is here to help!



Blessings in Milbank

Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, was blessed to welcome 14 people into membership on April 3. From left, Josh Vogel, Sebastian Vogel, Ryan Meeker, Teaneashea Vogel, Bella Vogel, Liz Vogel, Pam Vogel, Alanna Vogel, Steve Whitlow, Troy Gilbertson, Dakota Wollschlager and Derek Wollschlager. Missing from the photo are Anita Forman and Reed Wollschlager.

LFS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

be on-site in the Sioux Falls office to help not only church workers, but also congregational members with their emotional and mental health.

Telehealth will be available to individuals throughout South Dakota. Adoption services will also be available.

I'm sure you understand that to offer such care for one another does come at a financial cost to our district. For 2022, that cost is \$75,000.

The resolution calls for the district itself to contribute toward the cost of the ministry agreement with LFS for 2022. The district will contribute its share through special gifts we've received to do the Lord's work here in South Dakota.

What about congregations? What is asked of them? In the second-to-last "resolved" of the convention resolution, congregations are called on to contribute "above-and-beyond" gifts to bring emotional and mental health resources to our district through the ministry of LFS. Above and beyond what? Your

congregation's current pledge for district and Synod mission work. We already support missionaries in this above-and-beyond way through the *Together in Mission (TIM)* program. And now we are asking your congregation and the other 104 congregations of the South Dakota District to go above and beyond once more, by prayerfully considering a gift for our ministry agreement with LFS. In mid-March, your congregation's chairman and your pastor received information about how this additional financial gift can be given for 2022.

Your congregation is already doing so much to support the work of God's kingdom through the support you give for Synod and district mission work. Thank you! We praise God for your partnership in the Gospel, and we thank you for whatever you are willing to contribute in this new work we are doing together through the ministry of Lutheran Family Service — a ministry God is using to offer Christ-centered, life-changing hope amid the challenges of life.

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



Share your news with us!

We love to feature a wide variety of news occurring in our district congregations. If you have any announcements, special events or human interest stories, please share with your brothers and sisters in Christ of the South Dakota District.

Send submissions to Kate Meadows:

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

The deadline for the September issue is July 15.

PATTY'S PONDERINGS

A heartfelt 'thank you'

Chances are you're reading this after we held our district convention (June 3-4 at St. John's, Yankton, under the theme "Walk in Love"). If you were there, I hope that the Spirit of the Lord filled your hearts as you heard the Word, participated in servant events, learned about the Mission Grants and enjoyed fellowship with your LWML sisters.

This event can't be accomplished without the help of many people. Thank you to the ladies of the Yankton Zone and the members of St. John's, who opened their doors for many to enter.

Farewell

As the body of Christ we work together to show His love to our neighbor. Praise be to God for everyone who gives their time, talents and treasures to further the kingdom of God. I thank the outgoing officers — Susan Swanson, Nyla Jurrens, Donna Harr, Heather Miller and Rev. Daniel Grimmer. May God bless each of you as you continue to work in His harvest fields.

As we start a new biennium, I pray that you can participate in the many LWML activities and Bible studies in your groups, zones and the district. Please continue to fill your mite boxes. I hope to see you in Milwaukee for the 2023 national LWML convention, "Celebrate the Lord of the Nations," based on Ps. 33:12-13.

May the Triune God bless you each day as you "Walk in Love!"



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota
District President



MITCHELL ZONE REPORT

Much fun in 2022!

Greetings from the Mitchell LWML Zone! This year started off with an overwhelming feeling. Too many things to do with no promise of getting caught up. That feeling has not diminished or disappeared. As one project is completed, another appears. But I am reminded almost daily of Rom. 8:28:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

We ended 2021 with our Fall Rally on Oct. 3. Two women from the Mitchell Area Safe House gave a presentation on its history, services and outreach programs, and how to recognize and report abuse. Groups of the Mitchell Zone collected Gifts from the Heart items for the safehouse.

We also conducted a silent auction during the Fall Rally. Initially, we intended to have a small "trial-and-error" auction to raise money for Mites. Each group was asked to provide one or two items for the auction. With eight groups in the Mitchell Zone, we ended up with over 35 items to auction off! Because of God's blessings, the silent auction was a monumental success. With thankful hearts, we were able

to make a large donation to Mites. Praise be to God!

The excitement hasn't stopped in 2022. On April 30, the Mitchell Zone Spring Christian Life Workshop featured Rev. Brian Lemcke, who talked about, "Who Is Jesus-According to the Scriptures," and Carma Popp, president of the Mitchell LWML group, who gave a striking visual presentation, "The Pieces of Jesus' Life in Color and Quilts." Pastor Lemcke serves the dual parish of Emmaus, Tripp, and Zion, Delmont.

Attendees brought donations for the local food pantry and more for Gifts from the Heart.

On Oct. 2, the Mitchell Zone will host the Orphan Grain Train Fish Feed at Zion, Delmont. The Fish Feed is another new experience for us, but we have been told that the food is fantastic! One of the district's two Christian Life Workshops will be held at Zion, Mitchell, on Oct. 8 (see page 5), and plans are once again being made for a silent auction to be held this fall to benefit Mites.

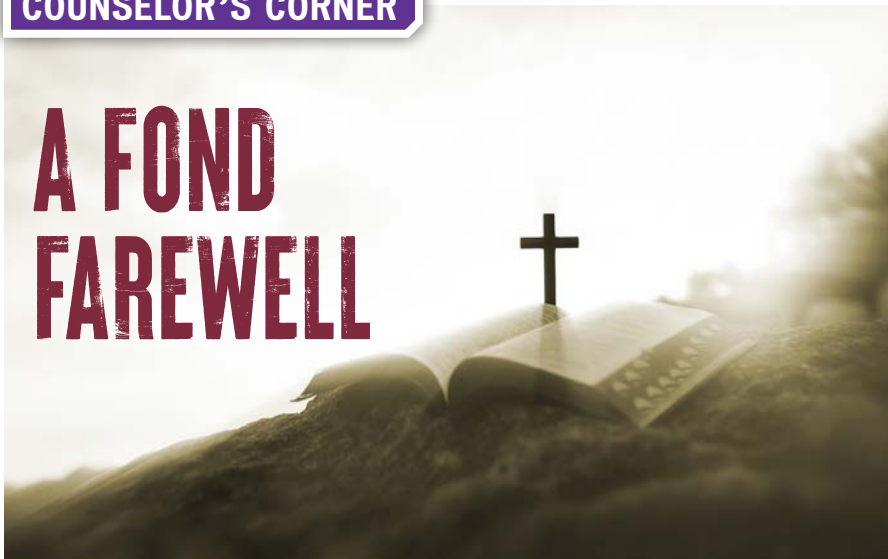
We pray God's blessings on our plans as we seek to do His loving work with our hands.

Julie Kaufman
LWML Mitchell Zone President

As **Lutheran Women in Mission**, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

A FOND FAREWELL



But now,
O LORD,
you are our
Father; we
are the clay,
and you are
our potter;
we are all
the work of
your hand.

Is. 64:8

**Dear Sisters in Christ of the
LWML South Dakota District,**

It's been such a joy and a privilege to serve as your pastoral counselor these last four years.

Seminary professors talk frequently about their work in “forming” pastors. And much formation does indeed occur during the years that a man is preparing to serve as a pastor. But in truth, so much shaping and forming continues to come through the years of actually serving as a pastor. I thank you for all the opportunities to serve among you, while continuing to grow and be shaped for future ministry.

If there's one area that I can be certain that the Lord has used my time as LWML pastoral counselor to shape me for His service, it is in my renewed appreciation for the



**Rev. Daniel
Grimmer**
LWML District
Pastoral Counselor

prayers, support, encouragement and leadership of the LWML for sharing the Good News of Jesus to a world in need of His mercy, grace and forgiveness. Though of course I knew of your work prior to my service as a counselor, I failed to recognize how much the Lord has shaped and is using you to accomplish His own mission. Thank you for giving me a renewed interest and passion for sharing Jesus' Word with the lost!

The last couple of years were a “blessed challenge” as together we navigated the disruptions and uncertainties of the pandemic, and the challenges that it brought to our works of ministry and mercy together as a district. Despite the difficult circumstances, our work was blessed as your joy and zeal for Christ's Word and for sharing the Gospel with the world never wavered. You met the challenge head on and prevailed through God's gracious provision.

I have learned so much from my time among you and I will miss having the insider view of your mission work in support of the church's ministry. I will continue to keep you and your work in my own prayers and look forward to seeing you all again.

The Lord bless you and keep you in His service and in His grace!

**With gratitude and appreciation,
Pastor Daniel Grimmer**

Make plans to attend workshop

With the LWML South Dakota District Convention now a sweet memory, we are making plans for the Fall Christian Life Workshops.

Rev. Robert Hinckley, pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Chamberlain, will present on “The Tabernacle/Temple in the Bible.” He will talk about how the tabernacle and temple point to Christ and what that means for the church today.

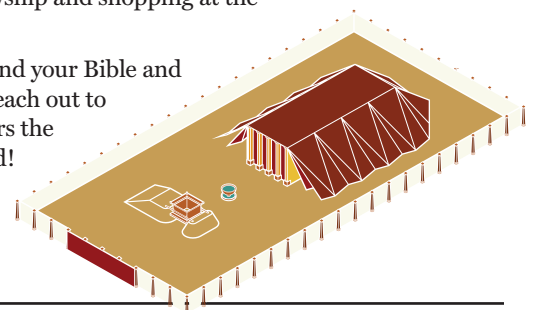
The workshops will be held on Saturday, Oct. 1, at Bethesda Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, and Saturday, Oct. 8, at Zion Lutheran Church, Mitchell. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the

workshop concludes at 1:45 p.m. with a devotion.

Registration will be followed by an opening devotion and the main presentation. Each workshop includes an hour-long break for lunch, fellowship and shopping at the LWML store.

Bring a friend and your Bible and be inspired to reach out to share with others the life-saving Word!

Susan Buxcel
VP of
Christian Life



‘God was there...’

RYLEE'S STORY

By Rev. Chris Navurskis
Pastor, Mount Calvary, Huron

Dear friends in Christ,

I see great value in sharing people's life stories as a way to celebrate God's gifts to us and prepare others to speak on behalf of those (young and old) who cannot speak for themselves. Recently, I have seen another way that these stories can bless our mission: these life stories help to shape the bigger story of the congregations where we all belong. I'll use my own congregation as an example.

In June 2019, I had been serving Mount Calvary, Huron, for about a year. I was still getting to know the congregation and I received a message that a 6-year-old member of our congregation was on her way to Sanford Children's Hospital (what we lovingly refer to as "The Castle.")

That was my headlong introduction into Rylee's story.

As I invited others to pray for Rylee, their responses were intense and indicated that they knew her history. "Rylee? Really, oh no, what's the matter?" "Rylee? Is it serious?" "What does she need?" "How are her mom and dad?"

That June, Rylee had been hospitalized with an infection. In her own words: "One day I was playing outside and I got a tick on my neck. It's normal to have ticks because I live in the country and play outside a lot. The following Monday I started swim lessons. Then, on Tuesday, my neck started to hurt really bad. It felt tight, so I told my mom. She thought it was just my muscles, sore from swimming. That evening I started to run a low fever. Wednesday, I skipped swim lessons because I didn't feel good. My grandma took me to the doctor, and the doctor started me on an antibiotic."



The Airheart family: parents Natasha and Joe with their children, from left, Rylee, Brelynn and Aiden.

The antibiotic didn't treat the infection. Rylee's fever was recorded at 106 degrees. Rylee says, "The doctors drew lots of blood and ran a lot of tests. We didn't find out it was tularemia until Friday. Once the doctors figured out what was wrong, they put a PICC line in my arm so they could give medicine to (make me) better. I was able to go home on Monday. My mom (Natasha) and dad (Joe) hooked up my medicine to my PICC line at home."

Tularemia is a severe infectious disease caused by bacteria and is transmissible from animals to humans.

By the time I visited Rylee at the Sanford Castle, I had heard her story from many members and friends. At the hospital, her mom and dad started reliving the past.

Rylee was born with gastroschisis, meaning she was born with a large portion of her intestines outside her body. She was delivered by C-section at 34 weeks and rushed into surgery after her baptism. Sadly, doctors were only

able to save 25 percent of her intestinal tract. Natasha remembers the moment when she learned that Rylee would be left with only her small intestine and colon. She vaguely remembers hearing the doctor communicating with her after Rylee was carried off to surgery.

"It was like hearing the lady on Charlie Brown," she recalled. "Then the doctor updated the rest of our family. It really wasn't until my mom burst into the room crying, hugging me and saying it's going to be OK that it really hit me that everything wasn't as fine as I thought it was."

What began in a fog quickly became more vivid. Life in the NICU is like a rollercoaster, Natasha says. At one point, she and her family were told that Rylee would be at Sanford for a year — 52 weeks, 365 days! But Natasha, an over-achiever, and Joe raced to learn every detail of every task Rylee's homegoing would demand. Eighty-four days later, after some scary setbacks

See RYLEE, page 8

LCMS South Dakota District Congregational Year-to-Date Report of Mission Receipts for the three months ending April 14, 2022, compared to the three months ending April 14, 2021

City, Congregation	Comm. Members*	2022 Intention	3 months 2022	3 months 2021	Avg/Per Comm. 2022	Avg/Per Comm. 2021
Circuit 1 – Aberdeen						
Aberdeen, Our Savior	329	10,000	4,000*	3,065	12.16	9.32
Aberdeen, St. John	87	12,500	3,860	4,348	44.37	49.98
Aberdeen, St. Paul	780	50,000	12,760	10,320	16.36	13.23
Andover, Zion	106	–	900	–	8.49	–
Britton, St. John	155	–	–	–	–	–
Columbia, St. John	102	–	1,938	3,875	19.00	37.99
Cresbard, Concordia	58	2,500	3,000	2,272	51.72	39.17
Doland, Redeemer	43	–	–	1,000	–	23.26
Ferney, St. Paul	165	4,000	4,000	–	24.24	–
Groton, St. John	308	7,000	2,661	2,983	8.64	9.69
Leola, St. Paul	48	500	–	–	–	–
Mansfield, Trinity	280	25,000	5,955	8,092	21.27	28.90
Redfield, Messiah	152	500	1,000	–	6.58	–
Stratford, St. Paul	43	4,000	1,000	–	23.26	–
Wecota, Immanuel	86	7,150	–	4,829	–	56.15
Circuit 1 Totals	2,742	\$123,150	\$41,074	\$40,784	14.98	14.87
Circuit 2 – Watertown						
Brookings, Mount Calvary	375	43,500	12,527	11,275	33.41	30.07
Brookings, Peace	271	–	6,000	–	22.14	–
Corona, Trinity	146	2,000	–	–	–	–
Flandreau, Redeemer	37	3,800	950	750	25.68	20.27
Milbank, Bethlehem	62	300	–	–	–	–
Milbank, Emanuel	575	–	4,000	9,715	6.96	16.90
Revillo, St. John	126	4,000	1,249	1,155	9.91	9.17
Sisseton, Emanuel	161	3,900	720	1,100	4.47	6.83
Watertown, Mount Olive	389	30,700	7,675	7,675	19.73	19.73
Waubay, Zion	118	–	3,319	–	28.13	–
White, Zion	77	5,000	–	900	–	11.69
Willmot, Our Savior	162	2,500	1,155	285	7.13	1.76
Circuit 2 Totals	2,499	\$95,700	\$37,595	\$32,855	15.04	13.15
Circuit 3 – Pierre						
Blunt, Trinity	37	2,000	1,000	500	27.03	13.51
Chamberlain, Zion	407	–	–	–	–	–
Draper, St. Paul	21	–	–	–	–	–
Gettysburg, Emmanuel	201	6,500	–	–	–	–
Gregory, St. John	258	–	–	–	–	–
Hamill, Zion	25	500	–	–	–	–
Harrold, Immanuel	19	600	–	–	–	–
Lebanon, Christ	23	–	–	–	–	–
Midland, St. Peter	40	3,000	650	777	16.25	19.43
Murdo, Messiah	76	3,000	1,262	1,000	16.61	13.16
Norris, St. John	68	–	–	190	–	2.79
Onida, Holy Cross	110	1,600	–	–	–	–
Phillip, Our Redeemer	50	–	–	–	–	–
Pierre, Faith	1,478	–	11,250	11,250	7.61	7.61
Presho, Zion	95	1,650	–	–	–	–
Reliance, Trinity	38	–	–	–	–	–
Rosebud, Rosebud Mission	–	–	360	691	–	–
Winner, Christ	68	2,000	500	500	7.35	7.35
Circuit 3 Totals	3,014	\$20,850	\$15,022	\$14,908	4.98	4.95
Circuit 4 – Black Hills						
Black Hawk, Divine Shepherd	364	15,681	3,920	3,806	10.77	10.46
Creighton, Emmanuel	52	–	–	–	–	–
Custer, Our Redeemer	195	3,000	985	750	5.05	3.85
Deadwood, Grace	73	3,000	750	750	10.27	10.27
Hill City, Our Savior	23	–	1,000	–	43.48	–
Hot Springs, Bethesda	308	7,000	1,750	1,750	5.68	5.68
Rapid City, Bethlehem	448	28,388	7,097	6,917	15.84	15.44
Rapid City, Our Redeemer	125	2,700	980	925	7.84	7.40
Rapid City, Peace	524	–	7,203	4,226	13.75	8.06
Rapid City, Zion	792	27,000	6,750	6,000	8.52	7.58
Spearsfish, St. Paul	316	42,000	42,000	41,500	132.91	131.33
Sturgis, Blessed Emmanuel	27	800	–	1,612	–	59.70
Wall, First	201	2,100	–	–	–	–
Circuit 4 Totals	3,448	\$131,669	\$72,435	\$68,236	21.01	19.79

City, Congregation	Comm. Members*	2022 Intention	3 months 2022	3 months 2021	Avg/Per Comm. 2022	Avg/Per Comm. 2021
Circuit 5 – Mitchell						
Armour, Redeemer	222	8,000	2,000	2,000	9.01	9.01
Delmont, Zion	99	16,000	–	4,000	–	40.40
Dimock, Immanuel	166	15,000	4,061	2,953	24.46	17.79
Emery, St. Peter	59	3,000	1,378	1,941	23.36	32.90
Huron, Mount Calvary	766	70,000	13,624	17,020	17.79	22.22
Mitchell, Faith	555	30,850	7,733	7,639	13.93	13.76
Parkston, Faith	191	10,000	2,600	1,700	13.61	8.90
Plankinton, St. Paul	145	–	–	1,000	–	6.90
Tripp, Emmaus	57	–	625	625	10.96	10.96
White Lake, Trinity	117	8,000	2,400	3,050	20.51	26.07
Wessington Springs, Zion	75	–	–	650	–	8.67
Wolsey, St. John	216	–	3,710	1,591	17.18	7.37
Woonsocket, Mount Olive	11	–	–	–	–	–
Circuit 5 Totals	2,679	\$160,850	\$38,131	\$44,169	14.23	16.49
Circuit 6 – Freeman						
Alexandria, St. Martin	81	1,100	–	1,375	–	16.98
Canistota, Zion	227	–	1,459	–	6.43	–
Centerville, First English	64	2,000	530	770	8.28	12.03
Emery, St. John	51	–	–	–	–	–
Freeman, St. Paul	265	9,000	2,684	3,184	10.13	12.02
Hartford, Trinity	96	3,000	–	–	–	–
Howard, St. John	111	–	–	–	–	–
Hurley, Zion	31	2,750	–	–	–	–
Madison, Our Savior	221	3,600	900	1,200	4.07	5.43
Marion, Bethesda	61	2,500	–	–	–	–
Menno, Immanuel	62	3,000	808	1,171	13.03	18.89
Montrose, St. John	88	–	–	–	–	–
Parker, First English	43	2,000	5,000	10,000	116.28	232.56
Scotland, St. Paul	31	600	150	200	4.84	6.45
Spencer, Trinity	77	2,000	–	1,000	–	12.99
Tea, Risen Savior	100	11,790	3,122	4,594	31.22	45.94
Wentworth, St. Peter	181	7,750	1,292	1,937	7.14	10.70
Circuit 6 Totals	1,790	\$51,090	\$15,945	\$25,431	8.91	14.21
Circuit 7 – Sioux Falls						
Brandon, Blessed Redeemer	285	15,000	3,750	3,300	13.16	11.58
Sioux Falls, Christ	90	2,000	–	–	–	–
Sioux Falls, Faith	619	43,500	14,500	10,875	23.42	17.57
Sioux Falls, Lord of Life	179	12,500	3,168	3,000	17.70	16.76
Sioux Falls, Memorial	725	50,000	8,255	6,835	11.39	9.43
Sioux Falls, Our Redeemer	324	24,000	8,400	8,000	25.93	24.69
Sioux Falls, Resurrection	214	10,000	2,500	2,500	11.68	11.68
Sioux Falls, Trinity of The Deaf	35	–	–	–	–	–
Sioux Falls, Zion	646	48,000	12,000	17,625	18.58	27.28
Circuit 7 Totals	3,117	\$205,000	\$52,573	\$52,135	16.87	16.73
Circuit 8 – Yankton						
Alcester, Peace	113	3,000	842	781	7.45	6.91
Avon, Zion	190	–	1,305	1,285	6.87	6.76
Dakota Dunes, Holy Cross	173	25,814	3,132	3,460	18.10	20.00
Fairfax, Trinity	71	4,500	–	2,000	–	28.17
Springfield, Our Savior	24	100	–	–	–	–
Tyndall, St. John	132	2,500	–	–	–	–
Utica, Martinus	65	–	–	–	–	–
Vermillion, Concordia	81	–	2,880	2,160	35.56	26.67
Wagner, St. John	231	9,000	2,250	2,250	9.74	9.74
Yankton, St. John	1,107	53,000	8,834	8,833	7.98	7.98
Circuit 8 Totals	2,187	\$97,914	\$19,243	\$20,769	8.80	9.50
GRAND TOTALS	21,476	\$886,223	\$292,018	\$299,287	13.60	13.94

Comm. Members = Communicant membership as of Feb. 4, 2021 per LCMS church locator website

*\$1,000 of Our Savior, Aberdeen is for 2021 Missions

Making Disciples for Life



Making Disciples for Life has been the triennial mission emphasis of the LCMS since the 2019 convention (replacing Witness, Mercy, Life Together). It captures both the evangelistic fervor of the New Testament – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” – and the understanding that disciples of Jesus are taught “all that [Christ has] commanded” so that we may abide in Christ and faithfully serve our neighbor in love.

The Lord preserves “your going out and your coming in” from His Divine Service through faithful preaching, teaching and administration of the Sacraments and the mutual conversation and consolation shared among Christians. From the font of Baptism until we fall asleep in Jesus, Christians live by faith in Christ and in fervent love for others in the humble vocations to which God has called them. By the grace of God in Christ, the Holy Spirit enables us to be faithful disciples of Jesus for life and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from Him. In a world of sin and suffering, we bear witness to Christ with joy, serving our neighbor in love and reaching out to the lost that they, too, might become disciples for life.

The current seven mission priorities of the LCMS, established through a process initiated in 2010, are, by the grace of God, intended to guide the work of the Offices of National and International Mission in “making disciples for life.” The current mission priorities are:



Plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches.



Support and expand theological education.



Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries.



Collaborate with the Synod’s members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness.



Enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry.



Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers.



Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God’s design.

RYLEE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

and training sessions barely short of a medical degree, they were all under one roof.

“We beat the odds,” Natasha says. “The last 10 years we have prayed, praised, begged and fought with God. Why us? Why can’t we just move forward? Why can’t things just go smoothly?”

“We did all the things. Quite honestly, looking back, (I see that) God knew we needed Rylee. When we were most vulnerable, weak and broken and we could have thrown in the towel and call it quits on absolutely everything, God was there guiding and leading us in every way. I honestly believe because of Rylee, Joe and I have a relationship between us and with God (that is) stronger than ever.”

As I visited with Rylee and Joe and Natasha at Sanford, I got to be a part of that praying and praising, that petitioning and wrestling, asking Christ the Good Shepherd to have mercy on this little lamb. In fact, I saw the entire congregation join in that activity.

Rylee’s hospital visit in 2019 brought her family back to the first 84 days of Rylee’s life. Rylee’s story is the story of her parents and siblings, and her doctors and nurses, and her congregation, all valiantly supporting life ministries. The Lord has seen fit to have Rylee lead our congregation in our Life Ministry. Do you see parallels in your congregation?

If you’d like to hear more about Rylee’s story from her and her family, please visit my blog on our Mount Calvary website: mtcalvaryhuron.org/home. Go to “Stay Connected” and click “Pastors’ Blog” from the drop-down menu.

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

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 pnavurskis@gmail.com or 605-352-7121.



Pastor Navurskis also serves as life coordinator of the South Dakota District.