



# DISTRICT NEWS

## SOUTH DAKOTA



**Rev. Scott Sailer**  
District President

**I**n last month's issue, I shared with you that many people in the world view life through a "shame and honor" lens. We as Lutheran Christians, on the other hand, tend to see life primarily through the lens of sin and forgiveness.

Both lenses focus on realities of life. If people are going to appreciate Christ's forgiveness, they will have to come to the realization of sin. Sin gives birth to guilt and shame. Guilt says I did something bad. Shame says I am bad. We have to face and deal with our guilt and shame, along with all the other consequences of sin.

Enter the grace of God! In His grace, God claims sinners as His dear children through faith in Jesus Christ. If children, then heirs! What an honor it is to be God's forgiven children and heirs of heaven.

The Good News of this undeserved honor is a gift you and your church can extend to your neighbors and your community, no matter the size of your church.

I know how it is for many of our churches. In many cases, throughout South Dakota, our churches are not what they once were. Nostalgia takes us back to the 1950s, 60s and 70s, when church basements were bursting with Sunday school students.

Pictures of confirmation classes from that era show a dozen students, even in small-town and rural churches. Our big churches had 30 in a class. Chairs were set up around the perimeter of our naves, not only on Christmas Eve, but also on Easter, Confirmation Sunday, Mission Sunday and Mother's Day.

Today's reality is that some churches in our district rarely have a confirmand. Some don't have a Sunday school any longer.

But all of our churches have God's Word of truth and promise. We all worship a risen Savior whose Easter triumph guarantees that sin, guilt and shame are covered. And as I wrote last month, by faith we are incorporated into the once shamed but now honored Christ.

Your church is a place where you hear this message and you can invite your neighbors to hear it, too. This is a gift you can extend to others.

Your church is situated between individuals and their broader day-to-day lives. Your friends and neighbors work hard. They interact with government, schools, service organizations and senior centers. All of these institutions have their place.

Your church's place is to be different than those institutions. The church is a place of grace, even a place of honor.

You and your church can speak grace and give God-bestowed honor to the frazzled mom who can't control her kids: "Your heavenly Father cares for you and your kids. Because of Jesus and

See MESSAGE, page 2

## LEGO challenge

Memorial Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, held a LEGO Bible challenge in February. Folks could pick a Bible story and then build it out of LEGOs to share! On Feb. 28th, the creations were displayed. Attendees voted for their three favorite creations. A Thrivent Action Team grant was secured to purchase prizes of LEGOs. It will become an annual tradition at Memorial.



A design of the Tower of Babel won first place at the first LEGO challenge at Memorial, Sioux Falls.

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

His saving work, you're His dear daughter. You are righteous — perfect — in His sight. Let me sit with you during the service and be an extra pair of hands for you."

You and your church can speak grace and give God-bestowed honor to the teen who missed out on making the team and the honor roll: "You may have failed to make the team, but you're not a failure. Your identity isn't in the team. No, it's in your being a precious child of God. You count so much to Him that He sent His Son to be Your Savior."

You and your church can speak grace and give God-bestowed honor to the new widow in town, without a church home and now without a husband: "Join us for quilting on Thursday mornings." Then bring her. Show her God's love. Demonstrate that your church is a place where she has another kind of family. It's a place of belonging and of experiencing God's unconditional love in Jesus Christ.

To whom might you extend God's gift of such grace and honor?

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

## Call Information

### ACCEPTED

- ▶ **Rev. Jason Resner**, Faith, Shumway, Ill., accepted the call of associate pastor to Faith, Sioux Falls, March 12.

### DECLINED

- ▶ **Rev. Ray Greenseth**, Messiah/St. Paul/Zion, Murdo/Draper/Presho, declined the call of pastor to St. John/St. Peter, Cadott/Boyd, Wis., March 14.
- ▶ **Curtis Miller**, Concordia Preparatory School, Towson, Md., declined the call of middle/high school principal from Sioux Falls Lutheran School, March 9.

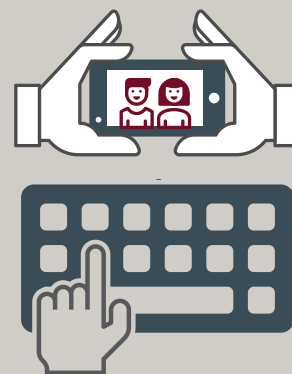


### VACANCIES

- ▶ Aberdeen, St. Paul (*assistant pastor*)
- ▶ Leola, St. Paul
- ▶ Mitchell, Zion (*associate pastor*)
- ▶ Redfield/Doland, Messiah/Redeemer
- ▶ Sisseton/Waubay, Emmanuel/Zion

Send submissions  
 for the **DISTRICT**  
**SUPPLEMENT** to:

**Vonda Sturzenbecher**  
 ▶ [vsturzenbecher@yahoo.com](mailto:vsturzenbecher@yahoo.com)  
 ▶ 8605 Woodland Dr.  
 Black Hawk, SD 57718



**The deadline for the August issue is June 15.**



# Dartball returns

The South Dakota District State Dartball Tournament resumed on March 6. After a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19, seven congregations were excited to get back together again at the Parkston Legion Hall for some fun and fellowship.

This year's turnout was understandably lower, but that didn't mean there was less fun to be had. Everyone had a great time and enjoyed some much needed fellowship after a long year. Zion, Delmont, lost only one game all day to claim first place in the round-robin format. Risen Savior, Tea, was the only team that was able to topple Delmont, but they had to settle for third place after having a rough start. That left Immanuel, Dimock, to take home the second-place trophy.

Tournament organizers would like to express their gratitude to Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) and Randy Gayken, LCEF district vice-president, for sponsoring

the tournament again this year.

Next year's tournament will be hosted by Zion, Mitchell, on March 5, 2022. If you are interested in fielding a team, contact Adam Schulz at 605-999-2403 or [adamschulz05@gmail.com](mailto:adamschulz05@gmail.com). Having more teams participate in the years to come would be welcome.

## About Dartball

The game is similar to baseball and softball. Two teams of nine players face off by throwing darts underhanded at a dartboard 15 feet away. The dartboard is shaped like a baseball diamond, and has all the bases and spaces for outs, strikes, balls and fouls.

The dart is thrown at the board and you get a hit by landing the dart in a base area; or an out (by striking out, missing the board or hitting the space labeled "out").

Like baseball, there are three outs each half-inning and nine innings per game.

Team captains accepting trophies from Adam Schulz, tournament director and a member of Zion, Mitchell, are:



### FIRST PLACE

Adam Klumb, Zion, Delmont



### SECOND PLACE

Travis Bialas, Immanuel, Dimock



### THIRD PLACE

Chad Birger, Risen Savior, Tea

## PATTY'S PONDERINGS

# We have our delegates!

The 39th Biennial LWML Convention, under the theme "Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus," will be upon us very soon!

We have lots of fun at convention, but there is also business to accomplish. New officers will be elected and bylaws and mission grants will be voted on. If you want to learn more about these, go to *lwml.org/2021-convention* and scroll down to "Delegate and District Information."

Listed below are the delegates and alternates from our South Dakota zones. I thank them for doing this work for our district. Please discuss the amendments and proposals that will be voted on within your groups and let your delegates know your thoughts. The delegates are:

### Aberdeen Zone

Jan Bohling and Gwen Petrich

### Black Hills Zone

Kathleen (Casey) Harvard and Dianne Hemminger



**Patty Peters**

LWML South Dakota District President

### Brookings Zone

Delorus Limmer and Nyla Jurens

### Chamberlain Zone

Susan Swanson

### Huron Zone

Ann Cruse and Laraine (Lari) Kahre

### Milbank Zone

Sharon Larson

### Mitchell Zone

Nancy Bogenhagen and Kimberlea Lessman

### Pierre Zone

Jan Larson and Melissa Brock

### Sioux Falls Zone

Tina Lenz and Heather Miller

### Yankton Zone

Dianne Diekman and Bonnie Pinkelman



## YWRs chosen for convention

The South Dakota District is blessed to have two Young Woman Representatives (YWRs) attending the 39th Biennial LWML Convention June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky.

Elizabeth Schmidt, a member of Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, has attended a variety of LWML activities with her mother. She is a student at Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls and is in the licensed practical nurse program. She lives with her parents and one brother.

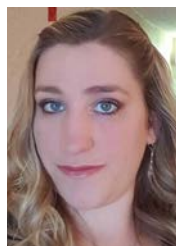
Elizabeth was a Faith youth group member while in high school and she participates in "Young Living Group," which teaches young adults how to share the love of God. She also works at Sanford Hospital as a patient care tech.

Elizabeth looks forward to working together with other ladies so they can spread the love of Christ to those in need.

See YWR, page 7



Elizabeth Schmidt



Janelle Lafrentz

## MITCHELL ZONE report

2020 proved to be a challenging year. We've had to dig deep to maintain positive attitudes and hopeful perspectives. But God gives us an everlasting promise in Heb. 6:17-20:

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf.

Assured that Jesus has gone before us, we faithfully carried on. We completed our banner for the district convention and, after the cancellation of the convention, we looked forward to the "reveal" at our Fall Rally, which was eventually postponed as a result of a spike in COVID infections.

We gathered as a board to complete zone business and elect officers. Two officers were installed, and we looked expectantly to 2021.

Our time together physically has been limited, but we continue our work making mats, sewing mission blankets, preparing school, hygiene and baby kits, and gathering items for various mission projects individually and in our smaller groups. Plans are being made to deliver these items to Orphan Grain Train in the near future.

We recently had our zone Board of Directors meeting. We look forward to the rest of 2021 and will, to the best of our ability, continue in God's call for each of us. Whatever the second half of 2021 brings, we will "hold fast to the hope set before us" and finish the work given us with hope and joy.

### Julie Kaufman

Mitchell Zone President

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



THE APOSTLE PETER WRITES:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. — 1 Peter 2:9

We do not use the terms “priest” or “priesthood” a lot in contemporary Lutheran church language, but that is probably to our loss because the Scriptures are clear that every Christian is a priest of God.

The role of priests in the Old Testament was primarily to offer sacrifices. But not



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

every sacrifice was of the same kind. Some sacrifices were to atone for sins. Other sacrifices were offered not for sin, but as thanksgiving and praise to the Lord. Peter makes it clear that we are priests, but in what sense? Do we offer sacrifices for sin?

No. Christ Jesus alone is the faithful high priest who was the perfect and final sacrifice for all sin by offering up His very body on the cross for us.

His sacrifice atones for all our sins forever. There is no longer a need to slaughter bulls or goats for sins. The blood of Christ covers us completely.

Instead, as New Testament priests, we offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise. We give thanks to God for His gift to us of His Son Jesus.

Our priestly sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving serve a missional purpose as well. By offering in worship our thanks and praise to God, we are also proclaiming His excellencies to those who do not yet know Him. Our praises and thanksgivings serve to give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ itself. For in praising God for sending His Son, we are also proclaiming His Son to all the world and giving a reason for the hope that is within us.

I recall a day some years ago when Ben & Jerry’s was giving away free ice cream cones. Hundreds were lined up out the door and around the block to receive the free ice cream cone. As they waited, they talked about how great it was that Ben and Jerry’s was doing this and what a special treat it was. And as others passed by, they wondered what was going on, that so many would be waiting for ice cream. Then those in line told the passers-by the good news and the line grew a little longer.

I don’t mean to trivialize the Gospel, but I think our worship of God as His holy nation of priests is a bit like that. Animated by the joy of Christ, we give spontaneous witness to those around us of the hope and joy we have in Christ. And the holy nation of God grows a little bit larger as others are called with us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The Lord bless you with His grace, that secure in His mercy you proclaim the excellencies of your God!

Time to submit mission grant applications

Spring has arrived! With the new season, it is time to think about new mission grants for our district. Applications for mission grants are due Aug. 31. Please remind your group about this important step in serving the Lord with gladness. I am excited to see what the Lord has planned for us in the next biennium.

Jan Larson • Vice President of Gospel Outreach



Hayden Rensner takes vitals from a young patient for a Mercy Medical Team (MMT) in Sierra Leone in 2018. Scholarships for nursing students to serve on an MMT is a 2020-22 district mission grant.

# Tell us your story



### Dear friends in Christ,

In late August 2017, I had been in ministry for 14 years but was on my way to work in a situation I had never experienced before. A son of the congregation I served at the time (and where I had grown up) had literally been hit by a train — and lived. His body was fairly broken. He was airlifted for emergency intervention and taken to a trauma center. His shoulder and back injuries were severe, but he had no life-threatening head injuries. He slept in an induced coma with his family keeping vigil close at hand. I had known his whole family during my early years of life, so their trauma was tangible for me.

The hour-long drive from our parsonage provided more than enough time for reflection on possible methods of ministry, helpful Bible passages to share, prayers to be offered and memories of this family's journey to ponder. Memories — vivid and plentiful — are the worst and the best during such defining moments. I began to feel as if an hour was insufficient time to compose myself. Halfway into the drive, a message popped into my phone. Glancing at the screen as it lit up with the notification, I could see that the first line of the message read: "Hello pastor, I don't know if you even remember me, but..."

I could see the display name of the sender. The last name didn't ring a bell, but I knew many people with the same first name. One special person came to mind. She had been a member of my confirmation class years before. Wow, that class almost drove me to leave the ministry. I felt like a total failure at getting them to complete even a small portion of their lessons. This young girl was confirmed, was pregnant within a

year and gave birth to her child at 15 years old. Could this message be from the same young lady?

I was already emotional, so I could not help but check the message. I pulled off the road at my very next opportunity. It *was* that same girl I remembered from confirmation class so many years before. The details of her message were the same as I had recalled: the class, the pregnancy and the birth of a healthy baby. She added a few details from her own memory and experience. She recalled how frightened she was of being a young mother and how abortion was an option offered and readily available to her at the time. She also recalled home visits I had made and the Gospel we shared on my visit. I told her that life is always a gift, and that God promises to be with mothers and fathers as they care for their children and raise them according to His Word.

She remembered that I also promised to help and that many people in the congregation were willing to do the same. Her message included a description of the other children she now has and the loving husband to whom she is married. She described the joy she has taking her oldest to school functions and sporting events. The child about which she once felt shame and embarrassment is now, along with their other kids, her pride and joy. She thanked me for helping her those many years before because she couldn't imagine being without all the blessings motherhood has given her.

I read her message through tears and typed back, "Of course I remember you! Is there a number I can use to call you?" She sent it and I called immediately. As she recalled the early days of her struggle stage by stage, I shared

a few she had not known. As she and her family planned for delivery and made baby-room accommodations, I prepared for the baptism I told her we would conduct after the baby was safely home (confirmation revisited!).

There was, in her congregation that I served, a group of leaders that were very insistent that the baptism of "that child" would have to be performed in the home and not be permitted to occur in the sanctuary during Sunday service. They confronted me. I shared the same Bible passages with them that I had shared with her and told them of her humble and repentant position, as well as her request for help from her church family.

Still, the conflict grew. I did not want the message of condemnation to get back to her or her family, so I took one of my elders and made home visits to the angry members. I spoke on behalf of her and her child and the mission of our church in Christ. In the end we did have the baptism in church, and now that little baby is a teenager, attends a Lutheran school and continues to grow in Christ with the rest of the family. She is thriving in the care of her faithful and loving mother.

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Someone is near you that 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. My email address is included below.

**Your friend and fellow worker,  
Rev. Chris Navurskis**  
Mount Calvary,  
Huron

► [pcnavurskis@gmail.com](mailto:pcnavurskis@gmail.com)  
► 605-352-7121



[lutheransforlifesd.org](http://lutheransforlifesd.org)



# AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

Nine youth, three pastors, one DCE intern and one adult gathered at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Wilmot, for an Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ (OAFc) event on March 20. The group was broken up into five teams that went door-to-door to talk to their neighbors about faith and what they believe.

The groups knocked on 111 doors. Of the 36 people who answered the door, 21 of them were sure of their salvation because of what Jesus did for them. Five people were depending on their own good works. Seven didn't know why they believed they were saved, and three people didn't answer questions. Gospel literature and congregational information were left at the other 75 homes where no one answered the door.

Pictured are, from left (front row) Liz Vogel, Harley Bode, Grace Herzberg, Ben Bobby, Judah Bobby, Rozanne Dockter; (middle row) Bella Vogel, Gus Bobby, Sebastian Vogel, Michael Leapley (DCE intern), Jaxen Dockter; (back row) Polly Burke, Rev. Sam Bobby, Rev. Martin Herzberg and Drew Biel.



Drew Biel (left) and Harley Bode are ready to greet neighbors.

## YWR

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

The second YWR is Janelle Lafrentz, a member of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls. Janelle and her husband, Michael, have two small children, James and Lydia.

Janelle is a very busy and talented young woman. Although her background is in music, she is currently the director

of A-OK, a before- and after-school program at Sioux Falls Lutheran School. Janelle also uses her music and technology skills volunteering at Our Redeemer.

When asked why she would like to serve as a YWR, she said, "I feel being a Young Woman Representative would help me gain some more experience and knowledge that I can pass on to my friends to help get them get excited

about LWML activities in the future.

"I serve with joy in many capacities in my life. To serve as Christ served, I must put other's needs above my own."

We look forward to having Elizabeth and Janelle as YWRs at the national LWML convention, learning to serve as Women in Mission!

Tina Lenz • YWR Chairman



## Pastor returns home to serve tri-parish

Rev. Wade M. Harr was installed as pastor of the tri-parish of Christ, Winner; Zion, Hamill; and Trinity, Reliance, on March 21 at Christ Lutheran Church.

Rev. Albert Bader, pastor of St. John's, Ogallala, Neb., was the preacher. The liturgist was Rev. Marcus Ring, pastor of St. John, Gregory, who had served as the tri-parish's vacancy pastor, and Rev. Mark Mischnick, circuit visitor, was the lector. Rev. Scott Sailer, South Dakota district president, was the officiant.

A native of South Dakota, Pastor Harr's home congregation is Faith, Sioux Falls. He is a 1993 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and previously served as pastor of St. John, Palmer, Neb.; St. John, Gregory; and First, Fort Benton, Mont. He has one son, William, who is a freshman at Concordia University Wisconsin and is in the pre-seminary program.

The South Dakota District thanks God for answering His people's prayers for a pastor for the tri-parish, and we welcome Wade back to the beloved district!



Participating clergy pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Mark Mischnick, Wade Harr, Scott Sailer, Daniel Bremer; (middle row) Marcus Ring, Corey Aker, Nabil Nour, Bill Serr, Daniel Grimmer; (back row) Ryan Loeslie, Robert Hinckley, L. Scott Spiehs, Albert Bader, Ken Soyk, Georg Williams, Ray Greenseth and Randy Sturzenbecher