



# DISTRICT NEWS

## SOUTH DAKOTA



# THANK YOU FOR SERVING

*(and for not “tooting your horn”)*



**Rev. Scott Sailer**  
District President

As I travel throughout the state, I try to make it a point to thank church folks I see serving in various ways. While some of the work is rather public, so much of it is behind the scenes. All of this work is important.

These church members are giving of their time and talents — and often their treasures — as they serve in their congregations. However, it is my observation that the rest of the church members all too often take these servants for granted. This ought not be so!

And so, one Sunday morning not long ago, I thanked the wind quintet instrumentalists, the organist, the Bible study leader and the two ladies washing the communion vessels. During my sermon, I thanked the mission team that makes an annual trek to El Paso, Texas.

Those kinds of works of Christian service don't just magically happen. It's supernatural, actually. This is God working through His children to accomplish important work among us.

Think about it. What do all these church members who serve us have in common? A Savior. A love for Him and their congregation. A realization that their life is not their own, but they've been bought with a price — the blood of Jesus. They belong to God and they have been saved to serve. And serve they do, most of the time without receiving a penny for their service. They serve so humbly. They are certainly no “horn-tooters,” these servants in our congregations.

Today I just want to say “thank you” to the hundreds of church members throughout our South Dakota District who serve in countless ways in our congregations. If they don't toot their own horns (and I'm glad they don't), I want to sound a few notes of appreciation by way of this article.

I also want to thank all of you for your service in your families, to your neighbors and friends, to your community, to your school, to the American Legion, VFW and blood bank. This Christian service won't make the headlines anywhere. Nor do I hear any horns being tooted. But your selfless service is just what another person needed at the time.

I've said it many times: We serve the God we cannot see by serving people

See **SERVICE**, page 3

## Congratulations!



**Michael Leapley was commissioned and installed as director of Christian education (DCE) of St. Paul's, Aberdeen, and St. Paul's, Leola, dual parish on March 20.** He will serve primarily in youth ministry and parish education.

Michael had served as a DCE intern for the Aberdeen congregation for the past year while completing the DCE program at Concordia University Nebraska. He is now the fifth DCE currently serving in the South Dakota District.

DCE Leapley, center, is pictured with his parents, Kurt and Margaret Leapley.



**Rev. Samuel P. Handschke was installed as senior pastor of Faith, Pierre, on March 13.** He had been serving the congregation as associate pastor since 2018. Pastor Handschke received the call after Rev. Dr. Cory Rajek, former senior pastor, accepted a call from the LCMS Office of International Mission to serve as a missionary in Eurasia.

Pastor Handschke is a 2018 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He and his wife, Cathy, are Wisconsin natives and have four children: Annalise (7), Paul (6), Julia (3) and Evie (1), who is pictured with her parents.

## Call Information

### ACCEPTED

**Rev. Donald Erickson**, St. John, Germantown, Iowa, accepted a call as pastor to Peace, Alcester, March 19.

### PENDING

**Rev. David Lindenberg**, pastor of Peace/Rapid City, received a call as pastor to St. Peter, Portage, Ind., March 19.

**Rev. Nathan Neugebauer**, St. John/Bethlehem, Revillo/rural Milbank, received a

call to Trinity, Gillette, Wyo., March 25.

### DECLINED

**DCE Joshua Schmitt**, St. John's, Yankton, declined a call as DCE to St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, Westlake, Ohio, March 4.

### VACANCIES

- ▶ Corona/Wilmot, Trinity/Our Savior (sole pastor)
- ▶ Milbank/Emanuel
- ▶ Plankinton/White Lake, St. Paul/Trinity (sole pastor)



## Living the retired life!

The Black Hills retired pastors recently held their first potluck get-together at Peace, Rapid City. Pastors, their wives and a grandchild — 17 people in all — enjoyed food and fellowship. The group decided to meet again in May. Clockwise from bottom left: Rev. Terry, Evelyn and Arlene Naaz; Jeannie Fries; Audrey and Rev. Bill Paepke; Rev. Glenn Schultz; Carol Uecker; Revs. Gene Baumann, Bob Anderson, John Fries, Gordon Goldammer and Bob Bohlmann; Myrna Bohlman; and Diane and Rev. Bob Gardner.



## SERVICE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



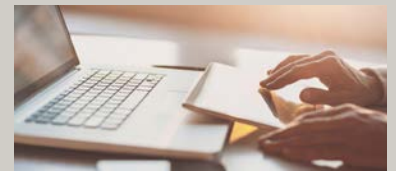
we can see. You can't see God (not yet!), but God knows you and sees you, and He sees what you've done as His redeemed child. And someday — the day He welcomes you to your eternal home and you see Him as He is — the Lord will say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Until then, why not make it a habit to offer a "well done" and "thank you"

to a fellow congregant for his or her service to you and the other members? Why not get involved yourself in some service to your fellow congregation members in gratitude for Christ's service to you?

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

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

# Time for convention!

I am looking forward to seeing so many of you at our district convention (June 3-4, St. John's, Yankton). The ladies of the Yankton Zone have been waiting to host you for four years, and now we get to pray and sing together, hear mission grant reports and vote on new grants.



**Patty Peters**  
LWML South Dakota  
District President

Under the theme "Walk in Love" (based on Eph. 4:32-5:2), we will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the

Puppet Place at the South Dakota State Fair — and the 80th anniversary of LWML! The celebration will be at Riverside Park following the mite walk across the Missouri River. Rev. Andrew Utecht will do a puppet and magic show for us.

Jan Wendorf, former LWML president, will give the keynote address, and Marie Chow, LWML vice-president of Organizational Resources will bring greetings from the national office. Both ladies are looking forward to meeting us and spending dedicated time with the Young Woman Representatives and Heart 2 Heart Sisters.

Please bring your Gifts from the Heart



for MOST Ministries, River City Domestic Violence Center and ZoeCare. We will participate in servant events during the retreat on Friday morning.

Pastor Utecht will lead a Bible study and Katy Gifford, former LWML Nebraska South District president, will provide "comic interruption."

Please join me in praying for a blessed time together as we "Walk in Love."



## Quilters unite!

Ten women who attend Redeemer Lutheran Church, Armour, meet monthly for quilting and other projects. The group, which includes three women who quilt from home, has made two trips to the Orphan Grain Train warehouse in Norfolk, Neb., to deliver 113 quilts, 18 school backpacks, 13 healthcare kits and one teacher school bag. The ladies are thankful to be able to gather for these mission projects. Pictured are, from left, Marlene Silbaugh, Judene Irving, Karen Baier, Priscilla Lau, Carla Gohl, and Judy Wunder.

## Please bring your ingathering items

If you haven't started, please look for and collect items for the LWML South Dakota District convention ingathering.

Most Ministries will appreciate donations of:

- Adult glasses
- Children's glasses
- Non-prescription sunglasses

Please bring only glasses that are in good condition. MOST Ministries cannot use broken glasses.

Gently used eyeglasses can enable an adult to secure a job to support his or her family; a child to succeed in school; a senior to continue to live independently; a mother or father to see their child's face clearly for the first time; and people to hear the Gospel while they are being fitted for glasses.

We will also collect items for the River City Domestic Violence Center in Yankton. The center provides a safe haven to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and child abuse. The center exists to break the cycle of these traumas in our community through survivor empowerment, advocacy, education, awareness and social

See **DONATIONS**, page 8

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



**LIVING, MOVING, BEING**  
*(aka screaming, squirming, scared)*

As some of you may know, the Thorson family is about to be bigger by one.

It must be a scary thing, to be born. What a drastic change of scenery! From Mom's warm belly to the big, wide (and often cold) world, not to mention being greeted by a scary person in a mask (the doctor). The infant's existence is turned upside-down. No wonder babies come into this world screaming, squirming and scared.

Thinking about this, the birth of a child should cause us to ponder ancient, important questions about life and existence: Why am I here? What am I going to do now that I am here?

These are the very questions that Paul addressed to the Athenians at the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-34). As the men sat around and pondered the deepest questions of life, Paul stood up and addressed them on their own terms with language about God that they could understand. Paul put it to them that they had all the answers they needed in the God they had labeled as unknown.



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

The God who created everything and sent Jesus to die and rise again was and is the answer to even the oldest questions of men, for it is in Him that all creation lives, moves and has its being. God is the reason we come into this world and continue in it screaming, squirming and

scared. He sustains all His creation and by His Son, Jesus Christ, has given redemption and life for His creation.

Paul assures us that we are more than living, moving creatures that take up space. We are more than screaming, squirming, scared bundles of flesh. Instead, we find our purpose and being in Jesus, who rescued us from screaming, squirming and being scared in eternal death so we could "walk in love" (just as our theme for next month's LWML district convention encourages us to do).

We are therefore God's creation, made alive by the Father, redeemed by Jesus and sustained by the Holy Spirit, that we may testify to God's glory and mercy while walking in love.

FAREWELL  
AND



To my fellow LWML ladies ... I cannot believe my four years as financial secretary has already come to an end. I have enjoyed collecting and keeping track of the funds we have brought in together through our gatherings. I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know you. God has blessed our LWML here in South Dakota and throughout the nation.

I pray you will continue to work for our Lord Jesus. Many blessings to you.

**Donna Harr** • South Dakota District Financial Secretary

Saying farewell is harder than I thought, and what a privilege it has been to serve as your VP of Special Focus Ministries. During this term, I have met many wonderful people. I have also learned we can get things done even when we are unable to meet in person. I enjoyed hearing about all the wonderful things we can accomplish as a group. This proves LWML is a strong organization and knows how to get it done by "walking in God's love."

I would like to leave you with my new favorite Bible verse:

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 and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. **EPH. 4:32-5:2**

**Nyla Jurrens** • V.P. of Special Focus Ministries

It has been a pleasure to serve as your VP of Communication for the past four years. I want to thank the LWML district Board of Directors and all the LWML members for your help and support. The past couple of years has made us look at different ways to communicate and serve our Lord. We attended our board meetings, group meetings and even our Bible study via Zoom. But through it all we knew that God was there to guide us.

I am thankful for my four years of God's service in the district and am grateful for the friends and fellowship. God's blessing to all of you!

**Susan Swanson** • VP of Communication

# What gold can you give?

Dear friends in Christ,

I minister to many folks who say they see more “rust” than “gold” in their later years. I assure you, the “golden years” are indeed “golden.” As we age, our bodies suffer decay, which is to be lamented as part of the curse from which Christ rescued us. However, I am sharing my friend’s Kathy’s story with you this month so you can see the treasure you carry as a chronologically gifted Christian. You have something golden to give others on your journey to, or through, your golden years.

Kathy has suffered one physical malady after another in her golden years. The breadth of her suffering has repeatedly demanded hospitalization. No one really wants to go to the hospital, but if you would see Kathy there, you’d think she feels right at home. The nurses listen to her intently and she exchanges information with them in medical shorthand that sounds like a foreign language to me. That is because Kathy worked as a registered nurse from 1971 to 2016.

“From the first day, I loved it,” Kathy remembers. “I liked the challenge.”

She graduated from St. John’s Hospital School of Nursing, Huron, and over the course of her career served in the delivery room, dialysis department, pediatric clinic and surgical recovery room. Kathy also taught OB/GYN nursing for two years and enjoyed educating many parents through prenatal classes. Most of all, she says, she loved delivering babies.

“You had to be ready for anything, because sometimes everything would happen before the doctor even got there,” Kathy says.

When she describes the extreme highs and lows of the job, you get the idea that the feelings are not so much memories as they are characteristics of her own personality. She made clear the pressure she felt as the vise between senior medical staff and patient needs, between professional standards and



outcomes. “Document! Document! Document!” she says. “You always worked under the threat of lawsuits.”

It is a double standard. Doctors and nurses are expected to be perfect even as they accept and fix the imperfections in others. Only a person with a calling can bear up under that kind of load. God’s calling fueled Kathy’s passion to serve.

“For me, it was a joy,” she says. “I loved to see the look on the faces of the moms and dads as they held their new babies, and to see the new families God made.”

God made Kathy’s own family by adoption. Her dad ran a clothing store in town and her mom stayed at home.

What all did Kathy see and think with each delivery over those 45 years of her nursing career? She can’t count how many babies she saw come into the world but concludes, “there were tons!”

She delivered multiple generations of various families.

“There were many times I would look at the mom and dad and say to one or the other, ‘Hey, I slapped the first diaper on your butt when you were born!’” she recalls.

Kathy calls each birth a gift from God and reminisces over one special miracle. A 17-year-old was 30 weeks’ pregnant when she arrived at the hospital with significant bleeding. She had a previous baby by C-section, but this baby was coming too fast for that, and was not breathing when born.

“We bagged and intubated with no success, and the doctor called it,” Kathy says.

The mother had heard the whole procedure and had thought all along that her baby was breathing. Despair hung in the room. The baby was set aside in an isolated bassinette in the nursery, and the focus turned to saving her mother’s life. After the doctor left, the baby began to cry — loudly. The doctor was called back. The baby was flown to a children’s hospital in Minnesota and nicknamed Lazarus. She lived, grew and graduated college.

“Never underestimate a baby!” Kathy told me twice.

You probably know that not every baby Kathy delivered made it. Not every baby was wanted. Kathy remembers a young woman who ended her pregnancy in some “mechanical” way but, frankly, I can’t share all the details because of their sensitive nature. I can’t bear to type the words she told me.

Kathy remembers baptizing a severely premature baby and rocking it until it died in her arms. She remembers families that suffered miscarriage and stillborn babies. She remembers coping with children who would ultimately live with genetic disorders.

“How did you keep going?” I asked her. “How do you keep going now?”

See **KATHY**, page 8

# Game on!

From dart ball to ladder ball and more, district members play hard – and have fun



The Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, Men's Club recently challenged congregation members to a dartball and bean-bag toss competition for fellowship and to raise money for the church's parking lot. Men of the congregation invited the LWML, choir, youth and others to compete for a traveling trophy. The event opened with prayer and a smoked pork loin lunch prepared by Jeff Althoff.

Thirty-four participants ages 5-80 were divided into four teams. The competition

included heckling, cheering and lots of laughter. Championship teams were challenged to a game of ladder ball for the final contest. The winning team was the Saints of Christ (pictured above, from left, Rev. Al Althoff; Julia, Everett, Espn and Callen Althoff; and Rev. Nabil Nour).

It's no secret that the Saints of Christ had an extra edge with two pastors on the team. It was a great afternoon of fun and fellowship as participants got to know each other better and play for a good cause.



The 2022 dartball champions from Dimock include, from left, Tim Geidel, Tyler Bialas, Travis Bialas, Rev. Ryan Loeslie, Morris Wegehaupt, Jill Moege, Jeremy Moege and Gerald Moege.

Despite snowy weather on March 5, over 100 district members congregated at the Davison County Fairgrounds in Mitchell for the annual State Dartball Tournament, sponsored by Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Eleven teams representing 10 congregations competed, and each team played a minimum of five games.

Rev. Daniel Grimmer, senior pastor of Zion, Mitchell, led a brief devotion to kick off the event. The top three teams from each pool played in a single elimination bracket to determine the overall champion.

The team from Dimock powered through the day with a total of eight wins to claim the championship. Delmont took the second-place trophy and Parkston rounded out the top three. Information about the 2023 tournament will be published soon.

Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, held a game night on Feb. 6, hosted by the Board of Parish Fellowship. Along with a variety of board and card games, the event included a Bible Bowl for all ages on the Gospel of John. Bible scholars participated in elementary, youth, adults, "all ages" and professional divisions. (No one volunteered to participate in the senior citizen division.) The elementary division competed in a special Bible heroes trivia contest.

Longtime Bible Bowl coach LeRoy Kropuenske was the quizmaster. He has resources available on his Facebook group page "Bible Overview Bowl World." The resources are designed to be flexible and meet the needs for a variety of events.





## Preparing for end-of-life

On Jan. 29, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Spearfish, sponsored “Christian Decision Making at Life’s End,” a three-hour presentation that covered the many aspects in which we and our loved ones face at that particular stage. Members of area congregations were invited to attend.

Rev. Tim Rynearson, pastor of Redeemer, Flandreau; Peace, Brookings; and Zion, White, talked about the importance of being prepared for the end of life here on earth and reminded us that earth is only our temporary home. Being in our heavenly home with Jesus is the final and most glorious goal we have been promised, through His death and resurrection.

Tom Muckle, Fidler–Isburg Funeral Chapel director in Spearfish and a member of St Paul, led a discussion on funeral planning and what to expect when preparing for the service.

Eric Nies, an estate attorney with Neis & Karras Attorneys at Law in Spearfish and a member of St Paul, talked about the importance of writing a will and keeping it updated as circumstances can change.

Randy Wombold, Kirk Funeral Home preplanning specialist in Rapid City, informed the audience about insurance products that can cover some end-of-life expenses and make the funeral-planning process easier for a loved one’s survivors.

## The Word at work

“It’s all about the Word,” says LCMS missionary Rev. Dr. Cory Rajek in the Spring 2022 issue of *Lutherans Engage the World*. The issue highlights a few places where the Word of God is at work, including in rural western Kenya, where men and women are being prepared to serve a dozen Lutheran church bodies in East Africa; in Lutheran schools in California and Wisconsin, where the next generation is growing in their knowledge of math, science and the Savior, Jesus Christ; and in Germany, where students who attend online classes through the Luther Academy in Riga, Latvia, recently gathered for a week of intensive studies.

Dr. Rajek recently served as senior pastor of Faith, Pierre.

The issue also includes five stories written by LCMS missionaries about mission work in Brazil, Italy, Taiwan, Germany and more. In addition, you’ll hear from the Rev. James Krikava, director of the LCMS Eurasia region, who is coordinating the Synod’s response to help those who are displaced, suffering or in danger due to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

The magazine was slated to arrive in mailboxes in late April. You can read the issue online at [engage.lcms.org](http://engage.lcms.org). To have the magazine delivered directly to your door, visit [engage.lcms.org/subscribe](http://engage.lcms.org/subscribe). Individual and bulk subscriptions (for congregations) are available at no charge.

## KATHY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

“I cried with them,” she says. “That is part of what we did. We all did. God put me there to cry with them and love them.”

What a treasure. A treasure better than gold I’d say. Check out 1 Peter 1:6-8 and you will see what I mean.

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.

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



## DONATIONS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

change. Their wish list includes:

- Dish-washing cloths
- Laundry soap
- Sports bras
- Gray bath towels
- Food-storage containers
- Bleach
- Non-bleach cleaning solutions
- Cash to purchase meal coupons

ZoeCare is a pregnancy center that aims to meet the needs of couples and women who are facing an unplanned pregnancy. The mission encourages women and couples to choose life, embraces single mothers with the love of Jesus Christ and builds communities where purity in relationships, traditional marriage and strong families are nurtured and valued.

ZoeCare will accept cash donations.

**Nyla Jurrens**

V.P. of Special Focus Ministries