



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

God's blessings, Pastor Olson!

The calling body is the same, but the work is far different.



Rev. Scott Sailer
District President

Rev. Darren Olson has served the South Dakota District for the past nine years as executive secretary. Recently, the Lord, through the district's Board of Directors, called Darren to a new and exciting ministry in our district: Missionary-at-large for Northern Lincoln County and school chaplain at Sioux Falls Lutheran School. Pastor Olson was installed into his new role on Sept. 2.

We owe Darren many thanks for his service as executive secretary. Rev. Dr. Dale Sattgast, who previously served our district as president (2006-15), and I are grateful for Darren's wise counsel to us as the other pastor in the district office. Outside the office, Darren provided call lists for Lutheran schools as well as encouragement and guidance for school administrators, teachers and directors of Christian education. He provided support to the service areas of the district, and he initiated some marvelous programs. The Harvest Grant

program, which provided seed money to schools and churches for witness and mercy events for the last four years, was his idea. Untold souls have been impacted now and forever through the various projects that were jump-started by the Harvest Grants.

But now it's on to a new ministry for Pastor Olson. Darren will work at the Sioux Falls Lutheran School campus, with the goal of planting a church while simultaneously serving as an on-site spiritual resource for the school. How unique is that! We know of no other ministry quite like this in the Synod, at least at this time. But the needs are great. The fields are "ripe unto harvest" in this area of South Dakota.

The target area for this mission work within Lincoln County will be the area south of 69th Street in Sioux Falls and will also include the city of Harrisburg. The city of Tea, also in Lincoln County, will not be a part of this mission effort since Risen Savior Lutheran Church already serves the Tea community.

Note it well, the fields are ripe! Sioux Falls is growing at a

steady rate of 3,000 to 4,000 people a year. Yet only about 40 percent of Lincoln County residents claim membership in a church. In the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, 100,000 people are unchurched. Many families at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, particularly those with students in the preschool, are not church members.

So now is the time for this outreach ministry. Northern Lincoln County is the place to establish a greater LCMS presence and, more importantly, bring God's Good News of the Savior to those who don't know and trust Him as their Lord. Sioux Falls Lutheran School, at its new building near the intersection of I-29 and I-229, is an excellent location for our work.

Our work. Because this is a call by the district's Board of Directors, we in the South Dakota District are in this together. We will be reaching souls for Jesus together.

We are grateful that the administration at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, led by Tia Esser, and the school board recognize their place, even their responsibility, in bringing God's Good News to their students and their families, but also into the world. And so Sioux Falls Lutheran School is collaborating with the district in this blessed, exciting work for the Lord.

Rev. Darren Olson



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CELEBRATING 85 YEARS

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Custer, marked 85 years of God's grace with a float in the annual Gold Discovery Days parade on July 17. Nine people sang hymns from the float while five others walked alongside it, passing out snack bags with candy and a Christian message. Parade goers clapped at the end of each hymn, and one young boy shouted, "You guys sing good!" The parade reported a record turnout, making Our Redeemer's float and hymn singing a great way to share Jesus' love and mercy.

Call Information

ACCEPTED

- ▶ **Rev. Andrew Wolfram**, pastor, St. John/Zion, Groton/Andover, accepted a call to Holy Cross, Bordentown, N.J., Sept. 12.
- ▶ **Rev. Kevin Moore**, Hope, Brewster, Wash., accepted a call to Messiah/Redeemer, Redfield/Doland, Sept. 12.

PENDING

- ▶ **Rev. Nathan Neugebauer** St. John's/Bethlehem, Revillo/Milbank, received a call as pastor to St. Peter's/Grace, Westgate/Fayette, Iowa, Sept. 4.

DECLINED

- ▶ **Rev. Ryan Drevlow**, pastor, Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls, declined the call to St. Peter, Portage, Ind., Aug. 20.

VACANCIES

- Leola, St. Paul
- Mitchell, Zion (*associate pastor*)
- Pierre, Faith (*senior pastor*)
- Plankinton/White Lake, St. Paul/Trinity
- Redfield/Doland, Messiah/Redeemer
- Sisseton/Waubay, Emmanuel/Zion
- Sioux Falls, District executive secretary



Photos: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

MISSION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We're all in this blessed Kingdom work together — the district, the school, Pastor Olson and, best of all, God, who guides us by His Word and Spirit.

Please keep Pastor Olson and this mission work in your individual and corporate prayers.

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 December issue is Oct. 15.



LERT unveils new website

LUTHERAN EARLY RESPONSE TEAM (LERT) is a network of LCMS volunteers who are organized at the district level and trained to deploy rapidly in the event of a disaster. Now, in addition to flood buckets, chainsaws and words of Gospel comfort, LERT has another resource in its "toolkit": a new website at lcms-lert.org that will better facilitate the work of LCMS Disaster Response.

According to the Rev. Robert Wurst, volunteer manager for LERT, the website "will help us see what LERT training and deployments are taking place across the Synod. Additionally, our LERT volunteers — and anyone else who is interested — can see what training and deployment opportunities are available and make plans to jump in and help as they are able. The software lets us communicate detailed needs and will help our LERT volunteers be well-prepared when they respond to a disaster."

In addition to information about training and deployment opportunities, the website includes links to disaster response resources and the LERT blog. The necessary software

has been shared, at no cost, with all of the Synod's disaster-response entities.

"The new software will allow us to readily connect with all our district disaster response coordinators, trainers and volunteers," Wurst said. "It will also allow the coordinators to schedule deployment responses from single-day to multi-week events and to create shifts for volunteers to sign up for many different support tasks,

such as chainsaw work, food preparation, mucking out and more. We haven't had such capability or flexibility in the past."

Wurst stressed that anyone who has served as a LERT volunteer in the past, as well as anyone who would like

to begin serving, should sign up on the new platform.

"We are striving to have good communication with our brothers and sisters and to give them tools and guidelines so that our work together goes smoothly," Wurst said. "We continually emphasize that our LERT volunteers can serve their neighbor during both ordinary and extraordinary times."

Learn more about LCMS Disaster Response at lcms.org/disaster.



PATTY'S PONDERINGS



Celebrate LWML Sunday

By Patty Peters

LWML South Dakota District President

“Our Hearts in His Hand” is the theme for this year’s LWML Sunday. The theme is based on Peter’s first letter to the persecuted Christians in Asia Minor. In 4:8, Peter writes through the inspiration of God:

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly.

The heart of LWML is Christ working in and through its members, and our hearts are made holy by Him.

Now with renewed hearts, we dedicate our lives to serving Him at home and abroad through prayer, mission grants, gifts from the heart and other service projects. He cares for us each day and through our service we show His love to the world.

The first Sunday in October is traditionally set aside for the observation of LWML Sunday, but it can be celebrated on any Sunday. LWML Sunday downloadable materials are available at lwml.org/lwml-sunday. Resources include a children’s message, coloring page, worship service and bulletin cover. I am sure you have many fun ideas for how to celebrate and spread the news about how God uses our Mites to further His kingdom.

The author of the materials is Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, president and professor emeritus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He also served as speaker of “The Lutheran Hour” radio program.

May God bless your celebration of LWML Sunday! Remember that our hearts are in His hand and He has a plan for each of our lives.

ABERDEEN ZONE report

Our groups are keeping busy, even with many not meeting during the summer months. We held our (late) Spring Workshop in May, hosted by St. Paul’s, Ferney. Laurel Wempe, of Church of Hope at the South Dakota Women’s Prison in Pierre, spoke to the 36 people in attendance about the hardships the women in prison face, and the joy and hope they receive by regularly hearing about Christ’s love and forgiveness, which can truly change lives.

Our zone continues its efforts on mission projects. The St. John’s, Britton, and St. Paul’s, Ferney, ladies have been busy making quilts, some of which are ready to go to Orphan Grain Train. Shelly Redhage of St. John’s LWML has made over 150 sleeping mats. The members of St. John’s, Aberdeen, have complet-

ed 980 sundresses, 400 diapers (from T-shirts) and an additional 23 quilts.

The women at Trinity, Mansfield, have finished and are ready to deliver 36 quilts. They also held the annual “Pizza in the Park,” serving pizza and delicious desserts to more than 60 attendees.

Other groups have many community projects going on. We thank God for all the talented and dedicated women who contribute in so many ways.

We are beginning to plan for our Fall Rally and eagerly anticipating the district retreat/workshop in Pierre. Hoping everyone enjoyed the summer and that we receive some much needed rain, clear air and good health.

As sisters in Christ, we serve with gladness!

Bev Graham • Aberdeen Zone



At the opening of the LWML 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., in June, President Patty carries the South Dakota District banner alongside Young Woman Representatives Janelle Lafrentz (left) and Elizabeth Schmidt.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



LWML/Erik M. Lunsford

Our hearts in HIS hand

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

When I think about October, I think about the LWML. In my zone, the ladies usually have a Fall Rally on the afternoon of LWML Sunday. They get together for worship, fellowship and a Bible study led by a neighboring pastor.

On the district level, the beginning of fall sees our Christian Life Workshop bring women from around the state together to reflect on God's Word. And often in this season, district leadership is hard



Rev. Daniel Grimmer
LWML District
Pastoral Counselor

at work planning for the next district convention.

The theme for LWML Sunday this year is "Our Hearts in HIS Hand." The Bible has a lot to say about our hearts, but one of the best passages is Ezek. 36:25-26, when the Lord Himself says to Israel:

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the

heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

It's an image of open heart surgery, with the Lord Himself as our surgeon. Because we are born desperately wicked and sick, with hearts addicted to sin and death, we need new hearts. God's response to our sin is not simply to reform us with therapy and medication. We don't just need a little help; we need a spiritual heart transplant. Our hearts need to be in His hand, as He removes our hearts of stone that are cold and dead to the life and righteousness of God.

And in place of our stony hearts, God has prepared for us a heart of flesh. He has a replacement organ in mind, and it's more than a perfect match. Because the heart of flesh that the Lord has held in His hand and given us in place of our heart of stone is none other than the heart of Jesus. It's the perfect sinlessness and righteousness of Jesus, now beating in us, giving life to our dead and dying bodies through the One who is the way, the truth and the life.

Where did this radical heart transplant surgery occur? In verse 24, the Lord spells it out very clearly. It happened through the sprinkling of clean water that eradicates our uncleanness, accompanied by the new Spirit of the Lord that was breathed into us. In our Baptism, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have given us the heart of Jesus, His perfect righteousness and holiness. And so we have life in Him. Our hearts are in His hand, and He holds them for safe keeping for us forever.

Reports due to historian Nov. 1

We all want to be counted in that number when the saints go marching on. Soon we will be counting events we attended this year. Who were officers at this time? I am collecting contact information of group members, how many attended where and when.

As I wrote my biennial report, I found my historian reports ended before the election of officers and when the secretary reports were due. So my numbers did not match with the secretary.

It is important for historians to be on point with their group information, if we want accurate numbers so that future generations can read our reports and learn about the women who came before them.

A side note: For a memory book project, Lisa Asmus is collecting stories of women who were your mentors. Please send her your stories. I love it when past historian Norma Harer sends me pictures or articles to put in my file box for that year's events.

We all matter in this race for Jesus. **Signed reports are due to Lurene M. Denke by Nov. 1.** Please mail them to 1008 Izaak Walton Road, Pierre, SD 57501.

‘Joy unspeakable’

Even in suffering, God still at work

Dear friends in Christ,

In our work as advocates for life from conception to natural death, we are confronted by opponents who say that people should have the right to end a life when they judge the quality of that life to be poor or diminished. As Christians, however, we believe that God redeems our brokenness so that a person can have a great quality of life even in the presence of chronic suffering.

James is a perfect example of God at work amidst chronic suffering. As a pastor, I have been especially blessed with elected leaders who have walked with me through the valley of the shadow of death. James has been one of those men. Beyond his work as an elder, he has given me an example to follow as a friend and a disciple of Jesus.

Difficulty starts early

James and I are close in age, but while I was enjoying motorcycle racing and work on my grandparents’ farm, James was fighting for his life. At 16 years old, he suffered from Hodgkin’s lymphoma. When he started to notice swelling in his lymph nodes, he figured it was no big deal and that it would eventually recede. But instead, the lumps around his neck and under his arms continued to swell.

He didn’t say anything to his folks. But then he noticed it became hard to breathe when he lay down. Concerned but not yet alarmed, he told his mom, who took him to the doctor, who immediately showed great concern. It was not until a blur of tests led him to the pediatric cancer center in Madison, Wis., that the heavy weight of this life-threatening disease became real. James remembers the moment he and his mom sat together and wept. He was never going to be the same person.



Though he has permanent side effects from chemotherapy and radiation, James says his “life is good” as he recognizes every day as a gift.

James was admitted and started acquiring all the marks of a chronically ill person. He would receive a port for chemo drugs, undergo bone marrow testing and receive radiation treatments. The pinpoint radiation treatment available today did not exist back then, and the broad and heavy radiation application he received blackened the skin around his neck and armpits. He can still recall the smell of ozone during treatment.

The first time he received chemotherapy, it was administered intravenously before his port had been installed. This resulted in the profound physical pain and suffering that cancer patients so often endure. James descended into an emotional state that paralleled his physical waste; the darkness of self-pity blinded him to anything hopeful or good.

Help from a ‘simple gesture’

Then he remembers hearing one of his fellow patients receiving percussion treatments for cystic fibrosis. Those

treatments combined with the choking sound in her cough must have caused him to inquire about her condition and prognosis. Her future was dim. She, in turn, had witnessed his suffering. Feeling compassion for him, she brought him a piece of candy to lift his spirits. That simple gesture remains with James to this day. She was worse off than he was, but she was the one who reached out to him.

James insists that he was never the same after that piece of candy. The young woman’s kindness and cheery disposition drove him to power through the rest of his treatments.

“I told myself, ‘You have no business feeling sorry for yourself,’” he relayed to me.

With his family’s help, he endured his excruciating treatments and his cancer was effectively treated. However, the chemo and radiation left permanent side effects. He says his thyroid was “cooked.”

Continued on next page

His lungs and heart have injuries. Over the years, he has undergone weight fluctuations, headaches and a heart valve replacement. The majority of his life has been a roller coaster of ill health. Over and over again, he and his wife and their daughter have faced the possibility that doctors might not be able to fix whatever his current issue happens to be.

For James, there will always be another issue. His family has felt additional grief in the loss of a child at a young age. Financial challenges come and go. Other family members have fought their own battles against the world, the deceiver. If someone without faith in Christ accounted for the suffering James has experienced in life, measuring by psychology, biology or chronology, that person might argue the bad outweighs the good.

Thanks be to God

But that is not how James accounts for his days on earth. He insists that his life is good, and he is filled with gratitude. He gives thanks to God for giving him “the perfect wife” with whom to endure these pains and problems. He has joy unspeakable in the gift of their daughters, one who is with Jesus and the other who was just married. He treasures his mother and father and the sacrifices they made for his physical health and spiritual well-being.

He acknowledges Jesus as the author and perfecter of his faith, which he recognizes every day as a gift because Jesus Himself has been there with him every day. Christ has made known His power through it all.

**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:

- ▶ pcnavurskis@gmail.com
- ▶ 605-352-7121

Rev. Chris Navurskis
South Dakota District Life Coordinator
Pastor, Mount Calvary, Huron



Happy 100!



In the early 1920s, the last American troops were returning home from Europe following the end of World War I. Women had just been given the right to vote, with the passing of the 19th Amendment. The average life span was 54 years.

When Millie (Stoller) Kirschenmann was born on Oct. 9, 1921, it was not expected that she would live to see her 100th birthday in 2021.

But that is exactly what she intends to do. Kirschenmann, who was born in Elgin, N.D., and has lived in Rapid City for decades, is being celebrated by LWML circles and members of Peace Lutheran Church, Rapid City, where she has been a member since 1954.

Millie married Bert Kirchenmann on April 7, 1943, in Rapid City. She served as the organist at Peace from 1954 to 1981 and as the church historian for many years. An avid knitter, she enjoys knitting hats and blankets for Rapid City organizations. Since she started keeping track in October 2010, she has knitted about 160 hats and blankets to support local charities.

Millie joined the LWML in the early 1940s. She has held many positions over the years, serving her society, zone and district. For her society, she served as secretary, treasurer, vice-president

and historian. For her zone, she served as president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and historian. She has served in all district roles except president.

Millie started attending national LWML conventions in the late 1950s. She was on the ballot for financial treasurer at the 1983 national convention in Detroit. At the 1989 national convention in Rapid City, she served as the financial treasurer. She recalls counting large amounts of money and being flanked by guards when she made deposits.

A lot happens in 100 years. In her lifetime, Millie can mark World War I and World War II, the completion of Mount Rushmore and almost the entire history of the automobile. Much has changed, but Millie's dedication to her fellow Lutheran women — and her Lord Jesus Christ — never has.



OFF AND RUNNING!

As part of its business, delegates to the LWML 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., approved 28 mission grants and a mission goal of \$2.15 million. Twenty-five percent of the mites collected in the South Dakota District are used to fund these grants. Help LWML in this race, and help the ladies finish strong! For more information and to donate to the LWML mission goal, visit lwml.org/mission-grants.



Mission grant No. 10 will help fund theological education in Africa.

1. Deaconess Ministry–Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, \$81,680
2. Healing the Invisible Wounds of War through Horses–Spirit Warrior, Maine, \$95,000
3. Thirst to Learn: Bible Books for Africa’s Children–Lutheran Heritage Foundation, \$100,000
4. Making the Next Generation of Disciples for Life–LCMS Life Ministry, \$92,000
5. Helping Hands–Lutheran Deaf Outreach, \$50,000
6. Hope for Christ for Cancer Patients–Phil’s Friends, \$70,000
7. Training Pastors to serve the Church in Russia–Lutheran Theological Seminary, Novosibirsk, Siberia, \$100,000
8. Light of Christ in Eastern Europe–Mission Central, \$56,000
9. Propelling the Gospel–LAMP Ministry, Inc., \$65,000
10. Educating Pastors in Africa–Mission Central, \$100,000
11. Redeeming Life Maternity Home, Illinois Expansion–Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, \$100,000
12. Mercy Medical Care for Tanzania–Mwadi Lutheran School and Community, \$68,182
13. Gospel Outreach to Women and Children in Mongolia–Lutheran Hour Ministries, \$100,000
14. Caring for and Sharing Christ with Hurting People–Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, \$100,000
15. The Littlest and Least of These, Dallas, Texas–St. Paul Lutheran Church and Christian Academy, \$42,000
16. Bring the Inner-City Children to Camp–Lutheran Valley Retreat, Colorado, \$25,000
17. Spiritual and Physical Food for Children of Peru–La Mision Luterana del Peru, \$56,750
18. “Ends of Earth” Scholarships–Mission Opportunities Short Term (MOST) Ministries, \$50,000
19. Sharing Jesus Love in India–Lutheran Braille Workers, \$100,000
20. Mission and Outreach to the Least of These–Victory Lutheran Church, Gwinn, Mich., \$51,356
21. Mercy House Belize Lutheran Campus–Belize Mission Society, \$100,000
22. Ministry Vehicle Fund, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone–Lutheran Bible Translators, \$70,000
23. Showing God’s Love in the International District, Albuquerque, N.M.w–God Cares about You Mission, \$98,000
24. Reaching the Homebound with God’s Word–Lutheran Ministries Media, Inc. (DBA Worship Anew), \$100,000
25. Missionaries to America Project–Mission Nation Publishing, \$88,000
26. Strengthening the Lutheran Mission to Kuna, Idaho–Friendship Celebration Lutheran Church, \$100,000
27. Expanding God’s Love in Uganda–LCMS Office of International Mission Africa Region, \$92,000
28. Christ-Centered Materials for Hmong Language School and Outreach–St. Paul Hmong Outreach Ministries, \$70,208