

# District President's Report to the 61<sup>st</sup> Convention of The South Dakota District, LCMS

President Scott C. Sailer

## **“Behold Your God!”**

(Extended Theme: “Behold Your God! What Help! What Hope!”)

**Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 52:13; John 3:14-15**

*“Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’”* (Isaiah 40:9).

*“Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted”* (Isaiah 52:13).

*“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life”* (John 3:14-15).

It is an honor to bring you this report as the fourteenth President of The South Dakota District. In the past triennium, my first as the District President, we have walked together under the theme from the last convention in 2015: “Called Into Partnership – For MERCY (*Diaconia*)”. This theme logically followed the themes of the conventions that immediately preceded it: in 2012, “Called Into Partnership – For WITNESS (*Martyria*),” and in 2009, “Called Into Partnership – For FELLOWSHIP (*Koinonia*).” The three themes nicely reflect the mission and ministry emphasis of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in place since the Synod’s restructuring in 2010: Witness, Mercy, Life Together.

## **“Mercy” in The South Dakota District, 2015-2018**

“Mercy” has been our emphasis from 2015-2018. Mercy is spoken of throughout the Old and New Testaments in various ways, using various words, such as loving kindness, pity, kindness, compassion, and sacrificial love. God acts in all of those ways toward us sinners. This is especially seen in His love for us in Jesus Christ. We, having received such undeserved and necessary mercy, reflect the mercy we have received from God into the lives of the people around us, as His grateful sons and daughters, especially as we serve our neighbors with good works to meet their needs.

In my article in the January 2018 District supplement in *The Lutheran Witness*, I asked, “How have we [shown mercy] in our District in the current triennium?” I wrote:

God has done that through you! In 2017, forty-one Harvest Grants totaling \$94,060 were given to encourage and support congregations and schools in planting the seed of the Gospel in their communities through mercy projects and Gospel witness activities.

You have also shown mercy through your generous mission support, with our 107 congregations remitting about \$1 million to the District in each of the last three years. For every dollar your congregation remits to the District, thirty-two cents are sent to the Synod to support the Lord’s work in other places. The offerings we retain go to work to show mercy in many ways, including through the Native American mission work we do on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations. Reverend Andrew Utecht (Rosebud) and Reverend Albert Sutton (Pine Ridge) preach God’s Word to a growing number of people. Baptisms are increasing in number, too. And

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myriad are the other ways people are being helped through these pastors and the laypersons who assist them.

Because of your congregation's mission commitment to the District, the deaf are receiving God's Word and hospital patients in Sioux Falls are being visited by Reverend Matthew Nix. Your dollars help us to minister to college students at South Dakota State University and the University of South Dakota. And they help us to conduct workshops in rural ministry, stewardship, church planting and evangelism.

In the current triennium, in addition to the ministry carried out through the mission dollars the District receives, many of our congregations, Sunday Schools, and other groups and individuals rallied to the aid of Zion Lutheran Church, Delmont, after the devastating tornado in 2015. Thousands of dollars were given in a great show of mercy. The result is that Zion now has a new church building and parsonage.

Yes, God has shown mercy to us; we, in turn, have shown His mercy to others.

### **God's Agents of Mercy to Me**

God has extended His mercy to me, personally, in special ways the past three years. Being a District President is not on the radar of one who aspired to be a pastor, as I had done since my confirmation days at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Dickinson, ND. Yet this is what you elected me to in 2015, after I had served in parish ministry in South Dakota for twenty-six years and as a seminary admissions officer for four. There was the proverbial steep learning curve, especially early on as District President. But my predecessor, the Reverend Dr. Dale L. Sattgast, given the title "District President Emeritus" in the 2015 Convention, was generous with his time as he wrapped up his duties as president, and he gave me a fine orientation to the unique ministry of District President. And the value of the many templates left behind by Reverend Sattgast to aid in ministering to this or that situation cannot be calculated, but they are deeply appreciated by me. Thank you, Dale, for being God's agent of mercy to me in these ways!

God, in His mercy, has given to the District and to me a fine staff at the District Office. Mr. Randall Gayken, our Business Manager for 37+ years, Mrs. Julie Pike, Administrative Assistant for 30+ years, Mr. Chad Zinnel, Accountant (officially) and Technology Guru (unofficially) for thirteen years, and Reverend Darren Olson, our Executive Secretary for six years, are God's agents of mercy to me and to you. Many of you know, from your experience of contacting the District Office, that Randy, Julie, Chad, and Darren are willing and able servants of God, eager to assist you and your congregation or school. They do that for me, too, as what has been new to me is hardly new to them. I could not serve you effectively as your District President without them. I think we work together well at 3501 S. Gateway Boulevard in Sioux Falls for the sake of the Kingdom. Thank you, District Office team, for being patient and helpful agents of mercy to me and all of us in the District!

### **Our Convention Theme in 2018 and the District's Mission & Ministry Theme for 2018-2021: "Behold Your God!"**

The District President gets to develop the theme for District Conventions. And so I gathered together a small team in January of 2016 to work on the theme for this year's convention. I wanted something missional and something exciting. I had already invited the Reverend Dr. Reed Lessing, a pastor in Fort Wayne, IN, and one of the fine Old Testament scholars in the Synod, to be our essayist/Bible study leader for this convention, and I instructed Dr. Lessing that he has two hours at the convention to take us through Isaiah chapters 40-55, which he is eager to do for us.

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As the team and I explored this beautiful section of Isaiah, which Dr. Lessing, in his commentary on Isaiah 40-55, calls the “zenith of Yahweh’s revelation in the Old Testament,” we came up with the theme “Behold Your God! What Help! What Hope!” (short form, “Behold Your God!”). This was inspired by Isaiah 40:9, where the prophet implores the people of Judah to urge their neighbors to behold God and all He wants to do for them as the all-holy, almighty, and all-gracious Lord of creation and the One who would redeem them by the Suffering Servant He would provide (Isaiah 52-53).

But, to get them to this point of being God’s grateful messengers, a whole lot of history had to unfold. God’s people living in Judah would be complacent in their faith, or downright rebellious against God, running away from Him, indulging their sinful flesh, and chasing after idols. God did not want to lose His people forever, so He would one day discipline them through the destruction wrought by the ruthless Babylonians. Many of God’s people would be carted off into exile in Babylon. There, they would mourn the loss of their land, their temple, and their freedom.

Yet God, who is rich in mercy, did not stop loving His people. In response to their cry for help, He would deliver unexpected and undeserved help in the form of a certain promise to rescue them from their Babylonian captivity and to grant them “double for all their sins” (cf. Isaiah 40:2) – that is, far more grace from Him than they could have ever imagined. What a gracious God they beheld! What a gracious God, whose love they, the people of Judah, could now share with their neighbors, saying, “Behold your God!”

We, the people of God of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, who live in South Dakota, likewise, have experienced our Lord’s help in countless ways, and we have countless opportunities to witness to those around us: “Behold your God! Know that He has an immeasurable supply of grace for you in Jesus Christ.”

And so in our District Convention we will study and celebrate this Good News and we will plan our mission and ministry around this Good News for the next triennium.

### **Not Home Yet: Evidence of This in the Past Three Years**

God’s people in their Babylonian exile yearned for home and for *shalom*. Judah, Jerusalem, and its environs was “home.” For us, the new heavens and the new earth promised by God is really our home; we’re just passing through this temporal world for the time being. *Shalom* is more than mere “peace.” It is a restored and grace-filled relationship with God. Dr. Lessing, on page 670 in his commentary, adds that *shalom* means everything so wrong will be made right.

So much has happened in our world and state in the past triennium to signal to us we are not home yet and that there is so much that is wrong that must be made right.

On Mother’s Day, 2015, the aforementioned tornado ripped through Delmont, just as Sunday School was about to begin at Zion Lutheran Church. Fortunately, the teachers and students were able to take shelter in the church basement, even as the nave was destroyed above them. God was gracious and He guarded the lives of those in the building. But the beautiful German Gothic building and its priceless organ from Germany were destroyed. The re-building of lives and buildings would ensue, but it would be a difficult time of recovery.

On June 26, 2015, another kind of “storm” ripped through our entire nation, as the U.S. Supreme Court on that day ruled that same-sex marriage was the law of the land. We in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod continue to hold firm to the teaching of God’s beautiful gift of marriage as one man and one woman for life. However, we face the ongoing challenge of declaring His truth on this doctrine and all His instruction found in His Holy Word in a world that finds it difficult to acknowledge truth of any kind, and that has grown in its hatred of individuals and institutions that declare the Bible as divine truth.

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Travel bans. Pipeline and anthem protests. Charlottesville. Church shootings. Sniping via social media. North Korean missiles. Syrian genocide. Internet porn. Abortion on demand. Wildfires. Harvey, Irma, Maria. Storms, of one kind or another, that rip through our sinful, broken world.

In The South Dakota District and throughout our Synod the winds of change are blowing in the form of changing demographics and attitudes. Rural towns and churches, for the most part, are getting smaller and older. Even in places of population growth, like Sioux Falls, Tea, and Rapid City, church membership and worship attendance have plateaued. LCMS folks are moving to these cities, but many are choosing to worship in other churches, or not at all. In other places in the state, big and small, our church members are moving away, or, if they stay, they are less frequent in their worship attendance.

About a generation ago, in 1994, the average congregation in the District had 302 baptized and 231 confirmed members; 115 souls were in worship. At the end of 2016, the 107 LCMS congregations in the District had an average baptized membership of 278, an average confirmed membership of 217, and an average weekend worship attendance of 83. Over the twenty-two years from 1994 to 2016, while the number of souls in our congregations declined by 8%, worship attendance declined by 28%. It's no wonder that 71 of our 107 congregations are in dual and triple-point parish arrangements in order to keep their doors open and support a pastor. In 2017, three congregations in the District, which had stood alone for an average of 104 years each, made the decision to partner with other churches in response to having fewer members and lower worship attendance and offerings for the Lord's work.

If this decline is true for many of our District congregations, it should not surprise us that demographic studies reveal that a large number of the people in the rural areas and cities of South Dakota today are not connected to a church. How many of these folks don't know or trust the help and hope given by the Savior? Only God knows! And He calls us to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (cf. Matthew 5:13-14). Praise God that He uses individual Christians as "salt" and "light" in their various vocations to draw people to Himself! He wants to use congregations and circuits and a church District, too. But the institutional Church as a whole, and we as a part of it, seem to be lagging in the missionary efforts required to reach out with the Gospel and with works of mercy.

Instead, should we not be a Church that lives like it knows that there's a better Home to come, and that we want to head there, bringing more people along with us, as we connect them to Christ through Word and Sacraments? There's plenty of room! Our Lord assures us, "In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

### **What Help, What Hope: The Lord is With Us and For Us!**

By the end of 2017, I had visited most of the congregations in the District. In fact, I've had the privilege of preaching in fifty-eight churches in South Dakota – some of them more than once -- since I was elected District President. I feel like I'm getting to know the saints of The South Dakota District and they are getting to know me. Despite the shortcomings and challenges noted above, it is clear to me that we are God's beloved people, saint-sinners, striving to be faithful to Him and His Word. We have dedicated, hard-working pastors, teachers, and Directors of Christian Education. The laity are salt-of-the-earth. In God's mercy, He helps us in countless ways. He gives us hope for the living of our days, as we look forward to the eternal Home to come. We know that the living Lord is with us and He is for us.

In Part 2 of my report, to be given at the Convention, I'll outline the needs and opportunities before us, as I see them, which include:

- Strategizing with our congregations about their future and their opportunities for witness and mercy;
- Increasing the offerings of Bible study in our churches, a way that God builds healthy congregations;
- Seizing the opportunities to reach the unchurched and de-churched in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Belle Fourche, and other places;
- Recruiting more people for church work careers; and
- Equipping our lay people, including our young adults, to lead.

Until then, I wish you God's richest blessings! May He continue to help you amid the storms and the times of tranquility. May He fill you with His hope in Christ Jesus. And may you boldly and winsomely say to those in your congregation and community, "Behold Your God!"

Reverend Scott C. Sailer  
President, The South Dakota District—LCMS  
Romans 1:16; 16:25-27  
*"...not ashamed of the Gospel"*

[Note: The commentary referenced is from the Concordia Commentary series published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. Dr. Lessing's volume on Isaiah 40-55 in the series was published in 2011.]

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## District Mission Reports

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### Ministry to the Deaf, Sioux Falls, SD

Reverend Matthew W. Nix, Sioux Falls, SD

Over the past few years, the work being done among the deaf in South Dakota has continued to change. We have been able to continue to work with the members of Trinity Lutheran Church of the Deaf, in Sioux Falls and across the state. We are able to provide regular Word and Sacrament ministry along with Bible studies and care in all parts of their lives. There has also been a growing number of high school students and young adults that have shown a renewed interest in the church. This has brought with it changes in how Deaf Ministry needs to be provided. Our deaf, being across the state and many of them not being official members of Trinity and with their many special needs (communication being only one special aspect) require a creative use of time and resources. Working with one deaf youth in Rapid City required multiple trips out within a month's time, each trip taking multiple days. This is not an uncommon situation and we are grateful for your understanding and support.

The dual parish with Christ Lutheran continues to work well with Deaf Ministry. It allows us to offer more opportunities to the deaf in our local area. If the deaf in our area cannot make it to Trinity we are able to provide an interpreter at Christ. We are also able to invite the deaf to our special services, allowing them opportunities they might not otherwise have. Our main service for the deaf is at 8:30 Sunday mornings. We also enjoy the opportunity for my wife to interpret Main Street Living, giving deaf across our region opportunity for regular worship.

Whatever changes might happen in our deaf community in South Dakota, we are thankful that our District provides opportunities for us to bring the precious Gospel to them in the manner that fits the ever changing environment. If you have deaf people in your area please feel free to point them to Main Street Living and or let us know about them. ([mw\\_nix@yahoo.com](mailto:mw_nix@yahoo.com))

It is a great joy serving the deaf in our District. I look forward to many more years of working with you to bring the saving message of Jesus to this special part of God's kingdom.

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### Missionary-at-Large to the Native American People at Pine Ridge

Reverend Albert G. Sutton, Rapid City, SD

It is a land of darkness, poverty, and suffering. In this land, pagan worship and blood sacrifice still exist through the ever-popular sun dances and human flesh sacrifices left on prayer trees. In this land, it is thought by many that purification comes in the form of burning sage and smudging or going to sweats in the sweat lodges. In this land of confusion, Christianity is seen by many as a threat to the traditional culture. All Christians are made to bear the punishment for the sins of a few, so many years ago. This land of darkness and confusion is often hostile to the Christian message and witness.

However, it is into this land that our Father has called us, as a district, to speak the Way, the Truth and the Life to a hurting people. As we gather for ministry, Jesus comes to us in Word and Sacrament, forgiving our sins and raising us to new life. As we gather with the Natives, we hear the bold proclamation "Behold your God!" And together as God's people we rejoice that He has come to us, breaking into our land of darkness and confusion and bringing us light and life through the purification that only His blood and Word can bring.

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Through the partnership of The South Dakota District, we are able to spread God's Word, and show acts of love and mercy to the Great Sioux Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The Word is spread as we continue to hold services on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. The services are traditional Lutheran targeted at an adult audience, followed by a Christian magic lesson taught by Larry Belitz. Dianne Falin follows this up with a Sunday school lesson and a craft. The lessons and magic are designed for the children but the adults stay to listen and even look forward to the craft every time. Christ's love and mercy is also seen through our human care. Every Sunday that we hold church, we conclude with a meal to feed the people, prepared by Doris Belitz. On the fourth Sunday of every month, we hand out food bags to each family that is in attendance. The end of the month is a very lean time for the native families and the gifts are greatly appreciated. The human care extends after the Sunday service with family home visits to shut ins, those requesting or needing a visit, regular hospital visits to those staying at Rapid City Regional Hospital and the helping of individuals as specific financial needs come up.

On a typical Sunday, we use the two District vans to bring our needed items for the day. This would include tables, altar furnishings, a generator, fire wood, A/V equipment, food and water and cleaning supplies. We joke that we are the traveling Tabernacle. All of this is needed as we worship in and make do with an abandoned building for our church home. This means no heat or utilities other than what we bring. It is dark, cold, and dirty. Not a nice place by anyone's standards. The good news is, nobody else wants to use it, and this has actually helped us to remain in the community. The Sutton and Tilley children help us set this all up and I might add they have become quite efficient at it, too. Jim Tilley, Sarah Sutton, Jeff Falin, and Donna Utecht then take the vans and go through the housing divisions to pick up children and those needing a ride. During our service and Sunday School hour all of the workers in our mission help to keep order, run A/V equipment or be a loving lap for a native child to sit on.

Our attendance has grown to 35-50 Natives each Sunday. These numbers do not include the team itself. It is important, when looking at attendance numbers, to remember that the Native people are a very transient people. It is very normal for people to move from community to community and live with or visit extended family for various lengths of time, up to years on end. It seems that every year half of the faces are changing. We are seeing many different people and as they move away they are taking their faith with them. I have had Natives call me wanting to know a good church to worship at in their new home off the reservation. Also by way of social media, we are seeing members encourage one another in the faith even after they move away.

The last three years we have seen steady growth in many areas. The adult attendance continues in a slow growth cycle. We are seeing more children where previously they had stopped coming as the adults increased. The last three years have given us many firsts. Previously we had spoken at wakes for native friends that have passed away but last year we were asked to officiate the entire funeral process, which is a 2 day wake with a service and committal. We have also seen our first, and now abundant by comparison, adult baptisms. Most recently, I have been asked to officiate a native wedding. While not spectacular by most normal church standards, these firsts show that the community is seeing us not just as a mission but also as a church of the community.

Thank you to the District and all who support our mission and for the continued prayer on our behalf.

## Missionary-at-Large to the Native American People

Reverend Andrew E. Utecht, Rosebud, SD

“Behold Your God” Proclaimed on the Rosebud Indian Reservation

2018 will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our mission in Rosebud. 2017 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year of my ordination and installation in Rosebud. The last 3 years have witnessed lots of baptisms, and funerals, a few weddings, confirmations, Sunday worship services, Lenten services, Bible studies, daily radio devotions, VBS, mission groups, home visits, puppet shows, and lots of prayer, as we seek to say with Isaiah, “Behold your God!” and show the people of Rosebud the grace of our Lord Jesus.

One of the main parts of our mission are home visits. Looking back I can see how the visits have changed from being an outsider, visiting through a door or window with suspicion, to being welcomed as one of the family or community as their Pastor. Many times I am invited to the homes to perform a “house blessing”, and chase away the evil spirits. If I am not asked, I usually still include a prayer that the evil spirits leave and the Holy Spirit comes. This may strike some as scary, but it is an everyday part of the ministry.



We also work together in ministry by hosting several mission groups throughout the year. We try to have most of them come from the SD District, as one of the goals of hosting groups is to develop Christian friendships. That way if someone from here moves to where they are, or attends college there, they will have a friend to encourage them. Hosting mission groups also helps break down racism, as people get to know people. Hosting mission groups also helps those groups open their eyes and hearts to learn to do missions right where they live. Most groups help with VBS, although some help with Christmas caroling, or work projects. We thank especially the churches in Brandon, Sioux Falls, Brookings, Pierre, and Dimock in this regard, but others as well.



We continue to help and encourage the work at Harvest Winds sewing factory in Parmelee, where we make star quilts. This business has been going for 4 years now, and we are quite encouraged by it. My job is to go on a semi regular basis and offer encouragement to the workers, and a devotion. I also try to help with problems at home, so that then they are better able to work.

We also host a Bible AA group, in both churches, and help with Sunday worship on a monthly basis. This is a great group of people that run the program, tied to the tribal treatment program. The members of our church are greatly encouraged by this outreach.

One of the great things to come out of our churches is my son Titus, who is currently on vicarage in Green Bay, as he studies to be a pastor. We also work to raise up Native leaders also. Have encouraged a few in that direction, but God will raise them up in His time.

We also continue to perform the Puppet Place ministry at the State Fair, even utilizing some people from Rosebud to help. We also help the LWML in this as they help us, not only here but in so many ways. Thank you to all the LWML groups for their support.



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Our worship service attendance ranges from 12-60 in attendance. Many are children who come without parents. The children help with all the preparation from lighting candles, distributing the bulletins, ringing the bell, getting the flannelgraph story together and even helping tell the story. I have also served the vacancy at St. John in Norris for the past 2 years. And continue to serve Our Savior, Valentine, Nebraska as a vacancy also, with this moving toward a permanent call while continuing the mission in Rosebud.

Again we are glad to proclaim, "Behold Your God" together as a mission of the SD District. We look forward to continuing to proclaim Jesus Christ as God, and Lord in the years ahead. Thank you for the support, prayers, and encouragement you give to all of us.

Love In Christ, Reverend Andrew Utecht

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## **Campus Ministry SDSU, Brookings, SD**

Reverend Matthew E. Wurm and Reverend Micah L. Bauer, Brookings, SD

In August 2016, Reverend Micah Bauer was called to Mount Calvary, in part, to lead the ongoing campus ministry at SDSU, replacing a series of vicars and a parish worker. In 2016-2017, we reached at least 54 students, with approximately 25-35 different students worshipping with us and 7 at our campus Bible study within the span of a given month. In the fall semester of 2017, we reached at least 68 students, with approximately 35-40 worshipping and 11 in Bible study monthly.

In addition to weekly worship and on-campus Bible study, we attended conferences in Minneapolis and Washington, DC, hosted game nights for students and parishioners, provided a monthly lunch for students after worship services, played dartball against our Men's Club, had pizza and movie nights, etc. In addition to making student visits, Pastor Bauer has also been visiting campus weekly in his clerical collar, offering to pray for students and answer any questions.

In order to further our campus ministry, we ask that you please let us know if any of your parishioners attend SDSU. Giving us their contact information is a significant initial step in helping them to remain faithful during this often tumultuous time. The other colleges' campus ministries would ask the same. Many students, for one reason or another, do not make the extra effort to go to church unless someone reaches out to them, and we cannot reach out if we don't know they're here. Thank you.

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## **Concordia Lutheran Church and Student Center USD, Vermillion, SD**

Reverend Paul F. Albers

Reaching out and ministering to the students of USD continues to be a priority of Concordia Lutheran Church and her members, and we are extremely thankful for the generous support of the District that helps us do this work! It has been both a wonderful and challenging couple of years and your continued support of thoughts and prayers is always welcomed and especially needed.

Much of our campus ministry activities have not changed over the last few years, which means we continue to meet for a weekly Bible study somewhere on campus, gather at least once a month for fellowship and to watch a movie at the church, and attend the biannual LCMS-U conferences. I (pastor) also try to spend some time on campus each week to interact with

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students, but that doesn't always happen depending on the seasons, meetings, or any number of other things that come up.

This last year there was a core group of young students that come to many of our weekly Bible studies and a number of other students that we regularly have joining us for worship on Sunday mornings. By the grace of God, I pray that both groups will continue to thrive and grow in the coming months and years.

The couple years have been a time of transition, as we have gotten a new pastor and recruited a new faculty/staff advisor for our LCMS-U student group at the university. All of which is to say, we have begun to have conversations about how we want and/or need to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of campus ministry, so that God's Word might continue to reach the students here at USD.

Thank you, again, for your strong support and love! Please, continue to pray for Concordia, the unique work God has given us to do, and share with us the names of any young woman or man from your congregation that attends (or plans to attend) USD.

Peace and God bless.

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# Report of Initial Membership - Individuals

The procedure for admitting into membership in the Synod Ministers of Religion – Ordained (Pastors) and Ministers of Religion – Commissioned (Teachers and DCE’s) was changed by the 1986 Convention of the Synod. Eligible individuals become members of the Synod by the Rites of Ordination and Installation (in the case of pastors) and by Rites of Commissioning and Installation (in the case of teachers and other church workers). (2016 Handbook, 2.6.2 and 2.6.3, p. 55). During the past triennium, the following individuals were received into membership:

## PASTORS

### 2015

Jesse L. Davis  
Daniel P. Grimmer  
Jason M. Letsche  
Matthew T. Resner  
James M. Wilshusen

### 2016

Paul F. Albers  
Micah L. Bauer  
William L. Cornelius  
Josiah J. Fitch  
Ryan M. Janke  
Jens B. Jenson  
Eric P. Obermann  
Benjamin J. Theiss

### 2017

Christopher R. McCarthy  
Samuel R. Thole

## TEACHERS AND DCE'S

### 2015

Christina R. Sereda  
Emily B. Smith  
Brian M. Weyers

### 2016

Allison R. Miller  
Joshua M. Schmitt  
Britney C. Vercruysse

Action Requested: That the new members be recognized and welcomed.

# **Report on the Admission of Congregations into Membership in the Synod and on Revisions of Articles of Incorporation, Constitutions and By-Laws of Congregations**

Pursuant to the regulations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which govern the admission of congregations into Synodical membership, as well as the revision and amendment of Articles of Incorporation, Constitutions and By-laws of congregations, the following report is made. Please refer to the 2016 Handbook of the Synod pages 52 - 55.

The procedure for congregations applying for membership is as follows:

1. Submit Articles of Incorporation (Constitution) and By-laws to District President.
2. District President refers documents to the District Constitution Committee for review.
3. District Constitution Committee examines documents and informs congregation of any necessary changes that must be made.
4. When documents are in order, this fact is reported by the District Constitution Committee to the District President who presents the application for membership to the District Board of Directors.
5. The Board of Directors acts on the application at any regular meeting.
6. The President and Secretary of the congregation, as representatives of the newly-admitted congregation sign the Constitution of the Synod in a special worship service normally attended by the District President.
7. District President presents certificate of membership to the congregation.
8. Signatures preserved by District Secretary.

The procedure for review of Articles of Incorporation, Constitutions and By-Laws is:

1. Mandatory to submit any change in all documents to District President.
2. District President refers to District Constitution Committee for review.
3. District Constitution Committee notifies District President when documents are in harmony with Holy Scripture, the Confessions and the teaching and practices of the Synod and laws of South Dakota.
4. District President presents documents to District Board of Directors for approval.
5. When approved by the Board of Directors the congregation is notified that it may function under the new documents as a member of the Synod.
6. The congregation files a restated Articles of Incorporation with the State of South Dakota.
7. These actions reported to the next convention of the District.

As you can see, the District Constitution Committee plays a major role in the review process of corporate documents of member congregations and of congregations applying for membership. The committee has three members. Pastor Terry Naasz replaced Pastor David Otten as Chairman of the Constitution Committee when he was elected into the position of District Secretary in 2012. Pastor Naasz served until his retirement in August 2013. Pastor Daniel Deardoff, Sr., was appointed Chairman in October 2013. He is assisted by Pastor Warren Uecker and Pastor Kenneth Soyk. The District has been blessed to have had legal counsel of Mr. Tom Deadrick who looked to see if Articles of Incorporation are in line with the State of South Dakota codified law.

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## Corporate Documents Approved by the Board of Directors

Paragraph 2.4.1, pp. 54 of the 2016 Handbook of the Synod stipulates that the action of the District Board of Directors approving revised Articles of Incorporation, Constitutions and By-laws be reported to the District Convention. The Board approved documents as follows:

**Fairfax**, Trinity Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Constitution and Bylaws, December 10, 2017

**Rapid City**, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, September 26, 2017

**Rapid City**, Zion Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, March 6, 2018

**Sioux Falls**, Christ Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, September 26, 2017

**Sioux Falls**, Resurrection Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, March 6, 2018

**Tea**, Risen Savior Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, September 26, 2017

**White Lake**, Trinity Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation, June 13, 2016

**Wilmot**, Our Savior Lutheran Church, South Dakota, Amended Articles of Incorporation, December 15, 2014

## Documents in Process of Review by DCC

The District Constitution Committee is currently considering the official documents of the following congregations:

**Black Hawk**, Divine Shepherd

**Brookings**, Mount Calvary

**Hill City**, Our Savior

**Hot Springs**, Bethesda

**Milbank**, Emanuel

**Parkston**, Faith

**Rapid City**, Bethlehem

**Sioux Falls**, Memorial

**Springfield**, Our Savior

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## Pastoral Candidates Ordained and Installed

**Albers, Paul F.** (St. Louis, MO 2016) ordained by Reverend John M. Albers at Chapel of the Resurrection, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN on June 12, 2016 and installed by Reverend Scott Sailer at Concordia Lutheran Church, Vermillion, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on August 7, 2016.

**Bauer, Micah L.** (St. Louis, MO 2016) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookings, South Dakota as Assistant Pastor on August 14, 2016.

**Cornelius, William L.** (Colloquy, 2014) Placed by Council of Presidents on May 6, 2016, installed by Reverend David J. Kniefelkamp at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on July 24, 2016.

**Davis, Jesse L.** (Ft. Wayne, IN 2015) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at First English and Zion Lutheran Churches of Centerville and Hurley, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on August 30, 2015.

**Fitch, Josiah J.** (St. Louis, MO 2016) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota as Assistant Pastor on July 31, 2016.

**Grimmer, Daniel P.** (Ft. Wayne, IN 2015) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Zion Lutheran Church of Mitchell, South Dakota as Associate Pastor on July 12, 2015.

**Janke, Ryan M.** (Ft. Wayne, IN 2016) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Christ and Zion Lutheran Churches of Winner and Hamill, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on June 26, 2016.

**Jenson, Jens B.** (Ft. Wayne, IN 2016) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Redeemer Lutheran Church of Armour, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on July 24, 2016.

**Letsche, Jason M.** (St. Louis, MO 2015) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Blessed Redeemer Lutheran Church of Brandon, South Dakota as Assistant Pastor on June 28, 2015.

**McCarthy, Christopher R.** (St. Louis, MO 2017) ordained and installed by Reverend Gene D. Bauman at First and Emmanuel Lutheran Churches of Wall and Creighton, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on July 23, 2017.

**Obermann, Eric P.** (St. Louis, MO 2016) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Our Redeemer and Our Savior Lutheran Churches of Custer and Hill City, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on June 19, 2016.

**Resner, Matthew T.** (St. Louis, MO 2015) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Immanuel and St. Paul Lutheran Churches of Menno and Scotland, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on August 9, 2015.

**Theiss, Benjamin J.** (St. Louis, MO 2016) ordained and installed by Reverend L. Scott Spiehs at Holy Cross, Immanuel and Trinity Lutheran Churches of Onida, Harrold and Blunt, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on August 14, 2016.

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**Thole, Samuel R.** (St. Louis, MO 2017) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Peace Lutheran Church of Brookings, South Dakota as Assistant Pastor on August 13, 2017.

**Wilshusen, James M.** (St. Louis, MO 2015) ordained and installed by Reverend Scott C. Sailer at Zion and Emanuel Lutheran Churches of Waubay and Sisseton, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on July 26, 2015.

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## Pastors Transferred from Other Districts

**Aker, Corey W.** (Mid-South District) installed at Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 14, 2016 by Reverend Gene D. Bauman.

**Barbey, Daniel C.** (Southern Illinois District) installed at Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota as Intentional Interim on February 7, 2016 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Bohlmann, Robert E.** (Indiana District) Emeritus, Custer, South Dakota on July 1, 2017.

**Dawson, John K.** (Ohio District) Non-Candidate, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on February 3, 2016.

**Fries, John J.** (Missouri District) installed at Grace and Blessed Emmanuel Lutheran Churches of Deadwood and Sturgis, South Dakota on April 9, 2017 by Reverend Gene D. Bauman.

**Hartwig, Raymond L.** (Missouri District) Emeritus, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on March 1, 2017.

**Hinckley, Jr., Robert M.** (California-Nevada-Hawaii District) Candidate, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on December 19, 2017.

**Hinners, Gregory S.** (Nebraska District) installed at St. John and St. Peter Lutheran Churches of Norris and Midland, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on January 28, 2018 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Kurowski, Peter M.** (Missouri District) installed at Zion and St. John Lutheran Churches of Canistota and Montrose, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on August 6, 2017 by Reverend Thomas D. Christopher.

**Lemcke, Brian S.** (Missouri District) installed at Zion and Emmaus Lutheran Churches of Delmont and Tripp, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on January 7, 2018 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Lessman, Bradley R.** (Southern District) Candidate, Spearfish, South Dakota on December 18, 2017.

**Loeslie, Ryan L.** (Nebraska District) installed at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Dimock, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on September 24, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Makelin, Terry J.** (Nebraska District) installed at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on September 10, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

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**Morfitt, David C.** (Iowa West District) installed at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota as Assistant Pastor on May 3, 2015 by Reverend Charles F. Kramer.

**Rajek, Cory J.** (South Wisconsin District) installed at Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota as Senior/Administrative Pastor on February 12, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Ring, Marcus J.** (Southern District) installed at St. John Lutheran Church, Gregory, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on January 8, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Schmidt, Kenneth A.** (Iowa West District) Emeritus, Rapid City, South Dakota on July 8, 2017.

**Thorson, Clint O.** (Texas District) installed at Our Savior and St. John Lutheran Churches, Madison and Howard, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on April 15, 2018 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Warnier, Paul A.** (Minnesota North District) Emeritus, Alcester, South Dakota on September 1, 2017.

**Warpness, Barry G.** (Northwest District) Emeritus, Box Elder, South Dakota on November 13, 2016.

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## Pastors Transferred to Other Districts

**Barbey, Daniel C.**, August 1, 2017 (Intentional Interim, Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota) to the Nebraska District.

**Baumann, Joshua J.**, March 4, 2018 (Associate pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota) to the North Wisconsin District.

**Bicknase, Keith W.**, July 1, 2016 (Emeritus) to the Florida-Georgia District.

**Bode, Edgar W.**, December 19, 2016 (Emeritus) to the Rocky Mountain District.

**Bucklew, Christopher B.**, July 3, 2017 (Sole Pastor, Zion and Emmaus Lutheran Churches, Delmont and Tripp, South Dakota) to the Nebraska District.

**Cornelius, William L.**, November 6, 2017 (Sole Pastor, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, South Dakota) to the Southern District.

**Edge, David A.**, March 10, 2017 (Assistant Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) to the Texas District.

**Garland, Curtis D.**, July 4, 2016 (Sole Pastor, First and Emmanuel Lutheran Churches, Wall and Creighton, South Dakota) to the Michigan District.

**Gregory, Karl W.**, June 5, 2017 (Sole Pastor, Bethesda and First English Lutheran Churches, Marion and Parker, South Dakota) to the Southern Illinois District.

**Henschen, Nathan P.**, October 3, 2016 (Sole Pastor, St. Paul, Leola, South Dakota) to the Nebraska District.



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**Mehl, Silas C.**, January 30, 2017 (Sole Pastor, Zion and St. John Lutheran Churches, Canistota and Montrose, South Dakota) to the Missouri District.

**Milbrandt, Richard W.**, October 29, 2017 (Sole Pastor, St. Paul and Trinity Lutheran Churches, White Lake and Plankinton, South Dakota) to the Iowa West District.

**Needham, Samuel J.**, June 1, 2015 (Sole Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church, Vermillion, South Dakota) to the Wyoming District.

**Nies, Jared R.**, February 1, 2016 (Sole Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Gregory, South Dakota) to the Minnesota North District.

**Pater, Paul M.**, November 14, 2016 (Sole Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Howard, South Dakota) to the Ohio District.

**Pay, Garen R.**, October 30, 2017 (Sole Pastor, Peace Lutheran Church, Alcester, South Dakota) to the Northwest District.

**Poppen, Tyler P.**, July 17, 2017 (Sole Pastor, Our Savior and St. John Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen and Columbia, South Dakota) to the Missouri District.

**Smith, Kelly D.**, June 20, 2016 (Associate Pastor, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Huron, South Dakota) to the North Wisconsin District.

**Troester, Jerome A.**, August 10, 2015 (Emeritus) to the Nebraska District.

**Yahr, Karl J.**, January 5, 2016 (Candidate) to the Minnesota South District.

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## Pastoral Moves Within The District

**Bierman, Bret R.** (Sole Pastor, Trinity and St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Mansfield and Stratford, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor-SMP of Trinity, St. Paul and St. John Lutheran Churches of Mansfield, Stratford and Aberdeen, South Dakota (a newly created tri-point parish) on May 3, 2015 by Reverend Dr. Dale L. Sattgast.

**Bobby, Samuel L.** (Sole Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church of Aberdeen, South Dakota on July 5, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Doremus, Dwaine D.** (Emeritus, Wentworth, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor, First English and Bethesda Lutheran Churches of Marion and Parker, South Dakota on March 3, 2018 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Edwards, Lucas W.** (Sole Pastor, Holy Cross, Immanuel and Trinity Lutheran Churches of Onida, Harrold and Blunt, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota on November 22, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Grams, Craig N.** (Sole Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Groton, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor, St. John and Zion Lutheran Churches of Groton and Andover, South Dakota (newly formed dual parish) on September 10, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

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**Janneke, Kory A.** (Assistant Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) installed as Associate Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on December 20, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Nour, Nabil S.** (Emeritus, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, South Dakota) on August 21, 2016 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Otten, David G.** (Sole Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Dimock, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor, Emmanuel and Christ Lutheran Churches of Gettysburg and Lebanon, South Dakota on January 29, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Redhage, Lloyd W.** (Sole Pastor, Zion and St. Paul Lutheran Churches of Andover and Ferney, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor of St. John and St. Paul Lutheran Churches of Britton and Ferney, South Dakota (newly formed dual parish) on February 19, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Sailer, Scott C.** (Senior Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) installed as South Dakota District President, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on June 14, 2015 by Reverend Dr. Dale L. Sattgast.

**Welton, Adam J.** (Sole Pastor, Zion and Trinity Lutheran Churches, Presho and Reliance, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church of Wentworth, South Dakota on January 6, 2018 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Winckler, Paul M.** (Assistant Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota) installed as Associate Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota on July 1, 2017 by Reverend Randy R. Sturzenbecher.

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## Candidate Status Granted

**Edge, David A.**, Assistant Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Candidate status granted July 28, 2016.

**Yahr, Karl J.**, Sole Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, South Dakota; Candidate status granted July 20, 2015.

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## Pastors Retired

**Anderson, Hyle R.**, Senior Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota retired July 31, 2015.

**Borglum, Kent A.**, Sole Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, South Dakota retired January 31, 2016.

**Denke, Glenn R.**, Sole Pastor, St. John and St. Peter Lutheran Churches, Norris and Midland, South Dakota retired December 31, 2015.

**Doremus, Dwaine D.**, Sole Pastor, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Wentworth, South Dakota retired December 1, 2017.

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**McKillop, Don C.**, Sole Pastor, Christ and Zion Lutheran Churches, Winner and Hamill, South Dakota retired December 31, 2015.

**Nour, Nabil S.**, Sole Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Armour, South Dakota retired August 9, 2015.

**Sattgast, Dale L.**, South Dakota District President LCMS, Sioux Falls, South Dakota retired August 1, 2015.

**Schulz, Glenn A.**, Assistant Pastor, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, South Dakota retired February 7, 2017.

**Schwan, David E.**, Senior Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota retired June 12, 2017.

**Troester, Jerome A.**, Associate Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Mitchell, South Dakota retired July 31, 2015.

**Uecker, Warren W.**, Sole Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Madison, South Dakota retired January 15, 2018.

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## Pastors Called to Glory

**Brack, Orlett D.**, Emeritus, February 19, 2018.

**Knuth, Edward W.**, Emeritus, March 1, 2017.

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## Pastors Removed from Roster

**Morton, Douglas V.** (Emeritus, Omaha, Nebraska) resigned March 14, 2016.

**Tews, Daniel E.** (Sole Pastor, Emmanuel, Christ and St. Paul Lutheran Churches of Gettysburg, Lebanon and Seneca, South Dakota) resigned November 8, 2015.

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## Teachers – DCE’s Commissioned & Installed

**Miller, Allison R.** (Concordia, Chicago, Illinois, 2017) commissioned and installed as Principal/Teacher at St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, Aberdeen, South Dakota on August 6, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Schmitt, Joshua M.** (Concordia, Irvine, California, 2017) commissioned and installed as Director of Christian Education at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota on August 13, 2017 by Reverend Darren R. Olson.

**Sereda, Christina R.** (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2015) commissioned and installed as teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 30, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Smith, Emily B.** (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2015) commissioned and installed as teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 30, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Vercruyse, Britney C.** (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2017) commissioned and installed as teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 27, 2017 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Weyers, Brian M.** (Concordia, St. Paul, MN, 2015) commissioned by Reverend Adam Koglin at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rochester, Minnesota on June 21, 2015 and installed as Director of Christian Education at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota by Reverend Scott C. Sailer on July 12, 2015.

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## Teachers - DCE’s Transferred From Other Districts

**Eberhard, Susan L.** (Montana District) installed as Teacher at Black Hills Lutheran School, Rapid City, South Dakota on August 27, 2017 by Reverend Darren R. Olson.

**Geidel, David O.** (Nebraska District) Emeritus, Dimock, South Dakota on July 1, 2017.

**Grimmer, Christine A.** (Indiana District) Candidate Status, Mitchell, South Dakota on January 9, 2017.

**Holt, Sheryln J.** (Rocky Mountain District) Non-Candidate Status, Arlington, South Dakota on January 4, 2016.

**Kolb, Linda A.** (Minnesota South District) Non-Candidate Status, Big Stone City, South Dakota on June 3, 2016.

**Loeslie, Valerie A.** (Nebraska District) Candidate Status, Dimock, South Dakota on September 5, 2017.

**Miller, Dana N.** (Northern Illinois District) installed as Teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 21, 2016 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

**Mlnarik, Kathryn J.** (Montana District) installed as Teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 30, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

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**Preto, Kayla A.** (Nebraska District) Non-Candidate Status, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on September 11, 2015.

**Schmitt, Ellen M.** (Iowa East District) Candidate Status, Yankton, South Dakota on August 2, 2017.

**Singer, Kelly J.** (Pacific Southwest District) installed as Teacher at Black Hills Lutheran School, Rapid City, South Dakota on August 28, 2016 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

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## Teacher - DCE Moves Within The District

**Solinsky, Ann C.** (Teacher, Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City, South Dakota) installed as Principal/Teacher at Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City, South Dakota on July 19, 2015 by Reverend Scott C. Sailer.

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## Teachers – DCE’s Transferred To Other Districts

**Heirigs, Joshua D.**, (Director of Christian Education, Zion Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) to the Minnesota South District on August 24, 2015.

**Heirigs, Rachel L.**, (Candidate Status, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) to the Minnesota South District on August 24, 2015.

**Nies, Sarah A.**, (Non-Candidate Status, Gregory, South Dakota) to the Minnesota North District on February 1, 2016.

**Sereda, Christina R.**, (Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) to the Southern District on July 13, 2017.

**Smith, Megan T.**, (Non-Candidate Status, Huron, South Dakota) to the North Wisconsin District on June 20, 2016.

**Waterman, David M.**, (Emeritus Status, Cedar Rapids, IA) to the Iowa East District on January 20, 2016.

**White, Jordan M.**, (Teacher, Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City, South Dakota) to the Rocky Mountain District on May 18, 2015.

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## Candidate Status Granted

**Singer, Kelly J.**, Candidate Status granted July 1, 2017.

**Smith, Emily B.**, Candidate Status granted February 19, 2018.

**Wacker, Christian N.**, Candidate Status granted May 27, 2016.

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## Teachers – DCE’s Removed From the Roster

**Deeter, Alex C.**, Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, resigned January 10, 2017.

**Geidel, Lianne I.**, Teacher, Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City, South Dakota, resigned June 25, 2015.

**Palmreuter, Joel K.**, Non-Candidate Status, Rapid City, South Dakota, resigned May 28, 2015.

**Wacker, Christian N.**, Teacher, Black Hills Lutheran School, Rapid City, South Dakota, removed by action of the District President, May 18, 2017.

**Weyers, Brian M.**, Director of Christian Education, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota resigned May 25, 2016.

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## Teachers – Retired

**Hoyme, Kristie L.**, Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota retired July 1, 2017.

**Lafrentz, Louise J.**, Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota retired June 30, 2015.

**Sayles, Priscilla M.**, Administrator, Zion Lutheran School, Rapid City, South Dakota retired June 30, 2015.

**Withee, Roxanne J.**, Teacher, Zion Lutheran School, Rapid City, South Dakota retired July 1, 2017.

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## Congregational Changes

St. John Lutheran Church, Groton, South Dakota and Zion Lutheran Church, Andover, South Dakota formed a dual parish on April 27, 2017.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Mansfield, South Dakota, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Stratford, South Dakota and St. John Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota have formed a new tri-point parish on May 3, 2015.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Seneca, South Dakota was removed as a congregation of the South Dakota District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod when they disbanded on September 24, 2016.

Zion Lutheran Church, Andover, South Dakota and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ferney, South Dakota dissolved their dual parish on December 18, 2016.

St. John Lutheran Church, Britton, South Dakota and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ferney, South Dakota have formed a new dual parish on December 28, 2016.

St. John Lutheran Church, Howard, South Dakota and Our Savior Lutheran Church, Madison, South Dakota have formed a new dual parish on April 15, 2018.

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## Centennials – Congregations

Zion Lutheran Church, Wessington Springs, South Dakota, 1916  
Zion Lutheran Church, Chamberlain, South Dakota, 1917  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Reliance, South Dakota, 1917  
St. John Lutheran Church, Norris, South Dakota, 1918

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## 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries – Congregations

St. John Lutheran Church, Britton, South Dakota, 1892  
Zion Lutheran Church, Mitchell, South Dakota, 1892  
First English Lutheran Church, Parker, South Dakota, 1892  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer, South Dakota, 1892  
Zion Lutheran Church, Waubay, South Dakota, 1892  
Zion Lutheran Church, Avon, South Dakota, 1893  
St. John Lutheran Church, Groton, South Dakota, 1893

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## Anniversaries

In 2018 the following pastors and teachers will have observed 25 or more years of service to their Lord since ordination or commissioning.

Reverend Charles Boeder	Ordained	1958
Reverend James Mueller	Ordained	1959
Reverend Raymond Pomplun	Ordained	1961
Martha Palmreuter	Commissioned	1961
Reverend Melbourne Helling	Ordained	1962

Kenneth Palmreuter	Commissioned	1962
Reverend Kenneth Greinke	Ordained	1965
Larry Belitz	Commissioned	1965
Reverend Clark Gies	Ordained	1966
Joyce Peters	Commissioned	1966
Louise Lafrentz	Commissioned	1967
Reverend Robert Bohlmann	Ordained	1967
Reverend William Paepke	Ordained	1968
Marvin Sopko	Commissioned	1968
Reverend John Farden	Ordained	1969
Reverend Richard Luttmann	Ordained	1969
Paul Consoer	Commissioned	1969
Marlys Schoenborn	Commissioned	1969
Darlene Sopko	Commissioned	1969
Reverend Paul Haugen	Ordained	1970
Reverend Raymond Hartwig	Ordained	1971
Reverend Charles Kramer	Ordained	1971
Reverend Brad Urbach	Ordained	1971
Reverend Glenn Schulz	Ordained	1971
Priscilla Sayles	Commissioned	1971
David Geidel	Commissioned	1972
Reverend John Werner	Ordained	1972
Reverend Robert Anderson	Ordained	1974
Reverend Albert Althoff	Commissioned	1974
Diane Althoff	Commissioned	1974
Carol Uecker	Commissioned	1975
Reverend Robert Gardner	Ordained	1976
Reverend David Schwan	Ordained	1977
Reverend Peter Sestak	Ordained	1977
Roxanne Withee	Commissioned	1977
Reverend Neal Ahart	Ordained	1978
Reverend William Dietz	Ordained	1978
Reverend Gordon Goldammer	Ordained	1978
Reverend Craig Grams	Ordained	1978
Reverend Peter Kurowski	Ordained	1978
Reverend Neal Ahart	Ordained	1978
Reverend Howard Shane	Ordained	1978
Reverend Albert Althoff	Ordained	1979
Reverend Hyle Anderson	Ordained	1979
Reverend Gene Bauman	Ordained	1979
Reverend Larry Johnson	Ordained	1979
Rod Lenz	Commissioned	1979
Tina Lenz	Commissioned	1979
Reverend Dr. Dale Sattgast	Ordained	1980
Diane Schroeder	Commissioned	1980
Reverend David Gunderson	Ordained	1981
Reverend Terry Naasz	Ordained	1981
Reverend Warren Uecker	Ordained	1981
Reverend Paul Warnier	Ordained	1981
Reverend Glenn Denke	Ordained	1982
Reverend Ray Greenseth	Ordained	1982
Reverend Don McKillop	Ordained	1982
Reverend Iver Possehl	Ordained	1982
Reverend Warren Uecker	Ordained	1982
Reverend Daniel Domke	Ordained	1983
Reverend Lloyd Redhage	Ordained	1983



Reverend Raymond Adams	Ordained	1984
Reverend Daniel Deardoff	Ordained	1984
Reverend Robert Heckmann	Ordained	1985
Reverend Timothy Rynearson	Ordained	1985
Reverend Scott Sailer	Ordained	1985
Reverend Aaron Asmus	Ordained	1986
Reverend Dwaine Doremus	Ordained	1986
Reverend Stephen Hartman	Ordained	1986
Reverend Barry Warpness	Ordained	1986
Reverend John Dawson	Ordained	1986
Reverend Richard Milbrandt	Ordained	1989
Reverend Lynn Wilson	Ordained	1989
Reverend Thomas Christopher	Ordained	1990
Reverend Wade Meyer	Ordained	1990
Reverend Richard Weeman	Ordained	1990
Reverend L. Scott Spiehs	Ordained	1991
Reverend Kenneth Johnson	Ordained	1993
Reverend Matthew Nix	Ordained	1993

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# Reports of Circuit Visitors

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## Circuit A (Aberdeen)

Reverend Timothy Koch, Circuit Visitor

Behold Your God and what He has done in the Aberdeen Circuit.

Over the past triennium, the Aberdeen Circuit (Circuit-A) has recognized that the world is increasingly hostile to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, it is antithetical to our Christian confession to view our congregations in competition with one another. Confessing our unity in Jesus Christ, we have striven to reflect our unity in confession by unity in practice. This has manifested itself in the following ways:

- (1) **Circuit-Wide Worship Services.** Beginning in 2015, our Circuit has had three circuit-wide services each year: a Reformation Service, an Epiphany Service, and an Ascension Day Service. We bring in a guest preacher for our Reformation Service and are happy to have heard God's Word preached from Reverend Tom Eckstein (2015), Reverend Jonathan Fisk (2016), and Reverend Dr. Raymond Hartwig (2017). A Circuit-Wide Easter Vigil will be added beginning in 2018.
- (2) **Circuit-Wide Catechism Classes.** Four times a year, the catechism students from the congregations of our circuit gather together for plenary instruction at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Aberdeen.
- (3) **Circuit-Wide Bible Studies.** Pastors from the circuit take up the task of leading a four-week Bible study about four times a year on Friday afternoons in Aberdeen. Study topics have ranged from "The Reformation Solas" to "Job" to "Hosea" to "Biblical Typography" and many others.
- (4) **Circuit-Wide Youth Group.** Because our smaller outlying congregations struggle to wrangle enough youth for a robust youth-group, the youth of every congregation is invited to Aberdeen on the first Sunday of every month for "Circuit Youth Group." The youth-group begins with Responsive Prayer, enjoys an hour of games, and concludes with a meal and an hour of study.
- (5) **Circuit-Men's Bible Study.** There was an 11-week men's study on Reverend Jeff Hemmer's book *Man Up! The Quest for Masculinity*. Next year, it is the plan to have a similar study for the ladies based on the book *LadyLike: Living Biblically*.
- (6) **Circuit-Dartball.** Usually during the winter and spring months, a congregation will host a co-ed Dartball event. These have been well-attended and have fostered great circuit unity.

Within the circuit congregations, the following significant events have occurred.

- On 2 May 2015, St. John Lutheran Church rural Aberdeen formed a tri-point parish with Trinity Mansfield and St. Paul's Stratford. Reverend Bret Bierman is their pastor.
- On 5 July 2015, Reverend Samuel Bobby was installed as the Sr. Pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Aberdeen.
- On 25 July 2015, a celebration was hosted at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aberdeen for the faithful 38-year ministry of Reverend Hyle Anderson, who would retire at the end of the month. Reverend Anderson served parishes in Wolsey, Mitchell, Bemidji MN, and Aberdeen during his years.
- On 31 July 2016, Reverend Josiah Fitch was ordained and installed at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Aberdeen, SD.
- On 16 July 2017, Reverend Tyler Poppen accepted a call to Cole Camp, MO, thus leaving Our Savior in Aberdeen and St. John's Columbia vacant after a four-year ministry among them.

- On 6 August 2017, Ms. Allison Miller was installed as Director of Lighthouse Preschool after the position was vacated by Mrs. Rhonda Henschen who followed her husband, Reverend Nathan Henschen, to Bancroft & Lyons NE where he accepted a call to serve as their pastor.
- On 6 August 2017, Joshua Vogel was installed as Vicar of the Concordia-Immanuel Lutheran Church parish in Cresbard and Wecota. The installation service was a joint-service held at Concordia in Cresbard.
- Parish realignments occurred when Zion Lutheran Church in Andover ended their dual-point arrangement with St. Paul in Ferney and aligned with St. John's in Groton. Reverend Craig Grams is their pastor. Meanwhile, this freed up St. Paul in Ferney to align with St. John's Britton as a new dual-point parish. Reverend Lloyd Redhage is their pastor.

Finally, due to a generous \$2000 *Harvest Grant* from the SD District, Circuit-A was able to purchase 250 copies of *The Problem of Suffering: A Father's Hope*, authored by Reverend Dr. Gregory Schulz, who came out to St. Paul's in Aberdeen on 30 April 2017 to be the guest presenter for the Circuit Convocation. Roughly 175 were in attendance for that event.

Behold, this is what your God has done and accomplished among the saints of Circuit-A.

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## **Circuit B (Milbank)**

Reverend Iver Possehl, Circuit Visitor

Our Circuit has been working together during our winkles to focus on Scripture and the Confessions studies. Over the last three years, our congregations have worked together to do Circuit Youth Gatherings. These Youth Gatherings have struggled with respect to distance. We also, due to distance, had our Circuit Forum over Google Hangouts, which was a minor success (hopefully we will be able to work through some issues).

At Waubay and Sisseton Pastor Wilshusen has been working on additional Bible studies and new member classes. While Pastor Wilshusen has been doing research for his STM Thesis, he has been able to do several presentations related to his topic on the Vineyard imagery.

At Bethlehem and St John's, there have been attempts to work through creative Sunday School ideas. Pastor Nathan Neugebauer has encouraged and been encouraged as they took several youth to a Higher Things conference. Revillo faced the closing of their school in 2017.

Pastor Caleb Schewe has taken on a leadership role with Lutherans for Life.

Emanuel has celebrated their 125th anniversary. They did a remodel of their sanctuary and some facility updates. Pastor Keith Bicknase retired in 2016. They started the call process before Pastor Bicknase retired, and they called Pastor Bill Cornelius who was installed a month after Pastor Bicknase's retirement. Emanuel also called Pastor Glenn Schultz to help as visitation pastor. Pastor Schultz has since retired, and Pastor Cornelius has taken a call to Trinity, Monroe, LA. Emanuel's parsonage is currently vacant, and the circuit is serving their pastoral needs being led by Pastor Tim Ryneerson, Peace Lutheran, Brookings.

Mt. Olive recently did an outreach to their delinquent members with an "I Hate Winter" gathering, having summer fun activities inside. This was helped along by a Harvest Grant. They have also done some updates to their facilities.

First English recently has had a discussion on Estate and Funeral planning. White and Aurora continue to face struggles with finding out how to do various things with declining membership and numbers. Zion's LWML continues to help the congregation make great strides in mission minded focus, with quarterly mission projects.

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Mt Calvary has worked through the vicarage program for many years in helping with Campus Ministry, but now has called Pastor Micah Bauer as their Assistant Pastor who has been doing a great job with the college group. Mt. Calvary has hosted our Circuit Tre Ore Service inviting Pastors throughout the Circuit to preach.

Peace and Redeemer, Brookings have called Pastor Samuel Thole to help out Pastor Tim Rynearson. Peace is now in their third building and have been able to increase their Early Childhood Center. They have looked through and moved forward with starting a Lutheran Elementary School. This is in addition to the Preschools at both Redeemer and Peace.

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## **Circuit C (Pierre)**

Reverend Ray Greenseth, Circuit Visitor

**Zion Lutheran Church, Presho** - Presho has begun planning to celebrate its 100 anniversary in 2020. In the last three years Presho has continued to have VBS, Sunday school and other Bible studies. In that time we have seen a number of adult Confirmations and infant baptisms.

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Reliance** - Trinity celebrated its 100th anniversary in May 2017. The guest preacher was Pastor Gardner and we had over 100 people attend the service and the lunch. There has been one infant baptism in the last three years.

**Rosebud Ministry** - Reverend Andrew Utecht has been serving as district missionary for 20 years, as the mission in Rosebud has reached its 24th year, (25 years will be Nov. 2018). Worship continues at both Rosebud Lutheran in Rosebud, and at Lord's Warriors Lutheran in Parmelee. There is also midweek class held in Parmelee every Tuesday, and Rosebud on Thursday. Daily radio devotion ministry continues on KOYA 88.1 FM. You can read more about this mission in the special ministry section.

**St. John, Norris** - During the last 3 years we have had our Pastor of 19 years retire, Reverend Glenn Denke, and we thank him for his faithful service to our church and community. We have continued in vacancy status, being served by both Pastor Utecht of Rosebud, and Pastor Hinnert of Crookston, NE. Pastor Hinnert has accepted our call to serve and will be our full time pastor, together with St. Peter in Midland. We have had baptisms, confirmations, funerals, VBS, and LWML along with our regular worship services. We have recently put a new steel roof on the church, and plan to continue to proclaim, "Behold your God" for many years.

**Holy Cross, Onida** - The LWML has been very active in both local, national, and international efforts. Locally they had a booth representing Holy Cross at the Sully County Fair, giving away various literature and other goodies. Also locally they sold food and drinks to the attendees of Onida's annual "Twas the Night Before Christmas" event. Outside of Onida they have collected receipts to support Missouri Shores, collected various items for the Orphan Grain Train, and put together health kits for hurricane disaster relief.

**Trinity, Blunt** - The members have once again been very active participants in various parts of Blunt Fest, an event held at the end of August. Also they contributed a lot of food for the Community Thanksgiving supper held at Blunt Elementary.

**Immanuel, Harrold** - The members have recently voted to increase their giving to missions, both in the state and with international efforts. For most of the year Trinity and Immanuel had been worshipping together, though that has now changed so that all three churches are having their own services once again.

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In the future the Tri-Parish will be working together in looking at the importance of Closed Communion, that there would be better understanding of this practice. Also we have begun work on ways to protect our ministry from various lawsuits and will hopefully have something in place within the next year so that we will have peace of mind concerning this potential issue. Another plan for the three congregations is to address the issue concerning our inactive members: who they are, why they've become inactive, and reaching out to them in ways that will encourage them to come back and receive God's gracious gifts in worship. Lastly we may look into sending some youth to our Circuit Bible Camp so that they can share in fellowship with other youth in our circuit.

**St. Peter, Norris** - has been served by Pastor Denke for some 19 years and then retired. They were truly blessed to have a pastor for so many years. They have been served the last two years by the Circuit Visitor Ray Greenseth in the afternoon and they extended a call to Reverend Greg Hinnens who did accept the call and will have been installed in January.

**St. Paul's, Draper** - celebrated their 107 years of being a Lutheran Church and also celebrated using the same building for 71 years. They have resided 3 outside walls so far which really adds to the appearance. What was great about all this is that they celebrated this day on September 30, 2017, a Saturday so their Pastor Ray Greenseth could attend. For he is real busy on Sunday doing 4 worship services, so that was a real joy to me. They look forward to celebrating "Behold our God" for many, many more years.

**Messiah, Murdo** - Is busy planning for their 100 years in 2020, as this takes a lot of work, to pick the day, the time, the preacher, to get everything ready and to show the community that "Behold our God" is very important to us all. We try to do things in the community, we take care of the "Food Assistance" program, which is also a good outreach program for our county, and several members listen to kids read at school,

**Emmanuel, Gettysburg** - The congregation has called a new Pastor. Rev David Otten was installed in January of 2017. The congregation paid off the mortgage of the fellowship hall and educational building. The congregation would be more involved in the community. Looking for ways to reach younger members of the community.

**Christ, Lebanon** - The congregation has called a new pastor. Rev David Otten was installed in January of 2017. Christ Lebanon is the only church in the town. Needs direction and help in serving the small town and staying open.

**St Paul, Seneca** - The congregation closed in 2016.

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## **Circuit D (Huron)**

Reverend Dr. Dale L. Sattgast, Circuit Visitor

From the moment of our Baptism until the Day of the Lord when Christ comes again in glory or the day when the Lord of Life calls us from life in this creation to life eternal in heaven, God's people are always in transition. Yet, by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in God's Word and the Sacraments, there is always the assurance that our God is with us every moment of our life's journey, no matter what transitions we may face.

"Behold your God!" That is the assurance we are given each time we open God's Word in our home devotions, each time we sit in the pew in worship or at a table in Bible study, each time a child or older person is brought to the Baptismal Font, and each time we receive our Savior's holy Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper. "Behold your God!" "Behold the Cross!" "Behold the Empty Tomb!" "Behold the victorious Savior!" "Behold the blood-bought forgiveness and redemption that is for you!" "Behold the living Savior who says, 'I AM with you always.'" What comfort, what help, what hope!

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Through this past triennium, the people and congregations of Circuit D have beheld our God as He has led us and continues to lead us through a time of transition both in our congregations and as a circuit.

Three years ago and facing the realities both of a pastoral vacancy at the two-point parish of Zion Lutheran Church in Wessington Springs and Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Woonsocket as well as rural demographics and declining memberships, these two congregations joined with St. John's Lutheran Church of Wolsey to form a new three-point parish. The parish called Reverend Scott Spiehs who had been serving the Wolsey congregation to be its senior pastor and retired pastor, Reverend Richard Weeman, to be the part-time assistant pastor. During this past triennium, the people of this three-point parish have beheld their God as He has poured out His blessings on this transition.

Two pastors from our circuit, Reverend Paul Pater who served as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Howard and Reverend Kelly Smith who served as associate pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Huron both accepted calls during the triennium. Pastor Warren Uecker who served as pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Madison retired in January of this year, and Pastor Dan Domke who serves as senior pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Huron will retire this May. "Behold your God" is a wonderful assurance to each of these men and their families that even during these transitions in their lives, their God and Savior is present with His help, hope, and blessings!

Needless to say, each of the circuit congregations served by these pastors who have accepted calls or are leaving due to retirement also face a time of transition. Both St. John's Lutheran Church in Howard and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Madison not only have faced the loss of their pastors, but also the reality of diminishing memberships. As a result, these two congregations recently formed a two-point parish and, at the time of the writing of this report, were actively involved in the calling of a new pastor to serve this newly-formed parish.

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Huron is also a congregation in transition. Facing the vacancy in the position of associate pastor and the coming retirement of its senior pastor, Mt. Calvary is in transition as it calls a new senior pastor. When that position is filled, the congregation will review its staffing needs and responsibilities and will issue a call for a second professional staff person.

In the midst of so many transitions in our circuit, we are thankful for Reverend Peter Utecht who continues to serve the two-point parish of Messiah Lutheran Church in Redfield and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Doland.

Facing the realities of rural demographics, declining memberships in our congregations, the forming of multiple-point parishes and the resultant reduction in numbers of pastors in our circuit, as well as the difficulty of maintaining the minimum requirements under Synod's Bylaws to exist as an electoral circuit, we face one more major transition as a circuit. That is reflected in the request to this Convention to disband as a circuit and realign our congregations and parishes with other surrounding circuits. This has not been an easy decision. However, we know that in whatever direction the Lord leads in this transition, one thing will remain the same. Through God's precious Word and Sacraments, the people and congregations in this part of our beloved South Dakota District will continue to have the assurance we may behold our God in all of His grace, mercy, help, and hope.

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## **Circuit E (Black Hills)**

Reverend Randy Sturzenbecher, Circuit Visitor

Black Elk peak is the highest point in South Dakota. On a clear day you can see 5 states. It would be the perfect place to look down and "Behold your God" and all He is doing. However you do not have to climb to the top of the 7200 foot summit to see how our mighty God is working, just look at what His churches in the Black Hills circuit are doing.

### Bethesda Lutheran Church, Hot Springs: Pastor Gary Jacobsen

I finished our last report by saying that a special project was being presented to the parish with the intent of having the mortgage paid off within five years. I am very pleased to inform all that the mortgage has been paid for in full two years ahead of schedule. A reassessment of how and what we are doing with the school has taken place. We are very encouraged by some of the preliminary stats. Quit possibly, a 'day-care' center along with some expansion to the Pre-school and Day School may be taking place. - - - On another note, we are planning for and getting ready to celebrate our 100th anniversary coming soon. Plans are underway for a spectacular event. The Lord has blessed us.

### Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Rapid City: Pastor Joshua Jones

Bethlehem has experienced several firsts recently. We sent our first "son" of the congregation, Nathaniel Brown, to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in the summer of 2017 for his preparation for the pastoral ministry. We also sent our first short-term mission team of 10 members of our congregation to Panama to work with Lutheran Hour Ministries and the local people in Panama City. Our congregation also started our own grant program called "Caring by Sharing" in which we disperse up to \$20,000 per fiscal year to those in need, generally outside of our own congregation. Bethlehem continues to be supportive of her pastor and his family in their ongoing challenges to care for his special needs daughter, Zoe. The congregation has also been supportive of their pastor receiving further education at Concordia Seminary in the Doctor of Ministry program.

### Black Hills Lutheran School, Rapid City: Lacey Hoogland Administrator

In the past three years Black Hills Lutheran School has grown to serve students in 6th - 12th grade and this May we will graduate our first student who has been with us since we opened in 2011. We currently have 4 full time faculty, three of whom are called. Each month, during the school year, our faculty and students participated in a community service project ranging from volunteering at Feeding SD, Cornerstone Rescue Mission or a nursing home, making Valentines for Sr. Citizens, cookies for First Responders, Easter or May baskets and more. We have officially adopted and have begun implementation of Classical Education. After an in-depth study we believe this is what is best for students and it offers a distinctly Christian worldview. Full implementation will begin in the fall of 2018.

### Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church and School, Black Hawk: Pastor Randy Sturzenbecher

Isaiah reminds us that our God comes with "might". Through His mighty Word He provides sinners forgiveness of sins, life health and salvation. Easter Sunday 2017 was the first service in Divine Shepherd's new sanctuary. It was also the beginning of offering Holy Communion in every worship service to God's redeemed people. Along with the new sanctuary Divine Shepherd opened an Early Childhood Center (ECC). It offers preschool classes as well as child care for up to 65 of God's children. Each day, and in each lesson they hear of their redeeming, loving Savior Jesus. Divine Shepherd continues to send short term mission teams to Concordia Lutheran School in Kowloon, Hong Kong, to engage the students in English and teach them about the One true God. Through God's grace and mercy in Christ we are able to be His "herald of good news" to the communities of Black Hawk, Rapid City and the Piedmont valley.

First Lutheran, Wall and Emmanuel Lutheran, Creighton: Pastor Christopher McCarthy

The Lord of the church continues to care for His people in Wall and Creighton through the faithful hearing of the Word and reception of the Sacraments. Pastor Garland accepted the call to Immanuel Lutheran of Monroe, Michigan in 2016 and the Lord provided Pastor Kent Borglum to care for His people as their vacancy pastor. Pastor Christopher McCarthy was installed in July of 2017 and the churches have received him warmly. Both churches continue to grow through baptisms, confirmations, and affirmations of faith. The early release from school to churches continues in our community and both children and teachers enjoy this time to study God's Word. First has continued to work upon the basement, especially the kitchen. Emmanuel remains healthy, and has nearly as many children in weekly attendance as adults. Sunday school remains active in both churches. The response from both churches in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was robust, and the circuit wide service well attended. Each congregation sought to outdo the other in showing love for their neighbor and donated over 1000 food items to the Country Cupboard food pantry. First and Emmanuel continue to be a beacon in their communities of God's love for His creation shown in the Crucified and Risen Lord.

Grace Lutheran, Deadwood and Blessed Emmanuel Lutheran, Sturgis: Pastor John Fries

At Blessed Emmanuel we have closed our Pre-School but we are starting a diaper ministry for Meade County. We served over 1600 breakfasts and suppers during the Sturgis Rally. VBS had over 30 children involved from the community. Tuesday afternoon Bible study that is studying Isaiah. Service is at 10:45 AM on Sunday morning.

At Grace our attendance is steadily growing. We have a real Sunday School again. We have a midweek service at 5:30 PM and a Thursday morning Bible study that is well attended. Service is at 9:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

Our Redeemer Lutheran, Custer and Our Savior's Lutheran, Hill City: Pastor Eric Obermann

At the dual parish of Our Redeemer and Our Savior's Lutheran Churches in Custer and Hill City we have experienced the joys of calling a Seminary Candidate in the spring of 2016. Pastor Obermann has been serving the dual parish since June of 2016. Aside from calling a new pastor, the dual parish adjusted the service times to help with travel between the parishes. Our Savior's now starts at 8:15 a.m. and Our Redeemer has kept their time at 9:45 a.m.

Our Redeemer Lutheran, Rapid City: Pastor Lucas Edwards

Our most gracious and merciful God endlessly pours forth his blessed gifts through his Son and in the power of his Spirit to the congregation of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (Rapid City). God remains faithful to His promises and continues to sustain and nourish His beloved people through His Word and in His Sacraments. Our Redeemer was the recipient of a SD District Harvest Grant, and is using that grant to provide sack lunches to all those in need of daily bread. We are not only meeting a basic need in the community through the provision of food, but we are also making friends and creating a context in which we can proclaim the Word to people who are far off. The saints at Our Redeemer continue to embrace the good news of Jesus Christ, and to engage one another and their community with the one thing that cannot be provided, or even found, outside the Lutheran Church—namely, Christ and him crucified, poured into our ear holes, on our heads, and down our throats. Soli Deo Gloria!

Peace Lutheran, Rapid City: Pastor David Lindenberg

+ Our MOPS group has brought a number of young families to our congregation.  
+ Many of these young families have immersed themselves into the life of the congregation and are serving the Lord and others in various capacities.  
+ We hosted a Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University course last spring, and are currently hosting a 2nd one.  
+ Surrounding the 500th Reformation Anniversary we hosted a day of making meals for the hungry for Feeding South Dakota, through a group called (Kids Against Hunger), and plan to do more of these in the future.



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+This summer we did many replacements/renovations/improvements to the church facilities and are continuing this work with things that need to be done in the parsonage.

+For the new Triennium, we are preparing, through Bible Study and education, to have a greater focus on and involve the congregation more in:

\*Mercy Care (in the various areas of emphasis this includes)

\*Support of Missions (beyond what we give to the TIM program)

\*Making Disciples (as opposed to just gaining more members)

St Paul Lutheran, Spearfish: Pastor Gene Bauman.

1) Celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Paul congregation with President Sailer and former pastors and sons of the congregation participating.

2) Continued outreach through campus ministry.

3) Updated Fellowship Hall and offices with carpets, blinds and chairs.

4) Voted to replace outdoor church sign

5) Increased mission giving

6) Jump-started the St. Paul Endowment Fund to assist our community, circuit, district and beyond.

7) Supported Spearfish Community Food Pantry and Bella Pregnancy Care Center.

8) Continued to support ministries of LWML, LYF, Quilters group, Prayer Shawl, Loaves and Dishes (meals for members after operations or newborns), Altar Guild and Prayer Chain.

9) Continue to be a supporting congregation of Black Hills Lutheran School.

10) Are exploring the possibility of outreach into the Belle Fourche area toward the goal of planting a church in that city.

Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City: Pastor Paul Winkler, DCE Lorien Petersen, Principal Ann Solinsky, and Preschool Director Hope Genzlinger

Zion continues to be blessed with strong ministry through our church, school and preschool. Ann Solinsky was called to serve as the Principal of the school and immediately was tasked with guiding our school through a successful renewal of accreditation through the National Lutheran Schools Association. The visiting accreditation team nominated Pastor David Schwan and Pastor Paul Winkler for the national School Shepherd Award. In May 2017 Roxi Withee, a dedicated and talented servant of Christ, retired from teaching Kindergarten. In June 2017 Pastor Schwan retired from the ministry after 40 years of faithful and effective leadership in Christ's church. The congregation is currently seeking to call a second Associate Pastor. Our Preschool under the direction of Hope Genzlinger continues to remain strong and operating at maximum capacity. DCE Lorien Petersen continues to lead a very active youth ministry with numerous middle school and high school youth engaged in study and annual service projects. She also serves as a leader in District youth events and also volunteering as Chaplain for the Rapid City Police Department. Pastor Winckler has attended Synodical Reconciler Training to serve as a District Reconciler. Our members continue to remain engaged in study of the Word and service to our community in numerous ways, seeking to reflect the grace of God in word and deed.

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## **Circuit F (Mitchell)**

Reverend Mark Mischnick, Circuit Visitor

The Mitchell Circuit, at this writing, is comprised of thirteen congregations served by eight pastors, four pastors who reside in the Circuit as retirees and one dual parish that is vacant. St. Paul, Plankinton and Trinity, White Lake are vacant for the first time in more than fifteen years when Reverend Richard Milbrandt took a call out of the District in October of 2017. They are awaiting a decision by the Board of Assignments for a candidate placement this spring.

As we in the Mitchell Circuit behold our God over the last triennium, we see a God who does not change--acting to bring about change in His Church! The most violent and destructive change came soon after we met in convention in 2015 when a tornado destroyed Zion, Delmont's church

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building, parsonage, and much of the town on Mother's Day. Pastor Bucklew and the people of Zion were tried, tested, and challenged in the following months as they ministered to each other and their community. It was there that the true meaning of the church at large and walking together came to fruition. Thanks be to God for the saints at Emmaus, Tripp, and those of the surrounding parishes in the Mitchell Circuit, the South Dakota District, and the whole Missouri Synod who rallied around Zion, Delmont. God be praised! A new church building and parsonage were completed and dedicated in the summer of 2017. Pastor Bucklew has since taken a call to Nebraska. Zion, Delmont and Emmaus, Tripp have a called Reverend Brian Lemcke who began his service January 1, 2017.

Other changes in the circuit were decidedly less traumatic but were changes nonetheless. Due to resignation, calls, and retirements most of our congregations have new pastors. Of the nine called pastors serving in the circuit, only one has been here more than ten years (Soyk-13) and only three were here for the last convention in 2015 (Soyk, Brown, and Mischnick). Reverend Dan Grimmer was installed at Zion, Mitchell, in the summer of 2015; Reverend Jens Jenson at Redeemer, Armour, and Reverend Ryan Janke at Christ, Winner, and Zion, Hamill in the summer of 2016, all from the Board of Assignments. Reverend Marcus Ring, St. John, Gregory and Reverend Ryan Loeslie, Immanuel, Dimock, were called from the field and installed in 2017. Reverend Brian Lemcke was installed in January 2018.

Both Christ and Zion Lutheran of Winner and Hamill are doing well. Both congregations made the switch to the *Lutheran Service Book* and have been using it as their sole worship book.

Zion, Chamberlain, celebrated their Centennial in 2017 with five special Sundays. They invited special guests to preach on those occasions, including Reverend Scott Sailer (twice), Reverend Bob Bailey, Reverend Vernon Schindler, and Reverend Dr. Herb Mueller, Jr. Synod VP Mueller was the guest for the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Reformation and Circuit F Convocation in October. Many from our Circuit attended.

The last three years have been busy ones at Zion, Mitchell. In 2015, they bid farewell to Pastor Troester who retired, and welcomed Pastor Daniel Grimmer from the seminary. Zion has largely not shared in the demographic crunch of so much of our district, as Mitchell is a growing, increasingly forward-looking community. As Mitchell grows, Zion has grown proportionately. In 2016, Zion purchased 3 adjacent properties that were eye-sores and demolished them to make room for more parking and expansion. They have been busy studying options for expanding their facilities to better serve the changing congregation well into the future. 2017 marked Zion's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Zion, Mitchell has joined Zion, Chamberlain in offering the blessings of every Sunday Holy Communion to the saints gathered there. Both Zions praise God for this blessing to their respective congregations.

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Dimock (Flensburg as many folks still call it) has been greatly blessed by the Lord of the Church over the past three years. The same Word and Sacraments which have been the consistency of this congregation for over 135 years continue to support a strong congregation. Many families have been here since our congregation's founding. Others have been welcomed in over the course of time. Together we form a congregation which honors the traditions of our fathers while looking to pass on our precious faith to new people in a new day. For much of Immanuel's history, she has been blessed to be served by long-tenured pastors, most recently 13 years of faithful service from Reverend David Otten. Blessed with a short and smooth vacancy served by Reverend Don McKillop, Immanuel welcomed a new pastor in September 2017, Reverend Ryan Loeslie. As always, God is with us at Immanuel. No matter how much times have changed in the world and around our beloved country church, we stand ready to serve God's people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Reverend Don McKillop has served the District and Circuit in retirement as vacancy pastor for Dimock and now Plankinton and White Lake. Pastors Brown, Grimmer, and Jenson have added to their responsibilities by serving Delmont and Tripp during their vacancy.

Revs. Werner (Clayton), Althoff (Gregory), Denke (Winner), and McKillop (Winner) are all retired and living in Circuit F. Reverend Mischnick (Chamberlain) was serving as Circuit Visitor, 2015-2018 and will be retiring from full time ministry in 2018.

We continue to meet eight months of the year as a Circuit with seven Winkels and a picnic. Our Winkels begin with time for Confession and Absolution, followed by a family meal and the Divine Service. Our topics have been centered on Chemnitz's Enchiridion. Our picnics these past two summers have been at the American Creek Recreation Area in Chamberlain.

Reverend Thomas Brown was elected to serve as our next Circuit Visitor by the Circuit F Forum. We pray that the Lord of the Church will give him the strength and stamina needed for this noble task.

All of the congregations in Circuit F continue to lift up their voice and herald the Good News in their respective communities. Whether with a seasoned shepherd or a new one, the task is the same, to behold our God and aid our neighbors in doing so, too!

God bless the congregations and pastors of Circuit F, our beloved South Dakota District, and Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as we Behold Our God, living lives of Witness (It's Still All About Jesus!), showing Mercy, and living Life Together as the Body of Christ, the Church.

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## **Circuit G (Freeman)**

Reverend Thomas Christopher, Circuit Visitor

Circuit G is comprised of the following congregations:

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Wentworth, SD – Reverend Adam Welton  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, SD — Reverend Nabil Nour  
First English Lutheran Church, Parker, SD — Currently Vacant  
Bethesda Lutheran Church, Marion, SD — Currently Vacant  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, SD — Reverend Terry Makelin  
Zion Lutheran Church, Canistota, SD — Reverend Dr. Peter Kurowski  
St. John Lutheran Church, Montrose, SD — Reverend Dr Peter Kurowski  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer, SD — Reverend Thomas Christopher  
St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Alexandria, SD — Reverend Thomas Christopher  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Emery, SD — Reverend Thomas Christopher  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Scotland, SD — Reverend Matthew Resner  
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Menno, SD — Reverend Matthew Resner

Circuit G has seen several new faces in our pulpits during the last triennium:

Reverend Matthew Resner was installed on August 9, 2015 at St. Paul/Immanuel in Scotland and Menno after Reverend David Ellis retired as pastor of the parish.

Reverend Nabil Nour was installed as Pastor of Trinity in Hartford on August 21, 2016 after having served the vacancy there for several months. Reverend Nour also serves as 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Reverend Dr. Peter Kurowski was installed in a part-time call as pastor of Zion/St. John's in Canistota and Montrose on August 6, 2017 after Reverend Silas Mehl accepted a call to Missouri.

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Reverend Terry Makelin was installed as pastor of St. Paul in Freeman on September 10, 2017 after an extended vacancy in that parish.

Reverend Dwaine Doremus, after having served for 21 years in the parish, retired as pastor of St. Peter in Wentworth as of November 30. The parish called Reverend Adam Welton who accepted the call and was awaiting his installation as of the writing of this report.

The parish of First English, Parker, and Bethesda, Marion remains vacant after Reverend Karl Gregory, who had served there for ten years as vacancy pastor and later as called pastor, accepted a call to Illinois. The vacancy is currently being served by Reverend Matthew Resner.

The pastors of Circuit K meet monthly for study and worship, fellowship and mutual support at the circuit winkels. As often as possible the pastors' wives and children join the pastors at the monthly winkels.

The congregations of the circuit meet twice each year for circuit forums, each congregation taking its turn to host the delegates to the forums. Each triennium the circuit holds its circuit convocation, with the convocation this year being the circuit celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation observed in a worship service at Trinity in Hartford on October 29 with Reverend Dr. Dale Sattgast preaching.

In 2016 the circuit congregations began the Circuit Lay Leadership Conferences. Meeting three times per year, the conferences are for the members of the circuit congregations, especially the lay leadership of the congregations, to get to know one another, study various practical theological topics, and have open discussion on matters of parish and circuit concern with one another. The goal of the conferences is to help our circuit congregations work more closely together as we meet many of the same challenges we see in our rural parishes.

"Behold Your God," the theme of our 2018 SD District Convention, has been and continues to be very much the theme of Circuit G as well as the pastors and saints of the circuit continue to behold their God and Savior Jesus Christ in the holy Means of Grace. The pastors of this circuit continue to be a close-knit group working diligently in their partnership in the Gospel and benefitting greatly from the monthly fellowship and study time at the winkels. The congregations of the circuit also take advantage of opportunities to show their Christian care and concern for one another and their pastors. Despite the challenges of rural ministry in our Synod and District, God's Word is still being preached in its truth and purity and the Sacraments still administered according to Christ's command. We rejoice that God continues to do His mighty work among us through His Means of Grace and will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

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## **Circuit H (Sioux Falls)**

Reverend Charles F. Kramer, Circuit Visitor

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God! Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and tell her that her sin has been paid for"( Is 40:1,2). As pastors in the Brandon, Sioux Falls and Tea communities it is our privilege to share the message of God's comfort, love and forgiveness in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our congregations and their ministries include:

Blessed Redeemer Lutheran Church, Brandon - Reverend Dan Deardoff Sr., Pastor; Assistant Pastor: Reverend Jason Letsche;(ordained and installed on June 28, 2015) Michelle Ternus, Preschool Director.

Christ Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran Church of the Deaf, Sioux Falls - Reverend Matthew Nix, Pastor. He also provides ministry to the deaf in other locations in South Dakota.

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Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls Reverend Corey Aker, Sr. Pastor (installed August 14, 2016) and Reverend Kory Janneke, Associate Pastor; Mavis Smith, Music Coordinator; Faith has ethnic ministries to the Ethiopian and Eritrean people.

Lord of Life Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls Reverend Wade Meyer, Sr. Pastor  
Reverend Chera Namera, Assistant Pastor to the Oromo people, immigrants from Ethiopia.

Memorial Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls - Reverend Aaron Asmus, Pastor; Liz Peters, DCE; Eric Larson, DCE (plans to attend the seminary in 2018); Colleen Kaiser, Director of Ministry Involvement,(contract part-time); Kathy Holdorf, Administrative Manager (contract full time); Kristi Prouty, Coordinator of Special music (contract part-time).

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls - Reverend Ryan Drevlow, Sr. Pastor; Assistant Pastor, Reverend David Morfitt, (installed May 10,2015) They also minister to Liberian people in their worship services.

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls - Reverend Christopher Ascher, Pastor; Jodene Baker, DCE, His Ark Director; Albert Bakat; Evangelist to the Congolese people.

Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Tea - Reverend John Farden, Pastor; Mrs. Holly Hank, Preschool Director/Teacher, (contract part-time)

Zion Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls - Reverend Greg Lehr, Sr. Pastor; Reverend Jenina Gatnoor, Pastor to the Sudanese; Jacob Shoup, Praise Team Leader and Director of Youth and College Ministry,(contract full time); Rusty Willson, Choir Director, (contract part-time); Melissa Anderson, Lil Troopers Learning Center Director; Chez Shoup, Director of Family and College Ministry, (contract part-time)

Pastor Matthew Nix continues to serve as hospital chaplain for the Sioux Falls hospitals for those outside the Sioux Falls area. Should you desire a chaplain call on a member, you may contact him at 605-338-5267.

Circuit H congregations came together for our circuit forums and circuit convocation according to the by-laws of the LCMS. We gathered together at the Brandon Valley Performing Arts Center on October 29, 2017 for our Circuit Convocation celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. Our guest speaker was the Reverend Wallace Schultz from St. Louis, MO. Then on October 31, 2017 our members gathered together to watch the movie “Martin Luther: The Idea That Changed the World” at Memorial Lutheran Church. On November 12, 2017, at our Circuit Forum, The Reverend Dr. Ray Hartwig was elected as our next Circuit Visitor pending the 2018 District Convention ratification. The pastors meet monthly for their Winkels during the months of September through May. The pastors are on a rotational basis for worship and Bible study.

We are privileged to have several retired pastors in our circuit: Reverend Orlett Brack, Reverend Monty Dell, Reverend Robert Fedde, Reverend Stephen Hartman, Reverend Dr. Ray Hartwig, Reverend Paul Haugen, Reverend Melbourne Helling, Reverend Richard Luttmann, Reverend Charles Kramer, Reverend Peter Sestak and Reverend Howard Shane. Many of these retired pastors are still serving as needed pulpit supply for other pastors in the surrounding area. Four of these couples get together on a regular basis for Christian fellowship.

The Lord tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those who have young. ( Isa 40:11) The Sioux Falls Lutheran School Assn. makes it possible for many children to grow in faith. This year, we are honored to serve a total of 297 students—160 preschoolers and 137 K-8 students. The fall of 2017 marked the 40th anniversary of our school’s inception and its 10th straight year of being voted a Local Best preschool in Sioux Falls. In addition, last July, the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) Commission accredited 102 Lutheran schools across the nation and awarded five of them

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special recognition as Schools of Distinction. SFLS was one of the five schools to receive this top national ranking. The foundation of the School of Distinction designation was the accreditation team's finding that SFLS is a school of excellence--academically and spiritually. After its site visit in March 2017, the team noted that, "Five LCMS congregations in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, celebrate, support and operate an excellent school that well serves the community. Sioux Falls Lutheran School provides a challenging academic curriculum (early childhood – grade 8) that intentionally and thoroughly integrates what we teach and believe as Christians." During the 2018-19 school year, we will have the opportunity to share three powerful, research-based, and replicable practices, identified by the NLSA visiting team, with other Lutheran schools across the United States as well as with our sister international schools in Hong Kong, Viet Nam, and China—allowing our brothers and sisters in Christ the opportunity to replicate these effective methods. After a year-long feasibility study specific to enhancing the school's mission and outreach opportunities, Our Greatest Gifts Capital Campaign was launched in November 2016. A three-year campaign goal of \$8 million was established and to date, \$2.6 million in pledges and over \$1 million in cash have been donated for the purchase of land and the construction of a new facility. On November 12, 2017, a united voters' assembly comprised of the school's association congregations (Faith, Lord of Life, Memorial, Our Redeemer, and Resurrection), granted the SFLS Board of Education permission to move forward with evaluating and acquiring property for our new school. Finally, to effectively prepare for sustainable future growth, the SFLS board, administrators, faculty and staff have been working with consultant, Dan Krause of Grace Works Ministries, to improve admissions practices and retention strategies, and to study and implement a biblically-based financial model. We praise and thank God for continually gifting us with so many wonderful kingdom-building opportunities. Mrs. Tia Esser is the Administrator.

Six of our congregations (Blessed Redeemer, Our Redeemer, Zion, Memorial, Faith and Resurrection) also joined together in ministry to the high school students. Lutheran High School of Sioux Falls (LHSSF) began in 2010 with 4 students. For this 2017-18 school year, there are 35 students preparing for their future with 1 full-time and 9 part-time teachers and 2 full-time staff members at the Memorial Lutheran Church campus. LHSSF exists to offer students and families excellence in education in a nurturing Christian environment. LHSSF helps equip students with the skills to serve God and the world with strength of character and purpose, knowing that they are loved and saved by Christ, forgiven by God, and heirs to His Kingdom. LHSSF is so thankful for the great variety of gifts and talents which God has given to young people. We strive to offer opportunities to help them continue to recognize and develop their God-given gifts and abilities. Students are extremely active and engaged in extra-curricular activities, including band, choir, athletics, drama, and many more that we do not have space to list. These activities have been designed to help enrich the student's education at LHSSF. Each year, congregation members are invited to a "Celebrate" dinner to hear progress reports and provide funding for tuition assistance. We are truly blessed to serve families by offering excellence in academics, education grounded in Christ, and support and encouragement to students who serve as leaders in their churches and community. Mr. Derek Bult is the school administrator.

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## **Circuit I (Yankton)**

Reverend David Gunderson, Circuit Visitor

Since the last convention, our circuit has been blessed to welcome into our circuit Reverend Paul Albers to Concordia Lutheran in Vermillion, and also Reverend Jesse Davis to First English in Centerville and Zion in Hurley. Reverend Garen Pay who had been serving Peace Lutheran in Alcester accepted a call to Idaho in October of 2017. The vacancy is being served by Reverend Paul Warnier, a retired pastor in our circuit.

Joshua Schmitt was installed as Director of Christian Education at St. John's Lutheran in Yankton in August 2017. He is the only DCE in our circuit.

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A wonderful blessing to our circuit has been Andra Gates serving her deaconess internship in our circuit. In the last two years she has been serving the congregations in the circuit by leading Bible studies, visiting members and helping in other areas. Her supervisor is Reverend Dean Schroeder.

The circuit meets monthly for our "Winkel" meetings. At these meetings they celebrate the Lord's study, share concerns and have been studying the confessions of the church in their regular meetings. Members of the circuit also have fellowship events including a summer picnic, a party at Christmas and hunting trip.

In celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The circuit held a worship service on October 28, 2017 at Martinus Lutheran church in Utica. The service included President Scott Sailer as the preacher. Following the service, a wonderful meal of fine German food and beverages was served, and Reverend Steve Weispfennig, shared a presentation on his recent tour of Germany and historical locations involving the Reformation.

Following the 2015 District Convention, Reverend Dean Schroeder was elected as Circuit Visitor until he stepped down in the summer of 2017. Reverend David Gunderson was appointed to fill the position until the convention of 2018.

At our circuit forum in October, Reverend Jordan Andreasen was elected Circuit Visitor for the next three years.

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**NOTE: These reports were written in January 2018. Therefore some activities which occurred between that date and the time of convention are not included in these reports.**