



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICE

*There for you
(just as God is for us)*



Hard times hit everyone. Did you know that there are skilled Lutheran Family Service (LFS) counselors available for you, right here in South Dakota, to help get you through those hard times?



Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer
District President

LFS has opened its Sioux Falls office at 3409 W. 47th St., Suite 103 (pictured above). This is immediately south of the west side Kohl's store, near Empire Mall.

Two counselors at this office stand ready to serve you:

- ▶ Virginia Strubbe, individual and family counseling
- ▶ Dr. Mark Vande Braak, a specialist in grief and trauma counseling

To make an appointment, call 605-271-1081.

Please note that their services are not free. But your health insurance plan likely has coverage for mental health counseling. Most of our church workers can use Concordia Plans' Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for several free consultation sessions with these mental health professionals. LFS is a Concordia Plans in-network provider.

LFS in South Dakota also offers another important service: unplanned pregnancy support and adoption services. This is provided through Cathy Vande Braak (Mark's wife), adoption caseworker. Her phone number is 605-366-7311.

LFS has other counselors available to church members and church workers in South Dakota, including Lindy

Hinckley in Chamberlain and Rev. David Gunderson, who serves us out of Kansas City via telehealth. You can reach them by calling 605-271-1081.

What a blessing it is to have LFS with us! LFS is God's gift to us, to "walk with people who are experiencing hard times and are there for them just as God has been there for us" (from the LFS mission statement).

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we need your financial support to ensure that these services continue here in South Dakota. You may recall that, at our 2021 District Convention, a resolution was passed that included committing \$75,000 for LFS start-up costs for 2023, and \$50,000 for 2024. Half of these amounts will come from funds available for expenditure by the district's Board of Directors, and half is to come from our congregations.

We are lagging behind in congregational gifts to LFS for 2023, but your congregation can help us catch up so that the fine services offered by LFS in South Dakota can continue! Check with your pastor or church leaders to find out about your congregation's plans to support LFS.

You as an individual can make a gift by sending your donation to The South Dakota District—LCMS, 3501 S. Gateway Blvd., Sioux Falls, SD 57106 (payable to the district, with "LFS" on the notation line).

Thank you for your prayers and gifts for this important ministry among us. LFS is there for us, a manifestation of God being with us always!

Christ's mercy IN DISASTER

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church and School in Black Hawk hosted a Lutheran Early Response Training (LERT) May 22-23. Twenty volunteers (*pictured at right*) became certified to bring Christ's mercy to people who are suffering.

When a disaster happens — a natural disaster like a tornado or a flood, or a man-made disaster like a chemical spill or building collapse — God's people respond with "How do I help?" Living in our baptismal identity, we respond to the needs of others with the mercy, compassion and care Christ has first shown to us.

LERT equips God's people to understand what a disaster is and how to respond safely and effectively. The natural reaction when there has been a disaster is to *go* — go help, go clean up. LERT training widens the focus of what needs attention after any disaster, and centers



on the Gospel of Jesus for all people. As He has shown us mercy through the cross and His glorious resurrection, we are able to show mercy to others.

LERT training focuses on the needs of the person as well as the property. As God's people, called into action in disaster, our priority is to listen, pray and help all hurting people find comfort in the eternal promises of Christ, even in disaster.

LERT training also teaches how to work safely and collaboratively in disaster situations. Removing storm debris, muck-

ing out basements and cutting damaged trees are just a few of the areas LERT volunteers are trained for.

Please consider hosting a LERT training in your congregation so that we are all better at bringing the hope and promises of Christ to His hurting people. For more information on LERT training, contact Rev. Adam Welton at adwelton@gmail.com or visit lcms-lert.org.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. GAL. 6:10



The Sailer family: (from left) Lisa and Aaron Sailer; Scott and Sarah Sailer; Tim Sailer; Lyndsey Gerhart and Dan Sailer.

DP awarded honorary doctorate

Congratulations to Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, who was awarded the honorary Doctor of Letters from his alma mater, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. (CSP). The commencement ceremony was held on May 6 in Concordia's Gangelhoff Center.

Pastor Sailer has served as South Dakota District president since 2015. He is a 1981 graduate of CSP's pre-seminary program. After earning

a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), in 1985, he served as pastor of LCMS congregations in Howard (St. John's), Hot Springs (Bethesda) and Sioux Falls (Faith). He also served on the admissions staff at CSL (1994-98).

Pastor Sailer is married to Sarah (nee Meyer), whom he met while they both were in the CSP band. Sarah is a 1982 CSP graduate.



Welcome to the BOD

Douglas Klipfel (left), a member of Our Savior, Aberdeen, was installed as a member of the South Dakota District Board of Directors by Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, district president, before the board's meeting on June 4. Doug was appointed to the board after the resignation of an elected lay member.

Remembering OUR BAPTISM

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are in the midst of a roughly year-long series hearing from the youth and education professionals who work in and bless the LCMS South Dakota District. This month's article is shared by Deaconess Amanda Korthase of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls.



I have been serving as deaconess at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church for two years. I never would have imagined that I would be living in South Dakota, let alone be a deaconess! God's plans for my life have surpassed anything I could have imagined.



**Deaconess
Amanda Korthase**

A deaconess is theologically trained to serve alongside and support the pastor in teaching the faith and caring for the mercy needs of a congregation. As a deaconess I am able to serve my church in many different ways. I interact with people of all ages in the congregation and love sharing Christ's love with them all.

One of my favorite things to do as a deaconess is remind people of their baptism. The Small Catechism says:

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

What a wonderful encouragement of which to remind people! Here are some ways that you can help others remember their baptismal birthdays, especially young children.

Many people were given a baptismal banner at their baptism. My banner hangs in a place I see every day. I encourage others to do the same with their baptismal banners. If you did not receive a banner or have misplaced yours, consider creating something to remind you of the day you were adopted as a child of God. You could cut a water droplet shape out of a plastic plate or craft foam, for example, and then write your baptismal date on it with a blue marker and add three water droplet stick-

ers for the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You could do the same thing with a baptismal shell shape.

Small wooden crosses are my go-to gift for baptisms. On the cross I add the date of the baptism, along with the person's name (if there is room). I often spray-paint the cross and add flowers or other small decorations.

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) contains many wonderful hymns that remind us of our baptism. These songs are easy to teach children. You can also give a book in remembrance of one's baptism.

Sending baptismal birthday cards is another great idea. You can also take time to talk about baptism with a child. This can be done on or around their own baptismal day, or whenever someone is baptized. Making the sign of the cross during the invocation or personal devotions and prayers reminds us that we have been baptized into the name of the Triune God. When someone is struggling or suffering, reminding them of the promises found in their baptism can bring them great comfort and peace. These promises found in baptism cannot be taken away from us. They are ours to cling to at all times.

Titus 3:4-7 says:

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewals of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Call Information

Rev. William Newell, pastor of Trinity, Bloomington, Ill., accepted a call as senior pastor of Lord of Life, Sioux Falls. His wife, **Dr. Kristen Newell**, assistant principal/teacher, Trinity Lutheran School, Bloomington, Ill., accepted a call as administrator, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, May 21.

Rev. Doug Slavens, associate pastor of Faith, Sioux Falls, declined a call as pastor to St. Salvator, Venedy, Ill., and Olive Branch, Okawville, Ill., June 13.

Rev. Daniel Welch, senior pastor of First, Glencoe, Minn., is prayerfully considering a call as senior pastor to St. Paul, Aberdeen, and St. Paul, Leola, June 7.

Rev. Micah Bauer, pastor of Mount Calvary, Brookings, declined a call as associate pastor to St. Paul, Marion, Iowa, May 19.

Rev. Luke Edwards, pastor of Our Redeemer, Rapid City, declined a call as pastor to Immanuel, New Wells, Mo., May 27.

Rev. Christopher McCarthy, pastor of First, Wall, and Emmanuel, Creighton, declined a call as pastor to St. Paul's, Clarinda, Iowa, June 5.

VACANCIES

Senior pastor

- Mount Calvary, Huron
- St. Paul's/St. Paul's, Aberdeen/Leola

Sole pastor

- Concordia, Immanuel/Cresbard, Wecota
- Grace/Blessed Emmanuel, Deadwood/Sturgis
- St. Paul/Trinity, Plankinton/White Lake

Associate pastor

- Zion, Rapid City
- St. John's, Yankton

Got news to share?

Send articles and photos to **Kate Meadows**:

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



- ◀ Brooke Aker, first-grade educational assistant, watches over students as they await pickup.
- ▼ Liz Slavens, a high school English teacher, helps a student.



DELIBERATE, INTENTIONAL & BOLD

Lutheran parents teach their children the faith in the home and encourage them to consider serving the church as a vocation. But they don't have to do it alone.

A Lutheran school can walk alongside parents to reinforce that teaching and encouragement.

"I look at the kids that have become church workers ... and a lot comes from their families," says veteran middle-school teacher Marli Ockander. "Their parents are church workers, professional church workers — a lot of times pastors — or they're just part of a family who is regularly at church and regularly serving through that church or even ... here at Sioux Falls Lutheran."

Walking Beside Parents

At Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Ockander and her fellow teachers and the school's administrative team bring Christ into everything they do with the students entrusted to their care. Ockander works to foster the parents' teaching of the faith, provides resources such as devotions, encourages her students to serve the church in both a professional and lay capacity, and prays for her students to remain in the faith.

Staff at Sioux Falls Lutheran School walk alongside parents to encourage students to consider serving the church as a vocation.

At morning chapel in March, Ockander proudly watched her seventh-grade students assist Rev. Paul Winckler as he led the service. The students sang and performed a short play, written by Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy, president emeritus of the LCMS Minnesota South District, about their identity in Christ.

"We're walking beside [the parents]," Ockander says, alluding to the Greek word for "Synod," which means "walking alongside." "We're helping to train them up [in the faith]. And a lot of that foundation is started at home." She wants to warn parents about how easy it is to forget God and fail to pass along knowledge of Him to future generations.

Ockander recently represented the school and the South Dakota District at the *Set Apart to Serve (SAS)* pilot program training at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis. Participants attended from all 35 of the Synod's districts, each representing a pilot congregation, school or camp that will be testing *SAS* materials.

Each site, including Sioux Falls Lutheran School, will use *SAS* resources to discuss full-time church work with young people and to develop long-term plans for nurturing future church workers. The pilot project will provide feedback before the initiative is launched Synodwide.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Centered in Christ

Sioux Falls Lutheran School — built recently to house a growing student body — sits outside of the city in a location ripe for development. Down the hall from Ockander, teacher Britney Vercruysse hugs her first-grade students as they arrive. During Bible time, Vercruysse draws from Concordia Publishing House's "One in Christ" curriculum for her lesson. One of her continuing themes for her students is the importance of pastors in their lives and the life of the church.

On this sunny, cold day, the children read the Bible story of Jesus blessing the children. Vercruysse sits with small groups and goes through their work. She

Continued on next page

loves her work as a teacher — a path she was guided on by her father — and sees the need for more Lutheran teachers.

There is a joy, she says, in a Lutheran teacher's freedom to spread God's love every day. "We are here for the kids. We're here for the families. We're here for each other. No matter what the situation or what we're teaching, [we are here] to share God's love with those families and those kids."

During the lesson, Vercruyse crisscrosses the classroom with Brooke Aker, an educational assistant in the first-grade classroom. Aker's husband is Rev. Corey Aker, pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, one of the school's five association congregations. Later in the evening Brooke is present alongside several school families for Wednesday Lenten service at Faith.

There's a need for Lutheran teachers, says Brenda Bernard, principal for kindergarten through fifth grade. A growing school means a growing need for teachers. She was able to call one teacher, yet more opportunities for called workers remain. Her goal is to teach and prepare young Lutherans for their vocations serving their community and the church, and she wants the school's teachers to bring their Lutheran faith into the classroom in all that they do to instruct the students.

"Our common thread through everything we do is Christ," says Bernard. She gives an example of weekly Bible verses and readings. "[We're] making sure our families understand the Bible through



Kortney Temple, a kindergarten through third-grade strings and preschool music teacher, gives students violin lessons.

the eyes of their children at different stages of development." She also invites parents to chapel and brings the association and supporting congregations' pastors into the classrooms.

There is no age too early to plant seeds with students about vocation and God's plans, she says. She recalls a young student who was having some challenges in school. She says she told him, "I'm not sure what God has planned for you, but wouldn't it be amazing if these experiences lead you into being a teacher where you can help somebody through some of the same challenges you've had?" It's being deliberate and intentional with the conversations and being "bold about that," says Bernard.

The school is full of activity throughout the day. Middle-schoolers build a snowman at recess. Students recite Bible

verses from memory. Fourth-grade students create Lenten crosses in art class. Kindergarteners spend quiet time reading in indoor tents. High school students weather their anxiety during a public speaking project. Young musicians rehearse proper form on the violin. After all of these scenes and more, the school day winds down. In the moments before pickup, fifth-grade teacher Jon Pinn quiets his classroom and opens Luther's Small Catechism. In unison, voices young and older pray Luther's Evening Prayer before all are dismissed.

Story and photos by Erik M. Lunsford, managing photojournalist for LCMS Communications. The article is reprinted from the Summer 2023 issue of Lutherans Engage the World (engage.lcms.org). Visit lcms.org/sas for more about the Synod's church worker recruitment initiative.



Teaching class on March 15 are, from left, Britney Vercruyse (first grade), Marli Ockander (middle school science and seventh-grade homeroom), Jon Pinn (fifth grade) and Angela Hoekman (kindergarten-12th grade art).

PATTY'S PONDERINGS



Patty Peters, LWML South Dakota District president, carries the district banner at the LWML 40th Biennial Convention on June 23 in Milwaukee. She is joined by Vania Asmus (left) and Rebecca Scott, district Young Woman Representatives.

A mountaintop experience

How blessed are you by our LWML conventions? For me, attending an LWML convention is a mountaintop experience. We join old and new friends to study the Word, sing, laugh, hear Mites in Action speakers and vote on mission grants and the mission goal. It is so much fun to do the mission/mite walk with hundreds of people, all connected to the LWML!

The most recent mountaintop experience — the 2023 LWML Milwaukee convention, “Celebrate the Lord of the Nations” (based on Ps. 33:12-13) — is now in the books. If you attended the convention, I prayed you learned a lot and had fun! May God bless you as you send in your mites, read *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly*, take part in Bible studies and carry on the mission of LWML to support global missions and to serve the Lord with gladness.

I am excited to announce the theme of the LWML South Dakota District 2024 Convention. — “Inexpressible Joy + Matchless Savior,” based on 1 Peter 1:8-9:

Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The convention is scheduled for June 7-8, 2024, at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Aberdeen. Our Bible study leader is Donna Snow, whom many of you know because you have used the Bible studies she has written, including “Chosen,” “Forgiveness” and “Meant for God.”

More information will be coming in the next few months, so mark your calendars and tell your friends. This is a great way to introduce ladies to LWML and tell them of our “Inexpressible Joy” because our “Matchless Savior” died on the cross to redeem us from our sins and rose from the grave to grant us eternal salvation.

HURRY: grant proposals due Aug. 31

The deadline for submitting Mission Grant proposals for the 2024-26 biennium is fast approaching! Please submit your proposals by Thursday, Aug. 31. May the Lord bless your heart as you consider applying on behalf of a Gospel-centered ministry. Grants will be announced at the district convention, to be held June 7-8, 2024.

Aug. 31 is also the first day of the **South Dakota State Fair**. We have another opportunity to serve in a mission right here in our own district. Each year, we help the Utecht family as they deliver the Gospel message in a fun and informative way to children and adults through their Puppet Place Ministry. This is the 51st year of the ministry.

Please note the date that your zone is assigned to help:

- ▶ Thursday, Aug. 31: Pierre Zone
- ▶ Friday, Sept. 1: Sioux Falls Zone
- ▶ Saturday, Sept. 2: Yankton Zone
- ▶ Sunday, Sept. 3: Aberdeen Zone
- ▶ Monday, Sept. 4: Black Hills Zone

Anyone from your congregation is encouraged to participate in this ministry (including men and youth).

For more information, please call Bev Johnson (605-747-2448) or Jan Larson (605-280-0862). You may also visit sdlwml.org (go to “Missions” and select “The Puppet Place” from the drop-down menu).

See you at the fair!

Jan Larson
VP of Gospel Outreach



Feeding children in Lutheran schools in Haiti through Trinity HOPE is a district mission grant for the 2022-24 biennium.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



All things new!

Getty Images

A new school year is upon us. Soon kids will begin a new grade, and a new year of learning and studying.

Of course, school isn't the only place newness happens. We also see it in the church regularly. New pastors, new hymnals, new bills and new ministries are just a few of the "new" categories a church regularly encounters.

In many circumstances, we resist the new. We resist it because it is unknown. We even joke in the Lutheran church that "new" is bad. Most of us have heard things like, "Don't you dare change the color of the carpet," or "Why do we need a new hymnal when the old one is just fine?"

From experience, we know that some "new" is good and some "new" isn't. New phone numbers on our caller ID often mean new scams. The loss of a loved one means learning to live in a new way. New spots on our medical scans mean new treatments.

Remember, though, that some new things are great and that not



Rev. Clint O. Thorson
LWML District Counselor

all the old is good. Take a few minutes to read Revelation 21:1-5. As people who believe in Jesus and trust in His victory over sin, Satan and death, you can be reminded in this passage that you have nothing to fear in the new or the old! In fact, Christ is actively working to make all things new. His death and resurrection put our old, sinful selves to death so that you might

have the promise of new life, and the promise that one day you will live in new and glorious bodies in the new heaven and new earth!

This promise, however, isn't a new thing. In Lamentations 3:23, we read that God renews His mercy every single day for you. His eternal love will never let you down. It will be new for you every morning. Christ fulfills this promise and is making all things new, including you, so that God's old promise might make you new every day and strengthen you to face anything new (or old) in the joy and safety of our loving Lord.

Amen.

Plan to attend Christian Life workshop

"The Impact of Original Sin" is the theme for the LWML Christian Life workshop this fall. If we are to biblically understand the challenges of homosexuality and transgenderism, we first must correctly understand original sin. To do that, we must explore God's Word.

This presentation will focus on the reliability of God's Word, the impact of original sin in the world, especially as it relates to homosexuality and transgenderism, and how to help people who face these challenges.

Josh Schmitt, DCE at St. John's, Yankton, will be the presenter.

The workshop (schedule below) will be held on Saturday, Sept. 16, at Peace Lutheran Church, Rapid City; and Saturday, Sept. 30, at Zion, Sioux Falls.

Bring your Bible. The LWML store will be open, and you will have time to visit with your LWML sisters. Bring a friend and share in the blessings of LWML!

Susan Buxcel • VP of Christian Life

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

- 9:30–10 a.m. Registration and coffee
- 10–10:15 a.m. Opening devotion
- 10:15–10:30 a.m. Greetings, announcements
- 10:30–11 a.m. Speaker
- 11–11:15 a.m. Break/singing
- 11:15–noon Speaker
- Noon–1p.m. Lunch/shopping
- 1–1:45 p.m. Speaker
- 1:45–2 p.m. Break/singing
- 2–2:45 p.m. Speaker
- 2:45–3 p.m. Closing
- 3 p.m. Coffee and goodbyes



Sharing beautiful music

The yet-to-open Luther Classical College in Casper, Wyo., recently received 125 copies of *The Lutheran Hymnal* from members of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Menno. They discovered unused stacks of the hymnal while organizing a storage room at the church.

Rev. Brian Mosemann, Immanuel pastor, suggested that Immanuel place a notice in *Reporter*, the official newspaper of the LCMS, letting congregations across the country know about the hymnals' availability.

Before contacting *Reporter*, Immanuel reached out to the other congregations in its four-point parish to see if they had any additional copies of the hymnal they might want to donate. St Paul, Scotland, and First English, Parker, both offered additional copies.

It didn't take long for the hymnals to be spoken for. While 125 of the hymnals will be used in daily chapel services at Luther Classical College, which is set to open the fall of 2025, 35 will supplement the hymnal supply at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Excelsior Springs, Mo., while another five went to a former church musician in Texas who plans to give each of her children a copy.

Giving these hymnals new homes is one way to share the beautiful music found in their pages, just waiting to be played and sung.



Members of Immanuel, Menno, pack up the hymnals to be sent to Luther Classical College in Caspar, Wyo.

District's newest congregation installs pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Belle Fourche, became a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in June 2022. Less than a year later, on May 21, Rev. Don McKillop was installed as their pastor. Trinity's mother church is St. Paul, Spearfish, which was represented at the service by its current pastor, Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown, and by its former pastor, Rev. Gene Bauman. We rejoice with the saints of Trinity because of God's goodness!



Pictured are, from left, Revs. Gene Bauman, Dennis Mercer, Don McKillop, Dr. Scott Sailer, Dr. Thomas Brown and Randy Sturzenbecher.