

# DISTRICT NEWS

**November 2024**



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## CONTENTMENT and THANKSGIVING

**“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.”** PHILIPPIANS 4:11B



**Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer**  
District President

The Ninth and Tenth commandments are about contentment.

The Ninth Commandment:

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.

The Tenth Commandment:

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

Luther’s Small Catechism (2017 edition from Concordia Publishing House) says the central thought of these commandments is that “God created us to be content with the gifts by which He sustains our life.”

There’s that word: “content.”

Consider this: To be miserable, I want what I don’t need.

And consider this: To be content, I want what I need, and I don’t want what I don’t need.

Read those sentences again, about being miserable and being content.

OK, let’s go on...

Being a content and thankful Christian also means we know we have a loving heavenly Father who provides for us. (Read the explanation to the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed for a beautiful statement of God’s care for our physical life, “out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit of worthiness in me.”) This is undeserved providence from our Father in heaven!

And then there’s the Father’s grace in Jesus Christ; His giving of Jesus into this world, Jesus’ giving of His life for our sins (resulting in our forgiveness), the gift of faith and everlasting life.

That’s grace! Not getting what I do deserve (hell!) and getting what I don’t deserve (heaven!), all because of Jesus.

Let’s review: I am miserable when I want what I don’t need. But I am content and thankful when I want what I need, and I don’t want what I don’t need, and

See **MESSAGE**, page 8



**Zion Lutheran Church, Mitchell, welcomes Vicar David Christensen, his wife, Amanda, and their children, Benjamin and Charlotte.** Vicar Christensen is a Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, student and will serve at Zion for the 2024-2025 academic year. David and his family moved to Mitchell in August and he was installed as vicar on Aug. 4. His vicarage supervisor is Rev. Daniel Grimmer, Zion pastor.



## Youth to gather in New Orleans

It's time once again to start preparing for the LCMS Youth Gathering, which will be held July 19-23, 2025, in New Orleans. LCMS youth and adult leaders will gather under the theme "Endure," based on Hebrews 12:1-3.

Held every three years, the LCMS Youth Gathering provides youth an opportunity to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. During the five days, youth spend time together in worship, God's Word, prayer, song and service. Learn more at [lcmsgathering.com](http://lcmsgathering.com), and follow the South Dakota District's preparations for the 2025 Gathering at [facebook.com/SouthDakotaDistrictNYG](https://facebook.com/SouthDakotaDistrictNYG).



## Preschoolers get wonderful gift in Groton

The swing set so loved by the preschool children at St. John's, Groton, had seen better days. The wooden posts in the ground were beginning to decay and soften. It didn't take long for the posts to actually become loose, posing a danger for the children, who used the swing set every day, weather permitting.

This past summer, St. John's was blessed with a new swing set, donated by the Kurth family in memory of Susan Kurth and Stetson Bierman. Congregation members put the swing set together.

## CALL INFORMATION

**Rev. Robert Moeller**, St. John, Trosky, Minn.; Our Savior, Pipestone, Minn.; and Trinity, Jackson, Minn., is prayerfully considering a call to St. John, Britton, and St. Paul, Ferney, Sept. 22.



**Rev. Felix Bradley**, Grace, Chisholm, Minn., and Trinity, Virginia, Minn., declined a call to St. John, Britton, and St. Paul, Ferney, Sept. 5.

**Rev. Samuel Thole**, Peace, Brookings; Zion, White; and Redeemer, Flandreau, declined a call to Immanuel, Lakefield, Minn., Sept. 6.

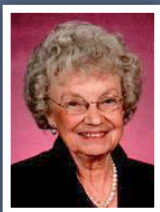
## VACANCIES

Sole pastor

- Zion Canistota/St. John, Montrose
- Concordia Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- St. Paul, Freeman
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- Risen Savior, Tea
- St. John, Wagner/Trinity, Fairfax
- Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls
- Zion, Chamberlain
- St. John, Britton/St. Paul, Ferney
- St. Peter, Wentworth

 In Memoriam

**Dorothy Helling**  
1928–2024



Dorothy Helling, wife of Rev. Melbourne Helling, was called to glory on Sept. 5, at the age of 96. She was baptized and confirmed at Immanuel, Dimock, and graduated from Parkston High School in 1947. Dorothy continued her education at Presentation School of Nursing in Mitchell and graduated in 1950.

The Hellings were married on Aug. 20, 1950, at Immanuel, Dimock. They were blessed with three sons and one daughter; 10 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and one great great-grandchild.

As a nurse, Dorothy worked in geriatrics, and orthopedics, and served in nursing homes and provided home nursing care.

The Hellings had been living in Viborg for the past couple of years. Pastor Helling served district congregations in Lebanon, Seneca, Stratford, Mansfield and Sioux Falls.

Dorothy’s funeral was held Sept. 9 at Zion, Sioux Falls.

Please keep Pastor Mel and the rest of the family in your prayers, even as you thank the Lord for the wonderful servant He made Dorothy to be in this earthly life.

**SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!**

Send submissions to Kate Meadows: [kate@katemeadows.com](mailto:kate@katemeadows.com), or 420 E. Liberty Street Rapid City, SD 57701

The deadline for the January 2025 issue is Nov. 15. Please ensure photos are high resolution.

**Lutherans Engage the World**



Pictured in July is a house destroyed by rushing floodwaters in Arroio do Meio, Brazil. The latest issue of *Lutherans Engage the World* features articles on recovery efforts amid disasters in Brazil and Chile.

**‘In good times and bad’**

In February, historic wildfires ravaged two communities in Chile, destroying 12,000 homes and killing more than 100 people. As Chilean Lutherans cared for victims, one pastor noted, “On my own, I don’t have anything good to say to anybody. ... [But] I realized ... I could say to [the victims], “Through the Word of God, you are not alone.”

The Fall 2024 issue of *Lutherans Engage the World* explores how Lutherans are sharing the Gospel in both good times and bad. In addition to a feature story on the disasters in Chile and Brazil, the issue gives a glimpse into the work of the Rev. Dr. Daniel Jastram, the Synod’s only missionary in Japan, who is bringing together faithful Lutherans scattered around the country.

The issue also includes an article about two Lutheran foster families that are caring for children in need and a first-hand account of what it’s like to serve on a short-term team through LCMS International Mission.

“This issue ... delivers inspiring stories of those who love and believe in these Scriptures,” writes Rev. Kevin Robson, LCMS chief mission officer. “In turn, they



The Fall 2024 issue has arrived in mailboxes. Read it online at [engage.lcms.org](http://engage.lcms.org). If you would like to receive the magazine in the mail or by email, visit [engage.lcms.org/subscribe](http://engage.lcms.org/subscribe) to sign up for a free subscription.

constantly ‘speak’ the Word of God to others — in verbal proclamation, yes, but also in marvelous deeds of mercy for their neighbors. We thank God for them and for your stewardship that makes such magnificent efforts possible.”



# Call to convention!

## Moments with Mary Jo

It might be hard to believe, but now is a good time to start making plans to attend the LWML 41st Biennial Convention, to be held June 26–29, 2025, in Omaha, Neb. The theme is “Growing in God’s Grace,” based on 2 Peter 3:18:

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

**Goal Statement:** Through Word and Sacrament, I will grow in grace to serve our Lord and proclaim His glory.

At the convention, it is our prayer that attendees will be inspired to dig deeper into God’s Word, be encouraged to share the love of Christ with enthusiasm and be equipped to support missions and our mission goal with joy.

One of the convention highlights for many is the processional of district banners. Are you creative and would like to show off that creativity? Then please consider submitting an idea for our district banner. Designs are due to me by Jan. 3, 2025.

Whether this would be your first convention or your 20th, you will not want to miss the 2025 LWML convention. I pray I will see many of you there!



**Mary Jo Stier**  
LWML South Dakota  
District President



## Wanted: **Young women** to attend

Calling all South Dakota groups and zones! The LWML national convention is upon us and we need Young Woman Representatives (YWR) from our district. This is an exciting opportunity for our zones and groups to enrich our young women!

Becoming a YWR provides connections with other young women from around the United States. It provides an opportunity to serve the Lord and others by participating in a variety of servant events and Gifts from the Heart. It uplifts souls as we worship with other women, participate in Bible studies and devotionals, and sing songs of praise. Most importantly it gives young women the opportunity to see our mighty mites in action!

Encouragement is needed from our groups and zones! If you know of a young woman age 21 to 35 years who is ready to make the commitment of serving as a district YWR June 26-29 in Omaha, Neb., please encourage them to fill out the application form found at the district website. Applications are due in December.

Grace and knowledge in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ await our candidates! To apply:

1. Download the application at [sdlwml.org/young-women](http://sdlwml.org/young-women).
2. Provide a recommendation letter for your chosen young woman.
3. Email the application and recommendation letter to Laurel Schamber, YWR committee chairwoman, at [Laurel.Schamber@k12.sd.us](mailto:Laurel.Schamber@k12.sd.us) by **Dec. 2**.

**Laurel Schamber • YWR Committee**

## BLACK HILLS ZONE UPDATE

We began 2024 with the combined Prayer Service and Spring Rally, held at Peace, Rapid City. Rev. Terry Naasz led the prayer service and Keena Manhalter shared information and memories on her trip to Israel. The pictures she shared brought to life some of the areas where Jesus walked.

A zone meeting was also held with 43 ladies attending. Seven groups from the zone had voting

delegates at the district convention in Aberdeen.

September brought the beginning of fall activities, including the Christian Life Workshop (see page 5). On Sept. 28 we held our Fall Retreat at Zion, Rapid City. Planning for hosting the 2026 district convention in the Black Hills will begin in January.

**Elaine M. Hankel**  
Black Hills Zone President



LWML members sing at the 2021 LWML convention in Lexington, Ky. The next convention will be held June 26-29, 2025, in Omaha, Neb.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

# 'Be thankful'

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **COL. 3:14-16**



Getty/images

Here it comes! Are you ready for it? Thanksgiving Day! You might not be ready for it, what with all the planning and cooking, and the friends and family around. Just like Christmas, Thanksgiving Day seems to end before it began and we will be back to our normal routines. It seems there is hardly any time to be thankful at all on that day.



Rev. Christopher McCarthy

But the Christian does not need any day in particular to be thankful. Rather, we are to be thankful every day. Paul's words apply to us, not just on Thanksgiving Day, but every day. "Put on love." "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." "Be thankful." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." It would be absurd of us to put on love for just one day a year, to let the Word of Christ dwell in us for just one day a year. It is just as absurd for us to think we have one day a year set aside to be thankful.

Yet the command to "be thankful" cannot produce thankfulness, just as telling a sad person to be happy will not simply make that person happy. Our thankfulness is a response to the grace of God to us. On Thanksgiving, but also before every meal, we are to receive our food with thanksgiving. Why? Because our God satisfies our every need. As the psalmist says:

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

**PS. 145:15-16**

If He indeed satisfies the desire of every living thing, how is Christian thanksgiving different? It's not measured by the frequency, nor the intensity or the bounty of our Thanksgiving meals. Our Thanksgiving is different because we know the God of heaven and earth by grace in His Son, our Lord Jesus, who laid down His life to free us from all sin, death and the power of the devil. He has called us His own children through the waters of Holy Baptism. He feeds us with His body and blood, that we may have life and have it to the full. And because He rose, still bearing those nail-scarred hands, we know that "nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (**ROMANS 8:38-39**). Therefore, we are thankful at all times because we have received grace upon grace and He still provides for all our daily needs.

So whether you have much or whether you have little, whether this is for you a year of surplus or a year of deficit, as you take time to remember this past year and all the blessings that the Lord your God has given you, be thankful.

For Jesus lives. You have been bought and paid for. Not with gold or silver. But with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that you may be His own. You are His. He is yours. Forever.

## Witness at the State Fair



The Puppet Place had over 900 visitors for the shows at the South Dakota State Fair, held Aug. 28–Sept. 2 in Huron. The show's theme was "The Christmas Story as Told by the Animals." Over 400 puppets were given away, along with nearly 200 Bible studies, copies of "Happy Times, My Devotions" and whistles. As in past years, the Gospel was presented to families in a fun and interactive way.

Puppet Place has been spearheaded by the Utecht family for many years. This year, 34 volunteers worked at Puppet Place, giving out tickets, inviting fairgoers to come to a show, handing out free gifts and even dressing up in animal costumes. The weather was wonderful this year.

Thank you for your help in keeping this important ministry alive at the South Dakota State Fair! God bless you!

**Jan Larson**  
Gospel Outreach Chairman

## Workshop draws large crowd

The Christian Life Workshop held Sept. 7 at Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, was a huge success with more than 60 people in attendance

Rev. Dennis Mercer, Divine Shepherd Specific Ministry Pastor, led the opening devotion. We enjoyed some singing and great fellowship. Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, Divine Shepherd senior pastor, presented on, "God Gives Good Gifts in B.A.G.S. (Baptism, Absolution, Gospel, Supper).

Thank you to the groups from Divine Shepherd; Our Redeemer, Custer; and Bethlehem, Rapid City, for providing the morning coffee and goodies. The Divine Shepherd LWML served a wonderful lunch including sandwiches, salads and desserts.

**Kathy Roling**  
President, Divine Shepherd LWML



Photos: LCMS/Errik M. Lunsford

## LFL offers ‘Life Quotes’

The Lutherans For Life (LFL) website maintains an ongoing repository of “Life Quotes” for sharing. The quotes represent thoughts on life issues that can be used in weekly congregational bulletins and newsletters, as well as for offering hope to anyone hurting after an abortion decision.

While all the quotes include specific dates on the website, they can be used anytime. Here are the quotes for November:

### Nov. 3

“In the fullness of time, our Lord was born for our sake. In the fullness of time, He will bring all the faithful into eternal fellowship with Him. In the fullness of time, He will dry every tear and fulfill His will for all mankind, as John the Evangelist witnessed in the Revelation God granted him.”

**Deaconess Bethany Stoeber,**  
Director-at-Large, LFL of Kansas

### Nov. 10

“For no one of those who are alive today knows where he was during the first two years, when he lived either in the womb. ... Yet he lived at that time, and he was a body joined to a soul — a body adapted to all natural functions.”

**Martin Luther**

### Nov. 17

“If we find ourselves with a desire that

nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”

**C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity***

### Nov. 24

“In spades the Lord has taught me, and prayerfully you also, that Psalm 23 is a thanksgiving psalm. He anoints our heads, which is the Old Testament way of saying He chooses us as kings. He makes us a part of His royal household! Man, are we blessed as His kids!”

**Rev. Keith Haberstock,** guest speaker on “The Lutheran Hour”

Visit [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org), go to the “Resources” tab and select “Life Quotes” from the drop-down menu, or scan the QR code.



## LCMS Life Ministry

Through LCMS Life Ministry, the Body of Christ comes together to value all human life — from conception to natural death. LCMS Life Ministry ([lcms.org/life](http://lcms.org/life)) speaks up for life, cares for people in body and soul and teaches about the sanctity of human life.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Life Ministry network is comprised of thousands of people throughout the LCMS who are passionate about and engaged in sanctity of human life efforts, both in our church

body and the culture at large.

**We speak** for human life by witnessing to our Lord’s creation of life and His design for marriage and the family, and by advocating for the God-given value of all human life in the public square.

**We care** for human life by sharing Christ’s love and mercy, caring for people in body and soul by sponsoring human care efforts in local communities through congregations, and internationally through our missionaries and partner church bodies.

**We educate** by providing resources and events for people of all ages.

### RESOURCES

- ▶ Online Life Library  
Visit [lcms.org/lifelibrary](http://lcms.org/lifelibrary)
- ▶ Curriculum for children and schools  
Email [lifeministry@lcms.org](mailto:lifeministry@lcms.org)
- ▶ Friends for Life podcast  
Visit [kfuo.org/friendsforlife](http://kfuo.org/friendsforlife)
- ▶ LCMS Life Conference and symposiums  
Visit [lcms.org/life](http://lcms.org/life)
- ▶ Life Sunday and worship resources  
Visit [lcms.org/lifesunday](http://lcms.org/lifesunday)

*“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

**JOHN 10:10**

# Psalm sheets for study, devotion and prayer

The Psalms are the Holy Spirit's own hymnbook. They are rich in the history of Israel, the prophecies of Christ, the wisdom of God and the steadfast love of the Lord. You probably know a few by heart. It was once required that pastors be able to "sing an entire David," that is, to know the whole Psalter from memory (*Canons of the Second Council of Nicea, Canon 2*).

But what if you're just starting to learn and pray the Psalms?

With your Bible and one of these pages in hand, you should have everything you need to take your first step into any of the 150 Psalms.

These "One-Sheets" were an

outgrowth of the 2024 Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music where, over the course of the four-day conference, attendees sang and prayed all 150 Psalms together. The LCMS is delighted to release this resource for the good of the wider church.

They are ideal for rehearsals so that choirs can sing with understanding. They could be used for Bible study starters or bulletin inserts. Above all, we commend them to your devotional use as a tool to help you pray and sing the Psalms with faith in Jesus Christ.

To download, visit [lcms.org/worship-planning/psalm-sheets](https://lcms.org/worship-planning/psalm-sheets) or scan the QR code.



**YOU GET TO  
TELL THEM  
THE GOOD NEWS**



**LCMS INTERNATIONAL MISSION**  
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[lcms.org/international](https://lcms.org/international) [LCMSInternationalMission](https://www.facebook.com/LCMSInternationalMission) [LCMS International](https://www.youtube.com/LCMSInternational)



## St. Paul sends five to music institute, sing entire psalter in four days



From left, Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown, Jan Huffman (organist), Mary Barna (pianist), Kim Hepper (organist) and Bill Warner (choir director).

By **Mary Barna**  
St. Paul, Spearfish

Five members of St. Paul, Spearfish, attended the LCMS 2024 Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music, held July 9-12 at Concordia University, Nebraska.

The theme was “Songs of Deliverance: Psalms in the Great Congregation.” We slept in dorms, ate meals in the cafeteria and attended sessions at various campus buildings. Over 500 pastors, musicians and laity attended.

Worship services and keynote addresses were held at St. John’s Lutheran Church, across the street from the campus in Seward. Worship services were held each morning and evening with vocal choirs, handbell choirs and organists providing special music. Many voices filled the sanctuary with hymns. Pastors and keynote speakers offered inspired preaching and a wealth of information about the Psalms.

Learning sessions were offered in all aspects of liturgy, preaching and music. Accomplished musicians gave organ and piano recitals.

Every worship service, keynote speech and learning session began with a Psalm, either spoken or sung. All 150 Psalms were covered, including Psalm 119 and all its 176 verses!

Evening events included folk dancing, a “Beer and Bach” sing-along at the Bottle Rocket Brewing Company, and a live organist-accompanied silent movie at the historic Rivoli Theater. After the evening festivities came Compline, a brief worship service held in the dark around the campus fireplace or downtown Seward. There we sang and prayed to God under the stars.

The Institute has traditionally been a triennial event. What a blessing to the members of the LCMS. The friendliness of everyone, the Lutheran hymns, the Psalms, and the glorious music make for unforgettable memories.



From left, Krista Erickson talked about the work of the district Mission and Ministry Council; and Adam Schulz reported on the Men’s Ministry activities sponsored by the district.

## Ministry together

The South Dakota District’s triennial Planning Conference was held Sept. 16 at the Highland Conference Center in Mitchell. The Planning Conference is a way to get grassroots input and feedback about our ministry together in the district as we prepare for the next district convention, to be held Feb. 16-18, 2025, at the Sioux Falls Convention Center.

The theme of the conference was the same as for the upcoming convention: “God’s Gospel: Salvation Power” (based on Romans 1:16-17). Thirty-two participants were present, including a lay representative and a pastor from each of the eight district circuits. Julie Pike was the conference manager.

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

when I realize that God — my loving God — provides for those needs. Always.

That must be what Paul meant when he wrote about learning to be content in Philippians 4:11.

Have a most blessed Thanksgiving, and don’t keep the secret of being content to yourself. Blab it to somebody else!

**Your servant in Christ • Pastor Sailer**

“Not ashamed of the Gospel”

Rom. 1:16; 16:25–27“...not ashamed of the Gospel”