



SOUTH DAKOTA DISTRICT  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD

# DISTRICT NEWS

May 2024

## YOU are a church worker recruiter

Church workers, like your pastor, don't come from the seminary. They come from churches. Oh, I know, pastors receive their pastoral formation at the seminary and they are certified for a call after they have successfully completed their seminary training. But first, God the Holy Spirit formed faith in their hearts through Baptism and the hearing of God's Word.



Rev. Dr.  
Scott Sailer  
District President

Boys observed their pastors conduct the liturgy and heard them preach. Or they heard the campfire devotion given by the director of Christian education or a layman they admired.

Girls were taught by caring teachers in Sunday school or at the Lutheran school they attended and they wanted to follow those teachers by serving in the teaching vocation. Or their congregation had a deaconess and they want to follow in those footsteps of sharing the Gospel through works of mercy, spiritual care and teaching the Christian faith.

Church workers ... you are church worker recruiters!

Mr., Mrs. and Miss Layperson ... so are you!  
Your faith inspires the faith of others.

Your encouragement plants vocational seeds: "Say, have you thought of being a pastor ... a Lutheran school teacher ... a deaconess ... a DCE ... a director of parish music?"

Those seeds may grow quickly, and a young person heads off to a Concordia university intent on entering church work. Eight years



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

later (the latter four at seminary), he is ordained and installed as a pastor.

Those seeds of encouragement may take root and grow over a number of years, but eventually the boy you once encouraged to be a pastor becomes that 50-year-old who heads off to the seminary or enrolls in the Specific Ministry Program (SMP), a distance-education route to ordination.

And that girl you encouraged to become a Lutheran school teacher ... what about her? After 20 years of her service as a public school teacher, she gets a job at a Lutheran school. She loves the opportunity to openly witness of Christ's love and God's glory in creation, every day. She decides to take classes through one of our Synod universities and becomes a rostered LCMS teacher via the colloquy program.

See **WORKERS**, page 3

**Marli Ockander**, a teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, is a member of the SAS advisory council. She would be glad to address your congregation or youth group regarding the various church work vocations and what could help in recruiting future church workers. Contact her at [mockander@sflutherschool.com](mailto:mockander@sflutherschool.com).

## Zion welcomes Pastor Schulte



◀ Pictured are, from left, Revs. Steve Maske, Good Shepherd, Elgin, Ill., and Bryan Meadows and Gary Schulte of Zion, Rapid City.

▼ Pastor Schulte is pictured with his wife, Stephanie.

Rev. Gary Schulte was installed as associate pastor of Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City, on Feb. 25. He joins Rev. Bryan Meadows on the ministry staff.

Pastor Schulte, a 2006 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, most recently served as an LCMS missionary to Central and West Africa. He is and his wife, Stephanie, have four adult children.

We welcome the Schultes to the beloved South Dakota District! God bless your work among us.



## SFLS launches capital campaign



A student reads her “One in Christ” book at Sioux Falls Lutheran School in March 2023.

Imagine a place where Jesus’ Great Commission — “to go and make disciples, teaching them everything I have commanded” — is lovingly and intentionally fulfilled in the lives of hundreds, even thousands of people. This happens daily at Sioux Falls Lutheran School (SFLS).

The SFLS staff is grateful to God for a 40% increase in enrollment since it moved from the center of Sioux Falls to Boe Lane, near I-29. Every weekday, it is blessed to educate and disciple over 460 students, from infants through 12th grade, with more than 80 loving Christian staff, who also inspire their students’ families, which then touch the lives of thousands in the Sioux Falls region with the love of Jesus Christ. More than 62% of Sioux Falls residents do not have a church home.

The growth, which places SFLS within the top 5% of Lutheran schools in enrollment throughout the nation, makes it the largest LCMS mission in South Dakota. The growth also now requires SFLS to build more classrooms and support space. In response, SFLS has launched the Imagine Immeasurably More capital campaign. This is the school’s greatest challenge and most vital project since its relocation.

The project will fund an addition to the SFLS Upper School, expanding middle and high school capacity to at least two classrooms per grade, while also opening up capacity in the elementary wing for dual classes of first- through fifth-grade students. It will grow academic offerings and provide for superior arts and athletics. It will bring needed parking, added space for a kitchen and conference and administrative facilities.

For more information, Visit [siouxfallslutheran.com/capital-campaign](https://siouxfallslutheran.com/capital-campaign).

## Koester is now sole pastor



Rev. Kevin W. Koester (center) was installed as sole pastor of Mount Calvary, Huron, on March 10. He had been serving as associate pastor at Mount Calvary since his graduation from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in May 2019. He is pictured with, from left, Rev. Dr. Dale Sattgast, district president emeritus and a member of Mount Calvary, and Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, district president.

# Congrats, Immanuel, Dimock!

On March 2, 13 dartball teams from across the state gathered at Faith, Sioux Falls, for the 68th Annual South Dakota District Dartball Tournament. In the championship game, with the game tied in the bottom of the 10th inning, Josh Rands got the hit that gave Immanuel, Dimock, a win over runner-up Zion, Delmont. Faith, Sioux Falls, finished third.

Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, was a new addition to the field.

Thank you to the Lutheran Church Ex-



Pictured throwing darts are Ryker Olson of Risen Savior, Tea (in background), and Jeremy Moege (at right) of Immanuel, Dimock, which won the championship.

tension Fund (LCEF) and Kai Larson, LCEF district vice-president, for sponsoring the tournament again this year. Thanks also to the congregation of Faith for hosting the tournament.

The next tournament is scheduled

for March 1, 2025, in Mitchell. If you are interested in entering a team, contact Adam Schulz at 605-999-2403 or [adamschulz05@gmail.com](mailto:adamschulz05@gmail.com). We would love to have even more teams join us in the years to come!

## WORKERS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Make it your mission this spring and summer to encourage a young man or woman to consider a church work career. Plant the seed.

Church workers come from churches! And you are a church worker recruiter.

### Set Apart to Serve

Did you know that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has an initiative to provide resources to you and your congregation for help in recruiting workers for the church? It's called *Set Apart to Serve (SAS)*.

Visit [lcms.org/sas](http://lcms.org/sas) to learn more about SAS and download resources for encouraging people you know to serve the Lord as a church worker.

### Your servant in Christ, Pastor Sailer

"Not ashamed of the Gospel" Rom. 1:16; 16:25-27

## CALL INFORMATION

**Rev. Toby Heller**, Zion, Beulah, N.D., declined a call as senior pastor to Our Savior, Aberdeen, and St. John, Columbia, March 30.

**Rev. Nathan Neugebauer**, St. John, Revillo, and Bethlehem, Milbank, declined a call to St. John, Homestead, Iowa, and Good Shepherd, Wellman, Iowa, March 24.

**Rev. Kevin Richter**, St. John, Reinbeck, Iowa, declined a call to St. John, Howard, and Our Savior, Madison, March 24.

**Rev. Kyle Whaley**, Mount Calvary, Polson, Mont., and Zion, St. Ignatius, Mont., declined a call to St. John, Britton, and St. Paul, Ferney, April 1.

## VACANCIES

### Senior pastor

- Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls
- Our Savior, Aberdeen/St. John, Columbia

### Sole pastor

- St. John, Howard/Our Savior, Madison
- Risen Savior, Tea
- Zion, Chamberlain
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- Concordia, Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- Zion, Canistota/St. John, Montrose
- Faith, Parkston/St. Peter, Clayton



## PATTY'S PONDERINGS



LCMS/Erin M. Lunsford

## Our 'Inexpressible' Easter joy

On Resurrection Sunday, did you have a different joy or excitement in your heart and mind than you did just three days prior on Good Friday?

Singing "Alleluia!" and hearing the trumpets sound with beautiful choirs that almost lift the roof off the church is the mountaintop experience of Easter morning. How did the women respond when they saw the empty tomb outside of Jerusalem on the first Resurrection Sunday? They responded with fear and bewilderment, and they ran to tell the other disciples what they saw (an angel), and what they didn't see (the body of Jesus). The disciples hid behind closed doors because they were afraid of what the Jews would do to them.

God blesses us with the New Testament writers who tell us His true and inspired Word through which we learn about Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He submitted to His Father's will to suffer and die in our place so that we who have faith in Jesus as our Savior will have eternal life with Him in heaven.

Jesus said to her (Martha), "I am the resurrection and the life.



**Patty Peters**  
LWML South Dakota  
District President

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." JOHN 11:25-26

St. Peter expresses our joy in 1 Peter 1:8-9:

Though you have not seen him, you love him. 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.

This is why we have resurrection joy. We know that Jesus defeated sin, death and the devil, and we have the victory!

Under the theme "Inexpressible Joy + Matchless Savior" (based on 1 Peter 1:8-9), we gather for the 63rd LWML South Dakota District Convention June 7-8 in Aberdeen. We will celebrate with inexpressible joy because we know that Jesus won the victory for us. We will share in His body and blood, study His Word, learn about mission grants, work on servant projects and participate in a mission/mite walk.

May God bless us as we walk in love with our sisters and brothers in Christ.

## Officer farewells

I've had quite a journey these past four years as the vice-president of Christian Life for our LWML South Dakota District. Our loving God led me into a sisterhood of mission-minded Christian women who wrapped their arms around me and shared how our LWML uses "our hands to work for Him and our feet to go on His errands and our gold and silver to extend His Kingdom."

Along my journey, I've made many new friends in Christ. These ministers joyfully prepared biblically inspired programs for our Christian Life Workshops and LWML groups throughout our state. They have welcomed our sisters in Christ to each special retreat.

I appreciate all the women who assisted me with sales at the LWML store and those who helped set up and then pack up all the materials at each workshop. It's been a joy to be part of the district LWML Board of Directors. I've received guidance and share a special friendship with every board member as we worked together to spread the Gospel of our loving Lord and Savior, and worked on the district Women in Mission projects.

I send a loving thank you to all the LWML women and pastors who have guided me in the past four years.

**Susan Buxcel • VP of Christian Life**

Wow ... four years already! How is that possible? It seems like yesterday that I was collecting all the boxes filled with years of bank statements and financial records from the previous treasurer.

I am so grateful for the continued encouragement and guidance I have received, from both past and current board members, as I muddled my way through the world of QuickBooks, paying vouchers and reconciling bank accounts. These past four years as your treasurer have definitely been a learning experience and I truly appreciate the confidence you have all shown in me.

As my time on the Board of Directors comes to an end, I would like to thank each and every one of you for making my experience a memorable one.

**Melissa Vance • Treasurer**

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



LCS/Errik M. Lunsford

# LIBERATED TO LOVE

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? JAMES 4:1

We often shift blame for our problems from ourselves. It goes like this: “It’s not me; it’s him (or her or this or that).” That is why the passage from James seems incredulous. Many of us have been taught our whole lives that we can do and be anything we want. In short, we’ve been told that we are wonderful and just have to overcome these outside obstacles frustrating our inner awesomeness and limitless potential.



**Rev. Brian Mosemann**  
LWML District Counselor

So when confronted with James’ words that we are the problem, we recoil. James’ words might strike you as offensive, but they are true.

His words hit us hard by revealing that the breakdown of our relationships has everything to do with what is going on inside of us. When we don’t have what we want, we will kill for it. When I’m not getting from you what I think I need, I’ll fight you. Once James puts this into words, it couldn’t be more obvious: Our main problem in life is ourselves.

The Bible is God’s Word, revealing that we’re all sinners in need of a Savior. It also reveals that our heavenly Father sent His Son to die and rise again for the sins of whole world. In church each Sunday we hear the Good News that things between us and God are forever made right.

In the proclamation of the Gospel and through Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, God declares to us concretely that the debt of our sin has been paid, the ledger has been put

away and that, in Christ, everything we need we already possess. His Word of forgiveness produces humility because we realize that, through Him, our needs are fulfilled.

We don’t have to worry about ourselves anymore. This, in turn, allows us to stop looking out for what we think we need and liberates us to love our neighbor by looking out for what they need. Our standing before God is secure, freeing us to think about the needs of others. What comes next is a peace we could not attain on our own.

Once we understand and believe that Christ’s saving work for us is finished and that we have everything we need in Christ — that He provides for all our needs — we are strengthened in faith toward Him and in fervent love toward one another. This you will hear and see at the LWML South Dakota District Convention June 7-8 when we will rejoice with inexpressible joy in our matchless Savior, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:8-9).

## Convention offering service opportunities — and lots of fun

Make plans to attend our district convention, to be held June 7-8 at Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Aberdeen. The ingathering items needed for Safe Harbor and the Journey Home were listed in last month’s issue.

This month, I’m excited to tell you about our planned servant events, which include making items for Orphan Grain Train, including diapers out of



T-shirts and flannel, and making mission bracelets with string and beads. We will also make mitten puppets to give to children who visit Puppet Place at the South Dakota State Fair, and we will color cards to send to Phil’s Friends, which provides support and

hope to those affected by cancer.

We are excited to have our mite walk at Storybook Land. The route takes us on a trail of nursery rhymes that many of our parents taught us and through the Land of Oz. It is sure to bring back childhood memories. A longer walk includes opportunities to see live animals. Be prepared to participate in a scavenger hunt as you walk! And don’t leave Storybook Land without a ride on the train.

The Aberdeen Zone is excited to host this year’s convention. Attend and enjoy!

**Betty Ochsner**  
Convention Chairman

## It's a WRAP...



## Nonprofit offers creative ways to support foster families

**Editor's note:** The following is an excerpt of Rev. Ryan Drevlow's interview with Jenn Eekhoff, WRAP director of South Dakota Kids Belong, a nonprofit organization that aims to create awareness of and better outcomes for children in foster care. This is the first of two parts.

**Pastor Ryan:** Jenn, can you explain a little bit about what SD Kids Belong WRAP is?

**Jenn:** WRAP is an acronym. It stands for:

- ▶ Wards of Encouragement
- ▶ Respite care (short-term care for foster children)
- ▶ Acts of Service
- ▶ Prayer

At SD Kids Belong WRAP, we promote new foster families and adoptive families. We also provide support for those families adopted in the state of South Dakota. My role is to engage the community in foster care wraparound support for



Jenn Eekhoff

foster families and also to train leaders to provide care and support for foster families within their community.

**Pastor Ryan:** You must work closely with churches and other community organizations.

**Jenn:** Yes, my actual focus is mostly on churches. Church members get together once a week or more. Some gather for small-group Bible studies and other ongoing activities that form natural communities. We encourage church members to use those natural communities to build more community.

For example, we have a Bible study that meets every week, and they will decide to be a WRAP team. This allows us to match them with a community foster family. The family might belong to their church. Or the family might live in their neighborhood. Becoming a WRAP team allows them to build more community in a very natural way.

**Pastor Ryan:** In my own church there are a lot of retired people. Because they tend to have more free time, we have encouraged them to think about foster care. Often, they think foster care is beyond them. But being part of a wrap-around team would be a logical middle ground between doing foster care full time and doing nothing.

**Jenn:** Absolutely! We have such a range of support that we're trying to offer. We encourage each team to have a prayer warrior. A prayer warrior prays for these families, writes them notes and sends them text messages of encouragement.

Another way a WRAP community helps is with acts of service. For example, you might send a family a text message if you're going to the store, to ask if there is anything they need. Acts of service provides an extra buffer of support and encouragement. It allows foster families and the kids to feel seen. It's a blessing to families when they don't feel alone. These are things that anyone can do, whether retired or in the trenches of raising their own children. I like to say, "You may not be able to foster, but everybody can do something." I think that as "the church" we are a people who show hospitality, care and comfort to those in need.

*Rev. Ryan Drevlow serves as life coordinator of the South Dakota District, and senior pastor of St. Paul's, Aberdeen, and St. Paul's, Leola.*





## WITNESS: How congregations are responding

Since members of the South Dakota District voted to end a decades-long policy of congregations paying for *Lutheran Witness* (*LW*) subscriptions for all its members, congregations throughout the district are responding in ways that make the most sense to them and their members. As our congregations continue to weigh their options, here is a look at what some are doing to keep *LW* and the district insert coming to those who still wish to receive it.

### Faith, Sioux Falls

*Lutheran Witness* copies containing the district insert continue to be delivered to the homes of all congregation members. The congregation has requested that its members offset the yearly subscription cost by placing \$25, earmarked “Lutheran Witness,” in the offering plate each year.

### Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk

The church put out a sign-up list to gauge how many families would be interested in receiving their own copies of the magazine and district insert, if they were delivered to the church at a discounted cost. Members who signed up pay the church secretary and pick up their copies at the church. Other members have paid for their own subscriptions separately, to be sent directly to their homes.

### Emmanuel, Sisseton/Zion, Waubay

This dual parish will continue to provide subscriptions for all member families in its congregation.

### Zion, Mitchell

The congregation will order bulk subscriptions without the district insert and will print the insert separately. Says Rev. Dan

Grimmer, “Some read both, but many have said they prefer to read the district insert digitally, so we wondered if we might cut down on costs this way.”

### Bethesda, Marion/First English, Parker/Immanuel, Menno/St. Paul’s, Scotland

The quad parish agreed to collectively order a bulk subscription with the district insert. “Many of the members are elderly so they do not read the insert digitally,” said Rev. Brian Mosemann. Copies of the *LW* will be mailed to Immanuel, Menno, and the pastor will distribute them among the four congregations for members to pick up. Pastor Mosemann said he also intends to take copies to each of the homebound members he visits each month, as he already does with *Portals of Prayer*.

### Messiah, Redfield/Redeemer, Doland

Rev. Kevin Moore reports that the dual parish decided to order the bulk option of 25 copies, with the district insert, and assess whether more copies are needed after receiving several issues. Some members have indicated they plan to subscribe individually.

### St. John’s, Yankton

The congregation has purchased a bulk subscription with the district insert. Copies will be available to pick up at the church, similar to *Portals of Prayer*. Leadership also suggested that members could purchase their own subscription if they preferred to have it delivered to their home.

**For questions about *Lutheran Witness* subscriptions and/or the district insert in your own congregation, please call the district office (605-361-1514) or reach out to your church directly.**

**FREE ONLINE  
CONTENT AT  
WITNESS.LCMS.ORG**



In addition to all the great content that comes to you in the print edition, *The Lutheran Witness* (*LW*) has even more content online.

Each month, at *witness.lcms.org*, you can find articles expanding upon and adding to that month’s print content, as well as articles by LCMS ministry leaders and continuing series on special topics. In 2024, *LW* is featuring reflections, from a Lutheran perspective, on classic works of art and literature such as *The Annunciation* by Fra Angelico and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. You can also read archived articles from past series on topics such as technology, reading the Old Testament and the Lord’s Supper.

Visit [witness.lcms.org](https://witness.lcms.org) today and get reading! Be sure to subscribe to the monthly *LW* newsletter to ensure you never miss an article.

# Dual parish installs Pastor Hinckley

Rev. Robert M. Hinckley was installed as pastor of Grace, Deadwood, and Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis, on March 17. The service was held at Grace.

Pastor Hinckley graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1996. He earned an STM in Old Testament Exegesis from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., in 2022. He most recently served as pastor of Zion, Chamberlain.

Robert and his wife, Lindy, have five children. Lindy is a marriage and family therapist with Lutheran Family Service.

We thank the Lord of the church for His provision for the Deadwood-Sturgis parish!



Pictured are, from left, Revs. Bryan Meadows, Bob Gardner, Don McKillop, David Warner, Dr. Thomas Brown, Robert Hinckley, Gordon Goldammer, Dennis Mercer, Dr. Scott Sailer, Randy Sturzenbecher, Robert Anderson and Robert Bohlmann. At right is Pastor Hinckley with his wife, Lindy.



Our Redeemer, Rapid City, observed its 25th anniversary on Jan. 28 with Rev. Gene Bauman, emeritus, serving as guest preacher. A potluck followed the service.

The congregation held its first worship service on Jan. 24, 1999, with Rev. David Schwan serving as vacancy pastor. The charter for Our Redeemer was signed on Oct. 24. Of the 32 founding members, still attending are Ted and Sharon Ruffedt; Dean and Wanda Wiechmann; Gaile Eckert; Joan Bares; Bob and Shirley Mallow; and Krista Zolnoski.

Rev. Lucas Edwards has served as Our Redeemer pastor since November 2015.

Pictured are, from left (seated) Shirley Mallow; (bottom row) Bob Mallow, Gaile Eckert, Sharon Ruffedt, Wanda Wiechmann, Joan Bares; (top row) Pastor Bauman, Pastor Edwards, Ted Ruffedt and Dean Wiechmann.

**Share your news with us!**

Send articles and photos to Kate Meadows:

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