

District President's Report to the 63rd Convention of The South Dakota District, LCMS

President Scott C. Sailer

“God’s Gospel: Salvation Power” Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17).

It is an honor to bring you this report at the end of my third term as the President of the beloved South Dakota District. What a joy it is to serve the Lord with you in this good place!

In the past triennium, we have walked together under the theme from the 2021 convention: “Rooted in Christ, Abounding in Thanksgiving,” a theme reflecting the strong and loving faithfulness of our Savior and our being rooted in Him. The theme verses for the 2021 convention were Colossians 2:6-7:

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving”

Our being rooted in Christ Jesus brings to us His unswerving care for us. Such rootedness in Christ was also the hallmark of the generations who had come before us in our District, since its founding in 1906. Our being rooted and built up in Christ ought to result in our living thankful and productive lives, which exhibit a multitude of deeds of kindness and words of witness. I am blessed to report that I see an abundance of such fruits of salvation in you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as I travel throughout our District. Now, I am blessed to report to you regarding some of those fruits of salvation in our life together as His Church, since the last District Convention in December 2021. As I do, you’ll see the mighty salvation power God has at work among us through His Gospel!

Buffeted but Not Broken by Covid

May this be the final report on the nasty coronavirus pandemic of 2020-2021! The pandemic directly impacted the very earliest months of the 2021-2025 triennium, but it seems to have produced some lingering effects, too. That said, we are grateful to our wonderful God that, although we were buffeted by the virus, we were not broken. Pastors and church leaders and congregation members made decisions to the best of their ability, and they respected the decisions of other congregations as how to handle matters dealing with the pandemic. So, by God’s grace and the Spirit’s direction, the proclamation of God’s Word continued, on-line or in-person. Moreover, the saints continued to give their offerings to the Lord, so that, in most cases, our ministries did not suffer financially. This includes the ministries we do while we walk together as a District. Thank you for exhibiting such faith and faithfulness!

But are there some troubling lingering effects? Consider worship attendance. Back in 2016, our average weekend worship attendance among our 107 congregations at the time was 83. At the end of 2020, our congregations, making many adjustments because of Covid, averaged 53 in in-person attendance (on-line attendance was not counted in the numbers reported to the Synod).

God blessed us with a bounce-back in attendance, after the pandemic, with our average attendance in 2022 being 70, but we haven’t bounced back all the way to our pre-Covid numbers. I’m sure the reasons for this are many and various; we can’t place blame only on the virus. The solution? We will need to commit ourselves to weekly attendance in the Divine Service. We will

need to seek the sheep who have wandered away, even as we let the light of the Gospel shine so as to attract the unchurched to the riches of God's grace. In these ways, it is possible for us to bounce back to pre-2020 levels.

Blessed by Adjustments to How the District Carries Out Its Ministry

Have you noticed some of the new approaches to how the District is serving our church workers, congregations, schools, and other ministries?

- We used to have "Services Areas"; we now have the Mission and Ministry Council.
- We used to have one Executive Assistant to the District President, an Executive Secretary; we now have an Assistant to the President and a part-time Education Executive.
- Mr. Randy Gayken served as our part-time Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) Vice-President until the end of October 2023, after 5 ½ years of service in this position. After he retired, we were served for a time by an Interim VP for LCEF, Mr. Kai Larson, from the Minnesota South District. Very recently, that changed when LCEF hired a full-time Vice-President to be shared by our District and the North Dakota District.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding the development of these approaches so that we can be more effective in our Kingdom work. Allow me to explain more about these new approaches to the ministry done by our District:

Mission and Ministry Council: This Council was launched by the passing of 2021 District Convention Resolution 2-04. The main task of the Council is to ensure that helpful resources are provided to our workers, congregations, and schools, to assist them in carrying out the Lord's work. The Mission and Ministry Council, very ably chaired by Krista Erickson and advised by Rev. Paul Winckler, has replaced the Service Area committee structure, at least for the past triennium. Its future will be decided by the upcoming District Convention.

Consider some of the fruit the Spirit has worked through the efforts of the Mission and Ministry Council: 1) P.A.S.S. It On workshops were held in 2023 and 2024, 2) District Men's Retreats were planned and carried out in 2023 and 2024, due to the discussions coming out of meetings of the Council.

Much more about the work of the Mission and Ministry Council can be found in other sections of this Convention Workbook. I think our delegates should pass Resolution 2-01 at this Convention, so that the Council can continue and expand on its excellent work.

District Executive Staff: For many years, our District had an Executive Secretary, who assisted the District President in such areas as overseeing our District's subsidized ministries and assisting our church workers, congregations, and schools in ministry areas such as education and stewardship. When Rev. Darren Olson, our most recent Executive Secretary, accepted a call to Sioux Falls Lutheran School in July of 2021, the District's Board of Directors realized there was a need to especially assist the Lutheran schools in the District with such things as identifying candidates for call lists. Upon Rev. Olson's departure for his new call, the Board identified Mr. Dave Geidel, a retired, rostered commissioned minister and former school principal, now living in rural Dimock, as a possible candidate to serve as an "interim," part-time Executive Secretary to work with our schools. Mr. Geidel agreed to serve in this position in May of 2022, for what eventually became a 3-year appointment. He went to work assisting our Lutheran day schools and pre-schools. Later in 2022, Mr. Geidel's position would come to be known as "Education Executive," because he is our District's specialist in working with schools.

The Board of Directors soon created a second Executive Staff position: Assistant to the President. This person would oversee the subsidized ministries of the District, such as the two Native American ministries and our deaf ministry. He would also serve as the right-hand man to

the District President in visiting and encouraging the pastors and other church workers. In addition, he would be the staff person overseeing the work of the brand-new Mission and Ministry Council.

Rev. Paul Winckler was called to this new position, and he was installed as Assistant to the President on November 20, 2022.

It has been a tremendous blessing to have two District Executive staff persons in place so that one of them can concentrate on the needs of our schools and educators, and the other can devote his time to the many other areas of ministry that require attention, resources, and encouragement. One of the resolutions before us in the upcoming Convention deals with amending our Bylaws to continue to grant the Board of Directors sufficient authority and latitude to appoint Executive Officers to assist the District President. I hope the resolution passes.

LCEF Vice-President: It is important for our District to have a Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) Vice-President 1) to encourage congregations and individuals to invest in LCEF to provide a financial pool of funds for church and school building projects, 2) to help South Dakota District ministries apply for loans, and 3) to promote the ministry solution resources available through LCEF. We are still getting used to the blessed reality that our District is a member of the Synod's LCEF, after having had our own Church Extension Fund for many decades. We are grateful a new LCEF Vice-President has been hired to steer the LCEF ship in the Dakotas.

Partnerships in Gospel Ministry

The Book of Ecclesiastes posits: "And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him – a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12). What does this mean? There is strength and safety – and even joy – when work is undertaken together. So it is in the Church. Sometimes, an individual congregation finds it very difficult to continue operating because of financial limitations brought about by population loss and other factors. The struggling congregation will then seek a ministry partner in a neighboring community in order to maintain their presence in their own community. The resulting parish, made up of two LCMS congregations, is able to continue to let their Gospel lights shine when they support a pastor together, by way of an official parish agreement. This is why we have so many dual parishes (24 of them), tri-point parishes (7 of them), and even one quad-parish. When you do the math, you will find that seventy-three of our 105 LCMS congregations in South Dakota are in such Word and Sacrament ministry partnerships. We are among the leaders in the Synod in the number of multi-congregation parishes we have.

Our congregations partner in other ways, too. The congregations send in offerings for ministry in our District and beyond, in addition to what they are already doing in their own congregations. The fruit borne through such generosity is the ability to provide salaries for various kinds of mission work: overseas missionaries, campus ministers, the afore-mentioned Native American missionaries and a deaf ministry pastor. Not one of our congregations could do this alone! But 105 congregations working together can, and they are.

I want to make special mention of the newest ministry the Lord is carrying out and multiplying in South Dakota, thanks to our collective prayer and financial support: Lutheran Family Service (LFS). What a blessing their individual and family counselors have been to many of our church workers and lay people! What a blessed adoption resource they are to Christian couples! What a blessed resource LFS is as their experts make presentations on marriage, caring for caregivers, the danger of pornography, and much more!

Your ongoing financial support for LFS is crucial, as they maintain offices in Sioux Falls and Deadwood, and extend their reach into Rapid City by way of the Deadwood office, as well. The

LFS resolution we'll consider in this Convention will be critical in extending the ministry agreement currently in force between our District and Lutheran Family Service.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your generous support of the many partnerships in the Gospel the Lord is carrying out in our District!

Before I leave this topic, there are a couple realities we will face as we head into the future:

- Many of our congregations are gradually getting smaller and are finding it increasingly more difficult to go it on their own.
- There are fewer pastors and other church workers available to serve our congregations, schools, and other ministries.

Therefore, the need for circuits, regions of the District, and congregations to do more cooperative ministry will increase. The need to raise up more church workers will be ever before us.

Unprecedented Actions

Late in 2023 and early in 2024, we took a very unusual action as a District; it was, in fact, unprecedented. Almost always, it is at the Synod and District Conventions of our church body, where official business is conducted. But what happens when a very important matter arises between conventions, and, what's more, that matter had involved resolutions adopted by previous conventions? This happened with not one, but two, issues that came up here in South Dakota after the 2021 District Convention:

- 1) Whether to end the requirement that congregations pay for subscriptions to the *Lutheran Witness* for all congregational households, per a 1976 District Convention resolution, and
- 2) Whether to amend a resolution from the 2021 District Convention regarding which overseas missionaries our District would support via the Together in Mission (TIM) program.

Regarding the *Lutheran Witness* matter, the cost of a year's subscription to the *Witness* had nearly doubled from 2022 to 2024, thereby creating unexpected, much higher expenses for the congregations and the District.

Regarding the Together in Mission matter, three missionaries from South Dakota (Revs. Samuel Bobby, Jordon Andreasen, and Jonah Domenichelli) had accepted calls overseas after the 2021 District Convention, and the Board wanted to include them as recipients of our support, too. The "problem" was that the Convention resolution specified only Missionary Daniel Jastram and Missionary Cory Rajek as the recipients of our TIM support.

What could we do? The Board of Directors did some research and found that the Synod Constitution, in Article XII.2 and 6, and in Article XI.B.8, provided us with the rationale and permission for putting those matters to a vote of our congregations in between conventions. When all the voting was finished on December 31, 2023, 72% of the participating congregations had voted to end the policy of congregations paying for subscriptions to the *Lutheran Witness* for all their households. An even larger majority, 96%, voted to add the other three South Dakota pastors to the group of missionaries receiving our support.

Many thanks are due to our congregational leaders and pastors for getting their congregations involved in this novel, unprecedented vote. By the way, this Convention will ratify the congregational vote in order to get it into the permanent records of the District via the Convention minutes.

Not Ashamed of That Powerful Gospel

I have a confession to make: I was a little selfish in choosing the theme and theme verses for the Convention! Romans 1:16 is my confirmation verse, given to me by my pastor, Rev. Garland Wittmayer, on April 22, 1973: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek* (RSV). I was a serious confirmation student who took his confirmation verse seriously. I've lived in the powerful and profound peace that comes through the knowledge of the Good News that I have a mighty and gracious Savior in Jesus Christ. I've lived with the knowledge that Christ uses the Gospel message, shared by me (the saint-sinner that I am), to bless the lives of others.

This is my last Convention as your District President. Thank you for electing me to serve you, the first time back in 2015, and a couple times thereafter. After 10 years in this position, I'll be retiring when the next President is installed this coming spring, a month or two after his election. .

Before then, I look forward to the Convention. Think of it! We get to do His Kingdom work in this marvelous part of God's Kingdom called South Dakota, as members of the LCMS South Dakota District. Most of the time, this work is done in our congregations and schools. But in February, we get to do the work of the Lord together in Convention.

At the Convention, we'll get to worship together, study together, pray together, make decisions together, converse over coffee together, and hear reports together on what God is doing among us by His Word and Spirit and through you.

We'll carry out those Convention activities because of the Gospel, and only because of the Gospel -- the Good News of Jesus' saving work for dead-in-sin nobodies. Think of it! Christ made you and me alive, and He keeps us alive when He *words* His way into our lives. He uses words of forgiveness and salvation taught to you, preached to you, applied with water upon you, and attached to bread and wine for you. Oh, yes, our theme is so true: *"God's Gospel: Salvation Power."*

At the Convention, we'll consider what may lie ahead of us as God's people, even as we thank Him for what He has already done for us in the 119 year history of our beloved LCMS South Dakota District. We are hope-filled because the tomb is completely empty. Christ is risen! He lives, and He is with us. We are hopeful because God has been faithful. He keeps His promises.

I'll see you in February, my dear sisters and brothers in Christ!

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

District Mission Reports

EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

Dave Geidel, Dimock, SD

1. Schools – Five Schools, Thirteen Early Childhood/Preschools

- Sioux Falls Lutheran School - Infant – High School serving around 500 children. They also offer before school (63) and after school care (124).
- Zion Lutheran School, Rapid City - Preschool – Fifth Grade serving around 175 children with current efforts to expand their school
- Peace Lutheran Early Childhood Center and School, Brookings - Infant (30) – Third Grade serving around 122 children.
- Divine Shepherd Lutheran Classical School, Blackhawk – Infant – Fifth Grade serving around 45 children.
- Bethesda Lutheran School, Hot Springs – Preschool – Fifth Grade serving around 30 children.
- 13 “Free Standing” Early Childhood Centers and/or Preschools without schools in Aberdeen, Brandon, Canistota, Dakota Dunes, Flandreau, Groton, Hartford, Huron, Milbank, Pierre, Sioux Falls, Tea and Yankton. These programs each serve from 6 – 120 children.
- Around 1240 children have the privilege of attending a Lutheran Christ-centered program

2. National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) with LCMS School Ministry

- Meets and exceeds school accreditation standards
- Thorough self-study with Seven Standard Area (Elementary and High School) and Ten Standard Areas (EC/Preschool)
- Submitted to a Validation Team of five to eight people 30 days ahead of a site visit
- Two SD District Schools completed the process in 2023/2024 and received their certificates
 - Bethesda Lutheran School, Hot Springs
 - Sioux Falls Lutheran School
- St. John’s Lutheran Preschool, Yankton completed the process and had a Validation Team visit Oct. 20-22, 2024. This report was submitted before the Validation Team visit.

3. Big Challenge for Schools: Staffing

- Synodically trained teacher numbers cannot fill the need
- Intentionally recruiting solid Christian teachers in the community
- Resources to use to retain our Lutheran identity
 - *Welcome to the Family* available on Amazon
 - CPH offers *A Simple Explanation of Lutheranism*
 - CPH also offers *A Simple Explanation of...* assortment covering 10 topics

4. Resources for starting a school

- LCMS School Ministry “Resources” tab LuthEd <https://www.luthed.org/>
- NLSA Self-Study Documents would be a good resource also found on LuthEd
- Lutheran Education Association (LEA) <https://www.lea.org/>

5. Microschools

- What is a Microschool?
 - Multiple ages learn together in a single classroom
 - Education is highly personalized
 - Can be imbedded in other schools, churches, businesses
 - Opened quickly in non-traditional spaces
 - Higher emphasis on parental involvement
- Micro Schools <https://www.microschoolrevolution.com/about-microschools/>
- [Starting A Christian School | Soaring Education Services](#)
- Rev. Dr. Matt Hoehner, Christ Community Lutheran Schools, St. Charles, MO is passionate about starting Microschools. Rev. Hoehner’s desire is to see more children in Christ-centered Lutheran schools. There are different models, some imbedded within an existing school to meet specific needs, some independent.
- Two congregations in the SD District have started microschools: Peace, Brookings and Divine Shepherd, Blackhawk

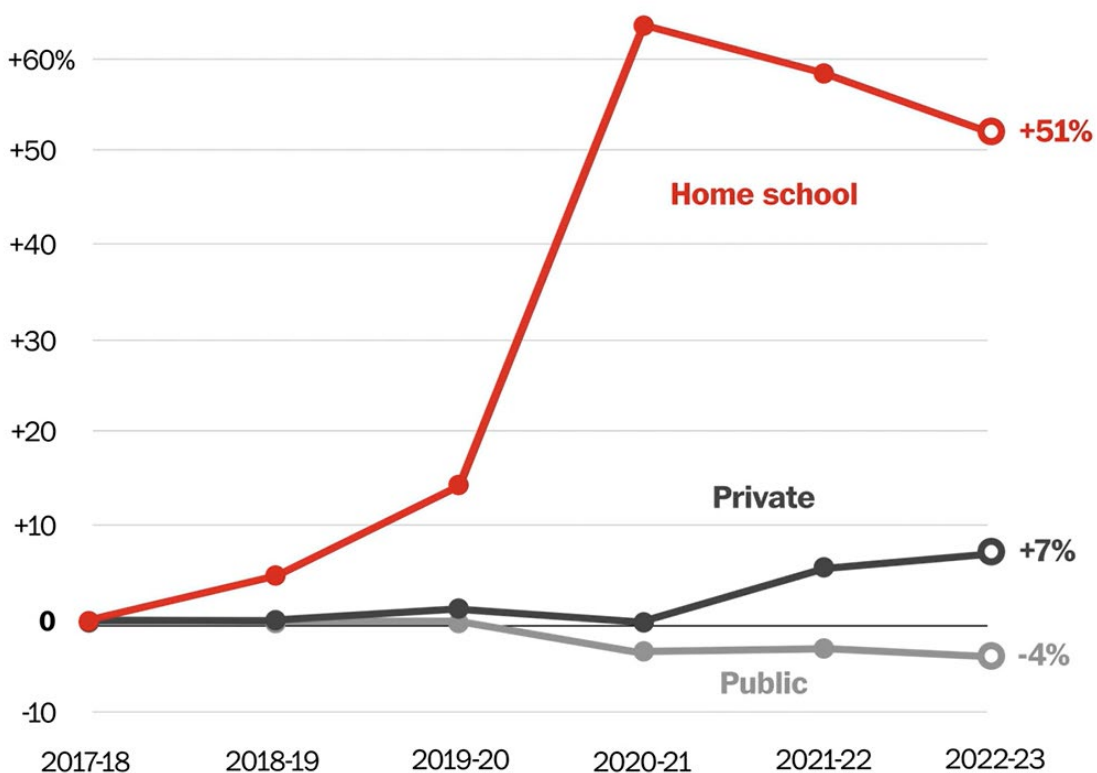
6. South Dakota School Choice - [About Us • SD Partners in Education](#)

- South Dakota Partners in Education (SDPE) offers tax-credit scholarships to children in South Dakota who attend a non-public school and who meet the requirements of the program. These scholarships are funded through donations. SDPE is the [Scholarship Granting Organization \(SGO\)](#) in South Dakota.
- 2023/2024 Impact
 - 45 participating schools
 - 1,671 student scholarships granted
 - \$1,972 average scholarship amount

7. Top Ten Reasons Why Congregations Start Lutheran Schools

- Strengthening the congregation
- Nurture the children’s faith
- Help parents fulfill their role as Christian parents
- Strengthen the communities
- Provide a safe, caring place for children
- Help children see all of their lives from the perspective of God’s Word
- Demonstrate the high value the congregation places on children
- Enhance the public relations of the congregation
- Seek out the lost
- Fulfill the congregation’s responsibility for the Christian Education of it’s children

8. School Choice Trends info@schoolchoiceweek.com - Parents are desiring change and more choice.



9. Fall Educators Conferences, October 10-11, 2024, Sioux Falls Lutheran School

- Thursday, October 10 – Sectionals were offered and a business meeting was conducted
- Friday, October 11 – Dr. Brad Allies, Concordia University Wisconsin was the keynote speaker presenting *The ABC's of Defending Your Faith*
- Concordia University Wisconsin staff members Dr. Amy Lindgren, Dr. Nicole Muth, Dr. Adam Paape, Dr. Jim Pingel and Dr. Val Keiper lead the sectionals following the keynote

10. School Visits, Etc.

- 40+ visits to Early Childhood Centers, Preschools and Schools since February of 2022.
- Met with several governing boards, spoke at one school dinner auction, provided a back-to-school in-service, hosted a School Administrators gathering, served as the NLSA SD District Commissioner consulting with schools seeking accreditation, and attended the annual National Accreditation Commissioners meetings in St. Louis, many emails and phone conversations
- Attended way too many meetings

***Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn from it.***

Proverbs 22:6

Ministry to the Deaf, Sioux Falls, SD

Reverend Matthew W. Nix, Sioux Falls, SD

What a joy it is to serve in South Dakota. Not that things are perfect here, but as I travel to other parts of our country, I still see signs of COVID most anywhere I look. The other thing I notice in talking with people (both from within the LCMS and out) is that the mindset is not the same as most of our people have.

That being said, we are not without our own challenges here at home. Our winters make visits and service much more unpredictable. The distance between our people makes gathering more difficult. We also have the same problems most other churches are having, such as children falling away to many other activities pulling them every way but to church. You have peer pressure challenging both young and old alike.

I guess you could say deaf ministry is much like your church. There are some differences, but all in all, we deal with God's gifts and share them with sinners. Our church hasn't changed much in the past four years. Though some have joined others have moved and some have died. A number of our people outside of Sioux Falls have relocated, so our visits have had to be modified. The one thing that has changed is the number of people we have contact with in Rapid City has gone down so I do not make that trip as often as I used to.

We still work with a good number of non-members, which has its ups and downs. Whether it is in the hospital, homes, in public or at the church, it is always a joy to share the love and promise of Christ. It would be nice to see them a little more regularly on Sunday morning, but we thank God for the opportunities He provides.

We have been looking for ways to be more visible here in Sioux Falls. We have looked at signage that might let others know where we are before they are right in front of our building. We have also looked in to activities we could do to let others know us better. If you have any ideas please send me a note. Main Street Living is still a huge benefit, especially for those living out of town. I will quite often hear comments about it and how happy they are that Lynda is interpreting it for them.

I would like to thank you, the South Dakota District of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, for your support of deaf ministry over the years. Without you this ministry would not be possible. In closing I would like to ask three things of you; 1 – would you continue to keep us in your prayers, that more deaf would be lead to faith in Jesus. 2 – if you know of any deaf, please let me know. 3 – if you have any ideas of how we might be more effective please share them with me.

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

Reverend Albert G. Sutton, Rapid City, SD

Yesterday, at our adult bible study, we had a discussion on what brings faith. Is it scientific proof, miracles, or even popular opinion? Of course, the answer is No! It is ALWAYS the WORD, working to bring faith. As the book of Romans says, "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation!"

As I reflect on that moment, I am reminded of God's power. Here we sit in a newly remodeled building, teaching adult Bible study, waiting for children to come into our afterschool program. The tribe owns the building. The tribe has issued a ban on missions that are not Native run. This was a concession from the ban of all Christian churches that preceded it a couple of weeks earlier. Yet here we sit discussing faith and the power of God. A moment almost missed by me until I sat down to write this. Further, none of this happened three years ago!

After Covid the South Dakota District partnered with the Tribe to remodel the old, abandoned building that we had used for the ministry for many years. This remodel turned out great with the addition of a kitchen. This allows us, and the tribe, to have community events and funerals. After the initial construction costs, our lease consists of paying for the utilities. This allows both of our entities continued use of the building.

In the last three years we have added an after-school program and adult Bible study on the first and third weeks of the month to compliment our holding services on the second and fourth weeks of the month. We now get down to the reservation once a week for ministry in one form or another.

Jeff and Diane Falin continue to be a blessing as Jeff helps with the driving and Diane teaches the children for the after-school program and Sunday school. I would not know what to do without them! My wife, Sarah, has taken up the position of chief cook in the wake of the retirement of Larry and Doris Belitz. Titus and Elizabeth, our still-at-home children aid in many ways as well. Donna Utecht is still our Mother-in-the-faith and comes faithfully to help when she is not traveling to visit grandchildren and great grandchildren. By the way she will be 95 when you read this! Aaron and Bria Sutton have moved back and are now coming regularly to help as well. Aaron is our 25-year-old son and had his start in our ministry playing cowboys and Indians with the local boys and got stuck up in a tree a couple times by the more aggressive older boys.

In addition to our normal services, we hold several community BBQ's and events per year. We usually do a VBS, Christmas and Easter give-away and Reformation carnival. This year we held a health fair put on by some local pharmacy students. This, with the addition of the home visits, hospital visits, hospice work and local outreach keeps us very busy.

We have also been blessed with a new-to-us pulpit, altar, and lectern and some table and chairs from Trinity, Belle Fourche. We pray for the former members there to find new church homes, thank God for his season of ministry there, and pray for the community at large.

All of our work has not been without its challenges though. The months of August and September we had septic backup issues in the building. We had more instances of cleaning up septic messes than we had actual services. We hope this has been resolved now, with the tribe doing some repairs to the main line. Sadly, we have lost many long-time members as they are now with Jesus. Many others have moved away to live in Rapid City. We still have sporadic contact with them through home and hospital visits. In 2023 we lost two children to gun violence. One family came to our after-school program only and the second was very close to our church and a multi-generational family. I had previously buried his mother, now him and finally his great-

great grandfather. It was a time of intense ministry and of course a story of Christ's redemptive power all in its own.

We continue to thank you all for your support of this great ministry by the district and, as always, we covet your continued prayers!

Missionary-at-Large to the Native American People

Reverend Andrew E. Utecht, Rosebud, SD

Rosebud Lutheran/Lord's Warriors Lutheran District Report 2025

Here on the Rosebud Reservation we are not ashamed of the Gospel, it is the power of God for salvation. It is important to not be ashamed especially amid the clear contrast of the different religions. While in much of South Dakota those who don't attend church would pick Christianity if it came down to it, in Rosebud people might just as easily, or perhaps even more readily choose the traditional Native American religion. People here also might choose no organized religion, and instead live a lifestyle of addiction and everything that goes with it.

We are not ashamed to share Jesus Christ, and him crucified. We do this on Sunday at Rosebud Lutheran with a regular attendance around 30, and in Lord's Warriors Lutheran in Parmelee with a regular attendance anywhere from 12-40. We also have mid-week Bible school, a daily radio devotion, summer VBS in 3 communities, and make plenty of home visits, as we care for many more people. Along with Baptisms, Funerals, and a few weddings, we continue to share Christ



Crucified. 2025 marks 32 years of ministry here.

One of the areas of life where Christ crucified as the power of God which is also a regular part of the ministry here is the house blessings, to remove evil spirits. As the traditional religion keeps and uses spirits, people have troubles with them on a regular basis. To be able to pray in faith, Our Father... deliver us from the evil one, is a true blessing, and to be able to share and teach people the freedom of following Christ is a joy.



One of the greatest joys has been teaching some young men and women of Christ, and helping them to walk in His way, so they are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. One young woman, Tessa, (pictured as she wanted to dance at the front of church to share with some visitors), recently stated, "I read my Bible before I go to bed. "and "Christian music is better than Rap music" This came especially after a couple of church groups came over the summer, and helped her to grow in her life in Christ. Her close relative, Terrance, is a regular help in church, helping me to lead the worship service, and attending not only in Rosebud, but also in Parmelee. Having them and their family brings great joy.

We have also have been having our Rosebud kids help with Bible school, and in particular we have one boy, Aiden, who loves puppets. He has his own puppets he brings to church, and then he loves to help when we do puppets for VBS. He also encourages his cousins to help, and it all makes sharing Christ quite fun.

It is also a joy to share the ministry with different groups who come to help, from Brookings, Pierre, Sioux Falls, our churches in our circuit and zone LWML. We know that we are in this together as the SD District LCMS. We continue the Puppet Place at the SD State Fair. We also appreciate all the prayers, the financial support, the cookies, the quilts, the portals of prayer, and so many other donations that people share and encourage both our church members, and my family as we share Christ here. THANK YOU for sharing the Salvation Power of God's Gospel with us.



Campus Ministry SDSU, Brookings, SD

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

Mount Calvary has effectively become the home church of many SDSU students. It is often the first congregation where young people are truly accepted as full-fledged adults, and they become integrated in the life of the church. They worship with us, learn with us, and serve with us.

So far in the fall semester of 2024, we have worshipped with at least 62 students, averaging 21 in worship each week and 15 in our campus Bible study. In addition, we gave CPH Pew Bibles to over 80 students this fall semester, including a reading plan and information on Lutheran Student Fellowship (LSF).

Every Sunday, we worship together, eat lunch together, and study God's Word together in the evening. The students have devotions every Tuesday and some event every week. Alumni who have stayed in Brookings or relocated back to Brookings help the students by hosting meals or events.

LSF has been hosting an annual spring conference on topics of interest, e.g. "Speaking Truth in Love" and "Handling Hurts with Hope."

Last year, Papua New Guinea began sending its best and brightest high school graduates to SDSU to study in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Currently there are more than 50 students from Papua New Guinea at SDSU, and we minister to some of them. This spring, we were blessed to baptize and confirm one of them.

Thanks be to God for faithfully working in and through SDSU campus ministry for over 75 years. And thank you for your continued support of this ministry.

Concordia Lutheran Church and Student Center USD, Vermillion, SD

Reverend Matthew A. Bless

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

The campus ministry at Concordia Lutheran Church in Vermillion, SD, serving the University of South Dakota, probably looks a bit different than usual, and at the very least drastically different than when I first arrived three years ago. When I arrived in the 2021-22 school year, we were averaging around 4 students at services and about 2 at Bible Studies, which were held on campus at that time. In both 2022-23 and 23-24, our average attendance tripled to about 12 at services and grew at Bible Studies as well, starting in the spring semester of 2023, when moving our Bible Study to Concordia caused it to grow to about 10 students, which is about where we stayed in 2023-24. As of the time of this writing, through September 29, we are averaging 16 students at service and 12 at Bible Study. [Addendum: this has slowed a bit in recent weeks as of 11/14. We're back at our numbers from last year or thereabouts. However, the good news is that we continue to see these same faces and have an excellent base of students that are in attendance at Concordia regularly!] We also have good turn-outs at our periodical fundraisers (D-Days bake sale and Advent/Lenten suppers), community outreach opportunities (our Reformation Day outreach) and student gatherings like movie nights and potlucks. God be praised for His wonderful work of providing hearers of the Word on the campus of USD!

I could point to a lot of factors for this, but I think the largest is a core group of undergraduate students that we added at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year who have been instrumental in encouraging those around them to be in service and have even begun inviting their friends from non-Missouri backgrounds to services and Bible Studies. There was also at this time a group of graduate students who were doing the same, but most of them have moved on to their next stage of life, so the fact that our numbers have not only survived that loss, but have actually *thrived* in the aftermath of the inevitable consequences of campus life is a wonderful reality!

One of the biggest success stories that I have to mention is the sheer influx of students new to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, often from other Lutheran denominations but occasionally from other Christian denominations entirely. In the 2023-24 school year, we received four into membership through confirmation from the student population. Already at the time of this writing, I am preparing two more to be received into membership, with others considering the possibility. College is a great time of independence, and at USD there is an astounding abundance of students using that independence to discover the true Salvation Power of God's Gospel!

With all of this wonderful success, I would still like to note one area of need: your help! Even with the sheer growth of our campus ministry over the past few years, a good portion of those students are from districts outside of South Dakota. Our contingency of South Dakota students is growing, but your assistance is still very much needed! Please do not hesitate to talk to your graduating high school students about where they plan to attend college, encourage them to check out Concordia and let the campus ministries in those locations know via the map found at <https://www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/campus-ministry/lcms-u-chapter-map> and please continue to pray for Concordia and all our dedicated campus ministries in the South Dakota District and beyond!

Soli Deo Gloria!

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). (2023 Handbook, 2.6.2 and 2.6.3, p. 58). During the past triennium, the following individuals were received into membership:

ORDAINED

2022
Ray Anderson
Thomas Mueller

2023
Dennis Mercer

2024
Joseph Greenmyer

2025
Thomas Pendrod

COMMISSIONED

2022
Michael Leapley
Leanne Holdorf

2023
Sierra Geistfeld

2024
Kristi Prouty
Jade Fjelstad

2025

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 2023 Handbook of the Synod, pages 56.

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 normally has two members. Rev. David Otten serves as Chairman, and Rev. Jordon Andreasen had served as the other committee member. Another member is being sought. Providing legal advice, particularly regarding the compliance of congregations' governing documents with the codified law for non-profit agencies in South Dakota, is the District's legal counsel. Mr. Matthew Naasz, a member of Peace, Rapid City, has served as legal counsel since 2020.

Corporate Documents Approved by the Board of Directors

Bylaw 2.4.1 of the Synod, p. 56 of the 2023 Handbook of the Synod, stipulates that the action of the District Board of Directors in approving the revised Articles of Incorporation, Constitutions, and By-laws of congregations be reported to the District Convention. The Board of Directors of the South Dakota District approved the following documents in the past triennium:

Black Hawk, Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church, Bylaws, June 13, 2022.

Hartford, Trinity Lutheran Church, Bylaws, June 5, 2023.

Mitchell, Zion Lutheran church, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, June 5, 2023.

Sioux Falls, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bylaws, June 13, 2022.

Sioux Falls, Resurrection Lutheran Church, Bylaws, September 11, 2023.

Watertown, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Bylaws, June 13, 2022 (first of two submissions in the triennium).

Yankton, St. John's Lutheran Church, Amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, March 6, 2023.

Documents in Process of Review by DCC

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

Alcester, Peace Lutheran Church

Andover, Zion Lutheran Church

Custer, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Deadwood, Grace Lutheran Church

Gettysburg, Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Huron, Mt. Calvary (Learning Center)

Watertown, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church (second of two submissions in the triennium)

Pastoral Candidates Ordained and Installed

Anderson, Ray N. (St. Louis, MO, 2021) ordained and installed by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer at St. Paul and St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen and Leola, South Dakota as SMP Assistant Pastor on January 23, 2022.

Greenmyer, Joseph R. (Ft. Wayne, IN, 2024) ordained and installed by Reverend Ryan L. Loeslie at Faith and St. Peter's Lutheran Churches, Parkston and Emery, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on June 30, 2024.

Mercer, Dennis D. (Ft. Wayne, IN, 2023) ordained and installed by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church, Black Hawk, South Dakota as SMP Assistant on January 22, 2023.

Mueller, Thomas P. (St. Louis, MO, 2022) ordained and installed by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer at Emanuel and Zion Lutheran Churches, Sisseton and Waubay, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on August 14, 2022.

Pastors Transferred from Other Districts

Bernau, Wayne A. (Minnesota South District) Emeritus, Madison, South Dakota on July 20, 2024.

Birtell, Brad E. (Nebraska District) installed at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Watertown, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on December 10, 2023 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Bobby, Jacob C. (Nebraska District) installed at St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota as Associate Pastor on January 28, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Davis, Christopher B. (Minnesota North District) installed at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on December 11, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Drehman, Arthur J. (English District) installed at Our Savior's and Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wilmot and Corona, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on September 11, 2022 by Reverend Matthew E. Wurm.

Erickson, Donald E. (Iowa West District) installed at Peace Lutheran Church, Alcester, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on May 29, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Huber, Terell O. (Nebraska District) Emeritus, Emery, South Dakota on October 1, 2022.

Lemmermann, Scott A. (Missouri District) installed at St. John's and Zion Lutheran Churches, Montrose and Canistota, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on October 16, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Ludwig, Alan G. (Indiana District) installed at Our Savior and St. John's Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen and Columbia, South Dakota as Assistant Pastor on June 11, 2023 by Reverend Timothy Rynearson.

Moeller, Robert E. (Minnesota South District) installed at St. Paul and St. John Lutheran Churches, Ferney and Britton, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on November 24, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Mork, Joshua D. (Nebraska District) installed at Our Savior and St. John's Lutheran Churches, Madison and Howard, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on July 14, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Newell, William J. (Central Illinois District) installed at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota as Senior/Administrative Pastor on August 6, 2023 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Reiner, Mark W. (Rocky Mountain District) Emeritus, Rapid City, South Dakota on September 7, 2023.

Schopp, Chad C. (Indiana District) installed at Our Savior and St. John's Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen and Columbia, South Dakota as Senior/Administrative Pastor on October 13, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Schulte, Gary R. (Missouri District) installed at Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota as Associate Pastor on February 25, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Yeadon, Jeremy T. (Indiana District) installed at St. John's and Zion Lutheran Churches, Groton and Andover, South Dakota as Sole Pastor on June 5, 2022 by Reverend Timothy Rynearson.

Pastors Transferred to Other Districts

Cooper, Loren D., September 6, 2024 (Emeritus) to the Indiana District.

Ford, Colin E., March 29, 2023 (Candidate) to the Michigan District.

Fries, John J., November 28, 2022 (Sole Pastor, Grace and Blessed Emmanuel Lutheran Churches, Deadwood and Sturgis, South Dakota) to the Kansas District.

Heermann, William G., October 7, 2024 (Sole Pastor, St. John's and Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wagner and Fairfax, South Dakota) to the Nebraska District.

Herzberg, Martin J., March 27, 2023 (Candidate) to the Southern Illinois District.

Koch, Timothy A., April 4, 2022 (Sole Pastor, Emanuel Lutheran Church, Milbank, South Dakota) to the Kansas District.

Kurowski, Peter M., August 11, 2022 (Sole Pastor, Zion and St. John Lutheran Churches, Canistota and Montrose, South Dakota) to the Missouri District.

Makelin, Terry J., July 10, 2024 (Sole Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, South Dakota) to the Nebraska District.

Navurskis, Christopher A., May 22, 2023 (Senior Administrative Pastor, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Huron, South Dakota) to the Iowa East District.

Olson, Darren R., December 16, 2022 (Candidate) to the Nebraska District.

Rajek, Cory J., September 1, 2024 (Latvia Missionary) to the Missouri District.

Redhage, Lloyd W., September 11, 2023 (Sole Pastor, St. John and St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Britton and Ferney, South Dakota) to the Iowa East District.

Thorson, Clint O., October 30, 2023 (Sole Pastor, Our Savior and St. John's Lutheran Churches, Madison and Howard, South Dakota) to the Rocky Mountain District.

Willms, Levi R., May 22, 2023 (Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota) to the Minnesota North District.

Pastoral Moves Within The District

Althoff, Albert F. (Emeritus, Crooks, South Dakota) installed as Assistant Part-Time Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, South Dakota on October 30, 2022 by Reverend Nabil Nour.

Bobby, Samuel (Senior Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota) installed as Senior Administrative Pastor of St. Paul and St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen and Leola, South Dakota on January 23, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Drevlow, Ryan A. (Senior Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) installed as Senior Administrative Pastor of St. Paul and St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen and Leola, South Dakota on January 14, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Handschke, Samuel P. (Associate Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota) installed as Senior Administrative Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota on March 13, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Hinckley, Jr., Robert M. (Sole Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Chamberlain, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor of Grace and Blessed Emmanuel Lutheran Churches of Deadwood and Sturgis, South Dakota on March 17, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Koester, Kevin W. (Associate Pastor, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Huron, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Huron, South Dakota on March 10, 2024 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Kumm, Dr. Michael L. (Emeritus, Sioux City, Iowa) installed as Assistant Pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota on January 16, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

McKillop, Don C. (Emeritus, Belle Fourche, South Dakota) installed as Sole Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Belle Fourche, South Dakota on May 21, 2023 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Meadows, Bryan W. (Associate Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota) installed as Senior Administrative Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota on February 12, 2023 by Reverend David Warner.

Richert, Jeremy D. (Sole Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota) installed as Senior Administrative Pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dakota Dunes, South Dakota on January 16, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Sturzenbecher Randy R. (Sole Pastor, Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church, Black Hawk, South Dakota) installed as Senior Administrative Pastor of Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church, Black Hawk, South Dakota on January 22, 2023 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Winckler, Paul M. (Senior Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, South Dakota) installed as Assistant to the President of The South Dakota District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod on November 20, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Candidate Status Granted

Ford, Colin E., Sole Pastor, Concordia and Immanuel Lutheran Churches, Cresbard and Wecota, South Dakota; Candidate status granted November 6, 2022.

Herzberg, Martin J.H., Sole Pastor, Trinity and Our Savior Lutheran Churches, Corona and Wilmot, South Dakota; Candidate status granted March 4, 2022.

Olson, Darren R., Missionary-at-Large, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Candidate status granted June 28, 2022.

Welton, Adam J., Sole Pastor, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Wentworth, South Dakota; Candidate status granted September 15, 2024.

Pastors Retired

Heckmann, Robert E., Candidate, Canton, South Dakota retired June 5, 2024.

Heermann, William G., Pastor, St. John and Trinity Lutheran Churches of Wagner and Fairfax, South Dakota retired June 17, 2024.

Howlett, Joseph F., Candidate, Sioux Falls, South Dakota retired January 25, 2022.

McKillop, Don C., Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Belle Fourche, South Dakota retired April 29, 2024.

Nour, Nabil S., Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, South Dakota retired October 27, 2024.

Meyer, Wade R., Pastor, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota retired January 1, 2023.

Possehl, Iver L., Pastor, Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Watertown, South Dakota retired July 31, 2023.

Soyk, Kenneth A., Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Parkston, South Dakota retired August 31, 2023.

Pastors Called to Glory

Boeder, Charles F., Emeritus, December 6, 2022.

Dell, Monty A., Emeritus, July 28, 2022.

Kramer, Charles F., Emeritus, March 13, 2024.

Lemmermann, Scott A., Sole Pastor, Zion and St. John Lutheran Church, Canistota and Montrose, South Dakota, November 25, 2023

Pastors Removed from Roster

Lessman, Bradley R. (Pastor, St. Paul and Trinity Lutheran Churches of Plankinton and White Lake, South Dakota) resigned February 7, 2022.

Teachers – DCE’s – Deaconess’ Commissioned & Installed

Fjelstad, Jade C. (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2024) commissioned and installed as Teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on April 24, 2024 by Reverend Corey Aker.

Geistfeld, Sierra C. (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2023) commissioned and installed as Teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 23, 2023 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Holdorf, Leanne R. (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2021) commissioned and installed as Teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on January 24, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Leapley, Michael S. (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2022) commissioned and installed as Director of Christian Education at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota on March 20, 2022 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Prouty, Kristi A. (Concordia, Seward, Nebraska, 2024) commissioned and installed as Teacher at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on April 24, 2024 by Reverend Corey Aker.

Teachers - DCE’s Transferred From Other Districts

Fowler, Eleanor L. (Texas District) Emeritus, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on February 19, 2024.

Gates, Andra S., (Florida-Georgia District) Candidate, Yankton, South Dakota on August 1, 2023.

Newell, Kristen A., (Central Illinois District) installed as Principal at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 23, 2023 by Reverend Dr. Scott C. Sailer.

Rattei, Faith J., (Minnesota South District) Candidate, North Sioux City, South Dakota on January 25, 2022.

Shane, Brenda K., (Minnesota North District) Candidate, Sioux Falls, South Dakota on November 21, 2024.

Utecht, Katie A., (California-Nevada-Hawaii District) Candidate, Belle Fourche, South Dakota on August 15, 2022.

Teacher - DCE Moves Within The District

Alberts, Jacquelyn M., (Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) installed as Teacher at Blessed Redeemer Lutheran Church and School, Brandon, South Dakota on August 20, 2023 by Reverend Daniel Deardoff, Sr.

Teachers – DCE’s - Deaconess Transferred To Other Districts

Deeter, Nicholas P.L., (Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) July 17, 2023 to the Nebraska District.

Gates, Andra S., (Candidate, Yankton, South Dakota) July 9, 2024 to the Mid-South District.

Koopman, Karleen J., (Emeritus, Lored, Texas) July 8, 2024 to the Texas District.

Korthase, Amanda M. (Candidate, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) June 19, 2024 to the Mid-South District.

Leapley, Michael S., (Director of Christian Education, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota) July 1, 2024 to the South Wisconsin District.

Lenz, Rodney G., (Candidate, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) April 22, 2022 to the Kansas District.

Lenz, Tina M., (Emeritus, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) April 22, 2022 to the Kansas District.

Moldenhauer, Allison R., (Candidate, Brenham, Texas) September 27, 2022 to the Southern District.

Navurskis, Miriam E., (Candidate, Huron, South Dakota) May 2, 2023 to the Iowa East District.

Olson, Susan K., (Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota) August 1, 2024 to the Nebraska District.

Yung, Janice J., (Emeritus, San Antonio, Texas) December 15, 2022 to the Texas District.

Candidate Status Granted

Graumann, Natalie, Candidate Status granted October 15, 2024.

Lenz, Rodney L., Candidate Status granted June 30, 2021.

Olson, Susan K., Candidate Status granted September 1, 2023.

Withee, Jane M., Candidate Status granted July 17, 2023.

Teachers – DCE’s Reinstated to the Roster

Moldenhauer, Allison R., (Candidate, Brenham, Texas) reinstated September 13, 2022.

Teachers – Retired

Herther, Ann P., Teacher, Sioux Falls Lutheran School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota retired May 31, 2023.

Withee, Jane M., Teacher Zion Lutheran Church and School, Rapid City, South Dakota retired July 5, 2024.

Teachers – Called to Glory

Consoer, Paul C., Emeritus, November 3, 2022.

Congregational Changes

Trinity Lutheran Church, Belle Fourche, South Dakota whose Constitution was accepted on March 1, 2021; Application for Membership was approved on June 13, 2022 and signed the Constitution of the Synod on August 28, 2022 was accepted into the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Belle Fourche, South Dakota disbanded April 29, 2024.

Centennials – Congregations

Redeemer Lutheran Church, Flandreau, South Dakota, 1921
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Leola, South Dakota, 1921
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Gettysburg, South Dakota, 1925
St. John Lutheran Church, Tyndall, South Dakota, 1924

125th Anniversaries – Congregations

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ferney, South Dakota, 1900

140th Anniversaries – Congregations

Zion Lutheran Church, Canistota, South Dakota, 1885
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Dimock, South Dakota, 1882
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, South Dakota, 1882
Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, South Dakota, 1881
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Milbank, South Dakota, 1882
Martinus Lutheran Church, Utica, South Dakota, 1882
St. Peter Lutheran Church, Wentworth, South Dakota, 1882
Trinity Lutheran Church, White Lake, South Dakota, 1884
St. John Lutheran Church, Wolsey, South Dakota, 1884
St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota, 1882

Reports of Circuit Visitors

Circuit 1 (Aberdeen)

Reverend Kevin Moore, Circuit Visitor

In the last triennium, through “God’s Gospel: Salvation Power” in Word and Sacrament, our Lord has blessed the people, pastors and congregations of Circuit 1 of the South Dakota District to walk together in the joy and bold confession of our Savior, Jesus. In a world lost in sin and captive to the devil, the Lord continues to be at work through His Word and Sacrament among us when and where it pleases Him. Such work in the circuit includes:

I. Circuit Worship Services take place in recognition of the fullness of our unity in the Word and Sacraments of our Lord Jesus on Epiphany, the Vigil of Easter, and Reformation.

II. Circuit Youth are gathering at St. Paul’s in Aberdeen for Bible Study and various activities twice a month. The Circuit Pastors organize two one-day retreats for both Confirmation age and High School youth each year in the Winter and Spring.

III. Circuit retreats and presentations take place as often as possible to encourage the growth of the Word of God in our midst.

IV. Circuit congregations have worked to build-up the Rural Gospel Initiative (RGI), an LCMS registered service organization, to encourage and help support current and future projects and ministry within the Circuit.

Besides this work in the Circuit, the Lord has been at work in His congregations:

At St. John, Groton & Zion, Andover Rev. Jeremy Yeadon was installed as pastor on June 5, 2022.

At Our Savior, Aberdeen & St. John, Columbia Rev. Dr. Al Ludwig was installed as Assistant Pastor on June 11, 2023. Senior Pastor Rev. Jordon Andreasen accepted the Lord’s call to serve as Synod Missionary to the saints in Romania, and in December 2023 he and his family began their preparation for service there. Rev. Chad Schopp was installed as Senior Pastor on October 13, 2024.

At Concordia, Cresbard & Immanuel, Wecota, Rev. Colin Ford resigned from his call at the end of October 2022. Retired pastor Rev. David Seeger was contracted to serve the vacancy in 2023-24, but his service was delayed and greatly limited by serious injuries sustained in a car accident. He continues to recover. The parish remains vacant and is being served by Rev. David Otten and SMP Pastor Tom Penrod of Emmanuel, Gettysburg.

At St. Paul’s, Aberdeen & St. Paul’s, Leola, Rev. Ray Anderson was Ordained and Installed as assistant Pastor on January 23, 2022 to serve Leola. Mr. Michael Leapley was commissioned and installed as Director of Christian Education on March 20, 2022. Senior Pastor Rev. Samuel Bobby accepted a call in February, 2023 to teach at the Luther Academy, the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, and serve as a missionary pastor there. He took up service in Riga, Latvia in August 2023. Rev. Ryan Drevlow was installed as Senior Pastor for the parish on January 14, 2024. Director of Christian Education Michael Leapley accepted the Lord’s call and began serving at Brookfield Lutheran Church, Brookfield, Wisconsin on July 1, 2024.

At St. John, Britton & St. Paul, Ferney, Rev. Lloyd Redhage retired from full time service and accepted the call and began serving the Lord’s saints at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Charlotte,

IA as part-time retired pastor on September 17, 2023. Rev. Larry Johnson of Webster served the vacancy until Rev. Robert Moeller was installed as Pastor on November 24, 2024.

At Messiah, Redfield & Redeemer, Doland, Rev. Kevin Moore continues to serve God's people as Pastor.

Circuit 2 (Watertown)

Reverend Matthew Wurm, Circuit Visitor

2022

April 15 – Circuit Tre Ore Service at Mt. Calvary-Brookings, offerings supporting Rev. Dr. Sam Bobby

Aug. 14 – Tom Mueller Ordination & Installation at Emanuel-Sisseton & Zion-Waubay

Sept. 11 – Arthur Drehman Installation at Our Savior's-Wilmot & Trinity-Corona

Oct. 9 – 75th Anniversary of Lutheran Student Fellowship at Mt. Calvary-Brookings

Oct 30 – Circuit Reformation Service at Zion-Reville; 175th Anniversary of LCMS

Dec. 11 – Rev. Dr. Christopher Davis is installed at Emmanuel-Milbank

2023

Jan 21 – Stewardship Conference with Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador at Mt. Calvary-Brookings

April 7 – Circuit Tre Ore Service at Mt. Calvary-Brookings, offerings supporting Lutheran Family Services

July 30 – Rev. Iver Possehl retires from Mt. Olive-Watertown

Dec 10 – Installation of Rev. Brad Birtell at Mt. Olive-Watertown

2024

March 29 – Circuit Tre Ore service at Mt. Calvary-Brookings, offerings supporting Lutheran Family Services

May – Work begins with Apostolic Lutherans in Watertown and Lake Norden, learning the Lutheran confessions and bi-monthly teaching

June 26 – Circuit Forum and David's Harp church music presentation at Peace-Brookings

July 28 – Rev. Nathan Neugebauer celebrates 10 years of ministry at Bethlehem-Milbank and St. John's-Reville

September – An independent Lutheran congregation is formed in Hayti from members of local Apostolic Lutheran Churches

Circuit 3 (Pierre)

Reverend Wade Harr, Circuit Visitor

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

As out-going visitor, I'd like to express my thanks and appreciation to the pastors and congregations of this vast circuit along with the families of these faithful church workers. It's been a joy working alongside you in this place where the mutual consolation of the brethren is a hallmark of Word and Sacrament ministry. We saw a number of challenges these past three years with pastoral calls and acts of nature. Here on the South Dakota prairie weather often dictates what can and cannot be done on a daily basis. As circuit visitor, I'm especially thankful for the work and insight Missionary Andrew Utecht has brought to our monthly Winkels and the wisdom he displays in dealing with the challenges he faces. He is an integral partner in the work God is doing among us in this circuit. In March of 2024, Pastor Hinckley accepted the call to serve God's people outside the circuit. The workload doubled overnight, but the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit has not been without its effects. I should like to mention in this report the fruitful Winkels I've been privileged to lead and from which I have greatly benefited. In addition to our regular exegetical and confessional studies, we've been able to give some time and energy to

a study of Bonhoeffer's "Life Together," and more recently a discussion of St. Basil's "On the Holy Spirit." These short studies have often without intention wed well with the entire Winkel. One fall we were able to collaborate with the Mitchell Circuit to provide a one day Winkel in which Dr. Brian Mosemann was our presenter. It provided a different format in which each circuit conducted its own business during the lunch hour. My thanks to Dr. Mosemann and Pastor Loeslie for making this dual circuit conference possible. Our congregations were also blessed by the addition of Vicar Tom Penrod who attended our Winkels and has been serving faithfully under the very capable tutelage of Pastor Otten in Gettysburg and points east. His willingness to learn and teach us have been much appreciated. His commitment toward a called and ordained ministry among us has served to invigorate and encourage us toward on-going faithfulness despite declining numbers both in terms of membership and financial support. God be praised for His people coming together in service to Him and each other. Although many throughout the district brand us "the Pierre Circuit," I should point out that we don't use that nomenclature in our circles. We know that hand in hand we are much bigger and broader than Pierre, stretching south to the Nebraska border and north to "the other" Dakota. Our people traverse the Rosebud Sioux Reservation and zigzag back and forth over the time zone as far west as Philip. As Circuit #3, we prefer to think of ourselves as the Circuit of the Holy Trinity, the place where the baptized live and move and have their being because His name abides among us not only in Pierre but throughout the vast expanse of His prairie creation. The Holy Trinity more accurately describes the work that's being done and sustained by grace. It certainly resonates with the number of tri-parishes that our pastors serve with distances between. My thanks to these pastors and the members who regularly hold up the prophets' hands in many and various ways. My thanks also to our pastors at Faith in Pierre for so often hosting us and providing us sanctuary on the prairie. It's an exciting time to see where the Holy Trinity is leading us in our future together.

Circuit 4 (Black Hills)

Reverend David Warner, Circuit Visitor

The salvation power of God's Gospel bears fruit in the Black Hills Circuit. As sinners gathered around the forgiveness of Christ, delivered through Word, Water, Wheat and Wine, the people and pastors of Circuit 4 are moved by the Good News to proclaim and celebrate the grace and mercy of God, revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus, to love one another and our neighbors as Christ has loved us, and to work for the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

Both the most notable fruit and the most difficult setback for God's Kingdom in the Black Hills during the 2021 – 2024 period relate to the mission congregation in Belle Fourche. Following several years of development, Trinity Lutheran Church of Belle Fourche was founded and recognized by the LCMS as a member congregation. Pastor Don McKillop, who had been serving the mission, was called to pastor Trinity, his installation occurring May 21st, 2023. We give thanks for the many ways that the salvation power of the Gospel was proclaimed and distributed through Trinity, Belle Fourche.

It was a disappointment to all when in the spring of 2024 the congregation voted to close, due to various challenges that had confronted them. The church materials and furnishings of Trinity were distributed between Circuit congregations, and Pastor McKillop worked hard to ensure all the remaining members of Trinity got connected to other LCMS congregations. We give thanks for the work of the Holy Spirit through Pastor McKillop and all the saints at Trinity, Belle Fourche. Circuit 4 continues to work to strengthen the bonds between our congregations. Examples include a combined Circuit Forum and Convocation in August of 2022. We elected Synodical delegates, and heard Dr. Daniel Jastram present on the LCMS mission in Japan at Zion, Rapid City. The turnout was excellent.

Our circuit congregations also support the Rally Breakfast and Dinner served by Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis. Members of circuit congregations have helped serve at the event for years. In 2021 Blessed Emmanuel asked for more substantial and organized support, and offered to

share the proceeds with the Circuit Pastors Conference. This new arrangement has worked well, and many members of our various congregations have become friends.

The Circuit Pastors Conference decided to create a Mission and Ministry Grant Fund with the monies received from the Rally Breakfast. Normally limited to \$500, these grants are intended to help Circuit congregations and other entities or persons within them with **local** mission and ministry needs and opportunities. Examples of grants include support for Circuit members attending seminary, VBS costs, community meal costs, and purchasing LCMS materials for evangelism training.

Zion Lutheran, Rapid City and Bethesda Lutheran, Hot Springs continue to proclaim the resurrection through their Lutheran schools. Zion is currently in a capital campaign to build new facilities to allow their school to expand. They are currently right at capacity for students and facility. And now Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk already running an Early Childhood Development Center, has added a primary school, using a classical one-room school model. Classes began in the Fall of 2024. Peace in Rapid City also attempted to re-open their Early Childhood Center in 2024. Due to severe building upgrade requirements, they were not able to do so.

As of the date of this writing, all Circuit 4 positions for ordained pastors are filled, for which we give thanks to the Lord of the Harvest. Circuit Visitor Rev. John Fries accepted a call to Kansas in 2022, and was replaced in November by Rev. David Warner.

Circuit 5 (Mitchell)

Reverend Ryan Loeslie, Circuit Visitor

The past three years have been enjoyable in the Mitchell Circuit. We are blessed to enjoy good unity in doctrine and practice while enjoying one another as pastors and congregations.

Our Winkel meets monthly for worship, fellowship, business, and study. We have been studying Martin Chemnitz's Church Order as a study in pastoral theology, while we have had a Greek study of the pastoral epistles, and now we have moved on to the book of James. Quite often our wives and children enjoy time with one another while the pastors have their meeting. This familial quality of our Winkel is a great strength, and we hope that continues.

Our congregations enjoy good stability in the Mitchell Circuit, though we certainly have challenges in this fallen world and a culture which is growing increasingly anti-Christian. Here is a short rundown on the ministry happening at our congregations:

St. John – Wolsey, Zion – Wessington Springs, and Mount Olive – Woonsocket continue to be served by Rev. Scott Spiehs and Rev. Richard Weeman.

Mount Calvary – Huron saw the departure of Rev. Chris Navurskis as Senior Pastor. Rev. Kevin Koester has moved into the position of Sole Pastor, while Rev. Dale Sattgast has provided part-time assistance in his retirement.

Zion – Mitchell established a vicarage program the summer of 2022. The Zion vicars have quickly become a fixture in the congregation, and they have greatly benefited from Rev. Daniel Grimmer's oversight. Zion is also busy building a brand new fellowship hall, which they hope will be completed by Christmas 2024.

I am grateful to the saints at Immanuel – Dimock over the past three years. Immanuel remains a steady and faithful congregation in the heart of the Mitchell Circuit. They have graciously supported my work as Circuit Visitor and more recently as vacancy pastor at Faith – Parkston.

Faith – Parkston said goodbye to Rev. Ken Soyk after 19 years of faithful service in the summer of 2023, as he entered retirement. Faith and St. Peter – Clayton formed an official dual parish that summer in preparation for the calling of their next pastor. After an extensive parsonage remodel and ten-month vacancy, Faith and St. Peter welcomed Rev. Joseph Greenmyer as their new pastor in 2024. We were glad to welcome Pastor Greenmyer back to the Mitchell Circuit, as he had served his vicarage at Zion – Mitchell.

Redeemer – Armour is served by Rev. Jens Jenson, who continues to serve as a reserve chaplain in the United States Air Force.

Zion – Delmont and Emmaus – Tripp continue to be served by Rev. Brian Lemcke.

St. Paul – Plankinton and Trinity – White Lake shared joint Sunday evening worship services led by Pastor Jenson for two and a half years. Now recently Rev. Don McKillop has picked up the vacancy work, taking residence in Plankinton.

Our congregations are largely composed of South Dakota Lutherans whose families have been in their churches for generations. They are honest people who are skilled and know well how to work the land and make a living in this part of God's creation. Though our people are very self-sufficient, God's Gospel power is very evident in the lives of our congregations. We know that the Gospel is God's good news to us in his Son, and we enjoy all the blessings of Christ through faith, not works. I have enjoyed my work as Circuit Visitor, counseling and encouraging these congregations who have many good works, and yet do not boast in them. With confidence in our pastors and congregations, I believe we will brave these turbulent times of the Christian church and come through stronger.

Circuit 6 (Freeman)

Reverend Tom Christopher, Circuit Visitor

Circuit 6 (Freeman) is comprised of the following congregations:

St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Alexandria, SD and Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer SD

Rev. Thomas Christopher

Zion Lutheran Church, Canistota, SD and St. John Lutheran Church, Montrose, SD

Vacant

First English Lutheran Church, Centerville, SD and Zion Lutheran Church, Hurley, SD

Rev. Kurt Laskowsky

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, SD

Vacant

Trinity Lutheran Church, Hartford, SD

Vacant

St. John Lutheran Church, Howard, SD and Our Savior Lutheran Church, Madison, SD

Rev. Joshua Mork

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Marion, SD, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Menno, SD, First English Lutheran Church, Parker, SD, and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Scotland, SD

Rev. Brian Mosemann

Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Tea, SD

Vacant

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Wentworth, SD

Vacant

I first of all want to thank the pastors of our Circuit, and of all the District, for their faithful service. As the years go on, the number of people in the pews in many of our rural congregations is dwindling, but the Church never shrinks and the elect Saints of God still gather around Word and Sacrament! Of all the blessings of this past triennium, the greatest is that Jesus is still being

preached into the ears of the Saints and by the hearing of that powerful Gospel faith is planted and grown unto eternal life.

The pastors and congregations of our circuit continue to rejoice in God's Gospel power to save as the eternally elect saints continue to gather around Word and Sacrament even as we have been hit with some challenges and received some blessed joys in the last trennium. We rejoice to have received three new congregations in our circuit after action of the last convention: Risen Savior in Tea, First English in Centerville, and Zion in Hurley. Pastors Domenichelli and Laskowsky are also blessings to our brotherhood in the circuit, and even though Pastor Domenichelli now serves as missionary and pastor in Germany, he remains a part of our circuit and in constant contact with his brother pastors. The circuit also joyfully received Rev. Joshua Mork and his wife, Samantha, at Josh's installation on July 14.

2023 saw a beloved pastor and friend in the circuit, Rev. Scott Lemmerman, serving Canistota and Montrose, called to glory on November 26, the first pastor in our circuit to die in office. But it was with Gospel hope that we gathered on December 23 for a memorial service at Zion in Canistota as the Saints gave thanks for Rev. Lemmerman's short but very faithful and appreciated pastorate in the parish. Since then we have had several of our pastors either accept calls to other parts of the Vineyard or resign due to health reasons. As this report is written we find ourselves in a position where we have only four called pastors still serving in our circuit — five of our 9 pastorates are vacant! But the Word and Sacrament ministry goes on and we trust God will soon fill again all the pulpits in our circuit.

The brother pastors of the circuit join in monthly Winkels and other gatherings and we have begun to reboot our circuit-wide congregational gatherings for worship, Bible Study, and fellowship that before 2020 we were doing three times a year, but just haven't got back to yet.

By God's grace the Gospel is still being preached to the joy and strengthening of God's elect saints in the Freeman circuit of our beloved South Dakota District. May God, through His blessed Means of Grace, keep us all in these difficult days and bring us at last to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Circuit 7 (Sioux Falls)

Reverend Corey Aker, Circuit Visitor

In the Sioux Falls Circuit, we are built on the powerful word of the Gospel. Salvation is proclaimed from the pulpits of our nine congregations. First, some of the major changes. Rev. Darren Olson was able to set the tone for Chaplaincy at our Sioux Falls Lutheran School (SFLS). Having taken a Call to serve the Lord elsewhere, the work of Chaplaincy has been carried by the ten association Church Workers: Pastors Aker, Ascher, Asmus, Drevlow, Newell, Rensner, and Slavens and DCEs Peters and Miller along with Deaconess Korthase. Although the might and power of God through the Gospel remains constant, those He raises to lead His congregations changes. In addition to Pastor Olson taking a Call, Pastor Meyer retired and **Lord of Life** Called Pastor Newell to lead them in their Gospel work in East Sioux Falls. Lord of Life is the one SF congregation offering exclusively contemporary worship, led and loved by their members. Pastor Drevlow received a Call and Deaconess Korthase got married and moved out of the area making **Our Redeemer** our circuit's sole vacancy. Revs. Shane and Morfitt have served admirably in their time of vacancy and their leaders continue to ensure the Gospel is proclaimed and the worship life remains vibrant! We are proud of our association school which has seen considerable growth — 40% in the last five years! This means new teachers and staff, new students and families, and new building projects. Executive Director, Tia Esser, and **SFLS** fearlessly instills the love of Christ's Gospel each day in their thriving community. Living righteously by faith, **Blessed Redeemer** has tirelessly focused on proclaiming Christ to the people of Brandon, adding Saturday night worship and continuing to share the love of Jesus with the children of their preschool. Change is on the horizon for Blessed Redeemer as their faithful shepherd, Pastor

Deardoff, plans to retire. Their mother church, **Faith**, continues their work of unashamedly proclaiming the Gospel to the Sioux Falls Whittier neighborhood, led by Pastors Aker and Rensner. For two summers, their VBS was taken to the neighborhood. Hosting kids from the neighborhood and congregation, the righteous of Faith brought the Bible to life on the Whittier Middle School football field. Serving the NE part of town, **Christ** is ably pointing their faithful to focus on Christ alone through active, vibrant worship. Pastor Nix serves as their pastor along with his work in **Trinity Church of the Deaf**, a fine outreach of the SD District! From NW to SW Sioux Falls, Pastor Ascher serves as pastor to the saints of **Resurrection** where they have a wonderful Childcare Center called His Ark. In addition to his duties as part-time theology teacher at SFLS, Pastor Ascher is serving the vacancy in Hartford. The generosity of God's saints from Resurrection pours out into the community! Central to Sioux Falls and mother of all our congregations, **Zion** continues to forge new connections into the community through their Gospel outreach – Streets of Bethlehem, childcare center, vibrant children's ministry led by Chez Shoup, excellent youth ministry led by Jacob Shoup, and engaging worship for all ages led by Pastor Lehr and Jacob. Rounding us out is **Memorial** to the south. Recent upgrades to the campus have been enjoyed by one of our District's largest congregations. Dedicated to ministering to all ages, DCE Peters oversees the children's ministry and DCE Miller oversees Youth ministry. Pastors Asmus and Slavens, who also serves as a part-time theology teacher at SFLS, have been partnering in their leadership amongst the active saints of Memorial. Here we find another congregation soon to experience change as Pastor Asmus will be retiring this spring. Many of our congregations also support African ministries and/or childcare/pre-school and we are actively looking for when, where, and how to plant new ministries. The Sioux Falls Circuit joyfully joins the rest of our SD District in fearlessly proclaiming the Gospel!

Circuit 8 (Yankton)

Reverend Steven Weispfennig, Circuit Visitor

By God's salvation power, the saints of the Yankton Circuit continue to be strengthened by the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of Word and Sacrament ministry. We are thankful for the faithful service of the ordained and commissioned ministers in the Yankton Circuit to empower God's people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

Peace Lutheran, Alcester welcomed Rev. Don Erickson on May 29, 2022 after Rev. Brent Keller accepted a Call to Trinity Lutheran, Guttenberg and St. Paul Lutheran, McGregor, IA in the January 2022. Rev. Paul Warnier, Pastor Emeritus, served the vacancy.

Zion Lutheran, Avon and Our Savior's Lutheran, Springfield is served by Rev. Ken Johnson. Zion in particular, despite its small-town setting, has a number of young families and children strengthening their congregation.

Holy Cross Lutheran, Dakota Dunes welcomed back Rev. Dr. Michael Kumm (after retiring in 2018) as Assistant Pastor on January 16, 2022, along with Senior Pastor, Rev. Jeremy Richert. Holy Cross Lutheran Preschool continues to serve the community with the Gospel.

St. John's Lutheran, Tyndall and Martinus Lutheran, Utica is served by Rev. Dean Schroeder. Martinus, like Zion, Avon, also has a vibrant ministry of young families and children while being in a very rural setting.

Concordia Lutheran, Vermillion, served by Rev. Matthew Bless, has seen growth and increased participation with its campus ministry to students at the University of South Dakota.

St. John's Lutheran, Wagner and Trinity Lutheran, Fairfax, bid farewell and Godspeed to Rev. Bill Heermann, who retired in June 2024 after St. John's, Wagner celebrated its 125th Anniversary with District President, Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer as the guest preacher. Despite its rural setting, Trinity also sees a number of young families and children participating in the congregation's life. The

vacancy is served by Rev. Ken Johnson in Wagner and Rev. Clark Gies, Pastor Emeritus, in Fairfax.

St. John's Lutheran, Yankton welcomed Rev. Dr. Jacob Bobby as Associate Pastor on January 28, 2024 after Rev. Levi Willms accepted a Call to Trinity Lutheran, Sauk Rapids, MN in May 2023. The congregation celebrated its 140th Anniversary with festivities in October 2022, with former pastor emeritus Rev. Dave Gunderson as the guest preacher. St. John's Lutheran Preschool continues to share the Gospel with young children and their families in the Yankton area, and is working toward re-accreditation. St. John's is also served by Senior Pastor Rev. Steve Weispfennig and DCE Josh Schmitt.

Deaconess Andra Gates completed her service as a winter deaconess at Concordia Lutheran, Sarasota, FL in 2023. She continued to assist the pastors of the Yankton Circuit, especially St. John's, Yankton, until accepting a Call to Redeemer Lutheran, Mountain Home, AR in September 2024.

Following Circuit Realignment at the 2021 South Dakota District Convention, the parish of First English Lutheran, Centerville, and Zion Lutheran, Hurley were relocated to Circuit 6 (Freeman).

The Ordained and Commissioned workers of the circuit meet regularly for "Winkel" gatherings. At the Winkel, they worship and celebrate the Lord's Supper together, share ministry joys and concerns, and study the Gospel of Mark. Other matters of casuistry and study are taken up as needed. The church workers and their families also gather for an annual summer event (picnic or minor league baseball game) and Christmas party. The 2024 Circuit Convocation welcomed retired DCE Mark Schoepp presenting on "Caring for Aging Parents."

NOTE: These reports were written prior to the publication of the Convention Workbook; therefore some activities which occurred between that date and the time of convention are not included in these reports.

ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT JOB DESCRIPTION

South Dakota District LCMS
Ministry Description –
Assistant to the President (Executive Secretary)
(adopted by the
District's Board of
Directors 8/4/2022)

Position: Assistant to the President (Executive Secretary)

Position General Description & Purpose:

- A. Serve as the Assistant to the District President in getting to know the pastors and congregations and their needs, challenges, and opportunities. He will especially seek to visit with and encourage pastors as they carry out their ministries. He will also serve in various other administrative capacities in order to help carry out the responsibilities and programs of the District.
- B. Serve as the primary District staff member promoting God's mission of making disciples of all nations and of seeking and saving the lost, and in promoting the call of the Christian to serve our neighbors with deeds of love.
- C. Provide accountability and oversight for District-subsidized ministries in our responsibility of carrying out the mission opportunities our Lord puts before us.
- D. Serve as the supervisor of the Mission and Ministry Council (*per 2021 District Res. 2-04A*) or whatever structure succeeds it in providing support and ministry resources to church workers, congregations, and schools.
- E. Ensure that Biblical principles of stewardship are promoted throughout the District (*per Synod Bylaw 4.6*).

Working Relationships:

Responsible to the District President, and under the supervision of the Board of Directors.

Term of Service:

The Board of Directors shall normally appoint the Executive Secretary for a 3-year term, which shall expire at the time of one of the meetings of the Board of Directors held within six months of the completion of the District Convention. The Executive Secretary shall be appointed from a list of candidates provided by the District President and approved by the Board of Directors. At the close of each term, the incumbent shall be eligible to be appointed again. When the term of office of the Executive Secretary expires after a District Convention, and the President recommends that a different person serve as the Executive Secretary, the incumbent may continue to serve until a new Executive Secretary is installed. In the event that the incumbent is not appointed or declines his reappointment, his salary and benefits shall be provided until he accepts another position or for a period not to exceed six months.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- A. Work as the Assistant to the District President
 1. Assist the President in getting to know the pastors and congregations, and report to the President the needs, challenges and opportunities that our workers and ministries are experiencing.
 2. Visit with and encourage pastors as they carry out their ministries.
 3. Serve as the director of the Lay Leadership Institute (arranging for instructors, promoting and scheduling classes).
 4. Serve as the director of Student Aid.
 5. Attend the annual gathering of Mission Executives and/or Stewardship Executives of the LCMS.

6. Attend and report at the meetings of the District Board of Directors, serving as an advisory member of the Board.
 7. Request quarterly reports from District-subsidized ministries, review the reports, and inform the Board of Directors as to the vitality and activities of the ministries.
 8. Perform an annual evaluation of all called District-subsidized ministries and staff for District budget, and seek budget recommendations from them.
 9. Assist with the call process for workers in District-subsidized ministries.
 10. Connect with LCMS organizations that resource this position, such as the Synod's Offices of International and National Mission (OIM, ONM).
 11. Carry out miscellaneous responsibilities, as requested by the District President and the Board of Directors.
- B. Work in Promoting God's Mission of Making Disciples and of the Christian's Obligation of Serving our Neighbor
1. Promote the mission work determined by District Convention or District Board of Directors' action, such as Together in Mission (TIM) and church planting efforts.
 2. With the assistance of the Mission and Ministry Council, strengthen congregations and their members in proclaiming the Gospel in their home, workplace, community, and congregation.
 3. With the assistance of the Mission and Ministry Council, equip and encourage individuals, congregations, and circuits in expressing their Christian concern, love, and compassion in meeting human needs to engage their community and world.
 4. Encourage collaboration and healthy partnerships with mission organizations, groups, and congregations, helping to identify a variety of ministry partners and resources, and connecting these to congregations and ministries.
 5. Evaluate the need for new ministries within the District and work within the District policies and procedures to advance new ministry opportunities.
- C. Work with District-Subsidized Ministries
1. Regular visitation with all District-subsidized ministry church workers to assess and respond to their spiritual, relational, emotional, physical, and educational needs.
 2. Provide the first line level of accountability for District-subsidized ministries, workers, and grant recipients, assisting them to keep activities within the policies and budget of the District.
- D. Work with the Mission and Ministry Council (or whatever structure succeeds it)
1. Assist the District President and 1st Vice-President in recruiting members of the Council.
 2. Supervise the work of the Mission and Ministry Council, and with the chairman of the Council, establish the meeting dates.
- E. Work in Promoting Biblical Stewardship
1. Ensure that Biblical principles of stewardship are promoted throughout the District by way of any means deemed appropriate (e.g., appointing a point person, articles in the email newsletter, etc.).

Qualifications:

- A person of the Word and prayer.
- Committed to the historical theological position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- An active member of a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod congregation.
- A leader with significant years of experience within congregations or schools of The

- Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- Familiarity with church polity evidenced by experience with District and Synod on some level.
- An effective team member with demonstrated competencies in:
 1. People skills (listening, caring, loving people)
 2. Teaching
 3. Team building and collaboration
 4. Strategic Planning and implementation
 5. Visionary
 6. Growth mindset
 7. Helping others develop interpersonal relationships
 8. Self-starter
 9. Knowledge of ministry resources
 10. Coach/Mentor
 11. Strong administration and follow-through
 12. Maintains confidentiality
 13. Maintains objectivity
 14. Comfortable with extensive travel

EDUCATION EXECUTIVE (PART-TIME) JOB DESCRIPTION

Ministry Description

South Dakota District--LCMS
Education Executive (a part-time position)

The Education Executive position is part-time (20 hours or less) and may be done remotely. It is a contracted position, without benefits, and it may be filled by an LCMS rostered minister-commissioned, an LCMS rostered minister-ordained, or an LCMS layperson. The Education Executive is accountable to the District's Board of Directors and is under the supervision of the District President. The Board of Directors shall set the salary annually. Travel expenses within the District and to authorized Synod meetings and LEA convocations are covered by the District.

Responsibilities:

This person shall serve as the primary District staff member providing resources, direction, and encouragement to the schools of the District, to their faculties and staffs, and to LCMS-rostered commissioned ministers serving in the District. To that end, he or she will:

1. Support the early childhood centers and preschools by communicating with their directors and teachers, an on-site visit to each annually or every other year, and by providing resources.
2. Support the Lutheran schools, especially by communicating with their administrators, an on-site visit to each, and by providing resources.
3. Assist the Lutheran schools and congregations in the call process and developing call lists, when calling commissioned ministers of religion.
4. Ensure that planning for the Fall Teachers' Conference is being done.
5. Stay informed concerning the activities of the South Dakota Christian Schools Association.
6. Stay informed concerning the federal and state legislation impacting private education.
7. Encourage and check on the well-being of the called Directors of Christian Education and deaconesses.
8. Give an in-person or written report to the regular meetings of the District's Board of Directors, serving as an advisory member of the Board.

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9. Serve as a member of the District's Mission and Ministry Council or whatever structure succeeds it.
 10. Attend the annual meeting of education executives of the Synod.
 11. Attend the occasional Lutheran Education Association (LEA) convocations.
 12. Serve as the NLSA commissioner of the District.
 13. Other duties as assigned.

Term of Service:

The Board of Directors shall normally appoint the Education Executive for a 3-year term, which shall expire at the time of one of the meetings of the Board of Directors held within six months of the completion of the District Convention. The Education Executive shall be appointed from a list of candidates provided by the District President and approved by the Board of Directors. At the close of each term, the incumbent shall be eligible to be appointed again. When the term of office of the Education Executive expires after a District Convention, and the President recommends that a different person serve as the Education Executive, the incumbent may continue to serve until such time as a contract is accepted and a new Education Executive is installed.