

DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the 2025 South Dakota District Convention election of the District President and District Vice Presidents closed on Monday, December 16, 2024. It was allowed that any nominations post-marked by December 16 would be included in the nomination tally. In accord with Bylaw 5.05.d.4, South Dakota District Secretary Reverend Dr. Thomas Brown and the chairman of the nominating committee, Reverend Dan Grimmer, met in Murdo on Friday, December 20, to tabulate the nominations. Care was given to be generous to minor errors made on the nomination forms. In the case where multiple names were given, only the first was considered valid. In a case where copies of the ballot were made and multiple ballots sent in, the sender was asked which one they wanted to count for the nomination. Only one congregation's nominations were deemed entirely illegal as the name given was not eligible for election because the person was not on the ordained roster of the Synod (Bylaw 5.05.a.1 and 5.05.d.1). An attempt was made to contact that congregation but having received no response, those two ballots were not included in the tabulation.

District President Nominations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Number of Nominations</u>
Reverend Corey Aker	2
Reverend Dr. Michael Kumm	1
Reverend Tim Rynearson	4
Reverend Randy Sturzenbecher	24
Reverend Paul Winckler	5

Comments

All five men are qualified under South Dakota District By-Law 5.05.a.1. However, District Bylaw 5.05.a.4 requires that the names of those men with at least five nominating votes for the Office of President shall be reported to the Convention, and District By-Law 5.05.b.1 says that the “*three ordained ministers receiving the highest number of votes in the nominating ballots of the congregations*” shall be the candidates to be considered. As only two men received the required five nominations, an exception will be needed to allow the next highest willing nominee to be on the ballot. Reverends Aker and Rynearson have both declined the nominations. Reverends Kumm, Sturzenbecher, and Winckler have accepted their nominations. Therefore, after the Convention allows an exception, and before any amendments to the slate of candidates from the floor (5.05.b.6), the slate of candidates for District President shall be:

Reverend Dr. Michael Kumm, Dakota Dunes, SD
Reverend Randy Sturzenbecher, Black Hawk, SD
Reverend Paul Winckler, Sioux Falls, SD

Although the District Bylaws do not require the tabulation of the nominations for District President to be a shared duty between the Secretary of the District and the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Reverends Brown and Grimmer jointly tabulated the nominations for both the District President and the Vice Presidents.

District Vice-President Nominations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Number of Nominations</u>
Reverend Corey Aker	4
Reverend Dr. Chris Ascher	3
Reverend Aaron Asmus	2
Reverend Dr. Thomas Brown	3
Reverend Thomas Christopher	1
Reverend Wade Harr	2

Reverend Ryan Loeslie	1
Reverend Dr. Brian Mosemann	1
Reverend Tim Rynearson	3
Reverend Steve Weispfennig	1
Reverend Paul Winckler	2
Reverend Matthew Wurm	11

Bylaw 5.05.e.1 says "Candidates for the Office of Vice-President shall be in each instance the four ordained ministers receiving the highest number of votes in nominating ballots of the congregations." Unlike the office of District President, the By-Laws have no requirement of five nominations to qualify for the ballot for the Vice Presidents. After the nomination process closed, Reverend Rynearson removed his name from consideration. Like the ballot for the Office of District President, Bylaw 5.05.e.6 gives the Convention the "right to alter each slate at the proper time by amendment." Therefore, prior to any Convention amendments, the slate of candidates for the Vice Presidents shall be:

Reverend Corey Aker
Reverend Dr. Chris Ascher
Reverend Dr. Thomas Brown
Reverend Matthew Wurm

Respectfully Submitted,

Reverend Dr. Thomas Brown
Secretary, South Dakota District, LCMS

Presidential Candidate Biographical Data

Michael L. Kumm

Born: June 13, 1952

Family:

Married: Janet B. (Wessel) Kumm – March 15, 2000

Children: Jeffrey, Michael, Jamie, Laura; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren

Education:

Community College of the Air Force	Assoc. - 1995
South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD	
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO	Alt Rte/MA – 2000/2006
Trinity Theological Seminary, Newburgh, IN	Ph.D – 2015

Ministries Served:

Blessed Redeemer, Brandon, SD	Delayed Vicar/Pastor 1999-2001
Saint Paul, West Frankfort, IL	Pastor 2001-2004
Concordia Seminary Professional Staff	Director of Alumni Relations 2004-2006
Holy Cross, Sugarloaf Township, Dupo, IL	Vacancy Pastor 2004-2006
Trinity, Millstadt, IL	Vacancy Pastor 2006
	Pastor 2006-2014
Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes, SD	Pastor 2014-2018
	Asst. Pastor 2022 to present

District Service:

Circuit Counselor (SID); SD District LLL Pastoral Advisor; Pastor's Conference Chaplain

Synod Service:

Interim General Manager, KFUE Radio	2010-2012
LCMS Board of Directors	Vice Chairman 2010-2013
	Chairman 2013-2023
International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg Board of Directors	Chairman 2012-2018

Community Service:

Chaplain, Sioux Falls Police Department	2000 to 2001
Founder of First Responder Chaplaincy, Millstadt, IL	
	Lead Chaplain 2008-2014
SD Department American Legion, Chaplain	2021 to present
Chaplain, Sioux City Police Department	2023 to present

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT PRESIDENT

1. Describe your commitment to the doctrine and practice of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

I am 100% committed to the Holy Scriptures, and Lutheran Confessions, found in the Book of Concord, that I have sworn to at my ordination and each installation where I have served. This commitment standing on the Scriptures and Confessions are where the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod stands and separates us from others who do not take the sole source and foundation of our faith seriously. God help us all to remain steadfast in the one true faith.

2. What challenges and opportunities do you see facing our South Dakota District?

The Church at large faces many challenges locally, district, synod, nationally, and globally. The culture is not welcoming to our faith nor our morality. Thus, we find ourselves at odds with the culture and the world. Life issues, sexuality issues, and so many more will not be going away soon, and need to be dealt with. Likewise, our decreasing membership in churches across the nation is causing many to be “un-sustainable,” and forcing many to close. How do we continue to serve the members of those churches? How do we ensure those sheep continue to be fed with the nourishment of Word and Sacraments? I believe this is one of the biggest challenges the SD District faces. We need more pastors, yet we have the opportunity to help some of our retired brothers to find purpose in retirement of helping congregations as I have described above. Part-time ministry to these struggling congregations can be a boon and blessing to many. We must look for every opportunity to continue to provide Word and Sacrament ministry to all within the Church.

3. What is your vision for The South Dakota District?

The South Dakota District is strong, and I certainly would like to see it remain strong and even grow stronger. In my opinion, we can do that merely by being who we have sworn to be, faithful preachers and teacher of the one true faith, and holding to who we are as confessional Lutheran Christians. We must continue to reach out to those who are unchurched or lapsed. Statistics show us that growth doesn’t come about through programs, but the vast majority of growth comes when people have been invited by a member. We must encourage our members to reach out, invite, share, and most of all be “In the Word” (as Sainted LCMS President Al Barry loved to say). We have much to do and we must be ready to work.

4. How do you see the role of District President?

The District President is elected by the District. He is not a Synod officer. His work is in the District and that should be his focus. The Council of Presidents (COP) is a group made up of all 35 District Presidents, the 6 Vice-Presidents of Synod and the President of Synod. They meet 4 times a year, plus there are meetings of regional District Presidents. It is my opinion that these meetings take the District President from his District too often and for too long. How so? Committees, programs, etc. that the COP creates require time and effort that takes away from his District duties. I am not saying the COP should be eliminated. I am saying they are NOT officers of Synod, so there does not need to be so many meetings outside the realm of the District.

For many in the District, the District President is only known as the one who meets with them when their current pastor leaves, gets them call lists when they need a pastor, or comes to install/ordain a pastor when one accepts their call. There is much more this man is elected to do. He is the Ecclesiastical Supervisor of all rostered church workers, which can mean disciplinary and other human resource type actions and responsibilities. He also is charged with getting to know each congregation in his district so he may be of service to them in any condition they may be in. He serves as the administrator of the District, serves on the District Board of Directors, deals with budgeting, assisted by the Board of Directors, and Circuit Visitors. He must report his administration to the President of Synod, interview men from his district who apply to seminary, and deal with legal issues in congregations, and schools.

The District President has his finger on the pulse of a lot of different things, but I do think he needs to be connected with a congregation. With no malice toward any current or past District President in this district or others, but many District Presidents have accepted Divine Calls as part-time assistants at a congregation to remain connected to the parish life. I think this is extremely important. The District President is an overseer, a Bishop, if you will, and needs to be connected with a parish to see how the issues of the culture, the community, and the world are affecting his people, pastors, and church workers. The value of such is beyond measuring. The assistance of his Vice-Presidents, and Circuit Visitors, and judicious delegation of duties and oversight can allow this to happen and be successful.

5. **How would you assist the congregations and church workers of the District to remain theologically and confessionally strong?**

I personally prefer to lead by example. Show the congregations, church workers, and above all, pastors, what it means to be theologically and confessionally strong through preaching, teaching, encouraging, mentoring, loving, and caring of individuals, groups, congregations, et.al. Like St. Paul writes, *“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”* (2 Corinthians 2:2) There is the core. Let us find ourselves gathered at the cross where our sins have been forgiven, our faith is strengthened, and the sure and certain hope of resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come is found. Grant it Lord, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Presidential Candidate Biographical Data

Randy R. Sturzenbecher

Personal:

Born in Yankton, SD, August 31, 1964 to Rudy and Florence (nee: Hansen) Sturzenbecher
Raised on the family farm near Parker, SD

Family:

Married Vonda (nee: Berg) Sturzenbecher on July 27th, 1985
Children: Ryan Sturzenbecher, Sioux Falls, SD (33)
Megan (nee Sturzenbecher) Zwiers, St. Cloud, FL (31)

Education:

Parker Grade School, High School, Parker, SD	1982
South-East Vo Tech, Sioux Falls, SD, Diesel Mechanics	1984
Augustana University, Sioux Falls, SD - AA	1997
Vicarage Trinity, St. Johns Persia, Honey Creek, IA	2000
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO - MDiv	2001
Doxology	

Ministries Served:

First English-Zion, Centerville-Hurley, SD	2001-2006
Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, SD	2006-Present

District Service:

Continuing Education Committee	
LWML Zone Counselor	
LWML District Jr., Sr., Counselor	
Youth Services Area Chairman	
CWEDA Secretary	
Secretary of Fall Pastors Conference	
Circuit 4 Circuit Visitor (Black Hills)	
Delegate to Synodical Convention	2016
Black Hills Lutheran School Chaplain	
Short term Missionary to Hong Kong	
District Realignment Committee	
President Board of Directors Higher Things	2023
1 st Vice President SD District	2018-Present
Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) mentor	

Community Service:

Rotary Vice President
Kiwanis Member

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT PRESIDENT

1. Describe your commitment to the doctrine and practice of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105. I believe and freely confess that God's Word is true (John 17:17) and the only hope for sinners. It is the Word of God that is the rule and norm that guides and directs the doctrine and practice of our Synod. I believe that the three Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large and Small Catechism, and the Formula of Concord are right expositions of doctrine of God's Word. It is the Word of God

only that accomplishes and succeeds in seeking and saving the lost (Isaiah 55:11 Luke 19:10). Our Synod follows the example of the first century church talking and walking together in the unity of Scriptures to bring the freedom and hope of Christ into the lives of His people. In a time when truth is viewed as subjective, and people will “accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” (2nd Timothy 4:3-4) it is even more important that we walk together in God’s Word as a Synod and the Lutheran Confessions so that our witness to His truth is clear.

2. What challenges and opportunities do you see facing our South Dakota District?

The opportunities to tell the good news and offer hope are endless. Thanks be to God that He has put us here in this beloved South Dakota District to love Him and love and serve our neighbor.

God has blessed us with unending opportunities to share the good news of Jesus and offer hope and peace to our neighbors. God has blessed us with faithful Pastors, DCE’s and Deaconesses, as well as talented and faithful lay men and women to bring hope to the hurting and forgiveness to the forsaken. God has blessed us with faithful Lutheran daycares, early childhood centers, elementary and high schools, and faithful Lutheran school teachers and administrators that teach and catechize. The very foundations of faith are taught in our Lutheran early childhood centers, preschools, and daycares. Let’s not forget the countless, faithful parents and laypeople that shine brightly with the light of Christ as their hope, as they go to work! As our communities become more diverse, ethnic ministry opportunities abound. Even in our smaller communities there are opportunities to reach out with Bible studies that ground us in hope and forgiveness and build relationships. “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1st Peter 3:15).

We do have challenges before us. Our post-Christian world is less and less tolerant of the truth of Jesus Christ. Many times what people think they know about Christianity is incorrect, allowing them to remain in their sin or live with a false confidence of their salvation. Church worker health and retention of workers must be guarded. With less church workers available we must work harder to make sure our current workers are and remain physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy. Along that line the growing number of vacancies puts more stress on the pastors that are serving them. Viability of our congregations becomes increasingly more challenging with older and smaller groups worshiping. As many of our rural churches become smaller, the financial implications impact budgets from the congregation up to the District and Synod. Church worker education debt adds another level of stress in the church worker’s life. Yes, we have significant challenges before us, but we are not without hope! “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:3-4).

3. What is your vision for The South Dakota District?

Faithfulness to God’s Word and His promises to us. The vision for a District President cannot be his own, lest pride and arrogance overtake him. The vision for the South Dakota District is given to us through God’s Word. “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23).

Our Good Shepherd came to seek and save the lost and bring comfort and hope to the hopeless. We continue faithfully preaching and teaching the eternal and unchanging hope we have through Christ Jesus. We celebrate when one receives faith in Holy Baptism or

receives Absolution through the blood of Christ. We are strengthened when the very body and blood of Jesus are placed in our hands and on our lips.

Guided by God's great commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 29:19-20), we continue looking for new opportunities to meet people with the promises of Christ. A cross-focused vision for the District is one that encourages all people to receive God's gifts of Word and Sacrament regularly, and continually looks for ways to serve and love our neighbors. Because the world in which we live is ever changing we must be intentional and creative in our reach into new areas with this Gospel hope. I envision more church plants or other creative ways, such as preaching stations, hub ministry or something like circuit riders of the 19th century. I pray that we will build Gospel-centered relationships in the many ethnic groups that are growing in South Dakota. I pray that we will support our pastors with resources that will help them stay healthy physically as well as emotionally.

4. How do you see the role of District President?

The District President is to be a pastor to the pastors and their families, encouraging and strengthening them and all the church workers in the District. The work of the Church is done well when our workers are healthy. The District President is to be a servant leader who supports and equips the ongoing ministry of the church or school. His role is supportive in providing information, counsel, and resources so the work of the church can move forward with the message of Christ. His role is to encourage congregations that struggle against the pressures of the world seeking to reform the church into its own image. His role holds pastors and congregations accountable to the Word of God and the Confessions for purity of doctrine and unity of the believers (Romans 16:17 Ephesians 4:14). His role is reconciler, always working to keep communication open and honest. His role is liaison between Synod and congregation.

5. How would you assist the congregations and church workers of the District to remain theologically and confessionally strong?

We remain fully committed to God's Word and the Confessions by careful and ongoing study of God's Word. I would encourage a faithful confession, in doctrine and practice, for the church workers through the teaching at Winkels and pastors and all workers conferences. Continuing education such as Doxology continues to strengthen our confession. Sabbaticals can be a useful tool for intentional focused study, strengthening faith and practice.

Strengthening and assisting congregations is primarily done through constant study of God's word, hearing it preached and receiving the Lord's Supper. The District President as well as the District staff will also be able to suggest Synod resources that may strengthen faithfulness.

Where we stand united, we give thanks to God. On those rare occasions when those called to lead fail in this, the goal is repentance, reconciliation, and restoration. This will require personal contact, admonition, and prayer. While the District President does play a role in the Synod at large, it is the President's first duty to ensure the workers under his supervision are cared for, guided, and shaped for faithful service to the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 2:10).

Presidential Candidate Biographical Data

Paul M. Winckler

Family Information:

- Born in Tyndall, SD on January 13, 1976 to Alton and Delores (nee: Delzer) Winckler
- Raised on the family farm between Tyndall and Tripp, SD, the youngest of six children. Graduated from Tripp-Delmont High School in 1994.
- Raised in the United Church of Christ, Friedens Reformed Church, Tripp, SD
- Married Laura G. Popkes on August 14, 1999 at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Larchwood, Iowa
- Adult confirmation and received into membership at St. John Lutheran Church, Britton, SD in November 2000
- Laura has worked as a Homemaker for 9 years, Re-Sell It Shop Coordinator at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis for 3 years, and with the Child Nutrition Programs at Rapid City Area Schools and the Harrisburg School District for 12 years
- Laura and I have three children: Benjamin (24) a construction worker for Tailored Garage Door in Sioux Falls; Emily (21) a senior at South Dakota State University, Brookings, majoring in Psychology and Human Development and Family Studies; Caleb (18) a senior at Harrisburg High School

Occupation, Education, Employment History, Involvement in the Church:

- Assistant to the District President, South Dakota District—LCMS since October 2022
- Graduated from the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD, Summa Cum Laude with B.S. in History and Political Science in May 1998
- Community Development Specialist, Northeast Council of Governments, Aberdeen, SD, 1998-1999
- Park Manager, Fort Sisseton State Park, Lake City, SD, 1999-2005
- Director of Advancement, Presentation College, Aberdeen, SD, 2005-2007
- Employment Verification and Proofing Specialist, Verifications Inc., Aberdeen, SD, 2007-2008
- Graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO with Master of Divinity in May 2012
- Ministries Served:
 - Vicarage, Zion Lutheran Church, School and Preschool, Rapid City, SD, 2011-2012
 - Assistant Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, School, and Preschool, Rapid City, SD, 2012-2015
 - Associate Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, School and Preschool, Rapid City, SD, 2015-2017
 - Lead Associate Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church School and Preschool, Rapid City, SD, 2017-2022

Other Service in the Church:

- Election Committee, South Dakota District Convention 2015
- South Dakota District Reconciler, 2017-2022
- Black Hills Lutheran School, School Board Pastoral Advisor (various times)
- Chair of Floor Committee 1, South Dakota District Convention 2018
- National Lutheran Schools Association Accreditation Visit Team, 2023 & 2024
- National Lutheran Schools Association School Shepherd Award Nominee, 2017
- District Mission Executive, 2022-Present
- District Stewardship Executive, 2022-Present
- Assistant District Coordinator, 2025 Youth Gathering
- Currently member at Zion Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Service in the Community:

- Volunteer Chaplain, Monument Health, Rapid City, SD
- Clinical Pastoral Education, Monument Health, Rapid City, SD
- Guest Worship and Bible Study Leader, St. Martin's Village, Rapid City, SD
- Support for families in addiction recovery in Sioux Falls area.
- Pennington County 4-H Club

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT PRESIDENT

1. Describe your commitment to the doctrine and practice of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The heart of our doctrine and practice is the love God has made known to His world in Jesus Christ our Lord. In the cross God has made His commitment to rescue you and me, sparing nothing, even giving up his own Son, according to His holy, inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word. And now, made alive in Christ, we are called to live in His grace and make His ways known, confidently and faithfully moving ahead, all the while knowing we can never exhaust His gifts. This is simple, straightforward Gospel drew me to the Lutheran confession 25 years ago, to the seminary 17 years ago, and ordination 13 years ago, where I vowed to remain constant in this truth to the best of my ability. I simply desire to hear the call of God and serve Him faithfully with the gifts He's given in the time He allows. I pray that God keep me faithful and, where I have erred, bring me to repentance and forgive me.

2. What challenges and opportunities do you see facing our South Dakota District?

The challenges of a "Post-Christian" America and world are well-documented and obvious to anyone who has spent any time considering where we now stand. Declines are discouraging and those who remain are exhausted by trying to do more with less. Anxiety and fatigue drown joy and sap enthusiasm that should come naturally to us who have been given the best reason for joy and enthusiasm.

The anxiety and fatigue can come from focusing on what is lacking. But consider, for a moment, what we do have:

- The truth of Gospel.
- The people who remain.
- The opportunity of a growing mission field in all communities as the "unchurched" increase.

This opportunity is great, but what do about it is not as clear and well-defined. How can those people who remain bring the truth to those who need to hear? This is the big opportunity and the big question before us as we consider our place in God's mission.

3. What is your vision for The South Dakota District?

The vision ought not be anything different than God's vision: building relationships, discipleship, baptizing, and teaching. It can seem so big and grand, but I would encourage people to think simple and small:

- Commit to being in the word and worship. Keep coming back and participate.
- Care for each other within the family of faith.
- Care and outreach to those who have been less involved or walked away.
- Witness to the "unchurched" and "unbelievers" with word and deed.

This good work mostly happens at the level of the congregation, focusing day-by-day, week-by-week, and month-by-month on small, simple, incremental, and realistic steps toward serving the communities where God has placed us with the gifts He's given us. As District, it is our place to support the congregation, workers and laity, as they build communities where this happens. The District can and should be a resource for opportunities to support and equip her people as they work together in her mission, with

this question at the heart of our thinking, speaking and doing: “How, in the love of Christ, will I serve my neighbor?”

4. How do you see the role of District President?

I am grateful for the opportunity to have learned from President Sailer and have a great fondness for one of his favorite descriptions of the role of District Officials as “Advisors to the Queen.” The “Queen,” of course, is the local church, God’s own precious, blood-bought bride. We are blessed to come alongside to offer help and support as the “Queen” understands and embraces her place in the Kingdom. The “Advisors” ought not stand above the “Queen” or take her place, but stand alongside her, as guide pointing to the constant, unchanging principles that make her who she is as well as bringing to remembrance the responsibility and honor of the place she holds. The “Advisor’s” greatest joy is to see the “Queen” happily flourish and thrive in her place, being what her “King” sees and loves in her.

5. How would you assist the congregations and church workers of the District to remain theologically and confessionally strong?

We are blessed to have wonderful doctrine and incredible leaders, pastors, workers, and teachers. There is great knowledge and zeal for truth and integrity. With our doctrine, knowledge, and zeal I pray that we would strive for:

- Honesty and love in our speaking to the world and with each other.
- Kindness and boldness in our witness and outreach.
- Cooperation and service in our deeds.
- Humility and respect in our dealings with one another.
- Attitudes of joy and confidence.

These attitudes and actions are formed and shaped by being in the Word where the Holy Spirit guides us to be people of repentance and grace.

Biographical Information for Vice-Presidential Nominations

Corey Aker

Born: March 3, 1979 in Rapid City, SD

Family:

Married: Brooke (nee Peer) on January 2, 1998. Brooke is the reading and math specialist at Sioux Falls Lutheran School.

Children: Alyssa (Connor) Ihry, Married November 9, 2024. Alyssa is the General Manager of a restaurant in Minneapolis.
Ethan Aker (22) Ethan works at HyVee in Sioux Falls.
Andrew Aker (16) Andrew is a sophomore at Sioux Falls Lutheran School.
Ella Aker (13) Ella is an 8th grader at Sioux Falls Lutheran School.

Education:

Black Hills State University, Spearfish, SD BS – 2001
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO MDiv – 2007

Ministries Served:

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY 2007-2016
Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD 2016-Present

District Service:

Circuit Visitor, Paducah Circuit 2012-2016
Mid-South District Lay Minister Teacher, Homiletics 2012-2013
LWML Zone Counselor, Sioux Falls 2017-2019
Circuit Visitor, Sioux Falls Circuit 2019-Present
Spring Pastors' Conference Chairman 2024

Community Service:

Paducah Lions Club, all leadership roles 2007-2014

Dr. Christopher Ascher

Born: July 1, 1976

Family:

Married: Laurie (nee: McClelland) Ascher on May 1, 1999

Children: Elizabeth (2002)
Daniel (2005)
Luke (2007)
Rebecca (2011)

Education:

University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS BSE – 1999
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis MDiv – 2003
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis DMin – 2014
International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism
and Human Rights, Strasbourg, France Working toward Diploma

Ministries Served:

Mt. Calvary, Huron, SD 2003-2005

Resurrection, Sioux Falls, SD 2005-Present
Theology Teacher Lutheran High / Sioux Falls Lutheran 2017-Present

District Service:

LWML Zone Counselor (Huron) 2003-05
Circuit Lutherans for Life Pastoral Counselor (Huron) 2003-05
Circuit Secretary 2010-15
District Youth Task Force 2003-2005, 2014-2022
Camp Minneboji:
 Counselor 2003-06, 13-14
 Sports Director 2016-20
 Director/Bible Study Leader 2021-Present
Chair of South Dakota Mission Area for Stewardship 2005-2013
Trainer/Speaker for “*Consecrated Stewards*” 2005-Present
Delegate to Synodical Convention 2010, 2023
Chair of Fall Church Workers/Pastors Conference 2011, 2021
Floor Committee of District Convention 2012, 2025
SD LLI Instructor: Homiletics 2012, 2015
Early Childhood Center Consultant 2013-Present
DCE Intern Supervisor 2015
Ethnic Immigrant Institute for Theology
Vicarage Supervisor 2017-2021

Community Service:

Organized “Volleyball for Life” fundraiser for Alpha Center 2004-15
Various Boards/Committees for Sioux Falls Lutheran School 2005-Present
Breakout Leader/Presenter for Higher Things Gatherings 2015-Present
Various events in SF Rake the Town, Life Chain, etc.

Dr. Thomas Brown

Born: March 7, 1980

Family:

Married: Lucy (nee Schimmelpfennig) Brown on April 6, 2002
Children: Zeke (2005)
 Jackson (2006)
 Olivia (2008)
 Lydia (2009)
 David (2011)
 Mary (2012)
 Anna (2014)
 Naomi (2017)

Education:

M.Div., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, 2010
D. Min., The Institute of Lutheran Theology, Brookings, SD, 2022

Parish Ministry:

Vicar, Zion, Mitchell, SD, 2009-2010
Associate Pastor, Zion, Mitchell, SD, 2010-2015
Senior Pastor, Zion, Mitchell, SD, 2015-2020
Pastor, St. Paul, Spearfish, SD, 2020-present

District Service:

District Youth Service Area Board Member, 2011-2018
District Young Adult Service Area Board Member, 2011-2018
Chair of Spring Pastor's Conference, 2014
Camp Minneboji Bible Study Teacher, 2015-2019
Circuit Visitor, Mitchell Circuit, 2018-2020
District Convention Floor Committee Chairman, 2021
District Secretary, 2022-present
Pastoral Delegate to LCMS Synodical Convention, 2023
District Reconciler, 2024-present

Community / Synodical Service

Doctrinal Reviewer, Higher Things, 2023-present
Authored *Seelsorger Journal* article on cohabitation, 2023
9-06A Circuit Alignment Task Force Member for the 2026 LCMS Synodical Convention

Matthew Wurm

Family:

Kyra (wife of 17 years)

6 children: Micah (14)
 Annika (12)
 Aubrey (9)
 Isaac (7)
 Elena (5)
 Benjamin (5)

Current Position:

Senior Pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, 629 9th Ave. Brookings, SD 57006 since 6/1/2013.
(11.5 years in the SDD)
Graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Ordained 2008

Pastorates held:

Trinity Lutheran Church, Bemidji, MN; 2008-2013
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookings, SD; 2013-present

District position held:

Circuit Visitor – Circuit 2; 2020-present

Church-related positions held:

Vicarage Supervisor of five vicars from CLS and CTSWF
DOXOLOGY Fellow; speaker on sexuality at conferences and contributor to the *Seelsorger Journal* on pastoral care: 2014- present

Inter-church relations:

Lake Preston Lutheran Churches (ELCA now NLCA): 2021-2024 advised departure from ELCA
Apostolic Lutheran Churches (Lake Norden/Watertown): Held Lutheran Confessions studies and guided the start of an independent Confessional Apostolic Lutheran church. 2024-present.

Community Involvement:

Trail Life Troop SD5511; Troop leader 2019-present
LGBT+ Family and Friends Support Group facilitator; 2021-present
Brookings Adult Hockey League

Nominations for Circuit Visitors

The following are the results of the nominating process for Circuit Visitors carried out throughout The South Dakota District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod according to Bylaw 5.2.2 of the 2023 Synodical Handbook. The list is submitted by the District Secretary and is subject to ratification by this District Convention.

Circuit 1 (Aberdeen)

Reverend Jacob Smith
St. Paul-St. Paul Lutheran Churches, Aberdeen–Leola, SD

Circuit 2 (Watertown)

Reverend Matthew Wurm
Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookings, SD

Circuit 3 (Pierre)

Reverend David Otten
Emmanuel-Christ Lutheran Churches, Gettysburg-Lebanon, SD

Circuit 4 (Black Hills)

Reverend David Warner
Our Redeemer-Our Savior Lutheran Churches, Custer-Hill City, SD

Circuit 5 (Mitchell)

Reverend Ryan Loeslie
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Dimock, SD

Circuit 6 (Freeman)

Reverend Thomas Christopher
St. Martin-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Alexandria-Spencer, SD

Circuit 7 (Sioux Falls)

Reverend Cory Aker
Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Circuit 8 (Yankton)

Reverend Steven Weispfennig
St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, SD

Report of the Nominating Committee

This slate of nominees, together with pertinent biographical information, is provided for the offices of: District Secretary; District Treasurer; District Board of Directors (lay member) – 2 to be elected. A change of circumstances (i.e. the departure of a nominee from the District) may necessitate a change in this report prior to or during the Convention.

FOR DISTRICT SECRETARY

NAME: REVEREND MICAH BAUER

BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookings, SD

Education:
M. Div., 2015, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO
S.T.M., 2016, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Church Experience/Positions:
Vicarage at Our Savior, Carbondale, IL
Pastor at Mount Calvary, Brookings, SD, 2016–present
Lay Leadership Institute Instructor (Christian Doctrine)
Presenter at LCMS–U “Witness” Conference, 2019
DOXOLOGY Classic Program

NAME: REVEREND RYAN DREVLLOW

BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, SD

Education:
M. Div., 2009, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Church Experience/Positions:
Vicarage at Apostles Lutheran Church, Glendale, AZ
Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, Breckenridge, MN, 2009–2014
Pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 2014–present
LWML Counselor, Fergus Falls Circuit, 2012–2014
Sioux Falls Circuit Secretary, 2018–present
Camp Minneboji Honors Camp Counselor, 2019

NAME: REVEREND DR. THOMAS BROWN

BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Spearfish, SD

Education:
M. Div., 2010, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
D. Min., The Institute of Lutheran Theology, Brookings SD, 2022

Church Experience/Positions:
Vicarage at Zion, Mitchell, SD, 2009-2010
Associate Pastor, Zion, Mitchell, SD, 2010–2015
Senior Pastor, Zion, Mitchell, SD, 2015-2020

Pastor, St. Paul, Spearfish, SD, 2020-Present
District Youth Service Area Board Member, 2011-2018
District Young Adult Service Area Board Member, 2011-2018
Circuit Visitor, Mitchell Circuit, 2018-2020
District Convention Floor Committee Chairman, 2021
District Secretary, 2022-Present
Doctrinal Reviewer, Higher Things, 2023-Present
Authored *Seelsorger Journal* article on cohabitation, 2023
Pastor Delegate to LCMS Synodical Convention, 2023
District Reconciler 2024-Present

FOR **DISTRICT TREASURER**

NAME: KENT HARNISCH

BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Occupation:
CPA (Certified Public Accountant)

Church Experience/Positions:
Congregation Treasurer
Congregation Vice Chairman
Board of Stewardship Chairman
Sunday School Teacher

Other Experience/Positions:
Sioux Falls Lutheran School Association Board as Treasurer
Trustee for Sioux Falls Lutheran School Association
Thrivent/Lutheran Brotherhood/AAL Board Member
Treasurer, SD District LCMS (2021-Present)

NAME: DAVID WITHEE

BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
Zion Lutheran Church, Rapid City, SD

Occupation:
Retired CFO, Respec Engineering Consultants

Church Experience/Positions:
Congregation Chairman
Board of Finance (Treasurer/Chair and Member)
Co-Chair of Capital Campaign (1st campaign)
Fulfillment chair of Capital Campaign (2nd campaign)
Lead gifts director of Capital Campaign (3rd campaign)
Choir and Praise Team Member
Lay Delegate/LCMS Convention

FOR **LAY MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS (TWO TO BE ELECTED)**

NAME: DAVID BOGENHAGEN
BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
Trinity Lutheran Church, White Lake, SD

Occupation:
Farmer/Gravel Business

Church Experience/Positions:
Congregation Chairman
Congregation Vice Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Trustee
Board of Elders
Sunday School Superintendent
Sunday School, VBS, and Midweek Teacher
Lay Delegate, LCMS Convention 2023
Lay Representative to SD District Planning Conference

Other Experience/Positions:
White Lake Cenex Board
Aurora Country Farm Service Agency Director
Aurora County Zoning Board
Stickney Coop Elevator Board
Washington Township Board

NAME: TIM EDEN
BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Occupation:
Banking/Finance

Church Experience/Positions:
Head Elder
Discipleship Board Member
Chairman, Call Committee
Sunday School Teacher
Usher
Handbell/Vocal Choirs

Other Experience:
Camp Counselor, Camp Minneboji

NAME: DOUG KLIPFEL
BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, SD

Occupation:
Non-Destructive Testing/American Society for Nondestructive Testing Level III

Church Experience/Positions:
Sunday School Teacher
Congregational Chairman
Congregational Vice Chairman
Board of Elders
Board of Social Ministry
At-Large Member, SD District LCMS, installed June 2023

NAME: RANDY KOERNER
BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Freeman, SD

Occupation:
Self-employed General Contractor

Church Experience/Positions:
Congregation Chairman
Trustee
Usher
Board of Elders
Lay Delegate, SD District Convention

Other Experience/Positions:
City Building Inspector
Planning and Zoning Commission
Treasurer, Golden West Telecommunications
Volunteer Fireman
Former EMT

NAME: TODD WOODS
BIOGRAPHY: **Church Membership:**
St. John's Lutheran Church, Yankton, SD

Occupation:
VP of Wealth 7 Trust, First Dakota Bank

Church Experience/Positions:
Congregation Chairman
Board of Elders
Evangelism Committee
Stewardship Committee
Lay Delegate, SD District Convention

Other Experience/Positions:
Chair, Yankton County Commission
Chair, Sertoma
Former Thrivent Agent
Former Police Officer

FOR PASTORAL MEMBER, DISTRICT CONVENTION NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2028
(2 to be elected)

NAME: BRIAN S. LEMCKE

PARISH SERVED: Zion and Emmaus Lutheran Churches, Delmont and Tripp, South Dakota; Sole Pastor 2018-Present
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Mound City, MO; Sole Pastor 2013-2017
St. John, St. Peter and Concordia Lutheran Churches Corning, Craig and Mound City, MO 2011-2013
St. John, Holy Cross and Immanuel Lutheran Churches Agar, Onida and Harrold, SD 2003-2011

BIOGRAPHY: 2003 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
MO District Human Care Committee
Pastors Conference & Professional Church Workers Conference Committees
SD District LWML Pastoral Counselor
Synod Convention Pastoral Delegate
Cancer Awareness Board-American Cancer Society
Deliver Senior meals to Shut-Ins
Holt County MO Christmas Toy Fund
Lions Club
Food Pantry Executive Director

NAME: THOMAS MUELLER

PARISH SERVED: Emanuel and Zion Lutheran Churches 2022-Present
Sisseton and Waubay, SD

BIOGRAPHY: 2022 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO

NAME: MARCUS RING

PARISH SERVED: St. Paul Lutheran Church 2011-2016
Shreveport, LA
St. John Lutheran Church 2017-Present
Gregory, SD

BIOGRAPHY: 2011 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
LWML Zone Counselor – Chamberlain Zone
District Bible Bowl Coordinator

NAME: SAMUEL THOLE

PARISH SERVED: Peace, Redeemer and Zion Lutheran Churches, 2017-Present
Brookings, Flandreau and White, South Dakota

BIOGRAPHY: 2017 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO

FOR LAY MEMBER, DISTRICT CONVENTION NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2028
(3 to be elected)

NAME: KEEGAN AHART

CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Spearfish, SD

BIOGRAPHY: Farmer/Mechanic

Trustee/Elder at Peace Lutheran Church in Alcester, SD and Vicar at Trinity Lutheran Church in Belle Fourche

Other: President of Newell Booster Club

NAME: MICHAEL BEYER

CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP: Blessed Redeemer Lutheran Church, Brandon, SD

BIOGRAPHY: Director of Business Office/Sanford Health

Congregational Chairman
Congregational Vice-Chairman
Board of Elders
Building Expansion committee Chairman
District Convention Congregational Lay Delegate

OTHER: Church choir member
Brandon Valley High School Band Parent Board Member

NAME: GLENN HARNISCH

CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP: Faith Lutheran Church, Parkston, SD

BIOGRAPHY: AVP, Field Clams Manager/Crop Insurance

Choir Member
Choir Director
Sunday School Teacher
Sunday School Superintendent
Secretary/Voters Assembly
Trustee
Elder
President

OTHER: Township Board; School Board; County Commissioner; Parkston Area development Board; Avera St. Benedicts Board of Directors; Avera St. Benedicts Foundation Board; Advisory Board/SD Farm and Ranch Management

NAME: DAVID PETERSON

CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP: Trinity Lutheran Church, Mansfield, South Dakota

BIOGRAPHY: Dentist/LLI Graduate

High School Bible Class teacher

As LLI graduate I assist our Pastor in any way that he wants:

Visitation in nursing homes assisted living and independent living as well as hospital

Bible studies in retirement center

Elder

Lead services at our tri-parish once a month

OTHER:

My wife and I were missionaries at the Norwegian Mission society Hospital, Ngaoundere, Cameroon 1981-1982. We were part of an inner-city congregation in Melbourne, Australia for 2.5 years in the mid-70's. Our dental clinic is a teaching rotation for students from USD and LATC.