



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

Time to prepare for convention



LCMS/Frank Kohn

By Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer
South Dakota District President

The next regular convention of our South Dakota District is just a year away — February 2025! I'm announcing it now so that your congregation or parish has plenty of time to choose your voting delegates and to submit an overture (item of proposed business).

Details

63rd Regular Convention of the LCMS South Dakota District

- Feb. 16-18, 2025, at Sioux Falls Convention Center
- Theme: "The Gospel: God's Salvation Power"
- Verses: Romans 1:16-17

Deadlines

- Oct. 16: Delegate names to district office
- Oct. 16: Reports and overtures to district office
- Dec. 16: District president and vice-president nominations to the district secretary

Pastor Sailer is pictured conducting elections at the 68th LCMS convention in Milwaukee last summer. He served as chairman of the elections committee. As district president, he will preside over the district convention next February.

- Dec. 16: Delegate registrations and fees due

What is the purpose of the convention? The answer, from Synod *Handbook*:

Bylaw 4.2

Conventions of the districts shall afford opportunities for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information. They are the principal legislative assemblies, which amend the district's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, consider and take action on reports and overtures, and handle appropriate appeals.

God's Word, from Paul's letter to the Romans, will be highlighted. Times of worship will enable us to lift up our voices in praise to the God who has saved us through the power of His Gospel. Reports on the Lord's mission through our servants in South Dakota will inform and inspire.

Planning for the convention is gaining momentum! We will be providing much information throughout the year about this important meeting of God's people in our beloved South Dakota District.

Your servant in Christ • Pastor Sailer

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





Rev. David Gunderson, emeritus, presented on providing care for church workers. Pastor Gunderson retired as pastor of St. John's, Yankton, in 2017 after serving the congregation for 27 years.

PASSing it on

The first P.A.S.S. It On! workshops were held in Rapid City on Nov. 11 and Sioux Falls on Nov. 12. The theme for the gathering, “Ideas and Inspiration for Mission and Ministry,” drew nearly 200 together to consider the many aspects of church leadership.

Breakout sessions provided leaders with information and encouragement for service. Sixteen sessions walked participants through topics that included youth ministry, teaching the faith, mental and emotional health, caring for church workers, stewardship, church leadership and administration.

Featured conference speaker Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, speaker of “The Lutheran Hour” presented on

“Outreach in a Post Christian Context,” inviting attendees to consider the Christian place and presence in the landscape of the 21st century. Rev. Chad Lakies of Lutheran Hour Ministries led a series of breakout sessions focusing on personal witness and outreach, and building spiritually vibrant homes.

The district Mission and Ministry Council thanks all who attended and presented at the conference, as well as Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church, Black Hawk, and Sioux Falls Lutheran School for their hospitality.

For more information about district events visit sddlms.org/news-events.

Stay tuned ... information on the 2024 P.A.S.S. It On! workshops will be coming soon.



Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, “Lutheran Hour” speaker, presented on being a Christian amid 21st-century challenges.

Share your news with us!

We love to feature a wide variety of news occurring in our district congregations. If you have announcements, special events or human interest stories, please share with your brothers and sisters in Christ of the South Dakota District.

Send submissions to Kate Meadows:
kate@katemeadows.com
420 E. Liberty Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

The deadline for the April issue is Feb. 15.



BUILDING ONE ANOTHER UP

Being men of faith for our families, friends, community and church was a focus of a men's retreat held Dec. 1-2 at Peace, Brookings. Men from across South Dakota gathered under the theme, "To Be Bold ... and Build One Another Up," based on 1 Thessalonians 5.

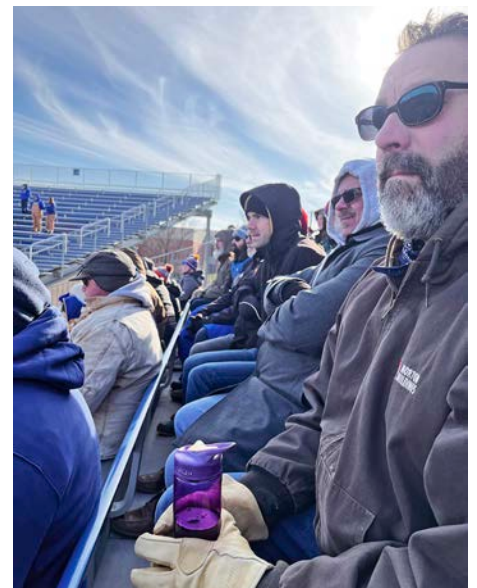
Featured speakers were Rev. Tim Rynearson, Peace pastor, and John Stiegelmeier, Peace member and former head coach of the South Dakota State University (SDSU) football team. Stiegelmeier retired after the 2022 season in which SDSU won its first national title.

Following the retreat, with the help of a generous donation from a "special friend" of the SDSU football program, several of the men gathered at Dana J. Dykhouse Stadium to watch the Jackrabbits in their quest for a second national title. Dozens of the "Frozen Chosen" enjoyed unusual mild weather to cheer on the Jacks as they beat Mercer University. (SDSU won a second title by beating Montana 23-3 on Jan 7.)

The district's Mission and Ministry Council is grateful to Coach Stiegelmeier and Pastor Rynearson for their powerful words. Also, thanks to the men of Peace for their hospitality, and Thrivent for supplying meals. Above all, thanks to God our Father for giving an opportunity for the men to gather for encouragement and fellowship.

Stay tuned for information on more mission and ministry events coming up in 2024 at sddlms.org/news-events.

— Rev. Paul Winckler, Assistant to the District President



Rev. Tim Rynearson (top) addresses attendees; John Stiegelmeier (left) signs an autograph; and attendees watch the South Dakota State University football playoff game (right).

CALL INFORMATION

Rev. Jacob Bobby, First Trinity, Bloomfield, Neb., accepted a call as associate pastor to St. John's, Yankton, Dec. 6.

Rev. David Mommens, St. Paul, Melrose, Minn., declined a call to Faith, Parkston, and St. Peter, Clayton, Dec. 17.

Rev. Doug Slavens, Memorial, Sioux Falls, is prayerfully considering a call as pastor to Crosspointe, Fargo, N.D., Dec. 13.

Rev. Jonah Domenichelli, Risen Savior, Tea, accepted a call to serve as LCMS missionary to Germany, Dec. 15.

Rev. Nathaniel Biberdorf, Zion, Browns Valley, Minn., and Zion, Claire City, N.D., declined a call as pastor to Grace, Deadwood, and Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis, Dec. 10.

Rev. Jeremy Richert, senior pastor, Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes, declined a call as pastor to Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, Dec. 17.

Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, senior pastor, Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, is prayerfully considering a call as sole pastor to Calvary, Wray, Colo., Dec. 19.

VACANCIES

Senior pastor

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

Sole pastor

- Risen Savior, Tea

- St. John, Britton/St. Paul, Ferney
- Grace, Deadwood/Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- Concordia, Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- Our Savior, /Madison/St. John's, Howard
- Zion, Canistota/St. John, Montrose
- Faith, Parkston/St. Peter, Clayton

PATTY'S PONDERINGS

Grace, mercy, peace



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota
District President

The LWML Prayer Service for 2024 is titled "Grace, Mercy, Peace," which is based on 1 Timothy 1:2b; 2 Timothy 1:2 and 2 John 1:3.

We often hear these three words when the pastor begins his sermon, just as St. Paul used them to begin his letters to his son in the faith, Timothy. These three words describe three blessed gifts from our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus, who is true God and true man.

As believers in the Triune God, we live with *peace* in our whole being. That peace comes only from our faith in Jesus, who came to live among us, teach, heal, die on the cross, conquer death and rise from the grave, and ascend to heaven to intercede for us. It is only through Jesus' suffering and death that we receive these riches



of forgiveness and eternal life. This is God's *grace* for us. Jesus took our sins and punishment upon Himself so that we sinners don't receive the punishment of eternal death. This is God's *mercy* for us. Because of these three free gifts, we live in the joyful response to love God and love our neighbor.

The prayer service was written by Rev. Michael Mattil, former LWML pastoral counselor (2007-11). He served congregations in Oklahoma and Texas, and now in retirement he continues to preach and serve on boards.

He also works with Habitat for Humanity, Family Promise and Lutheran Disaster Response.

The prayer service is available as a free download at lwml.org/prayer-service. It can be used at any time for large or small gatherings such as zone events or local church services. Use it as another way to be together in God's Word, to learn about His "grace, mercy, and peace."

Mite deadline is March 15

Spring is approaching! So is the deadline for turning in your mite offerings for the current LWML South Dakota District biennium.



Be sure your offerings are in the mail by March 15 in order for them to be applied to the mite goal for this biennium. Thank you in advance for all your efforts toward meeting our goal and supporting the ministries of our selected mission grants.

Blessings on your groups!

Jan Larson
Vice-President of Gospel Outreach

Make plans to attend 63rd DISTRICT CONVENTION

The 63rd LWML South Dakota District Convention will be held June 7-8 at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Aberdeen.

The theme is "Inexpressible Joy, Matchless Savior" and the theme verse is 1 Peter 1:8-9:

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

We are pleased to announce that speaker and author Donna Snow will be the Bible study leader. She has written over 20 Bible studies. (cph.org/donna-pyle-snow).



Donna Snow

The Aberdeen Zone is at work on the convention committees, and we are getting excited to have you visit our city.

Betty Ochsner
Convention Chairman

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

GREETINGS

from our **Interim Pastoral Counselor**

With Pastor (Clint) Thorson having moved to the Rocky Mountain District, I've been given the opportunity to serve for a few months as a pastoral counselor for our LWML South Dakota District.

By way of introduction, I suppose I could share a number of things about myself. However, in the spirit of St. Paul's



Rev. Aaron Asmus

encouragement to his young friend, Timothy (in reference to Grandma Lois and Mom Eunice in 2 Tim. 1:5), I'd like to share just a couple of things about a couple of women who have had important spiritual influence in my life.

First, I thank God for my mom, Lorraine. As we grew in our family, my mom continually sang songs, read stories and Scripture to us and shared thoughts with us about who we are as God's children. She carried a gentleness in her demeanor that reflected the tender care of our Shepherd. She also helped us learn about the LWML (it was always hard as a kid to say those letters correctly) by her involvement

in several congregations that were our church families. She also served as a zone president.

I also thank God for my wife, Lisa, who faithfully carries our faith values into our daily lives together. She continually supports and encourages me in my faith. She loves our children and grandchildren with a love that reflects Jesus' love for us. Many of you are likely familiar with her as she has served in various LWML roles over the years, including district president (2016-20).

One last thought for you to consider, Lutheran Women in Mission: there are many people that you have a great opportunity to influence in a gracious way!

May God bless you in sharing the love of our Lord!

Rev. Asmus serves as senior pastor of Memorial, Sioux Falls.

HURON ZONE REPORT



The Huron Zone kept busy in 2023. We met on March 5 for our Spring Rally at Mount Calvary, Wolsey, and used the 2023 Prayer Service, which was led by zone counselor Rev. Kevin Koester. We had 19 attendees (including four guests) and assembled 147 hygiene kits for Orphan Grain Train (OGT).

The ladies of St. John, Wolsey, along with a few other volunteers, helped clean Puppet Place in preparation for the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, held Aug. 31-Sept. 4.

Our Fall Rally was held Nov. 12 at Mount Calvary, Huron, with 22 in attendance. I spoke about the medical mission trip to Guatemala I attended in July with

MOST Ministries. Patty Peters, LWML district president, joined us, and together we assembled 70 mitten puppets for the Puppet Place.

Our congregations continue to focus on mission projects. St. John, Wolsey, assembles health kits, school kits and layette sets for OGT. Mount Calvary, Huron, sets aside days for quilting and packing clothing. Items are donated to OGT, Slumberland, and Sleep in Heavenly Peace. A quilting group at Zion,



ABOVE: Spring Rally attendees packed items for OGT.

Left: Janice Wagner (left) and her daughter, Donna Bartel, make hand puppets to be given to children at the Puppet Place.

Wessington Springs, donates quilts to local charities.

We are so thankful to our mighty Lord for all He blesses us with. We praise and serve Him with gladness!

Ann Cruse • Huron Zone President

Standing up for life

LCMS pastors and laypeople were well-represented at the Life Defense Fund luncheon at the Country Club of Sioux Falls on Nov. 28. Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, district president, co-hosted the event with Rev. Donald DeGroot, Sioux Falls Diocese Bishop.

We stand with many fellow Christians in South Dakota in affirming life from conception to natural birth and in opposing efforts to amend the South Dakota state constitution to permit abortions up until the time of birth.

Visit lifedefensefund.com for more information.



Pastor Sailer addresses those in attendance.



From left, pictured are Revs. Nabil Nour (Trinity, Hartford) and Tom Christopher (St. Martins, Alexandria, and Trinity, Spencer); and Steve Perkins, member of the LDF board Memorial, Sioux Falls.



State Rep. Jon Hansen (left) is pictured with Bishop DeGroot.

Mount Olive welcomes Pastor Birtell



Rev. Brad Birtell was installed as pastor of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Watertown, on Dec. 10. He previously served as pastor of St. John's, Columbus, Neb. The South Dakota District welcomes him and his wife, Christie. And, most of all, we thank our God for providing gifts for His people. Pictured are, from left, Revs. Nathan Neugebauer, Matthew Wurm, Tim Rynearson, Brad Birtell, Larry Johnson, Micah Bauer, Dr. Scott Sailer, Tom Mueller, Arthur Drehman, Dr. Chris Davis and Iver Possehl.



Make plans now to attend the 2024 Spring Pastors Conference, scheduled for April 29-May 1 at Cedar Shores Resort in Chamberlain.

Rev. Corey Aker (Faith, Sioux Falls) serves as chairman and Rev. Jonah Domenichelli (missionary) is secretary.

Stay tuned for more information or call 605-361-1514 with questions.





Connected in Christ

On Dec. 2, youth and church workers of Circuit 1 gathered at St. Paul's, Aberdeen, for a retreat. This was the second year of the retreat.

The retreat connects our young people with one another and reinforces the instruction already taking place in our congregations. The event began with Matins and ended with Vespers. Sessions were divided between high school and catechism students. High school students studied various topics and the catechism students reviewed the first three parts of the catechism.

Students enjoyed lunch and games. The event served as a reminder to our young people that they are not alone in their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior.

It is a blessing to bring these youth and church workers together for worship, study and fellowship. We pray that in these small ways the Lord would only continue to be at work to root them in Christ Jesus forever.



Above, Rev. Ray Anderson, St. Paul's, Leola, leads Matins; and below, DCE Michael Leapley, St. Paul's, Aberdeen, works with catechism students.



2025 Gathering headed to New Orleans



Planning is underway for the next LCMS Youth Gathering, to be held July 19–23, 2025, in New Orleans. The theme will be “ENDURE” and is based on Heb. 12:1–3.

The Gathering office has been very busy preparing for the 2025 event. There is already a significant amount of information available on the Gathering website for adult leaders, volunteers, participants and their families. To see the latest news and information, visit lcmsgathering.com



ENDURE

JULY 19-23, 2025; NEW ORLEANS, LA

or facebook.com/lcmsgathering.

The LCMS Youth Gathering provides thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God’s people to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. During the five days of the Gathering, youth spend

time together in God’s Word, worship, service, and fellowship with others from across the Synod. This event is organized by LCMS Youth Ministry.

NATIONAL24 is July 21-24

The National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference (NATIONAL24) will be held July 21-24 in New Orleans.

NATIONAL24 is a standalone youth ministry practitioner conference, but also provides an opportunity to prepare for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering. The four-day conference is a great opportunity for:

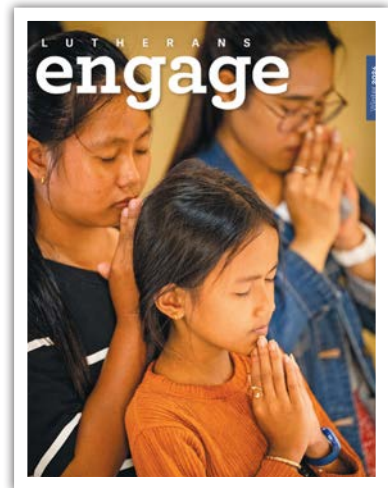
- ▶ Adult leaders planning to take a group to New Orleans in 2025 and wanting to familiarize themselves with area hotels, facilities and restaurants.
- ▶ First-time adult leaders desiring to connect with other new and seasoned adult leaders.
- ▶ Adult leaders looking for training and net-

works which support your service as a youth ministry practitioner.

- ▶ Youth (high school) leaders in congregations looking for an opportunity to sharpen their skills and meet other LCMS young leaders through YouthLead training.
- ▶ Young adults (ages 18-25) looking to serve their congregation and the opportunity to serve the community of New Orleans through a young-adult servant event.

Adult participants will receive a complimentary registration to the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

Registration for NATIONAL24 will remain open until the event fills or on July 1. For more information, visit lcmsgathering.com/national24.



‘There is clear teaching’

A handful of church workers building a church body in Cambodia. A missionary pastor reaching out to Mormon country. A refugee who was ordained as the first Lutheran pastor from his community. This issue of *Lutherans Engage the World* highlights a few of the ways that God is calling and equipping His people to serve in unique contexts. The issue also includes articles about the ongoing disaster response on the island of Maui, Hawaii, following a devastating fire in August; the rollout of the new Spanish-language hymnal, *Himnario Luterano*; and Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa, a hub for telling the church about the work of the Synod’s international missionaries.

Thanks be to God for faithful Lutherans around the world, such as Cambodian Pastor Bun (Peter) Phanna, who reminds us that “with Luther’s Small Catechism, with the Augsburg Confession, ... there is clear teaching. There is no doubt.”

Read the issue online at engage.lcms.org. If you aren’t currently receiving the magazine but would like to, visit engage.lcms.org/subscribe to sign up for a free subscription. Both individual and bulk subscriptions (for congregations) are available.