



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

‘Good food for your soul’



2024, that price rose to an annual cost just under \$1,000. A congregation providing 250 subscriptions would be faced with a \$2,300 increase in 2024, compared to its annual *LW* expense in 2022.

When the voting ended on Dec. 31, Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown, district secretary, reported that 75 of 106 congregations (70.75%) had cast official ballots. Fifty-four (54) congregations voted to rescind the resolution and thereby end the requirement of congregations providing *LW* subscriptions. Twenty-one (21) congregations voted “no” (to not rescind the resolution). The resolution passed by a 72% majority.

As a result of that vote, this March issue of *The Lutheran Witness* is the last issue you’ll receive under the subscription system the district has had in place since 1976. Your congregation is no longer obligated to provide the magazine to you.

However, I hope you will continue to subscribe to this informative official periodical of our LCMS church body. The magazine is solidly biblical, flowing from our confessional Lutheran theology. It’s good food for your soul.

The district section, of course, is more “newsy.” It keeps you informed about past and upcoming events in South Dakota, and it features ministries and congregations faithfully serving and responding to the Holy Spirit’s direction.

Please check with your church office or your church leaders about plans your congregation may have for individuals and families to subscribe to *The Lutheran Witness*.

Your servant in Christ • Pastor Sailer

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

I hope you will continue your **LW** subscription



By Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer
South Dakota District President

At the direction of the district’s Board of Directors, I took the action of calling for a congregational vote on whether to rescind a district convention resolution from 1976 that required South Dakota District congregations to pay for subscriptions to *The Lutheran Witness (LW)* for their members.

The board wanted me to take this action because the cost of a year’s subscription to the *LW* had nearly doubled from 2022 to 2024, thereby creating unexpected and much higher expenses for the congregations and the district. For example, a congregation providing subscriptions for 50 households in 2022 paid an annual subscription cost of \$562. In

Headed to Germany

Rev. Jonah Domenichelli was installed as an LCMS missionary to Germany on Jan. 21. The service was held at Trinity, rural Hartford. Rev. Thomas Christopher, Freeman Circuit visitor, performed the installation. Rev. Nabil Nour, Trinity senior pastor, was the liturgist and Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, district president, was the officiant.

Pastor Domenichelli will work alongside the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Synod's partner church in Germany, to plant a church that serves locals, expats and members of the U.S. military living abroad.

Rev. Domenichelli had served as pastor of Risen Savior, Tea, since 2020. The Domenichellis will head to Germany sometime this summer. Pastor Domenichelli is one of several missionaries supported by the South Dakota District.



The Domenichelli family: Pastor Jonah and his wife, Renee, are pictured with their children, (from left) Isabella, Abigail, Phoebe, Isaiah and Gabriel.



From left, Revs. Corey Aker, Jeremy Richert, Kurt Laskowsky, Nabil Nour, Jonah Domenichelli, Zachary Courie, Dr. Scott Sailer, Adam Welton and Thomas Christopher.

CALL INFORMATION

Rev. Daniel Suelzle, Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel, Fargo, N.D., is prayerfully considering a call to Our Savior, Aberdeen, and St. John, Columbia, Jan. 21.

Rev. Doug Slavens, Memorial, Sioux Falls, declined a call to Crosspointe, Fargo (Jan. 19). He is prayerfully considering a call to Rock, Seward, Neb. (Jan. 23).

Faith, Parkston, and St. Peter, Clayton, have decided to call a pastoral candidate from the seminary this spring.

Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, senior pastor, Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, declined a call to Calvary, Wray, Colo., Jan. 16.

VACANCIES

Senior pastor

- Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls

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



Dual parish welcomes new senior pastor

Rev. Ryan Drevlow was installed as senior pastor of St. Paul's, Aberdeen, and St. Paul's, Leola, on Jan. 14. He joins Revs. Jacob Smith and Ray Anderson, and DCE Michael Leapley on the ministry staff. Ryan is a 2009 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and he most recently served at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls. He also serves as district life coordinator.



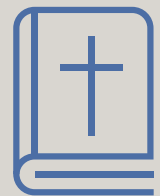
From left, Revs. Jordon Andreasen, Kevin Moore, Dr. Scott Sailer, Dr. Alan Ludwig, Ray Anderson, Ryan Drevlow, Bret Bierman and Jacob Smith.



Pastor Drevlow and his wife, Laura (left), are pictured with their children, (from left) Eli, Wylynn, Esther, Moses, Gracelynn and Joy.

Bible Bowl is March 23

Test your knowledge on Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Psalm 118 and the Apostles' Creed at the 2024 Bible Bowl, to be held at 10 a.m., March 23, at Faith, Pierre. Rev. Marcus Ring, pastor St. John, Gregory, will emcee the competition.



All questions come from the ESV translation. More specifically, Pastor Ring uses a *Faith Alive Student Bible* (Concordia Publishing House, 2011).

For more information, or to receive a link to the registration page, email Pastor Ring at revmring@gmail.com.

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.



PATTY'S PONDERINGS

The pure and beautiful words of God



Patty Peters
LWML South Dakota
District President

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. PSALM 51:7

As I sit in my house and look out at the fresh white snow that is piling up in my backyard, I think of a dear Christian woman from Costa Rica who had never seen snow until she came to South Dakota. She shared this verse with me. It is one of my favorite verses because it tells me that through the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, God removed the red stains of sin that are on me. In Isaiah 1:18, God says our "sins are like scarlet ... they are red like crimson."

St. John heard this:

"These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

REVELATION 7:14

What powerful words given to us in the Bible! They

give us assurance that as believers in Jesus as the Son of God and our Redeemer, we receive this free gift of eternal life, which starts at our Baptism. We should be exclaiming this with great joy because we know this is true, and we want the world to know that Jesus died for all.

The Bible verse for the LWML South Dakota District Convention (June 7-8) is:

Though you do not now see 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. 1 PETER 1:8-9

I pray that you are filled with this inexpressible joy as you travel through the penitential weeks of Lent and Holy Week to the glorious Resurrection Day, when Jesus broke the bonds of death and burst forth from the tomb. He did this out of His great love for you and for me. Thanks be to God!

MILBANK ZONE REPORT



The Milbank Zone held a Fall Rally and Workshop Oct. 21 at Mount Olive, Watertown. The theme was "You Shall Teach Them," based on Deut. 6:7. Rev. Thomas Mueller, pastor of Emanuel, Sisseton, and Zion, Waubay, led an informative and thought-provoking Bible study on the theme. We can teach our children, grandchildren, church family and community in many ways by what we do and what we say.

A representative from Haven Center, a

nonprofit medical pregnancy resource center, spoke about its mission, goals and current needs. Haven Center's mission is to provide men and women faced with unplanned pregnancy the knowledge and resources necessary to make an informed decision that is guided by truth.

District LWML President Patty Peters surprised us with a visit and updated us on the district's activities, missions and mites.

Attendees also enjoyed an informative slide show on the Ark Encounter museum in Williamstown, Ky.

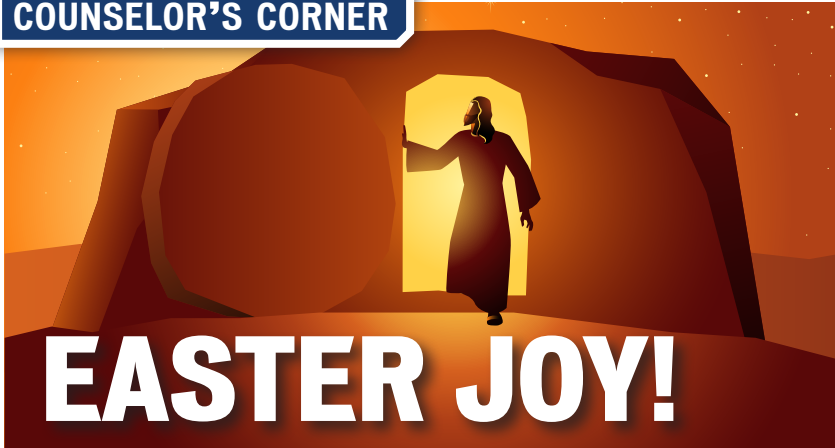
New officers elected were:

- ▶ Joyce Kasuske (Emanuel, Milbank), VP of Servant Resources;
- ▶ Dorothy Bassingthwaite (Mount Olive, Watertown), VP of Human Care;
- ▶ Sue Magedanz (Mount Olive, Watertown), secretary; and
- ▶ Nancy Hanson (Our Savior's, Wilmot), treasurer.

For the ingathering, the zone collected hygiene-kit items for the upcoming Guatemala water outreach mission trip. Two of our district LWML members are among those planning to go on the mission. Our zone assembled more than 60 hygiene kits. The ladies of Mount Olive, Watertown, made six handmade quilts that will be given to those in need.

Jeanette Gravidahl
Milbank Zone President

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



EASTER JOY!

A cemetery is a difficult place to confess. You might weep, reminisce or embrace someone, but it is not an easy place to open your mouth and confess, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."



Rev. Brian Mosemann
LWML District Counselor

Why is that? Is it because our emotions get the best of us? Are we afraid of saying the wrong thing? Perhaps. But more likely is that the cemetery seems like the enemy's trophy case. Every tombstone appears to be another medal on death's uniform. No matter how valiantly we fight for life, death always comes out on top.

That is the way it looks to the naked human eye. Looks, however, can be deceiving. The naked human eye sees the cemetery, the coffin and the corpse and is easily deceived into thinking death has won again. But therein lies the problem: the naked human eye. What that eye needs is clothing, the kind that will enable it to see beyond the cemetery, the coffin and the corpse, to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. That naked human eye needs to be clothed with these words from the mouth of Jesus:

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone

who lives and believes in me shall never die." JOHN 11:25-26

With that simple confession, a cemetery is no longer seen as a place of defeat, but rather a place of victory in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Just ask Mary and Martha, whose brother, Lazarus, fell ill and died (JOHN 11:1-53). To Mary, to Martha and to us, who Christ is becomes abundantly clear in that cemetery near Bethany. Mary still didn't quite understand. She didn't want the stone rolled back; no need to let loose the stench of her brother's decomposing body. But at Jesus' insistence, she relented and the tomb was opened. There, death ceased to matter. Life itself was present. There was no need to wait for the last day for the resurrection of the body, for there stood the One who is the resurrection and the life.

In the midst of that crowd gathered at the cemetery, the one who believed in Christ was the dead man. Mary had heard, Martha had heard and the crowd had heard, yet their hearts were still crowded with doubt and grief. But the dead man, he believed. Lazarus heeded the Word of Christ: "Lazarus, come out" (JOHN 11:43).

The dead man was ripped from the arms of death by the One whom death could not hold in the tomb. He who is the resurrection, who is resurrected, raised Lazarus. He is also the One who is our forgiveness, who is our salvation, and who is our resurrection and life everlasting. Easter joy!

Time to collect
FOR INGATHERING

It's that time to start thinking about the ingathering at the LWML South Dakota District Convention, to be held June 7-8 in Aberdeen, under the theme "Inexpressible Joy, Matchless Savior."

For **Safe Harbor**, a domestic violence shelter and advocacy organization that provides services in northeastern South Dakota, we are seeking:

- Ladies' deodorant
- Brooms and dust pans
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Scrubbing brushes
- Facial tissues
- Floor cleaner
- All-purpose cleaning spray
- Bath towels and kitchen towels
- Zip lock bags of all sizes
- Swiffer starter sets
- Disinfecting wipes
- Toilet bowl cleaner and brushes

For **Journey Home**, a housing support organization which aims to provide for the whole person — physically, intellectually and socially, emotionally, financially and spiritually — based on the love and wisdom of Jesus Christ, we are seeking:

- Peanut butter, coffee, toilet paper and non-perishable food
- Hats, bed sheets (any size) and clothes for babies, children, women and elderly men
- Used pots and pans, silverware and drinking glasses

Dianne Hemminger
VP of Special Focus Ministries



ATTENTION YOUNG WOMEN:

Could you be the next LWML Young Woman Representative?

“Serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” DEUTERONOMY 10:12

As Lutheran Women in Mission, we support each other. As we build relationships with other women, it is essential to make connections by finding common interests and shared experiences.

The LWML emphasizes the importance of affirming each woman’s relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives through active mission ministries and through support of global missions.

Becoming a Young Woman Representative (YWR) provides connections with other young women from around South Dakota and invites connections with experienced women in mission. Together, we can serve the Lord and others by participating in a variety of servant events and the gathering of gifts from the heart. Being a YWR uplifts your soul as you worship with other women, participate in Bible studies, and sing songs of praise.

If this is something that appeals

to you as a young woman ages 18 to 35, please consider applying to be a YWR for the South Dakota District Convention, to be held June 7-8 in Aberdeen.

To apply:

1. Download the application at sdlwml.org/young-women.
2. Ask a member of your local LWML group or zone to write a recommendation letter for you.
3. Email the application and recommendation letter to laurel.schamber@k12.sd.us by March 31.

Please note that to ease the costs of attending the convention, financial support is available from your local LWML group and zone.

I hope that you will prayerfully consider applying to be a Young Woman Representative at this year’s convention. If you have questions or would like to know more about the LWML, please contact me or a member of your local group.

Laurel Chamber
YWR Committee Chairman

Opportunity for youth!

Mount Calvary, Brookings, invites youth throughout South Dakota for a special trip to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Williamstown, Ky. The group will stay two nights at nearby Potter’s Ranch, with additional overnight stops at Concordia University Wisconsin; Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.; and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

The trip is intended for youth who will have completed seventh through 12th grade, and their chaperones. The cost is \$850 per person and includes everything except five meals. The trip will leave from and return to Sioux Falls. For more information, visit mountcalvary1.org/kentuckytrip.

‘FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE’

Reflections from an LFL conference

By Erika Peterson
LFL Events Coordinator

The 2023 Lutherans For Life National Conference was held Oct. 11–13 in Erlanger, Ky., just outside Cincinnati. Of the 277 people who attended, more than half were first-time attendees. Dozens of children and young people were in attendance, all gathered around the 2023 conference theme, “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made” (from Psalm 139).

The keynote addresses by pro-life speaker Rebecca Kiessling and Rev. Mark Chavez shared incredibly personal journeys through intimate life issues. Rebecca told of how she was conceived in rape, nearly aborted, and then adopted into a loving home. She has since become a fierce advocate for children conceived in rape, and she is a strong supporter of adoption and the For Life movement.

Rev. Chavez, pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church (NALC), Lancaster, Pa., spoke of finding the Lord and His joy as he walked with his wife through a terminal illness.

Additionally, experts presented on immigration, human trafficking, speaking truth into distortions of human sexuality, and reaching youth and adults for life.

Conference attendees visited the Creation Museum and the updated “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made” exhibit for a day of immersion into God’s truth of how we are created. A visit to the Ark Encounter brought many smiles as conference attendees discovered the wonder of the life-size model of Noah’s Ark and reflected on God’s mercy throughout the ages.

For audio and video from the 2023 conference, visit lutheransforlife.org and click the “Conferences” tab. Scroll down to “Past Conferences” and click the link.

Regional LFL conferences to be held in 2024 under the theme “Life Shines in Darkness” are:

Regional Conference Northeast
Sept. 14 • Immanuel, Bristol, Conn.

Regional Conference Midwest
Oct. 12 • Hope, Shawnee, Kan.

Regional Conference Southeast
Nov. 9 • Zion, Winter Garden, Fla.

For more information, contact Erika at epeterson@lutheransforlife.org.

(This article was edited by Kate Meadows.)

LCMS South Dakota District Congregational Year-to-Date Report of Mission Receipts for the 12 months ending Jan. 14, 2024, compared to the 12 months ending Jan. 14, 2023

Table with columns: City, Congregation, Comm. Members, 2023 Intention, 12 months 2023, 12 months 2022, Avg/Per 2023, Avg/Per 2022. Includes sub-sections for Circuit 1 - Aberdeen, Circuit 2 - Watertown, Circuit 3 - Pierre, and Circuit 4 - Black Hills.

Table with columns: City, Congregation, Comm. Members, 2023 Intention, 12 months 2023, 12 months 2022, Avg/Per 2023, Avg/Per 2022. Includes sub-sections for Circuit 5 - Mitchell, Circuit 6 - Freeman, Circuit 7 - Sioux Falls, and Circuit 8 - Yankton.

1 \$2,000 of Our Savior, Aberdeen, is for 2022 missions
2 \$3,500 of St. John, Bitton, is for 2022 missions
3 \$2,500 of Faith, Parkston, mission intention was paid in 2022
Comm. Members: Communicant membership as of Oct. 10, 2022 per LCMS congregational statistics report



REGISTRATION OPEN FOR SERVANT EVENTS

Registration is now open to volunteers who wish to participate in an LCMS Servant Event this year. Hosted by LCMS congregations and Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) across the country, LCMS Servant Events provide youth with opportunities to serve their communities, develop skills and relationships, and display God’s mercy to their neighbors through service projects. Events will begin in 2024 as early as March and continue through August.

In a testimonial on the Servant Event website, the Rev. Michael Pottschmidt, former pastor of Trinity, Richmond, Va., writes, “Hosting an LCMS Servant Event makes ignoring or avoiding God’s mission impossible. Congregation leaders and members must be intentional and deliberate about seeking local opportunities to proclaim and demonstrate the saving love of Jesus. And how invigorating it is for all involved to roll up their sleeves and join with fellow servants — youth and adults alike — in accomplishing this task. That enthusiasm for mission continues long after the Servant Event is over — those volunteers become leaders in finding ways to share their faith and serve others.”

Servant Event leaders met at the LCMS International Center Nov. 13–15, 2023,

to share ideas, receive training and prepare to host their respective events. Among the events taking place this summer are:

- ▶ **“Forts and Sorts at Youth Haven Ranch,”** hosted by Messiah Lutheran Church in Holt, Mich.;
- ▶ **“Adventures in Colorado: Dirty Jobs Servant Event,”** hosted by Lutheran Valley Retreat in Florissant, Colo.; and
- ▶ **“Beholding God’s Miracles in the High Country,”** hosted by Camp Linn Haven and Mountainside Lutheran Church in Linville, N.C.

See a full list of events and register at lcms-servantevents.org.

Many Servant Events challenge youth to step outside their comfort zones and get their hands dirty. As suggested by the name, the “Adventures in Colorado: Dirty Jobs Servant Event” will include trail building and maintenance at the retreat center, moving dirt and working on drainage around buildings, and even rebuilding a retaining wall. Volunteers will also have a chance to participate in challenging adventure options at the camp, such as rafting and rappelling.

Other events provide opportunities for youth to serve and connect with those in need.

Volunteers at “Forts and Sorts” will perform construction and maintenance to benefit underprivileged children at Youth Haven Ranch and may also have a chance to interact and share the Gospel with the campers. At the “Shepherding Sheep Volunteer Event” hosted by Camp Wartburg in Waterloo, Ill., volunteers will serve as companions for developmentally disabled children and adults during a five-day summer camp.

Along with the chance to serve, Servant Events provide an opportunity for youth to bond and grow in their faith through shared activities and Bible study. Youth will also learn from mentors and see the witness of ministry leaders and church workers in vocations that some of the youth may be called to some day as well.

“The goals for the youth at the servant event are to grow in their faith, experience their faith in action by working at Youth Haven Ranch, and build community and relationships with each other,” says Jo Ellen Miskowski, host of the “Forts and Sorts” event. “Each year has been such a blessing for the youth, volunteers and staff. Our evaluations each year show that the youth participants enjoy the event. They often make comments regarding their growth in faith, relationships, learning new skills and what they can accomplish with the help of God.”

“In the summer of 1989 I went on my first servant event,” recalls the Rev. Steve Hayden, senior pastor of Lutheran Church of St. John, Quincy, Ill. “Entering my senior year, I was considering a future in pastoral ministry, so I thought a trip like this might be a good experience and a lot of fun. Little did I know the way it would transform my life.

“To any congregation considering getting a group together, or any individual who has always thought about participating in a Servant Event ... do it!”

This article is reprinted from the February 2024 issue of LCMS Reporter and was written by Caitlin Magness.



For a schedule and descriptions of the 2024 LCMS Servant Events, and to register, visit lcms-servantevents.org.