



DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA



Serve your neighbor, lessen evil

In our vocation as citizens, we serve our neighbors by running for office and voting. We'll be doing the latter by mailing in our ballots or by going to a polling place on Nov. 5.

Because you potentially serve your neighbor, along with yourself, by way of ballot measures, your vote is important.

Because you potentially "lessen evil" (words I heard initially from John Stonestreet of the Colson Center), your vote can make a difference, even a life-and-death difference.

In South Dakota, we will find Amendment G on the ballot. It is certainly about a life-and-death issue. If it passes, the state's constitution would be changed to allow for the killing of far more unborn babies, because it would



Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer
District President

broaden the legality of abortion up to and including the time of birth.

That is evil.

If the amendment fails, we will lessen evil. Our Constitution would then continue to allow for abortions only if they are necessary to save the life of the mother.

Before I go any further, I need to tell you that Christians and pastors and congregations are within their rights to speak out concerning issues on the ballot and even about the positions of candidates. Concerning Amendment G, therefore, we can speak out because God's Word speaks to life's creation and life's ending. It speaks to our need to help, not hurt, our neighbor. We can declare to the world that life is God-given. That it is precious.

That we are called to guard the lives of our precious little neighbors still in their mothers' wombs, because Jesus' call to "love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 19:19, et al) carries with it no age restrictions.

Additionally, we can speak out because our government and the IRS maintain that, by law, pastors and congregations may address ballot issues and the positions of candidates on the issues. But they may not endorse or oppose specific candidates or political parties.

I am bold to tell you that I will be voting "no" on proposed Amendment G. I hope you will vote "no," too, as a way of loving your neighbor and lessening evil.

I hope our congregations and pastors will encourage God's people to do the same.

Not long ago, I wrote to our pastors in the South Dakota District and put before them this question:

"Is the pulpit the place from which to address Amendment G?"

My answer? "Perhaps, if very skillfully and sensitively done, with the pastor especially speaking about God's precious gift and creation of life."

I also gave this warning: Sometimes, the people in the pews will automatically disregard this public proclamation as the church having no business addressing political issues, even if skillfully, lovingly and sensitively done. A few people might even get mad and leave.

See **MESSAGE**, page 7



Pictured are, from left, Revs. Adam Welton, Dr. Scott Sailer, Brian Mosemann, Joshua Mork, Joshua Parrish, Tom Christopher and Tim Rynearson.

Dual parish welcomes new pastor

Rev. Joshua Mork was installed as pastor of Our Savior, Madison, and St. John, Howard, on July 14 at Our Savior. Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, district president, was the officiant and preacher. Rev. Tim Rynearson, who served as the dual-parish vacancy pastor, was the liturgist, and Rev. Adam Welton served as lector.

Pastor Mork recently served as associate

pastor of First Lutheran Church, Papillion, Neb., his first call since graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 2020. He is married to Samantha (“Sam”), whom he met while both attended Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn.

We welcome the Morks to South Dakota and to our beloved district!

‘I put my trust in You’



Children attending vacation Bible school (VBS) at St. John’s, Groton, this summer were encouraged to face their fears while trusting in God, leaning heavily into Psalm 56:3: “Whenever I’m afraid, I put my trust in You!” Many St. John’s members volunteered their time and donated food and other items, as well as helped with evening meals.

Children got to know cartoon characters like Sam, a camp counselor, and Lu, a lightning bug puppet. They explored timeless Bible stories that show how Old and New Testament campers trusted God in the face of their own fears to do great things in His name.

These stories taught the children about those in the Bible who experienced the gift of a trusting relationship with God. It also taught the children to trust that God will lead the way, share His wisdom, give us peace and spark joy as they celebrate the Good News of Jesus in their own lives and in the lives of others.

Special thanks to helpers Amanda Zimmerman, Jackie Iverson, Emily Sternhagen, Krissi Zak, Becca Johnson, Claire Schuelke, Rev. Jeremy and Diane Yeadon, Abby Yeadon and Sklyer Godel, as well as the many individuals who donated food for the week to make St. John’s VBS a great success!

CALL INFORMATION

Rev. Chad Schopp, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., admission staff, accepted a call as senior pastor to Our Savior, Aberdeen, and St. John, Columbia, Aug. 31.

Rev. Samuel Thole, Peace, Brookings; Redeemer, Flandreau; and Zion, White, is prayerfully considering a call to Immanuel, Lakefield, Minn.

Rev. Bradley Felix, Trinity, Virginia, Minn., and Grace, Chisholm, Minn., declined a call to St. John, Britton, and St. Paul, Ferney, Sept. 8.

Rev. Daniel Grimmer, Zion, Mitchell, declined a call to Trinity, Clinton, Mo., Aug. 25.

Rev. Jason Letsche, First, Kingsley, Iowa, declined a call to Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls, Aug. 31.

Rev. Ray Greenseth, Messiah, Murdo; St. Paul, Draper; and Zion, Presho, declined a call to Immanuel, Eagle Bend, Minn., and St. Matthew, Clarissa, Minn., Aug. 11.

Rev. Toby Heller, Concordia, Beulah, N.D., declined a call to Zion, Canistota, and St. John, Montrose, Aug. 2.

Rev. Greg Hinners, St. John, Norris; St. Peter, Midland; and Our Redeemer, Philip, declined a call to Zion, Power, Mont., and St. John, Fairfield, Mont., Aug. 2.

VACANCIES

Sole pastor

- Zion Canistota/St. John, Montrose
- Concordia Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- St. Paul, Freeman
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- Risen Savior, Tea
- St. John, Wagner/Trinity, Fairfax
- St. John, Britton/ St. Paul, Ferney
- Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls
- Zion, Chamberlain



Youth focus on who we are in Christ



“Who Am I?” was the 2024 Higher Things conference theme. Youth from South Dakota District congregations attended conferences, held June 25–28 at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW), and July 23–26 at Lewis and Clark College in Portland.

At CUW, Flame, a Grammy-nominated hip-hop artist, was a plenary speaker. Flame grew up in the inner-city neighborhood of East St. Louis, Ill. Through study of God’s Word, he made his way out of Calvinism and completed a master’s degree in theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

At the Portland conference, Rev. Merritt Demski, pastor of St. John Hanover, Alta, Iowa, was the plenary speaker. Pastor Demski grounded the youth in faithful and loving conversations with those struggling with their identity as male and female.

Each conference strengthened the youth and leaders in who they are in Christ Jesus and in the world through worship and teaching.



▲ Members of Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk; Resurrection, Sioux Falls; Mount Calvary, Huron; Peace, Rapid City; Our Redeemer, Rapid City; St. Paul, Aberdeen; Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls; and Faith, Orange City, Iowa, attended the conference at CUW.

◀ Members of St. Paul, Spearfish, and Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, attended the conference at Lewis and Clark College in Portland.



Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown, pastor of St. Paul, Spearfish, presents during the Higher Things confirmation retreat in August.

Building on the Higher Things conference theme of “Who Am I?” the district confirmation retreat Aug. 9–10 at Mount Calvary, Huron, centered on “Identity.” Rev. Dr. Chris Ascher, pastor of Resurrection, Sioux Falls, was the plenary speaker. He spoke about the importance of our godly identity in the three estates of family, church and government.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown, pastor of St. Paul, Spearfish, led a breakout session on marriage as a picture of our identity in Christ. Vicar David Christensen, serving at Zion, Mitchell, taught on the differences between the LCMS

and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, pastor of Divine Shepherd Black Hawk, spoke about being a man ... a Godly man.

Breakout sessions were held in between worship opportunities, which included Vespers, Evening Prayer, Matins and the Divine Service. Knocker ball, volleyball, corn hole and many other activities kept the youth busy.

Thanks to Mount Calvary for hosting and to the great cooks for keeping everyone well fed!

Join us in 2025 (Aug. 8-9) at St. John, Gregory, for the next South Dakota District Higher Things Confirmation Retreat.

Moments with Mary Jo



Getty Images

A **WORD** needed to get through the day

When I agreed to have my name placed on the ballot to serve as the district president for 2024-2028, I thought to myself, “Am I the right person for this?” I have served in many positions within the district but had never imagined myself as president. After much prayer — and “no” often running through my head — I decided to put my doubts into God’s hands and let Him lead me through this journey.



Mary Jo Stier
LWML South Dakota
District President

One of my main concerns about being a leader is that I am a terrible procrastinator, as many who have worked with me know. I am not a writer. I struggle trying to come up with the right words to say the right thing. Each morning as I start my workday, I open my email and there is the LWML Mustard Seed daily devotion. On many occasions, the devotion for that day is exactly what I needed to hear. It reminds me that I am not in control.

The Aug. 9 devotion shared:

God promises to be there and to be our strength to handle everything this world tries to throw at us. Alone, it’s overwhelming; but we are not alone! He is always there guiding, encouraging and sometimes even carrying us through our daily trials.

What a wonderful reminder that I am not alone, and neither are you. We are all God’s children.

If you haven’t signed up for the Mustard Seed daily devotions, I encourage you to do so. You can sign up to receive a daily Mustard Seed email at lwml.org/mustard-seed-devotions. The devotion may just be that one thing you needed to hear that day.



Remember to send your mites

Wow! It’s hard to believe I have been your financial secretary for two years already! I have enjoyed getting to meet a lot of you at conventions, Christian Life workshops, and rallies.

Please remember to send in your mites monthly. This allows the LWML South Dakota District to fund the Mission Grants we selected at convention in June, and also to help fund the 2023–2025 national Mission Grants. To God be the glory!

Paula Warren • Financial Secretary

ABERDEEN ZONE UPDATE

Our zone spent most of the winter and spring months getting ready for our district convention. One volunteer made sure to enter all the personal information into a database so that we could print name tags and register participants. Other volunteers made decorations; signed up vendors and helped them with set-up; coordinated and helped with servant events, Gifts from the Heart and the ingathering; and created convention banners.

There is a lot of work that goes into a convention and we had a fantastic event with a lots of attendees, wonderful speakers and generous donors. The funds and items collected will support our missions and local agencies that help the needy in our area.

The Aberdeen Zone has been planning its Fall Rally, which was scheduled for Sept. 28.

Betty Ochsner
Aberdeen Zone President



COUNSELOR'S CORNER



God does the impossible

October brings many events and much rejoicing in the Word and work of our Lord Jesus. There is LWML Sunday, a Christian Life Workshop (Oct. 12) and the Reformation!

“Ready to Serve,” based on Luke 1:38, is the theme for LWML Sunday. Mary’s response to the announcement that she, a virgin, will conceive and bear a son who will be the Son of God is remarkable. After gently suggesting that such a thing is impossible, and being reassured that with God, nothing is impossible, she agrees:

“Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” LUKE 1:38

Though this reaction seems logical (when an angel tells you something, you agree to it), it is actually unique.

When God told Abraham that Sarah was going to have a child, Sarah, who overheard, laughed! You’ve probably heard the saying, “We make plans, and God laughs.” It seems it is the other way around. “God makes plans, and we



Rev. Brian Mosemann
LWML District Counselor

laugh.” The reason we laugh is because we don’t believe God would ever do what seems so far-fetched for us to imagine.

God’s plans always seem impossible. Giving birth to His Son through a virgin. Bringing John the Baptist into the world through a woman who was barren. Making Abraham and Sarah — an old couple who could no longer have children — ancestors to many nations. Bringing the nation of Israel

out of slavery in Egypt, and not around the Red Sea, but through it. This is what God does! The angel said:

“For nothing will be impossible with God.” LUKE 1:37

God does the impossible in showing us that He is a loving, caring God. God generally grants life through fertile women. Yet God chose to bring a prophet and our Savior out of barrenness and virginity.

God accomplishes the impossible, including saving you, all according to His Word.



PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

How can we out give the giver? On our own, we can’t get more from the Lord than what He has given us. We pass on to the next generation what we have learned from previous generations.

Records of events, pictures of family and saving faith are important things we want to pass down to the next generations. Our Lutheran Women in Mission are on that mission. We want to share the “Inexpressible Joy” we have in the Lord by preserving what is important.

We want to look back and catch a glimpse of a challenging time that our parents and grandparents faced. We want to know how our loved ones handled these situations, both difficult and joyful. Where did they find their help and comfort?

We want to preserve these things, and we want those things that are special to us in the here and now to be preserved as well. Reporting your events and gatherings helps us to see what is working to bring people together as one body of Christ, across the generations. Names are important so we know who has done what in our congregations. Don’t forget the quiet ones who are our prayer warriors!

Please share your history of activities from this past year. Reports are due to me by Nov. 1.

Lurene Denke • Archivist-Historian



Mercy for Iowa

On June 22, floodwaters from the Little Sioux River inundated Trinity, Hawarden.

Joshua Lowe

By Rev. Dr. Steven Turner

President, Iowa District West



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My heart is full of thankfulness for the outpouring of generous support by the members of our district and beyond for our disaster relief fund following the tornadoes that damaged homes, infrastructure and lives.

It is with a heavy heart that I find myself reaching out to you with another appeal. As you may know, calamity struck again with the floods in western Iowa. On June 24, I visited Trinity, Hawarden, and Christ the King and First English, both in Spencer. Trinity suffered major damage to both the parsonage and church building. Christ the King also suffered major damage to its church building.

It appears that First English was spared. However, both Pastor (Alex) Kaldahl's and Pastor (Michael) McGinley's homes suffered major damage. (Pastor Kaldahl shepherds Trinity, Hinton, and First English, Spencer. Pastor McGinley serves at Christ the King, Spencer.)

This brief assessment does not take into consideration all the families, individuals and churches impacted by these flood waters. Please keep all affected in your

prayers. A major difficulty with this disaster is that most homeowner and church insurance does not cover damage caused by flood waters.

In times like these, our faith community has an opportunity to come together and help. We are reaching out to you today to request support for our disaster relief efforts. Your generous donation will directly impact the lives of those affected by this disaster.

How you can help:

- **Keep our communities in your prayers.** Encourage your congregation to pray for healing, strength and resilience during this challenging time.
- **Volunteer.** Organized efforts will provide physical assistance through Iowa District West Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT). If you are trained or would like to be trained by LERT, visit lcms-lert.org. All LERT communication can be found on this site. I also encourage individual congregations to organize their own volunteer efforts and communicate with individual community leaders to find out their specific needs.
- **Offer financial support.** You may wish to consider a door offering. Your contribution will go toward emergency supplies, shelter and long-term recovery efforts. You may donate:
By mail—Send your check, payable

to Iowa District West with “Disaster Relief” on the memo line, to: Iowa District West; 409 Kenyon Road, Suite B; Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Online—Go to iowadistrictwest.org and click on “Donate” at the top of the page to make a secure donation. Select the “Disaster Relief” option.

In person—Bring your donation to the district office (address above) during business hours (8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.).

The Sun reflected through water gives us a rainbow. And God said:

“This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” **GENESIS 9:11-13**

In times like this, we remember the rainbow and the promises of God's divine protection. But we have so much more than just a sign in the sky. The promise of the presence of Christ is found in the preaching of the Gospel and in His Sacraments. Rainbows come and are quickly gone, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

We are deeply grateful for your compassion and willingness to stand with us during this challenging time. Your support is more than a financial gift. It is a beacon of hope for those who have lost so much.



ONLINE BIBLE STUDY IS FREE

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with great joy that Community Light School of Discipleship (CLSD) invites you to use its free resources. Now in its fourth year, CLSD is an online Bible study designed to help each of us grow as disciples to make disciples. This free series equips participants with the resources to go and make disciples wherever God has planted them.

Keynote speakers for the 2024-2025 offering include Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing and Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy. Topics for this year include *Jonah: The Survivor Series* and *Threads: Celebrating the Biblical Tapestry*.

Each session includes a

40-minute presenter lecture with an attached small-group discussion guide.

Archives for 2021, 2022, and 2023 are available at communitylight.net. Simply click the archive button at the top of the page and select the desired session.

Staff of CLSD pray that this free resource is a blessing for you and your congregation. For more information, contact Amy at amy@crossview.net.

Community Light School of Discipleship is a ministry of Cross View Lutheran Church, Edina, Minn., in partnership with Concordia University, St. Paul, and the Minnesota South District.

Sing with the Main Street choir

The Sioux Falls Area Main Street Living Choir resumes this fall. Remaining practices and tapings will be at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 12, and Saturday, Nov. 9, at Zion, Sioux Falls, located at 1400 Spring Ave.

Please prayerfully consider becoming a member of this choir for the Main Street Living Worship Services. It will be directed by Rev. Howard Shane.

If interested and for more information, contact Maxine Farden at mmfarden@gmail.com.

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

And so I urged caution, and I do so now on this political issue, which is also, clearly, an issue that matters to God and His people. It is a scriptural issue.

To be clear: I do urge our pastors to address the life-and-death question that proposed Amendment G puts before us in South Dakota. I think it would be wise for them to do during forums that are open to the public; and Bible study on Sunday mornings and during the week, in which there can be give-and-take, questions and answers, and good pastoral judgment and care.

I will be praying for you as you go to the ballot box next month!

Your servant in Christ • Pastor Sailer

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

A year of church worker appreciation

October is the Synod's designated month for showing appreciation, in an intentional and unified way, to those who serve us through their faithfulness, dedication and skill. These dear workers bless us in a multitude of ways as they preach, teach and care for God's people in body and soul.

This year, in thanksgiving for these gifts of God, we have planned a year's worth of observances to align with other organizations in highlighting the many different kinds of workers who serve in the LCMS and to give thanks for

all of them and the indispensable and sacrificial work that they do.

Starting this month, watch for the following opportunities to recognize and celebrate the special church workers in your life. We hope you'll join with your brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the LCMS as we pause to thank our church workers for all they do and, even more, to thank our Lord for giving us these dear servants who keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

Oct. 13 Pastor Appreciation

Oct. 25 Deaconess, Director of Family Life Ministry, Director of Christian Outreach and Director of Church Ministries Appreciation

April 28 Director of Parish Music Appreciation

May 5-9 Teacher Appreciation

June 26 Director of Christian Education Appreciation

Witness at Sturgis

By Rev. Robert Hinckley
Pastor, Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis,
and Grace, Deadwood

What an awesome mission opportunity we have during the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally through the annual breakfast and dinners we serve at Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis! This year marked a record for the most meals served even though Rally attendance was down from previous years.

Volunteers from across the state, including Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Black Hawk, Spearfish, and our own sister church, Grace, Deadwood, combined to make this year's breakfast/dinners a tremendous success. We have some phenomenal volunteers who joyfully work hard day in and day out during the Rally, and that service is appreciated by our attendees. In fact, our attendees say we have "the best breakfast in town."

It all comes together for a wonderful experience for the rally goers, the volunteers and our congregations. The money raised supports

the missions of Grace, Deadwood; Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis; and the Black Hills Circuit.

Words cannot express the gratitude of our congregations and community to everyone who helped out with this mission. Next year we are expecting even greater numbers and higher demand and will need your support to make it possible.

Finally, we wish to thank LCEF and the South Dakota District for their part in securing a TV screen for our fellowship hall for this event. We were able to play a PowerPoint slideshow with encouraging Scripture passages and peaceful scenes of the Black Hills, along with announcements about our churches and even prayer requests from attendees. Pastors who served at the meals were able to visit and minister with the attendees freely. It all worked wonderfully for a great witness to Christ!

May we all be a blessing even as the Lord has blessed us!



▲ Randy McGruder (Grace Deadwood) and Bill Denke (Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis) ▼ Rev. Terry and Arlene Naasz (Peace, Rapid City)



YOU GET TO
TELL THEM

THE GOOD NEWS

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, or 420 E. Liberty Street Rapid City, SD 57701

The deadline for the December issue is Oct. 15. Please ensure photos are high resolution.