



/ APRIL 2025

DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH DAKOTA

Salvation POWER

God's salvation power filled Exhibit Hall #2 of the Sioux Falls Convention Center Feb. 16–18. About 200 people of God met for the 63rd convention of our district, including 110 voting delegates (59 laypeople and 51 pastors).



Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer
District President Emeritus

It was a blessing to chair a convention in which an honoring of the beauty and truth of God's Word was the foundation of the proceedings. It was heart-warming to hear the desire to let Christ's salvation light shine to others as we worshiped, studied, elected leaders and considered 18 resolutions.

The convention delegates, following consideration of the resolutions, decided, among other important actions, to:

- ▶ Continue our district's ministry with Lutheran Family Service;
- ▶ Continue our support for Together in Mission missionaries Revs. Jordon Andreasen, Samuel Bobby, Jonah Domenichelli and Dr. Daniel Jastram;
- ▶ Go forward with the Mission and Ministry Council as the model for providing resources and support for congregations and schools; and
- ▶ Approve various changes to the



district Bylaws, including the approval of executive officer positions (like the current assistant to the president and the education executive).

The delegates also elected:

- ▶ Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher (Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk) as president

▲ During the district convention, LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison (left) greets the pastors who received their first calls upon graduation from seminary to the South Dakota District in the last triennium. They are, from left, Revs. Dennis Mercer (Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk), Thomas Mueller (Emanuel, Sisseton, and Zion, Waubay), Joseph Greenmyer (Faith, Parkston, and St. Peter, rural Emery) and Thomas Penrod (Emmanuel, Gettysburg).

▶ Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher addresses the convention after being elected as the 15th president of the LCMS South Dakota District.

- ▶ Rev. Matthew Wurm (Mount Calvary, Brookings) as first vice-president
- ▶ Rev. Corey Aker (Faith, Sioux Falls) as second vice-president
- ▶ Rev. Dr. Thomas Brown (St. Paul, Spearfish) as secretary

See **MESSAGE**, page 7

DISTRICT NEWS



Rev. Brett Simek was installed as pastor of Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls, on Feb. 9. Rev. Dr. Michael Kumm (assistant pastor, Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes) was Brett's pastor at Trinity, Millstadt, Ill., and was preacher for the service. Pastor Simek, a 2015 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., most recently served at Trinity, Rantoul (Hilbert), Wis. He and his wife, Nicole, have three sons, Joel, Elijah and Jude. We welcome them to the beloved South Dakota District!

Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Corey Aker, Dr. Scott Sailer, Brett Simek, Dr. Michael Kumm, Nabil Nour; (middle row) Wade Meyer, David Morfitt, Matthew Nix, Aaron Asmus, Billy Newell; (back row) Greg Lehr, Paul Winckler, Dr. Christopher Ascher and Doug Slavens.



Tom Penrod was ordained and installed as Specific Ministry Pastor of Emmanuel, Gettysburg, and Christ, Lebanon, on Jan. 26. Pastor Penrod and his supervising pastor, Rev. David Otten, will also serve the Immanuel, Wecota, and Concordia, Cresbard, dual parish while it is in vacancy.

Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Chad Schopp, Ray Pomplun, David Strable, Tom Penrod, Dr. Alan Ludwig, Jacob Smith; (back row) Bob Moeller, Kevin Moore, Dr. Scott Sailer, David Otten, Ray Anderson and Bret Bierman.



HIGHER THINGS RETREAT

Standing firm in Christ, in a confusing world

More than 30 youth from across South Dakota gathered at Mount Calvary, Brookings, for a Higher Things retreat. The event, held Jan. 19-20, brought together high school and college students to dive into important questions about faith, culture and identity in a world that can sometimes be pretty confusing.

Rev. Merritt Demski, pastor of St. John

Hanover Lutheran Church, Alta, Iowa, led the retreat with engaging presentations, lively discussion and time-honored liturgy, helping students see how Scripture speaks clearly about these topics. It was a weekend filled with deep conversations, plenty of laughs and encouragement to stand firm in Christ.

Mount Calvary was a considerate host, offering warm hospitality, delicious

meals and a great atmosphere for meaningful fellowship. Attendees left not only with new insights, but also with new friends who share their faith.

The South Dakota District hosts two of these retreats each year: one in August for confirmation-aged students and another in January for high school and college students. If you haven't attended yet, please consider joining for the next event. These retreats are a great way to grow in the faith and wrestle with big questions in a friendly environment.

The next retreat for confirmation-aged students is Aug. 8-9 at St. John, Gregory.

CALL INFORMATION

Rev. Nathan Henschen, St. Paul, Bancroft, Neb., and St. John, Lyons, Neb., declined a call to St. John, Wagner, and Trinity, Fairfax, Dec. 27.

Rev. Paul Schultz, Trinity, Mallard, Iowa, and Zion, Ayrshire, Iowa, declined a call to Zion, Chamberlain, Jan. 11.

Rev. Samuel Thole, Peace, Brookings/Redeemer, Flandreau/Zion, White, declined a call to Salem, Barron, Wis., Feb. 19.

Rev. Jens Jensen, Redeemer, Armour, declined a call to St. John, Honey Creek, Iowa, Feb. 2.

VACANCIES

- Zion, Canistota/St. John, Montrose
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- Risen Savior, Tea
- St. John, Wagner/Trinity, Fairfax
- Zion, Chamberlain
- St. Peter, Wentworth
- Trinity, Hartford
- Concordia Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- St. Paul, Freeman

SING WITH THE MAIN STREET LIVING CHOIR



The Sioux Falls-area Main Street Living choir will resume practice and recording at 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 26, at Zion, Sioux Falls, under the direction of Rev. Howard Shane.

Practices and recordings are also scheduled for May 10, Sept. 13, Oct. 11 and Nov. 8, all beginning at 1 p.m. at Zion, which is located at 1400 S. Spring Ave.

Please prayerfully consider be-

coming a member of this choir as voices are joined together for the Main Street Living worship services.

If you didn't sing with the choir last fall but would like to join, please contact Maxine Farden at mmfarden@gmail.com for more information and updates.

Learn more about Main Street Living and watch archived services at mainstreetliving.com.

Moments with Mary Jo

REGISTER FOR RETREAT, CONVENTION

Spring is here — and so is the 2025 LWML South Dakota District Retreat. The retreat will be held April 25-26 at Cedar Shore Resort, Oacoma.

This year's theme is "Living God's Praise," based on Psalm 119:175a: "Let me live that I may praise you."

Registration is still available at sdlwml.org/district-retreats. You may also contact your group president. When you call the hotel, be sure to say that you are with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (not LWML) to get the correct room rate.

Registration is also open for the 41st Biennial LWML Convention, to be held June 26-29 in Omaha, Neb. The theme is "Growing in God's Grace," based on 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Visit lwml.org/convention for all the details and registration.

I look forward to sharing the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and being in fellowship with you and many more Christ-centered people through these two events.



Mary Jo Stier
LWML District President



Items needed for retreat ingathering

For the district Spring Retreat, to be held April 25-26, please bring any of the following items to help support First Circuit CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and the Missouri Valley Crisis Center (MVCC).

First Circuit CASA is a nonprofit organization that trains volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children. Their mission is to promote safe, permanent homes for these children while also edu-

cating the community about their needs.

First Circuit CASA serves communities in the following counties: Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Davison, Douglas, Hanson, Hutchinson and McCook.

MVCC serves victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Due to funding cuts, MVCC was forced to vacate its shelter apartments and now provides emergency hotel shelter only.

THE NEEDS ARE:

First Circuit CASA

- \$10-\$20 gift cards to McDonald's, Dairy Queen, Subway and other eateries
- Monetary donations to support outreach efforts and volunteer recruitment

MVCC

- Storage tubs
- Re-usable bags with handles
- Shampoo and conditioner (full-size bottles)
- Baby soap/shampoo

- Hair detangler spray for girls
- Hairbrushes, hair ties
- Tampons/pads
- Razors
- Toothbrushes (adult or child)
- Makeup (mascara, eyeliner, eyeshadow)
- Lotion (any size)
- Q-tips
- Paper towels
- Kleenex
- Baby wipes (unscented)

- Adult and child coloring books
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons
- Child's toys (small stuffed animals, new or gently used)
- Laundry soap
- Fabric softener
- SOFT Blankets
- Phone chargers for Android and/or iPhone
- Verizon phone cards
- Straight Talk phone cards



As part of a Milbank Zone project honoring area volunteers, the LWML of St. John's, Revillo, collected items needed by the Revillo Volunteer Fire Department. Items collected included bottled water, N95 masks and disinfecting wipes. Pictured are, from left, Anna Neugebauer, Joan Street, Gloria Zempel, Cathy Sieverson, Lone Brehmer, Carol Street and Malinda Word. Missing from the photo are Sheena King and Vicki Leonard.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

CHRIST'S WORK — *for us*



Rev. Brian Mosemann
LWML District Counselor

Soon we will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Shortly thereafter we will have joy at the Lutheran Women in Mission district Spring Retreat, “Living God’s Praise” (Psalm 119:175a).

Then a hop, skip and jump later, we will rejoice at the Lutheran Women in Mission national convention, under the theme “Growing in God’s Grace” (2 Peter 3:18).

These three are connected, for there would be no reason or purpose for the retreat or convention if it were not for the resurrection of our Lord! Needless to say, there is much planning and preparation underway for these events.

We are a society of doers. We’ve been told in many different ways that achievement precedes approval. Since we all long for affirmation and validation, we set out to prove our worth by working. Unwittingly, Christians have absorbed this mentality and drawn it into their interaction with God and their understanding of the Christian life. Even when Jesus was asked in John 6:28–29:

“What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” He answered, “This is

the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

What? That’s it? There has to be more work for us to do than that!

Remember the story of Martha and Mary? Mary sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to His teaching while Martha was distracted with much serving (Luke 10:38–42). Just like Martha, we always feel that we have to do something. We support her all the way when she asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her out. We can’t sit still. Achieving, not receiving, has become the mark of spiritual maturity. The hardest thing to do as believers in Christ is to sit down and receive His gifts. So come to the retreat and convention — and sit and receive His gifts.

Christians are drawn to practical to-do lists rather than to the proclamation, “It is finished!” They think they need to hear more than the Good News of Christ’s finished work. We want to be told what to do. We want something applicable! It’s important to remember, though, that the real application that defines Christians is the application of Christ’s work to them, not their work for Christ.

John Piper once asked, “How do you glorify a water fountain? Come thirsty and drink!”

Jesus is not glorified by our doing things for Him. He is glorified by our resting in and receiving what He has done for us. Easter joy!

HURON ZONE UPDATE

The Huron Zone keeps busy with many projects in each of our groups. The ladies at Zion, Wessington Springs, continue quilting. St. John, Wolsey, has many workdays throughout the year to assemble health kits and layette kits for Orphan Grain Train (OGT). Messiah, Redfield, assembles kits for OGT, and

See **ZONE**, page 7



Assembling health kits and layette kits for Orphan Grain Train at St. John, Wolsey, were, from left, Jill Johnsen, Sherri Blaseg, Vicki Hampton, Janice Wagner, Laraine Kahre, Jim Johnsen, Beth Brower, Dolores Eichstadt and Florence Adermann.



Supporting life causes, beyond birth

By Rev. Ryan Drevlow

South Dakota District Life Coordinator

Greetings South Dakota District.

Last month I shared some ideas for how to support our nation's pro-life movement. This month's column is a continuation of ideas, with the focus on support for **end-of-life** decisions and **foster care**. Being pro-life doesn't mean we only support causes around birth. We also support life through the end.

One way to support **end-of-life** care is to get involved with an elder care facility in your community. Many such facilities welcome anyone who is willing to sit and visit, assist or even entertain folks who need care. Often elder care facilities are understaffed and the personnel are busy tending to immediate and ongoing needs. I have personally met many older people who do not receive regular visits from anyone. It can be that a person didn't have children



and has outlived many of their friends. You could be supportive of that life.

You could also reach out to local hospice care facilities. Sometimes people who go through the dying process have no friends or family to see them through. If there is a facility like this in your community, you could let the staff know you are available to help with reading to, visiting or sitting with an individual. You might even offer to sing or play music there.

There are many ways to be involved in the **foster** movement, outside of fostering children yourself (though that, too, is a tremendous need). Are there any foster families in your church? If so, you could establish a support group for that family. Perhaps you could offer occasional care or babysitting. You could give support by bringing diapers, casseroles; or offer emotional support for the family in question. A simple encouraging note can also work wonders.

Many towns in our state have a foster care closet in which items are donated, allowing foster parents to spend little to nothing to buy important items. Could you donate some things? Could you volunteer at that store? Would it be possible for you to donate your time? Often the foster care agencies create large group outings for foster families. We go to the pool or other places. Maybe you run a farm, have horses, or could volunteer your place for one of these activities?

I'm going to end this month's column the same way I ended March's column: There are so many ways to support life at all stages! I hope some of these ideas spur you to take action and start conversations!

Rev. Drevlow also serves as senior pastor of St. Paul's, Aberdeen, and St. Paul's Leola.



If you or your congregation is taking part in any special events or ministries to support the pro-life cause, please let us know! We would love to feature Christ's work through you in an upcoming district newsletter! Email kate@katemeadows.com with your news.

Educational events held at Mount Calvary, Brookings

Every year, the lay leadership of Mount Calvary, Brookings, hosts a conference focused in some way on the Lutheran faith. Mount Calvary invites members of the 100 nearest LCMS congregations.

This year's conference, held in January, was a success as Mount Calvary elder Elijah Kosse shared a presentation on denominational differences. Kosse, a professor of economics at South Dakota State University, drew from research and his own experience of attending churches across multiple denominations to break down differences between reformed, evangelical, mainline, Latter Day Saints, Roman Catholic and orthodox denominations.

The presentation was a lunch-and-learn, a free educational event over a common lunch hour. Mount Calvary hosts lunch and-learn events every Wednesday.

"We thought, 'This is so good, we have to have this (as a larger format),' said Rev. Micah Bauer, Mount Calvary associate pastor.

The larger event drew 44 people. According to Pastor Bauer, the questions people asked about denominational differences largely came from those who had grown up in denominations other than the LCMS.

The presentation was recorded and is available at mountcalvary1.org/youtube.

MESSAGE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Convention delegates listen to the Synod report, given by Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, LCMS president.

- ▶ Kent Harnisch (Resurrection, Sioux Falls) as treasurer
- ▶ Douglas Klipfel (Our Savior, Aberdeen) as lay member at-large
- ▶ David Bogenhagen (Trinity, White Lake) as lay member at-large

Congratulations, brothers in Christ!

I am grateful for the presence and participation of LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison. He preached for the opening service and presented the Synod report. Rev. Dr.

Jeffrey Oschwald, New Testament professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, presented the Bible study.

The unity of faith, the respect for one another and the joy of our salvation were evident from start to finish! This, too, is evidence of God's Gospel power in our life together. Thank you, beloved South Dakota District!

**Your servant in Christ •
Pastor Sailer**

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

ZONE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

Mount Calvary, Huron, has a quilting group and a site to donate clothes to be sent to OGT.

Our Spring Rally was held March 3, 2024, at Messiah, Redfield, with 22 in attendance. Our speaker was Rev. Jordon Andreassen, who shared about his call to serve as an LCMS missionary to Romania. We also assembled 52 hygiene kits.

Our Fall Rally was Oct. 6 at Zion, Wessington Springs, with 17 in attendance. Our speakers were Becky and Julia Weeman, who told us about their medical mission

trip to Honduras with MOST Ministries. New officers were elected: Nancy Ziegeldorf as president and Donell Mayfield as treasurer.

Mount Calvary members cleaned the Puppet Place. This ongoing ministry is such a blessing and one in the backyard of our Huron Zone that reaches so many souls.

Our 2025 Spring Rally is at St. John, Wolsey, on April 6. All are welcome to join us on a workday for OGT.

Thank You, Lord, for the blessing of serving as president for these precious souls of our Huron Zone these past four years.

Following His Plan • Ann Cruse

Two free Ukrainian resources available

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation (an LCMS Recognized Service Organization) has just received two new free resources available in Ukrainian, including the classic children's Bible storybook, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories* and *Best of Portals of Prayer*. These are available to any LCMS church, mission or individual who wants to share the Good News with their Ukrainian-speaking neighbors.

To order, email info@LHFmissions.org or call 800-554-0723.





HIGHWAY WITNESS

“Moving Faith Into Action” are the words you will read if you happen to see the Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, motor coach on the road. This is the reason the coach was acquired — to transport God’s people to the ends of the earth to share His love and beautiful, saving words.

The coach made its first big journey in May 2022 as a group went to Mexico for a mission trip. Since then, the motor coach has taken groups around the state and elsewhere in the U.S. In June 2023, the coach traveled to Milwaukee for the LWML convention. A group of teens and adults traveled to Carbon-dale, Ill., for a Higher Things conference in July 2023.

A lively group of all ages toured Pierre and then traveled to Kentucky to take in the Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum in October 2024. And most recently, a group of 40 men attended a retreat in Buena Vista, Colo.

The Faith Lutheran Mexico Mission Team gave the motor coach a complete facelift when it was purchased, including re-flooring, adding a cabinet and cooler, and cleaning every space. A wrap was added to the outside with our Savior’s words so that as the bus travels, seeds are planted for our Lord.



The congregation hopes to actively keep the motor coach on the road. Being on the road means the Gospel is being shared while those inside are serving our Lord. You are welcome

to inquire about having the bus take your group somewhere, at a significantly less cost than a private service would charge. Please send an email to businessmanager@faithluth.com.

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!



Send submissions to
Kate Meadows:

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or

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The deadline for the
June-July 2025 issue is May 15.
Please ensure photos are high
resolution.