



APRIL 2026

SOUTH DAKOTA DISTRICT NEWS

Resurrection answers and hope for you

By Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, President,
SD District

Dear Saints,

It is a common thing when we are struggling with life to look for guidance and comfort from God's Word. You have all seen the lists that say, "when needing comfort turn to..." or, "in times of doubt turn to..."

In fact, I have one of those lists in my Bible for quick reference.

What I've noticed in my list of maladies and references back to God's Word is a lack of focus or even reference to the resurrection of Jesus.

In our world of self-help and bumper-sticker theology we are trained to find individual verses and apply them to our situation without looking at the larger context of what God's Word is saying and why. Yes, God's Word is always helpful, even when we take comfort from just one verse. Those go-to-verses, understood in context, are a promise from God to you.

One of the reasons the Passion account of Jesus is not on the quick reference guide to life's problems is that it does not seem to offer any solutions to our immediate problems. How does Jesus' death and resurrection comfort me after I just lost my job or war breaks out in the Middle East?

Dear Saints, the Passion account of Jesus is the certainty that every promise of God is real, will happen and is all for you!



Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher,

President,
SD District

The Old Testament Saints, through faith, believed in God's promise to send our Savior to rescue us. They looked ahead to what God promised to do. They believed and that carried them through trial and hardship.

On this side of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have the gift of being able to look back more than 2000 years and see what God promised He delivered.

In the Passion account of Jesus, we see the depth of God's love for each of us in Jesus Christ. That love was modeled in the Old Testament by Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love" (Genesis 22:2). God's love for you put His only Son, the one He loved, in the hands of evil men and subjected Him to pain and suffering, our sin and death, all because God loves you and wanted to rescue you from the wages of your sin.

When you are struggling with life and feeling alone and abandoned, look to the Passion account of Jesus. Read it slowly and realize He endured all of that for you. The events of Holy Week reveal the depths of God's love for you through His own Son.

In the death of Jesus, we see the promise that "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). In a loud voice Jesus declared for you to hear, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Your sin, all of it, no matter how terrible it is, was paid for by the blood of Jesus on the cross. You are forgiven!

Every time you struggle with your brokenness, every time you are burdened by what you have done in thought, word or deed, every time you want to give up hope because you have done it again, look to the death of Jesus. Look to His promise to you. Your sin is finished. Your death has died. Nothing can separate you from this gift that God has given to you through His Son. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, and because of that you are forgiven!

Dear Saints, God's Word is full of hope and peace for you, because it all points to Jesus. Our greatest hopeful event was on the first day of the week, after Jesus' three-day rest in the tomb. St. Matthew records it this way: "But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said'" (28:5-6).

When you need comfort and hope and to know you are forgiven, turn to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

On behalf of all the South Dakota District Staff, Vonda and myself, we pray for a very blessed Easter to you and your family.

Rejoicing in Resurrection forgiveness and hope,

President Sturzenbecher



DISTRICT NEWS



Ways to Appreciate the Many Church Workers in the LCMS

"It's our joy to work together with you for the good of the church and her workers, especially as we plan and prepare to show our deep appreciation for all who serve through love and good works," writes Deaconess Dr. Tiffany Manor, managing director LCMS National Mission.

Throughout the year, the LCMS shares social media posts about its church workers and the many hats they wear. Please consider strengthening these efforts by resharing the LCMS's posts or even promoting church worker appreciation through your own social media channels.

During the month of April, the synod will collectively recognize all church volunteers. May 4-5 is teacher appreciation. On June 13, the synod will recognize church worker spouses, and June 26 marks Director of Christian Education Appreciation.

Learn more about how to show your appreciation for these various roles at <https://resources.lcms.org/general/ways-to-show-your-gratitude-and-support-for-church-workers/>.

CTSFW ORGAN WORKSHOPS HIT THE ROAD



This year, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), is taking **organist workshops on the road!** Due to a summer 2026 construction project to replace windows in Kramer Chapel, the building is unavailable for our regular weeklong summer workshops. Instead, we will host a **series of nine workshops** across the country! For more details about this year's organist workshops and to register for a workshop near you, please visit ctsfw.edu/organist-workshops.

RURAL GOSPEL INITIATIVE RECOGNITION FOR ABERDEEN CIRCUIT

Earlier this month, the South Dakota LCMS District Board of Directors were pleased to give a gift to Rural Gospel Initiative that supports many things in the Aberdeen Circuit. The Great Plains Region of the LCMS also met at the South Dakota District Office. District Presidents from Minnesota North and South, Iowa East, by special invite and West, Nebraska, Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming, gathered to study and work on the business of the church.

Thanks be to God for His work in our rural areas!

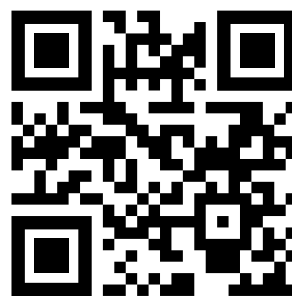


MAY WE HELP YOU WITH YOUR CHURCH WORK COLLEGE TUITION?

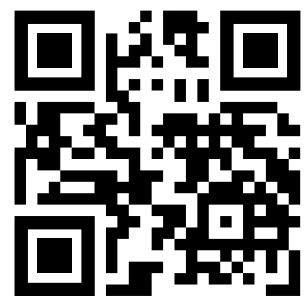
The South Dakota District has a scholarship fund set aside to aid people going into full time Church work. District student aid is given to defray the cost of tuition for those studying to enter fulltime church work within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Please act quickly as applications close May 1st!

Check out the links below for the student aid guidelines and the student aid application.

Fillable Application



Student Aid Guidelines



You can also find this information on our website: <https://sddlcms.org/resources/>

MAIN STREET LIVING PROGRAMMING – APRIL



“Main Street Living” is a liturgical worship service broadcasting a different local pastor each Sunday morning. It airs along with the classic Lutheran Hour program, “This is the Life.” Both can be viewed on KDLT (NBC) & KEVN (FOX).

NBC airs “This is the Life” programs at 10 a.m. and “Main Street Living” programs at 10:30 a.m. Central Time. KEVN (FOX) airs “This is the Life” programs at 8 a.m. and “Main Street Living” programs at 8:30 a.m. Central Time. The “Main Street Living” programs are interpreted and closed captioned for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Visit www.mainstreetliving.com/ to view current and past episodes.

April 5, 2026 EASTER

8 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “A Child’s Easter Sermon”

A child shares the joy of Easter with an old shoemaker

8:30 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10:30 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “Main Street Living”

Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher, President of the South Dakota District LCMS in Sioux Falls, SD, presents a message titled, “Helpless, fearful and hopeless no more, Christ is risen!”

April 12, 2026

8 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “Finders Keepers”

A man finds a large sum of money and struggles with the consequences of keeping it.

8:30 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10:30 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “Main Street Living”

Rev. Timothy Schleusener, pastor at Zion, Canistota and St. John's, Montrose, presents a message titled, “But these are written...” The sermon is based on John 20:19-31.

April 19, 2026

8 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “A Girl’s Best Friend”

Focusing on the here and now creates problems for a mother and her daughter and prompts spiritual questions for all.

8:30 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10:30 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “Main Street Living”

Rev. Joseph Greenmyer, pastor at Faith, Parkston and St. Peter's, Emery, presents a message titled, “Where can Jesus be Found?” The sermon is based on Luke 24:13-35.

April 26, 2026

8 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “Song of the Night”

A son's accident causes his family to question everything.

8:30 a.m. (KEVN/FOX) and 10:30 a.m. (KDLT/NBC) – “Main Street Living”

Rev. Daniel Grimmer, pastor at Zion, Mitchell, presents a message titled, “Are You Prepared?” The sermon is based on John 10:11-16.

CALL INFORMATION

PENDING CALLS

The following are prayerfully considering calls:

Rev. Kevin Moore, Messiah/Redfield and Redeemer/Doland, to St. John/Wheaton, Minn., and Immanuel/Monson, Minn., March 12.

ACCEPTED

Rev. Samuel Handscke, Faith, Pierre, to Prince Of Peace, Medina, OH, March 6.

DECLINED

Rev. Phillip Booe, Saint John, Luverne, MN, to Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk, Feb. 22.

Rev. James Preus, Trinity, Ottumwa, IA, to Mt. Calvary, Brookings, Feb. 18.

VACANCIES

- South Dakota District Office, Assistant to the President
- Trinity, Blunt/Immanuel, Harrold, Holy Cross, Onida
- Mt. Calvary, Brookings (associate pastor)
- St. Peter, Wentworth

- Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk (senior pastor)
- Concordia, Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- St. John, Wagner/Trinity, Fairfax
- Mt. Calvary
- Peace, Rapid City
- Emanuel, Sisseton/Zion, Waubay
- Emmaus, Tripp/Zion, Delmont
- Mt. Olive, Watertown
- Trinity, Corona/Our Savior, Wilmont
- St. John, Revillo/Bethlehem, Milbank

Mission Grants Announced

By Cathy VandeBraak, Vice-President of Gospel Outreach

We are excited to announce that all mission grant applications received for the 2026-2028 biennium have been carefully reviewed by the LWML South Dakota District Executive Committee and the South Dakota District President Randy Sturzenbecher. After our discussions and prayers, we are pleased to share that the following mission grants have been placed on the ballot for the 2026 Lutheran Women in Mission South Dakota District convention in Rapid City in June. Watch for more detailed information as the convention gets closer.

1. Trinity Hope – Nourishing the Bodies and Souls of Children, \$5,000
2. Lutheran Family Service – Lunch and Learns plus Crisis Pregnancy Support in SD, \$5,000
3. Lutheran Heritage Foundation – Bible Books Madagascar, \$5,000
4. Lutherans For Life – “For Life” Ministry Development, \$5,000
5. Lutheran Bible Translators – Bible Printing Distribution, \$5,000
6. MOST Ministries – Training Servant Leaders for Mission, \$5,000
7. Black Hills Pregnancy Center – Earn While You Learn, \$5,000
8. Concordia Counseling – Expanding Access to Services, \$5,000
9. Main Street Living – Devotional Book, \$5,000
10. Dakota Boys and Girls – Physical and Mental Wellness, \$4,000
11. Zion White SD – The Gathering Place, \$5,000
12. Concordia Center for the Family – Facilitating Lifelong Christian Family Disciples, \$5,000
13. Divine Shepherd – Classical Lutheran Academy, \$5,000
14. India Bible Study – Malayalam Translation, \$5,000
15. Orphan Grain Train – Milbank Collection Center Upgrade, \$5,000
16. Higher Things – Making Jesus Known, \$5,000

Please keep these ministries in your prayers, as they all provide wonderful services to God’s Kingdom. We wait with anticipation to see how God uses our Mites to do His work.

Moments with Mary Jo

RENEWED IN CHRIST’S LOVE



Mary Jo Stier
LWML District President

Can you feel the spring in the air? I for one am ready for it. For me, spring brings freshness to the air, an opportunity to go outside and enjoy the beauty the Lord has given us. Spring also brings us Easter, the time where we reflect on Our Risen Lord and Savior.

I recently read an article entitled, “Missing Easter,” on The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod website (www.lcms.org). The article talked about how the busyness in our lives sometimes makes us miss the true meaning of Easter.

This article reminds us: “Easter is the Good News that Christ is alive. He is risen. A grave could not contain the living God. And because He lives, His people will also live.”

The article continues: “God’s grace and mercy do not ever miss us. We are always loved, always forgiven, always renewed in Christ’s love.”

Coming up in June, we will have the opportunity to be renewed in Christ’s love at the 2026 LWML South Dakota District Convention. I encourage you to spend a couple of days in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota alongside many LWML members and pastors as we gather under the theme, “Confidence in His Grace.”

We can rest assured that “God’s grace does not miss us.”

LWML Nominees

By Lori Hoffman, Nominating Committee Chairman

The following have been nominated for South Dakota LWML positions by the Nominating Committee. We are still looking for a secretary, and President Sturzenbecher is working on Pastoral Counselors. Keep these people in your prayers.

- Gena Kellar for VP of Communication.
- Mary Dunlap for VP of Special Focus Ministries.
- LuAnn Zuercher for Financial Secretary.
- Denise Schmidt and Sandy Brandt for Nominating Committee.

Easter Triumph

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

The women head to Jesus' tomb, spices in hand, ready to anoint a dead body. Their hearts were heavy with grief, braced for the sealed stone. Instead, they find the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, and two dazzling angels who say, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He's not here—He's risen" (Luke 24:5-6)! The women sprint back and tell the disciples. The disciples think it's nonsense. Peter runs to check anyway, sees the empty linens and walks off scratching his head.

Those first followers had witnessed Jesus's miracles and heard His predictions of resurrection, yet they still came prepared to embalm a corpse.

We're no different. We lug our own baggage—sin, shame, doubt, fear— and act as though death still holds the upper hand. We lug "spices" of good works, self-improvement or penance, hoping to appease God whom we think is angry. In our minds, we trudge back to a tomb we've constructed, convinced the stone remains sealed, blind to the life that has already burst forth.

But hold the embalming oil—the Gospel explodes onto the scene with joy! Jesus isn't dead—He's risen, just as He promised! Death has been defeated, sin stripped of power, the tomb proven a failure. What the disciples dismissed as nonsense is God's glorious reality: grace that doesn't



Rev. Dr. Brian Mosemann

LWML District
Counselor

wait for our understanding. Christ's victory is complete, and in Him we are made alive—no spices required.

That empty tomb? It's yours in the baptismal font. Jesus didn't just rise; He clung to us and took us with Him. We come to the water, dead in sin and He washes us into His resurrection. Baptism is a daily dunking of our old, tomb-loving self, raising us as new creations. The Law says we're corpses; Baptism says, "You're alive in Christ, sealed with His triumph." He rolled the stone off us, too, even when we fail to notice.

Then comes the Lord's Supper—His resurrection feast. The women found no body, but we get His body and blood, under bread and wine. It's not a memorial snack in order to remember a dead guy; it's a meal with the living King. We stumble up, doubters like Peter, and Jesus says, "Take, eat—given for you." It's life in every bite, forgiveness in every sip, proof that the tomb is empty and our slate is clean.

We often arrive at Easter still clutching spices, foolishly lugging death when victory is already ours in Christ. Baptism soaks us in His triumph; the Supper feeds us His life forever. So, drop the spices. The tomb is empty, the table is set, and the King lives. Hosanna to the Risen One, who turns our brokenness into an everlasting celebration of triumphant grace!

Mitchell Zone Update

By Mona Geidel

Judy Moege, Judy Geidel, Judy Hauser, Mona Geidel and Deb Bialas delivered 300+ quilts and blankets, 100+ sleeping mats, clothing/shoes and bicycles collected in the Mitchell Zone to the Orphan Grain Train-Norfolk. We enjoyed a tour given by Annette Grizzard, Volunteer Coordinator of the new warehouse and volunteer packing areas, to include the Mercy Meal packaging area. We look forward to expanding our project donations, seeing first-hand the continued need here in the United States and around the world. Our tour given by Kamryn Green of the OGT International Office gave a glimpse of the ongoing mission, with Immanuel-Dimock roots, with Rev. Wilkie and Grant Schmidt in the office. It is noted that our next visit to the Norfolk area will include a Dimock cheese delivery to the OGT "office."



LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICE

Growing The Family God Planned For Us: Maryn's Adoption Story

Originally appeared on the Lutheran Family Service blog on March 5, 2026

by Mitch & Angela, Parents

Our prayers have been answered beyond our wildest dreams, and our family is now complete. We joyfully welcomed a precious baby girl, Maryn Katherine, through the gift of adoption with Lutheran Family Service.

When we began exploring adoption in 2019, we reached out to LFS at the recommendation of a family member. From the very beginning, the staff offered honest, gentle, and realistic expectations about what adoption could look like. We felt confident that their program would provide us with an ethical, faith guided path to becoming parents.

A Continuing Family Story

In 2022, we were blessed with our son through adoption with LFS. As he grew, we felt a strong openness to welcoming a second child. After much patience and many prayers, we matched with an expectant mom carrying a baby girl. We had only about three weeks to prepare – but our hearts were more than ready.



Photos courtesy of Lutheran Family Service



Steadfast Support

Throughout the process, we leaned heavily on our LFS social worker, who guided us through every step of the hospital experience. She facilitated our early conversations with Maryn's mom, helping us build an open, positive, and loving channel of communication. She consistently advocated for decisions rooted in the best interest of Maryn – both now and in the future. We will never have words big enough to express how grateful we are for her caring and steadfast presence.

God's Unfailing And Never-Ending Love

Maryn's adoption was finalized the week of Thanksgiving—perfect timing for a season of gratitude—and we will soon celebrate her first birthday. She has brought a tender, delicate love to our home. She keeps her big brother on his toes, and she's given her grandmas and aunts yet another excuse to visit Target. Most of all, she has given us a deeper glimpse of God's love for us – a love that is truly unfailing and never ending.

Share your news with us!

NOTE: With the new part-time Communications Director position comes a new email address to share your news. Please email articles/photos to Kate Meadows at communications@sddlcms.org.

PARENTING TOWARD THE KINGDOM

All parents are invited to a free one-day workshop with Kyle Townes, author of *The Road Less Traveled: Reclaiming Childhood for Christianity*. She will present topics such as godly discipline, our role as parents, screen time, socialization, influential books, education and more. Throughout this course, we will refocus on what is truly important and eternal in our parenting. We will examine how secular parenting strategies and beliefs have led many Christian families astray, and outline a different, Biblical path forward for you and your children.

Kyle is the wife of a military veteran, Richard Townes, and the mother of five children. After spending years in the public school system teaching middle school, she left the profession to classically educate her children at home.



Kyle Townes

Townes is now a conference speaker and freelance writer. In addition to the previously mentioned book, she also maintains a blog at Kidsarecapable.net.

The workshop will take place at St. John's, Britton, on **May 9**, with registration beginning at 8:30 am and sessions from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. This workshop is free, but so we may plan for the noon lunch, we ask you to **register by May 5** with Pastor Robert Moeller by email Seelsorge8@aol.com or call or text (605) 321-1641.

Christ Academy Family Institute

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), is excited to host Christ Academy Family Institute (CAFI) June 11-13, 2026, which leads into the week of Christ Academy High School.

CAFI focuses on providing resources to parents, families, and youth-focused church workers who are interested in passing on the faith to future generations and growing in their care and love for one another. This year, CAFI will focus on "Faith in the Home," featuring sessions on family devotions, hymn singing, Christian hospitality, and more.

For more information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/CAFI.

We hope you can join us for a weekend of faithful instruction, Lutheran worship, and Christian community this June!

Communion Ware Available

St. John's, Yankton, is offering some older sets of communion ware to any church that could use them. The set includes a complete silver communion wine cup tray set with base and top, as well as Chalices, patens, Lent Altar cloths and Ciborium. If your congregation could use any of these items, please reach out to Jarrod Anderson, Church Administrator; St. John's Lutheran Church 1009 Jackson St., Yankton, SD 57078; jarrod.stjohnsyankton@gmail.com.

Organ Available

Pastor Nabil Nour is looking to give away a nice organ that could be useful at a home or a church. Contact Pastor Nour for more information:

(605) 201-6998 or preachermandfootwasher@gmail.com.

LCEF Announces 2 College Scholarship Opportunities

LCEF's Take Heart Scholarship now open

High school seniors who have a Young Investors Steward Account with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) are eligible to apply for the Take Heart Scholarship. Answer this question, and you could receive up to \$3,000:

Other than Jesus, which person in the Bible would you love to talk with?

Recipients will be awarded scholarship amounts of up to \$3,000. Apply by May 1, 2026. For more information, visit lcef.org/scholarship.

South Dakota District College Scholarship now open

One \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a high school senior or full-time post-secondary student who is a member of an LCMS congregation within the South Dakota District. High school senior applicants must have a GPA of at least 3.0. Post-secondary students must have a GPA of at least 2.5. Applications close April 15. Winners will be announced on May 5. Learn more at lcef.org/southdakotascholarship.



LWML SOUTH DAKOTA DISTRICT CONVENTION

64th LWML South Dakota District Convention

June 5-6, 2026

Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center,
Rapid City, SD



Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Church, City _____

Zone _____

Emergency Contact name and phone number

Registration Status (check one)

_____ Voting member of Board of Directors

_____ Delegate

_____ Past LWML District President

_____ Non-voting member of BOD

_____ LWML Member

_____ Speaker

_____ Non-LWML Member

_____ Exhibitor

Church Worker

_____ Pastor _____ Deaconess

_____ DCE _____ Lutheran school teacher

Please check all that apply:

First time attending a district convention

Young Woman Representative

Choir member (please include your email to receive information and music)

Housing Information

You are responsible for making your own hotel arrangements. Ask for the LWML rates. Reserve rooms close to Convention Center 1. There are no elevators. If you need to be on the first floor, please make that request at the time of booking. Deadline for these rates is May 4th.

**Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center
2111 N Lacrosse Street, Rapid City**

\$153 plus tax and fees

605-343-8550

Registration Fee (Registration is due May 4th)

	Quantity	Cost	Fee Total
Registration	_____	\$100	\$ _____
Church Worker Registration		\$0	\$ _____
Meal Package (includes all 4 meals)	_____	\$85	\$ _____

I need my meals gluten-free

Thursday night Mt Rushmore trip

Yes, I would like to attend (Cost will depend on number of participants.)

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make check payable to:

LWML SD District

Mail check and registration to:

Paula Warren
14573 Lower Spring Creek Road
Hermosa, SD 57744

There is also an option for online registration and payment.