



# DISTRICT NEWS

## SOUTH DAKOTA



Photos: LOMS/Erik M. Lunsford

# 'We won!'



Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer  
District President

When your local high school team wins a big game and you're a zealous supporter of the team, I'm thinking you exclaim, "We won!" Not, "They won!"

You say, "We won," even though you did not take part in the game. It was your team that won, so the joy of victory was yours, just as much as if you had been a part of the action on the field or court or rink or track.

If we can get excited over the exploits of a sports team, what excitement should fill our hearts as we consider the greatest contest of all time — and all eternity. It's not a game at all, but a life-and-death struggle for the souls of the human race, one in which the eternal Son of God came to earth to take our place in the battle of life and death!

In our name, in our place, on our behalf, Christ Jesus went to battle and won an eternal victory for us. When He cried, "It is finished," we cried, "It is finished," because He was taking our place for the punishment of our sin. And even though we had no part in the action, we can look to Christ, whose grave was empty on Easter morning. And with

complete and zealous joy, we can say "We won!"

What have we won? Martin Luther summarized the fruit of the victory in his explanation to the second article of the Apostles' Creed:

[Christ has] purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil.

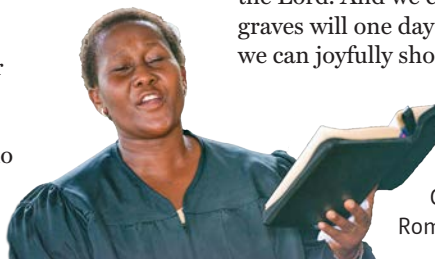
Someone once said that Christianity is the religion of the personal pronoun. The heart and soul of the Christian message is salvation by substitution.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." ISAIAH 53:5

"[Christ] was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." ROMANS 4:25

"Because I live, you shall live also." JOHN 14:19

It is true, we had no part in the action. We were nowhere around. But because God's Son, Jesus, came to earth for us, because He kept God's Law for us, because He suffered our punishment, endured our hell and died our death, we can look at His empty grave and we can stand with hope-filled hearts beside the graves of loved ones who died in the Lord. And we can know that their graves will one day be empty, too. Then we can joyfully shout, "We won!"



Your servant in Christ, Pastor Sailer

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

## CALL INFORMATION

**Rev. Matthew Nelson**, Our Redeemer, Columbia Falls, Mont., declined a call to St. John, Britton, and St. Paul, Ferney, Feb. 11.

**Rev. Samuel Thole**, assistant pastor, Peace, Brookings; Redeemer, Flandreau; and Zion, White, declined a call to First, Glencoe, Minn., Feb. 13.

**Rev. David Mommens**, St. Paul, Melrose, Minn., declined a call to Our Savior, Madison, and St. John, Howard, on Feb. 26.

**Rev. Doug Slavens**, associate pastor, Memorial, Sioux Falls, declined a call to The Rock, Seward, Neb., on Feb. 16.

**Rev. Robert Hinckley**, sole pastor of Zion, Chamberlain, accepted the call as sole pastor to Grace, Deadwood, and Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis, Feb. 7.

**Rev. Kevin Koester**, associate pastor, Mount Calvary, Huron, accepted the call as Mount Calvary sole pastor, Feb. 11.

### VACANCIES

#### Senior pastor

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

#### Sole pastor

- Risen Savior, Tea
- Zion, Chamberlain
- St. Paul, Plankinton/Trinity, White Lake
- Concordia, Cresbard/Immanuel, Wecota
- Zion, Canistota/St. John, Montrose
- Faith, Parkston/St. Peter, Clayton



### Rev. Dr. Jacob Bobby was installed as associate pastor of St. John, Yankton, on Jan. 28.

He joins Rev. Steve Weispfennig, senior pastor, and DCE Josh Schmitt on the ministry staff. Jacob had served as pastor of First Trinity, Bloomfield, Neb., since 2013. He is a 2009 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and he earned a Ph.D. in political science from the University of South Dakota in 2015. We welcome Pastor Bobby and his family to the beloved South Dakota District!

Pastor Bobby is pictured with his wife, Sara, and their children, Adeline, William and Beatrice.

Pictured are, from left (front) Revs. Dr. Scott Sailer, Dr. Jacob Bobby, Steve Weispfennig; (back) Jeremy Richert, Ken Johnson, Bill Heermann, David Ellis, Jim Mueller, Don Erickson and Paul Warnier.



## Trained and certified

Roger Kropuenske and Clint Bartel, members of Mount Calvary, Huron, recently completed all 11 classes of the district's Lay Leadership Institute (LLI), equipping them to be of greater service to their pastor, Rev. Kevin Koester. Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, South Dakota District president, presented the LLI certificates to Roger and Clint during the Mount Calvary voters meeting on Jan. 30.

District pastors and DCEs provide the class instruction. Anyone interested may take the classes, but those enrolled in "Level III," as Roger and Clint were, receive the pastor's assistant certification.

For more information on LLI, visit [sddlcms.org/mission-ministries](http://sddlcms.org/mission-ministries) and scroll down to "Lay Leadership Institute."



From left, Roger Kropuenske, Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer and Clint Bartel.

# Our world through a Lutheran lens



By Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer  
South Dakota District president

If you are a member of a South Dakota District congregation, you recently received your last issue *The Lutheran Witness* that's covered by your congregation. That's because of a resolution recently passed by district voters to end a decades-old policy of congregations paying for a subscription for all of its members. The vote was prompted by subscription costs more than doubling in 2024. Your March issue was wrapped in cellophane, with a letter from me on a piece of paper, separate from the magazine.

My letter informed you how to continue receiving *The Lutheran Witness*. Here's the text of my message:

Greetings to you, in Jesus' name! I have some important news for you regarding your *Lutheran Witness* subscription. For years, your congregation has been providing a subscription for you, paid for by the congregation. But because of the recent vote of the congregations of the LCMS South Dakota District to discontinue that District-wide policy, this is the last issue of the periodical you'll receive under your current subscription.

But you will be able to subscribe on your own, or you may be able to receive *The Lutheran Witness* at your church.

Please check with your church leadership as to what their plans may be to encourage and arrange for you to

receive this official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

I urge you to subscribe. If you do, you'll continue to receive the fine main section of *The Lutheran Witness*. And, for a few dollars more, you will receive the South Dakota District insert, bringing you news from our congregations, schools, the LWML, and our life ministries in the State.

If your church will not be offering *The Lutheran Witness* and you wish to start an individual subscription, please contact Concordia Publishing House at 800-325-3040 and select option #2 for Magazines. You can also email them at [magazines@cph.org](mailto:magazines@cph.org). Identify yourself as a member of the South Dakota District and you'll receive an extra discount.

It's important that you check with your pastor or another leader of your congregation to see whether there might be a plan to have a special sign-up for individual subscriptions. Or your church might be planning to get a number of copies of *The Lutheran Witness* each month for you to pick up at the church.

If you order your own subscription, as instructed above, make sure you say you're from South Dakota. Then you'll get the magazine for the discounted price of \$24.99, which includes the main magazine and the South Dakota District insert. That's a \$5 savings from the regular cost.



As a result of the vote to end the current policy of congregations paying for subscriptions to *The Lutheran Witness (LW)* for all their members, congregation members will no longer receive copies of *LW* or the South Dakota District insert courtesy of their congregations. What does this mean for you, *The Lutheran Witness* and the district insert? Here are some frequently asked questions and their answers about subscribing to the *LW* and receiving the district insert going forward:

**Who contacts Concordia Publishing House (CPH), the publisher of *LW*, to cancel the current subscriptions for each congregation?**

This has already been arranged through the South Dakota District office. The March 2024 issue of *LW* was the final issue you received under the policy.

**Must all current subscriptions be canceled?**

Yes.

**How may we continue to receive the *LW* after March 2024?**

Individuals or households may subscribe on their own. Or congregations can have a sign-up time to collect information for individual subscriptions. Or congregations may have a bundle of the periodicals sent to the church for distribution to members. Stay tuned for news from your congregation and the district on how individuals may subscribe by way of their congregations, or how a congregation may receive bulk copies for distribution at the church.

**How much is a *LW* subscription for South Dakota District members?**

CPH is offering district members a special rate of \$19.99 for a year's

See **WITNESS**, page 8

## PATTY'S PONDERINGS

# Join us for 'inexpressible joy'



**Patty Peters**  
LWML South Dakota  
District President

Are your plans in place to attend the LWML South Dakota District Convention, to be held June 7-8 at the Aberdeen Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center?

The theme is "Inexpressible Joy + Matchless Savior," based on 1 Peter 1:8-9:

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

The ladies of the Aberdeen Zone are planning a convention filled with Bible study, singing, Mites in Action reports, and a fun mission walk at Wylie Park, where you can enjoy Storybook Land, the Land of Oz and a zoo. There are many activities for your whole family!

We are so excited to have Kay Kreklau, former LWML president (2011-2015), as our keynote speaker, and Donna Snow, author of many Bible studies and devotions, as our Bible study leader. The national LWML representative will be our own Arlene Naasz, who serves as



**Donna Snow**

vice-president of Organizational Resources. You will have fun learning a lot from these ladies.

Gifts from the Heart will be collected for Safe Harbor and Journey Home, which are Aberdeen-area organizations that provide shelter and resources during crisis situations. Both organizations pledge to give a "hand up, not a handout" to people who are committed to changing their lives.

Registration is open for the convention, and the Best Western Ramkota is accepting hotel room reservations. Please see the



**Kay Kreklau**

registration form in this insert. You can also find information at [sdlwml.org/district-conventions](http://sdlwml.org/district-conventions).

The servant events will be held the morning of June 7, so be ready. The opening communion service will immediately follow lunch that day, and we will later vote on mission grants, bylaw amendments and new officers.

Come to the Hub City and serve the Lord with gladness as Lutheran Women in Mission. Rejoice in the knowledge that Christ died and rose for you to give you the salvation of your souls!

## Our blessed officer nominees (so far)

We, the Nominating Committee, are delighted to announce the list of nominees for the 2024 LWML South Dakota District Convention. We are grateful to these women and men for their thoughtful consideration and eagerness to serve the Lord with joy. We would also like to express our gratitude to Patti Greenseth and Nyla

Jurens, who are members of the committee.

As of now, we do not have a complete list of candidates, but we are working diligently to finalize it before the convention. Praise our Lord!

**Ann Cruse, Susan Swanson**  
Nomination Committee chairpersons

### President

- Mary Jo Stier

### Vice President of Gospel Outreach

- Cathy VandeBraak

### Vice President of Christian Life

- Kristy Ring

### Nominating committee:

- Lori Hoffman
- Patricia Huisman
- Lurene Mogler Denke

### Pastoral Counselor:

- Rev. Christopher McCarthy
- Rev. Thomas Mueller

COUNSELOR'S CORNER



## There's more to who you are!

Rich Bimler, one of our Synod's first DCEs, shared the story of two caterpillars that were passing by one another on a tree branch. While sharing a friendly greeting, they were distracted by a butterfly flitting high above them. One caterpillar, shaking its head, warily said to her friend, "Mark my words, Anastasia, you'll never get me up in one of those!"



**Rev. Aaron Asmus**

Sometimes our vision and our experience are too earthbound to recognize everything we truly are. But the Good News of Easter reassures us that we have more life to live than what we see on this side of the grave! Just as our Savior rose from the grave on that wonderful Easter morning, so God promises that we, too, shall rise, even though we die.

John writes:

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. **1 JOHN 3:2**

Yet we are not promised new life just for the sake of our bodies. Our whole being is made new in Jesus Christ!

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. **2 COR. 5:17**

Indeed, our old sinful selves shed their cocoons and our renewed spirit in Christ emerges to soar with newfound freedom and forgiveness. We carry and share the love and hope given to us from Jesus.

So be ready, lady caterpillars — you've got some flying in your future! Be ready, Lutheran Women in Mission. We have more to live and give than we're able to see.

God bless your daily Easter celebration as His dearly blessed and gifted children.

## Mission grant ballot announced



The Rev. Dr. Walter Steele (right), LCMS missionary to East Africa, works with a student in the library of Matongo Lutheran Theological College in Nyamira County, Kenya. Funding for theological libraries in Africa is a proposed mission grant for the next biennium.

It is with great excitement that I am able to announce the following mission grants to be placed on the ballot for the 2024 LWML South Dakota District convention in Aberdeen this spring! More detailed information will be coming your way before the convention, but here is the official list of mission grants to be considered:

1. Lighthouse Preschool, Aberdeen, \$5,000
2. Servants of the Gospel Through Dots of Love — Lutheran Braille Workers, \$3,000
3. Critical Tools for Body and Soul — MOST Ministries, \$5,000
4. New Shepherds for South Sudan — Lutheran Heritage Foundation, \$5,000
5. Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch: Bismarck Chapel Furnishings, \$3,000
6. Help Haitian Seminarians: Ministry in Mission, \$4,000
7. Faith Lutheran Motor Coach Improvements, Pierre, \$5,000
8. Main Street Living Ministry Outreach TV Program, \$4,998
9. Faith Lutheran Preschool, Pierre, \$3,075
10. Faith Health and Wellbeing and Community Outreach, Sioux Falls, \$4,600
11. Proclaiming Christ to the Nations: Concordia Seminary (St. Louis) International Student Support, \$5,000
12. Shepherd's Canyon Retreat, \$5,000
13. Walking Together in the Mission Field: Alliance Missionaries — LCMS, \$5,000
14. Theological Libraries and Resources (Africa) — LCMS International Mission, \$5,000
15. Proclaim the Gospel, Serve in Mercy — LCMS, \$5,000
16. Mount Calvary Learning Center Security Update, Huron, \$5,000

Blessings on each of these ministries as they carry out the Great Commission! It is exciting to think we may be a part of this work. Please keep these ministries in your prayers in the days ahead.

**Jan Larson**  
Vice-president of Gospel Outreach

# DISTRICT NEWS

## 63rd LWML South Dakota District Convention

June 7–8, 2024

Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center, Aberdeen



### 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 the 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

Heart to Heart Sister

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

Make check payable to: **LWML SD District Convention**

Mail check and registration to:

LWML SD

c/o Denise Melius

15825 373rd Ave.

Northville, SD 57465

**e-mail address:** [dmelius@nvc.net](mailto:dmelius@nvc.net)

#### Housing Information

You are responsible for making your own hotel arrangements. Ask for the LWML rates. *Deadline for these rates is May 5.*

Rooms are blocked at:

- **Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention:**  
\$159.99 plus taxes  
605-229-4040
- **AmericInn Lodge and Suites:** \$150 plus taxes  
605-225-4565
- **Super 8 Wyndham** \$90 plus taxes  
605-824-6422

#### Registration Fee

	Quantity	Cost	Fee Total
Registration	_____	\$30	\$ _____

#### Church Worker Registration

Gratis	_____	\$0	\$ _____
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Friday lunch	_____	\$18	\$ _____
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Friday supper	_____	\$23	\$ _____
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Saturday lunch	_____	\$18	\$ _____
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I need my meals gluten-free

**Total Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday lunch:** Grill-out meal of hamburger with fixings, potato salad, chips, baked beans and brownie.

**Friday supper:** Italian meal of meatball marinara pasta and chicken alfredo pasta, Sicilian vegetables, Caesar salad and garlic bread.

**Saturday lunch:** Picnic includes garden salad, potato salad, oven fried chicken, barbecue pork sandwich, buttered corn and fresh cornbread.

Do you need a large-print manual?

**Deadline for registration and meals: April 30**

LCMS Life Ministry

# Advocating, educating and caring for all human life

Through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Life Ministry, the Body of Christ comes together to value all human life — from conception to natural death.

LCMS Life Ministry speaks up for life, cares for people in body and soul, and teaches about the sanctity of human life.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Life Ministry network is comprised of thousands of people throughout the LCMS who are passionate about and engaged in sanctity of human life efforts, both in our church body and the culture at large.

We speak for human life by witnessing to our Lord’s creation of life and His design for marriage and the family, and by advocating for the God-given value of all human life in the public square.

We care for human life by sharing Christ’s love and mercy, caring for people in body and soul by sponsoring human care efforts in local communities through districts and congregations, and internationally through our missionaries and partner church bodies.

We educate by providing resources and events for people of all ages. For resources and more information, visit [lcms.org/life](https://lcms.org/life).



## CSP THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

Is your congregation looking for ways to encourage and invest in future church workers?

(Director of Christian Education) ←

### Consider applying for a DCE or DCO intern from CSP!

→ (Director of Christian Outreach)

Contact Shelly Schwalm, DCE Director at [schwalm@csp.edu](mailto:schwalm@csp.edu) for more information.

### Kindness in cans

The students of Bethesda Lutheran School, Hot Springs, got elbow deep in their most recent service project. Led by Staci Pokorski, who teaches second through fourth grade, the classes collected offerings during weekly chapel service to donate to the local food pantry.

The students raised \$300 in three months and purchased over 150 pounds of food for the pantry. The children compared prices and chose the most needed, shelf-stable foods. After grocery shopping, the students loaded the food in the church van and delivered it directly to the food pantry. Older students packed food bags while younger students weighed and sorted food to stock on the shelves.

The children learned the importance of serving our neighbor as well as the importance of food pricing and nutrition. This service project was also part of the National Lutheran Schools Week celebration.

— Submitted by Jackie Rausch



## WITNESS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

subscription to the main part of the magazine. With the district insert, the cost will be \$24.99 for one year. This is for delivery to your home or post office box. If you wish to receive the *LW* in this way, please contact CPH at 800.325-3040 and select option #2 for Magazines. You can also send an email to [magazines@cph.org](mailto:magazines@cph.org). Make sure you indicate that you are from South Dakota to get the \$19.99/\$24.99 rate (a \$5 discount).

Congregations may provide the *LW* at the church for their members, without names and addresses of the members specified on the magazines. If that is done, 0 to 25 copies will be at the annual subscription rate of \$19.99/24.99 per magazine; 25-plus copies will be at the bulk rate of \$15.99 for the main part of the magazine, or \$18.39 with the district insert included.

Here is new information for an adjusted bulk rate for 25 or more subscriptions gathered at your church (from CPH): If you have a sign-up at the church and you have a minimum of 25 subscriptions, the

subscribers will be charged \$17.10 for the main magazine, or 19.90 with the district insert included. The magazine will be sent to their mailing address.

**It appears that the district insert will continue to be a part of the *LW*. What if I don't want to subscribe to the main magazine but still receive the district insert? Is this possible?**

We will continue to produce the district section, and this section will be made available to non-subscribers to the *LW*, on other platforms and in other ways.

The district section is the copyright property of the LCMS South Dakota District, which means the district office is able to distribute it as it wishes. The district supplement is already posted at [sddlcms.org](http://sddlcms.org) under "News and Events." We also plan to include it as a regular feature in our twice-monthly email newsletter, a much different publication than the *LW* insert we produce.

To subscribe to our district's email newsletter, contact Julie Pike at [jpike@midco.net](mailto:jpike@midco.net) or 605-361-1514.

## 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](mailto:kate@katemeadows.com)  
420 E. Liberty Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

The deadline for the June-July issue is April 15.

