

# DISTRICT NEWS

December 2025



And the Word became flesh and took up residence among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth.

JOHN 1:14, LEXHAM ENGLISH BIBLE



**Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher**  
District President

Jesus took up residence. He moved in with us. He tabernacled among us. Jesus dwells in a tent of flesh and blood. This earthly tent, promised by God in Genesis 3 and proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets, was extremely vulnerable.

That is not usually the message we hear as we move from Advent into Christmas. We see the crèche with the angels and animals looking reverently at swaddled and healthy baby Jesus. We often overlook how vulnerable this newborn really was. He had to be wrapped to stay warm. He needed to be fed from Mary's breast every couple of hours. He needed to be changed and bathed. He needed to be loved and taught and protected.

In a very brief but extremely important part of the church year, we see how vulnerable God became for us. The church season of Christmas is when the church celebrates the "Word" becoming flesh. The

Word of God — the creative, eternal, second member of the Holy Trinity — became vulnerable by taking on the fragility of our flesh in the womb of Mary. He was protected by Mary for nine months. When Jesus was born, Joseph, his earthly father, protected and provided for Him. Among all the things Joseph taught the "Word" (Jesus), he taught Him the very Word that testified about Him!

We only have a few accounts of Jesus's very early life. We do know that Jesus was vulnerable as an infant, and He remained vulnerable all the way to the cross.

He was vulnerable to judgment when He reached out and touched those that the law and parts of society declared unclean. Because of that the dead were raised, the deaf and blind would hear and see, and the marginalized were given hope and value in His kingdom.

See **MESSAGE**, page 2

# Capital campaign entering next phase at Zion

### Giving a 'hoot' for its 'OWLs'

On Oct. 14, a special morning service was held for the "Older, Wiser Lutherans" — lovingly dubbed "OWLs" — of Zion, Rapid City, followed by lunch and an update on Zion's Christ's Way capital campaign to support ministry expansion. As the campaign's initial three years come to a close, the next step is launching the "Christ's Way ... Continuing in Faith" campaign.

Communicating the campaign progress to all members of the largest LCMS church in Rapid City requires planning, and a special campaign committee spent the fall conducting forums across groups within the church to ensure that every member is informed about the expansion plans and progress.

It occurred to the committee that many of the OWLs have difficulty attending regular worship services and fellowship events. So invitations were delivered and follow-up phone calls made for a special communion service. It was a heartwarming reunion for these longtime Zion faithful, and a joy to hear their appreciation for this opportunity to commune and enjoy fellowship together. Many thanks to Rev. Bryan Meadows, Zion lead associate pastor, for creating and conducting this worship service; and to the lay ministers and volunteers who served in a variety of capacities.

Current plans connected to the capital campaign include the addition of six classrooms and a gymnasium to Zion's



**Above, Betty Woods and Betty Withee chat during the OWLS luncheon; and, right, Dr. Ken Anderson, prayer coordinator for Zion's capital campaign, helps Rawling Reule fly her prayer kite.**

bursting-at-the-seams school, which will allow the current multipurpose "sanctinasion" to become a dedicated worship space.

It's all about Zion's mission: "Knowing Jesus, Growing in Faith, and Serving in Love!"

— Submitted by Marilyn Herz, Zion Capital Campaign Committee chairwoman

### Prayers flying high

On Sept. 17, Zion Lutheran School, Rapid City, elementary and preschool students participated in a kite-flying event to "launch" the next phase of the capital campaign. To get things started, the students, working with their chapel buddies (a younger student paired with an older student), wrote prayers on kites.



One prayer on each kite was about the capital campaign and a second prayer could be about anything on the students' hearts or minds.

Zion is situated on top of a hill overlooking Rapid City, and owns property with an open field nearby. Students headed there to send their prayers skyward.

It's always windy on our hill, except for that day. The kites didn't fly as high as expected, but it didn't matter. Students still had a lot of fun, burned a lot of calories and learned that God loves to listen to their prayers in any shape and size!

— Submitted by Becki Aker, Zion school general educator and Zion church member

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Jesus was extremely vulnerable time and time again when He ate with sinners.

He was vulnerable to the authorities when He was falsely charged and arrested, even though He had the authority to call down ranks of angels from heaven to defend and protect Him. He was vulnerable to false charges when they put the "Way and the Truth" on trial. He was vulnerable to pain and suffering when the steel pierced His holy hands in His crucifixion.

But He was not vulnerable to death!

Where there is no sin, death has no authority.

When Jesus took up residence among us, when He physically moved into our world, He became vulnerable for us. He willingly took upon Himself our vulnerability to sin and death so we will never die eternally. Because of the incarnation of Jesus, Him being vulnerable for us, we are forgiven. We are not vulnerable to death as a result of our sin.

That is the best Christmas gift ever!

Dear Saints, Vonda and I wish the best for you this Christmas season. May our vulnerable Lord born into our world give you joy and peace and hope each and every day.

Peace in Christ our newborn King!

## Insert ending, but news distribution continues



Society's modes of communication are always evolving. The print world dominated for many years, but the digital revolution quickly overtook print publications.

Even if consuming news on computers and phones isn't always the preferred avenue, one cannot deny it is a faster, simpler and more cost-effective means of communication.

Our district and Synod communications are no exception to this. Just a couple of years ago, rising costs of print publications moved Synod to significantly increase the publication costs of *The Lutheran Witness*. Our district and her congregations moved from mandatory *LW* subscriptions for all members to allow congregations to determine for themselves how they wished to approach distribution of the *Witness*.

Through this all, the district news insert in *The Lutheran Witness* has remained a constant. But that, too, is changing. Recently Synod signaled that they will soon no longer publish the district news inserts. As a result, this is the final South Dakota District insert to appear in *The Lutheran Witness*.

While the printed insert was a valuable tool for a very long time, timeliness of the information was a challenge. The publication timeframe worked such that news and information in the insert was always two months behind. By the time the issue hit mailboxes, much of the information was long past being fresh. In a day of instantaneous tools of communication, the value of such a thing was diminishing.

To be clear, *The Lutheran Witness* will continue to be printed, published and mailed. However, the district news insert will be no more. What does this mean for district communications?

The good news is that the district will continue to provide information and is striving to improve our means of communication with our people and congregations. The district Board of Directors has agreed to establish a part-time communications coordinator to work on providing timely and easily accessible news and information. Highlights of this new communication will include:

- ▶ Continued distribution of the district e-newsletter, with some changes and additions to "flesh out" this newsletter with more news, features and profiles.
- ▶ Production of a monthly printable piece that will approximate the *LW* insert. This piece will be delivered to congregations electronically, allowing everyone to disseminate it in their preferred ways to those who don't use email or the internet.
- ▶ Increased communication and presence in social media.

Things will continue to change as communications evolve, but the mission — the heart — remains the same: working together to make the Gospel of Jesus Christ known!

### Share your news with us!

With a 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](mailto:communications@sddlcms.org).

## CALL INFORMATION

### PENDING

*Prayerfully considering calls:*

**Rev. Samuel Handschke**, Faith, Pierre, to St. Paul's, Marion, Iowa, Oct. 16.

**Rev. Nathan Henschen**, St. John's, Lyons, Neb., and St. Paul, Bancroft, Neb., to St. Paul, Freeman, Sept. 21.

### ACCEPTED

**Rev. Andrew Ratcliffe**, St. Paul's, Perham, Minn., to Blessed Redeemer, Brandon, Oct. 4.

### DECLINED

**Rev. Patrick Baldwin**, Christ, Rawlins, Wyo., to St. John, Wagner, and Trinity, Fairfax, Sept. 27.

**Rev. Willis McCall**, Mount Olive, Billings, Mont., to Mount Calvary, Brookings, Oct. 1.

**Rev. Doug Slavens**, Memorial, Sioux Falls, to Mount Olive, Anoka, Minn., Oct. 15; and to Good Shepherd, Circle Pines, Minn., Oct. 13.

**Rev. Paul Winckler**, assistant to the district president, to St. Paul's, Marshfield, Mo., Oct. 17.

**Rev. Dan Grimmer**, Zion, Mitchell, to Zion, Mount Pleasant, Mich., Oct. 21.

### VACANCIES

- Trinity, Blunt; Immanuel, Harold; and Holy Cross, Onida
- Mount Calvary, Brookings (*associate pastor*)
- St. Peter, Wentworth
- Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk (*senior pastor*)
- Concordia, Cresbard, and Immanuel, Wecota
- St. Paul, Plankinton, and Trinity, White Lake
- Memorial, Sioux Falls (*senior pastor*)
- St. John, Wagner, and Trinity, Fairfax
- St. Paul, Freeman
- Mount Calvary, Huron
- Peace, Rapid City
- Emanuel, Sisseton-Waubay





## Moments with Mary Jo

### A season of 'FIRSTS'

Greetings to you on this beautiful day that the Lord has made. It is now December and roughly five months since my world changed. (In July, my husband, Steven, died unexpectedly.) As I wrote last month, sometimes it is best to just write from the heart, whether it is right or wrong.



**Mary Jo Stier**  
LWML District President

Over the past five months, there have been several "firsts," as many people say will happen after losing a loved one. Some of these firsts for me without Steven included his birthday, my birthday, our goddaughter's confirmation, and Thanksgiving. Christmas is right around the corner — another first.

As I experience these firsts, I continue to remind myself that, while I miss Steven terribly every day, I have the reassurance that he was welcomed home by our Lord and Savior, and that gives me peace. While this Christmas will not be the same without him, I know that the true meaning of Christmas is still the same: that the birth of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, is the greatest gift that God has ever given.

As you enjoy Christmas with your family, hold them just a little tighter and share the true meaning of Christmas.



## Workshops held in Gregory, Sioux Falls



From left, Rev. Thomas Mueller, pastor of Zion, Chamberlain, and his wife, Bobbie, enjoy lunch with Susan Swanson, Chamberlain Zone president.

**By Kristy Ring**

VP of Christian Life

Two Christian Life Workshops were held in October.

On Oct. 4, Rev. Bill Serr, pastor of Grace, Burton, Neb., and Immanuel, Jamison, Neb., led a workshop at St. John, Gregory, called, "Living God's Commandments." Pastor Serr talked about how God's commandments are foundational to Scripture.

"The commandments are to be taught in families by fathers as the head of the household," said Pastor Serr, who worked backward from Commandments 10 to 1, showing how when we break one commandment, we actually break them all.

Rev. Marcus Ring, pastor of St. John, Gregory, led Responsive Prayer for the workshop. In the prayer, he reminded us that God's commandments are given to protect His gifts.

Hymns chosen for the day included *LSB* #579, "The Law of God is Good and Wise," and #580, "The Gospel Shows the Fathers Grace."

All in attendance — 27 — were richly blessed by God's Word.

A second workshop was held on Oct. 18, at Lord of Life, Sioux Falls. Rev. Billy Newell, Lord of Life senior



In Gregory are, top (from left), Bev Beck JoAnn Serr, Kristy Ring; and, left, Rev. Bill Serr.

pastor, presented on "Deeper Relations Tips, Wider Kingdom Influence."

We greatly appreciate the time the pastors spent studying for and organizing their presentations, and teaching God's Word to us.

If your pastor is interested in sharing his spiritual wisdom at a Christian Life Workshop, or your group or congregation is interested in hosting a workshop, please contact me at 605-831-9295.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

# From what does Jesus save you?

“You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save His people from their sins.” **MATTHEW 1:21**

What great news is heard this Christmas season!

God has sent His own divine Son into the world, born of the Virgin, God and Man in the one Person of Jesus of Nazareth. And with a specific purpose: to save His people from their sins. How can this Baby do this?

“Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). **Matthew 1:23**

Our sins and offenses against God have been taken on by God Himself in the Person of His Son, who, in the fullness of time, took on human flesh and was born into this world to save us from our sins



**Rev. Christopher McCarthy**  
LWML District Counselor

(see Galatians 4:4). He was made like us in every way and yet without sin, that He may bear your sins on the cross and in His death, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice to the Father for you. What wonderful news is again repeated into our ears this Christmastide: God's eternal aim and purposes have been realized in Jesus. He does not wish for you to perish eternally, but to be saved from your sin.

I suppose there are many things from which you have heard Jesus saves you. Some might say poverty. Some might say mental illness. Some might say this or that bad habit. It is fine to call upon Him for deliverance from these things. He is God, after all, and to God we pray, calling on Him in every trouble. We are to pray, praise and give thanks (see Philippians 4:6). That is the point of calling Jesus “Immanuel” — “God with us.” He is the God of heaven and earth, and the angels have announced His purpose in becoming one with us in our humanity. It is to save us from our sin.



How can the good and gracious God endure sin, that evil and corruption from our first parents? In His goodness, He cannot stand idly by as man continues to rebel and corrupt and kill everything. No, He sends His Son to save us from our sin.

It may be that this Christmastide you are looking to Jesus to save you from all sorts of things. And that is fine — He is your God to whom you are to call. But He makes the point and root of all our woes very clear — it is our own sin. He has saved us from those sins by His bitter cross and innocent death.

As you are making your Christmas plans, remember Who is present at the altar in your churches. It is the same Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin, who won the victory by His cross, and now gives you the victory in His Supper, to do what? To “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

A most happy and blessed Christmas celebration to you all!

## BROOKINGS ZONE UPDATE

The Brookings Zone Fall Rally was hosted by the ladies of Peace, Brookings, on Oct. 4, with 26 in attendance. Rev. Tim Rynearson, Brookings Zone pastoral counselor, led devotions and presented on our topic, “End of Life Issues,” based on Philippians 1:21. He shared with us the basic premises of medicine and Christian care at life's end. Some of the main points of his presentation were:

- ▶ God is present and heals through the hands of doctors and nurses (medicine is God's gift).
- ▶ “I'm but a stranger here; heaven is my home.”
- ▶ An end-of-life statement of faith (or creed) shares what we believe and want our family to know at the end of our lives. Such a statement should reflect our values and beliefs.
- ▶ Pray, pray and when all else fails, pray.

- ▶ Have discussions as a family about your wishes so family members are aware before the time comes.
- ▶ Plan your funeral and share those plans with your pastor or church office.

An ingathering of items and monetary donations for the Peace Early Childhood Center were received at the rally. Ruth Rynearson accepted the position of zone vice-president. The position of president received no nominations, of which the zone are seeking.

Several from the Brookings Zone attended the national LWML convention in Omaha last summer. Dora Harste of Brookings was our delegate. The Brookings Zone also helped at the Puppet Place at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron on Aug. 30. Our societies are active in their churches and communities, sharing the Word and mission of the LWML.



# Time for spouse, time for family



**By Rev. Dave Gunderson**  
Emeritus

**Editor's note:** In the November issue, Pastor Gunderson wrote about the church worker's spouse as the "most important church member." Here is Part 2, which focuses on finding and spending time with the spouse and family.

► **Take time to spend with your loved ones.**

Setting a specific day off is telling the congregation your family is important, but it is also teaching them to take time for their loved ones. However, one day a week is not enough for your family. You need to find time throughout the week for those you love.

► **Take time for date nights with your spouse.**

► **Take time for family nights/activities.**  
Do something special with your family each week. Go to a park or a lake and play games. Play a game in the backyard. Have a movie night with popcorn or other snacks.

► **Take time to go to your children's sports games or school events.**

► **Take time to go on family vacations to spend more time with those you love.**

► **Find extra time in your monthly schedule for doing other activities with your spouse and family.**

Most people get two days off a week, so give yourself an extra day off now and then.

► **Secure extra time by reducing church meetings.**

Having 10 elder meetings a year instead of 12 gives you more time and the same could be done with education committee and LWML meetings.

► **Allow others in the congregation to do the "religious things," like an opening prayer or devotion.**

► **Protect your family time by not answering a phone call or text message during the evening meal, or on your day off.**

Further, protect your time with family by reminding people certain issues can be discussed at church during office hours and not while you can be enjoying a dinner out with your family. Before you set that date and time for a wedding or retreat, be considerate and double check with your spouse if that will work in your family's schedule. Your anniversary or other family events do not have to take a back seat to someone else's schedule.

► **Examine the time you are spending at work.**

If a church worker is averaging 50 or more hours a week, then look seriously at why this is the case. Visiting the sick and shut-ins is important, but maybe instead of seeing every shut-in every month, you see them every six weeks, thus giving you extra time for other duties.

Time is a precious gift and how you use it shows your family and the congregation what is important!

It begins at home. Just as we would with any church member, we want our spouses to feel important and special because they are in God's sight. God created them, Christ died for them, and the Holy Spirit has called them to be God's children. Remember, what is true for church members is also true for those "church" members in your home.

In my ministry, I often avoided a last-minute meeting someone tried to schedule simply by saying, "I already have a meeting today with another church member." That member was my wife, and we were going out for dinner, because she is a very important person in my life and I wanted her to know it!

*Rev. Gunderson retired in 2017 after serving for 27 years as pastor of St. John's, Yankton. He currently serves as a marriage and family therapist, via telehealth, for Lutheran Family Service.*



## Lutheran Family Service

If you as a church worker (or that special church worker in your life) is in need of Christ-centered mental health or marriage counseling, contact Angela Kollbaum, LFS director Of Church Worker Wellness, at 402-644-8048 or [akollbaum@lutheranfamilyservice.org](mailto:akollbaum@lutheranfamilyservice.org).

You may also contact LFS at [lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact](https://lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact).

Lutheran Family Service walks with those experiencing difficult times through mental health counseling, marriage counseling, crisis pregnancy counseling, and adoption services.

## LCMS South Dakota District Congregational Year-to-Date Report of Mission Receipts for the nine months ending Oct. 14, 2025, compared to the nine months ending Oct. 14, 2024

| City, Congregation             | Comm. Members | 2025 Intention   | 9 months 2025    | 9 months 2024    | Avg/Per 2025 | Comm. 2024   |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Circuit 1 – Aberdeen</b>    |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Aberdeen, Our Savior           | 277           | 10,000           | 9,115            | 10,050           | 32.91        | 36.28        |
| Aberdeen, St. John             | 80            | 10,500           | 7,500            | 8,616            | 93.75        | 107.70       |
| Aberdeen, St. Paul             | 450           | 20,000           | 15,678           | 18,877           | 34.84        | 41.95        |
| Andover, Zion                  | 106           | —                | 1,050            | 3,300            | 9.91         | 31.13        |
| Britton, St. John              | 146           | 3,000            | 3,896            | —                | 26.68        | —            |
| Columbia, St. John             | 95            | —                | 7,750            | 5,812            | 81.58        | 61.18        |
| Cresbard, Concordia            | 58            | 2,750            | 4,458            | 5,640            | 76.86        | 97.24        |
| Doland, Redeemer               | 29            | 2,000            | 1,500            | 1,500            | 51.72        | 51.72        |
| Ferney, St. Paul               | 92            | —                | 3,500            | 2,500            | 38.04        | 27.17        |
| Groton, St. John               | 305           | —                | 5,832            | 5,607            | 19.12        | 18.38        |
| Leola, St. Paul                | 53            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Mansfield, Trinity             | 270           | 25,000           | 19,289           | 17,426           | 71.44        | 64.54        |
| Redfield, Messiah              | 140           | 2,000            | 1,000            | 1,000            | 7.14         | 7.14         |
| Stratford, St. Paul            | 38            | 4,000            | 4,000            | 4,000            | 105.26       | 105.26       |
| Wecota, Immanuel               | 87            | 9,500            | 7,896            | 7,146            | 90.76        | 82.14        |
| <b>Circuit 1 Totals</b>        | <b>2,226</b>  | <b>\$88,750</b>  | <b>\$92,464</b>  | <b>\$91,474</b>  | <b>41.54</b> | <b>41.09</b> |
| <b>Circuit 2 – Watertown</b>   |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Brookings, Mount Calvary       | 420           | 56,000           | 42,554           | 39,487           | 101.32       | 94.02        |
| Brookings, Peace               | 295           | —                | 4,000            | 4,500            | 13.56        | 15.25        |
| Corona, Trinity                | 132           | 2,000            | 1,492            | 1,221            | 11.30        | 9.25         |
| Flandreau, Redeemer            | 28            | 3,800            | 2,850            | 1,900            | 101.79       | 67.86        |
| Millbank, Bethlehem            | 64            | 300              | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Millbank, Emanuel              | 576           | 24,000           | 14,000           | 12,000           | 24.31        | 20.83        |
| Reville, St. John              | 119           | 2,000            | 1,320            | 1,420            | 11.09        | 11.93        |
| Sisseton, Emanuel              | 101           | 4,400            | 2,200            | 2,200            | 21.78        | 21.78        |
| Watertown, Mount Olive         | 387           | 28,000           | 23,333           | 20,833           | 60.29        | 53.83        |
| Waubay, Zion                   | 126           | —                | 3,885            | 3,673            | 30.83        | 29.15        |
| White, Zion                    | 62            | 5,000            | 2,938            | 4,870            | 47.39        | 78.55        |
| Willmot, Our Savior            | 160           | 2,500            | 1,610            | 1,044            | 10.06        | 6.53         |
| <b>Circuit 2 Totals</b>        | <b>2,470</b>  | <b>\$128,000</b> | <b>\$100,182</b> | <b>\$93,148</b>  | <b>40.56</b> | <b>37.71</b> |
| <b>Circuit 3 – Pierre</b>      |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Blunt, Trinity                 | 40            | —                | 1,000            | 1,000            | 25.00        | 25.00        |
| Chamberlain, Zion              | 406           | 21,000           | 9,959            | 10,829           | 24.53        | 26.67        |
| Draper, St. Paul               | 24            | —                | 250              | 250              | 10.42        | 10.42        |
| Gettysburg, Emmanuel           | 201           | 6,500            | 4,766            | —                | 23.71        | —            |
| Gregory, St. John              | 246           | —                | 5,870            | —                | 23.86        | —            |
| Hamill, Zion                   | 14            | 350              | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Harrold, Immanuel              | 20            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Lebanon, Christ                | 23            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Midland, St. Peter             | 46            | 3,000            | 2,050            | 2,650            | 44.57        | 57.61        |
| Murdo, Messiah                 | 71            | 3,000            | 3,000            | —                | 42.25        | —            |
| Norris, St. John               | 70            | 2,500            | 550              | 2,374            | 7.86         | 33.91        |
| Onida, Holy Cross              | 108           | —                | —                | 1,600            | —            | 14.81        |
| Philip, Our Redeemer           | 50            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Pierre, Faith                  | 1,464         | 45,000           | 45,000           | 33,950           | 30.74        | 23.19        |
| Presho, Zion                   | 88            | 1,500            | 1,500            | 1,500            | 17.05        | 17.05        |
| Reliance, Trinity              | 15            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Rosebud, Rosebud Mission       | —             | —                | 1,225            | 1,686            | —            | —            |
| Winner, Christ                 | 25            | —                | 500              | 1,000            | 20.00        | 40.00        |
| <b>Circuit 3 Totals</b>        | <b>2,911</b>  | <b>\$82,850</b>  | <b>\$75,670</b>  | <b>\$56,839</b>  | <b>25.99</b> | <b>19.53</b> |
| <b>Circuit 4 – Black Hills</b> |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Belle Fourche, Trinity         | —             | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Black Hawk, Divine Shepherd    | 430           | —                | 11,761           | 14,343           | 27.35        | 33.36        |
| Creighton, Emmanuel            | 54            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Custer, Our Redeemer           | 198           | 6,000            | 3,585            | 3,361            | 18.11        | 16.97        |
| Deadwood, Grace                | 79            | 3,000            | 3,000            | 3,000            | 37.97        | 37.97        |
| Hill City, Our Savior          | 29            | 1,000            | 1,000            | 1,500            | 34.48        | 51.72        |
| Hot Springs, Bethesda          | 143           | 7,500            | 5,625            | 7,866            | 39.34        | 55.01        |
| Rapid City, Bethlehem          | 451           | 31,325           | 23,494           | 20,925           | 52.09        | 46.40        |
| Rapid City, Our Redeemer       | 124           | 5,000            | 9,061            | 4,299            | 73.07        | 34.67        |
| Rapid City, Peace <sup>1</sup> | 495           | —                | 23,665           | 17,141           | 47.81        | 34.63        |
| Rapid City, Zion               | 553           | 34,000           | 25,500           | 24,750           | 46.11        | 44.76        |
| Spearfish, St. Paul            | 283           | 36,000           | 27,000           | 22,500           | 95.41        | 79.51        |
| Sturgis, Blessed Emmanuel      | 22            | 600              | 1,567            | 2,235            | 71.23        | 101.59       |
| Wall, First                    | 229           | 2,100            | 2,100            | 2,100            | 9.17         | 9.17         |
| <b>Circuit 4 Totals</b>        | <b>3,090</b>  | <b>\$126,525</b> | <b>\$137,358</b> | <b>\$124,020</b> | <b>44.45</b> | <b>40.14</b> |

| City, Congregation                 | Comm. Members | 2025 Intention   | 9 months 2025    | 9 months 2024    | Avg/Per 2025 | Comm. 2024   |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Circuit 5 – Mitchell</b>        |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Armour, Redeemer                   | 199           | 9,000            | 6,750            | 6,000            | 33.92        | 30.15        |
| Delmont, Zion                      | 89            | 17,000           | 12,750           | 12,750           | 143.26       | 143.26       |
| Dimock, Immanuel                   | 127           | 15,000           | 18,209           | 11,688           | 143.38       | 92.03        |
| Emery, St. Peter                   | 56            | 3,000            | 4,374            | 4,025            | 78.11        | 71.88        |
| Huron, Mount Calvary               | 781           | 70,000           | 36,717           | 53,730           | 47.01        | 68.80        |
| Mitchell, Zion                     | 507           | 20,000           | 15,472           | 23,204           | 30.52        | 45.77        |
| Parkston, Faith                    | 195           | 10,000           | 7,650            | 2,350            | 39.23        | 12.05        |
| Plankinton, St. Paul               | 138           | 2,000            | 2,000            | 2,000            | 14.49        | 14.49        |
| Tripp, Emmaus                      | 42            | —                | 1,875            | 1,875            | 44.64        | 44.64        |
| White Lake, Trinity                | 115           | 8,000            | 10,325           | 6,800            | 89.78        | 59.13        |
| Wessington Springs, Zion           | 75            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Wolsey, St. John                   | 233           | —                | 8,243            | 8,225            | 35.38        | 35.30        |
| Woonsocket, Mount Olive            | 11            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| <b>Circuit 5 Totals</b>            | <b>2,568</b>  | <b>\$154,000</b> | <b>\$124,365</b> | <b>\$132,647</b> | <b>48.43</b> | <b>51.65</b> |
| <b>Circuit 6 – Freeman</b>         |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Alexandria, St. Martin             | 88            | —                | —                | 1,700            | —            | 19.32        |
| Canistota, Zion                    | 226           | —                | 3,314            | 1,069            | 14.66        | 4.73         |
| Centerville, First English         | 63            | 3,000            | 3,806            | 3,165            | 60.41        | 50.24        |
| Freeman, St. Paul                  | 275           | —                | 5,573            | 5,877            | 20.27        | 21.37        |
| Hartford, Trinity                  | 87            | 1,750            | 1,313            | —                | 15.09        | —            |
| Howard, St. John                   | 122           | 4,000            | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Hurley, Zion                       | 24            | 2,500            | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Madison, Our Savior                | 188           | 3,000            | 2,400            | 3,000            | 12.77        | 15.96        |
| Marion, Bethesda                   | 46            | 2,000            | 2,000            | 2,500            | 43.48        | 54.35        |
| Menno, Immanuel                    | 60            | 3,000            | 3,023            | 4,975            | 50.38        | 82.92        |
| Montrose, St. John                 | 109           | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Parker, First English              | 28            | 750              | 2,000            | 1,000            | 71.43        | 35.71        |
| Scotland, St. Paul                 | 34            | 300              | 225              | 500              | 6.62         | 14.71        |
| Spencer, Trinity                   | 79            | 2,000            | 2,000            | 2,000            | 25.32        | 25.32        |
| Tea, Risen Savior                  | 131           | 11,899           | 10,961           | 16,760           | 83.67        | 127.94       |
| Wentworth, St. Peter               | 185           | —                | 5,816            | 5,021            | 31.44        | 27.14        |
| <b>Circuit 6 Totals</b>            | <b>1,745</b>  | <b>\$34,199</b>  | <b>\$42,431</b>  | <b>\$47,567</b>  | <b>24.32</b> | <b>27.26</b> |
| <b>Circuit 7 – Sioux Falls</b>     |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Brandon, Blessed Redeemer          | 269           | —                | 11,250           | 10,000           | 41.82        | 37.17        |
| Sioux Falls, Christ                | 122           | 3,000            | —                | 3,536            | —            | 28.98        |
| Sioux Falls, Faith                 | 592           | —                | 22,267           | 37,914           | 37.61        | 64.04        |
| Sioux Falls, Lord of Life          | 164           | —                | 8,336            | 9,378            | 50.83        | 57.18        |
| Sioux Falls, Memorial <sup>2</sup> | 770           | 68,820           | 42,073           | 37,396           | 54.64        | 48.57        |
| Sioux Falls, Our Redeemer          | 314           | 25,200           | 21,000           | 25,200           | 66.88        | 80.25        |
| Sioux Falls, Resurrection          | 245           | 10,000           | 6,667            | 7,500            | 27.21        | 30.61        |
| Sioux Falls, Trinity of The Deaf   | 35            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Sioux Falls, Zion                  | 672           | 50,000           | 50,000           | 50,000           | 74.40        | 74.40        |
| <b>Circuit 7 Totals</b>            | <b>3,183</b>  | <b>\$157,020</b> | <b>\$161,593</b> | <b>\$180,924</b> | <b>50.77</b> | <b>56.84</b> |
| <b>Circuit 8 – Yankton</b>         |               |                  |                  |                  |              |              |
| Alcester, Peace                    | 89            | 3,000            | 2,617            | 2,749            | 29.40        | 30.89        |
| Avon, Zion                         | 212           | 5,000            | 3,871            | 6,083            | 18.26        | 28.69        |
| Dakota Dunes, Holy Cross           | 203           | 24,634           | 16,039           | 14,738           | 79.01        | 72.60        |
| Fairfax, Trinity                   | 77            | 5,000            | —                | 5,000            | —            | 64.94        |
| Springfield, Our Savior            | 26            | —                | —                | —                | —            | —            |
| Tyndall, St. John                  | 132           | 2,000            | 2,000            | —                | 15.15        | —            |
| Utica, Martinus                    | 68            | 2,000            | 1,410            | 1,100            | 20.74        | 16.18        |
| Vermillion, Concordia              | 73            | 3,000            | 2,400            | 5,400            | 32.88        | 73.97        |
| Wagner, St. John                   | 182           | 9,000            | 9,000            | 6,750            | 49.45        | 37.09        |
| Yankton, St. John                  | 1,455         | —                | 14,333           | 50,558           | 9.85         | 34.75        |
| <b>Circuit 8 Totals</b>            | <b>2,517</b>  | <b>\$53,634</b>  | <b>\$51,670</b>  | <b>\$92,378</b>  | <b>20.53</b> | <b>36.70</b> |
| <b>GRAND TOTALS</b>                | <b>20,710</b> | <b>\$824,978</b> | <b>\$785,733</b> | <b>\$818,997</b> | <b>37.94</b> | <b>39.55</b> |

<sup>1</sup>\$4,414 of Peace–Rapid City is for 2024 Missions

<sup>2</sup>\$4,953 of Memorial–Sioux Falls is for 2024 Missions

Comm. Members: Confirmed membership as of Jan. 24, 2025 (LCMS Locator website)

# LFS has meet and greet in Aberdeen

Forty attended the Lutheran Family Service (LFS) Meet and Greet held at St. Paul's, Aberdeen, on Oct. 5. Present were Wanda Pritzel, LFS director of Ministry Advancement, and Dreena Wertz, LFS counselor for the Aberdeen area specializing in mental health and marriage counseling, crisis pregnancy support, church worker wellness, and many other important areas of family life.

The event was sponsored by the Rural Gospel Initiative (RGI), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization.

Along with startup funding for Dreena's position with LFS, the RGI has also funded or helped fund Aberdeen Circuit fellowship and confirmation gatherings; vacation Bible school at an Aberdeen Circuit church; a Bible study at Northern State University in Aberdeen; a weekly Table Talk program for high school students at St. John's, Groton; and tuition funding for children attending Lighthouse Preschool at St. Paul's, Aberdeen.

Learn more about LFS at [lutheranfamilyservice.org](http://lutheranfamilyservice.org); and the RGI at [ruralgospel.org](http://ruralgospel.org).

— Submitted by Sarah Ludwig Rausch



▲ The Table Talk Committee makes lunch every week for the students attending Table Talk. From left, Laurie LaMee, Ray Larson (RGI president), Eunice McColister, Lori Westby, Bridget Fliehs, Becky Knecht, Becky Hunter, Judy Thompson, Laurie Mitchell and Renee Brooks. Missing from the photo is Renee Swisher.

◀ From left, Wanda Pritzel, LFS director of Ministry Advancement; Rev. Bret Bierman, pastor of Trinity/St. Paul/St. John's, Mansfield/Stratford/Aberdeen; and Dreena Wurtz, LFS mental health counselor. Dreena has an office at St. Paul's, Aberdeen.

## District welcomes new executive



The South Dakota District is pleased to welcome **Dawn Wombold** as its new education executive. Dawn has worked as an educator for 28 years and has served in LCMS and other Christian schools in South Dakota and Iowa.

She graduated from Concordia College, Seward, Neb., in 1997. Throughout her career she has served as a teacher, mentor and youth leader, and in administrative roles.

She lives in Rapid City with her husband, Randy. She loves spending time with her four daughters and their husbands, and her three grandchildren.



*Wishing you Merry Christmas*