

THE PUBLIC WITNESS OF CHRIST



Dear Redeemed
Saints,

How does our outward confession of Christ fit into the public square! In the last few weeks, we have experienced some very powerful examples of this, both good and evil.

On January 18, a mob stormed into a Baptist congregation's worship service in the Twin Cities. Their stated goal was to protest the congregation. The unstated goal shown by the way it was carried out was to intimidate and harass.

That is exactly what happened.

There are respectful and legal ways to protest. There are ways to disagree with people that do not give way to anarchy and lawlessness. January 18 in the Twin Cities was not one of them.

On January 23, an estimated 70,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C., to publicly protest abortion and legislation that makes it legal to end human life. The march was publicly planned. The March for Life team worked with authorities to develop a route. Streets were closed, legally. Nothing was vandalized. Our public leaders, such a Vice President J.D. Vance, spoke on supporting life issues. Signs were handmade, with positive — not vulgar — messages, such as "Everyone deserves a birthday," and, "Life is a gift." The LCMS signs quoted Psalm 139 and simply said, "Fearfully and wonderfully made." We sang hymns as we marched in the public square. We held pro-life signs a quiet witness to the truth and power of God working through His Word.

In these last few paragraphs, I have reflected on two protests in the public

square, just a week apart. The January 18th event was more about power and intimidation, calling the evil they initiated good and the good of Christians gathering in worship, evil.



The January 23 March for Life was respectful. It worked hard to keep the 4th Commandment: "Honor your father and mother." This commandment includes those in authority over us. The March for Life, very much in the public square, promoted things God loves and calls good, life, family, His Word, and authority.

The prophet Isaiah writes in Chapter 5, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" This deception to reframe reality started in the Garden when the evil one said, "Did God really say ... ?"

If we are not continually grounded in God's Word and the gifts He gives to each of us the deception of evil calling itself good can quickly confuse us and lead us into evil, as well.

Dear Baptized Saints, we are not helpless in this present evil age. We are led and protected by the Victorious one. Jesus Christ beat every trap and deception the evil one throws at us. He

is risen from death's grasp and promises that for you as well. He has wisdom in all things and says to us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10).

The bold confession we have as sons and daughters of the King has done very powerful tools to bring our hope to the public square.

Pray for wisdom. Pray for our enemies. Pray for strength to disagree publicly (with respect and honoring our authorities) when the wisdom of the world does not agree with God's wisdom. Pray for safety in our cities. Pray for persecuted Christians.

Dear Saints, be in worship. Be in God's Word. Encourage one another and remember what St. Peter writes: "But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).



This is exactly how we confess our risen Christ Jesus in the public square — marching in the public square and letting Christ's light shine.

—President Sturzenbecher

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10).

DISTRICT NEWS

CHANGES TO DISTRICT NEWSLETTER/

E-NEWSLETTER AND NEW CONTACT

The beloved South Dakota District is working to improve our communications with our South Dakota congregations. With the Synod's recent decision to no longer publish District news inserts, our South Dakota District will put together its own monthly printable newsletter and will continue to send out two e-newsletters each month.

As communication modes are changing, we hope to provide more news, features and profiles for our readers. We will also strive for an increased social media presence.

Congregations can now receive a monthly printable newsletter, allowing each church to distribute it as they see fit.

Please send any news about your congregation, service project, building project or feel-good human interest piece to communications@sddlcms.org.

We look forward to sharing your stories and praying alongside you!

-Kate Meadows
Communications Coordinator
communications@sddlcms.org



CHRIST AT WORK IN HIS CHURCH: WORSHIP AND THE CHURCH AS A HEALING COMMUNITY



Pastors and church elders/lay ministers are invited to a free one-day training with Rev. Michael Kumm to learn about pastoral care and theology in the context of worship and the church community. The training is titled, Christ at Work in His Church: Worship and the Church as a Healing Community. It will take place at Mr. Calvary, Brookings, on Feb. 28, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Please RSVP to Steve Timmerman at stimmerman@brookingshealth.org by Feb. 16.

SHOWING GOD'S LOVE IN JESUS AT EVERGREEN LUTHERAN, PINE RIDGE



Evergreen Lutheran Church on the Pine Ridge Reservation hosted a Christmas worship on December 21, 2025. The service started with the gift of Holy Baptism. What a joy to witness our dear friend receive the gift of Baptism and become God's own child.

Wood Nativity figures were placed one by one as the lessons were being read. The sermon and hymns were well received by many people. Sarah Anderson Sutton prepared a delicious ham meal. There were plenty of gifts given to all in attendance.



We thank Mt Calvary, Huron, for providing 30 beautifully sewn bags filled with gifts for everyone. The excitement and smiles were contagious. It was a great day and the true Gospel of Salvation was proclaimed. We appreciate and encourage prayers for the Evergreen Mission. -Diane Falin



INVITATION TO 28TH ISRAEL "NOUR TOUR"



Join Pastor Nabil Nour on his 28th tour of the Holy Land, scheduled for Sept. 29-Oct. 12, 2026! During the 13-day tour, travelers will experience two civilizations – the old and the new.

Along the way you will....:

- Walk where Jesus walked
- Cruise the Sea of Galilee
- Climb the Mount of Olives
- Walk the Triumphal road, the same road on which Jesus entered Jerusalem
- See the Old City of Jerusalem
- Visit Tabgha, the site of the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes

For further information contact:

Rev. Dr. Nabil S. Nour, Pastor, proud grandpa, and Foot Washer Phil. 1:6
7701 S. Tuscan Club Circle.
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
605-201-6998 (Cell)
preachermanfootwasher@gmail.com

DISTRICT NEWS

REV. PAUL WINCKLER INSTALLED AT ZION, SIOUX FALLS

Rev. Paul Winckler was installed as Pastor of Zion, Sioux Falls, in a special service Jan. 25, 2025.

Rev. Winckler is a 2008 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He received a deferred vicarage placement to Zion Lutheran Church, School, and Preschool in Rapid City in 2011 and was called as Zion, Rapid City's pastor, where he was ordained on July 1, 2012. Rev. Winckler served 11 years at Zion before accepting a call to serve as Assistant to the District President in Sioux Falls in 2022. At the South Dakota District office, he worked closely with former District President Scott Sailer and current District President Randy Sturzenbecher.

Rev. Winckler and Laura have three children. Benjamin (25) lives and works in Sioux Falls. Emily (22) works for Camp Lutherhaven in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Caleb (19) recently graduated from Harrisburg High School.



Attending the installation were (back row L to R): Revs. John Farden, Emeritus; Dr. Christopher Ascher, Resurrection, Sioux Falls; Tanner Sutcliffe, Risen Savior, Tea; Scott Sailer, Emeritus; Andrew Ratcliffe, Blessed Redeemer, Brandon; Brett Simek, Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls; Matthew Nix, Christ, Sioux Falls; Jason Rensner and Corey Aker, Faith, Sioux Falls. Front row L to R: Revs. Nabiil Nour, Emeritus; Albert Bakat; Greg Lehr, Zion, Sioux Falls; Paul Winckler, Zion, Sioux Falls; Randy Sturzenbecher, District President.



Left: Rev. Winckler with wife Laura and son, Caleb.

Right: Rev. Winckler with Zion, Sioux Falls' Senior Pastor, Greg Lehr.



REGISTRATION OPEN FOR SUMMER ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATIONS CLASS

Pastors, church workers and laypeople are invited to a three-day class, English Bible Translations, led by Dr. Cameron MacKenzie, at Trinity Lutheran, Ortonville, Minn., July 19-21, 2026.

Dr. MacKenzie has served on the Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), faculty since 1983 and has published many articles in the field of church history.

The course offers an introduction to and history of significant English versions such as the King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, the New International Version and the English Standard Version. Students will learn about the theological milieu from which such versions arose and examine texts for evidence of theological positions as well as linguistic and scholarly expertise.

Class begins at 9 a.m. each day and concludes the last day at 12 p.m.

For more information (including accommodations), reach out to Rev. Nathaniel Brown at revnathanielbrown@protonmail.com or (605) 593-2745.

To register by phone, contact LeeAnna Rondot at (260) 452-2204. To register online, visit ctsfw.edu/CE/Ortonville-Minnesota.



LUTHERAN SCHOOLS FOCUS

*to share your Lutheran school/preschool news, please email Dawn Wombold, District Education Executive, at Dawn.Wombold@sddlcms.org

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY HONORS OPENING OF NEW HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL ADDITION AT SIOUX FALLS LUTHERAN



Sioux Falls Lutheran School marked the dedication of its new high school and middle school addition with a special ribbon cutting ceremony on Jan. 20. The new wing includes seven classrooms, collaborative learning spaces and "the Upper Room," a gathering space on the second floor honoring Steve and Vicki Jastram, longtime school supporters.

Association church members, families, students, alumni, and supporters were invited to be part of this exciting milestone.

MAIN STREET LIVING PROGRAMMING - FEBRUARY

"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). KEVN (FOX) airs at 8 a.m. Central Time. The 8:30 a.m. programs are interpreted and closed captioned for the deaf and hard of hearing.

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

Feb 1, 2026

KEVN (FOX)

8 AM - "Visitation" - Pastor Andrew Burdick (Dick Sargent) is having problems keeping his congregation together. Bishop Smith (Parley Baer) visits him to identify some troubling leadership spots and to renew faith.

8:30 AM - Rev. Paul Winckler, with the SD LCMS District LCMS in Sioux Falls, presents a message titled, "**Blessed Are You.**" The sermon is based on Matthew 5:1-12.

Feb 8, 2026

KEVN (FOX)

8 AM - "Happy Dirty Hands" - School teacher Kent (Daniel Travanti) and his wife (Anne Whitfield) live in an impoverished area causing trouble in their marriage.

8:30 AM - Rev. Matthew Nix, pastor at Christ Lutheran, Sioux Falls, presents a message titled, "Does your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees?" The sermon is based on Matthew 5:20.

Feb 15, 2026

KEVN (FOX)

8 AM - "Destination Unknown" - Paul Werner (Leonard Nimoy) is a Nuclear Scientist who plans to defect to the Soviet Union. He reconsiders after a conversation on an airplane.

8:30 AM - Rev. Joshua Mork, pastor at Our Savior, Madison and St John's, Howard, presents a message titled, "Seeing God." The sermon is based on Exodus 24:8-18.

Feb 22, 2026

KEVN (FOX)

8 AM - "Cell of Hope" - Flag Washington (Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs), who came to Christ while in prison, gets a new cellmate Jimmy Stricklin (Richard Dinitri) who is obnoxious.

8:30 AM - Rev. Tanner Sutcliffe, pastor at Risen Savior, Tea, presents a message titled, "The Word in Wilderness." The sermon is based on Matthew 4:1-11.

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

Moments with Mary Jo

GET READY FOR P.R.A.Y.E.R.



Over the past few months, my articles have reflected my personal journey of loss but also of peace and joy. This month I have a wonderful opportunity to share with you the 2026 LWML Prayer Service Theme:

P.R.A.Y.E.R. - Praise, Remember, Ask, Yield, Excitement, Rejoice

The 2026 LWML Prayer Service, based on the acronym P.R.A.Y.E.R., is a classic, yet updated, service from over a decade ago.

The service was authored by Rev. Barrie E. Henke, former LCMS Oklahoma District President from 2009 to 2022 and the LWML Oklahoma District Pastoral

Counselor from 2004 to 2010. He also served as Senior Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Edmond, Okla., as well as other congregations in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Oklahoma. Rev. Henke received his crown of life in March 2023. Rev. Henke wrote that the service "prompts the participants to remember that God does not speak to His children in prayer. Rather, His children speak to Him, assured that He readily speaks to them in His Word and in the Sacraments, as the Holy Spirit gives His divine counsel through very clear direction or, sometimes, His 'nudging.'"

The LWML Prayer Service is designed to be used at any time by large or small groups. This prayer service is copyrighted by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. The use of this prayer service outside of LWML events requires permission from the LWML and other copyright holders. There are wonderful resources at lwml.org/prayer-service to help make your Prayer Service an uplifting and joyous event.

FEEDING SOUTH DAKOTA (LITERALLY)



Zion Lutheran, Sioux Falls, conducted a food drive during the month of November. Members brought in 1,664 pounds of food that was donated to Feeding South Dakota.
-Lisa May

ZONE UPDATE



Huron

The Huron Zone LWML keeps busy all year long. We are blessed with many talented women, and all four groups in our Zone make quilts.

One group makes all their quilts in one weekend. Another group works at it once a week. The Mt. Calvary Huron group partners with Slumberland Furniture in Huron for their annual bed giveaway. Slumberland gives about ten beds away every year and Mt. Calvary LWML furnishes quilts and sheet sets for each bed. Two of our groups pack clothes for Orphan Grain Train and together have delivered over 400 boxes of clothing this past year. We are able to serve the Lord with gladness as we continue to have our monthly Bible Studies, serve Lenten suppers, serve funerals, and all of the other things we do.

-Nancy Ziegeldorf Huron Zone President

MITE OFFERINGS DUE!

March 15, 2026, is the deadline to submit Mites for the 2024-2026 Biennium. As of last count, we reached 82% of our Mission Goal. We are currently \$21,714 short.

Please complete a "Financial Secretary Remittance Form" and send it along with your Mites to Paula Warren, 14573 Lower Spring Creek Road, Hermosa, SD 57744. Make checks payable to: LWML South Dakota District.

-Cathy VandeBraak
Lutheran Women in Mission
SD District Vice President of Gospel Outreach



LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE



Counselor's Corner

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

As we approach Ash Wednesday, the ashes are to serve as a reminder of two inescapable things: your sin and your death because of your sin.

What a way to start an article!

But as we come down from the glory of Christmas, the bright light of Epiphany, the glorious appearance of the Transfiguration, we are met with a sobering reality – the horrible weight of our sin and the deadly consequences of our transgressions. It is not something that we want to do, or maybe even feel ready to do, so the ashes are imposed on us, not as an end in itself, but a driver towards the Finisher of our faith.

-1 Corinthians 6:11

See, through the church year, the church breathes the life of her Lord. It is not so much that we are

coming down, as if from some spiritual high, but a constant forming into the One Who came down to us. Think of your sin and your death because of it. Now, think about the glory of Christmas, the bright light of Epiphany, how the glorious appearance of the Transfiguration centers around our Lord Jesus Christ and the actual events in His life.

Now, as He comes down from the mount, He brings His disciples with Him. That includes you and me, who are privileged with Peter, James, John, Moses, and Elijah to see the reality hidden in human flesh. God, the Lord Himself, has come down to us in our sinful state to free us from our sin and the evil tyrant. So, He ventured down the mount into the valley “of the shadow of death,” and immediately casts out an evil spirit from the boy. So, He also ventured from that valley to the mount of death, Golgotha, to raise Himself up as the Sacrifice to the

Father on behalf of all men, winning the forgiveness of sins for all of us, and casting out the old accuser. The Seed of the woman has bruised the serpent’s head, his power, to accuse the saints of sin.

This is why Psalm 51 has two parts. This Psalm, traditionally used as an entrance Psalm on Ash Wednesday, is first a confession of sins. Many of us may even sing it in our heads, as it is the psalm used for the offertory in Divine Service setting 3.

This is good. We truly need to examine our lives by God’s Law, recognize our complete sinfulness and confess it to Him. But there is unshakeable hope and utter confidence in God’s mercy in this Psalm, too. David says, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I will be whiter than snow” (51:7).

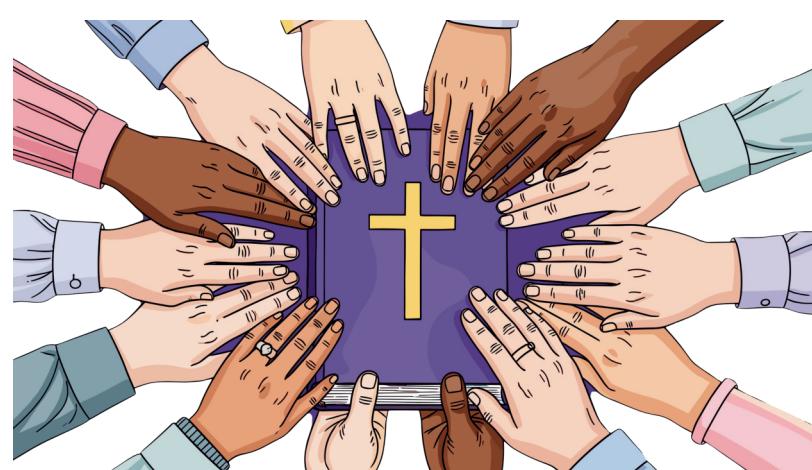
If God gives the cleansing, the sinner will be cleaned, for “against You and You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight” (Psalm 51:4).

Thanks be to God! “The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Let the ashes be imposed on you, and hear the condemnation, “Dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19).

Wash the ashes from your head and hear the promise, “You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). You were baptized into Christ, Whose blood cleanses you from all sin.

Soli deo gloria!



2026 BIBLE BOWL INVITATION

The 2026 Bible Bowl is open for registration to youth in 6th-12th grades. This year's Bible Bowl topic is, “The Life of David” and will cover

1 Samuel 16 through 1 Kings 2, Psalm 51 and Luther’s Small Catechism: Confession. The event takes place Saturday, March 21, starting at 10 a.m. Location is Faith Lutheran Church, 714 N. Grand Ave., in Pierre.

After rejecting Saul as king, Samuel declared that the LORD had sought out a man after his own heart to be prince over his people (1 Samuel 13:14). We will not find a perfect man, but a man who knew God’s mercy and forgiveness, who would transgressors in the God’s ways, so that sinners should return to him.

For additional questions, contact District Bible Bowl coordinator Rev. Marcus Ring at (605) 831-0601 or revmrng@gmail.com.

All are welcome to study God’s Word and watch our District youth compete.

“FORO” - AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE IN SPAIN AND ROMANIA, COMING SOON!



‘Foro’ is Spanish for forum. In LCMS International Missions, a Foro is a partnership of Lutheran people and institutions that help different mission fields do their work, on the ground, in the field. The Eurasia Region of the LCMS Office of International Mission is establishing Foros for Spain and Romania to allow individuals, congregations, Districts and other LCMS organizations to participate in and support these growing fields.

Watch the next District e-newsletters for information about the South Dakota District’s first opportunities to support the Romania and Spain Foros!

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

STANDING FOR LIFE, EVERY TIME

I remember growing up and hearing of Todd Akin's fumbles with the issue of victims of rape and incest. He was running for US Representative, and he said a few things that were uneducated but also a few things that were reasonable. He was savaged by the news and his party called for him to drop out of the race.

This same issue became a foible for Rick Santorum when he was faced with the question, if his daughter was raped and became pregnant as a result, how would he advise she move forward? Santorum said he would counsel her to keep the baby.

Santorum probably destroyed whatever chance he had to be president that day.

This issue of pregnancy as the result of rape is a political hand grenade because the conception itself occurs under terrible circumstances and great evil.

Of course, God does not want these things to happen. Neither does He want people to steal, kill or worship idols against His will. Yet, these crimes happen.

After these notable politicians and public figures spoke about these issues and were roundly maligned and criticized by the media and public, I believe we Christians were scared to speak a very sensible truth. I have heard people in my congregations say they are against abortion, "except in the case of rape or incest." I have heard members of my own family say it. I have heard friends say it.

We are afraid to be challenged or even rejected if we challenge this idea.

I want to make a case that aborting babies conceived by rape and incest is still an injustice. In such a case, there is a victim, which is the mother. There is an attacker, which is the father. The baby is innocent of its father's crimes and on top of that could very well become a victim if faced with the nature of how he or she came to be born and the pain that the mother and others endured.

"We stand for life as LCMS people. Our witness must be consistent and strong."

We should feel empathy for the women who go through these terrible situations. We should love them and support these mothers. But we should not support the killing of innocent children.

We stand for life as LCMS people. Our witness must be consistent and strong. No circumstances of conception should be used as confirmation for abortion. Our language matters. We should decry these kinds of crimes with every amount of energy we have, but we should not condemn to death any baby.

Take some time to research people like Rebecca Kiessling, Ryan Bomberger, or Mark Roepke. Mark Roepke said in an interview, "I was conceived in rape ...The circumstances of my conception do not determine my worth as a human being. I have a right to life. And the sins of my father do not fall on me."

All of these and many more like them have taken up the banner to thank their mothers for giving birth to them even through the pain but also to advocate for all people conceived in rape or incest.

Our confession on this issue must be strong and unafraid. Our lives may be eighty or ninety years, perhaps more. And then we will live forever with Christ! Make the bold confession for life in all circumstances. There is no sub-section of babies we throw away because of how they were conceived. We must remove this phrase from our vernacular and be willing to have hard conversations and speak for the sanctity of life.

-Rev. Ryan Drevlow

Rev. Drevlow is pastor of St. Paul's, Aberdeen and pastoral advisor of Lutherans for Life-South Dakota.

Suicide Awareness, Intervention and Postvention Program

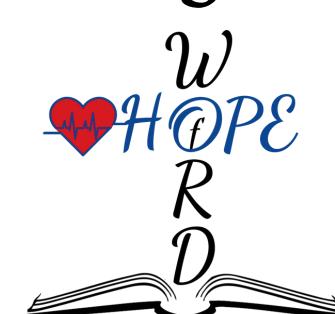


sponsored by Lutherans for Life of South Dakota
featuring Deaconess Chrissie Gillet, Director of Word of Hope

2 dates/locations:

Saturday, April 18, 10:00am to noon
Zion Lutheran Church
314 S. Main St., Chamberlain

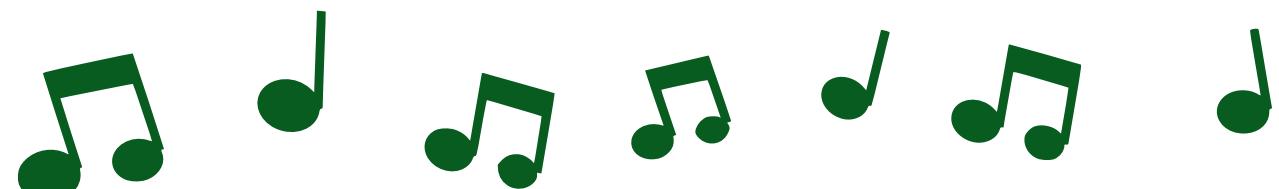
Sunday, April 19, 3-5 p.m.
Resurrection Lutheran Church
5500 26th St., Sioux Falls



RSVPs appreciated but not required to jjohns8@yahoo.com.
Refreshments will be served during the program. All are welcome.
Questions? Call 605-361-1514

DISTRICT NEWS

NOMINATE YOUNG MUSICIANS FOR LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC PROGRAM



Youth musicians from across the country are headed to St. Olaf College this year for the 2026 Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival (LSM). Students in grades 8-12 will be immersed in a supportive community that nurtures their musical growth and invites them to share their musical gifts in performance and in worship. The Standard Enrollment **deadline is March 1**, and spots are filling fast. Do you know young musicians who would thrive at LSM? Nominate them today at LSMacademy.org/nominate, or remind them to submit a free application by March 1 at LSMacademy.org/apply.



CALL INFORMATION

PENDING

The following are prayerfully considering calls:

-Rev. Daniel Grimmer, Zion, Mitchell, to Saint John, Fredonia, Wisc., and St. Mark's, Milford, Ohio, Jan. 21.

ACCEPTED

-Rev. Christopher McCarthy, First-Wall/Emmanuel-Creighton, to St. Paul, Ashland, Ky., Jan. 14.
-Rev. Doug Slavens, Memorial, Sioux Falls, accepted a call as Sole Pastor of Memorial, Sioux Falls on Jan. 14. He previously served as the Associate Pastor there.
-Rev. Brian Lemcke, Zion-Delmont/Emmaus, Tripp, to First Trinity, Bloomfield, NE, Dec. 30.

DECLINED

-Rev. Daniel Grimmer, Zion, Mitchell, to Trinity, Rantoul, Wisc., Jan. 12.
-Rev. Joseph Hanson, First, Missouri Valley, Iowa, to Emmanuel-Sisseton/Zion-Waubay, Jan. 3.

VACANCIES

• South Dakota District Office, Assistant to the President • Trinity, Blunt/Immanuel, Harold, 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 • Memorial, Sioux Falls (senior pastor) • St. John, Wagner/Trinity, Fairfax • Mt. Calvary, Huron • Peace, Rapid City • Emanuel, Sisseton/Zion, Waubay • Emmaus, Tripp/Zion, Delmont • Mt. Olive, Watertown

Attention Pastors In South Dakota: Tell Your Wives To Save The Date!

Lutheran Family Service will host a **South Dakota Pastors' Wives Retreat** in the Spring of 2026. Based on Matthew 11:28-30, join us as we find rest in Jesus and support one another as a pastor's wife.

Location: Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre
Date(s): May 1 & 2, 2026