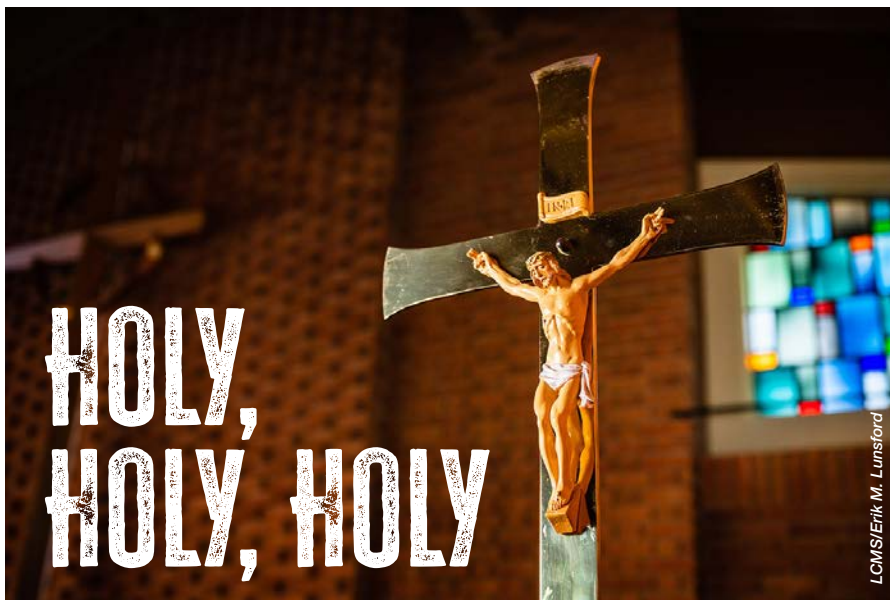


DISTRICT NEWS

March 2025



(and merciful, merciful, merciful)



Rev. Dr.
Scott Sailer
District President

In a vision, the prophet Isaiah found himself in the presence of God. Do you remember how Isaiah felt? We learn about it in Isaiah 6. As Isaiah came into the presence of the holy God — no, the holy, holy, holy God! — he felt small. In his smallness, he felt like the biggest sinner in all the world because God is holy.

Holy is a word that means totally other; totally separate; perfect and all-glorious — everything that Isaiah was not. Isaiah, the poor, miserable, small, insignificant sinner is in the presence of the holy, holy, holy God who ought to have destroyed this sinner on the spot. Isaiah feels this and exclaims:

“Woe is me! For I am lost; for I’m a man of unclean lips.” **ISAIAH 6:5**

You’re right, Isaiah. And you’re a man with an unclean heart. And an unclean mind. Just like you and me.

I’m sure you’ve had those moments when, confronted with the reality of our having a holy and glorious and perfect God, you’ve felt small and supremely sinful. St. Paul felt this, as he has a woe-is-me moment when writing to the Christians in Rome:

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I

keep on doing. ... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver from this body of death? **ROMANS 7:19, 24**

Isn’t Paul’s story your story? You’ve done something you know is wrong ... again. It’s a sin against someone and before God. You’ve said something nasty ... again. You’ve thought something dirty ... again.

And this is why, every Sunday, we include in our worship services a time to be real with God and with one another. That time is called the confession of sins. It’s a time to admit that God is holy and we are not. That God is loving and we are not. That God is mighty and He could crush us forever because of our sin. And it’s true. He could. He’d have every right to.

And so we tell it like it is to God. In a necessary woe-is-me moment, we all admit:

I, a poor, miserable sinner confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being.

We’ve spoken words like those many, many times in our lives, haven’t we? And I have yet to witness the lightning bolts of God’s justice and wrath come crashing down on us. (Thanks be to God!)

See **MESSAGE**, page 8

'THE SWEET SAVOR OF THE GOSPEL'

Free conference will point out false teaching—and a Lutheran response



Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller

“Has American Christianity Failed?” is the title of a book written by Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller, pastor of St. Paul, Austin. It is also the title of a conference to be held May 9-10 at Zion, Mitchell, in which Pastor Wolfmueller will present on this topic.

The book, available from Concordia Publishing House, was published in 2016. The book introduction states:

American Christianity teaches the centrality of the individual — my will, my experiences, my decision, my heart, my work, and my dedication. Yet we couldn't be more unaware that Christ and His saving and comforting work are being lost. Our minds and hearts are captivated in some way by those who often preach the Christian instead of Christ.

Wolfmueller sounds the alarm against the false teaching and dangerous practices of Christianity in America. He offers a beautiful alternative: the sweet savor of the Gospel, which brings us to the real comfort, joy, peace, freedom, and sure hope of Christ. And it's for *you*.

Pastor Wolfmueller, a frequent conference speaker around the country and podcast guest, also hosts a YouTube channel that focuses on Lutheran theology.

The conference is open to everyone and is free. Donations will be accepted to cover the cost of two meals. Registration is requested. Visit zionmitchell.org/wolfmueller to register.

CALL INFORMATION

Rev. Brett Simek, Trinity, Hilbert, Wis., accepted a call as senior pastor to Our Redeemer, Sioux Falls, Dec. 27.

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

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

Rev. Jens Jensen, Redeemer, Armour, declined a call to St. John, Honey Creek, Iowa, Feb. 2. He is prayerfully considering a call to Trinity, Bloomfield, Neb., Feb. 9.

VACANCIES

Sole pastor

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

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!



Send submissions to Kate Meadows:

kate@katemeadows.com, or
420 E. Liberty Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

The deadline for the April 2025 issue is Feb. 15. Please ensure photos are high resolution.

Get ready for 2025 Bible Bowl!

The **2025 Bible Bowl** is scheduled for **March 29 at Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre**, beginning at 10 a.m. The topic will be the Gospel of John and Psalm 22 (English Standard Version) and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar from Luther's Small Catechism).

Visit sddclms.org/news-events to register. The link to the event is on the right side of the page. Send a digital copy of the form or type out the information in an email to Rev. Marcus Ring at revmring@gmail.com. You may also email Pastor Ring for more information.

God bless you and your study of His Word!



Christ Academy High School seeks applicants for two-week session

High school students who are interested in theology and church work are invited to apply to Christ Academy High School 2025, a two-week intensive of learning, worship and fun to be held June 15–28 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind.

Designed for young people who are considering a future career in church work, Christ Academy High School (CAHS) consists of three essential elements: confessional catechesis, liturgical worship and a fun life together.

During CAHS, students take a variety of classes in theology taught by CTSFW faculty over two weeks. Learning also occurs informally in the invaluable discussions over the dinner table and in dorm groups daily.

Students also experience the joy of living a life of worship as they gather around God’s Word four times a day. All worship is drawn from *Lutheran Service Book* and is focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Students will have the opportunity to witness their faith while serving the greater community. In the past, some of these opportunities have included serving at local food banks, homeless shelters, area churches and pro-life organizations.

Finally, students have fun at Christ Academy. The schedule is packed with activities, from intramural games like Capture the Flag and Ultimate Frisbee to attending a minor league baseball game and the annual talent show. Students both enjoy themselves and build lasting friendships along the way.

For more information, email Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, director of Christ Academy, at christacademy@ctsfw.edu or call 260-452-3140. Spots are limited, so check out the details and join the tradition!



Moments with Mary Jo

REGISTER FOR RETREAT, CONVENTION

As I wrote this month's article, it was zero degrees outside. I sat in my office, wrapped up in extra clothing with a warmer on my lap and prayed for warmer weather.



Mary Jo Stier
LWML District
President

While March may not be the warmest month,

I also remind myself that spring is right around the corner. The birds will be singing, flowers will start to grow (unless they are my flowers — for those of you who know me well, I don't handle flowers well) and spring will turn to summer before we know it.

Speaking of spring and summer, have you marked your calendar for the upcoming LWML South Dakota District Retreat, to be held in Oacoma April 25–26? The registration form is available at sdlwml.org/district-retreats and is due by April 1, with hotel room reservations due by March 26. The retreat committee has been working hard to make this an uplifting experience that you won't want to miss.

Once you register for the district retreat, why not take a few moments to register for the 2025 LWML national convention? The 41st Biennial Convention will be held June 26–29 in Omaha, Neb. Registration opens March 1 and ends April 30. For more information, visit lwml.org/convention.

With the convention being so close, I encourage you to talk to your LWML sisters in your groups and make plans to attend together.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

“My name is Patrick. I am a sinner.”

With these straightforward words, the famous St. Patrick begins his short confessions.

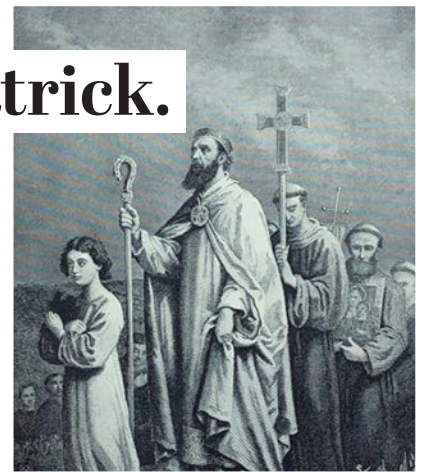
Legends abound around this man, this saint! Most famously, of course, would be the vanquishing of all snakes from Ireland. Not many take this claim literally, but instead interpret it as a metaphor for casting out the devilish druids by his proclamation of Christ — the Son of God — to the entire island. “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head” (Gen. 3:15). There are other legends showing that the Lord of Creation, Jesus, was with him and protected him and the other saints from all worldly dangers in their travels, which could not be accomplished by any other human effort.

From historical accounts, it appears that Christianity spread through Ireland fairly quickly because of the work that our Lord had done through His saint, Patrick. Monasteries were established for the training of clergy (on land donated from the kings of Ireland). And while Viking raiders targeted the monasteries and churches of mainland Europe and England, Ireland would not deal with these thieves and plunderers until after Irish missionaries would have the opportunity to reestablish centers of Christian learning on the continent, especially in France and along the Rhine River into Germany.

Of course, this is a simplified history and, of course, as is the case with any history, things are never quite as simple as they are recounted to us. History is filled with humans like us who are complicated creatures, having desires and wills and



Rev. Christopher McCarthy
LWML District
Counselor



Pictured is an illustration of St. Patrick journeying to Tara that appeared in *Harper's* magazine in 1872.

emotions that do not always submit to God's Word as they should. That is, history is full of sinners like St. Patrick.

History is full of sinners like you and me, whom the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps with our Lord Jesus Christ. He even calls these sinners, whom He has declared saints by His blood, to be His servants, to do the good works which He has prepared in advance for us to walk in (Eph. 2:10). A believer's work may be as grand as Christianizing an entire island, or it may be as magnificent as being a faithful Christian mother, reading the Word of the Almighty God to her children at bedtime.

We can learn from Patrick. Though he had accomplished great things that any natural man would boast of, his confession remained, “My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers.”

“We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty” (Luke 17:10). For Jesus has purchased and redeemed us by His blood, not because we earned nor deserved it, but because He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love for us.

Christ Jesus came to save sinners such as Patrick, such as you. God bless your Lenten observances as you meditate on this precious gift of salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.



LWML South Dakota District Spring Retreat
April 25–26, 2025
Cedar Shore Resort, Oacoma, SD
Theme: “Living God’s Praise”
Scripture Verse: Psalm 119:175a

Name _____
 Mailing Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone (____) _____ Email _____
 Group _____ Zone _____

Deadline for registration and meals is April 1

Mark which applies:

- Member of the LWML SD Board of Directors
- LWML Member
- Young Woman Representative
- Heart to Heart Sister
- Director of Christian Education (DCE) (no registration fee)
- Deaconess (no registration fee)
- Pastor (no registration fee)
- Guest
- Special Dietary needs

Housing Information: You are responsible for making your own hotel arrangements. Ask for the LWML rates. 2 queen beds. Rooms are blocked at: Cedar Shore Resort
 1500 Shoreline Drive, Oacoma, SD
 Phone: (833) 577-1794
 \$109 + tax
 Reserve before March 26, 2025.

Make your check payable to:
LWML South Dakota District Retreat
 Mail your registration form with payment to:
 Cindy Peterson
 24938 346th Ave
 Chamberlain, SD 57325

Registration Fee	Quantity	Cost	Fee Total
Registration	_____	\$35	\$ _____
Saturday Breakfast*	_____	\$17	\$ _____
Saturday Lunch*	_____	\$23	\$ _____
Total Enclosed			\$ _____

***Pastors’ meals are gratis. Please select and enter \$0.00.**

Looking for ways **TO SUPPORT LIFE?**



By Rev. Ryan Drevlow

South Dakota District Life Coordinator

Greetings South Dakota District. Perhaps you have tried to develop new habits in 2025. Here is a question for you: Where might your support for pro-life causes fit into those 2025 habits? I want to suggest some opportunities and ideas to creatively support our nation's pro-life movement this year:

- ▶ Ride in South Dakota's Annual Bike for Life. This event, held in the fall, invites members of our South Dakota District to bike from Brookings to Sioux Falls to raise money for pro-life efforts.
- ▶ Create a Lutherans For Life (LFL) chapter at your church, parochial school or in your circuit. LFL chapters seek to educate and encourage people to support and think about the sanctity of life



at all stages. Perhaps your new chapter could have a booth at the local county fair and talk to people on the truths about abortion. Perhaps a booth at one of our South Dakota colleges would influence the next generation of leaders against this terrible practice.

- ▶ Bring pro-life lessons to Sunday School. Lutherans For Life has Sunday school curriculum for educating children about the sanctity of life. Go to lutheransforlife.org/teaching-for-life.

- ▶ Celebrate Life Sunday, set for Jan. 18, 2026. Information, worship materials and sermons will be available at lutheransforlife.org.
- ▶ Encourage students in your congregation to participate in the Lutherans For Life essay contest. Students in grades 6-12 can win cash prizes. State winners advance to the national competition.
- ▶ Participate in the Life Chain on Oct. 5 (2-3 p.m.). Many in South Dakota organize a Life Chain to witness silently by the roadside of a busy street. It is an encouraging way to show community members that they are not alone in their desire to support life. During the time of the silent protest, you can read from the Scriptures and pray. It is a wonderful, meditative time.
- ▶ Encourage your pastors to lead a special prayer service on Dec. 28, which is the day the church remembers the Slaughter of the Innocents. I have worship materials, devotions and sermons about this night that compare it to the slaughter that goes on now. Several times we have held this prayer service in front of Planned Parenthood in Sioux Falls.
- ▶ Organize an around-the-clock prayer vigil for the 40 days of Lent. Volunteers take shifts praying for an end to abortion. Your community might already be doing something like this during Lent.

Next month, I will talk about some specific ways you can support life causes regarding end-of-life and foster care.

There are so many ways to support life at all stages! I hope some of these ideas spur you to take action and start conversations!

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



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

MISSION RECEIPTS

LCMS South Dakota District Congregational Year-to-Date Report of Mission Receipts for the 12 months ending Jan. 14, 2025, compared to the 12 months ending Jan. 14, 2024

City, Congregation	Comm. Members	2024 Intention	12 months 2024	12 months 2023	Avg/Per 2024	Comm. 2023
Circuit 1 – Aberdeen						
Aberdeen, Our Savior	277	10,000	13,550	11,700	48.92	42.24
Aberdeen, St. John	80	10,500	11,673	14,596	145.91	182.45
Aberdeen, St. Paul	450	20,000	24,857	51,707	55.24	114.90
Andover, Zion	106	–	4,400	3,350	41.51	31.60
Britton, St. John	146	3,000	3,000	10,500	20.55	71.92
Columbia, St. John	95	7,500	7,750	7,750	81.58	81.58
Cresbard, Concordia	58	–	5,640	8,175	97.24	140.95
Doland, Redeemer	29	–	2,000	1,500	68.97	51.72
Ferney, St. Paul	92	5,000	6,851	4,000	74.47	43.48
Groton, St. John	305	7,000	7,000	7,000	22.95	22.95
Leola, St. Paul	53	500	500	–	9.43	–
Mansfield, Trinity	270	25,000	28,223	32,196	104.53	119.24
Redfield, Messiah	140	–	1,000	1,000	7.14	7.14
Stratford, St. Paul	38	–	4,000	4,000	105.26	105.26
Weecota, Immanuel	87	9,000	7,146	10,905	82.14	125.34
Circuit 1 Totals	2,226	\$97,500	\$127,590	\$168,379	57.32	75.64
Circuit 2 – Watertown						
Brookings, Mount Calvary	420	45,000	57,388	52,082	136.64	124.00
Brookings, Peace	295	–	6,000	6,000	20.34	20.34
Corona, Trinity	132	–	2,807	2,753	21.27	20.86
Flandreau, Redeemer	28	3,800	3,800	3,800	135.71	135.71
Milbank, Bethlehem	64	300	360	660	5.63	10.31
Milbank, Emanuel	576	24,000	24,000	24,000	41.67	41.67
Revillo, St. John	119	2,000	2,000	2,995	16.81	25.17
Sisseton, Emanuel	101	4,400	4,400	4,400	43.56	43.56
Watertown, Mount Olive	387	25,000	25,000	30,700	64.60	79.33
Waubay, Zion	126	1,000	7,684	7,204	60.98	57.17
White, Zion	62	5,000	7,403	2,537	119.40	40.92
Wilmot, Our Savior	160	2,500	3,219	3,290	20.12	20.56
Circuit 2 Totals	2,470	\$113,000	\$144,061	\$140,421	58.32	56.85
Circuit 3 – Pierre						
Blunt, Trinity	40	2,000	2,000	2,000	50.00	50.00
Chamberlain, Zion ¹	406	–	18,955	21,068	46.69	51.89
Draper, St. Paul	24	250	250	250	10.42	10.42
Gettysburg, Emmanuel	201	6,500	8,691	7,430	43.24	36.97
Gregory, St. John	246	5,000	–	5,100	–	20.73
Hamill, Zion	14	–	500	500	35.71	35.71
Harrold, Immanuel	20	–	–	100	–	5.00
Lebanon, Christ	23	300	300	300	13.04	13.04
Midland, St. Peter	46	–	3,050	5,615	66.30	122.07
Murdo, Messiah	71	3,000	3,000	3,000	42.25	42.25
Norris, St. John ²	70	2,500	4,304	696	61.49	9.94
Onida, Holy Cross	108	1,600	1,600	1,600	14.81	14.81
Philip, Our Redeemer	50	–	749	–	14.98	–
Pierre, Faith	1,464	45,000	45,200	45,000	30.87	30.74
Presho, Zion	88	1,500	1,500	1,500	17.05	17.05
Reliance, Trinity	15	–	–	–	–	–
Rosebud, Rosebud Mission	–	–	2,068	1,613	–	–
Winner, Christ	25	2,000	2,000	2,000	80.00	80.00
Circuit 3 Totals	2,911	\$69,650	\$94,167	\$97,772	32.35	33.59
Circuit 4 – Black Hills						
Belle Fourche, Trinity	–	500	–	500	–	–
Black Hawk, Divine Shepherd	430	16,320	16,957	14,374	39.43	33.43
Creighton, Emmanuel	54	–	366	366	6.78	6.78
Custer, Our Redeemer	198	4,000	5,977	3,473	30.19	17.54
Deadwood, Grace	79	3,000	3,000	3,000	37.97	37.97
Hill City, Our Savior	29	1,500	1,500	1,500	51.72	51.72
Hot Springs, Bethesda	143	7,000	7,000	7,000	48.95	48.95
Rapid City, Bethlehem	451	31,387	31,382	30,447	69.58	67.51
Rapid City, Our Redeemer	124	3,500	5,674	3,985	45.76	32.14
Rapid City, Peace	495	–	23,420	29,070	47.31	58.73
Rapid City, Zion	553	32,500	33,250	32,750	60.13	59.22
Spearfish, St. Paul	283	30,000	30,000	30,000	106.01	106.01
Sturgis, Blessed Emmanuel	22	600	2,235	1,236	101.59	56.18
Wall, First	229	2,100	2,100	2,100	9.17	9.17
Circuit 4 Totals	3,090	\$132,407	\$162,861	\$159,801	52.71	51.72

City, Congregation	Comm. Members	2024 Intention	12 months 2024	12 months 2023	Avg/Per 2024	Comm. 2023
Circuit 5 – Mitchell						
Armour, Redeemer	199	8,000	8,000	8,000	40.20	40.20
Delmont, Zion	89	17,000	17,000	16,000	191.01	179.78
Dimock, Immanuel	127	15,000	15,653	26,093	123.25	205.46
Emery, St. Peter	56	3,000	4,910	4,418	87.68	78.89
Huron, Mount Calvary	781	70,000	70,000	70,484	89.63	90.25
Mitchell, Zion	507	30,850	31,047	32,107	61.24	63.33
Parkston, Faith	195	10,000	10,000	10,000	51.28	51.28
Plankinton, St. Paul	138	2,000	2,000	2,000	14.49	14.49
Tripp, Emmaus	42	–	2,500	2,500	59.52	59.52
White Lake, Trinity	115	8,000	9,200	10,400	80.00	90.43
Wessington Springs, Zion	75	–	–	–	–	–
Wolsey, St. John	233	3,400	13,818	13,477	59.30	57.84
Woonsocket, Mount Olive	11	–	–	–	–	–
Circuit 5 Totals	2,568	\$167,250	\$184,128	\$195,479	71.70	76.12
Circuit 6 – Freeman						
Alexandria, St. Martin	88	1,200	1,950	275	22.16	3.13
Canistota, Zion	226	–	2,770	3,366	12.26	14.89
Centerville, First English	63	2,000	4,245	2,130	67.38	33.81
Freeman, St. Paul	275	9,000	12,312	16,337	44.77	59.41
Hartford, Trinity	87	500	2,150	3,000	24.71	34.48
Howard, St. John	122	4,000	4,825	4,625	39.55	37.91
Hurley, Zion	24	2,750	2,750	2,750	114.58	114.58
Madison, Our Savior	188	1,000	3,900	3,600	20.74	19.15
Marion, Bethesda	46	2,500	2,500	7,000	54.35	152.17
Menno, Immanuel	60	3,000	7,305	6,750	121.75	112.50
Montrose, St. John	109	–	–	–	–	–
Parker, First English	28	2,000	1,000	11,497	35.71	410.61
Scotland, St. Paul	34	600	625	600	18.38	17.65
Spencer, Trinity	79	2,000	2,000	2,000	25.32	25.32
Tea, Risen Savior ³	131	11,970	26,568	7,838	202.81	59.83
Wentworth, St. Peter	185	7,800	8,896	7,750	48.09	41.89
Circuit 6 Totals	1,745	\$50,320	\$83,796	\$79,518	48.02	45.57
Circuit 7 – Sioux Falls						
Brandon, Blessed Redeemer	269	15,000	15,000	15,085	55.76	56.08
Sioux Falls, Christ	122	2,000	18,536	3,000	151.93	24.59
Sioux Falls, Faith	592	43,500	50,037	43,500	84.52	73.48
Sioux Falls, Lord of Life	164	–	12,504	12,504	76.24	76.24
Sioux Falls, Memorial	770	62,150	50,642	58,839	65.77	76.41
Sioux Falls, Our Redeemer	314	25,200	37,800	12,600	120.38	40.13
Sioux Falls, Resurrection	245	10,000	10,000	10,000	40.82	40.82
Sioux Falls, Trinity of The Deaf	35	–	–	–	–	–
Sioux Falls, Zion	672	50,000	50,000	42,000	74.40	62.50
Circuit 7 Totals	3,183	\$207,850	\$244,519	\$197,528	76.82	62.06
Circuit 8 – Yankton						
Alcester, Peace	89	3,000	5,273	4,332	59.25	48.67
Avon, Zion	212	5,000	7,333	5,085	34.59	23.99
Dakota Dunes, Holy Cross ⁴	203	22,498	22,840	23,422	112.51	115.38
Fairfax, Trinity	77	5,000	5,000	5,000	64.94	64.94
Springfield, Our Savior	26	100	–	100	–	3.85
Tyndall, St. John	132	2,600	3,000	2,800	22.73	21.21
Utica, Martinus	68	2,000	2,200	2,028	32.35	29.82
Vermillion, Concordia	73	–	6,000	10,000	82.19	136.99
Wagner, St. John	182	9,000	9,000	9,000	49.45	49.45
Yankton, St. John ⁵	1,455	62,500	60,975	42,017	41.91	28.88
Circuit 8 Totals	2,517	\$111,698	\$121,621	\$103,784	48.32	41.23
GRAND TOTALS	20,710	\$949,675	\$1,162,743	\$1,142,682	56.14	55.18

¹\$2,299 of Zion, Chamberlain, is for 2023 missions

²\$1,804 of St. John, Norris, is for 2023 missions

³\$3,946 of Risen Savior, Tea, is for 2023 missions

⁴\$500 of Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes, is for 2023 missions

⁵\$4,700 of St. John, Yankton, is for 2023 missions

Comm. Members: Communicant membership as of January 2025 per LCMS congregational statistics report

MESSAGE

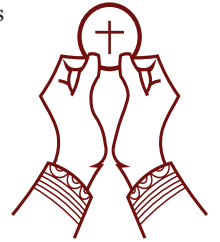
(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Why is that?

Because God is not only holy, holy, holy; He is also merciful, merciful, merciful! Your pastor announces to you and the other worshipers this glorious truth after you've spoken your woe-is-me to God:

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In this Good News proclamation, you hear the heart of God beating for you. And in the Supper, you taste and see that the holy, holy, holy God abounds with mercy, mercy, mercy.



The only possible response?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! **ROMANS 7:25**

Your servant in Christ • Pastor Sailer

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

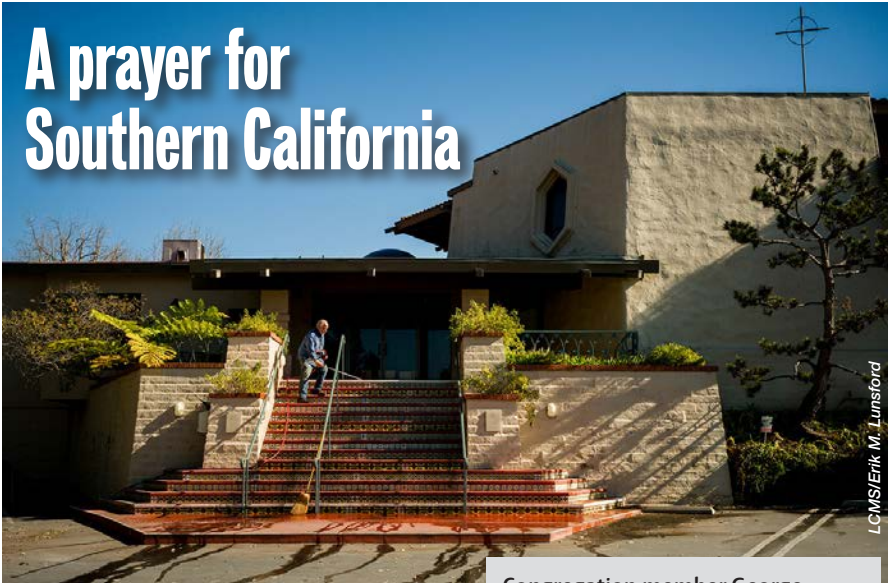
Could your church use an intern?

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

Consider applying for a DCE (Director of Christian Education) or DCO (Director of Christian Outreach) intern from Concordia St. Paul!

For more information, contact Shelly Schwalm, DCE program director at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn., at schwalm@csp.edu.

A prayer for Southern California



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Congregation member George Wilken hoses ash off the steps of Palisades Lutheran Church, Pacific Palisades, Calif., during the Palisades fire on Jan. 13. Though the church is still standing, it has been rendered unusable for at least six months.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As a result of a very significant Santa Ana wind event, several devastating wildfires have burned through multiple areas in Southern California. Thousands of homes and other structures have burned, and unfortunately there have been fatalities and injuries.

Several of our Pacific Southwest District congregations and schools are in or near the fire areas, with some having to evacuate. As of this point, we are not aware of property damage to churches and schools, but have been told some members and student families have lost their homes. We will provide more details to our district as we receive them. Please be in prayer for our brothers and sisters affected by these terrible fires.

And we pray together:

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation" **Isaiah 12:2**

Gracious and merciful Father,

We come to you by the leading of your Holy Spirit and in the Name of Jesus Christ our Savior to ask Your help in our time of need. You, Lord God, are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.

Today, we cry out to You for all who are impacted by the wildfires in Los Angeles and beyond.

We pray for those who have lost homes, livelihoods or loved ones. Comfort them with the peace that surpasses all under-

standing. Assure them of Your presence and provide for their every need through the kindness of neighbors, the compassion of strangers, and the generosity of Your people.

We lift before You the firefighters, first responders and all who work tirelessly to protect life and property. Grant them courage, wisdom and strength as they face the flames. Shield them with Your mighty hand and guide them in their efforts.

For your church, Lord, empower us to be agents of Your love and care, bearing witness to the Gospel in our service to those affected. As a people saved from disaster through the gracious gift of the cross of your Son, help us to take the forgiveness and life we have received into the lives of those in harm's way.

Finally, Lord, we ask for favorable weather conditions — calming winds and rain without destruction — to aid in quelling the fires. May all your provisions in this time of disaster be a reminder for us of Your promise to bring beauty from ashes and hope from despair.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

We entrust this prayer to You by your Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.