



# DISTRICT NEWS

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### Government...



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and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. — 1 Tim. 2:1-4

In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther, in his explanation to the Fourth Commandment — “Honor your father and your mother” — writes:



We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

We must be careful not to despise the authorities placed over us by God, a most difficult thing to do in these highly-charged and partisan times! The notes in the Small Catechism define despising parents and other authorities as “looking down upon them or making fun of them” and as “disobeying or rebelling against their God-given authority.”

We are permitted to disobey governing authorities only when they require us to disobey God’s Word. In that case, “we must obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:9).

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# A gift from God



Rev. Scott Sailer  
District President

**B**y the time you read this, it is likely the American presidential election and the various state and local elections have been held. Unless there’s a recount, we know who will be leading us for the next several years.

Government is in the Bible. Government makes its way into the confessions of our Lutheran church, too, in places like Luther’s Small and Large catechisms (especially concerning the Christian’s honoring of the Fourth Commandment).

Government is a gift from God. He has established government (and police forces) to bring order and peace to society.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. — Rom. 13:1

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions,

## Four-point parish has first pastor



From left, Revs. Adam Welton, Terry Makelin, Scott Sailer, Dwaine Doremus, Dr. Brian Mosemann, Peter Kurowski, Nabil Nour, Thomas Christopher and Clint Thorson.

Rev. Dr. Brian Mosemann, a South Dakota native, was installed as pastor of First English, Parker; Bethesda, Marion; St. Paul, Scotland; and Immanuel, Menno, on Sept. 13 at Immanuel-Menno. The installation marks the official beginning of this four-point parish in the Freeman Circuit, and the formal dissolution of the dual parish arrangements between First English and Bethesda, and St. Paul and Immanuel.

Additionally, with Pastor Mosemann's installation, Rev. Dwaine Doremus formally resigned as the pastor of First English and Bethesda, and is now emeritus. The vacancy service by Rev. Terry Makelin at St. Paul and Immanuel was also gratefully acknowledged. It truly was a historic day, filled with God's blessings.

Pastor Mosemann most recently served as a theology professor at Concordia University Wisconsin.



In the sermon, Pastor Nour (right) emphasized the precious shepherd-sheep relationship between the congregation and its pastor. The "apron of humility" and the shoes (in Mosemann's hands) that show wear from visiting the flock were highlights of the sermon.

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

These are difficult days in our nation. Let us do our part in contributing to a "peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way" by upholding the rule of law and honoring our leaders. In so doing, we are obeying and honoring God.

### District elections

Speaking of elections, we have our own coming up at the 62nd Convention of the South Dakota District, to be held April 11-13 in Sioux Falls. Each district congregation has the opportunity to nominate a pastor to be district president and one to be a vice-president. Official nominating ballots and other information on this was sent to your congregation chairman in September. These nominations are made via your voters assembly, and the nominating ballots are due to Rev. David Otten, district secretary, by Feb. 11, 2021.

Your congregation (or parish) also must select its voting and alternate delegates and, in some cases, advisory delegate. These delegates represent you at the district convention. **Delegate names and contact information are due to the district office by Nov. 25.**

Your district leaders and events like the district convention help to bring guidance and order to the work we do together in the church, for the sake of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) and of making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).

Government ... a gracious gift of God to bring order to the living of our days in society and, yes, even in the church!

**Your servant in Christ  
Pastor Scott Sailer**

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

## Call Information

### PENDING

Rev. Matthew Martin, pastor of Trinity, Reeseville, Wis., has been called as pastor of Our Redeemer, Custer, and Our Savior, Hill City, Sept. 30.

### VACANCIES

► Aberdeen, St. Paul (*assistant pastor*)

- Hill City/Custer, Our Savior's/Our Redeemer
- Bethesda, Hot Springs
- Leola, St. Paul
- Onida/Blunt/Harrod, Holy Cross/Trinity/Immanuel
- Sioux Falls, Faith (*associate pastor*)
- Sisseton/Waubay, Emmanuel/Zion
- White, Zion
- Winner/Hamill/Reliance, Christ/Zion/Trinity





# MERCY IN JUÁREZ



The team from Faith, Pierre, and their friends joyfully pose for a photo in front of the modest 12' x 24' they helped build in Juárez, Mexico, for Jesús Martínez. He is in the wheelchair.

## Mission team from Pierre shares labor, Gospel

In August, a team of nine saints from Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, traveled to El Paso, Texas, to work on servant projects and share the Gospel just across the border in Juárez, Mexico.

The trip was coordinated with Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care ([ylm.org](http://ylm.org)), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization that provides relief and human care services while planting and nurturing missions in the El Paso/Juárez region of the U.S./Mexico border. Founded in 1982, YLM benefits the lives of thousands of people every year.

The members of Faith Lutheran Church were first introduced to YLM when its Mariachi San Pablo band was in South Dakota in 2017 to help celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The members learned of the significant needs on the southern border — physical and spiritual.

Faith members Dennis and Carolyn Ryckman immediately were compelled to put together a mission team. The hope was to include teenagers in every trip to help energize the youth for mission work and gain experience sharing the Gospel with others.

In its third year of traveling to El Paso for missions, the team has ranged from nine to 12 individuals. This year, the team of nine included five adults and four high school and college students. It was very inspiring to watch a group of individuals start out very timid in handing out Bibles and praying with others, but then at the end of the trip be very excited to follow the Great Commission as recorded in Matt. 28:19-20.

To prepare for the trip, the team met weekly and also engaged in a study on the Great Commission. To raise funds, the group held soup meals before Lenten worship, and did lawn work in the spring and other various projects through their “Rent-A-Worker” service. This was a wonderful way for the team to work together, serve congregation members and others, and pray for and witness to those who asked for services.

The team built a house for a young man named Jesús Martínez in Juárez. Jesús is paralyzed from the waist down from an accident in 2019. After months of recovery and surgery, he started receiving physical therapy and spiritual care from YLM. His mother has been his caretaker at her humble little house and he dreamed of having his own space. Despite his physical setback, God has continued to bless Jesús in many ways.

More on his story can be found at [ylm.org/unexpected-blessings-for-jesus](http://ylm.org/unexpected-blessings-for-jesus).

The Faith mission team also spent time handing out Bibles and Gospel tracts at busy shopping centers in El Paso and Juárez. In addition, the group was able to help YLM with food distribution on a Saturday morning before returning to South Dakota.

This trip was an incredible blessing to the Jesús Martínez family. The team also prays the Holy Spirit will work in those who received God’s Word. The team’s presence at the mission encouraged Rev. Dr. Karl Heimer, YLM CEO, his son,

See MISSION, page 8

## PATTY'S PONDERINGS



**Lexington, Kentucky ...** what does that bring to mind?

Many of you think of thoroughbred horses and racing. Now you can add the LWML 39th Biennial Convention, which will be held June 24-27, 2021, at Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center in Lexington.



**Patty Peters**  
LWML South Dakota District President

The theme is “Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus.” The Scripture verse is Heb. 12:1-2 and the goal statement is “Looking to Jesus, we run the race set before us and proclaim the joy of the Lord.”

Convention attendees will:

- ▶ Focus on Jesus through God’s Word and Sacraments.
- ▶ Joyfully celebrate our salvation with song and prayer.
- ▶ Serve our neighbors through witness and mission.

It is a tradition for many South Dakota District LWML members to attend the national convention, and our prayer is that many of us can go again. Our district will have a banner that represents the theme of the convention. I hope someone has a great design idea and submits it by Jan. 5.

For more information, visit [lwml.org/2021-convention](http://lwml.org/2021-convention). The convention flyer can be downloaded for your use. You can also read the explanation for the design of the convention logo (shown above). The Omega symbol is shaped like a horseshoe and the laurel wreath symbolizes our victory in Christ.

Please spread the news about the convention, and I hope to see you in Lexington!

## YOUNG WOMAN REPRESENTATIVES

### Apply to attend convention

What is it like to be a district Young Woman Representative (YWR) at the LWML national convention?

Emily Murray (see below) represented the South Dakota District as a YWR at the 2019 convention in Mobile, Ala. She states that her “eyes were opened to so many wonderful ministries that our mites go to support. It was so amazing to see all the different people joyfully serving the Lord.”

She knows that giving mites has an eternal impact on people’s lives.

Do you know a young woman that needs encouragement to be a YWR? The application is available at [lwml.org/ywr](http://lwml.org/ywr) and is due in December. Please find that young woman from your zone and have her apply.

The South Dakota District will send two YWRs to the 2021 convention.

### A ‘refreshed heart’

**Dear Sisters in Christ,**

During the summer of 2019, I had the pleasure of attending the LWML convention in Mobile, Ala., as a Young Woman Representative. My heart was so refreshed with the fellowship of many other God-fearing women!



**Emily Murray**

As the book of Titus instructs us, the older generations of women have much to disciple and teach those of us that are in the younger generations. They can be a balm in this weary world, where it can sometimes feel isolating to stand up for Jesus.

In addition to the fellowship, my eyes were also opened to many wonderful ministries that our mites go to support. It was so amazing to see all the different women “joyfully” serving the Lord together, and it made me realize the eternal impact our seemingly small mites have.

If you want to grow in your love for Jesus and in serving the least of these, I would strongly encourage you to apply for one of the two spots for South Dakota YWRs. I hope to see you in Kentucky for our convention in 2021!

### Travel with your sisters to Lexington

Plans are being made to have a bus transport LWML members from South Dakota to the LWML 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., in June. Many of you know how much fun that can be!

Watch for more information to come in early 2021.





## COUNSELOR'S CORNER



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. — Heb. 12:1-2



You wouldn't expect it if you didn't know me back then, but I was an avid runner in high school. I competed in both cross country and track and field. I took racing very seriously and trained hard, especially during the summer so that I would be in top shape to race in the fall.



**Rev. Daniel Grimmer**  
LWML District  
Pastoral Counselor

I remember when I was a freshman and new to racing, one of the things I didn't initially like about racing was the uniform. The shorts were very lightweight and extremely short! The shirts too were very small, and the shoes were small and light. The whole outfit made me feel a little bit exposed. But it served its purpose.

The weight of heavier fabrics and bigger shoes slowed you down and made you less effective at the goal of finishing the race as quickly as possible. The purpose of the uniform was so that you would be as unencumbered as possible so that you could move swiftly to the finish line. Some of the more zealous runners even shaved their arms and legs so that they would be even more aerodynamic.

In Heb. 12:1-2, our life of discipleship in Jesus is described as a great race. The goal of course, is the eternal life and kingdom that Jesus has won for us and prepared for us from before the foundation of the world. Life in this world is a pilgrimage and a race to that

celestial finish line, where we will join with Jesus and the saints unnumbered in the place where sickness and sighing and death will be no more.

Like every race, this race requires focus. We must have the goal in mind above all else, and that requires us to unburden ourselves of anything that weighs us down or distracts us from running the race.

The author to the Hebrews exhorts us to lay aside our sin and our sinful pursuits, but also "every weight." This doesn't mean we need to live as ascetics, but we should consider how everything in our lives can be made into an idol that distracts us from the goal of entering the kingdom of heaven. Our possessions, our friends, our hobbies and even our jobs and families can be a weight that hinders us from running the race if we let them get in the way. We should take stock of those things from time to time and consider giving up those things which hinder us from following Christ.

But the best way we can run the race "with endurance" is to look to Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith." When I was running races, it was always tempting to want to slow down or even stop. The pain and fatigue of the race sometimes got in the way. But the thing that kept me going was remembering the finish line.

So also, we run the race remembering Christ Jesus, who died to save us from sin and who has promised us every peace and joy at the end. We run with endurance because we know He is upholding us and helping us on through His Spirit.

These verses from Hebrews are the inspiration for the theme of the 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., in June. Whether you are able to attend the convention or not, I pray that you run the race with endurance, remembering Jesus who endured the cross to save you from sin.

**Running with you,  
Pastor Grimmer**

# ‘Together Strong, Life Unites’

## Please **support** our March for Life efforts

“As we begin our service today, our opening hymn is No. 664 in *Lutheran Service Book*, ‘Fight the Good Fight.’”

I am confident that I have spoken a sentence like that at least a few times during my years as a pastor. This hymn works well for an opening hymn, sermon hymn or closing hymn. As an opening hymn, stanza 2 bids us to lift up our eyes and seek His face. As a sermon hymn, stanza 3 proclaims, “Christ is your life and Christ your love.”

When the hymn closes the service, it helps us face the journey ahead with the encouragement: “Faint not nor fear, His arms are near; He changes not who holds you dear.”

The hymn fits well in any age the Christian church faces because the Christian life is always a battle. The historical geography may change, but the enemy and his methods are still the same. In John 8:44, Jesus says that Satan is a liar and the father of lies. St. Peter warned that the devil is like a roaring lion looking for those he can devour (1 Peter 5:8). As Jesus declares himself to be the Good Shepherd, He stands against the “thief” who seeks to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Each one of us faces this battle on a daily basis as we strive to fulfill our baptismal calling in Christ and our individual vocation. We also fight the battle in each of our congregations as we stand together in hurling our confession of Christ and His cross at the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18). This happens also as we organize within our districts and our beloved Synod.

Still, the battle rages beyond the scope of our church body’s 2 million members. The Lord Jesus moves His whole church on earth to confront the enemy and renounce the devil in all his works and ways. That is why I am using this article to ask for your support of and participa-



Lutherans walk in the March for Life 2020 last January in Washington, D.C.

tion in the 2021 March for Life on Jan. 29th, 2021, in Washington, D.C.

This year’s theme is “Together Strong: Life Unites.” The march will bring Christians from around the world to stand for the value of every human life, as God has created each member of the human race. The witness will impact those who govern our nation, those who stand against the proclamation that life begins at conception and those who are pro-life yet do not believe in the God made known by His Word in the Bible. We need to be there.

Some of you will be able to travel and participate, but others may be unable to afford the cost. Others cannot travel, but have the financial resources to sponsor another person or family. (An individual can possibly travel and attend for \$500. A family may need support of \$2,500 to \$3,000). We can come together to support this movement and increase our LCMS presence on this front.

In the coming weeks, we can coordinate the details of how those donations can be made through the district office or Mount Calvary, Huron, but for now, please express your interest by emailing me at [pcnavurskis@gmail.com](mailto:pcnavurskis@gmail.com).

I look forward to hearing from you, and leave you with something to sing from another hymn that is a favorite of mine

— stanza 3 in *LSB* #825, “Rise, Shine, You People”:

Come, celebrate your banners high unfurling, Your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling, To all the world go out and tell the story Of Jesus’ Glory.

**Your friend and fellow worker, Pastor Chris Navurskis**

Pastor Navurskis serves as pastor of Mount Calvary, Huron, and is life coordinator of the South Dakota District.

## Walk for Life at the State Capitol

Noon–1 p.m. • Jan. 31, 2021

State Capitol, Pierre

**Master of Ceremonies**

Dale Batscher, executive director, South Dakota Right to Life

**Keynote Speaker**

Jason R. Ravnsborg, South Dakota attorney general

**Guest Speaker**

Dr. Pat Castle, Life Runners president and founder (Omaha, Neb.)

**Invited Speakers**

Gov. Kristi Noem and U.S. Sen. John Thune



# Ministry goes on at state fair

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Puppet Place at the South Dakota State Fair, held Sept. 3-7 in Huron, went on as usual, or at least as usual as possible. Social distancing was practiced for the duration of the fair.

A group from the Huron Zone helped clean and set up the Puppet Place for the shows ahead of opening day. Benches were removed and the chairs were appropriately distanced. There was no air conditioning, and windows and the front door remained open throughout the performances. Surfaces were disinfected between each of the five shows. Then there was more cleaning again in preparation for the next day.

With all these extra tasks, it would have been very helpful to have a larger than normal work crew at the Puppet Place, but alas, the virus kept most of our workers away. However, Rev. Andrew Utecht, his brother, Rev. Peter Utecht, their families and some friends kept the ministry going. The number of people attending the fair was down this year, and there were 414 people who attended the shows.

The Bible story for this year's show was "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego." As you recall, these were the three Israelites who stood up for their faith and were then thrown into the fiery furnace. God intervened though as only He can and spared their lives, and they exited the furnace without even a scent of fire or smoke on them or their clothes. What a powerful story to tell to today's culture of fear and discord. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus was proclaimed, and visitors were blessed by hearing the Word. The theme of the magic show was centered on getting rid of division between people with the forgiveness from Christ and the fruit of the Spirit.

A new feature this year was an app people could download to access a welcome statement of faith, a Bible study on racism and a poster explaining the goals of the LWML. This app also allows people to contact Pastor Andrew so there is the possibility for witnessing. Stickers were given to the children in place of our famous cross whistles. The Bible studies on racism were also



handed out to the people who attended.

We are grateful to the Utecht families for again taking on the task of spreading the Gospel to those searching for truth, comfort and hope in this world. We are hopeful next year will find more of us at the Fair to help with this great ministry of the LWML.

**Jan Larson**  
VP of Gospel Outreach  
LWML South Dakota District



Top, Isaac Utecht (left) is the illusionist as he performs with the help of his father, Rev. Andrew Utecht.

Below, guests were able to sit together as families. Others were distanced six feet apart.

## MISSION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Rev. Stephen Heimer, and all the caring and dedicated staff at the mission.

But the week had a lifelong impact on the Faith team. The members were emotionally overwhelmed during the ceremony to present the new home to Jesús. The team found great joy when distributing Bibles as the Mexican people received them with open arms. The group returned with new energy to be bold for the Lord after discovering that witnessing is a blessed way to partner with our great God and plant seeds for Him.

Please pray that you may be one who starts a mission trip like this in your congregation. For more information, contact Dennis at [dennis@factor360.com](mailto:dennis@factor360.com) or YLM at [luz.sota@ylm.org](mailto:luz.sota@ylm.org).



## Share your news with us!

**W**e are always in need of more submissions for the South Dakota District Lutheran Witness insert. Why should you send them in? It helps remind us of what God is doing around the district. It is also a way to share ideas for nurturing those God has already gathered into His church and for reaching those still outside of the flock with the Good News about Jesus. It finally reminds each of us that Christ's church is much larger than just our particular congregation.

We welcome pictures and stories of congregational events, youth events, outreach events, installations, events from your men's or women's group, servant events, anniversaries, church renovations or additions, and much more. If you would like an upcoming event publicized, please make sure we have the information at least two months in advance.

Please send submissions to Vonda Sturzenbecher at



[vsturzenbecher@yahoo.com](mailto:vsturzenbecher@yahoo.com). They could also be mailed to Vonda at 8605 Woodland Dr.; Black Hawk, SD 57718.

Please ensure photos sent electronically are high resolution.

**The deadline for the January 2021 issue is Nov. 15.**