



Filled with a living hope

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).



Rev. Dale Sattgast
South Dakota
District President

Dear friends in Christ,

The darkness of what we call “Good Friday” has passed. Suffering like no other that ever has been nor ever will be experienced has been completed. The ultimate sacrifice in the place of sinners has been made. The blood of the holy Son of God and the only Savior of the world has been poured out. Sin has been forgiven. The power of the devil to accuse forgiven sinners has been stripped away. The cross is empty.

But at the same time, the tomb is filled. Friday night. All of Saturday. Sunday morning. Three days! Filled! Not knowing what comes next, the women weep. And Jesus’ disciples are filled—filled with grief and fear. It’s all too much. Hope seems dead.

Then comes Sunday morning!

The earth quakes. The guards faint. A stone is rolled away. The tomb is now empty. *Christ is risen! Alleluia! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!*

Everything is changed! The tears of the women are replaced with “great joy” (Matt. 28:8). The disciples are no longer filled with fear and grief, but with amazement. In a short while, they will be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4) and a boldness that will compel them to confess, “We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Everything is changed! A tomb that is empty results in lives that are filled. And the apostle Peter now is able to speak of people who are “born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Peter’s words are written not just for people 2,000 years ago who were close to the first Easter. They are also written for us and for the world today. In fact, in no time in history have his words been more appropriate than for today. In no time in history has the message of Easter been more needed. For so many people

today, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection mean little to nothing!

For us who believe, however, we know what a wonderful blessing Christ’s resurrection brings. Jesus came not only to go to the cross and die for the sins of the world and for our sins, but He came to rise again showing—or even more, *proving*—the victory of what He had done for the world and for us.

The apostle Paul speaks to that very matter in the great “Resurrection Chapter” of the Bible: “*And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain ... But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*” (1 Cor. 15:14, 20).

These words speak of hope—a “living hope.” We know the outcome of our faith. It’s the salvation of our souls (see 1 Peter 1:9). It’s “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven” for us (1:4). Jesus is the “firstfruits.” That means that there is more to come. There is no uncertainty to the promise of resurrection to eternal life in heaven to all who, by God’s grace, believe. “*Because I live,*” He says, “*you will also live*” (John 14:19).

This “living hope” is an absolutely vital part of our life and our faith. Filled with this living hope, we make our little journey through life with confidence. We have the confidence that our faith is not “in vain.” We have the confidence that every step of our journey is lived in the presence and under the grace of our risen Savior. We have the confidence that when our little journey here is over, so much more waits for us in heaven. We have the confidence that “death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54).

Much of our world, however, is without that confidence. For so many people, Easter is a word without meaning. For many, Jesus’ resurrection is just one



But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20



(Continued on Page B.)

DISTRICT NEWS

FILLED WITH A LIVING HOPE

(Continued from Page A.)

more religious story among many, or it's not even known. And, sadly, for many people—far too many people—there is no living hope that fills them.

We, dear sisters and brothers, are people who, by God's grace, have been filled with a living hope. As such, we are also called to proclaim the wonderful deeds of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). In our families and among our acquaintances, there is no better time than now to speak of what is of "first importance" in our lives and in our faith, "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3b-4).

Christ is risen! Alleluia! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

"... nothing ...
except Jesus
Christ and Him
crucified"

In Christ,
Pastor Dale L. Sattgast
1 Cor. 2:2
2 Cor. 3:4-6
2 Tim. 1:8-12



The Lay Leadership Institute of South Dakota will offer two classes this summer. A New Testament class will be taught by Rev. Darren Olson of Canistota, and Rev. Wes Hafner from Mansfield will teach "Mission Outreach in Context—Rural America."

The cost for each class is \$150, and the deadline for registration is May 15. See your pastor or go to www.sd.lcms.org for the application forms.

He
lives!
Alleluia!



Focus and priorities

Sometimes we hear people say, "I never get done the things I really want to do." This is both a yes and no sort of situation. Yes, they are spending their time doing the things that are at the top of their list in importance. The "no" part refers to the reality that some things have snuck in to be at the top of the list perhaps unaware to the speaker.

The reality is that we always accomplish the things that are at the top of the list. When people say they have no time for church, their values are showing. It is not a discussion about time management. It is a discussion of priorities and focus.

Parents may lament over the amount of time they have to talk to each other or to their children. Again, it is not a time management problem at the root, but a priorities problem. It is a focus problem. If we are not watchful, we lose sight of that which is important, and our focus begins to dwell on other things. Our priorities shift. We need to make a conscious decision to review our priorities and to refocus on those things that truly are important.

In your home, review the things you spend the most time talking about. Then ask yourself what are the things you should be talking about. You will want to consult God's Word as you make this list. Perhaps read the fourth chapter in Philippians. Compare the lists. See what needs to be changed.

This works as well at church. Review the minutes to your voters' meetings. What things commandeer the biggest amount of time? Make a list. Again consult God's Word for guidance about our Head and His goals, perhaps Luke 19:10, and His direction regarding what we are to be about, such as Matt. 28:18-20, and make a list. Compare the lists. See what needs to be changed. This process can really open our eyes.

Remember, the steps are simple. Review actions, review priorities, refocus. This process can be very helpful in any relationship and group.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. David Schwan



"See what love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).



Call information

as of Feb. 18

CALLS PENDING

None

ACCEPTED

Daryl Tompkins, Zion, Chamberlain, accepted the call of pastor at St. John, Clarinda, Iowa, 2/15/09.

DECLINED

Kevin Vogts, Holy Cross, Dakota Dunes, declined the call of pastor at Faith, Denver, Colo., 2/9/09.

VACANCIES

- Our Savior, Aberdeen, senior pastor
- St. Paul/St. John, Aberdeen, assistant pastor
- Zion, Chamberlain
- St. John, Howard
- Bethesda/First English, Marion/Parker
- Lord of Life, Sioux Falls
- Blessed Emmanuel, Sturgis
- Concordia, Vermillion
- First/Emmanuel, Wall/Creighton

Camp Minneboji—June 14-20

“Who Is I AM?” is the theme of Camp Minneboji this summer (June 14-20). Jesus is the Great I AM! The “I AM” sayings of Jesus will be explored throughout camp week in Bible studies and other aspects of camp. Camp Minneboji is for those who are currently in grades four through nine.



The camp, located at Camp Okoboji in northwest Iowa, features Bible study, mission presentations, crafts, music time, sports, and recreation.

Cost is \$245 for fourth- through eighth-graders and \$275 for ninth graders.

Check with your church office for a copy of the camp registration booklet or download a registration form from the camp Web site. For more information, check out the camp’s Web site at www.minneboji.com or contact the camp dean, Rev. Scott Sailer, at scottsailer@aol.com or 605-332-3401.



June/July issue deadline: April 15



When possible, please send photos in a JPEG format, at 300 dpi. If you send print photos, please send a copy that you won’t need back. Thank you.

Vonda Sturzenbecher

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or mail **8605 Woodland Drive**

Black Hawk, SD 57718



LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

Counselor's corner

"Pastor, how can I get my pastor more involved in LWML?" "Pastor, what can we do to help our pastor?" There can be many reasons for pastors not to attend meetings that are optional for them. They may be too busy; they might have another meeting at the time your group meets; they may not see it as important in their ministry; they might not have been asked to attend. I have heard these questions countless times in the past couple years since becoming an LWML district counselor, and I struggled with how to answer them. But no more.

You see, I was at one of our LWML meetings last month and was given the answer to these questions. It was a normal meeting, and everything was going along normally. The secretary's report was given; the treasurer's report was given; and correspondence was read. The devotion was being given by one of the members. I was getting ready to give my Bible study after the devotion when she began to pray.

And then it happened—she was praying for **me!** My eyes welled up with tears (and they still do as I think about this) as she said something like "keep our pastor safe in your hands. Give him wisdom and understanding to take care of his congregations (I serve three). Be with his family and guide them in their ways." Now, that's not a direct quote, but you get the idea.

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae, "*Masters (or people in charge), provide your slaves (or servants) with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven. Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should*" (Col. 4:1-4).



When Jesus was about to be arrested in the garden and was to be executed for our sins, He thought of His disciples first as He prayed for them! If you want your pastor to be involved in LWML or any other activity in your church, the best thing you can do is pray for him! In this way, you know that God will hear your prayers, as He promises to hear the prayers of all believers, and will do in



Rev. Brian
Lemcke
LWML District
Counselor

your pastor what is good in His sight.

You never know; your pastor might just start coming to your meetings and praying for you, too! I pray for the LWML each and every day, and it is one of my joys as a pastor and counselor. May God bless the LWML and your individual groups as we pray for one another.

How is your Christian life?

While I was reading Isaiah 7 and 8 this morning, it struck me as very fitting for our times as well as when King Ahaz and the people of Judah were so worried about what would happen to them. So how is 2009 going for you? Who are you listening to? Who do you trust?

If we had believed all that the media predicted about gloom and doom at the end of 2008, we would probably still be cowering in bed! Or like King Ahaz who didn't listen to God's Word through Isaiah, try every method we could think of to "do it our way."

Thankfully, as women of God, we listen to and heed God's Word and promises. God told Isaiah to tell the people, "*If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all*" (Is. 7:9). Jesus says, "Follow Me, and receive life!" No matter what happens in 2009, we know that Jesus—our Immanuel, God with us—is by our side and we have nothing to fear.

Lutheran Women in Mission are—as LWML President Jan Wendorf says—to be "in the Word, of the Word, and walking daily with our Lord!" Are you looking for a good guide for Bible reading? I recommend *Today's Light* magazine from CPH. Try it; you will be blessed!

Looking for resources for yourself or your society to grow in the Word? The LWML catalog has numerous resources to choose from which have been tried and tested. Come to the LWML Store at the district retreat April 17-18 in Mitchell and find many resources and gifts. Or, visit the South Dakota LWML Web site at <http://www.sdlwml.org>.

The purpose of the Christian Life Committee is to encourage, equip, and nurture you to be strong in the Lord, steadfast in the Word and willing to serve the Lord with gladness.

Janell McKinstry
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Christian Life Committee and
Christian Resources Committee
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Portland convention 'Gifts from the Heart'

"Gifts from the Heart" for the Portland convention will be limited to only ONE of the following items.

♥ Health kits—comb, toothbrush, toothpaste (regular size), deodorant, bar soap, lotion, washcloth, Christian tract, or Bible verse. (Plastic, please; no glass or aerosol.) Items should be placed in a clear plastic bag.

♥ Art kits—16-pack crayons, eight-pack washable markers, children's scissors, two pencils, glue stick, watercolor paint set with brush, and a Christian book for children, in clear plastic bag.

♥ Teddy bears—new bears with a Bible verse securely attached.

♥ Children's socks—place new packages, any size, in a clear plastic zipper-type bag and enclose a Christian book tract or Bible verse.

♥ Children's T-shirts (sizes 6x-14), respectable prints only, in a clear plastic zipper-type bag with a Christian book, tract, or Bible verse.

NO MONEY WILL BE ACCEPTED for Gifts from the Heart at the convention.

Maybe you are not attending the convention but would be willing to contribute toward the Gifts from the Heart for your zone delegate attendee or a guest from your zone that might be attending. Contact them. I am sure they would appreciate your contribution.

LOOK! Look at the calendar! Only two months until we hear the majestic music of the opening service at the 2009 LWML convention in Portland, until the beautiful district banners triumphantly enter the assembly hall, and until we join with thousands of our LWML sisters in prayer and praise to "Look to the Hills ... God Reigns."

Have you made your travel plans? Now is the time to finalize your plans to be part of the LWML convention June 25-28! The registration deadline is mid-May. You don't want to miss strolling through Evergreen Park, the exhibit area, or helping at the Servant Connection. It's also time to get in shape for "Mission in Motion," the pledge walk that includes two walking trails to raise money for missions along with a low/no-impact exercise option. All contributions go toward our LWML mite goal, so start obtaining those pledges now. The pledge form is available at www.lwml.org.

District LWMLers serve in the Dominican Republic

After spending four days in Santa Domingo, our eight-member team of the South Dakota LWML-sponsored mission trip to the Dominican Republic traveled to the northern part of the island to the small town of Palmar Arriba.

As Pastor Walter Ries, our missionary host, drove us into the village of 3,000 residents, the people along the road waved and shouted their greetings to us when they recognized that Walter was the driver. He is loved and respected by everyone here.

Driving past the small houses of Palmar Arriba, we were amazed at the poor conditions in this village. Our van turned, and in front of us was an iron gate hiding a tidy white two-story building, which was the church and school. When the church doors opened, the children came and they were eager to help. They swept the floors, set up chairs, and helped get the crafts ready for their Bible time. When Walter picked up his guitar, the children rushed to be with him to sing praise songs. It was such a joy to see a shepherd and his lambs praising God!

Our evening lessons began on communication, partnership, conflict, and intimacy in marriage. We shared with these Christians the stories of Bible men and women and the early church. More people came each night. Their smiles and their eagerness to learn gave us so much joy.

What was so amazing about this mission trip was that these new Christians welcomed us into their homes, shared their faith, were thankful for our presentations, and cared for us! What a joy it has been to serve with MOST ministries. The Lord's gift to our team were Rev. Walter Ries and Danelle Putnam, who truly are servants in sharing God's Word and building His church in the Dominican Republic.

Susan Buxcel

Gifts from the Heart—South Dakota District Retreat April 17-18 Ramada Inn, Mitchell

At the South Dakota District LWML Retreat, we will receive "Gifts from the Heart" for the food pantry and quilts for the Orphan Grain Train. More information will be in the call letter to your society.



LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Ambassador coordinator appointed



Gary Schelske recently was appointed LLL Ambassador coordinator for membership growth.

Gary is a member of Immanuel Lutheran of Menno. He has been an insurance agent for 28 years. He and his wife, Marsha, have four children and four grandchildren.

At the time of his appointment he stated, "I have participated in LLL activities since high school. I look forward to serving the LLL as district ambassador coordinator for membership growth."

Off and running: 'Men's NetWork' now available as powerful ministry resource

Developed as a resource for men that can be used by groups or individuals, Lutheran Hour Ministries' Men's NetWork is now available as an online resource. Simply go to www.lhmmen.com, take a minute or two to register, and you're in. Loaded with helpful stuff men's groups can use to maximize their time together, the Men's NetWork also has features to boost their outreach mission to men who are on the fringe of the church or just uninvolved.

As a Web-based resource, the Men's NetWork provides tools and strategies that help guys get past the difficult hurdle of forming their own men's group. "This Web site has the potential to jump-start men's groups from scratch," said Bruce Wurdeman, director of U.S. Ministries for LHM. "We've all seen churches that had great possibilities when it comes to guys in their midst, but there wasn't a go-to resource for them to find new ideas to grow their ministry. The Men's NetWork is that resource."

Full of helpful tools like video Bible studies, how-to instruction sheets for ministry projects, a "braggin'" corner where men's groups can post their successes, and a load of other useful goodies, the Men's NetWork is a Web site men can return to again and again. "We'll keep it fresh," Wurdeman added, "by stocking it with new Bible studies and expanding the items we already have there."

Keeping content creative and relevant is what will make the Men's NetWork the most cutting-edge resource it can be for men's groups and individuals. "That's where our users come in," Wurdeman said. "We want feedback, especially at this very early stage in the

use of this Web site. That way—as much as is possible—we can be responsive to comments from the field and hone the Men's NetWork. Our aim is to provide a resource inspiring men to greater levels of discipleship, even as it brings honor to Jesus Christ."

The Men's NetWork is now available online at www.lhmmen.com. Drop on by, register, and give the site a test drive. This is your resource. Help us make it the best it can be.

Update from Bangkok, Thailand:

Nujcha is a college student studying social sciences. At 22 years old, she is part of a new generation of Christians who make the most of technology to learn more about God's love.

One of her eight brothers and sisters introduced her to Christ two years ago and, through the power of God's Spirit, she was brought to faith in Christ and was baptized in 2008.

Nujcha said she was disorganized, undisciplined, and didn't get along well with others before she became a Christian. After her baptism, Nujcha wanted to continue growing spiritually. She found out about the Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM)-Thailand ministry center and began reading Christian books from the ministry center. She also enrolled in LHM's Bible Correspondence Course (BCC).

"The lessons have helped me to understand the Bible better and see examples of the Christian way of life. It also has reassured me about my salvation, and I can also share what I've learned with other people."

Nujcha also receives daily Scripture verses from LHM-Thailand via e-mail. She receives encouraging Gospel messages through her mobile phone and other LHM media such as video programming and music CDs.

Nujcha said these things have greatly helped build up her spiritual life and grow in knowledge. As a result, she has now become a volunteer for the LHM-Thailand office, helping to lead others to Christ. Currently, she is being nurtured by a church in Chiangmai Province.

By following God and learning about Him, Nujcha's life has changed. She witnesses and shares what she has learned from the BCC lessons and other media with those around her who do not know Christ.





Lutherans For Life—'Witnessing to the Sanctity of Human Life through education based on the Word of God'

What is the Freedom of Choice Act?

What does the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) say? FOCA provides that it "is the policy of the United States that every woman has the fundamental right to choose to bear a child, to terminate a pregnancy prior to fetal viability, or to terminate a pregnancy after fetal viability when necessary to protect the life or health of the woman."

Further, FOCA would specifically invalidate any "statute, ordinance, regulation, administrative order, decision, policy, practice, or other action" of any federal, state, or local government or governmental official (or any person acting under government authority) that would "deny or interfere with a woman's right to choose" abortion or that would "discriminate against the exercise of the right ... in the regulation or provision of benefits, facilities, services, or information."

Clearly, its reach is very broad. This single piece of legislation would apply to any federal or state law "enacted, adopted, or implemented before, on, or after the date of (its) enactment."

What is the legal impact of FOCA? FOCA creates a new and dangerously radical "right." It establishes the right to abortion as a "fundamental right," elevating it to the same status as the right to vote and the right to free speech (which, unlike the abortion license, are specifically mentioned in the U.S. Constitution). Critically, in *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court did not define abortion as a "fundamental right." And with the exception of one justice's attempt in 1983 to distort the Court's abortion jurisprudence by framing the abortion license as a "fundamental right," the Court has not subsequently defined abortion as a "fundamental right." Thus, FOCA goes beyond any Supreme Court decision in enshrining unlimited abortion-on-demand into American law.

FOCA would also subject laws regulating or even touching on abortion to judicial review using a "strict scrutiny" framework of analysis. This is the highest standard American courts can apply and is typically reserved for laws impacting such fundamental rights as the right to free speech and the right to vote. Prior to the Supreme Court's 1992 decision in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (which substituted the "undue burden" standard for the more stringent "strict scrutiny" analysis), abortion-related laws (such as parental involvement for minors and minimum health and safe-

ty standards for abortion clinics) were almost uniformly struck down under "strict scrutiny" analysis. If enacted, FOCA would retroactively be applied to all federal and state abortion-related laws and would result in their invalidation.

Clearly FOCA will not make abortion safe or rare—on the contrary, it will actively promote abortion and do nothing to ensure its safety—so, abortion advocates' unrelenting campaign to enact FOCA is a "wake-up call" to all Americans. If implemented, FOCA would invalidate common-sense, protective laws that the majority of Americans support. It will not protect or empower women. Instead, it would protect and promote the abortion industry, sacrifice women and their health to a radical political ideology, and silence the voices of everyday Americans who want to engage in a meaningful public discussion over the availability, safety, and even desirability of abortion.

FOCA would nullify:

- the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003;
- the Hyde Amendment restricting taxpayer funding of abortions;
- restrictions on abortions performed at military hospitals;
- informed consent laws;
- waiting periods;
- parental consent and notification laws;
- health and safety regulations for abortion clinics;
- requirements that licensed physicians perform abortions;
- state and federal legal protections for individual health care providers who decline to participate in abortions; and
- legal protection for Catholic and other religiously-affiliated hospitals who refuse to allow abortions within their facilities.

plus more

(Copied from Lifelines, February-April 2009 issue, which was excerpted from "The Freedom of Choice Act: A Radical Attempt to Prematurely End Debate Over Abortion," written by Denise M. Burke, Vice President of Americans United for Life Legal Affairs. The entire article, including the history of FOCA and a list of the more than 550 federal and state laws that FOCA would nullify, are available at www.aul.org.)

DISTRICT NEWS



2008-09 Lay Leadership Institute participants include, from left (back row), Al Sutton, Divine Shepherd, Black Hawk; Bret Bierman, Trinity, Mansfield; Jerry Wulf, Faith, Pierre; Rev. David Schwan, LCMS South Dakota District executive secretary, Sioux Falls; (front row) Jeff Falin, Zion, Rapid City; Jerry Bunkowske, Risen Savior, Tea; Britt Nelson, St. John, Aberdeen; and David Peterson, Trinity, Mansfield. Rev. Brad Urbach, Faith, Pierre, who is not in photo, also participated.

District men learn Christian doctrine, Old Testament, Christian care at LLI

On Jan. 10 at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre, laymen and instructors associated with the district's Lay Leadership Institute (LLI) met for classes. Seven men finished the course on Christian Doctrine.

The class originally started with Rev. Michael Boykin as the instructor. When he left the district, Rev. David Schwan, executive secretary for the district and chairman of the LLI Steering Committee, took over as instructor to finish the class.

Meeting to discuss issues and points of doctrine, students and instructor concluded the class that began Sept. 13, 2008.

After lunch, students participated in a first for the LLI—two classes for the same time period.

One course on the Old Testament, taught by Rev. Lloyd Redhage, was first offered two years ago in the fall of 2007. Two students were on hand to gain insights from Rev. Redhage as they prepare to work their way through the Old Testament until the class concludes in late May.

Also meeting was a class on Fundamentals of Pastoral Care, a class taught by Rev. Brad Urbach. This class will help students learn how to make caring Christian visits to the ill or infirm. As part of the class, students will work with and make visits with their home pastor.

For more information on the district's Lay Leadership Institute, visit the district's Web site at <http://sd.lcms.org>.

Bump, set, spike ... for LIFE!

On Sunday, Jan. 25, teams from Resurrection, Faith, Lord of Life, and Our Redeemer Lutheran churches in Sioux Falls took part in the second annual Volleyball Tournament For Life, which raised funds for the Alpha Center in Sioux Falls.

The tournament is held every year on the last Sunday in January to celebrate life. This year's tournament was held at Faith Lutheran in Sioux Falls.

The event raised more than \$240 for the Alpha Center which will be supplemented by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

