



**58th South Dakota
District Convention
to meet under theme
'Called into Partnership'**

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:3-6 ESV).

Dear friends in Christ,

Just about the time you receive this issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, our South Dakota District will be meeting in convention. The theme of our convention is "Called into Partnership," based on the words printed above. The dates are April 29 through May 2.

Every pastor of the district is to be present either as a voting delegate or an advisory delegate. All the "commissioned" workers, such as Lutheran teachers and directors of Christian education (DCE), also are to be present, but they may be excused if they are involved in other official duties. A lay delegate from each *parish* of the district also is to be present. A *parish* consists of one or more congregations served by the same pastor or pastors. In the case of a "two-point" or "three-point" parish, one lay delegate represents the entire parish.

According to the Bylaws of our Synod, conventions of the districts are to provide opportunities for worship, nurture, inspiration, fellowship, and the communication of vital information. They also are to take action on reports and overtures, as well as elect those who will serve as officers of the district over the next three years.

This year's convention worship will involve the president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick, as the preacher for our opening service, and Dr. Raymond Hartwig, secretary of the Synod and former South Dakota District president, as the preacher for our closing service. Dr. Hartwig also will serve as our convention essayist, leading us in Bible study and discussion around our convention theme, "Called into Partnership." I anticipate that the sermons, the essay and Bible study,



Rev. Dale Sattgast
South Dakota
District President

and the devotions throughout the convention all will serve to nurture and inspire those who attend.

Prior to the convention, all the delegates received a *Convention Workbook* containing many different reports on the activities and life of the South Dakota District over the past three years. These include reports from the district president, executive secretary, the district business manager and treasurer, all the circuit counselors, the chairman of our various service areas, as well as from the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, the Lutheran Laymen's League, South Dakota Lutherans For Life, Orphan Grain Train, and "Main Street Living." A video during the convention will bring an update on the work of our district-supported missionary to Kazakhstan, Amy Hartwig Kashenov.

President Kieschnick will report on the work of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and also will field questions from the assembly. A representative from the Synod's Board for Mission Services will report on missions. And a portion of our time will involve a presentation by our Synod's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synodical Structure and Governance, including discussion on the possible restructuring of our Synod and districts.

Several "overtures" have been submitted for convention action. These have come from congregations, circuits, and from the district Board of Directors. They involve matters including encouraging support for the missions and ministries that we jointly have decided to do in South Dakota; realigning the circuits of the district to bring them into compliance with our Synod's Bylaws; continuing our districtwide subscription to *The Lutheran Witness*; giving encouragement to our smaller congregations and parishes; encouraging all our congregations to view themselves as "mission outposts," as well as looking at new mission opportunities; reaffirming our teachings on the sanctity of life; and several other important matters. God-willing, at the center of all we decide will be faithfulness to the teachings of God's Word and equal faithfulness to the mission that our Savior has entrusted to His Church, of which our beloved South Dakota District is a part.

Every pastor and lay delegate to the district convention will report back to the local congregation or parish concerning the decisions that were made, the results of the elections, the challenges that confront us all in our partnership, and not least of all, the joys we share as

(Continued on Page B.)

DISTRICT NEWS

FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

(Continued from Page A.)

we have been “Called into Partnership” with our Triune God, His Church, our Synod and district, our sister congregations, and with each other as sisters and brothers who have been called to faith, forgiveness, and salvation through our Savior Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

God bless us as together we serve Him and His kingdom!

“... 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

Ongoing Ambassadors For Christ to celebrate 40th anniversary

Ongoing Ambassadors For Christ (O AFC) will celebrate its 40th anniversary in June 2010 with its annual summer training and an alumni reunion.

An LCMS recognized service organization, O AFC has touched the lives of more than 36,000 youth and adults who have learned to share Jesus in a simple way during its 40-year history. Many have become pastors, teachers, directors of



Christian education, and committed lay members of local congregations because of their experiences in O AFC.

Now, we need to find you! O AFC alumni are encouraged to register on the alumni page at www.oafc.org/alumni.html.

LCMS Youth Sharing Jesus

Alumni interested in helping to plan the 2010 reunion may contact O AFC staff member Dan Barz and alumnae Tammy Granner Mackie at alumni@oafc.org or call Dan at 269-429-7521.

Why are we here?

It would be interesting to ask members of a congregation the simple question, “Why are we here?” This could be phrased any number of ways. We could ask, “For what purpose are we a congregation?” “Why has God gathered us together?” One wonders what the unguided answers might be in a congregation, be it a congregation of 20 or 2,000.

I wonder about this because we have seen how even our best teaching and repetition of a truth time and time again can still be lost. For example, how many times do we say in sermons and in Bible classes that we are saved by grace through faith, and yet, when members are polled, all too often the statement is made that we are saved by doing good things.

As is customary with any issue, we seek the answer from God Himself, not our own opinions. Jesus, the Head of the Body, noted that He came to seek and save the lost.

The Great Commission begins to outline for us how Jesus intended for us to carry on that prime directive from the Head Himself. How do we seek the lost? Jesus told us to GO—Get Out from behind closed doors. As you go, teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as Scriptures declare it to us. Baptize as you go, signaling to all people everywhere that that blessed truth of God’s saving love to us in Jesus Christ is for “you and your children.”

Thinking about these things, the answer begins to crystallize. Why are we here? We are here to follow the Head in seeking the lost and sharing with them the saving truth of forgiveness of sins for Jesus’ sake. When we take our eyes off that purpose, it is easy to get sidetracked. No matter how logical our path may seem, if we are not following the Head, it is only so much busyness.

God grant that we all keep our eyes on Jesus.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. David Schwan
Executive Secretary
South Dakota District
of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Rev. Schwan



Call information

as of March 21

CALLS PENDING

Daniel Deardoff, Blessed Redeemer, Brandon, received a call of pastor at Immanuel, Honey Creek, Mo., 3/10/09.

Candidate, for the call of pastor at Concordia, Vermillion, 3/12/09.

Candidate, spring placement, received the call of pastor at First/Emmanuel, Wall/Creighton, 3/12/09.

Candidate, spring placement, received the call of assistant pastor at Zion, Sioux Falls, 3/12/09.

ACCEPTED

None

DECLINED

None

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

**South Dakota members
‘Stepping Up’ in service**

Are you ready to get your hands dirty? The 2009 South Dakota Youth Gathering is all about serving others through Christ. Our theme—“Stepping Up”—reminds us of St. Paul’s words in 1 Cor. 3:9: “We are God’s fellow workers.”

From July 27 to 31, we will help rebuild the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, area after last year’s devastating floods. Our accommodations will be at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca near Solon, Iowa.

Something new this year! “Stepping Up,” using the talents God has given us, is something *everyone* can do. You are invited as well! Christian service to others does not have an age limit. “Stepping Up” as the body of Christ, we will offer our services to God’s people in Iowa during the day and return to camp in late afternoon for fun, food, and fellowship.

The cost for this year’s “Stepping Up” adventure is \$150 per person. For more information, contact Rev. Randy Sturzenbecher at revsturz@yahoo.com. Registration, and more information can be found at http://sd.lcms.org/PA_Youth_Services.html.



2008 Youth Gathering attendees in Spearfish.



The Lay Leadership Institute of South Dakota will offer two classes this summer:

- a New Testament class, taught by Rev. Darren Olson of Canistota; and
- “Mission Outreach in Context—Rural America,” taught by Rev. Wes Hafner from Mansfield.

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

August issue deadline: June 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

E-mail: vsturzenbecher@yahoo.com

or mail **8605 Woodland Drive**

Black Hawk, SD 57718

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE



*Travels
with Elaine*



Elaine Hankel
LWML District
President

The theme for the LWML Convention in Portland, Ore., "Look to the Hills ... God Reigns!" was truly evident when I attended the LWML Board of Directors meeting in January/February. As we were flying to Portland, I noticed the gentleman in the seat ahead of me looking out the window. As I looked to my left, there was a mountain peak visible just above the clouds. What a beautiful sight! But he continued to try to see ahead of us. I wasn't sure what to expect and then, all of a sudden, this beautiful snow-covered mountaintop came into view. You could almost reach out and touch it. It was Mount Hood. When I looked to my right, off in the distance was Mount St. Helens. What an awesome sight!

The convention Bible verse is very clear: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" (Is. 52:7). As we come together to celebrate who we are as Lutheran Women in Mission, we remember the convention objectives, to:

- worship God the Maker of all things;
- trust in the Lord who daily meets our needs;
- declare God's peace and provision through tangible acts of mercy and grace; and
- share the Good News of Jesus in everyday situations.

So, have you made your plans to join us in Portland? It is not too late to register. Remember, we don't have to work at this convention; you get to sit up close, relax, and enjoy the activities.

2009 South Dakota LWML Convention Delegates, Portland, Ore.

Aberdeen Zone—Bobbie Bierman, Mansfield
Black Hills Zone—Amy Lindenberg, Rapid City
Brookings Zone—Kathy McKinney, White
Chamberlain Zone—June Ring, Norris
Huron Zone—Arlene Schmitt, Redfield
Milbank Zone—Marilyn Koepke, Watertown
Mitchell Zone—Angie Luczak, Letcher
Pierre Zone—Lurene Denke, Pierre
Sioux Falls Zone—Diane Corkill, Sioux Falls
Yankton Zone—Paulette Gross, Yankton

I also will be in the South Dakota delegation, along with junior counselor Rev. Daniel Deardoff Sr. Our Young Woman Representatives are Melissa Brock, Pierre, and Sarah Rausch, Chelsea.

Counselor's corner

"Be an Angel"

"Be an angel, would you? Get me a glass of water." We ask this of our children and spouses. In our hearts, we know it's impossible. People are people. Angels are angels. Movies and television shows falsely suggest that people become angels upon entering heaven. People can become saints through the grace of God, both here on earth and in heaven. People never become angels.

Why would I tell you to be something you can't aspire to be? I want you to think of yourself as capable of doing the angel's work. That's exactly what God expects of you. You will never get a set of wings. Guess what? You inherited their job! We even sing this in our hymns. "*May we thy precepts Lord fulfill, and do on earth our Father's will, as angels do above*" (LSB 698 vs. 1). God wants you to do angel work!

During May, we celebrate the ascension of Jesus into heaven. This happened 40 days after His resurrection. Something else happened that day. The angels turned over their work of spreading the Good News. Angels proclaimed His birth and His resurrection. After Acts 1, the work of announcing these facts is handed over entirely to us humans. Angels didn't retire. They continue serving God, and they serve as guardians for those inheriting salvation. The baton of telling Jesus' Good News has been handed over to you!

So, what do you do when someone calls you with bad news? Insert Jesus into the conversation. Don't be afraid to mention Jesus never really left us, even if He physically ascended into heaven. If someone confides they may have cancer, say what an angel would say. Christ was born and Christ rose to defeat the devil's power. We can pray if it's God's will they recover. However, if God's will isn't that someone gets better on earth, it's definitely God's will they get completely better in heaven. The Gospel is a "win-win" message.

Don't be afraid to "be an angel." The LWML's work is about serving Jesus in our congregations and meeting together to tackle jobs He has given us.

In the hymn "Drawn to the Cross which Thou Hast



Rev. Daniel
Deardoff
LWML District
Counselor



Blessed,” the second-to-last verse speaks of God cleansing us through baptism and refining our faith through trials. The last verse says, “*And then for work to do for Thee, Which shall so sweet a service be, That angels well might envy me, Christ crucified I come*” (LSB 560).

Thank you, Lord, for giving me tasks today that an angel would envy!

Gospel Outreach Committee

The Gospel Outreach Committee chairman is a position that is appointed by the district LWML president. The chairman is a voting member of the South Dakota District LWML Board of Directors. Serving with me on this committee is Ann Cruse, Paula VanScharrel, and Judy Barnes.

Our goal is to equip and motivate all women to LIVE their FAITH and to SHARE their FAITH with people in their church, communities, nation, and the world. One way we share our faith with others is by supporting our mission grants through mite offerings.

Each day of 2009 brings opportunities for us to SHARE our faith as we work and visit with friends and relatives. Praying for each other and for our mission grants is another way to LIVE our faith. Across the United States, LWML members join in prayer at noon on Monday.

The Puppet Place ministry at the South Dakota State Fair is the primary responsibility of the Gospel Outreach Committee in South Dakota. The committee members are the contacts during the fair. Each day, five puppet shows are presented.

The Huron Zone LWML is responsible for cleaning the puppet place before the fair opens. The other LWML zones around the state furnish volunteers each day to invite fairgoers to view the shows and hand out Bible studies to adults and whistles to the children after attending the puppet show.

The Utecht family and friends make up the Puppet Place Ministry Team. You won't want to miss the puppet show at the South Dakota State Fair. On the day your zone is scheduled to volunteer at the Puppet Place, please let your zone president know you (women, men, and youth) will be there. The Puppet Place needs four to six volunteers each day. The JOY you receive from being a volunteer is passed on to the fairgoers. See YOU at the South Dakota State Fair!

Susan Kinsley, Gospel Outreach Chairman

Mighty Mites ... you have heard that phrase many times and yet during these hard economic times these words are more relevant than ever. When we combine all our mites, God blesses our efforts, and mighty things for Him are accomplished.

It is time to submit mission grant proposals for the South Dakota LWML 2010 convention. Submit your mission grant proposals to Arlene Naasz, Vice President of Gospel Outreach, by **Aug. 31**. For submission guidelines, please contact Arlene at 6219th Ave, Brookings, SD 57006, or download a copy from the South Dakota District LWML Web site.



LWML holds annual retreat at Blue Cloud Abbey

The women of the Milbank Zone of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League held their annual retreat at the Blue Cloud Abbey Retreat Center on Friday evening and Saturday, Feb. 6-7. Thirty-five women participated. Rev. Kim Kanitz, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church of Revillo and Bethlehem Lutheran Church, rural Milbank, led the four-part Bible study titled "The Son of God in the Old Testament."

The program included an ingathering of paper products, personal hygiene products, and cleaning products for the Prairie Lakes Caring Club House in Watertown. Other activities included aerobic exercising, morning and evening devotions, and a Bible trivia exercise called "Who Wants to Be a Million-Heir." On Friday night—the fun night—the women did a mixer activity, bead craft, games and puzzles, and trimmed cancelled stamps for the Stamps for Missions program.

The music for the retreat was led by Kristy Tostenon and LaVerna Moldenhauer. Skits were given by women of the various congregations represented, including Emanuel, Milbank; St. John, Revillo; Our Savior, Wilmot; Emanuel, Sisseton; and Mount Olive, Watertown.

The Retreat Committee consisted of Evelyn Nelson, Judy Dockter, Shirley Lundborg, Sharon Larson, and Sharon Falk.

LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

State Dartball Tournament

The 53rd annual South Dakota District LLL dartball tournament was sponsored by Mount Calvary, Brookings, but because of space limitations the games were played at Peace, Brookings.

Prior to the start of the games, Region 12 Governor Bill Snow showed a video featuring Rev. Kenneth Klaus, Lutheran Hour speaker. After the video presentation, Pastor Terry Naasz of Mount Calvary, Brookings, led a short devotion.



Region 12 Governor Bill Snow

Emmanuel, Dimock, again showed its dominance by winning the championship. The team did it the hard way—going through the losers bracket. In the championship games,

they had to defeat Trinity, Hartford, twice, which they did. That gave Emmanuel players their seventh consecutive state title. Trinity was awarded second place, and Zion, Delmont, received the third-place trophy.

Two new teams entered the tournament—Zion, Sioux Falls, and Faith, Pierre. Other teams were Zion, Mitchell; St. Peter, Clayton; Mount Calvary, Brookings; Mount Olive, Watertown; Faith, Parkston; and St. Paul, Freeman.

The tournament ended with trophy presentations. Grace Cleveland won a door prize donated by Lutheran Hour Ministries. Tournament director was Arlo Bueber.



Emmanuel, Dimock, first place



Trinity, Hartford, second place

MEMORIAL DAY



Jerry Cleveland,
Mount Olive, Watertown



Dutch Te Slaa,
Zion, Sioux Falls



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

Ancient pro-life document discovered!

by Dr. James I. Lamb

Actually, the document has been around for a long time. What needs to be discovered, however, is just how pro-life the Apostles' Creed really is. What we profess so often connects so well to the life issues of our day.

What follows are some "For Life" thoughts on the creed and some related Bible passages. Look up the passages and discuss how they relate. Add passages of your own!

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

Thought: Everything created before the creation of human life was for the creation of human life. The setting God created for human life and the way He created human life and the way He continues to create human life, gives human life special value.

(Psalm 8; Gen. 1:26, 2:7, 2:22; Ps. 139:13-14)

"And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit."

Thought: The conception of Jesus attests not only to His divinity at that moment but also to our humanity at that moment. Jesus, the embryo, gives value to all embryos.

(Ps. 51:5; Heb. 2:14; Luke 1:30-31)

"Born of the virgin Mary."

Thought: That God would come into this world at all for the likes of us testifies to His great love for life.

(John 3:16; 1 John 4:10)

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried."

Thought: His suffering is the price that gives value to human life; and His suffering gives value to human suffering.

(1 Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:18, 4:15; 2 Cor. 1:5; Rom. 5:2-4, 8:28-39)

"He descended into hell."

Thought: Satan loses! We can resist his temptations to sin against life.

(James 4:7; Heb. 2:14; Eph. 6:11-17)

"The third day He rose again from the dead."

Thought: Life wins! We do not strive *for* victory in our pro-life work; we strive *in* victory!

(1 Cor. 15:54-57; Rom. 8:37; Prov. 21:31; 2 Chron. 20:15)

"He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

Thought: Jesus is in control of His people, living and reigning to all eternity.

(Rev. 5:7-14; Heb. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:22)

"From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead."

Thought: Judgment is coming. We need to reach out to those who sin against life.

(Matt. 18:5-6, 25:41-46, 5:43-45; 1 Tim. 2:4; Luke 15:7)

"I believe in the Holy Spirit."

Thought: God's Spirit calls us to a life of faith.

(Rom. 3:21-26; Luke 12:22-31; Prov. 3:5-8; 1 Peter 1:6-7)

"The holy Christian Church, the communion of saints."

Thought: We are called into a caring community.

(Rom. 12:3-13; 2 Cor. 1:4; Gal. 6:2; James 1:27)

"The forgiveness of sins."

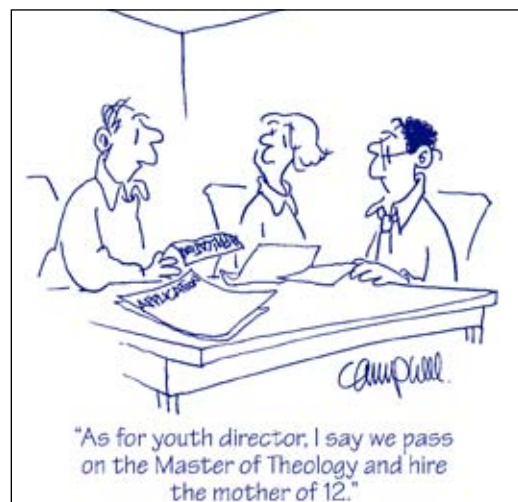
Thought: There is no message more powerful for those who have sinned against life.

(1 John 1:9; John 8:10-11; Rom. 8:1)

"The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

Thought: The best is yet to come! We live life always in hope.

(John 14:1-3; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Phil. 1:21; Rev. 21:1-4)



Rising from the ashes

Rural Wecota church rebuilt after being destroyed by fire last year

by Russ Keen, rkeen@aberdeennews.com

Published on Saturday, March 7, 2009

WECOTA—All at once, emotions struck Craig Cassens as he helped install pews into a new country church that replaces one destroyed by fire almost a year ago on the same site.

Organist Bev Holsing began practicing on the new organ while Cassens and other church members



moved pews into the sanctuary of Immanuel Lutheran Church in late February, a few days before Ash Wednesday.

“When she started playing, I just kind of choked up,” recalled Cassens, chairman of the church board. “It was kind of overwhelming.”

The 104-year-old church burned to the ground on March 26, 2008. The congregation worshipped in the new church for the first time on Ash Wednesday, followed four days later by its first Sunday worship service.

“The church was full,” Holsing said. “And the choir is back. It was great.”

Cassens got choked up after being part of the congregation for four years. Others have been part of the congregation since birth.

“We feel real good,” said Delores Flanigan, who was baptized, confirmed, and married in the church that burned.

“It’s awesome. It feels sacred. It’s joyous,” said Maxine White, another longtime member of Immanuel Lutheran, on state Highway 20 north of Wecota. About 100 belong and about 40 attend regularly.

Laura Holscher, 94, is the church’s oldest member.

“I am pretty happy,” she said as she stood in the church’s modern kitchen.

She and the other women were in the church earlier

this week for a meeting of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League.

From a practical point of view, elderly members really enjoy the one-level church, said member Lorraine Gebhard.

“They don’t have to go up and down steps.”

In the old church, the kitchen and fellowship hall were in the basement. And, unlike the new facility, the old building was not accessible to people who use wheelchairs, she said.

“And it’s easy to keep clean,” Gebhard said of the new building.

It would have been so easy to give up and not build a new church, said member Gene Holsing, the organist’s husband. The vote to rebuild was almost unanimous, with no heated arguments, he said.

“I am overjoyed. I am so proud. We have a lot of memories of the old church. But if we hadn’t built, we would have let the next generation down. It’s so easy to quit.”

“It doesn’t take any talent at all, and then it snowballs,” said member Bob Rusch, chairman of the building committee that he said faced numerous challenges.

“It was quite a struggle, but it was worth it.”

Insurance covered about one-third of the replacement cost. Even so, the church is paid for, with the remainder coming from donations, Rusch said.

Members of the former United Methodist Church in Ashton told the Immanuel Lutheran congregation it could take whatever it wanted—including beautiful, hardwood pews—from the Ashton church, which closed.

The pews and the altar from the Ashton church now grace the sanctuary at Immanuel Lutheran. So do a statue of Christ, a



lectionary, and a baptismal font retrieved from the burning church—about the only items saved.

“It was a sad time, but it turned out to be a blessing,” Bev Holsing said.

*(Reprinted by permission of the **Aberdeen News**.)*