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MINISTRY PARTNERS

Camp Okoboji
ILSTO
Life Advocates
Lutheran Family Service

ALSO INCLUDED...

Around the District
March for Life
Clergy Wives Retreat
Youth Gathering Dates



CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Joseph Hanson, First, Missouri Valley, to Zion, Painesville, OH
Rev. Ryan Meyer, St. Peter, St. Peter, IL, to Immanuel/St. Thomas, Guthrie Center/Panora
Rev. John Stacy (SMP) to St. Matthew, Mapleton
Rev. Trey Doak, to St. John, Honey Creek

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Jonathan Conner, Zion, Manning to St. Paul, Fort Dodge
Rev. Jonathan Conner, Zion, Manning, to Emmanuel, Ketterling, OH
Rev. Michael Boothby, St. Paul/St. John, Ireton, to Immanuel, Higginsville, OH
Rev. Dr. Josh Lowe, Trinity, Hawarden, to Redeemer, Enid, OK

CALLED TO GLORY

Rev. Randall Cormeny, St. John's, Battle Creek, April 27, 2026

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

TRANSFERS IN

Deaconess Amanda Nicks, Lutherans For Life, from Mid-South District

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 6...Synod Convention Orientation, IDW Office, Fort Dodge
June 10-13...District LWML Convention, Camp Okoboji
June 20...Iowa March For Life, Trinity, Des Moines/State Capitol Grounds
June 21...Father's Day



2026 Upcoming Events

July 18-23...Synod Convention, **Phoenix, AZ**
September 21-22...Fall Pastor's Conference, Gloria Dei Lutheran, **Urbandale**
September 29...Administrative Assistants Conference, **Fort Dodge**
October 2-4...Senior Youth Gathering, **Camp Okoboji**
October 9-11...Pastor's Wives Retreat, **Camp Okoboji**
October 24-25...Junior Youth Gathering, Sheraton Hotel, **West Des Moines**



Follow Iowa District West on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/IowaDistrictWest



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www.idwlcms.org

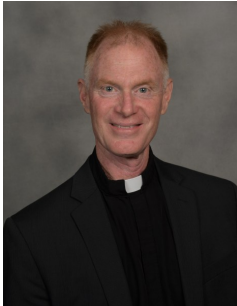
Please note: The inclusion of items from outside sources in *The Messenger* is for information purposes only. Inclusion of such items does not constitute District endorsement.



On a Mission
to Support
Christ's Mission!

June 2026

409 Kenyon Road, Suite B — Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501
515-576-7666 Fax 515-576-2323 www.idwlcms.org
Contact email: emilie@iowadistrictwest.org



Pentecost

Fifty days after Easter -- comes Pentecost
When God sends the Holy Spirit to empower people to
search for the lost wherever they've been thrown and tossed.

Together in a room, they hear a mighty wind sound.
The Holy Spirit helps them to speak in other languages to
people around.
This does amaze and astound.

They speak of God's works -- crowds ask, "What does this
mean?"

Speaking Greek, Cappadocian, and every language between.
This is quite the scene.

Huge crowds gather -- some joke the disciples are drunk with wine.
Peter says, "No, it's morning --- it's only nine!
From God, this is a sign."

Now learn about Jesus -- the Man Whom you killed.
This, all along is something God willed.
For God, His family, to build.

This Jesus you crucified -- He's raised from the dead.
The crowd cries, "What shall we do?!" They are filled with dread.
Knowing Jesus bled.

Repent and be baptized, your children and you.
In baptism, God offers a start that is new.
His promise true.

Devoting themselves to Scripture study, worship, communion & prayer.
God daily adds children to His family there.
Jesus does care.

Rev. Paul Egger, District President
paul@iowadistrictwest.org

LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Webinar

Join the LCMS Foundation for a
free online webinar, *Stewarding
God's Gifts: A Plan to Care for
Your Family and Support the
Ministries You Love*, on Tuesday,
June 16, from 11:30 AM – 12:30
PM CDT. Led by Leon Schoenfeld, LCMS Foundation Gift Planning
Counselor for Iowa District West, this session will help you understand the
basics of Christian gift planning and how your will or estate plan can pro-
vide for your loved ones and support the ministries you care about.
To learn more and register visit:

<https://www.lcmsfoundation.org/idw-giftplanning-webinar-2026>



2026 Iowa March For Life

All members of IDW congregations are invited to
participate in the **Iowa March for Life** on Saturday,
June 20. The day begins at Trinity Lutheran Church in
Des Moines (3223 University Ave.) with a Matins Prayer
Service at 9:00 a.m., followed by worship at 10:00 a.m.
A lunch will be served at 11:00 a.m. After lunch,
participants will travel to the Iowa State Capitol for the
March, beginning at noon. All are encouraged to come,
pray, worship, and walk together as witnesses for life.



Singles Retreat



Lutheran Singles

Adults ages 21–41 are invited to join us for the 4th
Annual LCMS Lutheran Singles Retreat August 21-23!
Enjoy a weekend of fellowship, faith-building, and fun
at the beautiful setting of Camp Okoboji. Cost is \$100
for the weekend (includes lodging, meals, and activi-
ties) This retreat is an opportunity to grow in your faith,
experience uplifting worship, engaging conversations,
and relaxing time in God's creation. Contact Rev. Dr. Keith Schweitzer for
more information at 641-745-5143 or keithlcms@gmail.com.
Register online: faithwinterset.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 25... Memorial Day—District Office Closed
June 6... Synod Convention Orientation, IDW Office, Fort Dodge
June 11-13... LWML District Convention, Camp Okoboji
June 16... Foundation Gift Planning Webinar, Online
June 20... Iowa March For Life, Trinity Lutheran/State Capitol, Des Moines
June 21... Father's Day

For more information on Iowa District West activities,
view *The Messenger* at www.idwlcms.org/publications.php

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The Rev. Paul Egger

Iowa District West, LCMS

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Whatever is NOBLE.

God's apostle writes to you, "Finally brothers, whatever is noble, think about such things, and the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4.

Who knows your mind better than Jesus?

Who knows your thinking better than Jesus? Who can bring you deeper peace than Jesus? And His apostle points you away from the sinful fallenness of this world, directing your attention instead to whatever is noble. As you engage your mind in whatever is noble, Jesus brings peace to your mind and soul.

NOBLE. The Greek word is SEMNA. "Noble" is an ok translation. Semna includes whatever you can look up to in persons and circumstances and respect. Astonishment mingled with fear. Reverent awe at seeing the face of a dead king. Honest and honorable. Serious and dignified rather than flippant and cheap. Noble.

Some Bible scholars offer you lists from the word "semna" to think about: the Name of God; the Rite of the Divine Service; the solemnity of life; the immortality of your soul; the fact of death; God's judgment seat. Think on these things and bless God. His hand is in all of them.

"Noble" can apply to First Article created things: The astronomical accuracy that can calculate the moment of an eclipse a hundred years in the future; instantaneous communication all around God's earth; the "rise up and walk" of medical skill; God's majesty reflected in mountain and sky and sea.

We sing “noble” in our hymn “We praise You and acknowledge You.” Stanza two: “The martyrs of Your kingdom, a great and NOBLE throng.” Think about noble people. John the Baptizer, after pointing to Jesus and revealing Him to be the Lamb of God Who takes away our sins, John willingly sacrificing his head in order to speak of marital purity. Who else? James, killed with the sword while bringing God’s love in Jesus to whomever would listen. Think about noble people.

Think about noble Jesus, the Christ.

Wait...noble? He doesn’t look very noble. God’s prophet Isaiah reports, “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him – nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him...Like One from Whom men hide their faces, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

Jesus? Noble? Just look at Him. Covered with spit and blood. Bruises. Heckled. Crucified.

Noble Jesus!

Nowhere to lay His head while searching for you. Hated by the world in loving you.

Losing Himself to death in rescuing you. Standing up again.

Death defeater and satan trampler.

Sinful thinking remover.

Mind and soul peace Giver.

NOBLE JESUS – THINK ABOUT HIM!

Finally, brothers, whatever is noble, think about such things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Pastor Paul Egger



Education Youth Family Life

Rhonda J. Mohr Assistant to the President 515-573-0010
rhonda@iowadistrictwest.org



Five Youth from across Iowa District West attended YouthLead in St. Louis, Missouri in March. LCMS YouthLead is a multi-day leadership training experience for high school students who desire to grow as Christian leaders in their congregations and communities. Through Christ-centered Bible study, practical leadership skill development, and peer-to-peer learning led primarily by teens, participants are equipped to lead devotions, Bible studies, and youth ministry efforts back home. YouthLead emphasizes identity and vocation in Christ, helping teens see that they are not just the church of tomorrow, but the church today—called and gifted by God to serve, lead, and share His love right now. Each year there is a different curriculum. The 2026 curriculum was focused on Apologetics. Youth learned to defend their faith in Jesus.



Pictured L to R Back Row: Rhonda Mohr, Ben Meseck, Zander Richards, and Rev. Robert Zellmer

Front Row: Luther Eggleston, Lilah Reed, and Ada Graham



2027 YouthLead in St. Louis

March 13-16, 2027

or

April 24-27, 2027

Zander Richards pictured above gave this comment: *“YouthLead was an opportunity to get away from all the fears we have living in this world and become centered in Christ once more. I gained new tools in the defense of my faith and new friends to share my struggles with.”*



IDW and LCMS Youth Ministry Host YouthLead in Iowa West



Youth learned how to defend their faith, write and lead a devotion, and learned how to lead a prayer.

Pictured left: YouthLead Teen Leaders along with Youth Ministry Leader – DCE Julianna Shults

Below left: Rev. Ryan Roehrig, IDW Youth Services Chairman, led us in closing worship Sunday morning of the event.



IOWA DISTRICT WEST SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING UNSHAKABLE LIGHT

"I am the light of the world..." - John 8:12



October 3-4, 2026

📍 **CAMP OKOBOJI**

OPTIONAL EARLY ARRIVAL: OCTOBER 2



MAIN SPEAKERS

Pastor Ryan Roehrig &
DCE Hailey Jo Miller



WHO

Senior High Youth
(Grades 9-12)



COST

\$90 (1 night)
\$120 (2 nights)



PAYMENT

One check per church
payable to
Iowa District West

Save the Date!

MORE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION COMING SOON!



Health, Healing, and Hope

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10



Pastor Wives Retreat

October 9-11 | Camp Okoboji

Guest Speaker: Diane Bahn

Cypress, TX

SPEAKER | COACH | PASTOR'S WIFE

Seeking to grow daily as a follower of Jesus

Who and Whose are you?

How is God's workmanship evident in your life?

On what path is God leading you now and with whom?

As we consider these questions together in the context of our identity as children of God by his grace in our Lord Jesus, we may also discover a path to renewed health, healing, and hope as women and as ministry wives. In the process we'll also have some fun, get to know one another better, and celebrate each other as God's precious creations.



Registration Details to Follow



**IOWA DISTRICT WEST
JUNIOR YOUTH
GATHERING**

**Sheraton Hotel
West Des Moines, IA
October 24-25, 2026**

MISSION POSSIBLE!

Rev. Dr. B. Keith Haney

A Missional Approach to Church Planting

The heart of church planting isn't just about starting a new service or finding a building; it's about **outward-facing evangelism**. To truly reach those outside the faith, we have to move past the "attractional" model—where we build it and hope they come—and embrace a **missional** mindset.

As we look toward the future of the [LCMS](#) and the wider Church, our goal must be to build bridges that connect our faith community with those outside our walls, rather than simply seeking to add seats through transfer growth. Here is how we can shift our focus to engage our communities effectively.

1. Intentional Community Presence

We cannot expect the unchurched to walk through our doors if we haven't first walked through theirs. Building flourishing faith communities starts with faithful Jesus followers meeting people where they already are living their lives.

- **Identifying "Third Places":** We need to be present at local coffee shops, bowling alleys, golf clubs, sewing circles, parks, and community centers. The goal isn't an immediate sales pitch; it's about building genuine relationships and becoming a fixture in the neighborhood.
- **Service-Based Outreach:** Actions often speak louder than sermons. By partnering with local food banks, schools, or neighborhood associations, we meet tangible needs and show the community that we are for them, not just for ourselves.

2. Radical Hospitality and Low-Bar Entry Points

For someone with no church background, a formal liturgical service can feel like entering a room where everyone knows a secret language. We must lower the barrier to entry without giving up what makes us unique.

- **Soft Openings:** Before launching a formal worship service, consider how you can build community. Events like "BBQs in the Park" or "Q&A Nights" at a local cafe. These non-threatening environments allow for spiritual questions without the pressure of "church" expectations.
- **Clear Language:** In the LCMS, we love our acronyms. We must audit our vocabulary. Avoiding "insider" jargon ensures that when a guest does join us, they don't feel like an outsider.

3. Every Member as a Missionary

Church planting shouldn't be a "solo performance" by the planter. It requires a cultural shift in which everyone in the pews sees themselves as sent. In Greek, the word for "church" is **ekklesia** (ἐκκλησία), which literally means "assembly" or "gathering." It is derived from two words: *ek* ("out of") and *kaleo* ("to call"), leading to the common interpretation of "called-out ones." It refers to a body of people gathered for a purpose, not a physical building. The church gathers to be strengthened by the Word, then goes out to share the hope we have in Christ Jesus with those outside the body of Christ.

- **Relational Evangelism:** We must train our launch teams to see their workplaces, gyms, and neighborhoods as their primary mission fields.
- **Invest and Invite:** It's about the long game. We encourage a culture of "investing" in the lives of non-Christian friends—caring for them through highs and lows—so that when an invitation to community eventually comes, it feels like a natural next step among family.

4. Digital Engagement

A dynamic mosaic of digital screens highlights the significance of an impactful online presence as the initial gateway for information seekers.

In 2026, the "front door" of the church isn't made of wood; it's made of pixels. Your digital presence is often the first point of contact for a seeker.

- **Content that Matters:** Our social media and websites shouldn't just be digital bulletin boards. We should share stories and resources that address real-life struggles—like anxiety, parenting, and finding purpose. This demonstrates that the church cares about the person's well-being, not just their potential membership.

The Vision: The goal of church planting is not competition. It is the courageous act of stepping into the harvest field to reach those who haven't yet heard the Good News.

By becoming **Bridge Builders**, we move the focus from the center of the sanctuary to the edges of the community, ensuring the Gospel is accessible to everyone.

Resources:

Save the Date: Engaged in Mission: Congregation & Community is a two-day gathering hosted by the Iowa District West and The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Office of National Mission. The conference will focus on strengthening mission engagement, community outreach, and congregational vitality within the LCMS. September 18-19, 2026, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Carroll, IA

The Concordia Center for the Family is hosting a powerful training event that will inspire and empower you to help all the families you serve grow as disciples of Jesus every day. This 3-day **Family Discipleship Facilitator Training** will equip you with the knowledge, resources, and support you need to better serve families, starting with your own, without adding to your plate. You already have so much to do. Wouldn't you appreciate a way to grow disciples without burning yourself out?

Training is available at several locations this year: Lee's Summit, MO, June 1-3, Heit's Point Camp, MO, June 15-19, Irvine, CA, Aug. 6-8, Rockledge, FL, Nov. 12-14.

The registration fee of \$500 covers all training, materials, lunches, dinners and follow-up cohort support for one year. The deadline to attend in MO has been extended to the end of May. Please register [HERE](#).

Your congregation can also benefit tremendously by taking our ***Faith & Life Survey*** to help you assess how effectively you're serving all your church members in their daily growth as Jesus' disciples. See info and how to contact us [HERE](#).

Check out all our resources, most of them free, at concordiafamily.org.

Call if you have any questions: 888-553-5133.

LCMS DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

CADDS for congregations

The Congregational Assessment of Development/Decline Status (CADDS) is a survey-based self-assessment tool designed to provide your congregation with a consistent and objective way of answering the question "Where are we ... really?" while providing a collaborative course of action. The survey is 95 questions and typically takes less than 30 minutes to complete. To learn more about CADDS, as well as other *re:Vitality* offerings from the Office of National Mission, please email wor@lcms.org.



Greetings again in the Name of our risen Lord!

While fighting for a pro-life culture will always be a battle until our resurrected Lord returns in glory, the general state of our culture does seem to be improving in many ways. In our conversations with different pro-life groups over the past few months, one theme has been quite clear: the younger generations are increasingly pro-life. Statistics show that young men are also increasingly “conservative” in their worldview.

While young women are trending strongly toward more progressivist views, history shows that where the young men go, the rest will later follow. This gives us hope for the coming decades, especially in matters of the defense of children—both born and unborn.

Another great sign has been a recent decision from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. This court has stopped the ability for mifepristone—the abortion pill—to be prescribed without an appointment and sent through the mail. Under Joe Biden’s administration, this pill was used to continue to provide abortion easily after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. The legal battle is far from complete, but this decision is a bright ray of hope in the midst of our battle against the destruction of life.

Beyond that ruling, the current administration’s Department of Justice has made great strides in working against the previous administration’s direct harassment of pro-life, traditional Christian, and anti-trans groups. (<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-reveals-biden-administrations-weaponization-federal-law-against-pro-life>) The previous DOJ worked actively to withhold evidence, as well as collaborating with pro-abortion groups to undermine pro-life efforts in illegal ways. On top of that, it has been shown that conservative Christians—in particular, Latin Mass Catholics—were surveilled and monitored inappropriately and without cause. The previous administration clearly saw anti-trans, anti-abortion, and traditionally practicing Christians as a threat. The following is a link to the Religious Liberty Commission’s sixth hearing about these abuses, which includes testimony from several Christians who were investigated and legally harassed for their stand for the truth about life and God’s design for living.

(<https://www.youtube.com/live/MP2fFuYT3bM>)

The fight is not over, but some small victories have been achieved in the past couple of months. Please come and join us at the Iowa March for Life on June 20, 2026. We will gather at Trinity—Des Moines at 9 AM for a worship service. Iowa West President Paul Egger will preach. Following the service, we will hear from Mr. Martin Cannon, a lawyer involved

with the Thomas More Society who has been involved in recent Department of Justice conversations about the harassment of pro-life groups and the abuses of the FACE Act that our government has carried out in recent years. He is excited to have your ear, so please email pastorckroonblawd@gmail.com to let us know you are coming to hear what he has to say. We need to know if you're attending so that we can feed you before we head to the capitol building for the march. This year, Iowa West and Iowa East are both official sponsors of the march, so let's have a large group to show our support for the defense of life in Iowa and our nation.

– Rev. Paul Schulz

SATURDAY, JUNE 20TH, 2026

**TRINITY
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
DES MOINES**

2026 IOWA MARCH FOR LIFE LCMS RALLY

9 AM - MATINS PRAYER SERVICE

10 AM - SPEAKER

11 AM - LUNCH

12 PM - RALLY AND MARCH AT STATE CAPITOL



**3223 UNIVERSITY AVE
DES MOINES, IA 50311**

GUEST SPEAKER
**MR.
MARTIN
CANNON**



We show up.
We confess Christ.
We are Lutheran.

RSVP VIA QR CODE OR EMAIL
PASTORCKROONBLAWD@GMAIL.COM



BUSINESS MANAGER NEWS
Iowa District West Congregations' Mission Receipts



Month Ending April 2026	
Anticipated Amount	\$110,000
Actual Receipts	\$117,153
Year-to-Date Receipts	
Anticipated Amount	\$330,000
Actual Receipts	\$342,661
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$12,661
Use of Mission Receipts	
Remitted to Synod (45%)	\$132,000
Balance for District programs & ministries	\$210,661
Total Receipts	\$342,661
Mission Receipts Compared with Last Year	
Month ending April 2026	\$342,661
Month ending April 2025	\$365,979
Over (under) last year	\$(23,318)

Partners in the Gospel - Monthly Mission Moment

Did you know that your congregational mission dollars support the District budget in many mission and ministry areas? Historically, the District budget has dedicated a significant portion to missions—nearly two-thirds of the entire budget. Almost one-third supports Synod missions, and nearly another one-third supports District missions.

The remaining portion of the budget provides essential congregational support services (Human Care, Education, Youth, Stewardship), as well as other ministry support service expenses.

Your dollars truly make a difference in carrying out the mission and ministry of Iowa District West and in sharing the Gospel around the world.

Thank you for being a Partner in the Gospel!

Stewardship Spark - by Ron Chewning, President of Stewardship Advisors, which provides year-round stewardship education [resources](#) for LCMS churches (248.644.6150 - stewardshipadv@aol.com)

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP IS ABOUT LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

“And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:10 NIV).



Congregational Quarterly Financial Report

Included in *The Messenger* is the report of congregational support for the first quarter of the District's fiscal period from February 1-April 30, 2026. Review your church's mission contributions to make sure your budget receipts are up to date. This report includes only District/Synod receipts and no restricted missionary support. Thank you for being "Partners in the Gospel." We are *On a Mission to Support Christ's Mission!*



A special thank you to the Boone, Carroll, Sac City, and Southwest circuits that have 100% participation for the first quarter.

69th Regular LCMS Convention and National Offering



Thank you to all congregations that have already paid their convention assessment (due June 1). Please remember that the remaining balance must be paid in full for your lay and pastoral circuit delegates to participate in the Synod's Convention, July 18–23 in Phoenix, AZ.

The District has already remitted nearly \$75,000 to the Synod to cover convention facility rent, electronic voting machines, multimedia expenses, postage, printing, floor committee needs, and more. The convention assessment also supports travel, lodging, and meals for six days for 32 District delegates and advisory leaders.

To learn more about the 69th National Convention, centered on the theme "*Christ Is Risen! Tell the Next Generation*" (based on 1 Corinthians 15:20–22), visit www.lcms.org/convention. Additional information can be found in the May issue of [The Lutheran Witness](#).

2026–2029 National Offering: The theme for the 2026–2029 National Offering reflects the church's call to proclaim Christ's resurrection across generations. Based on Psalm 78:4 — "*We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done.*" — this offering supports the ongoing mission of sharing the Gospel far and wide.

The National Offering spans the years between conventions and provides an opportunity for congregations, districts, circuits, individuals, and other groups to support the LCMS in its work of making known the Good News of Jesus Christ. Gifts to the 2026–2029 National Offering will directly benefit domestic ministry carried out at the local level and supported by LCMS Family Ministry, Youth Ministry, Campus Ministry, and School Ministry.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in and support the LCMS National Offering. Learn more at www.lcms.org/national-offering.

Secretarial/Administrative Assistants Fall Conference



The Iowa District West Secretarial/Administrative Assistants Conference will be held at St Paul, Fort Dodge this fall. Mark your calendar for Tuesday, **Sept 29** from 8 am - 3:30 pm. All ministry assistant professionals are invited to enjoy a relaxing, inspirational, and educational day. The program is a work in progress. A brochure with more details will be shared this summer.

Housing Allowance

As mid-year approaches, it's a good time to review the 2026 housing or parsonage allowance designated for all ministers of the Gospel. If the allowance currently designated for 2026 is lower than the minister's actual housing expenses, church leaders should vote to increase the allowance for the remainder of the year.

Please remember that clergy who own their homes may not claim a housing allowance greater than the fair market rental value of the furnished home.

For additional details regarding housing or parsonage allowances, see Chapter 2 of the LCMS *Congregational Treasurer's Manual* (www.lcms.org/ctm).





Stewarding God's Gifts: A Plan to Care for Your Family and Support the Ministries You Love

Have you put off making a plan for what God has entrusted to you?

Your home, savings, land, and other resources are gifts from God, given to you to care for your family and bless His Church. But many of us have not yet made a plan for how those gifts will be used when we are called Home. This webinar will help you take a faithful first step. Led by LCMS Foundation gift planning counselor Leon Schoenfeld (Iowa District West), this session will explore ways to steward your resources in a manner that honors your faith, provides for your loved ones, and supports the ministries you care about.

In this webinar, you will:

- Understand what it means to steward your assets as a Christian
- Learn the difference between gift planning and estate planning
- See how thoughtful planning can care for family while also supporting ministry
- Walk away with simple, practical next steps

**Register for the
webinar today!**

June 16, 2026

11:30 AM-12:30 PM CDT

Online Webinar

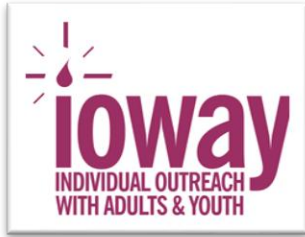


Leon Schoenfeld
Gift Planning Counselor
Phone: 712-830-7481
Leon.Schoenfeld@LFND.org



**Register today to begin putting a faithful plan in
place for your family and the work of the Church.**





Julie Mann, IOWAY Coordinator

julie@iowadistrictwest.org

515-408-9696

In the past couple of weeks, I have had multiple conversations centered around food—one of my favorite topics.

The first one focused on the joy of gathering in a kitchen simply to make a tasty dinner. I was visiting some friends, and three of us were able to spend several hours one afternoon creating a delicious meal for our larger group, who joined us later that evening. My friend Deb very intentionally said she had not had fun like that in quite a while—catching up on each other’s lives, learning some new cooking techniques, and making a gift for the other women who joined us for dinner that night. I was in complete agreement with her. We don’t often slow down enough to enjoy these moments. It also reminded me that Jesus and his disciples often gathered, debated, and enjoyed each other’s presence over a meal. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that we hear about that so often in the New Testament. Gatherings filled with laughter, conversation, and food are good for our bodies, our relationships, and our souls.

The second conversation revolved around the difficult topic of being sensitive or allergic to certain foods. I recently had some food sensitivity tests done and found out that certain things I’ve been eating my entire life are causing unhealthy inflammation in my joints. Because of that, I have to stay away from some of my favorites! Mind you, it is a handful of spices and a few items, but they are typically used in many dishes. Yes, I have been quite pouty and temperamental about this new information. I’ve had to change the way I cook many things. This spring, I am not getting the usual enjoyment from kitchen gardening since I can’t grow a couple of fresh herbs that I usually plant every year. And to be frankly honest, I just liked things the way they were.

Today it hit me that God giving us free will is similar to this. He has created a vast and wonderful world for us to explore and enjoy, but He tells us no to certain things. And those “no’s” are most definitely for our own good! Even when we can see the positive outcomes of following what God tells us, we still venture into doing what we want, even though we know it is not good for us. And then, of course, we experience the pain of the consequences. Once again, I am very thankful that God does not give up on me. Instead, He offers forgiveness and leads me back onto His path. He wants us to be healthy in body and spirit and will not lead us in the wrong direction.

And for the final conversation about food, it focused on our spiritual nourishment. Along with many of you, my congregation celebrated the rite of confirmation in recent weeks, which often goes hand in hand with receiving the sacrament of the altar for the first time. I encourage you to gather around the table for communion with fellow believers as often as you can this summer, whether you are at your home congregation or traveling. Let it strengthen you through Jesus’ body and blood—the best meal ever.

When you are gathering around food with your family and friends this summer, be thankful in the moment. Be present. Take the time to tell your people how important they are to your life and how grateful you are for them. We serve a good and gracious God, and He has blessed us with so many opportunities and good things.

Some “meal” ways to connect in:

- Mercy meals <https://www.faithlutheranchurch.net/mercy-meals-of-siouxland>
- IDW Hispanic Ministry taco fundraiser, July 11 6:00 – 7:30 pm in Carroll; come eat and enjoy fellowship! If you’d like to volunteer contact Pastor Lopez Pedro@IowaDistrictWest.org
- VBS meals or snacks
- Make and share a meal with a shut in
- Potlucks or summer picnics with your congregation

Invest Together in Faith

Now is the time to make the most of the blessings God has entrusted to you. With Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), you gain a trusted partner who shares your Lutheran values, helping you achieve financial growth while making a meaningful difference in the LCMS community.

**View rates and terms
at lcef.org/OurRates**



LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF Investments are not FDIC insured, are not a federally insured savings or deposit account or insured by any state or federal agency. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks.



**MISSION
CENTRAL**
LCMS Mission Advancement
40718 County Highway E-16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034



Mr. Gary Thies, *Director and Mission Development Counselor*
Rev. Steve Schulz, *Mission Advocate and Pastoral Advisor*
Mr. Jim Schroeder, *Gift and Estate Planning Counselor*

Gary.Thies@lcms.org (712) 251-1264
Steve.Schulz@lcms.org (712) 882-1029
Jim.Schroeder@lcms.org (515) 490-7371

June 2026



It was truly a special day on April 18, 2026, when we welcomed TWO wonderful missionaries here to Mission Central: Rev. Dr. Tom Park from Taiwan and Rev. Herb Burch from Belize. Here you see folks from all over Iowa, as well as people who came from Minnesota to hear the dynamic presentations of these two veteran missionaries.



What a blessing to welcome a full busload of NOT NORMAL people from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Urbandale, IA, on April 25. We were so happy to provide them with a complete tour of our campus, and the majority of people had never been to Mission Central before! It was indeed a day that these dear folks will never forget!



April 28, 2026, was a day that we will never forget. Students, faculty, and parents from Christ Lutheran School in Norfolk, NE, came to visit us at Mission Central. What a wonderful group of young missionaries! They were "sworn in" as missionaries for the rest of their lives, and they enjoyed a full tour of our campus. Please encourage other Lutheran schools to bring their students here to Mission Central. It will be an experience they will always remember!

Confirmation students, parents, grandparents, and pastors from Sioux Falls, SD, came to visit us on May 2. Most of them had never been here before, and they got to see and hear WHY we send and support missionaries all over the world. We want other people to have what WE have—forgiveness and life, comfort and joy, hope and peace through faith in Jesus. It was a day they will never forget!



May 6 was a very special day when the Lord brought our "Barn Cleaners" to Mission Central to clean the Barn Museum and Wayside Chapel. Twice a year, a group of hearty volunteers gathers to completely clean these buildings! A simple "thank you" seems so inadequate to express our deep appreciation for these fine folks. They are truly blessings from God, and we cherish them and their dedicated commitment.

On May 8, Rev. James Sharp, our dear missionary in Puerto Rico, came and brought with him our lead missionary in Jamaica, the Rev. Obit Ite. We gave Pastor Ite a full tour of our campus, and here you see them both in front of our "Jesus picture" in the office. Rev. Ite was so impressed by his visit, and it was a day we will always remember.



MISSION: SHARING GOD'S WORD AND LOVE IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY.

PASTORAL CALL UPDATE

We have finalized all the paperwork needed and are now in the waiting period for government approval. We continue to move forward in thoughtful prayer, trusting that the Lord knows the plans He has for our ministry and for Frank's family.

As we continue through this process, we will provide updates regarding legal fees, housing, and living assistance for them. We are also seeking transportation for the family and support to help cover moving costs from Guatemala to the United States. We ask for your continued prayers in the days ahead, both for this process and for all those who have helped us reach this point.

Donations may be sent to:
Siouxland Lutheran Hispanic Ministry
218 W. 18th St.
South Sioux City, NE 68776

YASMIN OSTERHOLT DCE UPDATE



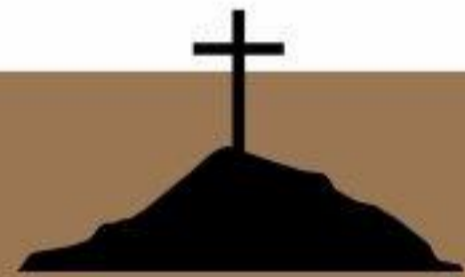
We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Yasmin on her graduation from Concordia University Irvine this past month! Yasmin began her one-year internship with the Hispanic Ministry at Hope Lutheran Church on May 15th. We thank God for guiding her to this important milestone and for her willingness to serve in ministry as she continues to grow in her faith and vocation as a DCE. Please feel free to send your congratulations and keep Yasmin in your prayers during this exciting new chapter of her journey.



HOLY LAND TOUR OPPORTUNITY

Join Pastor Myq Awe in this once in a lifetime journey to the Holy Land. Here we will see the Bible come alive with the names and events that we have heard all of our lives. Dare I say that we will enjoy awe-inspiring places of interest like the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Mt. Zion, to name a few. We will also enjoy the Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, and Jerusalem. The dates for this wonderful tour are 12-21 January 2027. We will be departing from and arriving back at the Omaha airport. The price for this tour, which includes transportation, tours, hotels, and most meals is \$4299 per person based on double occupancy. If you would like to receive a brochure, please contact Pastor Awe at the1revma@gmail.com or call him at 531.218.5793.

Prayers



- + For Daniel, grandson of Pastor Víctor De La Rosa, as he continues his recovery, and that God may help the family with His mercy and grace.
- + For open doors to share the Gospel in our daily life.
- + For the calling process, that God may send the workers He has prepared for our work here and in other places.
- + For immigrants around the world, that they may find a place to live and have Christ in their lives and homes.



DCE Intern Yasmin Osterholt
605-941-8965
Yosterholt@outlook.com

Hope Lutheran Hispanic Ministry
218 W. 18th St.
South Sioux City, NE 68776

'And as they went out of Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" And stopping, Jesus called them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him.' Matthew 20:29-34

"Kyrie" is the Greek word for "Lord". In our liturgy the Kyrie is when we call upon God in prayer. We cry out to Him again and again with our supplications, saying, "Lord, have mercy!" In the expanded Kyrie we pray for our salvation, for the peace of the world, for the Church of God, and for our worship.

While these words may sound like words coming from one filled with despair, as Christians nothing could be further from the truth. When you and I, dear Christian, pray, "Lord, have mercy!" we are not praying, wondering how God will respond. No, we know that God will have mercy upon us. We know that God has had mercy upon us.

These words have been cried by God's people for ages. Throughout the Gospels there is account after account when people cry out to Christ, "Lord, have mercy!" The account from Matthew 20 is one of those. Two blind men were sitting on the side of the road and heard that Jesus was passing by. When they heard that Jesus was near they began to cry out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" We get the sense that they were being a nuisance to those around them, that they were crying out over and over again, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Those two blind men had undoubtedly heard about the power that Jesus had, power to heal the sick, make the lame walk, cast out demons, and make the blind see. They were not going to let Jesus pass so close to them without crying out and begging for his help, his mercy. Because they cried out with such vigor, Jesus stopped and had mercy on them. He restored their sight.

This account reminds us that we do not cry out in vain to God. He hears us and He pours out mercy. And whether He gives us answer to our immediate concerns or not, we know that He will have mercy upon us. We have the mercy of God already, mercy that is sufficient for whatever we may face in this earthly life. When we worry about our bodies, we know that Christ has won for us everlasting life that we will be restored and perfected when he comes again in glory. When we worry about the state of our world, the corruption in leaders and governments, the warfare and dismay that is rampant in our world, we know that Christ has saved us from those things and that he will come and rule in perfect peace and unity, doing away with all the injustice and tragedy that we see throughout the world. When we worry about our sin, our guilt, our shame, we know that Christ has taken that on himself. It does not remain on us but has been satisfied through his suffering and death on the cross.

You and I can boldly cry out, "Lord, have mercy!" knowing that God hears us and cares for us. We can cry out, "Lord, have mercy!" whether we are troubled or at peace. We cry out because God invites us to call upon Him. He wants us to call upon Him in sorrow and in joy, in peace and in heartache.

God wants us to cry out to Him because there you will find mercy and love, peace and rest. Do not hesitate to cry out

to the Lord for He will have mercy. We have promise as those who have been marked with the water and the Word of baptism, those who have received the name of Christ as our own, those who have been sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. Cry out to the Lord that you and others may receive the mercy that is yours in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus 770

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

We pray: Lord, have mercy! Hear as we call out to you and show us Your boundless mercy throughout our lives. Open our eyes and the eyes of call people that we would see and behold Your love and care shown to all people and all Creation. May we ever call upon You, whatever our situation may be, that we may be strengthened and encouraged in our faith toward you and in our love toward one another. These things we pray in

Pr. Ezra Grabau
Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux City

THE LAMPLIGHTER



Theme: "Kyrie"

June 2026

*A Publication of The Lutheran Service Auxiliary
Sioux City, Iowa*

The Good Shepherd Hour airs every Sunday
morning on the following radio stations:

KSCJ – 1360 AM & 94.9 FM	Sioux City at 8 a.m.
KLEM – 1410 AM & 96.9 FM	Le Mars at 8 a.m.
KAYL – 101.7 FM	Storm Lake at 8:30 a.m.
KVFD – 1400 AM	Fort Dodge at 8 a.m.

Main Street Living airs Sunday mornings on KCAU
Channel 9 at 10:30 AM & Programming at 10 AM.



IOWA LUTHERAN SCHOOL
TUITION ORGANIZATION

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me..."

SUPPORT OUR LUTHERAN SCHOOL FAMILIES



"The STO program is and will continue to be a vital part of being able to afford a solid Lutheran education as a foundation of our children's lives in Christ."
- ILSTO FAMILY

WHY?



2025 giving was down meaning less assistance is available

650 students applied for tuition assistance this spring

OVER 100+ students than all of last year

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Make a tax deductible donation and receive a 75% tax credit on your Iowa State income tax
- Grain donation
- Stock donation
- Share this flyer

[DONATE NOW](#)



Update

UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 29-May 31: KIDS' KAMP

June 4-7: J.O.Y. CAMP 1

June 10-13: IWD LWML CONVENTION

June 14-18: CUB WEEK 1

June 20: ANNUAL QUILT AUCTION

June 21-27: MINNEBOJI CAMP

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP OKOBOJI IS STILL OPEN! Registration information is available online at campokoboji.org.

PERSONNEL: We continue to be hopeful that God will bring us the staff we need for the summer. We only have a handful of staff signed up. Please encourage youth (at least 16 years of age) and college students to consider serving with us. Those interested in serving at Camp Okoboji, or any LCMS camp in 2026 should complete a NLOMA profile. That is the first step in being considered for a summer position. Visit NLOMA.org for the profile link.

THANKS to volunteers and groups who give so generously of their time and talents in serving Camp Okoboji.

- Many, Many Thanks to the volunteers that joined us for volunteer weekend!
- I can't thank enough the volunteers that helped us with the Wittenberg Academy Family Retreat this year – we can't do it without you, thank you!

Baumann is finally coming down. We're excited about the future, but it was time for the old building to come down. We hope to be able to announce its replacement soon.



Summer Chaplain Schedule

Join us for worship - 9 am

- May 24 - Rev. Alex Smith – Sioux City
- May 31 - Rev. Daniel Harders – Holyrood, KS
- June 7 - Rev. Mark Resner – Whittemore
- June 14 - Rev. Dr. B Keith Haney – IDW
- June 21 - TBD
- June 28 - Rev. Chris Ascher – Sioux Falls, SD
- July 5 - Rev. Charlie Adams – Omaha, NE
- July 12 - Rev. David Beagley – Ames
- July 19 - Rev. David Matthews – Paullina/Sutherland
- July 26 - Rev. Mark Lund - Garner
- August 2 - Rev. James Travis – Sioux City
- August 9 - Rev. Dr. Kristopher Morris - Seward, NE
- August 16 - Rev. Dr. Joshua Lowe – Hawarden
- August 23 - TBD
- August 30 - Rev. Benjamin Dose – Algona
- September 6 - Rev. Robert Zellmer – Lawton

Meet Lynnette Aschinger

Lutheran Family Service News



Meet Lynnette Aschinger, LISW, a mental health therapist with over 37 years of experience. She provides evidence-based, compassionate care for individuals, couples, and families. Her work emphasizes a Christian perspective with a continuity of care through consistent, regularly scheduled appointments—supporting healing, strengthening relationships, and helping clients pursue meaningful goals.

Location: Ida Grove, Carroll, Storm Lake, and Wall Lake, Iowa; throughout Iowa via telehealth

Email: LASchinger@lutheranfamilyservice.org

Office/Scheduling: 712-276-9000

What is your role at Lutheran Family Service?

Clinical Social Worker who provides outpatient mental health counseling.

What drew you to the mental health counseling field?

Honestly, I believe we all have God given natural abilities that are fostered through life experiences and I have never wanted to do anything different. When you use your God given abilities, work does not feel like work, it becomes your passion.

Tell us a bit about your background (education, experience, credentials, etc.).

I attended University of Northern Iowa and obtained my B.A. Following my internship, I was hired by Lutheran Services in Iowa and worked there for 16 years. I obtained my master's degree in social work from University of Omaha while working for LSI. Following graduation, I completed my hours of supervision, and I obtained my license in 1997. I have been providing outpatient mental health counseling ever since. I worked for Lutheran Family Service from 2008 until 2020. After five years away, I have returned and am excited to be back.

Do you have a specialty?

I have extensive experience working with young children, as well as those who suffer from trauma, loss, and grief. I have lengthy history of serving those who suffer from victimization, anxiety, and depression. I also enjoy providing marital therapy to those in need.

I am EMDR certified, trained in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Integrative Behavioral Couple's Therapy. I love being able to incorporate faith into the care of those who are in need. I enjoy working with clergy and their families. I know how important it is to have a safe place to obtain support.

How does your faith inform your therapy practice?

Suffering is part of this world and hope can be difficult to find. But with Jesus, there is hope, because of his suffering, death, and resurrection. It is a blessing to serve others and to help them consider how their beliefs and faith influence the way they understand and respond to their circumstances. There is opportunity to replace a worldly perspective with a greater eternal perspective.

Pain has purpose when it presents an opportunity to move away from self-reliance and towards a deeper dependency on Jesus Christ, our Savior. When we walk closer with Jesus, hope and peace is the result even in the midst of suffering. It is very rewarding to be part of this resilient journey.

How might someone know when counseling would be a good thing to pursue?

Of course, it is different for everyone. But, when one's troubles interfere with one's daily activities and living, counseling is always an option to consider. Some people wait longer than others to initiate services, but I believe, the sooner the better chance of a more positive outcome.

Why is the work you do important?

God expects us to love our neighbors. I believe that our work at LFS not only is an extension of the church but also is a response to God's command.

How did you come to join the Lutheran Family Service team?

My very first boss helped me consider my job as a “calling to serve God” so that shaped the perspective on how I viewed my career. I am grateful to him for that. I honestly believe God led me to join Lutheran Family Service now and in the past. Both times, uncertainties prompted me to self-evaluate and after doing so, it became clear that Lutheran Family Service is where I need to be.

I was considering joining LFS the first time, and it had been on my mind. That very day I got my mail and there was a letter from Wanda searching for therapists. I thought to myself, here is my answer. The second time, after having discussion with family about some challenges, my son said to me, “You are going back to LFS.” It was not a question; it was a statement of confirmation. He read me, affirmed, and nearly directed me to return. I again knew it was meant to be. It truly feels like “coming home.”

How will you live out the mission of LFS, to walk with people as God has been there for us, in your daily work?

I will commit to living out the mission of LFS by using the character of God as our example to follow. I will try to mirror his love, grace, acceptance, and mercy to those I serve.

What do you enjoy most about the people you work with?

I am grateful for the team of professionals who not only are helpful supportive colleagues, but also faith filled people.

As for those I serve, I enjoy hearing about people’s life journeys and their willingness to allow me to be part of their journey.

What are you most looking forward to in your ministry journey at Lutheran Family Service?

I look forward to reconnecting with the ministers, professionals, and church people that I encountered the first time I worked at LFS. I have already run into some individuals, and it was good to see them.

Is there a Bible verse or passage that’s particularly meaningful to you, personally or professionally?

“And we know, that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” – Romans 8:28

This verse is meaningful to me, because we can always trust God is working for our good. This is a relief to know that when things are difficult, he is there working for us and shaping us.

This is my wish for the people I serve:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 15:13

Lynnette see clients in person in Ida Grove, Carroll, Storm Lake, and Wall Lake, Iowa, and throughout the state via telehealth.

LAschinger@lutheranfamilyservice.org | [712-276-9000](tel:712-276-9000) | lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Iowa District West

June 2026

The following events are hosted by District congregations/circuits.
Contact information is provided.
To include your church's event, send information to emilie@iowadistrictwest.org.



Plan now for the 4th Annual
LCMS Lutheran Singles Retreat
Ages 21-41

Friday - Sunday, August 21-23
Camp Okoboji, Milford, Iowa
campokoboji.org

\$100 pays for everything
Register at faithwinterset.org
Questions?

Contact Dr. Keith Schweitzer
641/745-5143
keithlcms@gmail.com

Be There!



125th Anniversary

Trinity Lutheran Church - Des Moines, IA, is celebrating its 125th anniversary on Sunday, June 7, 2026 with a 10AM Divine Service featuring special music and guest preacher IDW President Paul Egger. A catered luncheon will follow. RSVPs are requested. For more information, email trinityofficedsm@gmail.com.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Iowa District West

June 2026

The following events are hosted by District congregations/circuits.
Contact information is provided.
To include your church's event, send information to emilie@iowadistrictwest.org.



SAVE THE DATE!

REV. DAVID E. ERICKSEN

JUNE 28TH, 2026

St. Paul Lutheran Church of Hartley, Iowa recognizes Pastor Dave's 50 years in the ministry!

The graphic features a circular photo of a man in clerical attire, surrounded by colorful hexagons and a blue banner with the text 'SAVE THE DATE!'. Below the photo is a white banner with the name 'REV. DAVID E. ERICKSEN' and another white banner with the date 'JUNE 28TH, 2026'. At the bottom, a white box contains the text 'St. Paul Lutheran Church of Hartley, Iowa recognizes Pastor Dave's 50 years in the ministry!'.

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY



Ordination
Anniversary
Celebrations
of
Rev. Chris Nitzel
and
Rev. David Ericksen
St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Hartley



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 28TH, 2026

**REV. CHRIS NITZEL'S
20 YEARS IN MINISTRY!**

St. Paul Lutheran Church of Hartley, Iowa recognizes Rev. Nitzel's 20 years in the ministry. Please join us for the celebration!

The graphic has a teal and orange background. It features a diagonal banner with 'SAVE THE DATE' in white, a photo of a priest with a woman and a baby, and a white box with the text 'REV. CHRIS NITZEL'S 20 YEARS IN MINISTRY!'. At the bottom, a white box contains the text 'St. Paul Lutheran Church of Hartley, Iowa recognizes Rev. Nitzel's 20 years in the ministry. Please join us for the celebration!'.