
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISTRICT NEWS

Partners in the Gospel—Rev. Steve Schulz

1. President's Page—Rev. Paul Egger

2. Education, Youth, and Family Life—Rhonda Mohr

3. Mission Possible!—Rev. Dr. B. Keith Haney

4. Business Manager—Roger Curtis & Administrative Assistant's Conference

5. IOWAY—Julie Mann

6. LCEF—Josh Remington

7. Mission Central—Rev. Steve Schulz

8. Amigos En Cristo—Rev. Pedro Lopez

9. The Lamplighter—Rev. Jason Letsche

MINISTRY PARTNERS

Camp Okoboji

Lutheran Family Service

ILSTO

ALSO INCLUDED...

Around the District

Clergy Wives Retreat

Youth Gathering Dates

Life Advocates

SEPTEMBER

CALLS RECEIVED

Rev. Martin Davis, Trinity/St Paul, Anthon/Battle Creek to St. Paul/Faith, Jasper/Woodville, TX
Rev. John Rutz, Trinity, Creston, to St. Paul, Jerome, ID

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Jonathan Conner, Zion, Manning, to St. John, Fredonia WI
Rev. Nicholas Thackery, Good Shepherd, Fort Dodge, to First English, Spencer

CHANGE OF STATUS

Rev. Steve Struecker, to Emeritus Status effective April 26, 2026
Rev. Mark Heilman, to Emeritus Status effective July 26, 2026

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 28-29...Spiritual First Aid, Iowa District West Office, **Fort Dodge**
September 7...Labor Day, District Office Closed
September 18-19...Engaged in Mission Conference, St. Paul Lutheran, **Carroll**
September 21-22...Fall Pastor's Conference, Gloria Dei Lutheran, **Urbandale**
September 29...Administrative Assistants Conference, St. Paul, **Fort Dodge**



UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2-4...Senior Youth Gathering, **Camp Okoboji**
October 9-11...Clergy Wives Retreat, **Camp Okoboji**
October 24-25...Junior Youth Gathering, Sheraton Hotel, **West Des Moines**
November 7...Conflict/Difficult Conversations Workshop...District Office, **Fort Dodge**
November 7...Fall Treasurers Workshop, **Denison**
December 28-January 4...IOWAY Pedal Pushers Trip, **Pasadena, CA**



Follow Iowa District West on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/IowaDistrictWest



Iowa District West, LCMS
409 Kenyon Road, Suite B
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515.576.7666
emilie@iowadistrictwest.org
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!

September 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

Why Do We Tell Other People About Jesus?



Every Sunday, we rejoice in the forgiveness of sins that our Lord Jesus delivers to us in Word and Sacrament. We celebrate the eternal life that is given to us as a free gift because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. But what if there were no Jesus?

What if there were no Savior who lived a perfect life in your place, as your Substitute? What if there were no Redeemer who bled and died on the cross to take the horrible punishment for all your sins? What if there were no victorious Lord who rose from the dead to give you a new life with Him that will last forever? What if you had never heard about Jesus?

There are only two kinds of people in this world: those who trust in Jesus and those who trust in something else. Satan doesn't care what the "something else" is; he just doesn't want you trusting in Jesus. There are millions of people in this world who are trusting in something else that brings them nothing but doubt and fear, hopelessness and despair. They need Jesus!

That's why we tell other people about Jesus. We tell our children and grandchildren, our friends and neighbors, about Jesus! We send and support missionaries around the world to tell people about Jesus because we want them to have what we have! We want them to have the comfort and joy, hope and peace, that we have in Jesus. That's what Mission Central is all about. It's all about Jesus! This blessed assurance is ours, so let's share it!

Rev. Steve Schulz—Assistant Director—Mission Central
steve.schulz@lcms.org

2026 IDW Youth Gatherings

It is once again time to get registered for the 2026 Iowa District West Youth Gatherings. Senior Youth Gathering will be October 3-4 (with optional Friday, October 2, accommodations) at Camp Okobojo. Deadline to register for the Senior Gathering is **September 15**. The Junior Gathering will take place October 24-25 at the West Des Moines Sheraton Hotel. Junior Gathering registration deadline is **September 22**. For all gathering information, forms and a link to the registration pages, visit the District Youth Ministry webpage at: <https://idwlcms.org/youth-ministry.php>



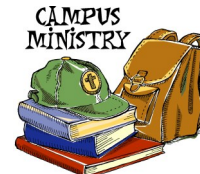
Conflict & Difficult Conversations Workshop



Join Rev. Dr. Todd Jenks for a practical and faith-centered workshop on navigating conflict and difficult conversations with wisdom, confidence, and Christ-centered communication on Saturday, November 7 at the IDW District Office in Fort Dodge. Participants will learn research-backed strategies and biblical principles for handling disagreements, reducing anxiety in challenging conversations, and fostering healthier relationships in families, workplaces, and congregations. This free event is open to all church workers and laity. Scan QR for more information.

Campus Ministry

Have a student moving to college? Connect your college students to a Lutheran campus ministry. Visit <https://www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/campus-ministry/lcms-u-chapter-map> to connect students with Lutheran peers and to stay connected to a faith family.



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 7...Labor Day, District Office Closed
September 18-19...Engaged in Mission Conference, St. Paul, **Carroll**
September 21-22...Fall Pastor's Conference, Gloria Dei, **Urbandale**
September 29...Administrative Assistants Conference, **Fort Dodge**

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2-4...Senior Youth Gathering, **Camp Okobojo**
October 9-11...Pastor's Wives Retreat, **Camp Okobojo**
October 24-25...Junior Youth Gathering, Sheraton Hotel, **West Des Moines**
November 7...Conflict & Difficult Conversations Workshop, **Fort Dodge**
November 7...Treasurers Workshop, **Denison**

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

paul@iowadistrictwest.org / 515-576-7666

Purity

I'm going to start my timer. 20 seconds. For 20 seconds, think of pure water. Nothing else. Just pure water. 20 seconds. Go!

How'd you do? Be honest. Were you able the full 20 seconds to think of pure water and pure water ONLY?

When I try, I very quickly picture polluted water.

God says, "Think about what is pure." Philippians 4. It's difficult, isn't it?!

How can I go from pure thoughts -- and in the blink of an eye, impure thoughts?! Lord, have mercy!

Saint and sinner. Godly mind wrapped in ungodliness. My mind needs help -- work -- training!

Speaking of training, consider this thought from a 100+ year old devotion: How should you, then, test amusements? Ask if they draw you nearer to Christ or remove you farther from Him; if they increase or diminish respect for Christian manhood and womanhood; if they

increase or lessen love for virtue and PURITY; if they make resistance to temptation easier or harder; and if they redound to the glory of God.

During our Evening Prayer service (LSB p.244) we sing:

*Joyous light of glory: of the immortal Father;
heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ.*

*We have come to the setting of the sun,
and we look to the evening light.*

We sing to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

You are worthy of being praised with PURE voices forever.

Pure voices -- think of such things.

And then we pray: Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord -- and let Your loving kindness descend on us -- that with PURIFIED minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host.

God's apostle writes, "Whatever is PURE, think about such things." **Jesus is PURE.** The Greek word is "AGNA." Agna -- PURE -- means "fit to be brought into God's presence & used in His service." The service of purifying you and me. God the Son! Perfect servant! Jesus certainly is "fit to be brought into God's presence and used in His service."

Jesus is PURE. Agna. It means "without stain or error or sin." Jesus certainly is w/o stain or error or sin.



Jesus is PURE. So think of Jesus and the God of peace will be with you.

Jesus PURIFIES us! 400 years before Jesus... God's prophet writes: When Jesus comes, He will sit as a refiner and PURIFIER. Malachi 3:3.

Daniel, the lions' den guy, writes: Many will be PURIFIED, made spotless and refined -- but the wicked will continue to be wicked. 12:10.

We think of pure air yet live in the reality of polluted air.

We think of pure water while knowing it will always have some impurities.

Our pure clothes and pure furniture over time pick up dirt and stains.

Earlier you thought briefly of pure water. Think of the expense of purifying water. Water treatment plants. Various home water purification units.

Think about Jesus' expense on His cross to purify us -- the Pure One for us impure many. Think about these things. Jesus spent much to purify you and me. Jesus spent everything to purify us. Think about such things!

Whatever is PURE -- think about these things -- and the God of peace will be with you.

Pastor Paul Egger

President, Iowa District West



Education Youth Family Life

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

New Policy for Youth Chaperones

For some time, Iowa District West has encouraged background checks for all staff and volunteers who work with minors. Beginning this fall, **all** volunteers who attend our district youth gatherings must have a background check on file at their church that was completed within the last three years. Congregations that register for our district youth gatherings will receive a form to verify that the required background check has been completed and is on file at the church.

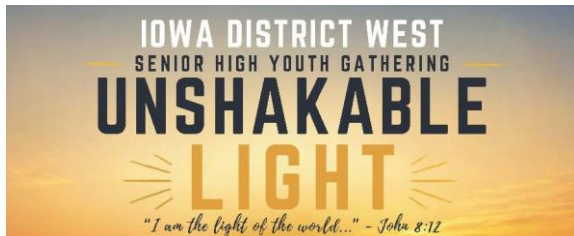
The district Youth Services and Education Committees have been champions of safety policies in our congregations and have encouraged every congregation to conduct background checks for anyone working with minors. This is all in the spirit of protecting God's precious children. Now, the district is requiring background checks for our district youth events, not just encouraging them. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me, Rhonda Mohr, at the district office. If you have questions about where to obtain background checks, we suggest using Protect My Ministry:

www.protectmyministry.com.

Iowa District West Youth Gatherings

Deadlines: Senior Youth Gathering registration deadline is September 15. Junior Youth Gathering registration deadline is September 22.

If your leaders or congregation did not receive registration materials, please note that they are also available for download on our district website.



JR Youth Gathering: Registration Cost \$175.
SR Youth Gathering: Two nights \$120 and one night \$90



District Workshop: Conflict and Difficult Conversations

The District Education and Family Life Committee is sponsoring a workshop on Saturday, November 7. The details are provided for you in the flier that's included in the Messenger. It will be a very helpful event for both church workers and laity. We encourage you to save the date on your calendar and register to attend. If you have any questions, contact Rhonda at the district office. Scan QR for more information.



National Lutheran School Accreditation



Des Moines-Mt. Olive Lutheran School staff receive their re-accreditation certificate.



Denison-Unity Ridge Lutheran School staff receive their re-accreditation certificate.

Lutheran schools that pursue accreditation complete a rigorous process and are held to high standards. As a result, the State of Iowa recognizes NLSA-accredited schools as state accredited.

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) is the accrediting process used by Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod schools to encourage, assist, and recognize schools that provide quality Christian education and ongoing improvement. Through NLSA, a school takes a careful look at its ministry, instruction, leadership, and daily practices to make sure it meets the standards expected of Lutheran schools.

The process begins with a self-study, in which the school gathers evidence, evaluates its strengths, and identifies areas for growth. Staff, families, students, and congregation members may all help provide input. The school then prepares an action plan that guides future improvement and demonstrates its commitment to faithful, effective Lutheran education.

After the self-study is complete, a visiting team reviews the school's evidence, interviews stakeholders, observes classrooms, and confirms that the school's report accurately reflects what is happening in the school. Accreditation is not simply a certificate on the wall; it is a meaningful process that helps Lutheran schools celebrate God's blessings, strengthen their ministries, and continue serving children and families with excellence.

This school year, Zion/St. John (Paullina), St. Paul (Sioux City), St. Paul (Fort Dodge), and Iowa Great Lakes Lutheran School (Spencer) will be going through this process.

What to Expect

SUPPORT

Licensed Counselor, Angela Kolbaum will be joining us and offering counseling sessions throughout the weekend.



RELAXATION

Quiet time optional but encouraged with safe spaces to do relaxing crafts/projects from home or safe spaces offered to have time alone to read or relax.

FELLOWSHIP

Fun fellowship optional but encouraged with Bunco (including giveaways and prizes) and other games and opportunities to chat with friends and catch up.



ACTIVITIES

Enjoy a creative and relaxing guided painting session

FOOD

All meals will be served in the Bethel Retreat Center with the exception of dinner on Saturday night. You can expect charcuterie boards with meats, cheeses, fruits, simple breakfast with pastries, coffee and other light fare, lunch with sandwiches and all snacks provided.



A weekend of restoration for your body and soul;

Your spiritual, emotional, and mental health



REGISTRATION

Scan the QR Code below or visit
<https://tinyurl.com/jy9c9s47>

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
September 8th

Scan me



Please make checks payable to
Iowa District West

*If you have difficulty registering online
and need assistance, call the district
office and they will help you register.*

515.576.7666

PASTOR WIVES RETREAT



Iowa District West

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

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.

Save the Date

**October 9-11
Camp Okoboji**

1531 Edgewood Dr, Milford, IA 51351

Cost: \$75.00



Guest Speaker

Diane Bahn

Diane is passionate about growing daily as a follower of Jesus. A native of St. Charles, Missouri, she now lives in Cypress, Texas. She is a graduate of Valparaiso University, holds a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Concordia University Chicago, and is a Certified Christian Leadership Coach.

Diane and her husband, David, have served congregations together in Utah, Colorado, Arkansas, and Texas. She is the mother of four sons and grandmother of ten. Her ministry experience includes serving as a church organist, choir director, Director of Worship and Music, and working with the Pastoral Leadership Institute on both national and international teaching teams.

Diane currently serves as a Coordinator and Coach with the Texas District Care and Coaching Team, where she enjoys encouraging and supporting others in their faith and leadership journeys.

Conflict & Difficult Conversations Workshop

Saturday, November 7, 2026 | Iowa District West Office | 409 Kenyon Rd, Suite B, Fort Dodge
A Free Event For All Church Workers & Laity

Session 1

Coping with Conflict Constructively & Productively: Communication Strategies & Christian Principles

How do you handle conflict in life? Are you a conflict dreader, a conflict spreader, or a conflict solver and resolver? Conflicts happen - in our families, in our workplaces, and in the church - but we are so often unprepared for how to handle conflict. Too often, conflict becomes destructive, rather than productive. Learn research-backed strategies from the field of Communication Studies, and God-given wisdom from Scripture, on how to make conflict less harmful and more helpful.

**Participants will head home equipped with wisdom on how to navigate conflict situations with God-serving communication. They will learn how to reflect on and improve their personal approach to conflict with new tools for their conflict management and with Biblical knowledge of Christ-centered conflict management.*

Session 2

Dealing with Difficult Conversations Calmly & Effectively

Certain conversations are, by their very nature, more difficult. It is not easy to talk with someone when there are high emotions, strongly different opinions, or a feeling of friction. In this session, a communication expert shares research-backed tips and beneficial Biblical insights to make uncomfortable conversations less uncomfortable and more successful, in a way that brings people together, rather than tears them apart.

**Participants will head home equipped to face difficult conversations more calmly and less anxiously, with insights on how to make these conversations unfold more smoothly. Participants will receive specific strategies to communicate more comfortably when engaging in uncomfortable conversations, as well as Biblical knowledge of Christ-centered principles for dealing with difficult conversations.*

Schedule

10:00-10:15 a.m. Arrival / Coffee, Juice & Light Snacks
10:15-10:30 a.m. Welcome & Opening Devotion
10:30-11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30-12:00 p.m. Discussion Time (Conflict)
12:00-12:45 p.m. Lunch
12:45-1:45 p.m. Session 2
1:45-2:15 p.m. Discussion Time (Difficult Conversations)
2:15-2:30 p.m. Closing Devotion & Sending

Copy Link or Scan QR to Register

Online - Fill out form



About the Speaker



Rev. Dr. Todd Jenks is Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ames and Teaching Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies and Psychology at Iowa State University. With 30+ years as a pastor and communication professor, his areas of focus include conflict management, leadership communication, and intercultural communication. Todd earned his PhD in Communication at Bowling Green State University.

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
— Romans 12:18*

Hosted by IDW Christian Education Committee



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!



**IOWA DISTRICT WEST
JUNIOR YOUTH
GATHERING**

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



IOWA LUTHERAN SCHOOL
TUITION ORGANIZATION

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

EDUCATION ROOTED IN FAITH

GIVE THE GIFT OF
TUITION ASSISTANCE.
HELP NURTURE THE
NEXT GENERATION OF
FAITHFUL DISCIPLES.

- Pray for our Lutheran schools
- Give, our 75% tax credit is the best available on Iowa income taxes.
 - RMDs, stock donation, and grain donation provide great opportunities to reduce tax liability



LEARN MORE AT IOWALUTHERANSTO.COM OR CALL
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, DEWEY AT (712) 260-2991

MISSION POSSIBLE!

Rev. Dr. B. Keith Haney

Why Supporting the Local Church Matters Today

I've heard the question more than once, sometimes over coffee after Sunday worship or in a quiet moment with a friend: Does giving to the local church still matter? With so many needs in our world, is this where our support should go?

Scripture certainly commends generosity in many forms. But there is something distinct about the local congregation. Here the Lord gathers His people around His gifts—His Word and Sacraments—delivering forgiveness, life, and salvation in Christ. Here we are fed, formed, cared for, and sent in love toward our neighbors.

Consistently giving to the church in your community:

- Strengthens the local body of believers gathered around Word and Sacrament.
- Sustains the public ministry of the Gospel in your neighborhood.
- Supports pastoral care, catechesis, mercy, and the formation of the next generation.
- Fosters faithful participation in the place where God serves you with His gifts.

Supporting your local congregation is one tangible expression of faith active in love. It ties your stewardship to the very place where Christ continues to serve you with His Word, His Sacraments, and His care.

The Heart Behind the Gift: Christian Freedom and Examination

The New Testament doesn't get hung up on percentages or formulas. Instead, it invites us to look at our hearts—what's really driving our giving?

In 2 Corinthians 9:7, Paul writes: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

This reminds us that Christian giving lives under Gospel freedom. It should not be driven by pressure, legalistic guilt, or the fear that we must somehow earn God's favor. We do not give because we are afraid. We give because Christ has first given Himself for us.

At the same time, God's Word lovingly searches the heart. If giving to the church feels burdensome, that reaction can become an invitation to honest self-examination—not to crush us with guilt, but to bring our fears, idols, and misplaced trust to Christ.

It may reveal:

- A lack of trust in God's daily provision.
- An idol of the heart, where we crave total control over our security.
- A disconnect between our confessed faith and our practical stewardship.

Jesus speaks directly to this tension in Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Our habits of giving reveal what we trust, what we fear, and what we may be tempted to hold too tightly. God's Word shows us the truth about our hearts, and the Gospel points us again to Christ, who frees us for joyful generosity.

From Duty to Participation in the Divine Mission

It's easy to think of giving as just paying the bills or keeping the lights on. Those needs are real, but they're not the whole story.

Ultimately, giving to the church is not merely about sustaining an organization. It is one way Christians share in the Lord's ongoing work through His Church—supporting the preaching of Christ crucified and risen, the administration of the Sacraments, catechesis, mercy, and mission. This shifts our mindset entirely:

- From: "What does the institution expect from me?"
- To: "How may I faithfully steward what God has entrusted to me in service to my neighbor and in support of the Gospel?"

This perspective changes the way we see the offering plate. What can feel like a weekly chore becomes a concrete act of faith, active in love. It helps believers see giving as a faithful response to the Gospel and a meaningful part of the Church's life and mission.

Trust, Transparency, and Pastoral Care

One of the greatest modern hurdles to church giving is trust. People rightfully want to know that their gifts are handled with integrity, transparency, and wisdom. Without that foundational trust, even the most biblically sound teaching on stewardship can ring hollow.

Scripture takes financial accountability incredibly seriously. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul takes explicit care to ensure that the financial collection for the saints in Jerusalem is handled honorably, openly, and above reproach, not just in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of man.

For churches today, this means:

- Communicating clearly about how resources get allocated.
- Developing strong accountability systems and financial checks.
- Connecting giving directly to the tangible gospel impact in the community.

When church leaders are open, transparent, and accountable, they serve the congregation faithfully and honor the trust placed in them. Such practices do not create faith, but they remove unnecessary obstacles and help generosity flourish in a healthy congregational life.

Proclaiming Stewardship with Pastoral Sensitivity

Teaching on giving calls for clear Lutheran theology and deep pastoral care. We want to speak truthfully about God's Word while also tending carefully to the hearts and burdens of God's people. Pastors and church leaders should aim to:

- Ground all stewardship teaching in Scripture, with Christ and His cross at the center rather than the church's financial anxiety.
- Speak of giving as a fruit of faith, shaped by God's ongoing work in us, our callings, and love for the neighbor.
- Avoid transactional language, prosperity-gospel promises, manipulation, or guilt-driven pressure.
- Provide clear, practical, and orderly ways for the congregation to respond in freedom and joy.

It is important to meet people where they are. Many are not withholding out of stinginess; they may be carrying financial worries, past hurts, or confusion. Pastoral care brings those burdens to Christ, speaks God's Word with clarity and compassion, and creates room for trust, repentance, encouragement, and joyful generosity.

A Comprehensive Vision of Stewardship

Ultimately, putting money in the offering plate is one expression of a much larger, life-encompassing stewardship. In Christ, we recognize that our time, talents, treasures, and very lives are gifts entrusted to us by the Creator and redeemed by our Savior.

When we stop seeing giving as a demand and start seeing it as a response to Christ's generosity, everything shifts. It is no longer a burden to be carried, but a privilege received in freedom, faith, and joy.

As God rules over creation with His one hand, the Church, to save souls, so also He rules over creation with His other hand, the government, to preserve order. The government is given by God to punish those who commit evil and to praise those who do good according to God's revealed will. Because this is the case, we should be prepared to see all manner of issues concerning Christian ethics and standards attacked, or sometimes even promoted, in the governmental sphere. While it might be easier simply to retreat into our churches and let the world be the world, this would be both impossible and out of order. Christians are called to change what we are capable of changing in the world based on where God has placed us. This happens primarily through our daily lives of prayer, confession of faith, and attendance to our vocational responsibilities. If God places us in callings or locations where we can have greater influence, we are called to use that influence in promotion of God's good will and in opposition to ungodly disorder.



The disordered and demonic attitudes toward life, sexuality, and children continue to appear in news reports concerning the United States government. One notable event from the past month was the questioning of Dr. Anthony Fauci regarding his involvement in and leadership during the COVID pandemic. A few Republican legislators made comments about the use of fetal tissue in research conducted under Fauci's watch. While testimony in governmental hearings cannot immediately be assumed to be accurate, the fact that this research occurred is, in fact, quite easy to verify. A PDF of one of these scientific reports can be found at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-71548-z.pdf>

Searching this document for the word “fetal” immediately reveals at least 11 references to fetal tissue being grafted into mice for the purpose of examining various reactions of the immune system in fetal skin. **From the report:**

*“Several reports demonstrated that immunodeficient mice support the development of human skin following engraftment of human fetal skin... **We processed human fetal spleen, thymus, and liver organs into ~ 1 mm³ pieces and isolated autologous human CD34+ hematopoietic stem cells from the fetal liver, then transplanted the tissues and hematopoietic stem cells into irradiated NSG mice. Human skin tissues were obtained from the scalp and dorsum of donors (donors = fetuses) and were used in developing human skin engraftments with and without hair in the mouse model, respectively. Full-thickness human fetal skin was processed via removal of excess fat tissue attached to the subcutaneous layer of the skin, then engrafted over the rib cage, where the mouse skin was previously excised.**”*

Notably, in the ethical standards section of this research, it is governmental regulations that in fact allow this use of fetuses to be considered ethical. *“**The use of deidentified human fetal tissues did not constitute human subjects research as defined under federal regulations.**” ‘Human fetal tissues were obtained from the Health Sciences Tissue Bank at the University of Pittsburgh. Human fetal tissues for constructing humanized rodents were handled and processed under biosafety level 2 conditions...This work was supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)’*”

While facts of grafting discarded fetuses onto mice were being revealed yet again, another governmental representative decided to publicly announce her decision to “freeze her eggs” with the expressed goal being “to show more depictions of women having full lives in every context and every choice.” In both situations, the existence of fetuses – or as we Christians call them, children – is not

seen as a blessing or a divine responsibility. Instead, we can see that many forces in our government see children at any stage as tools for the betterment of their own lives at the expense of the children. Whether freezing eggs to accentuate a woman's supreme independence in all things or grafting the skin of children with souls onto mice in the slight possibility that an immune system might be better understood, the children and their souls are not even a matter of discussion.

When the pilot of an airplane or the captain of a boat must declare an emergency over the radio, the standard way of reporting it is to give "the number of souls on board." Please continue to pray that our own United States government would be called to repentance and faithfulness, so that it may at least defend the existence of the souls of these fetuses and affirm the truth that children are not items to be set aside until self-appointed career goals have been achieved.

BUSINESS MANAGER NEWS
Iowa District West Congregations' Mission Receipts



Month Ending July 2026	
Anticipated Amount	\$110,000
Actual Receipts	\$111,433
Year-to-Date Receipts	
Anticipated Amount	\$660,000
Actual Receipts	\$700,970
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$40,970
Use of Mission Receipts	
Remitted to Synod (45%)	\$264,000
Balance for District programs & ministries	\$436,970
Total Receipts	\$700,970
Mission Receipts Compared with Last Year	
Month ending July 2026	\$700,970
Month ending July 2025	\$690,239
Over (under) last year	\$ 10,731

Partners in the Gospel - Monthly Mission Moment

Did you know that your congregational mission dollars support the District budget in a variety of missions, programs, and services including \$60,000 for gift planning ministry in the stewardship budget? Leon Schoenfeld started with the LCMS Foundation this spring and is doing a great job helping families in Iowa District West prepare estate plans that provide for their loved ones and support their favorite LCMS ministries. According to [Thrivent magazine](#), Summer 2026 issue, we are in the midst of the greatest wealth transfer in American history: \$124 trillion will be passed on through 2048.

For more gift planning information, go to www.idwlcms.org/christian-estate-planning.php.

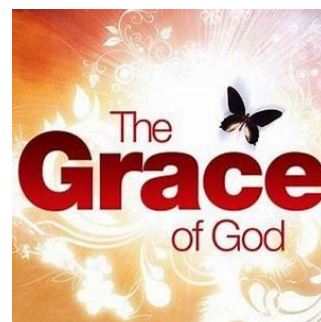
If you would like Leon to help you or your congregation at no cost or obligation, email leon.schoenfeld@lfnd.org or call 712.830.7481.

LCMS Foundation
TODAY | TOMORROW | FOREVER

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)

STEWARDSHIP IS THE FREE AND LOVING RESPONSE TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN OUR LIVES.

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).



Congregational Quarterly Financial Report

Included in *The Messenger* is the report of congregational support for the first six months of the District's fiscal period (February 1–July 31). Please review your church's mission pledge to ensure your budget receipts are current. This report reflects only District/Synod receipts and does not include restricted missionary support or other program income. Your mission dollars enable us to be "*On a Mission to Support Christ's Mission.*" Thank you for your continued support!



Compensation & Benefit Recommendations

The Board of Directors approved the suggested compensation recommendations for 2027. To view the salary schedule, [click here](#).

Another option to consider is the LCMS compensation tool used by congregations around the Synod to help determine fair and appropriate compensation for your workers. [Click here](#) for the direct link.

Church & Clergy Finance/Treasurer's Workshop



Mark your calendar to attend the fall workshop on Saturday, November 7, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Denison. Pastors and any individuals within the church who have financial responsibilities are encouraged to attend.

Our guest speaker will be Bob Joy, CPA, who has been presenting for nearly 30 years and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to this workshop.

If you have any questions, please contact Roger at 515-576-7666 or Roger@IowaDistrictWest.org.

Secretarial/Administrative Assistants Fall Conference

There is still time to register for the District Administrative Assistants Conference on Tuesday, September 29, at St. Paul in Fort Dodge. The registration fee is only \$45 when preregistered and paid before September 8. We are pleased to welcome back our outstanding speaker, Shannon Zetterlund, who will lead uplifting, encouraging, and educational sessions throughout the day. The conference brochure is available on the [District Administrative News page](#). If you have any questions, please contact Roger Curtis or Michelle Hammersland.



October is Clergy & Church Worker Appreciation Month

Church Worker Appreciation Month is a special time when congregations honor their pastor and church workers and their family for their hard work and sacrificial dedication. You might consider a special service of affirmation, a potluck event, or planting a tree in their honor. The sky's the limit! It is usually scheduled in October but can be held at any time that is convenient for the church. Brainstorm ideas now so you can celebrate later this fall. For additional ideas, download details from Focus on the Family's [Clergy Appreciation Month Planning Guide](#) or www.parsonage.org/cam and plan something for all church workers. Synod also has a good article online for [ideas](#) and [resources](#). What can you do to support your pastor and church workers?



How Churches Can Prevent AI-Powered Fraud

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping ministry operations, but it is also creating new risks for churches. Today's scams are no longer easy to spot. AI-generated emails, voice messages, invoices and fake receipts can appear legitimate enough to fool even experienced church staff members.

Because of this, churches should strengthen financial controls, improve verification practices, and require stronger online security measures before fraud occurs. Congregations that rely heavily on trust, quick approvals, and informal communication processes are increasingly vulnerable to AI-driven scams targeting finances, payroll and sensitive ministry data. More information is available on the [Church Law & Tax website](#).

Register Online

Administrative Assistants Conference

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

8:00am-3:30pm

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fort Dodge, Iowa



JOIN
US!



Scan QR to
Register
NOW

Registration fee: \$45 if postmarked by **September 8**
(\$50 after September 8)

fee includes all materials, snacks and lunch

Payable to: Iowa District West

(please include AAC & your name in memo line)

Mail to Attn: Emilie Jenson
Iowa District West LCMS
409 Kenyon Road, Suite B
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Hotel Accommodations:

A block of rooms has been reserved at Sleep Inn & Suites, 110 Leah Lane, Fort Dodge. Book online or call 515-302-8508 and ask for the Iowa District West room block. Rooms are available at a discounted rate of \$85/night plus tax through September 8, 2026, and include a complimentary hot breakfast.

Scan QR to Reserve Your
Hotel Room Online



Conference Committee

Mission Statement:

Serving Christ by serving others!

Roger Curtis.....Iowa District West

Lisa Gibson.....Gloia Dei, Urbandale

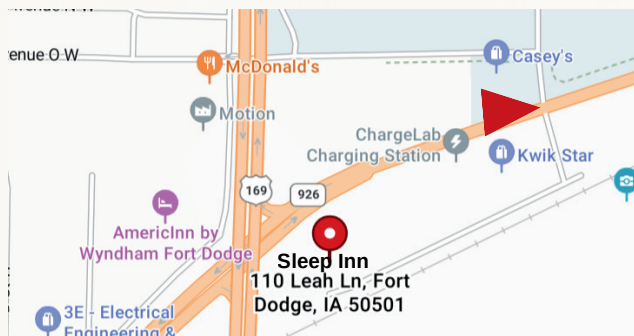
Stephanie Hatterman.....Our Savior, Denison

Michelle Hammersland.....Iowa District West

Christine Schroeder.....St. Paul, Fort Dodge

Shannon Walters.....Zion, Manning

Sleep Inn access from Kenyon Rd at Kwik Star



Access to church from 5th Ave S and S 13th St



St. Paul Lutheran Church

Also Included...

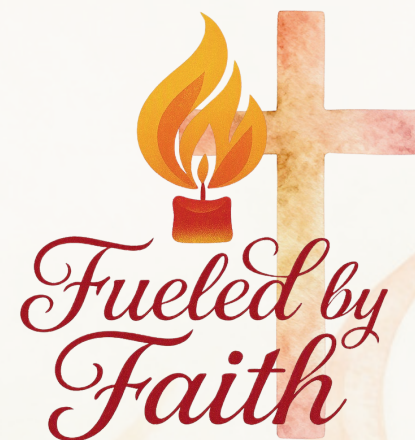
Vendors
Breakfast, Lunch, & Snacks
Door Prizes

Networking
Special Music

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep
your spiritual fervor, serving the
Lord."
Romans 12:11

2026

Administrative Assistants Conference For Ministry Assistant Professionals



ROMANS 12:11

Rejoicing in hope,
patient in tribulation,
continuing steadfastly in prayer

Sponsored by
Iowa District West, LCMS

Tuesday September 29, 2026
8:00am-3:30pm

St. Paul Lutheran Church
400 S 13th St. Fort Dodge, Iowa

Keynote Sessions

Session 1: Rejoicing in Hope — Hearts Full of Holy Humor

You are the first face people see, the first voice on the phone, the keeper of the keys, the calendar, and occasionally the pastor's last shred of sanity. Nobody warned you that "church administrative assistant" would also mean bulletin editor, tech support, coffee-maker whisperer, and unofficial therapist — all before 10 a.m. In this session, I'll pull back the curtain on my own years in and around church offices (yes, including life with a pastor at home) and remind you why hope isn't a quiet, polite feeling — it's a full-on, can't-help-it, holy belly laugh. Because the same God who calls you to rejoice in hope also gave you a sense of humor for a reason: ministry, and your sanity, need it. Come for the stories. Stay for the laughter. Leave lighter than you came.

Session 2: Patient in Tribulation — Faithing It Till You Make It

You've smiled through the budget meeting while your own world was quietly falling apart. You've fielded the complaint about the bulletin font while carrying something far heavier than a font could ever be. Admins don't get to clock out of hard seasons just because the office phone is ringing. This session is about the difference between faking it and faithing it — walking through real, hard things (I'll share some of mine) not by pretending everything's fine, but by leaning hard into a God who is patient with us in tribulation and shows up in ways we never saw coming. This is for every woman who's ever needed permission to be tired, honest, and still faithful all at once. Bring your tissues. Bring your coffee. Bring your whole, tired, faithful self.

Session 3: Continuing Steadfastly in Prayer — From Whispers to Belly Laughs: Conversations with God

Somewhere along the way, a lot of us decided prayer had to sound formal — quiet, serious, "appropriate." But what if God actually wants to hear about the copier that jammed for the fourth time today, the meeting that ran long, and the moment you laughed so hard you cried in the church kitchen? In this session, we'll talk about prayer as an ongoing conversation, not a performance — one where God laughs with you, aches with you, and wants to walk with you through every mundane and monumental moment of your desk, your calendar, and your life. Your work is holy ground, even on copier-jam days, and God wants to be in on all of it. Whisper it, shout it, laugh it — just don't stop talking to Him.

**Enter for a chance to win a coupon redeemable for spending at our vendors and a certificate for a FREE registration to next year's conference!*



*Meet Our Keynote
Speaker*

Shannon Zetterlund

Shannon was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, where her love for Jesus and the Word of God took root at an early age. Her family's ministry work led them to churches all over the South, creating a rich spiritual environment for her upbringing. Guided by her parents, she read a proverb a day, though she found that some of the wisdom in Proverbs was challenging to grasp as a young girl.

As Shannon grew older, she discovered a passion for storytelling, often reading Shel Silverstein books to the children she babysat. She was always captivated by how these stories could hold a child's attention. This inspired her to take the timeless wisdom of Proverbs and adapt it into a format that children could easily understand and enjoy.

Today, Shannon is married to Jay Zetterlund. She is a pastor's wife from Keokuk, Iowa. Together, they have raised five children and are now proud grandparents to two grandchildren. Their family also includes a lovable Great Dane named Pax. In addition to her roles as a wife, mother, and grandmother, Shannon is a speaker and singer. She has recently published the first three books in a series that adapts Proverbs for children, bringing God's wisdom to the next generation in a way that resonates with their hearts and minds.



IOWA DISTRICT WEST SWADDLING CLOTHES CONVOCAATION

Sunday, October 18

3 PM – 6:30 PM

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

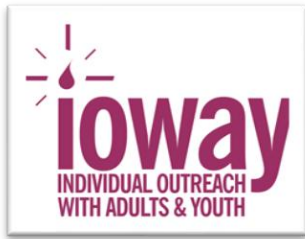
1112 Bailey St. – Sac City

**Pray. Study. Network. Learn. Be Encouraged.
Meal Provided!**

Pastors, Volunteers and Lay Members who are active in Swaddling Clothes Ministry or want to learn more about this mercy work should attend

Please RSVP for Meal Preparation
Call 651-295-7590 or Email pastorckroonblawd@gmail.com





Julie Mann, IOWAY Coordinator

julie@iowadistrictwest.org

515-408-9696

This past year, I've been chatting with quite a few folks about ways to combat food insecurity among our neighbors and within our communities. Thank you for reaching out and sharing your ideas!

According to Food Bank of Iowa's 2025 statistics, "12% of Iowans (1 in 8) and 16.6% of Iowa children (1 in 6) face food insecurity. All 99 Iowa counties saw an increase in food insecurity in the latest report."

If you are like me, you have probably stood in front of your refrigerator or pantry and said, "Ugh, there is nothing to eat in here!" In reality, there was a bounty of options available; you just weren't in the mood for any of them at that moment. Or perhaps, as often happens in my house, the night before trash pickup involves throwing away food that wasn't eaten and has gone bad. It's a simple example of food waste.

I encourage you to consider some of the following ways to help:

- Find a food pantry in your community and make a donation. Please ensure that any donated items have expiration dates at least six months away.
- If you garden, share your harvest with neighbors or donate it through a community organization.
- Start a Blessing Box at your church or school. They are fairly simple to build and maintain.
- Volunteer at a food distribution site and learn more about the needs in your area.
- Begin planning a community garden for next year's growing season.
- Volunteer for Meals on Wheels or similar programs.
- Prepare and deliver meals to shut-in members of your congregation, and take time to sit and visit with them.
- Check your refrigerator, freezer, cupboards, and pantry before shopping so you can avoid purchasing items you already have. Consider buying smaller quantities of perishable foods to reduce spoilage and waste.



purchasing items you already have. Consider buying smaller quantities of perishable foods to reduce spoilage and waste.

A newer idea that Timothy Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs has embraced is hosting a community refrigerator and pantry on church property. There are several community refrigerators in the Council Bluffs area and more than two dozen in the Des Moines metro area. I am currently exploring how this concept might be adapted to serve some of our smaller communities. Again, please reach out with your ideas!

Community refrigerators are a simple yet powerful way to address food insecurity while also reducing food waste. Often located in easily accessible public spaces, they function as shared refrigerators where anyone can leave or take food. Individuals, local businesses, restaurants, and community organizations contribute fresh and healthy items. There are no forms to complete, no income requirements, and no questions asked, just a space built on trust, kindness, and mutual support.

What makes community refrigerators especially valuable is their ability to bring people together. A family facing financial hardship can pick up groceries they need. Someone experiencing housing instability can access a meal. Restaurants and grocery stores can donate excess food that might otherwise go to waste. Community refrigerators also foster collaboration. Volunteers help keep them clean and well-stocked, local organizations spread awareness and provide support, and businesses contribute food regularly. Over time, these efforts create a broader network of care that extends far beyond the refrigerator itself.

There are many ways we can reach out and make a difference in addressing this great need throughout our district and state. God has indeed blessed us, and in turn, let us be a blessing to others.



All Access Account

Everyday Access to Your Funds with Competitive Rates

At Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), we align your investments with your faith, empowering LCMS ministries to grow and serve for the glory of His kingdom. With the All Access Account, you'll enjoy competitive rates and full access to your funds, designed for your daily needs.



Easy access with the
LCEF mobile app



No monthly
fees



Online bill pay
through MyAccount



Interest accrued
daily, paid monthly

Open your investment online in about 5 minutes.
Learn more at **lcef.org/FullAccess**.



LUTHERAN CHURCH
EXTENSION FUND

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. All Access Account is known as "StewardAccount" for investors in Washington. StewardAccount access features are offered through UMB Bank n.a. StewardAccount products are not available to investors in South Carolina. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit lcef.org for details.



MISSION CENTRAL

LCMS Mission Advancement

40718 County Highway E-16

Mapleton, Iowa 51034

www.missioncentral.us



Missionary Gary Thies, *Director and Mission 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

September 2026



It was a glorious day here on Wednesday, July 8. We had three special guests from the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, Missouri: Brian Gauthier, Dan Galchutt, and Katie Fiene. It was wonderful to visit with them.



That same day, we were also blessed to hear mission updates from David Preus in Eurasia and Andrew and Noel Schaff in Taiwan. Many people came to meet our missionaries and tour our campus. Praise God for all His blessings!



We celebrated a "triple-header" on July 11, with three missionary families providing us with exciting updates: the Wasmunds from Korea, Shawnen Trump (our Regional Director for all of Africa), and Raphael and Jamielynn Flores from Chile. Three missionaries. Three different regions of the world. Lots of people came to hear their presentations. WOW!

Our Lord is certainly doing amazing things to bring people to faith in Him as their Savior. Please keep these special missionaries in your daily prayers.

July 15 was HOT, but that didn't stop these special folks from Nebraska and Wisconsin. They wanted to see for themselves what the Lord has done out here in the "middle of nowhere." Many of them had never been here before, so we gave them the full tour!

They were treated to some very visible reminders of **why** we send missionaries around the world to share the Good News of Jesus. It was a day they will always remember.



Each year, we host a special catered meal for our volunteers at Mission Central to express our thanks and appreciation for all they do. On July 18, we gathered for our meal and heard a report on the many blessings God has granted us over the past year.

We also learned about the new missionaries who will be deploying to the mission field in the coming months, as well as the veteran missionaries who have visited Mission Central during the past year. It was a wonderful day to come together, and we thank God for all our faithful

volunteers and the important role they play in this ministry.

It was another "real miracle day" at the world-famous Mission Central! A wonderful group from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Milford, Nebraska, visited on Thursday, July 30, and what a joy it was to have them!

This trip was organized by Missionary Tim Rippstein and Rev. Mark and Carol Weber. What a special blessing it was for these guests to tour our entire campus. It was truly a day they will never forget.



!AMIGOS EN CRISTO and GRACIA!

News from *Las Iglesias Evangélicas Luteranas*
Amigos en Cristo in Denison and Gracia in Storm Lake
Pastor Pedro Lopez

September 2026

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This has been a wonderful summer and I am grateful to share the many ways God is working through our ministry.

Community Outreach and Service

In July and August, we began volunteering with Timothy Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs through its Swaddling Clothes program. We are also gathering the names of Spanish-speaking community members interested in learning English through our upcoming ESL classes.

- **St. Paul, Carroll**

Our Saturday evenings of praise, prayer, and Bible study continue to provide a meaningful time together. We also enjoy monthly fellowship gatherings that strengthen our community.

- **St. John, Storm Lake**

We continue to support the Swaddling Clothes program on the second Saturday of each month. The program serves an average of 50 families each month and is making a meaningful difference in the community. Through this outreach, we meet families and invite them to Sunday worship at Grace.

- **Holy Trinity, Farnhamville**

We have met with the congregation at Holy Trinity and are planning an ESL program to serve Farnhamville and the surrounding area. This outreach will help us connect with Hispanic residents and people from other ethnic communities and invite them to church.

Hispanic National Convention

On July 27th, six of us traveled to Irvine, California, to participate in the Hispanic National Convention. It was an inspiring opportunity to learn and connect with people who share our faith, language, and traditions. Fili and Adrian also spoke with the director of the Center for Hispanic Studies and we pray they will soon begin their studies.



Upcoming Bilingual Outdoor Worship

- **Date:** September 13, 2026
- **Time:** 11:00 a.m.
- **Location:** Graham Park in Carroll, Iowa, weather permitting
- **Music:** Mariachi San Pablo from El Paso, Texas

The bilingual service will bring together Hispanic brothers and sisters from across Iowa District West, along with friends and members of local congregations. Please share this invitation with your contacts. Additional information will be provided soon.

Prayer and Thanksgiving

Please continue to pray for the Hispanic Ministry of Iowa District West and for the communities we serve. The prayers and faithful service of our volunteers are a great encouragement, and we thank the Lord for each of you. We also ask for your continued prayers for my wife and I, that the Lord would graciously guide, strengthen, and equip us for the work He has entrusted to us.

Bendiciones,

Pastor Pedro Lopez

Executive Assistant - Missionary at Large

pedro@iowadistrictwest.org

(571) 606-7600





Update

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Sept 6: 9:30 AM TO 1:00 PM OMELET BRUNCH**
Sept. 9-11: Outdoor Education Session 1
Sept. 16-18: Outdoor Education Session 2
Sept. 23-25: Outdoor Education Session 3
Oct. 2-4: IDW Senior High Youth Gathering
Oct 4: 9:30 AM TO 1:00 PM OMELET BRUNCH
Oct. 9-10: CAMP OKOBOJI FALL VOLUNTEER WEEKEND
Oct. 9-11: IDW Pastors Wives Retreat



Summer Chaplain Schedule

Join us for worship - 9 am

August 23 - Rev. Chris Nitzel - Hartley
August 30 - Rev. Benjamin Dose - Algona
September 6 - Rev. Robert Zellmer - Lawton

Thank You!

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

- A very special THANKS to all the volunteers who serve as Youth Camp Deans, Staff and Counselors! You are greatly appreciated! We couldn't do our ministry well without you!



Fall Volunteer Weekend

Our Fall Volunteer Weekend will be Oct. 9-10. We will also host a dinner on Saturday evening at 5 pm to honor and celebrate our volunteers that help us throughout the year. Fall Volunteer Weekend is a great way to share your time and talents while you enjoy God's Creation at Camp Okoboji. Help prepare Camp Okoboji for the upcoming winter. Room and board will be provided for volunteers. Please save the date and make plans to come and help! For room and board accommodations, please call the office at (712) 337-3325!

We give thanks for our Summer Staff this year. We are severely understaffed, and the staff we have are working so hard. We are thankful for Martin, Jocelyn, Kimmy, Lucy, Chayo, and Paco, as well as Logan and Danielle (not pictured - Discipleship Interns). Please continue to speak with youth in your communities and congregations about serving at Camp in the future.

“A Sure Hope; A Clear Mission”

¹“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song and he has become my salvation.” Isaiah 12:2 ESV

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3 ESV

The above are the Scripture references accompany the hymn “I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus” (LSB 729). This is a hymn that assures us again where our salvation is found. It reminds us that in Jesus we have pardon, grace, mercy, cleansing, holiness, guidance, and all we need without fail.

A friend shared the story of a series of encounters and a conversation she once had with an elderly woman in a nursing home. This friend reported that, when she would visit the home, people would greet this elderly woman and ask her *“How are you doing?”* The elderly woman’s response, though it may not have been the first thing you would expect as someone’s response, had become rather predictable for those who greeted her because her response was always the same. Her answer was always, *“I’m trusting in the Lord.”*

What a refreshing response! *“I’m trusting in the Lord.”* We can all agree that’s the right place to have our trust and our focus. No matter what we face, our trust is that our salvation is safe in Jesus’ hands. We certainly believe it, and this woman’s response reveals such faithful reliance. What a witness her response became to all who greeted her. What a light and example she was with those simple words.

My friend heard this woman repeat those words again and again in the course of her visits, and as refreshing as it was, after a while my friend wanted to know if she had anything more to say. Curious, my friend playfully probed a little deeper. *“Is that your only response?”* she asked.

Well, as encouraged as my friend may have been by the elderly woman’s well-rehearsed reply, she was even more encouraged by her perspective when the woman answered, *“I’ve only got two things left in the world for me to do and that’s stay close to my Lord and tell everyone about Jesus.”*

Wow! *“Stay close to my Lord and tell everyone about Jesus.”* Stay close to the One who created you, redeemed you, and makes you new. And tell everyone you meet all about how He’s done that for you in Christ. How clear and simple her mission was in that moment. What a blessing to know your mission with such clarity.

Is your mission as clear to you? Are you as ready as this woman to give an answer for the hope that you have? You might be surprised to know you have a framework already.

As Christians we have the blessing of the Apostles’ Creed which gives us a reminder and a summary of what we believe that we might share all about Jesus with anyone whom we encounter. And even in reciting what we believe, the Creed reminds us that God has called us close in Jesus.

Maybe you find that you are unsure of how much you think you have to tell someone. Recite the Creed. It’s a great starting point for telling others about Jesus and it reminds us of the treasures we have in Christ, including the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Almighty, everlasting God, Your Son has assured forgiveness of sins and deliverance from eternal death. Strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit that our faith in Christ may increase daily and that we may hold fast to the hope that on the Last Day we shall be raised in glory to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (222)

*Pastor Jason Letsche
Trinity Lutheran Church, Cherokee, IA*

I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus

LSB 729

- 1 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation, Great and free.
- 2 I am trusting Thee for pardon; At Thy feet I bow,
For Thy grace and tender mercy Trusting now.
- 3 I am trusting Thee for cleansing In the crimson flood;
Trusting Thee to make me holy By Thy blood.
- 4 I am trusting Thee to guide me; Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev'ry day and hour supplying All my need.
- 5 I am trusting Thee for power; Thine can never fail.
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me Must prevail.
- 6 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus; Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever And for all.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–79

Text: Public domain

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the
dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life + everlasting. Amen.**

THE LAMPLIGHTER



Theme: “A Sure Hope; A Clear Mission”

September 2026

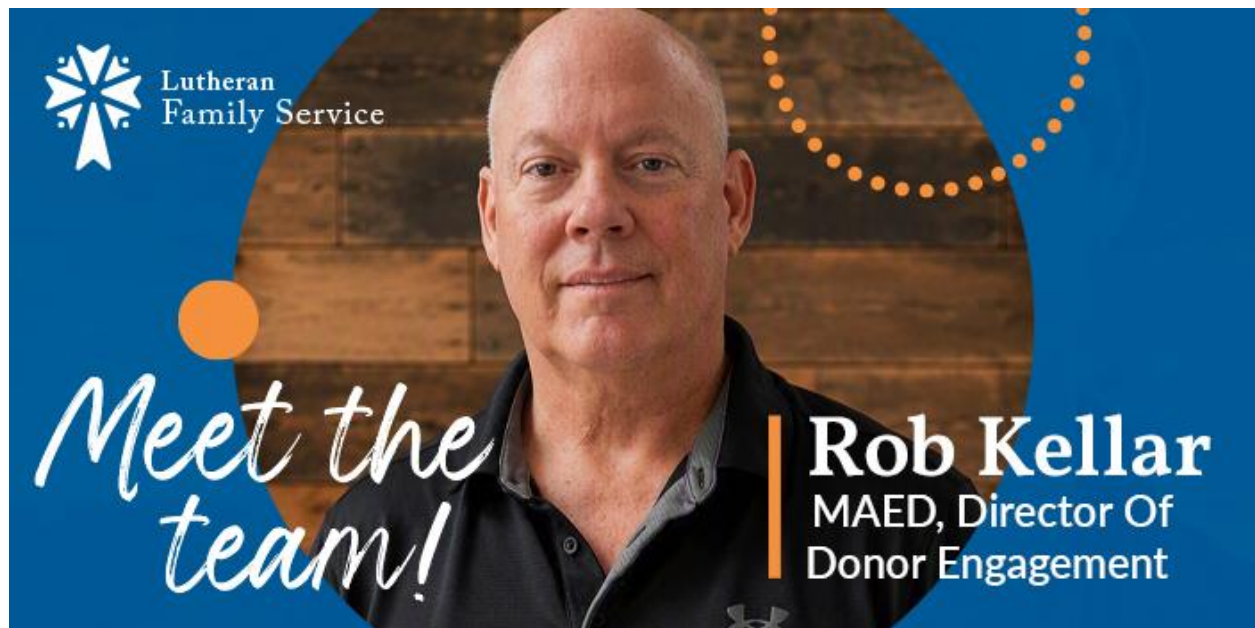
*A Publication of The Lutheran Service Auxiliary,
Sioux City, Iowa*

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.

Meet Rob Kellar, Director Of Donor Engagement At Lutheran Family Service



Building Relationships That Strengthen the Mission

At Lutheran Family Service, ministry is carried out by people who are passionate about serving others and sharing Christ's love. One of those people is **Rob Kellar**, LFS's new Director of Donor Engagement.

After more than three decades in Lutheran education, Rob brings a lifetime of ministry experience and a heart for serving others. His personal experiences have also given him a unique appreciation for many of the services LFS provides and for the supporters who make this work possible.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I've been a Lutheran my whole life and spent more than 32 years serving in Lutheran education as both a teacher and principal at six schools in Florida, Illinois, and Missouri. I grew up in suburban Chicago, where my parents were foster parents, and our family adopted my sister in 1974. Those experiences helped shape my heart for serving others and make my work at Lutheran Family Service especially meaningful.

My first teaching call took me to South Florida in 1990, where I met my wife, Karen. We've been happily married ever since and have three grown children. In 2000, we moved to Collinsville, Illinois, where we've lived ever since. My wife, Karen, and I have been married for more than 36 years, and we have three grown children.

What led you to Lutheran Family Service?

After many rewarding years in Lutheran education, I stepped away in 2022. I wanted to transition before experiencing the burnout I'd seen affect so many dedicated educators and ministry leaders.

Over the next few years, God led me through several different roles. I worked in an auto body shop, mentored new educators, taught Seizure First Aid for the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Southern Illinois, and served as a manufacturing representative.

When the opportunity at Lutheran Family Service came along, it felt like a natural next step. I was excited to join an organization that serves people in so many meaningful ways.

What has impressed you most since joining LFS?

The people. I've had the opportunity to meet many members of the LFS team, and I've been inspired by their compassion, dedication, and enthusiasm. Every day, they're helping individuals, strengthening families, and sharing Christ's love in practical ways. It's exciting to be part of that mission.

Why does the mission of LFS resonate with you personally?

Several areas of LFS's ministry connect directly to my own life. Growing up in a foster family and having an adopted sister gives me a deep appreciation for our adoption services. Having witnessed burnout in ministry helps me understand the importance of church worker wellness. I've also personally benefited from counseling, so I know firsthand the difference compassionate care can make.

These experiences help me appreciate the life-changing work LFS does every day.

What do you hope to accomplish in your new role?

As Director of Donor Engagement, I hope to build meaningful relationships with people who share a passion for our mission. Although not everyone can serve clients directly, everyone has the opportunity to make an impact through prayer, generosity, and encouragement.

I want our supporters to clearly see how their partnership changes lives and helps Lutheran Family Service continue serving individuals and families with Christ's love.

What would you like our supporters to know?

I want our supporters to know that their partnership is vital to the mission of Lutheran Family Service. No matter the size of their gift or how often they're able to give, they are an important part of something much bigger than themselves.

Every act of generosity helps make a real difference. It means a young woman facing difficult choices has someone to walk alongside her. It helps children find loving, permanent families through adoption. It supports Lutheran church workers as they navigate the unique challenges of ministry. Most importantly, it allows LFS to continue sharing Christ's love through compassionate care and life-changing services.

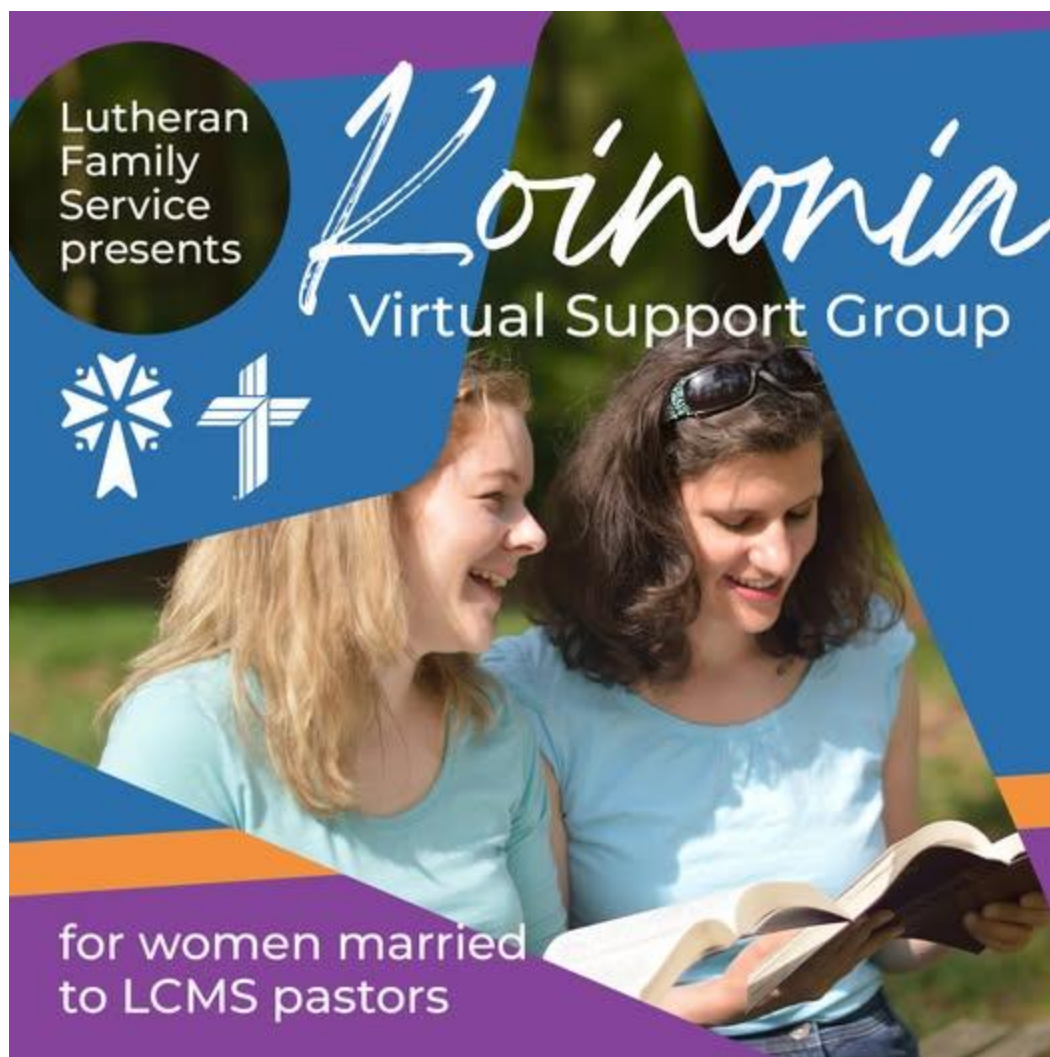
Our supporters may not always see the lives they're impacting, but they are making that impact every single day. I'm grateful for every person who chooses to partner with us in this important work.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

I enjoy fishing, spending time outdoors, and cheering on the Chicago Cubs and Chicago Bears, which is probably one of the reasons I appreciate the value of good counseling!

As Rob begins this new chapter with Lutheran Family Service, he looks forward to building lasting relationships with the faithful supporters who make our ministry possible. Through their prayers, encouragement, and generous partnership, donors help us walk alongside people experiencing difficult seasons of life—offering hope, compassionate care, and the love of Christ.

We are grateful to have Rob on our team as we continue advancing this life-changing mission. Together with our supporters, we can continue sharing hope, providing help, and reminding people that they are never alone.



Pastors' Wives: Find support. Build connections. Strengthen your journey. Koinonia Groups are back and better than ever! Join a supportive online community led by licensed counselors who understand the unique joys and challenges of life in ministry. Multiple group times are available beginning in July and August.

The more the merrier — whether you're new to Koinonia or returning, we'd love to have you join us! Sign up today: <https://lutheranfamilyservice.org/koinonia/>



2026 CALOV CONFERENCE

CONFESSING CHRIST. CONTENDING TOGETHER.
EQUIPPING THE CHURCH.

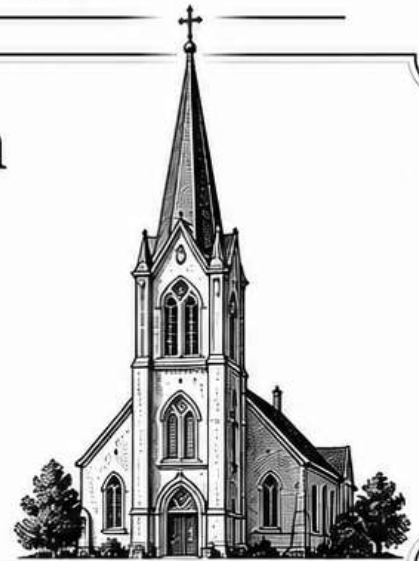
The Response of the Church in a Time of Disease



SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2026

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH • ELLENDALE, NORTH DAKOTA

Faithful theology for faithful witness in every season.



FAITHFUL TEACHING

Hear from faithful pastors
and theologians who proclaim
Christ and His Word.



ENCOURAGING FELLOWSHIP

Worship, learn, and connect
with brothers and sisters from
congregations across our District.



STAND FIRM

Be equipped to stand firm
in the timeless truth
of God's Word.

BE PART OF THIS IMPORTANT GATHERING!

REGISTER TODAY!



REGISTER ONLINE AT:

www.calovconference.org/registration



*"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love
which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit
who dwells in us." – 2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NKJV)*

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Iowa District West

September 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.



**TLC Quilters
IDW Convocation**

Free!

August 29, 2026
Registration 8:30-9am
Convocation 9am-3pm

**Trinity Lutheran
Life Center**
520 N Garfield
Algona, IA 50511

Meal Provided

**Join us for a Fun Day of
Sharing Quilting Ideas,
Tours, and Give-Aways!**

Questions? Contact
Barb Bitterman
515-341-1936

More Info: TrinityAlgona.org/tlc-quilters

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Iowa District West

September 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.

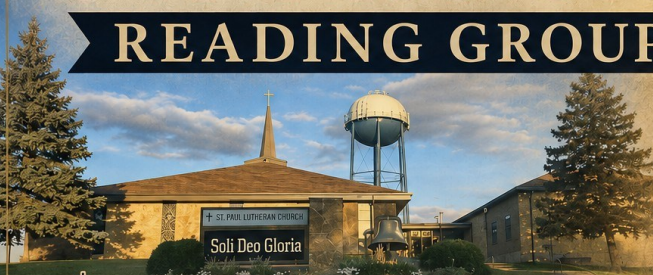


The congregation of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Newell is proud to celebrate 120 years of God's grace! Founded in 1905, the church will mark this special milestone with a celebration on August 30, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the church, located at 314 S. Clark St., Newell.

Everyone is welcome to attend! A light lunch will be served following the service, and several former pastors will be sharing remarks. Pictures of the old church will also be on display.

Please join us as we celebrate this wonderful occasion. Pastor Lesemann is currently serving the congregation during its vacancy.

LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS READING GROUP



St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Ida Grove, Iowa

 4th Thursday of Every Month @7:00pm
 Starting on Thursday, August 27th

 Both Laity and Pastors are invited to attend.

