

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISTRICT NEWS

Partners in the Gospel—Leon Schoenfeld

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 + Pre-Retirement Workshop
5. IOWAY—Julie Mann
6. LCEF—Josh Remington
7. Amigos En Cristo— Rev. Pedro Lopez
8. Mission Central— Rev. Steve Schulz
9. Siouxland Hispanic Ministry—Yasmin Osterholt
10. The Lamplighter

MINISTRY PARTNERS

Camp Okoboji

ILSTO

ALSO INCLUDED...

Around the District

Life Advocates + March for Life



CALLS RECEIVED

Rev. Jason Letsche, First, Kingsley, to Trinity, Cherokee

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Luke Timm, Living Faith, Clive, to St. Matthew, Rocklin, CA

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Bradley Ketcham, Grace, Storm Lake, to St. John, Galva

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

CALLS RECEIVED

Caleb Egger, to Clarinda Lutheran School, Clarinda

Caleb Egger, to Trinity Lutheran School, Boone

Abigail Velten, to St. Paul, Carroll

CALLS ACCEPTED

Caleb Egger, to Trinity Lutheran School, Boone

CALLS DECLINED

Caleb Egger, to Clarinda Lutheran School, Clarinda

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 5...Easter Sunday

April 24-26...YouthLead Workshop—Hidden Acres, Dayton

May 4-5...Spring Pastor’s Conference, Trinity Lutheran, Algona



2026 Upcoming Events

May 4-5...Spring Pastor’s Conference, Trinity Lutheran Church, **Algona**

May 18... Concordia Plans Retirement Workshop, Grace Lutheran, **LeMars**

June 10-13...District LWML Convention, **Camp Okoboji**

July 18-23...Synod Convention, **Phoenix, AZ**

September 21-22...Fall Pastor’s Conference, Gloria Dei Lutheran, **Urbandale**

October 2-4...Senior Youth Gathering, **Camp Okoboji**

October 24-25..Junior Youth Gathering, Sheraton Hotel, **West Des Moines**



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!

April 2026

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515-576-7666 Fax 515-576-2323 www.idwlcms.org
Contact email: emilie@iowadistrictwest.org

Bringing Your Christian Estate Plan Into Alignment



"I took my car to one place for an oil change, another for the brakes, and still another for a tune up. Yet my car just doesn't seem to be running right, and no one is offering to step in to help me."

That same scenario might be true about your Christian estate plan. You might be tempted to focus on one thing at a time, a will here, an insurance policy there, a conversation with the financial planner periodically and then the annual tax preparation. But do we think about how all those things are linked together? We need to, in order to have a comprehensive plan.

In a busy world, focused on quick productivity, we often miss the opportunity to weave the conversations of all our advisors together. In addition, inviting your pastor into these conversations, and your family, can bring a fullness otherwise missed. Your LCMS Foundation Gift Planning Counselor can help facilitate conversations in your circle of important people.

Contact Leon Schoenfeld, IDW LCMS Foundation Gift Planner by phone at (712) 830-7481 or e-mail at leon@iowadistrictwest.org.

Leon Schoenfeld, Iowa District West LCMS Foundation Gift Planner



Need help planning for retirement?

Concordia Plans is hosting a **pre-retirement workshop** for workers in Iowa on Monday, May 18, from 9 am – 12:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church in Le Mars. Workers enrolled in the Concordia Retirement Plan pension, especially those age 50 or older who are thinking about retirement, are encouraged to attend. Spouses are also welcome to attend. Topics covered include basic retirement finances, sources of retirement income, health care in retirement, tools and resources, and more.

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.



The LCMS Youth Ministry Office in partnership with IDW Youth Services committee is hosting a **YouthLead Workshop** at Hidden Acres in Dayton, Iowa April 24-April 26. This event is not for entire youth

groups, but rather for students who have shown leadership and want to grow in their leadership skills. Cost of \$130 covers two nights of lodging and all meals. The event will begin on Friday evening with arrival at 6pm and the program start at 7pm. The weekend will end on Sunday morning at 11:45. Register online at <https://iowadistrictwestlcms.regfox.com/iowa-district-west-youthlead->

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 29...Palm Sunday

April 5...Easter Sunday

April 24-26....YouthLead Workshop—Hidden Acres, Dayton

May 4-5...Spring Pastors Conference, Trinity, Algona



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

Synod is a Strange Word

Kyle was one of our best ball players that year. Strong at the plate. One of our best two pitchers. Great range at shortstop. A great kid from a hard-working family.

We worked on cut-off throws when balls were hit into gaps in right-center and left-center fields. Ball hit to right field, 2nd baseman goes out for the throw and shortstop covers 2nd base. Ball hit to left field, shortstop goes out for the throw and 2nd baseman covers 2nd base. Simple—well, it should have been.

In one of our early games Kyle is at shortstop. Ball is hit into right field, and a bad hop takes the ball to the fence. Kyle covers 2nd base, right? Not this time. Adrenaline pumping, Kyle is on the move from shortstop to almost beating the right fielder to the ball. Then he decides to be cut off instead. So here stands Kyle... and a few steps away stands our 2nd baseman scratching his head. No one is covering 2nd base. The right fielder stands there with the ball trying to decide which cutoff man to throw to. Meanwhile, runners are circling the bases. We finally got the ball into the pitcher. Time out. "Kyle..." A nice discussion follows.



"Synod" is a strange word. It means "walking together." Jesus walked together with His twelve disciples during His earthly ministry. Easter afternoon Jesus walked together with the two men on the road to Emmaus. Today Jesus walks together with us as we walk together with each other. As we "synod."

Walking together, we agree to love and care for each other in certain ways. Together we agree to be normed by a constitution and bylaws. We are in this together and for each other and cared for by God Himself. We are "same team." Formed by God's holy Word and leaning on our Confessions, we agree on objectives. From our constitution, our first team objective reads: The Synod... shall... conserve and promote the UNITY of the true faith (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10)... and provide a UNITED DEFENSE against schism, sectarianism (Rom. 16:17), and heresy. Schism includes any who would talk unity but then do their own thing that disrupts unity. Sectarianism draws others into cliques that disrupt unity. Heresy means "other teaching"—something that distracts or leads away from God's Old Testament and New Testament words with Jesus Christ as the Cornerstone. And soon the enemy is circling the bases and our team stands holding the ball not knowing what to do.

"Synod" is a strange word—and it is a wonderful word. As Jesus walks together with us, we walk together with each other. Walking together strengthens congregations to bring Jesus

and His gifts to others. Walking together helps us to recruit and train pastors and other church workers. Walking together helps us compassionately meet needs of the hurting. Walking together helps us establish Lutheran schools and universities and seminaries. Walking together aids our congregations in developing and receiving resources to unify us in the one true faith. Walking together helps us worship in uniform ways so that we can easily engage during Divine Service in any of our congregations. Walking together provides needed supervision and counsel and care for church workers, which leads to protection and freedom for all God's children whom He gathers into congregations.

“Synod” is a strange and wonderful word. We thank God for His guidance in gathering us together into this Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. May He keep us faithful to His Word and loyal to each other as we walk together.

As angels sing,
Pastor Paul Egger



Education Youth Family Life

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

YOUTHLEAD Retreat in Iowa District West

Special event for 9–12 grade students in your youth group who want to grow in leadership. The LCMS Youth Ministry Office, in partnership with the IDW Youth Services Committee, is hosting a **YouthLead Workshop** at Hidden Acres in Dayton, Iowa, **April 24–26**. This event is not for your entire youth group but for students who have shown leadership and want to grow in their leadership skills. Cost is \$130 and covers two nights of lodging and all meals. The event will begin on Friday evening with arrival at 6 p.m. and the program starting at 7 p.m. The weekend will end on Sunday morning at 11:45. Registration and additional information will be sent to congregations via email. **Space is limited**. Checks should be sent to Iowa District West. Registration deadline is **April 10**.

Important – Protect My Ministry

Is your church signed up? Deadline March 31

Does your church have safety policies in place? Do you require background checks for anyone working with minors? Do you have a two-person rule? There is so much that we can do to help prevent the abuse of children. The district thinks this is very important, so we have paid so each church can have free Child Safety Training, BUT each congregation has to sign up and be in their system by March 31 to allow their volunteers to eventually access the training. Please note the following email from Molly Ricks from Protect My Ministry:

This is an important reminder that all members of Iowa District West must be set up with Protect My Ministry to access your FREE Bundle 1 with Unlimited Child Safety Training **by March 31, 2026**. If you haven't made the move yet, now is the time to act!

Missed our October webinar? You can still catch up and learn about our partnership with Protect My Ministry by watching the recording here: <https://ministrybrands.registration.goldcast.io/events/c381a367-2d99-44cd-9a31-673d1f85066c>

Ready to get started? Here's how:

To learn more about Protect My Ministry and our partnership, visit: <https://www.protectmyministry.com/integrated-partners/partner-iowa-district-west/>

If you submit the form on the partnership page, it will notify their sales team, and someone will reach out to you directly to discuss training and screening package options that are best suited to your needs, but please be aware that this offering only includes a Bundle 1.

To sign up directly with Protect My Ministry, click here: <https://www.protectmyministry.com/iowa-district-west-of-the-lutheran-church/>

If you need direct help, please let me know!

Molly Ricks Direct Line: 813-773-1748

molly.ricks@protectmyministry.com

www.protectmyministry.com



SAVE THE DATE – Youth Gatherings

SR Youth Gathering (Grades 9-12) October 2-4, 2026, Location: Camp Okoboji

JR Youth Gathering (Grades 6,7,8) October 24-25, 2026, Location: Sheraton – West Des Moines



Iowa District West Scholarships

The fall semester may seem a long way off, but now is the time to start filling out financial aid paperwork. Iowa District West is blessed to offer substantial student aid to our church work students attending a Concordia school. We also offer grants to non-church work Concordia students as funds permit.

Students must be a member in good standing of one of the congregations of Iowa West, must be enrolled at one of our Concordia University System schools or one of our seminaries, and turn in an application and pastor's letter of recommendation to Pastor Joe Pierson, our student aid director, **by June 1**. You can find the application on the district website in the forms and links section under the resource tab. Email revpierson@gmail.com with any questions.

A **new scholarship** has been established this year by a family in our district, which is open to LCMS students preparing for church work vocations attending any Christian college or university. The Gerald and Kathy Gehring Church Worker Scholarship is a private scholarship distinct from the IDW student aid fund. Applications for this scholarship are **due March 31**. For full details, including the application, please email gkgcws@gmail.com.



Iowa District West Lutheran School Highlights

St. Paul's, Sioux City



St. Paul's Lutheran School is in the downtown area of Sioux City; IA. St. Paul's consists of Preschool 3-year-old to 5th Grade. The school had its start in the 1800's in the church basement. The current enrollment is 43 students. Over the last three years they have seen 10% growth each year and are projecting 10% for next school year.

Each day is filled with joy and struggle. The struggles we face are the same as many Lutheran schools. We work diligently to find and hire Called teachers, but struggle at times to secure a called teacher. Another struggle we and many other Lutheran schools face is creating and maintaining a balanced budget. While these struggles continue, the joys are seen each day. Seeing the students learn and grow and hearing from the teachers how the students incorporate our Lutheran beliefs into real world situations brings great joy to me and the teachers. A Kindergartener said this week after listening to how a character in a book acted poorly, 'We don't act like that because we know Jesus.' That kind of joy is worth all the struggles.

Many exciting things are happening at St. Paul's. The gym is now fully air conditioned and heated. The school is finishing a rebranding campaign. During this campaign the school updated its logo, changed the school colors to maroon and gold, changed the mascot to a lion and developed a new website (SPLS-SC.com). In addition, they have produced 4 new informational postcards. The gym has been repainted to display the new colors. The changes continue as plans for a new sound system in the gym and a new gym floor are in progress.

The mission statement: **Preparing every student for life and eternity with Christ-centered academic excellence** has been expanded to include the following five pillars:

- Christ Centered Learning
- Academic Excellence
- Strong Community Connection
- Safe and Nurturing Atmosphere
- Preparation for Future Success



St. Paul's is especially proud to share that one of the teachers is currently enrolled in the Colloquy Program. Next year St. Paul's is hoping to enroll another teacher in the Colloquy Program.

St. Paul's continues to provide quality Lutheran education in the Sioux City area.

Submitted by Pam Whightsil, Principal.



MISSION POSSIBLE!

Fresh Ideas for the Historic Church: Five Steps to Embrace Change

How do we define the historic church? The LCMS teaches that **the Church exists where the Gospel is properly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered**, and that its mission is the proclamation of the Gospel to the world (cf. *Of the Church* and *Of the Mission of the Church*).

- The LCMS affirms that the Church’s purpose is the **ministry of Word and Sacrament**, through which the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith.
- The LCMS further teaches that the Church’s mission includes **edification of believers** and **evangelistic outreach**, flowing from Christ’s command.

With that clearly defined, churches are places of memory, meaning, and mission. Yet even the most faithful congregations can struggle when new ideas arise or when change becomes necessary. Whether the change involves a new ministry or a fresh approach to outreach, many congregations ask the same question: “How do we honor and deepen our confessional past while moving into God’s future?”

Below are five practical steps that help an established church embrace meaningful change without losing its identity or compromising vital relationships.

1. Looking Back – Honoring Our Historical Past

Before a church can move forward effectively, it must understand its history. Every congregation has a story—shaped by faithful saints, sacrificial giving, hard-won lessons, and spiritual milestones such as baptisms, confirmation classes, weddings, and funerals.

Taking time to look back accomplishes several things:

- It acknowledges the contributions of earlier generations.
- It reminds the congregation of God’s faithfulness.
- It identifies strengths that are worth carrying into the future.
- It uncovers patterns that may need to be reshaped for future missions.

This step is not nostalgic wandering. It is a purposeful reflection that answers:

“What core values and lessons from our past should continue shaping our future?”

2. Looking Forward – A New Strategic Vision Toward the People We Are Called to Reach

Once the church understands its heritage, it can turn its eyes outward and forward. Change must be rooted in our shared confession and mission, not preference. Churches grow stronger not by asking, “What do we want?” but by asking, “Whom has God called us to reach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and serve?”

This involves:

- Learning the real needs of the community.
- Observing shifting demographics.
- Listening to unchurched neighbors.
- Understanding what obstacles keep people from stepping through our doors.

Looking forward does not dishonor the past; it fulfills it. Our history becomes most meaningful when it propels us toward the people God is sending us to reach today.

3. Involve the Legitimizers – The 30 Key Influencers

Every church has them—leaders, long-timers, prayer warriors, respected voices, and those whom others naturally follow. These **legitimizers** may not always hold official positions, but they hold influence.

Involving them early in the organizational change process is crucial because:

- Their support lends credibility to new ideas.
- They can help translate vision in ways others understand.
- They provide valuable insights, concerns, and wisdom.
- They reduce quiet resistance by becoming early champions of change.

When the legitimizers are on board, change becomes less threatening and more trusted. Remember that any change in an organization is often seen as a loss, so take the time to nurture and strengthen relationships.

4. Involve the Congregation – Spread Ideas Methodically and Prayerfully

Change thrives when the whole church feels included—not surprised. Churches resist change when ideas come too fast or feel forced. But when new ideas are shared gradually and clearly, people have time to process and embrace them.

Effective ways to involve the congregation include:

- Townhall meetings and listening sessions.

- Small-group discussions around the proposed changes.
- Testimonies from leaders who explain the “why.”
- Regular, open communication through video clips, newsletters, announcements, and prayer times.

The goal is not simply to **inform** the congregation but to **invite** them into a shared mission. When people understand the purpose behind change, their willingness to support it grows.

5. Generate Excitement – Let Hope Rise

Change is not driven by force or coercion; it requires patience, empathy, energy, hope, and spiritual discernment. After all, the church is not a business simply updating its policies; it is the living, breathing body of Christ answering God’s call.

There are many ways to generate excitement:

- Celebrate small wins and early progress.
- Share stories of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts and lives of people.
- Remind people of the mission and the souls being reached.
- Create moments of joy, worship, and gratitude.

When excitement grows, fear shrinks.

When hope rises, resistance falls.

When people see God at work, they gladly follow His lead.

Conclusion

“New ideas for the historic church” are not about abandoning tradition—they are about renewing purpose. By honoring the past, clarifying the future, involving key influencers, inviting the congregation, and building excitement, any church can give change a real chance.

Healthy change is not rushed. It is shepherded. And when guided by prayer, unity, and mission, it becomes a powerful tool for revival.

Multiethnic Symposium

On May 5–6, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will host its annual Multiethnic Symposium under the theme “United in Praise.” This event will highlight the unity of faith and confession shared by believers from every culture, grounded in the unwavering love and faithfulness of God, as it explores praise in music, dance, art and more. If you are serving a multiethnic ministry and want to attend this event, contact Rev. Dr. Keith Haney for Scholarship assistance.

[Learn more](#)

Theme

United in Praise: Celebrating God’s Love and Faithfulness Across All Nations

In Ps. 117:1, the church is called to praise the Lord – all nations together. The praise of the multiethnic church becomes a powerful witness to the rich tapestry of peoples who together glorify Him. This praise highlights the unity of faith and confession shared by believers from every culture, grounded in the unwavering love and faithfulness of God. Through expressions of praise in music, dance and art, the **2026 Multiethnic Symposium** will explore how the church is equipped to bear witness to God’s love and faithfulness across all nations. “Praise the Lord, all nations!” (Ps. 117:1 ESV).

Festival of Scripture & the Arts

Concordia University Chicago will host a Festival of Scripture & the Arts on its campus in River Forest, Ill., June 20–21. Featuring lectures, professional recitations, poetry and commissioned artwork on the Song of Songs, the event accompanies the world premiere of Jonathan Stahlke’s “Song of All Songs,” which takes the entire text of the Song as its basis.

[Learn more](#)



Rev. Paul Schulz

Have you ever been to the March for Life in Washington, D.C.? If yes, do you want to go again? If no, are you interested in joining others in 2027?

Yes, we are only two months past the 2026 March for Life, but as we have learned, planning for the next March for Life begins almost immediately after the previous one. If you are interested in attending, mark your calendar today for **January 22, 2027**, for the National March for Life.

Some dedicated pro-life members at St. Paul's in Council Bluffs, along with Rev. Cory Kroonblawd and myself, have been looking into ways to increase attendance to the March in 2027. We have been in contact with a bus company experienced in transporting life defenders from Iowa to D.C. and back safely and comfortably. The company has offered us bus reservations, and we hope to fill at least one bus—filling more would be even better!

Initially, the bus cost would be just under \$500 per person. The company already has the route and schedule set up to allow for different drivers along the way, so the buses can keep moving without long stops. This significantly reduces travel time. They also have experience handling the unique challenges of driving in Washington, D.C. and navigating hotel parking—a valuable advantage for our group.

If your church or pro-life group is interested in this, please start gauging interest now so we can get an accurate headcount. If you already know you'd like to attend—or even if you just have a rough idea of how many might be interested—please send an email to Rev. Paul Schulz of Trinity, Mallard, at trinitymallardia@gmail.com to let him know.

If you are unable to join us in the march, we kindly ask that you prayerfully consider donating toward the bus costs to help reduce the financial burden for attendees. Every contribution makes a difference.

When we arrive in Washington, D.C., there are at least two main options for participating in the March. If your attendees are youth or young adults, they may benefit most from signing up for the Youth 4 Life (Y4Life) program. This is free for youth, but participation is limited to just over 600 this year. In recent years, the Y4Life program has expanded so quickly that hotel space—not interest—is now the limiting factor.

The other option for adults, or for those who choose not to attend the Y4Life programming, is the LCMS Life Ministry opening service and light brunch at Immanuel–Alexandria, located near D.C.

Consider joining us on January 22 for the March for Life! If you can't attend, please pray for those making the journey—for their safety, boldness, and our nation.

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 February 2026	
Anticipated Amount	\$110,000
Actual Receipts	\$114,912
Year-to-Date Receipts	
Anticipated Amount	\$110,000
Actual Receipts	\$114,912
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$4,912
Use of Mission Receipts	
Remitted to Synod (45%)	\$44,000
Balance for District programs & ministries	\$70,912
Total Receipts	\$114,912
Mission Receipts Compared with Last Year	
Month ending February 2026	\$114,912
Month ending February 2025	\$124,310
Over (under) last year	\$ (9,398)

Partners in the Gospel - Monthly Mission Moment

Did you know that your congregational mission dollars support the District budget in a variety of mission and ministry areas? Did you know that 40% of your unrestricted congregational mission dollars support the work of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod? The 2026 budget includes \$528,000 designated for LCMS mission and ministry. Thanks to your support last fiscal year, we exceeded our goal and sent \$542,400 to the Synod. As we all “walk together,” we ask every congregation to be a partner with District and the Synod. Your dollars make a difference in carrying out the mission and ministry in IDW and across the world. Last year, IDW was ranked the 6th highest in mission giving out of 35 Districts. Thank you for your partnership!

Stewardship Spark - by Ron Chewning - www.StewardshipAdvisors.org - 248.644.6150

**LENT IS FORTY DAYS TO REFLECT
ON OUR UNWORTHINESS AND THEN
FOCUS ON GOD’S GRACE AND LOVE
IN JESUS**

“He Who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things”
(Romans 8:32).



Concordia Plan Services (CPS) Workshop – Focusing on Retirement

Need help planning for retirement? Concordia Plans is hosting a pre-retirement workshop for workers on Monday, May 18, from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church in Le Mars. Workers enrolled in the Concordia Retirement Plan pension, especially those age 50 or older who are thinking about retirement, are encouraged to attend. Spouses are also encouraged to attend. Topics covered include basic retirement finances, sources of retirement income, health care in retirement, tools and resources, and more. To register, send an email to MoneyMatters@ConcordiaPlans.org. See the poster for complete details.

Preparing employers for CRSP 403(b) Spring Enrollment – In early-mid April, Concordia Plans will begin a CRSP 403(b) [Spring Enrollment campaign](#) to:

- Encourage workers who are saving to consider increasing their contributions to be better prepared for retirement.
- Encourage workers not currently saving to start! Concordia Plans will highlight the importance of personal retirement savings to complement their pension benefits.

[Sign up](#) for an upcoming spring retirement webinar on March 25 at 1 pm.

CPS will be offering an education opportunity focusing on healthcare this summer. Watch for more information.

Celebrate Administrative Professionals Day/Week

Administrative Professionals Week was first established in 1952, and over the years it has grown into one of the largest workplace observances in the United States, honoring more than 22 million administrative and office support professionals.



This year, it takes place April 20–24, with Administrative Professionals Day recognized on Wednesday, April 22. Each year, administrative professionals are celebrated for the skills, loyalty, and essential qualities that support nearly every office. Administrative Professionals Week highlights and honors the dedication and invaluable contributions of these professionals.

Religious Freedom Update from Alliance Defending Freedom

The Johnson Amendment—a tax provision from the 1950s—has long affected 501(c)(3) organizations, including churches and clergy. To better understand its history and how it came to restrict pastoral speech, you can read an [Alliance Defending Freedom \(ADF\)](#) attorney’s explanation of how these limitations were put in place more than half a century ago.

The Church & Ministry Alliance (CMA) is anticipating an upcoming federal court decision in a recent case involving the Johnson Amendment. This ruling, once announced, may influence how clergy can or cannot apply biblical principles from the pulpit.

CMA will host a livestream in which ADF attorneys will discuss the decision. Because Iowa District West is a CMA Partner Member, you are invited to join the waitlist for this livestream. Stay informed about what the ruling may mean for you: <https://www.adfchurchalliance.org/johnson-amendment-livestream>.

The livestream will:

- Explain what happened in this case
- Address the potential implications for churches
- Identify what remains legally unresolved

CMA exists as a ministry and resource for Iowa District West, helping remove the stress and uncertainty surrounding legal and legislative challenges to religious freedom. These issues directly affect how we use our facilities, whom we hire, how we design curriculum, and much more. CMA’s mission is to handle the legal and legislative work so you can continue to freely live and speak the truth of the Gospel with as few limitations as possible.

Our District partners with Alliance Defending Freedom’s (ADF) Church & Ministry Alliance to help protect religious freedoms. Because of our partnership, you receive a 20% discount (LCMS20) on your own membership, where you can quickly access educational resources and legal guidance from qualified attorneys. For many of our churches, the annual membership costs no more than \$250, depending on your weekly attendance size. Many of our schools are members and receive the same 20% discount. To explore the benefits and join, [click here](#).



Thinking about retirement?

Attend a pre-retirement workshop sponsored by Concordia Plan Services.

Understanding the retirement process can be complex, so Iowa District West and Financial Educator Keith Duesenberg from Concordia Plan Services are hosting a pre-retirement workshop for individuals serving in LCMS ministries. **Who should attend?** Workers enrolled in the Concordia Retirement Plan pension, especially those age 50 or older who are thinking about retirement. Spouses are strongly encouraged to attend also.



Monday, May 18, 2026
9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
1430 7th Avenue SE
Le Mars, IA 51031

All materials, beverages, snack, and a light lunch will be provided. Spouses are also welcome to attend!

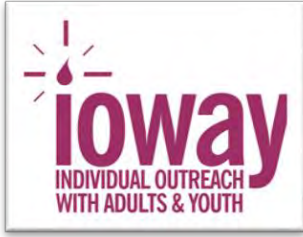
Register by
Monday, May 11, 2026



Topics include:

- Envisioning your retirement.
- Basic retirement finances.
- Sources of retirement income.
 - Pension
 - Social Security
 - Savings
- Health care in retirement.
- Initiating your retirement.

Advance registration by May 11 is required. To register, email the following information to MoneyMatters@ConcordiaPlans.org: your name, phone number, spouse's name (if attending), and any special dietary or mobility needs. Contact Roger Curtis at Roger@IowaDistrictWest.org with questions.



Julie Mann, IOWAY Coordinator

julie@iowadistrictwest.org

515-408-9696

As I sit in my office writing this and watching snowflakes swirl once again, I'm trying not to grumble about wanting the 71-degree weather back that I had 48 hours ago. This then prompts me to once again think about the Israelites of the Old Testament. Yes, when I read about how they often disregarded God's providence and blessings—and grumbled (check out Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalm 106)—I am taken aback at their blatant disrespect! And then, convicted, I realize I do the same thing.

God was their provider, and He is ours. Plain and simple. Oh, the miraculous way He provides looks a bit different these days. Not sure about you, but I've never had a large body of water part in front of me so I could escape slavery, haven't made bread from manna, nor have I been saved from a snake bite by looking at a bronze statue. However, I have indeed been provided with a great moving company when starting a new called position, I have often stood in front of a full refrigerator while trying to decide if I had "anything to eat," and I have been saved from my own not-so-brilliant choices more often than I'd like to say.

This IOWAY position within our district allows me to see how God immensely blesses and guides us at all times, through hearing your stories and seeing you live out your faith, even when life's circumstances in this sinful world don't seem too kind. It's easy for me to be thankful and remember what a wonderful Father I have when the weather is sunny and warm, my kids are all doing well, friends invite me to sing or get together for fun, and I know I have a safe and comfortable home at the end of the day. But am I thinking about thanks and praise when, from my perspective, the day (week, month) is not going well? It reminds me of the song "Blessings" by Laura Story, which puts a twist of perspective on things.

*We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear
And we cry in anger when we cannot feel You near
We doubt Your goodness, we doubt Your love*

*As if every promise from Your word is not enough
And all the while, You hear each desperate plea
And long that we'd have faith to believe*

*'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops?
What if Your healing comes through tears?
And what if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near?
And what if trials of this life Are Your mercies in disguise?*

What a unique perspective, and one I should lean into when I'm questioning things in life. God continues to bless my life by sustaining it each day, even though I sometimes don't appreciate it, and grumble. He also allows us to bless others. Look around today. What can you praise Him for...even if it's more snow flurries?

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Scholarship Opportunity

High school seniors who have a Young Investors StewardAccount® with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) are eligible to apply for the Take Heart Scholarship. Answer this question, and you could receive up to \$3,000:

Other than Jesus, which person in the Bible would you love to talk with?



- Recipients awarded up to \$3,000
- Apply by May 1, 2026
- Visit lcef.org/scholarship



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. StewardAccount products are not available to investors in South Carolina. StewardAccount access features are offered through UMB Bank n.a. The recipients of this scholarship award will be notified by LCEF. Funds are awarded to be used to defray expenses for tuition, books, laboratory expenses and/or related educational expenditures. The award amount will be deposited into the student's LCEF investment. Any amount awarded will be taxable as ordinary income to the recipient to the extent it is not used for "qualified tuition and related expenses" under Section 117 of the Internal Revenue Code. Some expenses, such as room and board, will not qualify. The recipient should consult with his or her tax advisor regarding what expenses are "qualified tuition and related expenses" and to determine whether any part of the award will be taxable. If the recipient misrepresents any information, LCEF reserves the right to revoke the scholarship.

Christ Has Risen! Alleluia!



LUTHERAN CHURCH
EXTENSION FUND

JOSH REMINGTON

LCEF District Vice President | Iowa East & West
515-417-9880 | josh.remington@lcef.org

!AMIGOS EN CRISTO and GRACIA!

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



Rev. Pedro Lopez

Assistant to the President
Missionary at Large

pedro@iowadistrictwest.org
571-606-7600 (cell)



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we prepare our hearts for the Easter season, I give thanks for the many ways the Lord continues to bless our ministry.

We remain joyfully engaged with our members, those exploring the faith, and our friends through ongoing Bible studies and home visits. Fellowship and openness continue to be a source of encouragement.

In Deloit, we are grateful to remain connected with several families from the fall ESL session. We will soon gather with our volunteers to discern the best path forward for continuing this important ministry.

At St. Paul in Carroll, our Saturday evenings of Praise, Prayer, and Bible Study continue to be a blessing. This year, we have also enjoyed monthly times of fellowship with our friends. We look forward with excitement to beginning our Spring ESL class on April 7, 2026. We were also thankful for the opportunity to join St. Paul in serving tacos during their Lenten meal. We hope to share photos next month.

At St. Paul in Hartley, ESL classes are paused for the spring, and we look ahead with hope to resuming them in the fall.

At St. John–Storm Lake, we continue to support the Swaddling Clothes program each second Saturday of the month, and we remain active in Sunday worship at Grace. We also continue home Bible studies with our families, giving thanks for these meaningful moments in God's Word.

Prayer Requests

- The Family of Juan Morales—whom we recently upheld in prayer— as he was called to Glory on March 3, 2026. Remember his wife, Yolanda, his daughters Jocelyn and Natalie, and his son Lalo in prayer.
- The immigrant community we serve, as well as the many new individuals the Lord has brought into our lives through ESL and other ministries
- Our Hispanic ministries and all the communities we are blessed to serve.
- Paquita's sister-in-law and her brother as they face health challenges
- My wife and me, that the Lord would strengthen, guide, and equip us for the work He has entrusted to us.

Bendiciones,
Pastor Lopez



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

April 2026

This month, we want to highlight even *MORE* of the missionaries who will be visiting Mission Central this spring and summer. We hope and pray that many of you can come and learn about the exciting things that our Lord Jesus is doing in His mission fields around the world. Remember, there is no better time to visit Mission Central than when we have a missionary here!



Rev. Herb and Markie Burch serve the Lord in Belize, Central America. From Belize, they support other Lutheran ministries in Central and South America. Herb travels to several preaching stations throughout Belize, where he preaches, coaches pastoral candidates, and teaches adults and children about the Christian faith through Luther's *Small Catechism*. He also works with leaders of partner churches in Venezuela, Guatemala, and the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico to share the Gospel, plant new Lutheran churches, and show mercy. In addition, Herb visits and mentors young leaders in newly planted Lutheran churches in Honduras to encourage them and help expand their capabilities. Herb and Markie will be presenting on Saturday, April 18, at 1:30 p.m.

Rev. David and Jennifer Preus serve the Lord in Eurasia, based in Romania. As regional director for Eurasia, David directs and supports the work to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches, train church workers, and show mercy throughout the continent. He also directs and facilitates communication and the appropriation of resources for strengthening ministry and communion among missionaries, pastors, and congregations of the region. The Preus family will be here at Mission Central on Wednesday, July 8, to provide a mission presentation at 1:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!



Rev. Shauen and Krista Trump serve in Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya. As the regional director, Shauen regularly engages church leaders in more than 25 countries to equip and encourage them in their work to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches, and show mercy. Shauen supervises the LCMS missionaries across the continent, coordinates with other entities, and communicates with the boards and institutions of the LCMS. He oversees the implementation of synod directives and the development and execution of strategies, projects, and grants for Africa. Krista serves as the region's project and grant secretary and coordinator of special events. They will be presenting at Mission Central on Saturday, July 11, at 1:30 p.m.





Deaconess Jamielynn (Tinkey) Flores, BSN, RN, has served the Lord as a missionary in Latin America and the Caribbean region since July 2016. In August 2020, Jamielynn married Rafael Flores, who now serves as a Lutheran pastor in Chile. In her missionary role, Jamielynn uses her nursing background and deaconess formation to coordinate life ministry efforts and community health education in Lutheran churches throughout Latin America. She works with others to translate and create resources that meet the needs of both partner churches and mission plants on the topics of life and death, family, and relationships. Rafael and Jamielynn will be here at Mission Central on Saturday, July 11 at 2:00pm. You don't want to miss this exciting event!

Ashley Lehr serves the Lord in Puerto Rico, based in Mayagüez. As an outreach specialist, Ashley connects, equips, and organizes local and international volunteers for service to Christ both on and off the island of Puerto Rico. These relationships of service and love create opportunities for sharing the Good News of Jesus in word and deed, as well as for forming a church body that is known for serving its communities. She also works to assist local communities by connecting them to fellowship, education, and mercy activities and events. Ashley will be presenting at Mission Central on Saturday, August 22, at 1:00 p.m.



Rev. Chris and Lula Tiews serve the Lord as career missionaries in Germany. As a missionary pastor, Chris reaches out to Farsi-speaking immigrants from the Middle East, serves as a theological instructor at the Luther Academy in Riga, Latvia, and mentors future pastors. Lula is the communications specialist for the Eurasia region. In this role, she collects and tells the stories of people whose lives have been impacted by the Gospel brought to them by our missionaries. Chris and Lula will be at Mission Central on **Saturday, December 5, at 1:00 p.m.** Plan to join us for this special presentation!

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

PASTORAL CALL UPDATE

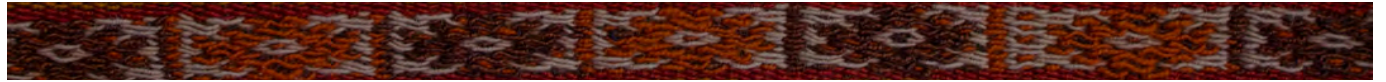
We are pleased to report progress toward bringing Frank to the United States. This past month, we met with an immigration lawyer who will help us file for an R-1 visa for Frank and his wife. We estimate the process will take about five months, assuming no delays.

We are applying for a religious worker visa, as Frank still needs to complete his vicarage. Pastor Awe has been in communication with the District regarding plans to help Frank complete his vicarage and be ordained as a pastor. We continue to move forward with thoughtful prayer, trusting that the Lord knows the plans He has for our ministry and for Frank's family.

As we continue working through this process, we will provide updates regarding legal fees, housing, and living assistance for them. We ask for your continued prayers for this process in the days ahead, as well as for all those who have helped us reach this point.

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.



The Old City, Jerusalem

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

Why Is God Still Keeping Me Here?"

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV)

Oftentimes, Christians in nursing homes express a specific frustration during visits. “Pastor, what is my purpose? Why is God still keeping me here?” Behind their eyes hide many unspoken sufferings: pain from the arthritis getting worse, pain from more freedoms being stripped away year after year, pain from family and social circles shrinking, pain from not remembering if you’ve been here 6 years or 16 years. Your body is declining; your mind is declining, and at times, it may feel like you yourself are slipping away too.

Where is God in the nursing home? Where he’s always been: among His saints of the Church, in His Word and sacraments, in the promise of Jesus’ blood and righteousness given and shed for you and your eternal salvation. The Bible promises, “Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). However, while you know this eternal peace of the life to come... what about *now*? My sins are forgiven, and I’m ready to go to Heaven, but that doesn’t answer the initial question: “Why is God still keeping me here?”

While we don’t know God’s mind, we do have the promises of His Word. He is a gracious and loving God who gives us life abundantly. On top of infinite grace, God also adds to it an earthly life of joyful service—to rejoice in our afflictions and so be a model for others to look to Christ. These are the good works God prepared for you

beforehand. But how can you do this in the limited health condition you may find yourself in?

The answer is in the people around you. For example, parents are called to raise kids, change diapers, and provide them with food and faith. But what is the calling for *you* in the nursing home? Well, if you are a parent, you are called to pray to your loving Father on behalf of your children. And even if you have no close family around, you still are called to shine Christ’s light to the workers who care for you *daily*. These young workers, who have their whole lives ahead of them, may also be asking themselves, “What is my purpose?” You can testify to the joy of Christ, even as your health declines. You can pray for them to believe the truth of eternal salvation found in the God who suffered on the cross for them to give them hope, to give them an identity, to give them meaning and purpose and peace.

The hymn “How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord” LSB #853 describes our purpose on this earth as baptized and forgiven children of God. It says, “How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed your call: To live according to Your Word And daily learn, refreshed, restored, That You are Lord of all and will not let us fall.” Our calling is to serve God in the freedom of forgiveness, *daily* learning, being refreshed and restored. This is your clear purpose, but it isn’t always easy.

The Devil wants you to think you have no purpose, that the condition of your physical health reflects the state of your soul before God. The second stanza of the hymn says this is not so: “But if, forgetful, we should find Your yoke is hard to bear; if worldly pressures fray the mind and love itself cannot unwind its tangled skein of care, Our inward life repair.” A “skein” is a length of thread or yarn, loosely coiled and knotted. When life is all in knots, when everything hurts, and you feel like a hopeless mess, we pray, “Lord, repair our inward lives. Forgive me my sins and lead me to serve you in joy. Use this weak body to bring others to faith in your Son.” The weakness of our

flesh displays the strength of Christ, for while we are weak and wasting away, God within us is stronger day by day.

This profound promise of strength in the midst of weakness and triumph in the midst of despair leads us to ponder in the third stanza of the hymn: “We marvel how Your saints become in hindrances more sure; Whose joyful virtues put to shame the casual way we wear Your name and by our faults obscure Your pow’r to cleanse and cure.” Even when I am not living or thinking as I ought, the Lord’s power to cleanse and cure remains just as potent. He cleanses our hearts of sin and gives us renewed hope and life day by day.

And finally, in all our work and service, we do not forget the source of all comfort, Jesus Christ our Savior and redeemer, who saved us from the clutches of sin and bought our inheritance to be heirs of his eternal glory. At peace with our life after death, we can live each day in hope and joyful service: “In what You give us, Lord, to do, together or alone, In old routines or ventures new, may we not cease to look to You, the cross You hung upon— All you endeavored done.”

Even when life isn’t what it used to be, and the health of your body and mind isn’t as sharp as your younger years, we still boldly confess the truth of Psalm 118:24, which proclaims, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!” As forgiven children of God, baptized and forgiven in Christ, we serve God joyfully, as Colossians 3:23-24 says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” Why is God keeping you here? So that, daily looking to Christ, you would serve the One who served you, who blesses you with the gift of life today and always.

Rev. Alex Kaldahl Trinity Lutheran Church, Marcus; Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Quimby; Trinity Lutheran Church, Hinton

THE LAMPLIGHTER



Theme: “Rely on the Power of God!”

August 2025

*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.



Update

Register Now!

Visit campokoboji.org to register for youth and family camps.

CAMP OKOBOJI 2026

Discipleship Programs

May 29-31	Kid's Kamp
June 4-7	Joy Camp 1
June 14-18	Cub Week 1
June 28-July 3	July 4 th Family Retreat
July 5-11	Jr High Week
July 9-12	Joy Camp 2
July 12-18	Cub Week 2
July 19-25	Youth Week
July 26-31	Family Retreat #1
August 2-7	Family Retreat #2

Other Events

January 23-25...Family Ice Fishing Retreat
May 1-2...Spring Volunteer Work Weekend
June 10-13...Iowa West District LWML Convention
June 20...Camp Okoboji Auxiliary Quilt Auction
June 21-27...Minneboji Lutheran Camp
May 24-September 6...Sunday Worship
1st Sundays of the Month (May-October)...Brunch
October 9-10...Fall Volunteer Work Weekend

For more information and to register, visit campokoboji.org



Summer Staff Needed!

We **urgently** need 2026 Summer Staff! We only have a few staff signed up. We know God will provide but we can't help but feel a little anxious! 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.

The Annual Meeting of Camp Okoboji is coming up, Saturday, April 11. We look forward to sharing Camp Okoboji with the congregations and members of Iowa District West and all our ministry partners! We encourage each congregation to be involved, send a delegate to hear from Camp, and report it back to their congregation and members.

Please remember **CAMP OKOBOJI AUXILIARY ACTIVITIES** held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. The day of the Annual Meeting, April 11, the Auxiliary hosts the Grocery Shower (to support the dining hall), the Theme Basket Auction (to support camper scholarships) and the Bake Sale (to support miscellaneous expenses).

May 1-3: VOLUNTEER WEEKEND: An opportunity to share your time and talents to assist in preparing camp for the summer. Room and board provided for volunteers! Please contact the office, (712) 337-3325, for lodging arrangements and sign up to help.

VOLUNTEERS: Recognizing and expressing our THANKS to volunteers and groups who give so generously of their time and talents in serving Camp Okoboji.

- A special thanks to all of the volunteers that help with our Annual Fund Mailings each year!

NEEDS/WANTS:

- Outdoor Rocking Chairs
- Laundry soap, bleach and hand soap
- Queen size mattress pads
- New commercial grade vacuums, coffee pots, toasters, crock pots
- Thrivent Action Team Cards (contact Kellie Jones for potential projects; 712-337-3325)
- Also, ask us about our Amazon Wish List!



Lutheran
Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

lutheranfamilyservice.org

409 Kenyon Road, Suite C

Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-573-3138

info@lutheranfamilyservice.org

facebook.com/LutheranFamilyService

Who Can Go And Work Today?

by Rev. David Gunderson, tLMFT



The pastor started the day fixing a leaky faucet in the church's kitchen. Later, he climbed a ladder to replace a loose shingle on the church's roof, and by noon he was emptying all the trash from every Sunday school room. Before he began mowing the church's front lawn, he remembered what his seminary catalog stated: "Your seminary education will not prepare you for all you will do in ministry."

That humorous story sadly illustrates how many church workers get caught doing tasks that are not part of their call. Many of those tasks could be done by others in the church, allowing the church worker to concentrate on work they were trained and called to do.

A church worker's main calling is to share God's good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with others. This is done through sermons, Bible studies, evangelism calls, meetings, visits, and a dozen other ways. One more way for a church worker to do the Lord's work is delegating work to others.

Biblical Delegating

It implies entrusting someone else with a task or responsibility. Jesus trained and equipped others for ministry and then sent them out. In **Luke 10** one reads

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

In the same way, church workers need to learn to train others to assist in the Lord's work. Saint Paul, in **Ephesians 4:11–12**, states,

And God gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

God Did Not Call Church Workers To Work Alone

He has called us into a team ministry! In one way, the pastor or church worker is like a coach for a sports team. The coach's job is not to play every position on the team. The coach's job is to recruit the right players, train those team members, encourage those team members, and allow the team members to do their job.

To do the Lord's work well, the pastor or church worker needs to learn to delegate different jobs within the church to others. To aid church workers in delegating with confidence (and as they grow in the art of delegation) here are five helpful steps.

5 Steps To Help The Church Worker In Delegating

1. Know What To Delegate

Having folks involved in handling finances, doing property maintenance, or assisting with teaching are some areas members can do — and possibly do better than the church worker. However, there are certain ministries, like leading worship or delivering sermons, that are best left to the church worker. At the same time, training someone to lead the worship service and possibly share an already written sermon can be a good way to cover for the pastor when he is out of town. This is a wise use of delegation.

2. Clearly Define The Job Being Delegated

Preparing a clear job description for the work being delegated is vital for success. This job description should include the goal, what needs to be done to accomplish the goal, what resources will be available — including the training provided. The job description should include the dates and times when the person needs to do the job.

For example: To recruit a Sunday school teacher, one should provide the age of the students they will be teaching, when they will be teaching (every Sunday from September through May), the lesson material provided, training opportunities to help them, and most of all a reminder that the goal in teaching is to help others know about Jesus as their Savior.

3. Provide Clear Communication And Encouragement

When challenges or questions surface, who can they ask for guidance? This person doesn't have to be the pastor or church worker, but could easily be the congregational president or someone else. If times are challenging, remember to provide words of encouragement. A weekly devotional thought from the pastor or church workers to those volunteers serving in the church can be a way to lift spirits.

4. Be Patient, Understanding, And Forgiving

People may be slower than us in doing the work. Others may choose to do things their own way. Some will make mistakes. At these times it is tempting to jump in and do it ourselves. (Don't be like that parent who says, "Oh, I can do it better myself!" only to prevent their child from ever learning how to do something.) A key to delegating is allowing others to make mistakes, forgiving them, and giving them another opportunity to learn through their mistakes. Jesus did this all the time with His disciples!

5. Seek Feedback And Give Recognition

Churches, like many businesses, need to seek input from their volunteers. Don't wait until they have finished the job. Seek their input as they are doing their work so changes can be made on the spot. Remember to recognize these servants in some public way. While many are humble servants, it is important to honor these individuals. Maybe during a church service, recognize the Sunday school teachers with a gift card or coffee cup. The key is recognizing them for being "good and faithful servants" for the Lord and His church!

In closing, remember:

Delegating gives the church worker more time to pursue other ministry opportunities, more time for family, and more time for self-care.

Delegating work to others within the church allows those individuals opportunities to do the Lord's ministry and to grow in their relationship to Christ.

God's Blessings in Christ,
Pastor David Gunderson

Our church needs healthy workers. Lutheran Family Service knows the importance of proactive wellness and encourages church workers to prioritize mental health just as much as physical health. We have years of experience serving church workers in LCMS congregations and schools. If your congregation, yourself, or a church worker you know would benefit from the support of Lutheran Family Service, refer to or contact us today.

- Call: 515-573-3138
- Email: info@lutheranfamilyservice.org
- Web Form: <http://lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact/>

DID YOU KNOW YOUR SURPLUS GRAIN CAN DO MORE THAN FILL A BIN? IT CAN HELP FILL THE KINGDOM.



As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. - 1 Peter 4:10

WHY GIVE?

- **TAX SAVINGS:** Farmer avoids having to include the sale of crops in their income along with 75% tax credit on value of the donation (credits can be spread out throughout 5 years) while helping Iowa families afford a Christ-centered education
- **MAINTAIN DEDUCTIBILITY:** Farmer can still deduct the input costs or expenses of raising the grain.
- **INSTILL A FOUNDATION OF FAITH:** Gifts of grain provide funding for Iowa students to be able to attend a Lutheran school that will give them a solid foundation of Christian education.

Learn more at:

lowalutheransto.com



IOWA LUTHERAN SCHOOL
TUITION ORGANIZATION

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

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Iowa District West

March 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!

Join us for the 5th Annual
Confessional Lutheran Homeschool League
Conference

We All Believe in One True God
Cultivating Lutheran Unity

Conference
Highlights:

Matins Service

Preaching
Rev. Kevin
Johnson

Keynote
Speaker
Rev. Jason
Braaten

Special Guest
Speaker
Rev. Jacob
Benson

Exhibitor
Presentations

Information
Booths

Suffrages



Keynote Speaker: Rev. Jason Braaten

Pastor Braaten has a BA in Theological Languages and Philosophy, and an MDiv from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. He is currently working toward an STM in Historical Theology and teaches for Wittenberg Academy. Pastor Braaten shepherds Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tuscola, Illinois.



Presentation topic: Raising Confessors

Session 1: Truth that Unites

Session 2: Forming Children to Think and Speak Faithfully

Guest Speaker: Rev. Jacob Benson

The Rev. Jacob H. Benson serves Luther Classical College as Chief Advancement and Admissions Officer. He is an assisting pastor at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Casper, Wyoming. He has a BA from the University of Wyoming and an MDiv and an STM from Concordia Theological Seminary. He currently studies early modern English poetry at Trinity College Dublin.



**Presentation topic: The One True God of Fairy Land:
Cultivating Lutheran Unity Through Epic Poetry**



Registration and Additional Information:

Go to www.holycrosscarlisle.org and click on the
'Homeschool Conference' button

Registrar: Ceci Johnson johnsonceciliam@gmail.com



May 9, 2026
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
1100 Market Street
Carlisle, Iowa