

We recently replaced our front door of 30+ years. Even though it was a much-needed upgrade, I couldn't help but think of all that door has witnessed over the years. It has fulfilled its duty of keeping out the elements and making us feel safe. It has been a portal into our home of good things and a few not so good things. It has welcomed visitors, received much-awaited packages, witnessed babies brought home from the hospital and later, those same babies leaving home. It has brought messengers with good news and sad news. It has been forcefully shut a few times over the years in irritation, annoyance, and impatience. But mostly it has been our magic door leading into our haven, our home. Even on the worst of days, the sight of it was the first signal of home offering a warm and comforting feeling that washed over me.

The sound of the door's opening has been most welcome and calming to a worried farm wife wondering if she should go check on her husband or a nervous mother awaiting the arrival of her teens home safe and sound. It has witnessed homecomings, college friend get togethers, countless family gatherings, and a surprise visitor now and then. This well-loved, overused door has been privy to every one of our comings and goings for three decades. Melancholy crept in looking at it leaning against our garage wall awaiting repurposing for an old granary workshop.

As I glanced at this worn door while admiring the new one, I thought of common sayings such as *door of opportunity* and *When one door closes, another opens*. But what does the Bible have to say about doors? Let's turn to some scripture.

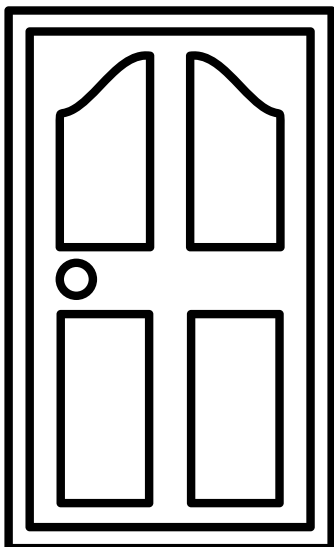
“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” ~Matthew 7:7-8

“I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” ~Revelation 3:8

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“ I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

~Revelation 3:20



Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ~Psalm 24:7

We should take heart in knowing that God's door is always open with unlimited business hours. He invites us to come in and have deep, soul-enriching, life-infusing conversations with Him. God's open-door policy is for everyone - you, the family member that drives you nuts, your most difficult neighbor, and those you consider your enemies. Opening God's door and walking through opens our hearts to love others as we are commanded.

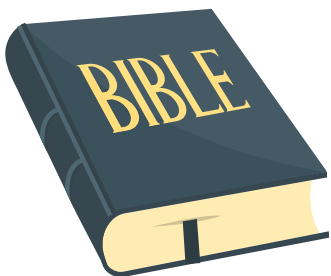
Peace, Kristi

SCHOOL KITS

Both WELCAs are collecting items for Lutheran World Relief. Watch for the school sales in the stores.

Each kit contains:

- * 4 - 70-sheet notebooks of wide or college-ruled paper, approximately 8 x 10 ½ ; no loose leaf paper
- * 1 – 30-centimeter rule, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
 - * 1 – pencil sharpener
- * 5 – unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
 - * 1 – pair of blunt scissors
- * 5 – black or blue ballpoint pens (No gel ink)
- * 1 – box of 16 or 24 count crayons
 - * 1 – 2 ½ " eraser



July Scripture Readings

July 7	Ezekiel 2:1-5	Psalm 123	2 Corinthians 12:2-10	Mark 6:1-13
July 14	Amos 7:7-15	Psalm 85:8-13	Ephesians 1:3-14	Mark 6:14-29
July 21	Jeremiah 23:1-6	Psalm 23	Ephesians 2:11-22	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56
July 29	2 Kings 4:42-44	Psalm 145 10-18	Ephesians 3:14-21	John 6:1-21



Bible School

July 22-25

Westside Wesleyan Church

The Incredible Race

Meal served at 5:30.

Evenings will end 8:15 - 8:30.

Please consider helping out an evening. Confirmation students, this is a great way to serve your church and community by being a helper!

One Family. One Race. One Savior!

Who Is Our Neighbor?

The theme of the 2024 Assembly was *Connected* and focused on our Neighbors in Solidarity. Solidarity is a commitment with others and a way of seeing, being, and acting. Solidarity means seeing and experiencing one's own well-being as connected to the well-being of others and the communities to which they belong. Solidarity often involves people aligning themselves with others who do not have the same experiences. The principle of solidarity compels respect for the lived experience of all our brothers and sisters. Solidarity encourages us to share in our neighbor's suffering and to participate in their liberation.

Across the South Dakota Synod, we have many specialized or supported ministries. Each of these ministries proclaims the Gospel and carries out the mission of our church in a specific way – sometimes working with those who have no home, sometimes building a new faith community, sometimes working with prisoners. We call these ministries “Neighbors in Solidarity” to celebrate that their work is our work, too. Jesus calls us to imagine our neighbors in a broad sense, and we stand together – in solidarity – with these ministries to share the love of Christ. These ministries are your ministries, because we are the body of Christ together.

Our Neighbors in Solidarity include:

*Church on the Street *Lutheran Campus Ministries (Lumin) in Aberdeen, Brookings, Rapid City, Vermillion, and Spearfish *McLaughlin Community Alliance Group *Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center *Pueblo de Dio Church in SF, *St. Dymas (funded independently) *Shepherd's Table, SF *Spirit of Hope Church, Scotland *Woyatan Luth. Church in RC *Companion synods in Cameroon and Nicaragua (funded through SD Synod Companion Synods)

PRAY

Christ accompanies us on our journey through prayer. God is always there for us. Regular prayer engages us with God's presence and God's reconciling mission. Pray about your role in God's Mission in the world, and more specifically in South Dakota.

LEARN

Learn about the ministries, the people impacted by these ministries and consider what your role might be in standing in solidarity with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Listen and share stories of others as a way of building relationships.

ACT!

We can share our resources: money, time, and expertise. We can become an ally, working to equip ourselves and our neighbors. God invites us all to the table and then sends us to share and serve each other.

Other Synod Snippets

36th Annual Synod Assembly

There are 200 congregations in our synod.

Friday's attendance was 342.
Saturday's attendance was slightly less than that.

Questions posed from panel discussions:

*Do you ask your students what role does their faith play in choosing a college?

*How does a resurrected Christ change your life?

*What is God doing? How can we be a part of it considering our passions, gifts/abilities, and community needs?

Box Elder will be the site of a synod-authorized worshipping community. They will receive \$20,000 from Churchwide.

34 percent of congregations exceeded their mission support commitments.

October 16th is World Hunger Sunday. This year is the 50th anniversary of ELCA World Hunger.

Pastor Alan Blankenfeld resigned and has accepted a part-time position with Messiah Lutheran of Flandreau.

Through the Lilly grant, 1 rural ministry director will be hired as well as 2 liasons. Other states are looking to SD as a model for addressing rural ministry issues.

Bishop Hagmeier will be on sabbatical in August and discerning whether or not to run for the next term of Bishop. She will also be on sabbatical in November and December.

Each congregation will be receiving a self-study survey on August 1 which will be due on September 1.

Lutherans Outdoors

Giving stats: (individuals)
2022 - 881 givers
2023 - 801 givers, but \$20,000 more was given

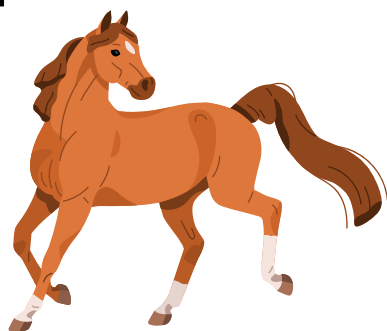
Congregations:
2022 - 101
2023 - 65

Tie-dye and Tuxedos Gala
November 8th
5:30 - 9:30
Prosper Event Hall
Lennox, SD

LO has 15 year-round positions. They continue to struggle having enough camp counselors. Marti Knudsen and the NeSoDak counselors visited and provided music during the assembly and shared the Core Values:

Explore faith
Welcome all
Build leaders
Care for ALL creation

Kampin' at Klein



submitted by Remi Hubsch

This month I was fortunate enough to be able to attend camp at Klein Ranch. Some of my favorite moments at camp were during Choice Time, where we got to sit with our counselors and friends. We sang along to music, enjoyed snacks, played games, and talked.

Another time that I enjoyed was worship. We sang songs and reviewed our lessons from Bible study. There were a number of places where worship was held, but my personal favorite spot was by the campfire.

And of course, I got to ride a horse! There was a trainer that taught us how to ride and saddle, and then we were off! We rode to some very scenic places, taking in the natural beauty of it all.

Finally, I would really like to thank Bethesda Lutheran Church and the Bethesda Butler Luther League for providing me with this opportunity!

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities –all things were created through him and for him. ~Colossians 1:16

BETHESDA WELCA Monday, June 10, 2024

Bethesda WELCA met on June 10, 2024, at 1:30 pm with 6 members present. Jane Goehring called the meeting to order, and the purpose statement was read. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Thank you notes were read. Since Karin Bartell won't be able to prepare the luncheon meal, the menu and work assignments were planned, and payment for the speaker was decided. Missions: 15 blankets were delivered to Ronald McDonald House in Sioux Falls. Sharon Johnson gave devotions from Proverbs 3:5 and Romans 8:37 and closed with a prayer by Paul. Secretary, Kathryn Bury



**Emmanuel Lutheran Luncheon
Groton
July 25 - 6:00
Speaker - Kristi Anderson
Treasures Amidst Trials
Cost is \$15**

Contact:
Shirley Larson 397-8600
Penny Stolle 397-4562

PERSONAL CARE KITS

Bethesda WELCA is collecting toothbrushes, sturdy combs, and lightweight bath towels for health kits. Towels can be 20 x 40 or 27 x 52 inches and darker colors are preferred. These needed items are on display in the narthex.

REMINDER to all Bethesda women to pay \$15 to help defray the costs of the WELCA July luncheon; payment may be given to Kay. We hope to see you July 10th at the luncheon!

PINK CLOUD BERRY CHEESECAKE SALAD shared by Sarah Harms

1 large Cool Whip
24 oz. vanilla yogurt
1 dry pkg. cheesecake pudding mix
1 dry pkg. white chocolate pudding mix
3 lb. bag of frozen mixed berries

Pour berries partially thawed into a large bowl. Add the Cool Whip and yogurt, and then sprinkle on the dry pudding mixes.

Stir together well until it is all combined and looks pretty. Chill before serving.



RURAL MINISTRY AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

These statistics and excerpted thoughts were shared by Pastor Janet Miller while being involved in a 6-week class.

*Farmers and those who work around them are 2 to 3.5 times more likely to commit suicide than any other professions.

*14.5% of all farmers in America will die of suicide. That comes to over 50,000 suicides a year.

*75% of those suicides are men but of the women farmers there is the highest suicide attempts in the nation.

*The suicide rate for farmers has increased by 30% since the year 2000.

Living in a rural community, we need to be aware that these statistics reflect our neighbors, friends, families, and us.

When dealing with people who are suffering from depression and suicidal thoughts, things can seem really overwhelming, leaving us feeling helpless. Although we are not called to cure, we can provide a safe place for someone to lay his/her burden down and rest. Providing a meal, a caring touch, or a listening ear are small things we can do for those suffering. Your small thing and God's big presence can be a reason to face one more day....and sometimes what is needed is that reason to hope. As disciples of Christ, we can bring God's hope to the hurting.

From Kristi - It hurts my heart that people don't feel they can talk about their mental struggles the same as physical struggles. This needs to change! It is not a sign of weakness; we are called to walk beside each other in our struggles and our joys. It's OK to not be OK at times! Please reach out! You are precious in the sight of the Lord!