

WYOMING DISTRICT

ROUND-UP

Wyoming District—LCMS
2400 Hickory St.
Casper, WY 82604
(307) 265-9000

www.wylcms.org



SUMMER
2023



The Christian in Community: The Solitary in a Family

“God settles the solitary in a home” (Psalm 68:6). This promise is the prophetic description of the New Testament church. Psalm 68, which is quoted in Ephesians 4 regarding the Ministry of the New Testament, also speaks of the Church, the Ascension of Christ, Pentecost, the Word and Sacraments, and much more. But for the lonely, the isolated, the desolate, the solitary, this promise holds particular comfort and hope.

The patriarch Jacob is the living image of this promise. When his father Isaac got old, he called to his older son Esau to bring him a meal, so that afterwards he may give him the blessing by which he would lead both church and household. (Read Genesis 27.) But Jacob beat his brother to it, deceived his father, and added the blessing to the birthright that he had previously “purchased” from Esau for a meal of soup (Genesis 25:29–34). Now, God had already promised these things to Jacob while he and his twin brother Esau were in the womb of Rebekah (Genesis 25:23). Nevertheless, the effect of his deception was predictable. Esau was filled with murderous rage and threatened to kill Jacob. His mother sent Jacob away to her brother Laban till Esau’s anger had cooled. Isaac also commanded that Jacob should find a Christian wife among his uncle’s household (Genesis 28:1–5).

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go. I will not leave you or forsake you. I will do to you what I have promised.”

So, in Genesis 28, we find Jacob driven out of his own home, alone, traveling through unknown country to a place he had never seen to visit relatives he had never met. He was alone. He was a hunted man. He was without family, without possessions, without safety. He was to obtain a pious Christian wife without land, home, money, livestock, or family assistance. He had nothing to offer. His future seemed hopeless, by all human reckoning.

Actually, he did have one thing to offer a wife: God’s Word. Jacob had the birthright and blessing of the promise God had made to Abraham: “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your seed [offspring] as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your Seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:16–18). The Seed was Christ. The promise was God’s Word that He would send His Son as Abraham’s Seed, so that all who believed in Him would be reckoned righteous in Him and would share in all His blessings.

Abraham had taught his sons and his grandsons this wonderful Word from God and had expounded upon it at length to his household. Isaac had done the same, so that Rebekah his wife risked all for the promise, and Jacob longed for it with great zeal. But now, solitary and desolate, Jacob needed to hear the promise for himself.

So the LORD appeared to Jacob in a dream in which a ladder stretched from earth to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. In John 1:51 Jesus teaches Nathanael that He, the Son of Man, is that ladder. He is true man, from the earth, and also true God, from heaven. These two natures are joined eternally in the Person of Jesus. By Him God sends blessings from heaven above to earth below. By Him we pray on earth to God above and are heard, until we also ascend to Christ at our death and resurrection.

In the dream, God renewed his promise to Jacob: "In you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And God added promises of comfort and strength to Jacob in his lonely isolation: "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:13–15).

In the same way God comforts all those, like Jacob, who experience the difficulty and pain of being alone. He speaks to the unmarried, the widowed, the lonely, those far from family, those who feel unloved, the friendless, and so on. "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go. I will not leave you or forsake you. I will do to you what I have promised."

And what has He promised? He promised to send His dear Son, God eternal, to join our solitary existence on earth as a man, that He may endure our temptations and suffer our desolation. In Jesus He promised to atone for our sins and reckon us righteous in His sight through faith. In Jesus He promised to join us to the family and household of God, to give us brothers and sisters in Christ our Brother, to "set the solitary in a family." All this He has done in Christ, who also promised, "And lo, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

"...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS..." (Eph. 1:16)

For **Rev. Ralph Jaeger** (emeritus, Laramie), health.

For our active-duty chaplain, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**.

PASTORS AND CONGREGATIONS

Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon) is serving **Grace, Merriman, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

Prince of Peace, Buffalo (served by **Rev. Rene Castillero, Immanuel, Sheridan**). Rev. Roger Mullet will be installed on July 9 at 4:00 PM.

Our Savior's, Chadron (served by **Rev. James Rockhill, Bethlehem, Crawford and Redeemer, Harrison**) is awaiting an updated call list.

Immanuel, Burns and **St. John's, Kimball** (served by **Rev. Andrew Dimit**, assistant pastor at **King of Glory, Cheyenne**): Pastor-Elect **Ellery Steffensen** will be ordained and installed Saturday, July 8, at 3:00 PM at St. John's.

Rev. Lee Wisroth (Immanuel, Powell) has announced his retirement, with July 24 set as his last Sunday.

THE NEXT ROUNDUP

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations after July 20 (August 2023 issue).



REFORMATION 500

The sudden flowering of Lutheran hymns during the Lutheran Reformation sprang forth from the blood of Lutheran martyrs. On July 1, 1523, the enemies of the Gospel of Christ burned two young men at the stake: Heinrich Voes and Johann Esch. They were Augustinian monks who had embraced Lutheran doctrine and were martyred for their confession. Luther thought he would be the first Lutheran martyr “for the sake of this holy gospel: but I am not worthy of it” (Brecht II.103). Yet he immediately gave thanks that God’s Word was bearing fruit “to make new martyrs.” These two young men were the first blood witnesses of the pure doctrine of the Reformation.

The killers and their fellow enemies of the Gospel began to spread around the lie that the two young men had recanted the pure doctrine before their death. To counter this lie, and to give popular publicity to the martyrdom, Luther wrote a hymn—a ballad—which recounted the event and instructed Christians how to understand it. The hymn, printed below, rehearses both the events of the martyrdom and the spiritual warfare that surrounded it. The hymn concludes with joy that God’s Word has reappeared in His Church and is bringing about the summer of the Gospel.

Luther had never written a hymn before this one. That was to change dramatically for the remainder of 1523 and 1524. In this brief year and a half he wrote the words, and in many cases, the music, for some two dozen hymns, most of which we have in our hymnal. Luther learned he had a talent for writing hymns. More importantly, he learned that singing the Word and doctrine of God was a powerful tool to teach the faith, instill doctrine in the mind and heart, comfort the contrite or sad, and give joy to the beloved saints of God. This first hymn of the Reformation seems long to us (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 259 is a two-stanza summary of the text below). I give it to you here and encourage you to read it as a memorial and thanksgiving for the first Lutheran martyrs and for the Reformation of the Church in doctrine and song.

1. A new song here shall be begun—
The Lord God help our singing!
Of what our God himself hath done,
Praise, honor to him bringing.
At Brussels in the Netherlands
By two boys, martyrs youthful
He showed the wonders of his hands,
Whom he with favor truthful
So richly hath adorned.

2. The first right fitly John was named,
So rich he in God’s favor;
His brother, Henry—one unblamed,
Whose salt lost not its savor.
From this world they are gone away,
The diadem they’ve gained;
Honest, like God’s good children, they
For his word life disdained,
And have become his martyrs.

3. The old arch-fiend did them immure [imprison]
With terrors did enwrap them.
He bade them God’s dear Word abjure [deny],
With cunning he would trap them:
From Louvain many sophists came,
In their curst nets to take them,
By him are gathered to the game:
The Spirit fools doth make them—
They could get nothing by it.

4. Oh! they sang sweet, and they sang sour;
Oh! they tried every double [deception];
The boys they stood firm as a tower,
And mocked the sophists’ trouble.
The ancient foe it filled with hate
That he was thus defeated
By two such youngsters—he, so great!
His wrath grew sevenfold heated, [see Daniel 3]
He laid his plans to burn them.

5. Their cloister-garments off they tore,
Took off their consecrations;
All this the boys were ready for,
They said Amen with patience.
To God their Father they gave thanks
That they would soon be rescued
From Satan’s scoffs and mumming pranks,
With which, in falsehood masked,
The world he so befooleth.

6. Then gracious God did grant to them
To pass true priesthood’s border, [see 1 Peter 2]
And offer up themselves to him,
And enter Christ’s own order,
Unto the world to die outright,
With falsehood made a schism,
And come to heaven all pure and white,
To monkery be the bosom [broom],
And leave men’s toys behind them.

7. They wrote for them a paper small,
And made them read it over;
The parts they showed them therein all
Which their belief did cover.
Their greatest fault was saying this:
“In God we should trust solely;
For man is always full of lies,
We should distrust him wholly:”
So they must burn to ashes

Continued on page 4

Wyoming District Fathers & Sons Retreat Registration Form

8. Two huge great fires they kindled then,
The boys they carried to them;
Great wonder seized on every man,
For with contempt they view them.
To all with joy they yielded quite,
With singing and God-praising;
The sophs had little appetite
For these new things so dazing,
Which God was thus revealing.

9. They now repent the deed of blame,
Would gladly gloze it over;
They dare not glory in their shame,
The facts almost they cover.
In their hearts gnaweth infamy—
They to their friends deplore it;
The Spirit cannot silent be:
Good Abel's blood out-poured
Must still besmear Cain's forehead. [See Genesis 4]

10. Leave off their ashes never will;
Into all lands they scatter;
Stream, hole, ditch, grave—nought keeps them still
With shame the foe they spatter.
Those whom in life with bloody hand
He drove to silence triple,
When dead, he them in every land,
In tongues of every people,
Must hear go gladly singing.

11. But yet their lies they will not leave,
To trim and dress the murder [murder];
The fable false which out they gave,
Shows conscience grinds them further.
God's holy ones, e'en after death,
They still go on belying;
They say that with their latest breath,
The boys, in act of dying,
Repented and recanted.

12. Let them lie on for evermore—
No refuge so is reared;
For us, we thank our God therefore,
His word has reappeared.
Even at the door is summer nigh,
The winter now is ended,
The tender flowers come out and spy;
His hand when once extended
Withdraws not till he's finished. (AE 53.215–216)

Name: _____

First Son at Home: _____

Additional Sons:

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Home Congregation: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Emergency Phone: _____

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CHECK: \$125.00

Additional Important Information (diet, health, etc.)

The District office is seeking volunteers from members of the Wyoming District with the Home-school Retreat and the Fathers Sons Retreat. We are in need of people to help with games and activities for the Homeschool retreat during presentations and also people to help with cooking and cleaning for both retreats. If you are able and willing, please contact Tiffany at 307-251-3157 or thoff@wylcms.org and let her know what you are available to help with.

Grace Lutheran Church in Greybull will celebrate her 75th Anniversary on Saturday, August 19, with a worship service at 11:00am, followed by lunch and a program with history and music. Pastors attending are invited to be part of the procession (red stole).



Pictured (L-R): Laura Jackson, Vicar Patrick Jackson (Our Savior, Cheyenne), President Hill, Pastor-elect Ellery Steffensen, and Meghan Steffensen.

We give thanks to God for sending faithful laborers to serve our district. Patrick Jackson will be doing his vicarage at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Cheyenne under the supervision of Rev. Joshua Scheer and Rev. Marcus Baikie. Please keep them in your prayers.

Pastor-elect Ellery Steffensen will be ordained and installed as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church (Kimball) and Immanuel Lutheran Church (Burns) during a divine service on Saturday, July 8 at 3:00pm.

The service will be held at St. John's (601 Locust St. Kimball, NE) with The Rev. Adam Koontz preaching and The Rev. John Hill officiating. A reception at St. John's will follow. Pastors who are attending are encouraged to participate in the procession. Please bring your LSB Agenda and wear a red stole.

Rev. Travis Berg was installed as pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, Lander on June 25th.

Pictured (L-R) front row: Rev. Gregory Sonnenschein, Rev. Travis Berg, Rev. Mark Mumme. Back row: Rev. Daniel Mulholland, Rev. President John Hill.



The Divine Service with Rite of Installation for Rev. Roger Mullet will be held on Sunday, July 9 at 4:00 p.m. at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (1200 Fort St., Buffalo, WY). Rev. John Hill will preach and officiate the service. Clergy are invited to participate. Please bring your LSB Agenda and green stoles.



The 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will be held from July 29 to August 3, 2023, at the Baird center in downtown Milwaukee. The Synod will gather under the convention theme, ‘We Preach Christ Crucified,’ based on 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. In a world of uncertainty, the church’s proclamation, mission, and identity remain the same. We preach Christ crucified.

Information regarding convention, including the Convention Workbook, can be found at lcms.org/convention/national. The livestream will be available for your viewing from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm (EST) at lcms.org/convention/national/livestream. Pastoral and Lay Delegates from the Wyoming District will be in attendance. These men will be voting on behalf of congregations within their circuit. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel to Milwaukee and discuss matters of the Church with others across the nation and make decisions that are pleasing to the Lord.

Chimney Rock & High Plains Circuit

Pastoral Voting Delegate: Rev. Allen Strawn—Bridgeport, NE

Lay Voting Delegate: Mr. John Schmall—Bayard, NE

Pine Ridge Circuit

Pastoral Voting Delegate: Rev. James Rockhill—Crawford, NE

Lay Voting Delegate: Mr. Blake Pieper—Hay Springs, NE

Powder River Circuit

Pastoral Voting Delegate: Rev. Dr. Christian Preus—Casper, WY

Lay Voting Delegate: Mr. Larry Rice—Glenrock, WY

Yellowstone & Headwaters Circuit

Pastoral Voting Delegate: Rev. Jacob Benson—Lovell, WY

Lay Voting Delegate: Mr. Al List—Cody, WY

Non-voting Advisory Delegates

Rev. Harold Hintzman—Cheyenne, WY

Mr. Nathanael Hahn—Casper, WY

The Homeschool Retreat will take place July 11-13 at the Lion’s Camp on Casper Mountain. This year’s theme is ‘The Excellence of the Knowledge of Christ: Philippians 3:8.’ Our speakers this year will be Rev. Jacob Benson, Rev. Andrew Richard, and Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Mars. Registration is free however families are asked to make a donation to help cover the cost of food and lodging. Please make checks payable to ‘Wyoming District—LCMS.’ Registration can be found at wylcms.org/homeschoolretreat

Report on Wind River Lutheran Mission

When the legal and medical troubles with Covid arrived in 2020, our work on the Wind River Reservation was already facing a stiff headwind. Tribal leadership no longer favored our presence and work. Religious conditions on the Reservation were shaped by a return to tribal animist and demonic spirituality, supported by the federal government and elitist cultural forces in our country. Christianity was not favored but tolerated, at best. Under these conditions, our Sunday School and VBS continued to thrive up to a certain age group, and our missionary was able at times to serve the local jail and the nursing home at Ft. Washakie. Bible Classes and Divine Services were held every Sunday.

Covid conditions put an end to all of it. Tribal members were particularly vulnerable to the virus. Beyond that, federal and tribal government shut down all schools and organized activities with children, including our Sunday School. The jail and nursing home were closed to visitors. The clothing give-away ceased. Tribal members with a connection to the Mission stopped coming to church and declined visits from our missionary. The few who continued faithfully at Mission services decided to attend church at Bethel, Lander. Our mission on the Reservation effectively came to an end long before our Board of Directors (BOD) finally took action.

On May 23, 2023 the Wyoming District BOD approved a resolution to “suspend the Wind River Lutheran Mission,” ending the call to Pastor Sonnenschein and our ministry agreement with Mount Calvary, Dubois, effective September 30, 2023. The Board made provisions for the ongoing care of the members of the Mission, for Pastor Sonnenschein’s transition as he continues as the pastor of Mount Calvary, and for the disposition of the possessions and property of the Mission.

The final two paragraphs of the resolution express both our deep gratitude for those who served the Mission and our hope and intentions for our ongoing obligations to reach out to tribal members:

Resolved that the Wyoming District congregations give thanks to God for the Pastor-Missionaries, together with their wives and families, for their faithful service, for enduring unique hardships and the absence of the normal congregational support, and for the gifts they brought to the Mission; and be it finally

Resolved, that while we, the Wyoming District congregations and pastors, grieve the suspension of our Mission on the Wind River Reservation, we give thanks that God provided His pure Word and Sacraments on the Reservation and brought His ministry and care to its members over the decades, and we pray that God would continue to open doors to the tribal members through the ministry and care of Bethel Lutheran Church, Lander, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Riverton, and Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Dubois.

The final word here is reserved to thank the congregations of the Wyoming District, the many pastors and laymen who have served the Mission in various ways, and our many donors across the Synod, for the generosity, prayers, and encouragement you have all given over the years. On behalf of the Wyoming District I thank you. Your zeal in sending the Gospel to the tribal members on the Reservation sustained this mission these many decades. Your love to them provided them not only a pastor, but also a chapel to worship in and clothing to give away. Your prayers sustained our missionaries through challenging circumstances. Your encouragement sustained the leadership of the district in planning and providing for the Mission.

None of our work in teaching, preaching, catechizing, baptizing, forgiving, and providing the Lord’s Supper will be lost to God or to those who received it. While the mission as we know it has ceased, we know that God’s Word will not return void but will still bear fruit, according to God’s will. And we encourage the three congregations in the Wind River valley, as they have opportunity, to draw the tribal members into their congregations to share in the blessed and saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ,
President John Hill

The list of names below are students who are currently enrolled in the Seminary program at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne or Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. It is our hope that you will pray for them during their time at Seminary and consider supporting them financially, if you are able, to help lessen their debt when they leave seminary. Please keep an eye out in the Fall edition of the roundup for a biography highlighting these men and their families.

Brandon Streeks (1st Year)
4308 Walker's Ridge
Fort Wayne, IN 46818

Edward Krez (2nd Year)
801 Seminary Place
Saint Louis, MO 63105

Nathanael Mars (1st Year)
5410 Brighton Drive
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Peter Preus (4th Year)
315 Carroll Rd
Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Andrew Hill (Post-Grad work)
7932 Westwick Place
Fort Wayne, IN 46835

Wyoming District
Fathers & Sons Retreat
July 28-30, 2023
Casper Mountain, Wyoming

Theme: Four Flawed Judges - One Gracious God
Presenting: Rev. David Petersen

Whereas the biblical record records the ordinary world, ancient mythologies celebrate characters like Achilles and half-gods like Hercules. Hollywood and most modern adventure also favor those sorts of characters. Consider, just for a moment, the characters in the Marvel cinematic universe. The Bible is not fantasy. It presents history. It is the story of ordinary, flawed people. Moses is a murderer. He sometimes throws temper tantrums. David betrays his own family and army. Peter, James, and John are too weak to stay awake. Yet God bestows His Spirit upon these people and they display real but heroic faith. In this regard there are perhaps no more interesting, flawed, or complicated characters in all of Scripture than the judges Ehud, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson. Our retreat will take a hard look at these difficult accounts to discover the virtue of faith and manliness and God's promises for it.

Registration Deadline: July 21, 2023
Cost: \$125 per household

Registration available at wylcms.org/fsretreat or on page 4 of the District Roundup

An update from Luther Classical College

Greetings in Christ! We have now completed the second quarter of this exciting year. In just over two years Luther Classical College will be welcoming its first class of LCC freshman onto campus. Students will be immersed in our beautiful Lutheran heritage— one that prizes our blessed dependence on Christ, active yearning for and certain hope in the pure Gospel, and a committed love for learning and Christian culture.

Your incredible commitment to Lutheran Classical College is a beautiful lesson for these future students. Please allow me to share a little bit about our impressive work so far.

Thanks to you, LCC now has over 120 congregations financially supporting with many more pending. The number of your individually supporting LCC is nearly 750, and your monthly gifts are now well over doubled what they were last year. Not only this, but over 150 of you have even helped us secure steady monthly gifts through your participation in our Patron Program. Some of you give \$10. Some give \$25, \$50, \$100, or even \$250 a month, all according to your abilities. Altogether your average gift is over twice as much as that of the average mission of our size. Brothers and sisters, your strong commitment is overwhelming. We are actively participating in the blossoming of a remarkable bright future for our children, homes, churches, and synod. Praise be to God!

And your gifts are accomplishing many things. LCC is on track to complete the engineering of its beautiful campus by next Spring. Our Academic Deal, Dr. Ryan MacPherson, is starting his work this summer, and we are in the final stages of choosing the first President of LCC. On top of all this, our curriculum development remains 100% on track and we have invigorated our activity in raising funds necessary to begin building out our now 16-acre campus as early as next year.

In an effort to continue this outstanding momentum, I would like to ask of you a favor:

If you haven't already, please join our Patron Program by committing to donate \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, or \$250 a month, and ask your loved ones to do the same. This will allow us to commit the resources we need to maintain strong growth and management of this effort. If you are already signed up, please know how much this helps!

Sign up at www.lutherclassical.org/giving-forms/friend

We are truly overwhelmed with gratitude by your commitment to this mission and thank God for your continue support. Please continue to pray for the ongoing work of Luther Classical College, for Dr. MacPherson and his family as they move to Casper this summer, and for the bright future of the Lutheran Church, that she remain steadfast in her faithfulness to God's pure Word. Thank you all again for your incredible support and God be praised for the bountiful fruit He has given this mission so far!

Your brother in Christ,



Mr. Samuel H. Preus
Director of Development
Luther Classical College

