

These two events, small in themselves, demonstrate the practical side of the Reformation—the actual change in the calling of pastors and in daily congregational life. In his preface addressed “to all Christians in the congregation of Leisnig,” Luther wrote, “Since the Father of all mercies has called you as well as others to the fellowship of the gospel, and has caused his Son Jesus Christ to shine into your hearts; and since this richness of the knowledge of Christ is so active and powerful among you that you have set up a new order of service, and a common fund after the example of the apostles, I have seen fit to have this ordinance of yours printed, in the hope that God will so add his gracious blessing that it may become a public example to be followed by many other congregations” (p. 169).

### **Future Dates (see [wylcms.org](http://wylcms.org) for information)**

November 10-12: Youth Breakaway (grades 5-8), St. Andrew’s, Laramie

February 9-10: Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation, Ramkota, Casper. (*Registration available at [wylcms.org](http://wylcms.org)*)

February 16-17: Youth Breakaway (grades 9-12), St. Andrew’s, Laramie

### **THE NEXT ROUNDUP**

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations around November 20 (December 2023 issue).



## ***Wyoming District Round-Up***

November 2023

*District Website: [www.wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org)*

**“...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, Merri-**  
**man, NE** (Nebraska District) while it considers its future.

**Our Savior’s, Chadron** (served by **Rev. James Rockhill, Bethle-**  
**hem, Crawford and Redeemer, Harrison**) met September 26 and called  
Rev. Willis McCall (Mount Olive, Billings, MT), who has returned the call.

**Immanuel, Powell** (served by **Rev. Kenneth Mars, Christ the King,**  
**Cody**) is submitting nominations for a call list.

**Trinity, Morrill** (served by **Rev. Scott Firminhac, Our Savior’s,**  
**Torrington**) is in the pre-call process.

**Rev. Mark Preus (St. Andrew’s, Laramie)** continues his sabbatical  
till January. St. Andrew’s is being served by **Rev. Mark Maas (King of Glory,**  
**Cheyenne)** during the sabbatical.

**Rev. Daniel Mulholland (Shepherd of the Valley, Fort Bridger):**  
Thanksgiving to God for delivering him from death in the wilderness.

**Rev. Darren Pflughoeft (St. Paul’s, Lusk)** is considering a divine  
call to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Annandale, Minnesota.

### **The Christian in Community: Wrestling with God**

There is no place for fear in the church or in the Christian. Christ Jesus our Lord is risen from the dead! He who atoned for our sins by His blood out of His everlasting love for us will always provide for and defend His dear and precious little flock. Daily He comforts and strengthens us through His holy Word and blessed Sacraments. Fear not!

But as we see in Genesis 32, Christians and churches are frequently assaulted by fear for the future, threats in the world, strife and division within the congregation, and a thousand lies and seductions of the devil. In this chapter, Jacob is finally returning to the land God promised him. He is at the head of a large family and the owner of many flocks and

herds. His aged father, whom he has not seen these twenty years, is still alive and eager to see him.

But all this joy is crushed by the news that his murderously angry brother Esau is coming to meet him with a force of 400 mounted men. If this were not enough, at the end of the chapter God Himself comes against Jacob as a wrestling champion. What do we do when both God and man appear to be against us?

Jacob responds in faith to these threats in three ways. First, he works and arranges his family and possessions according to wisdom to soften his brother's anger and give his family the possibility of escape. So we use all the wisdom and resources God has given us to provide for our family and congregation and community, that we may protect them from physical and spiritual harm.

Second, he prays to God, recalling God's spoken promise, confessing his own unworthiness, and glorifying God for His mercy and truth. Likewise, as we work and labor for our family, church, and community, we pray to God just as Jacob did, committing the outcome of our labors to God and trusting in His Word.

Third, when God comes against Jacob as his Adversary, Jacob does not flee from God but holds fast to Him, even when God has injured him. In fact, he refuses to let go of God until He has spoken a blessing. So also in our troubles we hold fast to Jesus and His Word, convinced that He loves such faith and that He will work great good for us. "You have wrestled with God and with men, and have prevailed." We often suffer lifelong injuries in our wrestling with God and our war with the devil and all his works and all his ways. Yet, like Jacob, God keeps His promises and delivers us with the whole church through Jesus Christ our Lord. We die with Christ, that we may also live with Him.

In Genesis 33, we learn that God answered Jacob's prayer and delivered him. He softened the wrathful heart of Esau, and the two brothers were reconciled. He brought Jacob back to Canaan in safety and with many blessings. He is Jacob's God, our God, faithful and true.

We too find many reasons for fear. Our families are under assault, and many have broken or fallen because of sin or the world's deceptions. Our congregations are small and often vulnerable to limited resources. They struggle to fill offices, pay the bills, and provide for the pastor and his family. Too often we see family strife in our homes and congregations like the strife between Jacob and Esau. And it is no secret that our communities and nation are beset by many sins, by those who despise God, by false teachers and teachings, and by the temptation to despair.

Yet God's dealings with Jacob, and the example of Jacob's faith in God's Word, encourage us and strengthen us. We have no reason to fear, for God is with us. Our God and Brother Jesus is risen from the dead.

He has overcome all our enemies—our sin, our death, our old evil foe. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid" (Psalm 27:1). "In God, my faithful God, I trust when dark my road; Great woes may overtake me, Yet He will not forsake me. My troubles He can alter; His hand lets nothing falter" (LSB 745.1).

### **REFORMATION 500**

In the latter months of 1523 Luther was not only writing hymns and composing tunes to go with them, but he continued to translate the Bible into German. By September he had translated and published the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch). By December 4 he had translated Judges through Esther. He was lecturing privately on Deuteronomy. Eventually he took his notes and wrote a commentary on Deuteronomy, published 1525. He continued to preach regularly, and 25 of his sermons from 1523 were published. We also have much of his correspondence with kings, princes, pastors, and others.

Two things happened in 1523 that had great significance for congregational life in the Lutheran Reformation. First, the Wittenberg city council, acting as a kind of voters' assembly and in consultation with Luther, elected John (Johannes) Bugenhagen to fill the pastoral vacancy at the City Church (St. Mary's). Luther continued as their preacher. Bugenhagen, born in 1485 in Pomerania on the Baltic Sea, had become a Lutheran in 1520. He came to Wittenberg as a student in 1521, married in 1522, and was soon lecturing at the University. In becoming the pastor of Wittenberg, he also became Luther's pastor and caregiver for his soul (*Seelsorger*). He helped shape the worship and congregational life not only of Wittenberg but far beyond. Luther installed him in office in October 1523, and one of his first acts as pastor was to reopen the city school.

Second, in the summer of 1523 Luther published the *Ordinance of a Common Chest* (AE 45.169–194), an ordinance for the city church in Leisnig which is a forerunner of our own congregational constitutions and bylaws. It made provision for the calling of pastors and the appointment of teachers for the school. It arranged for the gathering and maintenance of funds from offerings and various other sources. It directed the annual election of 10 trustees from all classes of the community to administer the funds. These funds were to be used to pay the salary of the pastors and teachers, provide for the care of the aged, infirm, orphans, and dependent children (that is, members with no family to help them), maintain and construct buildings, and purchase an emergency food supply for the community. Remarkably, the ordinance envisioned a congregation that was run by the congregation itself and not by the city council or some other agent of the state.