

WYOMING DISTRICT

# ROUND-UP

Wyoming District—LCMS  
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[www.wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org)



SPRING  
2024

### *The Christian in Community*

The book of Exodus records the creation of a community. It will help us understand what a profoundly important work God is doing in Exodus to observe the contrary impulses of our own day.

It is a sad fact that so many people see each other as objects to be used and then discarded, rather than as fellow members of a body or community. Young people hook up for a night or week or month, and then discard the unwanted person. A husband uses his wife until he tires of her and then moves on. Couples see children not as precious gifts placed by God into a divinely ordered community (the family), but as forms of obsessive self-fulfillment, as objects of personal pleasure, as projects to fulfill an agenda, as burdens to be endured—to be rid of as soon as possible, or perhaps never to leave. People today fear commitment, avoid joining groups, isolate themselves in their work, their play, their private lives. Computers, cell phones, home entertainment centers, and the attending evils of internet pornography, gambling, or gaming addictions make this situation far worse. People resist forming or joining communities.

In Exodus 3 and 4, we find Moses the lonely shepherd, isolated from his people in Egypt. Israel was a slave people. They were like sheep without a shepherd. They lacked the essentials for the formation of a church and a nation: a common purpose, a common leader, a common vision and message, a common law, a common worship, a common structure and form. We have heard that there were pious Christians among them, for example, the midwives who refused to perform abortion and infanticide (Exodus 1). But they were entirely incapable of planning and acting as a community.

*“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.” 1 Peter 2:24*

Exodus 2 ends with God’s resolve to act on behalf of the people of Israel: “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God saw the people of Israel—and God knew” (24–25). His first act was to call Moses into the Office of the Word of God. Moses would serve as civil ruler, as judge, as priest, as battle commander. But it was through the Office of the Word of God that God would constitute the “harassed and helpless” Israelites (Matthew 9:36) into His “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6), that is, into the church of the living God.

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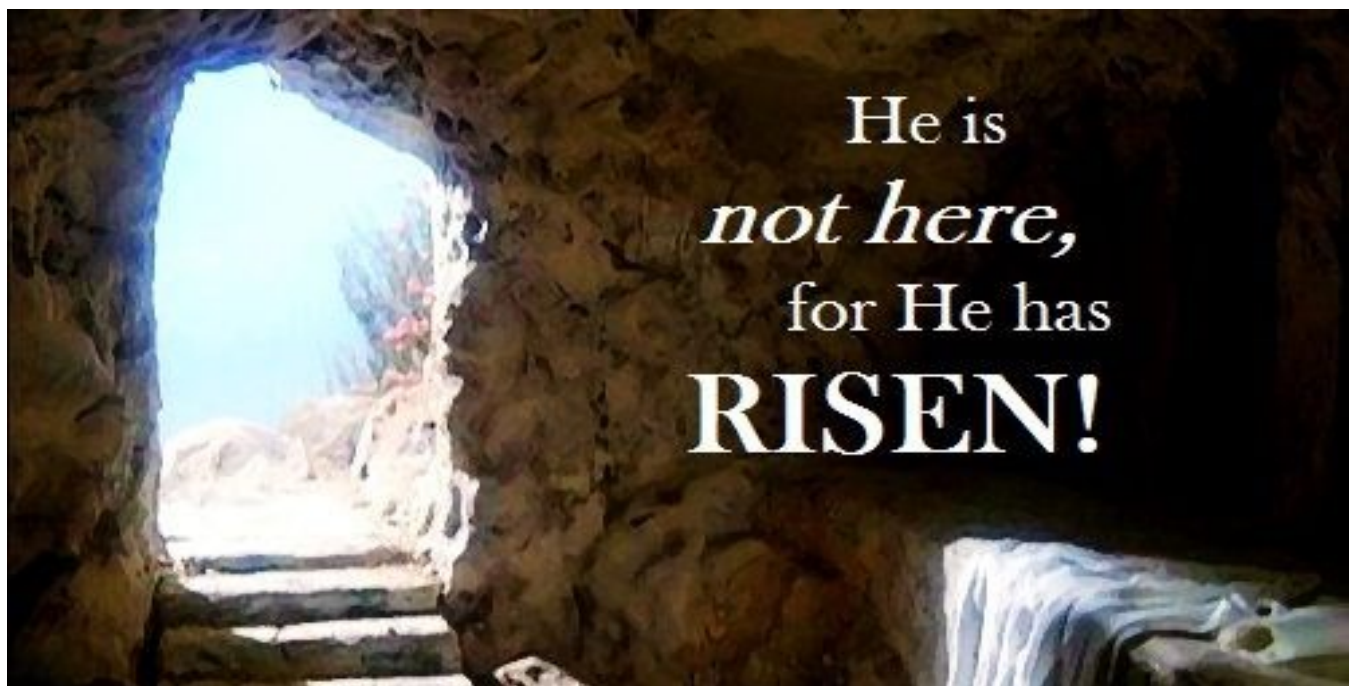
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So the Holy Spirit teaches in 1 Corinthians 10:1–4, “For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.”

In Exodus 3–4, God called Moses into the Preaching Office. Like other Old Testament prophets (and not a few New Testament pastors), Moses was a reluctant candidate. He did not know what to preach. He assumed his hearers would reject His divine call. He was a poor public speaker. “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else” (4:13). But God elected him and appointed him, gave him the sermon to preach and teach, established his authority with public evidence, and provided him an assistant.

God’s church, and every one of our congregations, is created and constituted by God alone. “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her by the washing of water with the Word...” (Ephesians 5:25–26). We become the church—God constitutes us as the church—in the person of Jesus, through His death and resurrection, and by the Word of God. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:24–25).

God called Moses to be His preacher, that through the spoken Word of God He might gather to Himself a holy community, cleansed of sin, set apart for His own good and gracious purposes. In the same way God gathers us into the church. He calls pastors through His church, servants of God’s Word, so that by their ministry He may create and constitute the congregations into which we have been called. By this ministry and through His church we are led into a Promised Land far greater than Canaan. “To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).





### REFORMATION 500

In the spring of 1524 Luther sent out a plea regarding schools that has great significance to this day. “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools” (AE 45.347–378) describes the need for truly Christian schools, a curriculum that is appropriate for Lutheran schools, and a plea to collect libraries. To open and fund schools is to invest in the future. It is to preserve Christianity for the sake of the church and the home, and to provide virtuous and capable citizens for our civil communities.

Lutherans today do well to recognize how similar our own situation is to Luther’s. Formerly Christian schools were closing due to lack of funding, lack of students, and heretical preachers who blasphemed by teaching that the Holy Spirit came without God’s Word—without education. The Roman Catholic schools were teaching lies that led the children straight to hell. Luther suggested that it would be better for the children not to be sent to school than that they be sent to schools that would educate Christianity out of them. He recognized that in this matter the devil himself takes a special interest and is “the most dangerous and subtle enemy of all” (351).

We can no longer count on councilmen (i.e. the government) to establish and fund Christian schools. The schools funded and run by our civil government are not Christian; in fact, they are often hostile to Christianity. As they say, the proof is in the pudding: too many of our own children have gone through our government school systems and public universities only to drop out of the church or fail to be of service in starting Christian households. It falls to us Christians, working together through our churches and through Christian homeschools, to educate our children and provide for their future as competent and faithful Christian adults.

Luther described three reasons why the Christians of his day should establish Christian

schools. First, he observed how bad things had gotten in Germany and how bad the schools were. He observed that the schools could no longer be counted on to train children to be competent Christian adults. He emphasized the goal that “young people... come to maturity in the knowledge of God and...spread his word and teach it to others” (350). He reminded us that our great enemy in this endeavor is the devil.

Second, he pointed out that the time was right. The Renaissance and Reformation had changed things. Europe had rediscovered and recovered the sources of Western civilization in their original Latin and Greek. With the renewal of the languages and the seven liberal arts, the church finally had enough competent men available to teach in Christian schools. He urged his fellow Germans to “make use of God’s grace and Word while it is there!” Here he described God’s Word as a passing shower that does not return once it is gone. The same is true for us in our day. Now is the time!

Third, and most importantly, Luther reminded us that God commands parents to educate their own children. He referred to Psalm 78, the Fourth Commandment, and Deuteronomy. He observed that “nature itself should drive us to do this, and even the heathen afford us abundant examples of it” (353). He reminded us here, as he does in the Large Catechism under the Fourth Commandment, that the souls of our children are at stake, as well as our own souls. He taught us how seriously Jesus takes the spiritual care of children in Matthew 18:1–14. If we do not train up our children in God’s Word, it would be better to have a millstone fastened around our necks and that we be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Luther listed three reasons why parents neglect this duty. First, some parents “lack the goodness and decency to do it,” even if they have the ability to teach their own children. Teachers must be virtuous in thought and life. Second, the great majority of parents unfortunately are unprepared to teach their own children. Luther recognized how difficult this task is. Third, it is also the case that parents often do not have the ability or the opportunity to teach their own children at home, and therefore need the help of others.

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The session recordings from the Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation are available for viewing on YouTube. Please visit <https://www.youtube.com/@wyomingdistrict> to view them. This year's topic was "They Walked Away from God's Word" with Dr. John Wohlrabe as our speaker. Next year's convocation is scheduled for February 7-8, 2025.



Rev. Dr. Maj. (ret.) Harold Ristau accepted the call to serve Mount Hope Lutheran Church as the Assisting Pastor in the capacity of President of Luther Classical College. His Service of Installation is scheduled for **Sunday, April 28 at 4PM** at Mount Hope Lutheran Church in Casper, WY. A dinner will be provided after the service. Please join the members of Mount Hope in welcoming Dr. Ristau and his family into our District. Pastors are invited to participate in the service wearing white vestments.

Dr. Ristau has served the Church faithfully for over 20 years. A native Canadian, Dr. Ristau earned his MDiv at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Catherine's, ON in 2000. He holds an MA in Political Science from the University of Waterloo and a PhD in Religious Studies from McGill University.

From serving as a parish pastor at an inner-city, multi-ethnic LCMS congregation in Montreal, including prison chaplaincy and ministry to refugees, and from the mission field with Chinese and Muslims in Canada to the mission field with Lutherans in Africa, Dr. Ristau has committed his life to proclaiming the gospel to the lost and using his unique gifts to serve the Church in challenging positions all over the globe.

Dr. Ristau also served honorably as a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces in both English and French Canada for eleven years with the Air Force, Infantry, and paratroopers. Deployed to the Middle East on several occasions, soldiering alongside the U.S. Army and functioning as a first responder and crisis intervener, Dr. Ristau has been honored by the Canadian government and Chief and National Defense with one of the highest commendations for his work in Afghanistan.

The Luther Classical College Board, administration, and staff are honored to welcome such a pious, devout, gifted, and accomplished man as Dr. Ristau.

May God bless Dr. Ristau, Luther Classical College, and all the supporters who are helping to make this blessed cause a reality.



From left to right: Harold, Elise, Simon, Luke, Katelyn, Mattias, Marcus



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For all these reasons, Christian leaders ought “to devote the greatest care and attention to the young” (355) by starting and supporting Christian schools. We dedicate our time and money to many things. Luther observed how much the Christians of his day devoted to business, city affairs, civil defense, luxuries. We likewise invest in our personal stuff—homes, cars, electronics, entertainment, travel. But our schools often get far less attention. Luther taught, “A city's best and greatest welfare, safety, and strength consist rather in its having many able, learned, wise, honorable, and well-educated citizens” (356). We ought to “spare no labor or expense to produce and train...intelligent, wise, and competent men, so skilled in every art and rich in experience” (357, 356). He held up the ancient Romans as our example.

What kind of education should Christians receive? Luther immediately took up the anticipated objection to teaching Latin, Greek and Hebrew, together with the ancient liberal arts, in our schools. He lamented, “Languages and the arts, which can do us no harm, but are actually a greater ornament, profit, glory, and benefit, both for the understanding of Holy Scripture and the conduct of temporal government—these we despise” (358). But Luther reminded us that we should see the devil's evil designs in the loss of this Christian education.

Here is what is at stake in teaching the languages: “Although the gospel came and still comes to us through the Holy Spirit alone, we cannot deny that it came through the medium of languages, was spread abroad by that means, and must be preserved by the same means” (358–359). God used the Latin and Greek languages to spread the gospel throughout the whole civilized world of the ancient church. At the time of the Reformation, God revived the languages so that the gospel could be restored and the Reformation take place. “In proportion then as we value the gospel, let us zealously hold to the languages” (359).

God gave his Word to us in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). Luther waxed eloquent: “We will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this Sword of the

Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall not only lose the gospel, but the time will come when we shall be unable either to speak or to write a correct Latin or German” (360). Both our spiritual and temporal well-being are bound up with the languages and God's Word.

Luther recognized that Greek and Hebrew are especially important for pastors and preachers. He acknowledged that some preachers may not have a good grasp of the languages. But he also emphasized that “languages are absolutely and altogether necessary in the Christian Church, as are the prophets or interpreters” (363). He observed that “where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations” (365).

Luther went on to show that, even apart from spiritual and eternal concerns, civil government and the home still need a good education. God ordained both temporal government and the household. “In order to maintain its temporal estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women, men able to rule well over land and people, women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright” (368). The goal is that our children “in the fear of God take their own place in the stream of human events” (369). A good Christian education in home and school raises up a new generation of men and women in the full image and stature of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4, especially verses 13, 15, and 24).

Finally, Luther urged Christian leaders to provide for good libraries. He does not envision large libraries but libraries that have good quality books in them and support a sound Christian education. He focused on six types of books: Holy Scriptures in all the languages; the best commentaries on Scriptures; books “helpful in

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learning the languages, such as the poets and orators, regardless of whether they were pagan or Christian;” books on the liberal arts and all the other arts; books on law and medicine; and “the chronicles and histories, in whatever languages they are to be had” (376).

We see today that our churches will survive and flourish only if we are able to raise up a new generation of Christians, competent and pious men and women who marry Lutherans, bear children and raise them “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4), provide for their families, actively fill and support their churches, and serve well in their communities. None of this can be accomplished unless we succeed in training and forming them in God’s Word, in Christian piety, and in the best of all the wisdom and skill that our Christian heritage can give us. God give us the zeal of Luther and many such Christian fathers and mothers in the faith to devote ourselves to this great work!

**“...REMEMBERING YOU IN MY PRAYERS...” (Eph. 1:16)**

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.

**Our Savior’s, Chadron** (served by **Rev. James Rockhill, Bethlehem, Crawford and Redeemer, Harrison**) is engaged in discussions about a multi-congregation parish.

**Immanuel, Powell** (served by **Rev. Kenneth Mars, Christ the King, Cody**) called **Rev. Dan Harrington** (Indiana District). Pastor Harrington has accepted the call and is planning his installation in May or June.

**Trinity, Morrill** (served by **Rev. Scott Firminhac, Our Savior’s, Torrington**) is engaged in conversations about a multi-congregation parish.

**St. Paul’s, Bridgeport** (served by **Rev. Richard Neugebauer, Faith, Gering**) has elected a seminary candidate. The call services for

the assignment of candidates take place at the seminaries April 23 (St. Louis) and 24 (Fort Wayne).

**Zion, Laramie** (served by **Rev. John Hill**) has a call list and will hold a call meeting April 7.

**Rev. James Martin**, pastor of **Emmanuel, Green River and Trinity, Rock Springs**, is retiring in May. The dual parish has elected a seminary candidate.

**Rev. Jais Tinglund (Zion, Emblem and Grace, Greybull)** has received a call as associate pastor at Atonement, Glendale, Arizona.

**Rev. Rene Castellero (Immanuel, Sheridan)** has received a call as associate pastor and headmaster at St. Paul Lutheran Church & School, Hamel, IL

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

April 23: Call Day (St. Louis)

April 24: Call Day (Fort Wayne)

May 6-8: Spring Pastors Conference, Immanuel, Sheridan, WY

June 4-5: Christian Culture Conference (LCC), Trinity, Casper

June 6-8: Pastors Wives Retreat, C’Mon Inn, Casper

June 13-15: Uinta County Family Retreat, Fort Bridger, WY

June 13-15: LWML District Convention, Northwest College, Powell, WY

July 16-18: Homeschool Retreat, Lion’s Camp, Casper Mountain, WY

August 4-8: WY Lutheran Youth Camp, Lander, WY

**THE NEXT ROUNDUP**

The next Roundup will be delivered to congregations after April 20 (May 2024 issue).



Situated on Casper Mountain, our weekend retreat at the Mills Spring Ranch Retreat and Conference Center offers a range of outdoor activities, including mountain biking, hiking, and archery. Families can stay in cabins, and RV spots are available. Don't forget to bring essentials like your Bible, Hymnal, notepad, bedding, toiletries, and a lawn chair. All meals will be provided during the retreat. Enjoy the nearby North Platte River for floating or fishing.

# Wyoming District Fathers & Sons Retreat June 28-30, 2024 Casper Mountain



Memory Eternal  
Rev. Marcus Williams

- The necessity of Heroes
- The Proper Use of the Saints

## Registration Form

Registration Deadline: June 24, 2024

Please Print Clearly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Son at Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Sons: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Due:           \$150.00          

Additional Important Information (diet, health, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send registration form and payment to  
Wyoming District – LCMS  
2400 Hickory Street  
Casper, WY 82604  
or register online at [WYLCMS.ORG/FSRetreat](http://WYLCMS.ORG/FSRetreat)

**If you have further questions, please contact Jeffrey Snyder at the District Office (307)265-9000 or visit our website for more information**

## Schedule:

### Friday, June 28

Afternoon

Gather, register, explore & relax

6:00 PM

Dinner

**7:00 PM**

**Session 1: On the Necessity of Heroes and AC/Ap XXI**

8:30 PM

Compline

9:00 PM

Free time, family devotions, sleep

### Saturday, June 29

8:00 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM

Matins

**9:30 AM**

**Session 2: Jakob Andreae, An unassuming Defender of the Faith**

**10:45 AM**

**Session 3: Johann Gerhard, The Devotional Dogmatician**

Noon

Lunch

Afternoon

Free Time: There will be cornhole boards provided, but feel free to golf, fish, float the N Platte, hike, bike, explore the archery course

6:00 PM

Supper

**7:00 PM**

**Session 4: Phillip Nicolai, A Plague-time Saint**

8:30 PM

Vespers

9:00 PM

Free Time, family devotions, sleep

### Sunday, June 30

6:30 AM

Breakfast, clean, and pack up

**9:00 AM**

**Divine Service: Trinity Lutheran Church – Casper, WY (Bible Study immediately after the service)**



Rev. Marcus A. Williams, ordained in 2017 after studying theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, has been the Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Lutheran Church since May 2022. An Idaho native, he returned to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. He holds a bachelor's degree in English Writing from the University of Montana. Rev. Williams, with his wife Jill and five children, enjoys outdoor activities and strives to be faithful in his vocations as a Christian, husband, father, and pastor.



The **5th Annual Homeschool Retreat** will be held July 16-18 at the Lion's Camp on Casper Mountain, Casper, WY. Entire families are welcome to attend this FREE event! Presentations, lodging, and meals are included. Activities are provided for children, and free time is scheduled for families to mingle. Please register online at [www.wylcms.org/homeschoolretreat](http://www.wylcms.org/homeschoolretreat). For questions, please call Rev. Jacob Benson at 307-254-9541.

## THIS YEAR'S THEME

### *ARS DOCENDI: THE BEST TEACHING METHODS FOR YOUR STUDENTS*

Which techniques of instruction and which kinds of assignments serve children best in homeschooling? When should children read whole works, excerpts, or secondary-source summaries? When should they write short reflections or longer papers? Applying twenty years of college teaching experience and fifteen years of homeschooling, Dr. MacPherson will share wisdom for the classroom, from high school down to the elementary levels. By weighing the pros and cons of five types of reading assignments, six types of writing assignments, and five types of classroom instructional techniques, participants will discover which methods are best suited for their own children.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKER



Dr. Ryan MacPherson serves as the Academic Dean of Luther Classical College. He holds a Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science from University of Notre Dame and is author/editor of several books, including: *Rediscovering the American Republic*, *Studying Luther's Large Catechism*, and *The Culture of Life*. He and his wife, Marie, are homeschool parents to seven children. Dr. MacPherson comes to LCC with 20 years of previous experience in Lutheran higher education. He is passionate about leading his family in home devotions and guiding his students through the primary texts that have shaped Western Civilization and Christian thought.

— S A P I E N T I A —