

## Wyoming District Roundup May 2025 Edition

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*“...Remembering You in My Prayers...” (Eph. 1:16)*

- For our active-duty chaplain, **Rev. Ryan Mills (Colorado)**.
- For our seminary students, **Brandon Streeks, Nathaniel Mars, and Eddy Krez**.

### *Pastors and Congregations*

- **Rev. Travis Sherman (Grace, Gordon)** is serving **Grace, Merriman, NE** (Nebraska District). President Hill met with the congregation on December 15.
- **Redeemer, Harrison** (served by **Rev. Darren Pflughoeft, St. Paul's, Lusk**) and **Bethlehem, Crawford** (served by **Rev. Richard Mueller, Immanuel, Alliance**) did not receive a seminary candidate and are preparing to receive a call list.

- **Grace English, Pine Bluffs, and Zion, Grover** (Vacancy Pastor is **Rev. Richard Boche**) did not receive a seminary candidate in conjunction with **Our Savior, Cheyenne (Rev. Marcus Baikie)**. Discussions are taking place regarding calling from a call list.
  - **Grace, Greybull** (served by **Rev. Jared Korb, St. Luke's, Worland**) is exploring a parish agreement with St. Luke's.
  - **Zion, Emblem** (presently served by **Rev. Kenneth Mars, Christ the King, Cody through August 31**) is seeking an answer to its future.
  - **Peace, Marbleton and Our Savior's, Pinedale** (served by **Rev. Dan Mulholland, Shepherd of the Valley, Fort Bridger**) received seminary **Candidate Nathan Raugutt, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne**. His ordination and installation will take place this summer.
  - **Salem, Gurley, St. Paul's, Potter, and St. Paul's, Sidney (Rev. Ted Bourret)**: Pastor Bourret retired May 11 and is moving to Pine Bluffs. The tri-point parish requested but did not receive a seminary candidate. They are preparing to enter the call process.
  - **Rev. Joshua Scheer (Our Savior, Cheyenne)** resigned his call to Our Savior effective at the end of May.
  - **Rev. Jacob Benson (St. John's, Lovell)** received a solemn appointment as a professor at Luther Classical College (May 7) and a divine call as assisting pastor at **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Casper (Rev. John Olson)**.
  - **Christ the King, Cody (Rev. Kenneth Mars, Rev. Dr. Ron Garwood)** has approved starting a school, beginning with the addition of a Kindergarten.
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# Announcements

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**Pastors Wives Retreat** will be held June 5-7 at the C'Mon Inn in Casper, Wyoming. Rev. Dr. Wilfred Karsten will be the presenter and will speak about *My Friend, The Hymnal*. His hymn *Though All Our Life Is Like A Scroll* was the winner of the Reformation 500 hymn writing contest sponsored by our LCMS and published by CPH. Registration forms with additional information have been mailed and are due to Vickie Mars by May 28.

**The Lander Camp Trailer** fund has been met. Through the generosity of our faithful members and congregations, we were able to raise \$10,785.16 for the trailer and upgrades to the old trailer. Thank you for your generosity to this fund, and a special thank you to Bethel Lutheran Church in Lander for their willingness to keep the trailer on their property.

**The Homeschool Retreat** will be held July 22-24, 2025 at the Lion's Camp on Casper Mountain. This is a free event for all homeschooling families. Registration is forthcoming.

**The Fathers and Sons Retreat** will be held at the Mills Spring Ranch on Casper Mountain June 27-29. Rev. Gary Zieroth will be speaking on the Portraits of Biblical Fatherhood and Sonship. The cost is \$150 per household family. A registration link is available at the bottom of this email.

**Camp Titus** will be held July 26 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Casper from 9AM to 4PM. Camp Titus (named for Titus 2:3-5) is a one-day event where Lutheran teen girls come together to build relationships with their Christian peers and to learn from older, mentor women of the same faith as they approach adulthood and their roles within the body of Christ at church and their potential future families as wives and mothers. There is no cost for this event, although free-will donations will be accepted the day of to help cover costs of food and activities for the teens. Click the link at the bottom of this email to

register. Registration closes July 20. Registrations received by July 5 are guaranteed a t-shirt.

**Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp** (Lander Camp) will be held August 3-7 at Fremont County Youth Camp in Lander, Wyoming. This year's theme is based around 1 Corinthians. Click the link at the bottom of this email to register. New this year is a shooting sport with Certified Range Masters. Registration for Lander Camp is open, but registration for the shooting sport won't be made available until the end of June. Registration closes July 25

**Luther Classical College** has acquired an academic facility in downtown Casper through a \$1,500,000 gift from an anonymous donor. The facility, formerly known as the Wedding Chapel, served First Baptist Church of Casper for over 75 years. The building itself was constructed in 1947 and showcases some of the classical design features that LCC will incorporate into its thirteen-acre campus. "This gift is emblematic of our progress as an institution," says LCC president Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau. "Thanks to the generosity of this donor and over thirteen hundred others, our college is no longer just a dream. It is a living trust from the Lord which He will use to bless His children. I pray that even as our brothers and sisters in Christ find cause for dismay in a society seemingly crumbling around them, they may rejoice in the Father's providence for the posterity entrusted to us by Him." LCC will welcome its first cohort of students with classes beginning August 25.

## ***Reformation 500: Marriage or Peasants' Rebellion***

The Year of Our Lord 1525 was a monumental and pivotal year for the Lutheran Reformation. We have already seen how Luther was engaging the non-Lutheran reformers on the Lord's Supper, as he would continue to do for the following three years especially. We will hear more about the Peasants' Revolt, a violent rebellion against the power and authority being exercised, often unjustly, by the nobility and rulers in civil government. On May 5, 1525, Luther's great protector and prince, Frederick the Wise, died and was succeeded by his brother John the Steadfast (1525-1532). During the war against the Peasants, on June 13, Luther got married. Toward the end of 1525, Luther wrote his greatest academic work, *Bondage of the Will*, his

response in a public and written debate to the great humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam. Luther had also been working at length to revise the Latin Mass into a truly German Divine Service, which was introduced to Wittenberg at Christmas. We'll take up two of these events in this article: the death of Frederick and the marriage of Martin and Katy.

It is probable that Luther and the Elector Duke Frederick never met, despite their deep influence on each other and their communication through Spalatin, the Elector's secretary. Frederick had protected his famous professor through all the early years of the Reformation. He forestalled the attacks and demands of the papacy and its army of theologians and judges. He obtained the opportunity for Luther to make his great confession before Emperor Charles V at the Imperial Diet at Worms in 1521. He had Luther "kidnapped" and taken to the Wartburg Castle in secret for protection after Luther was proclaimed a heretic and outlaw. When Luther returned to Wittenberg in March 1522, he continued to permit Luther's teaching and reforms.

Frederick died May 5 after a lengthy illness. Before he died, he received the Lord's Supper in both kinds for the first time, a sure evidence that he had embraced Luther's Reformation doctrine. On May 10, when the body arrived in Wittenberg for funeral and burial, Luther preached on the resurrection from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (verse 14). He also warned that Frederick's death was a warning from God that the times were evil and that Christian's — addressing especially the students at the University — should avoid the so-called "prophets" who were deceiving and misleading the people and bringing the danger of violence upon them. On May 15 thousands of rebelling peasants, under the leadership of one false "prophet" Thomas Müntzer, were slain in Thuringia by the army of the civil rulers.

Frederick was succeeded in office by his brother John the Steadfast, who became the new Saxon Prince and one of the seven Electors of the Empire. John worked personally and extensively with Luther in those critical years of 1525-1532. Under John's rule, Luther and the Reformers made valuable changes to Wittenberg University, the structure and visitation of the congregations in Electoral Saxony, and the worship and daily life of the church. The Christian piety and faithfulness of Luther's three Saxon

lords (Frederick, John, and John Frederick) demonstrate the positive role that civil government can and should fulfill on behalf of the Church.

Katherine von Bora (born January 29, 1499) was brought to Wittenberg from the Benedictine cloister in Nimbschen in March 1523. She was the daughter of a minor nobleman. When her mother died, she was taken to the cloister to be educated, and took vows as a nun at the age of 16. When the 24-year-old Katherine arrived in Wittenberg, Luther immediately sought to find her a husband, and he almost succeeded in the following year. She was also willing to marry Luther's good friend and fellow pastor, Nicholas von Amsdorf, but he remained a bachelor all his life. At age 26, when she married Luther, she was well past the normal age for a woman to get married.

Meanwhile, Luther's friends also encouraged him to get married. He had long resisted the idea, not because he was opposed to marriage, but because he believed that his life would soon be shorted by a martyr's death. In March 1525 he encouraged another pastor to marry, citing Genesis 2:18 and writing, "Put any reservations out of your mind, and go forward happily. Your body demands it and needs it. God wills it and compels it" (Brecht II.196). To another he wrote that no normal man should "wriggle out of being without a wife."

In his travels in mid-April, 1525, Luther especially went to Mansfeld to visit his parents, who also urged him to marry and raise a family. Luther would later describe his marriage as an act of obedience to his parents. He began to make known that he intended to marry Katy. His marriage would be a confession of God's Word and will. By his marriage he would spite the pope and the devil and give glory to God.

Having made up his mind, and in order to put an end to potential rumors, Luther moved quickly. He became legally engaged (or betrothed) on June 13, and contrary to custom, was immediately married that same day. He postponed the customary wedding feast till June 27, presumably to give time to invite and bring in the guests for the festive celebration. In his invitation to Leonard Koppe, the merchant who had arranged for Katy's escape from the cloister in herring barrels, he wrote "that I have

been entangled in the pigtails of my girl” (Brecht II.199f). When his friend Spalatin married later that year, he wrote and commended him to the dearest hugs and kisses on the marriage bed with this gratitude, “Lo, this being, the best little creation of God, has been given me by Christ, to whom be glory and honor!” (Brecht, II.200). Luther’s life was changed for the better, as he enjoyed a companion at table and awoke with a pair of pigtails on the pillow beside him.

Martin and Katherine brought no house, land, or possessions to their marriage. In fact, Martin was receiving no fixed salary when they married, though the new Elector remedied this problem with a modest salary later that year. The former Augustinian monastery (the Black Cloister) was given over to the Luthers as their parsonage, and it became some combination of guest hostel (or bed and breakfast), diner and pub for guests, dormitory for students, and hospital for the sick and elderly. It was not unusual for Katy to feed up to 25 people at mealtime. Katy and Martin housed and cared for some of the sick who were afflicted in the 1527 plague. After 1529 the Luthers also housed and raised the six children of his two sisters. Katy’s Aunt Magdalena was also a member of the household. God supplied the Luthers with both a vocation of service to others and the means to carry it out.

And though they both married late in life — Luther at 41 and Katy at 26 — God gave them six children. Hans, the oldest, was born a year after their wedding. Elizabeth, the second-born, died in infancy (December 1527 to August 1528). Magdalena, the third-born (1529), died in youth. Martin (1531), Paul (1533), and Margaret (1534) followed. Katy suffered a miscarriage early 1540. Luther was 51 and Katy 35 when their last child was born.

The example Luther gave in his work with his earthly ruler and in his marriage and domestic life reinforced and made applicable in a practical way the doctrine he was teaching in his preaching, lectures, and writing. He showed how Christians can appeal to civil government to govern in a way that acknowledges the true God and enables the Church to carry out God’s Word. In his home he demonstrated the great blessings of marriage and set the pattern for the Lutheran parsonage and the Christian household.

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## ***2025 Wyoming District Convention Summary***

The 21st Convention of the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod met May 1-3, 2025, at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper. Synod President Matthew Harrison participated in the convention, gave the Synod report, and preached for the closing service and installation of officers. Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau, President of Luther Classical College, was the essayist, speaking to the theme of “Spiritual Warfare” and applying God’s Word to the three estates of the home, the church, and the civil community. President Hill delivered his report of the District and an essay, “Christ Governs His Church by the Word of God.”

The primary duties of the convention were to hear and meditate on God’s Word, to hear and consider the work of the district and its congregations, to elect officers for the coming triennium, and to act on proposed resolutions. Daily worship, hymns, and doctrinal essays strengthened and encouraged the assembly in God’s Word. The following men were elected or reelected to office for the 2025-2028 triennium:

### District Officers:

- President: Rev. John Hill
- 1st Vice-President: Rev. Paul Cain (Sheridan)
- 2nd Vice-President: Rev. Jonathan Lange (Evanston)
- 3rd Vice-President: Rev. Jeffery Grams (Scottsbluff)
- Secretary: Rev. Zachary Viggers (Gillette)
- Board of Directors Pastor-at-large: Rev. Kenneth Mars (Cody)
- Board of Directors Layman: Mr. Blake Pieper (Hay Springs)



- Treasurer: Mr. John Schmall (Bayard) is appointed by the Board of Directors
- Board of Directors Commissioned Worker: Mr. Steve Coniglio continues in the remainder of his term (2021-2028).
- Board of Directors Layman: Mr. Marty Finch finishes the remaining three years of a vacancy (2025-2028).

#### Circuit Visitors:

- Chimney Rock Circuit: Rev. Richard Neugebauer (Gering)
- Pine Ridge Circuit: Rev. Scott Firminhac (Torrington)
- Powder River Circuit: Rev. Jon Olson (Casper)
- Yellowstone Circuit: Rev. Jared Korb (Worland)
- Headwaters Circuit: Rev. Travis Berg (Lander)
- High Plains Circuit: Rev. Mark Mumme (Laramie)

#### Commissions:

- Commission on Mission Services (CMS) Chairman-Elect: Rev. John Preus (Cheyenne)
- Commission on Congregational Services (CCS) Chairman-Elect: Rev. Roger Mullet (Buffalo)
- CMS Chairman (moving up from Chairman-Elect) 2025-2028: Rev. Patrick Baldwin (Rawlins)
- CCS Chairman (continuing) 2025-2028: Rev. David Bott (Jackson)

The Wyoming District is richly blessed by the volunteer service of many pastors and congregation members. The district is deeply grateful and thanks the following outgoing officers:

- Rev. Ted Bourret (Potter, Gurley, Sidney): 3rd Vice-President

- Rev. Darrell Debowey (Laramie): Secretary
- Rev. Dan Mulholland (Fort Bridger): Circuit Visitor
- Rev. Andrew Dimit (Cheyenne): Circuit Visitor
- Rev. Joshua Scheer (Cheyenne): Circuit Visitor
- Rev. Travis Sherman (Gordon, Chadron): CMS Chairman
- Mr. Larry Harrington (Casper): District Legal Counsel

Resolutions are the convention's voice to the church and constitute the formal decisions of the district. The convention adopted resolutions which addressed the following topics:

- The existence and immortality of the soul (Res. 03);
- In Vitro Fertilization (Res. 06a);
- The relationship of Luther Classical College and the Wyoming District (Res. 04);
- An appeal for a recognized ecclesiastical relationship between Luther Classical College and The Lutheran Church —Missouri Synod (Res. 05);
- District Visitation by Synod (Res. 09a);
- The church's duty to continue public worship in the face of legal or social opposition (Res. 01a);
- Encouragement to congregations to provide financially for their pastors (Res. 07a);
- The Scriptural teaching on the sin of racism (Res. 02c);
- Resources on the doctrine of Christ's atonement and justification against antinomianism (Res. 08a);
- Pre-call contacts of pastors (Res. 10);
- The publishing of Pres. Hill's essays (Res. 11)

I thank Jeff Snyder (Convention Manager), Tiffany Hoff (Administrative Assistant), and all the various chairman, committee members, pages, volunteers, and the convention organist (Kantor Steven Hoffman). The Convention Workbook with all the pre-convention reports and overtures, as well as the Convention Proceedings with the full text of the essays and adopted resolutions are found on the district website at

wylcms.org/2025convention. The Convention Proceedings will be published by July 2, 2025.

## Dates to Remember

Jun. 3-4: Christian Culture Conference, Trinity, Casper with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Luther Classical College Beech St. Campus

Jun. 5-7: Pastors Wives Retreat, C'Mon Inn, Casper

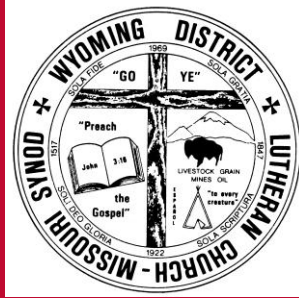
Jun. 27-29: Fathers and Sons Retreat, Casper Mountain, Casper (register at [wylcms.org/fsretreat](http://wylcms.org/fsretreat))

Jul. 22-24: Wyoming District Homeschool Retreat, Casper Mountain, Casper

Jul. 26: Camp Titus, Trinity Lutheran Church, Casper (register at [wylcms.org/camptitus](http://wylcms.org/camptitus))

Aug. 3-8: Wyoming Lutheran Youth Camp, Lander (register at [wylcms.org/camp](http://wylcms.org/camp))





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