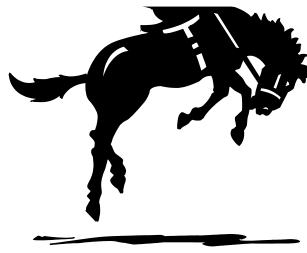


# WYOMING DISTRICT ROUND-UP



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

[www.wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org)

**FALL  
2025**

## **Where are the Homemakers?**

Katie Luther was an educated woman. She was brought to the convent as a young child and learned her Latin, in which she worshipped daily, and the basics of education. Her appearances in Martin Luther's Table Talks reveal her wit and wisdom. When she and Martin were married, she became the mistress of a large and increasingly complex household. She regularly housed students and guests. It was common for her to oversee and provide for more than two dozen people at a meal. She kept a large garden, chickens, and livestock. Eventually she even bought a farm (Proverbs 31). When the plague came through, as it did periodically, she became a nurse to those afflicted by this highly infectious disease. She bore six children with Martin, one of whom died as an infant, and one who died as a teenager.

Some have noted that Katie was a strong-willed woman with a biting wit. And it is true that no one appreciates a sharp-tongued woman. "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife... It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman" (Proverbs 21:9, 19). But then, she needed to be educated and sharp-witted, as well as bold and industrious, for her to carry out her very challenging vocation. Martin was not easy to live with and had a tendency to give away all their valuable possessions. She had to keep a budget and a close eye on her entire household. Perhaps more importantly, she helped restrain Martin's impulsive tendencies and gave him good advice. She comforted and encouraged him. She called for the doctor and the pastor when he was sick in body or sick in heart.

Katherine von Bora, the wife of Martin Luther, provides for us a model and pattern for the Christian vocation of homemaker. It is too often the overlooked and undervalued vocation. Christians of our day have rightly given a great deal of attention to the decline and fall of manhood. Where are the men? we ask. Men have too often been absent from our churches, from our homes, and even from the civil institutions of government and higher education. Our young men have often lost their way and seem to be unable to finish entering into the adult world of marriage and work. They are addicted to computer games, pornography, sports, and the like. Without them, the future of the home, the church, and civil communities is in grave danger. But the same sort of danger is present in women's abandonment of homemaking.

This essay is prompted, in part, by a recently gained insight. You can try this at home, or with your friends, neighbors, or coworkers. Ask them, Where is your home? Not their house, which has

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an address and is important in its own right. Where is your home? We have a saying, “Home is where the heart is.” It reminds us that our houses are locations for home, but they are not necessarily home itself. For something to be home, it needs to have a heart, which means people, relationships, shared experiences, life together as family.

The insight is this: Home is where the wife and mother are. She is the location of the home. She is the person in whom the marriage bond, with all of its profound and intimate affections, and the maternal bond, with its life-giving and lifelong affections, are united. She is the guardian and caretaker of the tangible and intangible household goods: food, clothing, comfort, family affections, memories, in short, the family culture. And she is not only the location of the home. She is the homemaker. She makes the house, the apartment, the camper, the tent, the hard patch of ground, into a home.

Where are the homemakers? We are observing two very powerful warning signs in our congregations today. The first warning sign has had our attention for more than a quarter century already. It is the abandonment of home and marriage by wives and mothers. The second is more recent and may be seen in the abandonment of the society of the church by many of our young women.

I saw the first warning sign as a young pastor, and like many of our pastors, I was not prepared for it. I had assumed that most divorces were driven by men who were having affairs, or who were looking for a younger wife, or who had simply tired of the work needed to maintain the marriage. But I have heard from many pastors across the Synod that the vast majority of the lawless divorces they struggle with are due to the wife, not the husband, abandoning the marriage.

Within the broad category of lawlessness, many reasons can be identified for this phenomenon. Men can be very difficult to live with. Many men exhibit all the vices of our unkind, self-centered, pornography-drenched culture. A loveless marriage to such a spiritually juvenile partner is truly a sore trial for any Christian woman. What’s more, for decades now our girls have been enculturated to prioritize personal autonomy, self-realization, independence, and career above the traditional priorities of marriage, childbearing, child-rearing, and homemaking. When marriage and children are perceived to interfere with these priorities, they are often refused or abandoned. The prospect of economic independence removes the last barrier to a lawless divorce.

The second warning sign has been creeping up on us for some years now, but has only recently become impossible to ignore. I have been visiting with pastors at our LCMS campus churches. To a man they have the same complaint: Our young women are not attending their congregations. The young men are starting to come and are coming with a remarkable zeal and eagerness, but in some cases there are no women at all – no women to worship with, no women to date, no women to marry. This is an astonishing development! Some sixty percent of the college undergraduates nationally are women. In theory, they should outnumber the men in our campus congregations. Where are they? Where have they gone?

Ministry to our young men and women at college has been both urgent and difficult for a long time. Some go home on weekends. Some have drifted into heterodox congregations or even into cults. Many have simply dropped out of the faith altogether. But in the past, we could observe these problems in both sexes, with the men usually being the less faithful sex. And we could always count on the mutual attraction of the sexes and the desire for marriage to open doors to ministry to both sexes.

Now, this essay requires an acknowledgement: God has given great blessings to our congregations today. I have seen and rejoiced in many, many exceptions to this cultural trend and its inroads into the church. I am surrounded by beautiful and happy marriages with many children and a rich family culture. Contrary to all the cultural pressures around them, many of our Christian women have embraced marriage under the vocation of homemaker.

And one more acknowledgment: There is a godly place for singles in the church. St. Paul even advocates it for churches in times of persecution. "I think that in light of the impending [or present] distress, it is good for a person to remain as he is" (1 Corinthians 7:26). Of course, chastity in heart, mind, and life is expected of the single man or woman, just as it is for the married. And for the single Christian, he is not single—he is never single—just for himself and his own selfish interests. He (or she) is single in order to be concerned about or care for "the things of the Lord," "how to please the Lord," and "how to be holy in body and spirit" (1 Corinthians 7:32–35). As Jesus teaches in his discourse on marriage in Matthew 19, some Christians have chosen not to marry "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:12).

But this essay is written to praise and uphold marriage, the marriage bed, childbearing and childrearing, the household estate, homemaking, and the woman as homemaker. The church needs homemakers. Christian men need homemakers. If we are to populate and sustain congregations and homes into the future, we will need to restore the high and godly vocation of homemaker.

We can begin by reestablishing in our congregations a culture in which young women once again find great fulfillment and purpose in orienting their lives to home, husband, and children. This exhortation comes from the Word of the Lord: "Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled..., so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" (Titus 2:3–5, 10).

It is clear that we cannot rely upon the culture of our civil communities to prepare and support our young women in their aspirations to be homemakers, or to honor and encourage married women in the labors of their vocation at home. If the women of our church are to be helped in this matter, that help must come from our Lutheran homes and Lutheran congregations. This means we must speak, act, and organize ourselves in such a way that marriage is restored as the highest earthly aspiration for our boys and girls, men and women, and that the gift of children and the duty to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord is returned to its high honor for the sake of our wives and mothers. It means we must narrate and embody daily the vision of the pious homemaker, praised by her husband, honored by her children, and upheld by her congregation. It may even mean finding ways to bolster the financial capacity of young households so that the wife and mother can give herself fully to being a homemaker.

There is no adequate substitute in the world for this vision. Indeed, the world's mockery and scorn of Christian homemakers has no place in our midst. Instead, we Lutherans must reassert the "innovation" of the Lutheran Reformation in giving a truly Christian education to our girls and young women as far as their needs, inclinations, abilities, and time before marriage allows. Nor should we scorn a woman's work outside the home insofar as it does not take away from her duties as wife, mother, and homemaker. But we should openly acknowledge that what the homemaker

teaches her children, and the counsel and help she gives her husband, will shape our households and congregations for generations to come.

Indeed, let our households once again become the home of useful industry, beautiful arts, pious and uplifting music, and storytelling and literature that ennobles and inspires the householders to deeper piety and greater service. Let our homes be the seedbed and garden of devout faith, Christian piety, and Christian love and affection under the attentive hand of our homemakers. The hand that rocks the cradle and shapes the inner and outer life of our children gives truly priceless gifts to our communities, congregations, and future homes.

Above all, God has appointed the homemaker, under the spiritual initiative and leadership of her husband, to be His instrument for teaching His Word to the dear and beloved members of His household. For in the Christian home, the homemaker supports, helps, and (in necessity) substitutes for the home provider, her husband, in inculcating a deep love for and daily use of God's Word in their children (2 Timothy 3:14-17). Together they bring their children to baptism. They bring them to church Sunday after Sunday. They catechize them with the pastor's help. They instruct and model Christian virtues to them. And above all, they set the work of Christ and His forgiveness before them in word and deed, that their children may dwell with them forever in Christ's eternal home.

Rev. John E. Hill

## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!



Our website has been under construction for the last few weeks and we are happy to announce that it is finally complete!

A few of the major changes include:

- \* The Roundup is now found under Communication Resources in the 'About' tab
- \* There is now a link for District Convention AND Synod Convention ('About' tab)
- \* Added a 'Congregations' tab full of resources, including the Calls and Vacancies updates
  - \* A tab specifically for schools
  - \* A media tab where you can watch podcasts that our pastors have appeared on
  - \* And more!

Visit [www.wylcms.org](http://www.wylcms.org) to look around. Contact Tiffany at the District Office if you have any questions.



### **REFORMATION 500**

There is no Reformation 500 article this month.

### **"...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) .

**Redeemer, Harrison and Bethlehem, Crawford** installed **Rev. David Vandercook** September 20.

**Grace English, Pine Bluffs and Zion, Grover** (Vacancy Pastor is Rev. Richard Boche) on September 14 called Rev. Mark Kranz (Mount Calvary, Excelsior Springs, Missouri) in conjunction with **Our Savior, Cheyenne (Rev. Marcus Baikie)**.

**Our Savior, Cheyenne (Rev. Marcus Baikie)** called Rev. Jonathan Olson (Hope, Aurora, Colorado) as associate pastor on September 14.

**Grace, Greybull** (served by **Rev. Jared Korb, St. Luke's, Worland**) is exploring a parish agreement with St. Luke's.

**Zion, Emblem** (served by **Rev. Ron Garwood, Christ the King, Cody** through Dec. 31) has asked for a call list for a retired or bi-vocational pastor.

**Salem, Gurley, St. Paul's, Potter, and St. Paul's Sidney** (Rev. Ted Bourret) called Rev. Paul Schulz (Iowa), who returned the call. They have requested a refreshed call list.

**St. John's, Lovell** (served by **Rev. Dan Harrington, Immanuel, Powell**) has requested a call list.

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

Events with (\*) are District-sponsored events. Please see [wylcms.org](http://wylcms.org) for information and registration for these events. All other events are sponsored by congregations/schools with the district.

\*October 5-8: Teachers & Pastors Conference @ Mt. Hope, Casper

October 30: Abendmusik Sacred Concert @ LCC Beech St. Campus, Casper

November 7-9: Youth Breakaway (Grades 5-8) @ St. Andrew's, Laramie

November 20: Abendmusik Sacred Concert @ LCC Beech St. Campus, Casper

November 21-22: My Walk is Heavenward Retreat @ St. Paul's, Bridgeport, NE

December 7: Advent/Christmas Sacred Concert @ LCC Beech St. Campus, Casper

January 29: Abendmusik Sacred Concert @ LCC Beech St. Campus, Casper

\*February 6-7, Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocation @ Ramkota, Casper



Nearly 120 youth and adults gathered in Lander around Christ and His Word to rejoice in the fellowship we share as His Church. Our daily services and Bible studies, which are always a treasured highlight, walked us through 1 Corinthians. Thanks to generous congregational support, a new cargo trailer made transporting and storing supplies far easier, and Bethel's (Lander) saints graciously continue to house it. The addition of archery and shooting activities proved a huge success, with certified safety instruction and enthusiastic participation. Allergy-friendly meals, Pastor Needham's faithful leadership, and the tireless service of our District administrators, camp counselors, cooks, and staff made for another blessed year. Plans are already underway for 2026! Come be part of it!



## Welcome new Pastors

Rev. Nathan Raugutt graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN in May and was Ordained and Installed at Our Savior's Lutheran Church and Peace Lutheran Church in Pinedale and Big Piney, Wyoming on July 21. Pastor Raugutt and his wife, Juree, have five children.

Pictured from left: (back row) Rev. Stephen Kieser, Rev. Dan Mulholland, President John Hill, and Rev. Jonathan Lange. (front row) Rev. Andrew Hill, Rev. Nathan Raugutt, Rev. Kevin Rose, Rev. Brandon Ross, and Rev. David Bott.



Rev. David Vandercook was Installed at Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church in Crawford and Harrison, Nebraska on September 20. Before accepting the call to serve the saints at Bethlehem and Redeemer, he served a dual-parish congregation in Arkansas. He and his wife, Laura, have four children, one of whom attends Luther Classical College in Casper, WY.

Pictured from left: Rev. Allan Wierschke, Rev. Richard Mueller, Rev. David Vandercook, President John Hill, Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau, and Rev. Scott Firminhac.

## A Year of Church Worker Appreciation

Our church workers dedicate themselves, day in and day out, to serving their church and school communities. That means it's always the right time to show them our appreciation. To help the church be intentional in showing that appreciation, The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has set aside special days throughout the year to highlight different kinds of church workers and their service. You are encouraged to join with your brothers and sisters in Christ across the LCMS in observing these days.

- Oct. 1-31 Church Worker Appreciate Month
- Oct. 12 Pastor Appreciation
- Oct. 25 Deaconess, Director of Family Life Ministry, Director of Christian Outreach, and Director of Church Ministries Appreciation
- April 26 Director of Parish Music Appreciation
- May 4-8 Teacher Appreciation
- June 26 Director of Christian Education Appreciation

Visit <https://resources.lcms.org/general/ways-to-show-your-gratitude-and-support-for-church-workers/> for more information