

The church responds to Wessington Springs tornado

By the Rev. John Paulson



Volunteers from Ameri-corps help clean up debris left by a tornado that hit Wessington Springs in June. Volunteer efforts were coordinated by staff from Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota, working out of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Wessington Springs.

and impacting a total of 110 homes in the community and surrounding area.

Two days later, representatives from Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota (LSSSD) were in Wessington Springs, offering assistance with both the physical and mental-health aspects of disaster recovery. Once the Red Cross moved out, LSSSD staff coordinated volunteer efforts and assisted community leaders in planning for long-term recovery efforts.

In August, I received requests from congregations in two neighboring communities who were looking for ways to celebrate the ELCA's "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, where congregations of this church gather to serve communities in ways that share the love of God with all of God's people. I turned to the LSSSD volunteer coordinator, who located an elderly couple whose farm had been totally destroyed by the tornado. Two months later, they still needed help cleaning up debris. It turned out that the couple had ties to all three congregations, including Our Savior's. On Sept. 7, around 30 people turned out to help them clean up their land.

We are a church that rolls up its sleeves and gets to work.

This spring and summer, several tornadoes ripped through multiple states causing massive devastation.

Hundreds of people must now find a way to rebuild their lives, homes and communities after tornadoes destroyed almost everything they had. One such community is Wessington Springs.

On June 18 a tornado ripped through this community of about 950 people, destroying 31 homes

and the ELCA continue to work assessing the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by this and all disasters. Through our extensive network of ELCA members, congregations, synods and Lutheran Social Service affiliates, we are there—whatever and wherever the need. □

Author bio:

Paulson is pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Wessington Springs.



A volunteer sorts through items donated to the tornado recovery center in Wessington Springs.



Volunteers from Ameri-corps help repair a home damaged by the tornado.

SAVE THE DATE!

2015 SYNOD ASSEMBLY



MAY 29-30, 2015

CALVARY LUTHERAN, RAPID CITY

Free resource:

Technology milestone for youth

We find technology in nearly every aspect of our daily lives—especially in the lives of our teens.

All of us are continually plugged into the Internet and social networks—technologies that have completely saturated our daily lives and work. And yet, as pervasive as these technologies and digital media are, we don't really talk about them in church. In this digitally integrated time, churches need to engage in conversation at the intersec-

tion of faith and technology for all ages, especially for youth.

As our youth live more of their lives online, they will also live out their faith there too. If we don't engage it, we will miss out on a huge part of their lives and leave them without spiritual guidance.

Youth ministry leaders in South Dakota have created a way for parents to faithfully discuss with their children the joy, danger and blessing that technology can be in their lives. They

developed a ministry milestone that includes resources for worship, ideas for a cross-generational event, and "Four Key" materials for home (Rituals and Traditions, Service, Devotion, Caring Conversations).

These resources are available for use in your ministry setting however you see fit. Find them at www.sdsynod.org/youth-family.

We hope you will join us in this important conversation!

Small group ministry for young adults

Every Tuesday at a restaurant in Sioux Falls, S.D., you will find a table of young adults gathered around food and beverages talking energetically about life and faith. Talk around a table and over a pint of beer may seem like a strange mode of ministry, but the roots of the idea are in the life of reformer Martin Luther.

Marty's Mug is a cooperative ministry shared among the congregations of the Sioux Falls area. The concept is based on Luther's practice of "table talks," or casual conversations with friends about extraordinary topics related to theology and daily life held around ordinary food and drink.

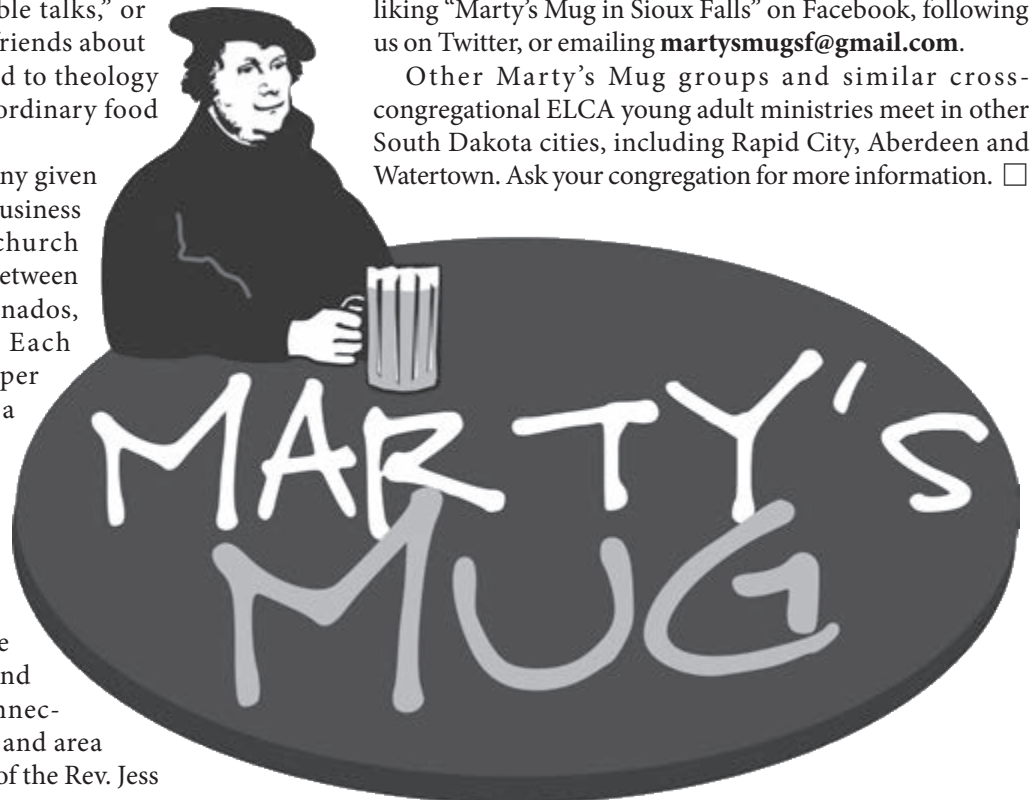
Among those gathered any given week you will find nurses, business professionals, students, church workers, teachers, those in between life adventures, beer aficionados, non-drinkers and more. Each individual is seeking a deeper relationship with God and a connection with their fellow 20- and 30-somethings, who can be hard to find in church buildings on a Sunday morning.

Marty's Mug connects young adults, offers a space for thought and support, and builds and gives life to connections between participants and area congregations. It's the hope of the Rev. Jess

Daum, coordinator, that young adults will find common ground through Marty's Mug and then take the energy they have generated in conversation with their peers into congregations to affect change and bring life.

Everyone is welcome around the table, and participants self-identify as "young adults." Marty's Mug alternates meeting locations and will soon be expanding its network of small groups. Keep up with and support this unique ministry by liking "Marty's Mug in Sioux Falls" on Facebook, following us on Twitter, or emailing martysmugsf@gmail.com.

Other Marty's Mug groups and similar cross-congregational ELCA young adult ministries meet in other South Dakota cities, including Rapid City, Aberdeen and Watertown. Ask your congregation for more information. □



South Dakota



Ministry on our college campuses

By the Rev. Andy Nelson

Lutheran Campus Ministry in South Dakota is fed by students' desire and commitment to be servants on their campuses, in their communities and in the world. Leaders from all our LCM sites have stories of how our students are living out Jesus' call to neighborly love. Here is one from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion:

The fall of 2013 saw the beginning of a new tradition for the Luther Center at USD: "Yotes Tackle Hunger." Dakota Days is the school's homecoming celebration and, save for the football game itself, the annual Dakota Days Parade is the biggest event of the D-Days weekend. We wanted a way to show both our USD spirit and the Spirit that pushes us to serve. Teaming up with several other campus ministries, we advertised in area



churches, on social media and in the press, inviting people to bring donations for the Vermillion Food Pantry to the parade.

Our float consisted of a small fleet of shopping carts, pushed along the parade route by our amazing students who collected donations of food and money as they went. We gathered a good amount of food for the pantry, displayed our spirit and our Spirit, and had great fun to boot.

2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the Dakota Days Parade and this year's

parade theme is "Live the Tradition," hence our Yotes Tackle Hunger theme for 2014: "Feeding the Hungry: Living Our (2,000-year-old) Tradition." □

Author bio:

Nelson is campus pastor of the Luther Center at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.