

# 2024 Ministry Celebrations



Our Synod's vision of Journeying Together in Christ has continued to be the focus of our work. We invite you to take a few moments to review the list below which celebrates some of the ministry we shared together in 2024. **Journeying together in Christ as the South Dakota Synod, in 2024 we have:**

- Applied and received a grant of **\$1,224,172** from Lilly Endowment, Inc. for the Synod's Holy Playground Initiative, which will provide strategic support for children's ministries in congregations and worshipping communities.
- Completed explorations for a potential church plant, with plans to start a worshipping community in Box Elder.
- Received **2 new first call** candidates.
- Completed **22 Ministry Site Studies** and extended **19 calls**.
- Ensured that nearly every congregation has a called pastor, interim pastor, Synod Authorized Minister, or lay leader to care for God's people (thank you to all of you who are helping out with area congregations and filling in!).
- Walked with **25 people** in various stages of **candidacy** in the SD Synod in 2024, with 18 others inquiring and in discernment.
- Granted **\$119,990** in scholarship funds to seminary students, **\$28,500** in internship assistance, and **\$38,232** to Luther and Wartburg Seminaries, for a total of **\$186,722** in support for seminary education.
- Distributed **\$48,220** to date through the Seminary Debt Reduction Program.
- Helped members and congregations recover from severe weather events, including awarding **\$20,000** in Storm Micro Grants and working with congregations to secure grants from Lutheran Disaster Response.
- Held a **Synod Assembly**, where we gathered as a community to conduct the business of the Synod.
- Hosted **Spring** and **Fall Theological Conferences**, where we continued to support the continuing education of our Rostered Ministers either online or in-person.
- Supported the congregations and ministries of the Synod through **visits by Synod staff**, both **digital** and **in-person**.
- Hosted "**Coffee with the Bishop**" for Retired Rostered Ministers, Spouses, Widows/Widowers.
- Received nearly **300 enrollments** from **over 100 SD churches** to **Pasque Learning Community**, our community effort to promote Spirit-led growth and faith formation. At Pasque, you can find 10 online courses with relevant instructional videos and digital discussion, as well as live weekly Zoom sessions, 4 active communities, and 2 digital downloads.
- Hosted "**I've Been Elected to Council, Now What?**" to support congregational lay leaders and supported rostered lay leaders with regular **in-person and virtual meetings**, such as monthly rostered minister virtual check-ins, Synod Authorized Minister, Senior Pastor, and Interim Pastor check-ins, and a First Call and Senior Pastor Retreat.
- Welcomed Rev. Joel Pakan as the new **Director for Rural Ministry**, where he has journeyed with our rural ministry sites. Rev. Pakan has continued to work with 14 communities and congregations in transition.
- Continued the work of the Rural Ministry Table, which is currently working on **Small Town and Rural (STAR)** grants, we awarded **\$84,139**.
- Partnered with Grand Valley Lutheran to hold a **Farm to Table Dinner**, which resulted in gifts of **\$44,710** to support rural ministry in South Dakota.
- Received **\$103,700** in Churchwide grants for our Neighbors in Solidarity ministries.

**Thank you for all the ways you have supported the ministry of the South Dakota Synod. Together we continue to serve as the hands and feet of Christ, sharing Jesus' love and grace. As we step into 2025, we trust in God's guidance and look forward to walking this journey of faith together.**