



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

July/Summer 2025 Newsletter Inserts

From the Bishop's Desk

Showing Up — Together

Dear South Dakota Synod,

Thank you for entrusting me to serve another six-year term as your bishop. It is a deep honor and privilege to walk this road with you. As I promised when I began: I will keep showing up in your congregations, at your tables, alongside you in ministry.

When you read this, the Churchwide Assembly will be underway in Phoenix, AZ. We are church together, and your SD Synod voting members covet your prayers as they listen for the Spirit's movement. Be assured: South Dakota congregations remain at the heart of their discernment.

You'll likely hear reports and commentary about the Assembly almost immediately — some generous, some critical. I urge you: don't rush to conclusions. When the Assembly concludes, we'll take time together to discern what these decisions mean for ministry here in South Dakota.

This fall, I'll hit the road again to listen to you — about your congregation's priorities and hopes — and to share where I see the Spirit nudging us as a synod over the next six years. Watch for details soon.

Journeying Together in Christ with you,
Rev. Constanze Hagmaier
Bishop of the SD Synod

Rural Ministry News

Beloved Travelers,

I am writing to you from the Synod office in Sioux Falls, having just returned from a week in Kimball with our sibling congregation, Kimball Protestant Parish. In the remaining days of July, I will be in our Bristol area congregations (Bethesda, Bergen, and Butler). And our team of Rural Ministry Ambassadors is showing up throughout the synod as we receive your invitations to places like the Lyman County Parish,

Custer Lutheran Fellowship, Trinity Lutheran Church in Estelline, Zion Lutheran Church in Bridgewater, and Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Canova. You can connect with the whole team at ambassadors@sdsynod.org.

Grand River Lutheran Church in Buffalo recently completed its three-Sunday rural immersion experience with Wartburg Seminarian Kathleen Robinson. Kathleen is the fourth ELCA seminarian we've hosted in this program, and we are inviting more of our ELCA seminaries to partner with us this fall. Would your congregation like to be part of forming the next generation of ELCA pastors and deacons? If so, let's chat! How may we accompany your congregation in 2025?

Looking forward,

Pastor Joel Pakan
Director for Rural Ministries
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sdsynod.org/rural

The Holy Playground Needs YOU!

As we get ready to open applications for our next congregational cohort on the Holy Playground, we'd love to hear from *you*—yes, *you*! Whether you're a pastor or a parent, a kiddo with big ideas, a council member, or just someone who cherishes their spot in the pew, your voice matters.

What brings you joy in intergenerational worship? What challenges are tugging at your sleeve? What do you dream could be different?

We invite you to share your thoughts with us! Reach out directly to Pr. Renae Boehmer at rboehmer@sdsynod.org or 605-274-4027 to set up a short interview with someone from our team and/or watch for an invitation to an online survey coming soon.

Thanks for being part of the holy mischief and sacred imagining! Let's keep playing, praying, and dreaming—together.

Pastor Renae Boehmer
Director for the Holy Playground Initiative
rboehmer@sdsynod.org

August is National Make-A-Will Month

Lutheran Planned Generosity and the South Dakota Synod have partnered with FreeWill to make it easier for you to join thousands of individuals who are making a will this month to protect the people and causes they care about.

In addition to writing your will, you can make a lasting impact on your congregation and favorite ministries for generations to come.

How do I get started?

Visit www.lpgsd.org today. **It's fast and easy, confidential and secure** within your personal, password-protected account. There is no cost and no obligation.

*(If you have already included a gift to your church or another charitable organization in your plans, please consider completing the form at **FreeWill.com/Beneficiaries** – we want to say “Thank You!”)*

Feel free to share this resource with family and friends. This is our gift to everyone, regardless of where they live or what church they attend, if any. For more information or further assistance, visit our website at www.lpgsd.org, or contact Kathy McHenry, Executive Director of LPGSD, 605-274-5030 or kmchenry@sdsynod.org.