

# Where in the World is Lutheran Family Service?

## LWML National Convention

June 22-25 in Milwaukee, WI

Women (and a few men) of all ages keep our booth busy inside the hall.

Everywhere! Well, almost everywhere. Like most of you, our Lutheran Family Service team packed in the activities and miles this summer. Aside from our usual hangouts like churches, schools, and counseling sessions, we've been out and about in the community. Perhaps you've seen us? Check out some of our summer highlights, starting with the LWML National Convention above and continuing inside with a few more favorites. *(continued on interior page)*



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# THE Good News LETTER

Fall 2023

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If you or someone you know is in need of Christ-centered mental health counseling, marriage and family counseling, or unplanned pregnancy support, reach out to us today.

Call: 515-573-3138 • Email: [info@lutheranfamilyservice.org](mailto:info@lutheranfamilyservice.org)  
Scan the QR code on the right to visit our web form



Sign up for our CrossWalk monthly eNewsletter at [lutheranfamilyservice.org/news](http://lutheranfamilyservice.org/news)

# Lutheran Family Service is in the **DAKOTAS!**



For more than a century, Lutheran Family Service has been walking with people in times of need, providing support just as God has been there to support us. And now the opportunity to walk with those in North and South Dakota is officially here! Both the LCMS North and South Dakota Districts have invited Lutheran Family Service into ministry partnership, knowing our expertise in church worker wellness, pregnancy counseling and adoption, mental health counseling, marriage and family counseling, and grief education and support.

Lutheran Family Service operated almost solely in Iowa until several years ago when the South Dakota District – having heard about our hope-filled, Christ-centered counseling – called on Lutheran Family Service to assist in a crisis situation. From that first

interaction in South Dakota, LFS has continued to focus on helping our pastors and other church workers with all manner of challenges that arise in their ministry vocations.

Now this year, LFS is making headway into North Dakota. A list of vetted local Christian counselors is in the works, with LFS staff immediately available via remote telehealth for anyone anywhere in North Dakota. Our northward-expanding services also include pursuit of a license to place children for adoption into Christian families. Please pray God sends us the right person to launch our adoption ministry in North Dakota!

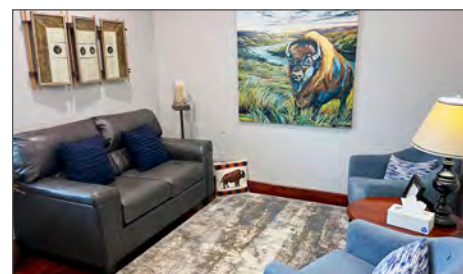
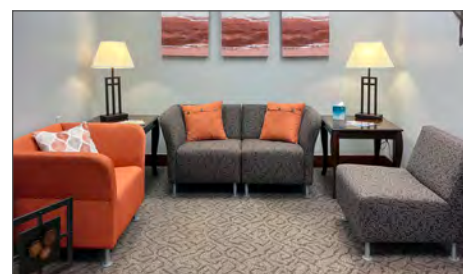


**Visit our new LFS office in the Dakotas at 3409 W 47th Street, Suite 103 in Sioux Falls!**

Made possible by our dedicated Healthy Together campaign donors, we have set up a Dakota office headquarters in Sioux Falls, offering unplanned pregnancy support and adoption services at that location alongside our mental health counseling. ♥



*From left to right: Wanda Pritzel (Director of Counseling at Lutheran Family Service); Rev. Les Wolfgram (Pastor at Shepherd of the Valley in Bismarck, NDD Board of Directors); Tami Ulland (NDD Business Manager and LCEF NDD Vice President); Rev. Tom Marcis, Jr. (Pastor at Zion in Bismarck); Rev. Steve Schulz (previous Pastor at Immanuel in Fargo, NDD District Chairman and First Vice President) taken at the 2023 North Dakota District Spring Pastors Conference.*



*The interior of our new LFS office in the Dakotas on West 47th Street in Sioux Falls.*

"Through the Healthy Together campaign, Lutheran Family Service can provide professional Christian mental health encouragement and guidance to church workers and laity in [our area]. This fills a great void and need in the living of these challenging days. Healthy workers help contribute to healthy congregations. Our ministry agreement with LFS is a godsend!"  
-Rev. Dr. Scott Sailer, President, South Dakota District, LCMS

## Meet Your North and South Dakota Team!



**Rev. Dave Gunderson, tLMFT**  
Licensed Marriage & Family  
Therapist Intern



**Lindy Hinkley, tLMFT**  
Licensed Marriage & Family  
Therapist Intern



**Cathy Vande Braak, MA**  
Adoption Caseworker &  
Pregnancy Counselor



**Virginia Strubbe,**  
*MSW, CSW-PIP*  
Clinical Social Worker

"One of my passions is working with people who have chronic illness, or have been diagnosed with a terminal illness, That's kind of been my world for a number of years.

The work that I do with people is just so powerful. The opportunity to work authentically with people in that way is really neat and the people that are here at LFS are really incredible. You can

really see their passion for the work of the agency.

I live out the mission of LFS daily by walking alongside others and getting to see them as someone God has created, and by showing them grace as we walk together along the path."



**Dr. Mark Vande Braak,**  
*Ph.D, FT, MT-BC*  
Thanatologist, Music Therapist

"On average, there are 6,500 people that die every day in the United States. That's a significant number, and about 128 people are impacted by each of those losses. It's quite staggering to think about it; there's about 300 million people every year in the United States that are impacted by a loss. My hope is that people can become aware that they don't have to struggle alone.

And struggling with grief is not exclusive to death. It could be a loss of a home or a loss of a job.

I truly believe that coming to LFS was a God thing, just trusting that He sends me to where I'm needed, like the ability to help church workers."

**Call our office in Sioux Falls at (605) 271-1081**



*(continued from cover)*

Here are a few more of our favorite summer highlights! You can follow @lutheranfamilyservice on Facebook or Instagram for all of our latest adventures! ▼

## *Iowa State Capitol* July 11 in Des Moines, IA

*Rev. Dr. Jim Lamb testifies at a hearing regarding the fetal heartbeat bill in a fight for life as protestors fill the rotunda.*

## *Family Fun Night* July 24 in Dubuque, IA

*Mental health counselor Ruth Barz welcomes children and families to the Dubuque Chick-fil-A to talk about regulating emotions.*



## *Car Show and Family Carnival*

July 28 in Fort Dodge, IA

*Good Shepherd's annual fundraiser for LFS features some stunning rides.*

# GROWING GOD'S GIFTS



How inclined would you be to give away something that wasn't yours? If you were asked by a close friend to deliver a gift to someone they love, would you do it?

This is exactly what the Lord has asked us to do with everything that He has given to us. We are to see all of these things as gifts and blessings, given to us by



His very hands, and give them away to our brothers and sisters in love and in His name.

When we stop and think about everything the Lord has given us, it becomes quite overwhelming. So much so, that we have the desire to bless others and bless ministries that share the truth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! ▼

**"Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day."**

**-Deuteronomy 8:17-18**

Anne Meyer-Schmitz, a mother of three Crusaders for Christ and a wife to her high school sweetheart, is a Donor Engagement Specialist at Lutheran Family Service who also has a passion for Christian education and served Valley Lutheran School in Cedar Falls, Iowa, for 10 years.

# Offering a Safe Haven

As a result of legislative efforts by Lutheran Family Service, private adoption agencies like LFS now have the ability to receive Iowa infants through the Safe Haven Act. Branch offices in Urbandale, Fort Dodge, and Bettendorf are prepared to do so.

"We asked the Iowa Legislature to make this change for one simple reason, some women are afraid to go to the Department of Human Services, and that fear may prevent them from making a safe decision," says Kim Laube, Deputy Director of Lutheran Family Service. "Some women also believe their infant will wind up in 'the system' if they go through DHS for a safe haven relinquishment. By giving the option to relinquish to a private adoption agency, women may feel there is a more stable process for their child to bond with an adoptive family right away."

Since 2002, over 50 babies in Iowa have been relinquished through the Safe Haven Act.

## What is Safe Haven Adoption?

Safe Haven relinquishments are different than traditional adoption because the birthparent has no obligation to give any identifying information for themselves or the child they are relinquishing. Many women find themselves in dangerous situations during an unexpected pregnancy, especially if there



are people in their life who are violent. Safe Haven relinquishments allow the birthmother, birthfather, or a designee to bring the child to a safe location and never reveal any information about themselves or the child without being prosecuted for abandonment.

Lutheran Family Service will bring all infants relinquished through Safe Haven to a medical professional for evaluation and treatment. While that is occurring, we will be calling our numerous adoptive families to line up a family to receive the child in adoption as quickly as possible. Many factors go into deciding who the adoptive parents will be, but our focus is always on the best interest of the child.

## We Are Here

For any birthparent needing the Safe Haven service for their child who is 90 days old or less, they can text "Safe" to 844-764-2029. For those inquiring about adopting a child through LFS, you can get more information at [lutheranfamilyservice.org](http://lutheranfamilyservice.org) about our domestic infant adoption program. ♥



Lutheran  
Family Service



Contact the LFS Administrative Office at  
(515) 573-3138 if you would like to  
distribute resources related to adoption or  
pregnancy counseling in your area.

## Direct Your Dollars Today!

*Eligible Thrivent members:* Please consider directing your Thrivent Choice Dollars® to Lutheran Family Service. You can make a profound impact, adding to the over \$21,000 directed toward LFS in the past three years! Don't wait to direct your dollars, visit [tiny.cc/thriventchoice](http://tiny.cc/thriventchoice) today! ♥

## Gifts given in Honor

**Deb Dreyer**  
given by Jane Dreyer

**Deborah Hansen**  
given by Sean & Rebecca Hansen

**Lyle Luedke**  
given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

**Albert & Bethel Rinderknecht**  
given by Doug Rinderknecht

**Louella Tutor**  
given by Ken & Markie Hays

**Karen Weber**  
given by Gale & Carol Bobolz

**Joy & Mick Wolfram**  
for their 50th Wedding Anniversary  
given by Rodney & Marilyn Meyer  
given by Trudy Sonksen

# Gifts given in *Memory of Loved Ones*

**Susan Ackerman**

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

**Donna Anderson**

given by Marlene Glasnapp

**Lucille Bell**

given by Duane & Diane Madoerin

**Violet Berkland**

given by Joel & Cindy Jaeger

**Jean & Harold Bern**

given by Bern Family Foundation Fund, C/O Cynthia Scott

**Joyce Breunig**

given by Sue Knutson  
given by Bob Hetrick

**Darrin Burress**

given by The Dorcas Society of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Ventura

**Marianne Chalstrom**

given by Gordon Barringer

**Nancy Chrisman**

given by Carol Lowder

**Norman Christiansen**

given by Jim & Lori Asmus

**Leo Dose**

given by Dale & Ruth Bruhn

**Don Eldridge**

given by Bonnie Eldridge

**Joyce Fisher**

given by Kerry & Keri Burmeister  
given by Joan Arnold

**Clarence Gehring**

given by Joe & Mary Holmberg

**DeLores Hackbarth**

given by Lucille Reinking

**Cathy Halferty**

given by The Dorcas Society of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Ventura

**John Hjelmeland**

given by Steve & Darlene Turner

**Barb Hoffman**

given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

**Kathy Hoyer**

given by Steve & Judy Rozek

**Brandon Jacobson**

given by Dale & Ruth Bruhn

**Pastor Andrew Johnson**

given by Michele Henderson

**Pastor Andrew Johnson (continued)**

given by Tiffany Johnson  
given by Ivan & Margaret Kaden  
given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb  
given by Susan Schlueter

**Doris Kuehnast**

given by Bruce & Linda Gunderson  
given by Doris Gillespie

**Nancy Lynn Lahs**

given by Gregg Peterson

**Dale Langner**

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

**Albert Latrisha**

given by Verdell Leek

**Lois Leadley**

given by Alice & Donald Yepsen

**Larry Lightbody**

given by Lona Younge

**Brenda Litka**

given by Milt & Sheryl Hustedt

**Janet Longbein**

given by Marlene Glasnapp

**Barbara Loving**

given by Anonymous  
given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

**Kim Mahlum**

given by Dan & Dawn Parle  
given by Jackie Schulze  
given by Mildred Torkelson

**Ted Pearson**

given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb

**Keith Peterson**

given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb

**Dana Pierson**

given by Joe & Hannah Pierson

**Tim Prem**

given by Bev Prem

**Howard Pulse**

given by James Pulse

**Janeh Ryerson**

given by The Dorcas Society of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Ventura

**Catherine Schillo**

given by Anonymous  
given by Andrew & Jahanna Ansonge  
given by Dean & Jean Barnett  
given by Shelia & Mark Border  
given by Wanda Bredice

**Catherine Schillo (continued)**

given by Kerry & Keri Burmeister  
given by Marlene Dickey  
given by Lee & Deb Dreyer  
given by Joanne & Joel Dufresne  
given by Lee & Carol Echtenkamp  
given by Mark & Ruth Gerken  
given by Cinthia Giles  
given by Ken & Markie Hays  
given by Brent & Diana Johnson  
given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb  
given by Robert & Jo Ann Meyer  
given by Wanda Pritzel  
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**John Tolson**

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given by Dean & Paulette Loney  
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**Dave Fevold, Judy Harklau, Doris Kuehnast, Mary Plagmann**

given by Dan & Dawn Parle

**Harold Harms & Scott Peck**

given by Angela Kollbaum

**Eric & His Daughter**

given by Doug & Sally Wendel