



Lutheran
Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

THE Good News LETTER

www.lutheranfamilyservice.org

Spring 2025

"The Lord Was Calling Us" Luke's Adoption Story

Written by Augustine & Molly, an adoptive couple sharing their personal account of their son, Luke's, adoption through Lutheran Family Service.

Our story of how we came to adopt Luke is an amazing one. My husband sent me an email from Lutheran Family Service asking for prayers as well as if anyone knew of a family willing to adopt a baby boy who was going to have a lifelong medical condition. I immediately called my husband and said that we should reach out to find out more information. Getting the response email, I immediately did a deep dive into Prader-Willi Syndrome as well as taking it to prayer that night.

"We felt strongly that the Lord was calling us to go down this path. We did not know what would happen, but we trusted that God had a plan and we had a role to play in this little boy's life."

Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) is caused by a deletion or mutation of genes on chromosome 15, preventing the body from producing certain proteins that regulate appetite, growth, and behavior. There is no cure for PWS, but with proper treatment and management, individuals can live long and fulfilling lives.

After an introductory meeting with Kim at LFS, we were instructed to send short biographies with pictures of our family. We met with the birthparents and then waited for their decision. I was teaching Catechesis when our social worker, Kari, called me, so I could not take the call. She then reached out to my husband, who was able to answer. Normally it's the woman who tells her husband that they are having a baby, but when I got home that night he



shared with me that we had been chosen! I began to smile uncontrollably. Excitement and joy filled my heart. I wanted this little boy so badly and had been afraid to hope that he would be ours.

Then began the whirlwind of paperwork. We were motivated to get through it because we wanted to meet Luke so badly. It was at this time that we began to talk to our three-year-old son, Max, about how he was going to be a big brother. Max was so excited to finally meet his baby brother and bring him home from the NICU. Their meeting was so sweet.

Now it feels as if Luke has always been a part of our family. It is hard to imagine the time before him. Max and Luke are each other's biggest fans, often having giggling sessions together. Max is also a cheerleader for Luke through all of his therapies and doctor appointments. Luke is a very happy baby, with one of the best smiles.

"We are so grateful to God for the gift of Luke, and for Lutheran Family Service and all that they did to help us through this process." ♥

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS Lutheran Family Service?

Hartley, IA



9/26/24 Dr. Mark Vande Braak presented to St. Paul Lutheran in Hartley, Iowa, on the topics of grief, loss, and trauma as part of Suicide Prevention Month.

Pierre, SD



9/27/24 We hosted a Pastors' Wives Retreat in Pierre, South Dakota, building connections centered on "running the race" that God has set before them.

Clarinda, IA



10/5/24 Our dynamic duo of counselor Cassie Beltz and Rev. Jonathan Conner spoke on creation and identity at the Council Bluffs Circuit Gathering in Clarinda.

Kearney, NE



10/17/24 Our Director Of Church Worker Wellness, Angela Kollbaum, presented at the Nebraska Professional Church Worker Conference in Kearney.

Minot, ND



1/19/25 Rev. Max Phillips, our Executive Director, spoke at the North Dakota District Convention in anticipation of building continued partnerships in the state.

Center Point, IA



11/16/24 We were joined by an awesome group of campus ministry students for a discussion on gender identity at St. John Lutheran in Center Point, Iowa.

Sioux Falls, SD



10/24/24 We had a great time at the 2024 Sioux Falls Lutheran School Fall Festival seeing nearly 400 families visit our trick-or-treat booth.

Trappe, PA



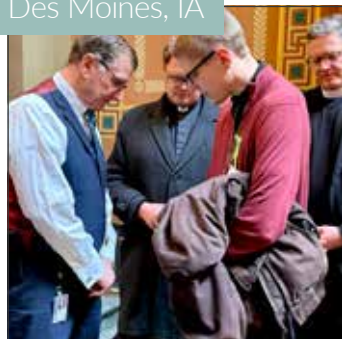
10/18/24 We weren't really in Pennsylvania, but German missionary Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg transported visitors at our Fall LWML events.

Des Moines, IA



1/27/25 Lutheran Family Service was proud to sponsor the annual Prayer Rally For Life in the Iowa State Capitol to promote pro-life legislative action.

Des Moines, IA



2/11/25 Iowa LCMS pastors stood for truth and life at LFS' 8th annual Iowa LCMS Pastors' Day On The Hill event at the State Capitol in Des Moines.

Phoenix, AZ



2/13/25 Along with 2,600 church workers and professionals who care about the LCMS, we attended the 2025 Best Practices in Ministry Conference in Phoenix.

Rapid City, SD



2/21/25 Therapist Lindy Hinckley supported an awesome group of mothers at their monthly Mom Co. meeting at Peace Lutheran in Rapid City.

Meet the team!

Rev. Todd Kollbaum
Director of Partner Engagement



Written by Rev. Todd Kollbaum, a husband, father, grandparent, and pastor. Todd comes to LFS with a background in connecting congregations and church workers with ministry resources and support.

Greetings to you in the name of Christ. Simply put, my job is to develop partnerships. In this role, I pray that I will be able to assist and support you and LFS to accomplish all the good work our Lord has planned in advance for us to do. I come to this role, knowing that in our hurting world, we have the opportunity and even the command to be the hands and feet of Christ to those who are in need.

"What a privilege it is then, to serve God's children through the care and support He provides through Lutheran Family Service."

I've worked a lot with LCMS districts on developing partnerships that build relationships through which

ministries can thrive and grow. I hope to continue that work so that together we can grow the LFS ministry, walking with others in times of need.

Still serving as a parish pastor in Madison, Nebraska, I come to this position with over 20 years of ministry experience. In the parish and through my work as Director of LCMS Rural & Small Town Missions, I find joy in bringing together partners in the Gospel to accomplish the work set before us.

One of my most important partnerships in ministry is my family. My wife of almost 35 years, Angela, is a DCE who serves LFS as the Director of Church Worker Wellness and as a therapist. (Read more about Angela in the article *Expanded Resources Lead The Way In Church Worker Wellness*.) Angela and I have 5 children and 7 grandchildren with whom we love to spend any free time we can muster. Caring for people is definitely near and dear to our hearts.

"What a joy it is to share in His mission through LFS. I look forward to meeting you, and our continued partnership in the Gospel!" ♥

Revamped Outreach Programs Available To Engage The Church

With a focus on equipping our church members and leaders in their daily lives, our Congregational Services Team remains committed to developing and sharing resources that address pertinent issues in today's culture with God's unchanging truth and love.

Male And Female He Created Them: Creation And Identity

is our gender identity project led by Cassie Beltz, LMHC, and Rev. Jonathan Conner. That project continues to be well utilized by churches and other organizations.

Becoming Screenwise: Understanding The Seen & Unseen And What You Must Do About It

is also led by Pastor Conner and expounds on dangers posed by a life on screens. It points to ways to more fully engage in God's three-dimensional creation.

From Womb To Tomb: Building A Culture Of Life

is also in the works. Pregnancy Counselor, Kari Smith, along with Rev. Alex Post, are developing a series of presentations covering a variety of life topics.



Whose You Are

is our catalog of youth programs, which is also receiving an update. DCE Bethany Kuhlmann brings fresh perspective through the lens of God's gifts to us.

To host a program at your church or to hear of new programs, visit lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact ♥



Coming soon to your mailbox, look for our *2025 Spring Appeal* to find out how you can partner with LFS and earn a special gift for your pastor!

Expanded Resources Lead The Way In Church Worker Wellness

We know our church needs her workers to be healthy — not only in ministry settings, but also in marriages and family life — so that ministries can be sustained, thrive, and grow. Church Worker Wellness has always been a priority for Lutheran Family Service, but with Angela Kollbaum now leading our team, we're ramping up our Church Worker Wellness efforts even further.



Angela isn't new to LFS or Church Worker Wellness. She has over 25 years of experience as a social worker, commissioned Director of Christian Education (DCE), youth leader, and family-life coordinator. She has been with Lutheran Family Service for three years as a Mental

Health Practitioner and Certified Professional Counselor, primarily serving Nebraska.

Existing and continually fortified efforts include:

- Koinonia — 6 weekly online support groups for wives of LCMS pastors across the globe
- Education related to self-care for church workers
- Education for congregations regarding care of their church workers
- Resources for church workers related to family issues and other areas of need
- Prayers by name for workers on a daily basis
- Planning and hosting Pastors' Wives Retreats
- Providing support for newly commissioned DCE's through a monthly online support/care group
- Presentations at Circuit, District, and Synodical levels regarding wellness and mental health
- Walking beside church workers who are struggling, providing distinctly Lutheran care and always pointing them to Christ

The team is also currently developing:

- Resources for Districts to provide to church workers upon retirement or leaving the ministry
- Partnerships with other LCMS-RSO's to collaborate in caring for our church workers

Angela Kollbaum is a church worker, married to a church worker, whose children are church workers. Her team consists of two pastors, a DCE, and two pastors' wives. They get it, and they can help.

If you're a church worker who desires to learn more about proactive wellness and mental health, or you're a member that wants to keep your favorite church worker healthy, connect with LFS today at lutheranfamilyservice.org/contact ♥



Recent Adoption Spotlights



Emma's birthmother struggled with addiction and learned she was pregnant while incarcerated. Through the hand of God, she was directed to LFS. She chose life for her baby, picking an adoptive family that could see past her faults and was willing to have an open adoption. This birthmother has been clean since the birth, loves her baby girl, and is thankful for adoption.



Zeke is being raised to know and love Jesus above all else, love others well, and love life! His adoptive parents, Adam & Sara, have been with Zeke from the beginning, starting with his delivery. "Lutheran Family Service is an amazing Christian organization that loves Jesus, loves babies from the moment of conception, and loves the family unit as a whole."

Clay is the fourth child adopted from Lutheran Family Service by Brandon & Ashley. They are so thankful for the gift of Clay's life, the blessing of raising this sweet boy, and getting to love his birth family in the process as well. He is truly loved. "To LFS, thank you. You have truly been the hands and feet of Jesus Christ throughout this process. Praise be to God for the kingdom work you are doing!"



Raelynn was born in Illinois. Jackson & Susie had shared their profile book with birthparents before, but this time felt different. The next day, they were chosen to be Raelynn's adoptive parents. God's timing is always perfect. "It was the absolute best moment of our lives. We thank the Lord in His infinite wisdom and Rae's birth mom, dad, and grandma for bringing Raelynn into our lives."



For the first time, my family is experiencing what I'm certain many of you have already gone through: my mother, Esther Schlesselman, died just before Christmas at age 88 following a valiant 2½ year battle with cancer.

We now have to settle her estate. But Mom made everything easy, so there's no conflict. She had

her funeral planned, down to the hymns. She had keepsakes allocated. But most importantly, she wrote a statement of faith along with her will, a testimony of what was most important to her — the source of the love that holds our family together: our Savior Jesus. I'm so thankful that God chose her to be my mom.

Consider my mom's example. Do you have a will? A statement of faith? What will your family have to direct and comfort them as they navigate life without you?

I'm doing this now for myself, and I encourage you to do the same. We at LFS are here to

help if needed. Desire some guidance before putting things in writing? Have concerns about relationships that still need resolution on this side of eternity? Looking to organize and communicate your plan to distribute the resources God has given you to steward? Call us at 515-570-2310. How good it will feel to have it all settled. Take it from me, those you love will be so grateful. 💙



Wanda Pritzel
Licensed Social Worker
Director of Ministry Advancement
wpritzel@lutheranfamilyservice.org

Gifts given in *Memory of Loved Ones*

Fred Arndt

given by Kerry & Keri Burmeister
given by Bruce & Linda Gunderson

Deann Barnes

given by Paul Dasher

Zola Beckman

given by Marlene Glasnapp

Donald Bremer

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Dean & Melva Brock

given by Bruce & Sheila Cairns

Dr. Eugene Brown

given by Phil & Alberta Voge
given by Bob & Marilyn Walker

Larry Brunk

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Jean Carlson

given by Joyce Vitzthum

Joy Englin

given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb

Kathy Erickson

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Ralph Fogal

given by Marlene Glasnapp

Bernice Gade

given by Joel & Cindy Jaeger

Diane Grave

given by Marlene Glasnapp

Phyllis Hanns

given by Redeemer Lutheran
Church, Ventura, Iowa

Cheryl Hansen

given by Joe & Mary Holmberg

James Hartman

given by Dolores Hatfield

Richard Holp

given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb

Roger Ingram

given by Dale & Ruth Bruhn

John Jacobson

given by Joe & Mary Holmberg

Kathleen Janssen

given by Shirley Koehn
given by William & Janice Witt

Audrey Johannsen

given by Ken Johannsen
given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

Elmer Kamprath

given by Joe & Mary Holmberg

Jason Koehn

given by Lonny & Sharon Koehn

Doug Kuhn

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Eldred Lietz

given by Marlene Glasnapp

Alan & Karla Mahaffey

given by Rebecca Moore

Andrea McWilliams

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Robert Meyer

given by Ilene Meyer

Bernie Miller

given by Joe & Mary Holmberg

Dennis Moon

given by LWML of St. James
Lutheran Church - Victor, Iowa

Alli Olsen

given by Jen Olsen

Dale Scharn

given by Marlene Glasnapp

Esther Schlesselman

given by Deborah Anderson
given by Lynette Aschinger
given by Ruth Barz
given by George & Ruth Ann Cole

given by Randy Harms

given by Mike & Amy Hull
given by Phil & Toni Larson
given by Andy & Jamie McWade
given by James & Vickie Miller
given by Cheri & Jeffery Nations
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Rita D. Schroeder

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JoAnne Spurlin

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Elaine Thayer

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James Timm

given by LWML of St. James
Lutheran Church - Victor, Iowa

Paul Unterbrink

given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Don Waderich

given by Dan & Dawn Parle

Gifts given in *Honor*

Ida Mae Bierschenk

given by Steven & Deb Rempfer

Lois Greder

given by Jim & Lori Asmus

Carmen Nielson

given by Virginia Hefty

Carol Ullerich

given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

If you would like to give a gift in memory or honor of
someone special, please visit lutheranfamilyservice.org
and click "Donate" at the top of the screen.

2024 LUTHERAN FAMILY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Profit & Loss Overview

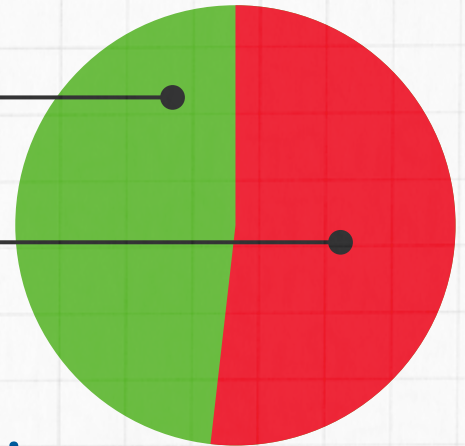
* Breakdown shown below

\$2,042,772

Revenue

\$2,458,192

Expenses



SOURCE OF FUNDS

21%
Individuals
171 New donors
7%
Healthy Together
Campaign Pledge Payouts

55%
Program Fees

17%
Congregations &
Organizations

Lutheran Family Service

4%
Fund
Development
11%
Management
19%
Adoption &
Pregnancy
Counseling
142 mothers &
preborn babies
9 Christian
adoptions

4%
Congregational
Services

37 MomTalk
gatherings

49 L&S Sundays

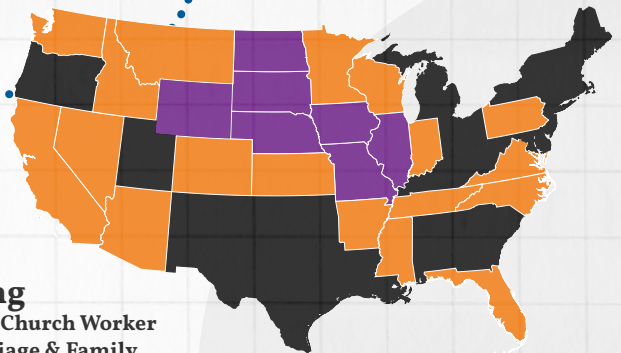
62%
Counseling
Mental Health, Church Worker
Wellness, Marriage & Family

6,638 Counseling
sessions

82 Church worker
consultations

6,830 Facebook
followers
1,163,112 Social
media reach
46,935 Website
visitors
38% Enews
open rate
6% Enews click-
thru rate

Licensed to
serve in **7** states



1,020 partners
24 states
\$0 government dollars

USE OF FUNDS



Lutheran Family Service
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Fort Dodge, IA 50501

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THE *Good News* **LETTER**

Spring 2025



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

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