Lutheran Family Service
For Nothing is Impossible with God

THE Good News LETTER

www.lutheranfamilyservice.org

Fall 2026

Stronger Together

LFS and Trinity Davenport Partner in Care

One year after bringing LFS counselors into Trinity Lutheran School, a new partnership has become an important part of caring for students.

A year ago, Trinity Lutheran School in Davenport, Iowa, was stepping into something new.

Last year, Trinity launched a new initiative, bringing LFS counselors onto campus not only to provide counseling but also to support students, teachers, and families throughout the school year. Principal Joel Kilgus knew there was a need.

"No matter where they attend school, students bring trauma with them. Access to mental health support is essential to nurturing the whole child."

LFS counselors Rev. Nathan Grewe, tLMHC, and Hannah Fowler, tLMFT, began spending 16 hours each week at Trinity. Over the year, they provided 64 individual student consultations, 108 classroom presentations, and 32 staff and parent consultations.

Beyond those numbers, counseling became woven into the life of the school. Parents grew more comfortable accessing services, and teachers became better equipped to recognize when students might benefit from additional support.



Nathan and Hannah also developed a social-emotional learning curriculum for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. LFS Clinical Supervisor Jamie McWade, LMHC, saw the impact firsthand.



From left to right: Joel Kilgus (Principal), Darik Muhlenbruck (Director of Ministry Support), Rev. Matthew Schilling (Senior Pastor/Executive Director), and LFS Counselors Hannah Fowler, Rev. Nathan Grewe, and Jamie McWade.

"[Trinity] saw the positive impact of classroom time, individual student support, and continued care when they connected to counseling."

By the end of the year, both counselors' schedules were full, demonstrating the value of the program. For Trinity leaders, the partnership offers more than on-site counseling. LFS counselors serve within a Lutheran environment while drawing on the resources and expertise of an entire mental health team. Rev. Matthew Schilling, Trinity Senior Pastor/ Executive Director, took notice.

"What a blessing it has been having LFS on our campus this past year. It's a great need for our school children."

As Nathan and Hannah return for the 2026-27 school year, Kilgus hopes Trinity's experience will inspire other Lutheran schools to explore similar partnerships.

"My hope is that this grows — that other schools see the benefit through us and take that leap and sign on with LFS."

Meet the team!

Rob Kellar

Director of Donor Engagement



"Growing up in a foster family and having an adopted sister gives me a deep appreciation for our pregnancy support and adoption ministries."

LFS is pleased to introduce Rob Kellar, our new Director of Donor Engagement. After more than 32 years serving in Lutheran education as a teacher and principal, Rob brings a lifelong commitment to ministry and a passion for connecting people with the mission of Lutheran Family Service.

A lifelong Lutheran, Rob grew up in suburban Chicago in a family deeply connected to foster care and adoption. His parents served as foster parents, and his family adopted his sister in 1974. Those experiences helped shape his heart for serving others and give him a special appreciation for many of the ministries LFS provides today.

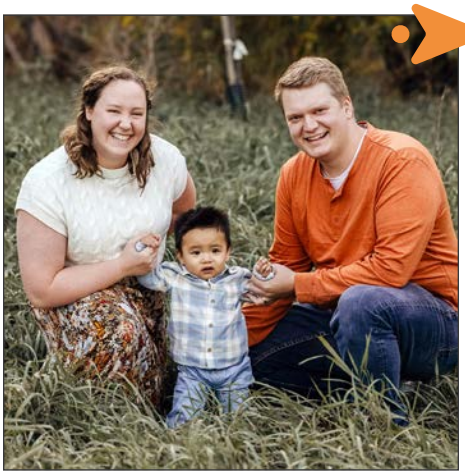
Rob says both personal and professional experience connect him to the mission of LFS.

As Director of Donor Engagement, Rob's goal is to build strong relationships with supporters and help them see the impact of their partnership. He believes everyone can play a role in changing lives through prayer and generosity. He is especially excited to connect supporters with the stories and life-changing work their gifts make possible.

"I want our supporters to clearly see how their partnership changes lives and helps Lutheran Family Service continue serving individuals and families with Christ's love."

Rob and his wife, Karen, have been married for more than 36 years and have three grown children. We are grateful to welcome Rob to the LFS team and look forward to the relationships he will build as we continue sharing hope, help, and the love of Christ.

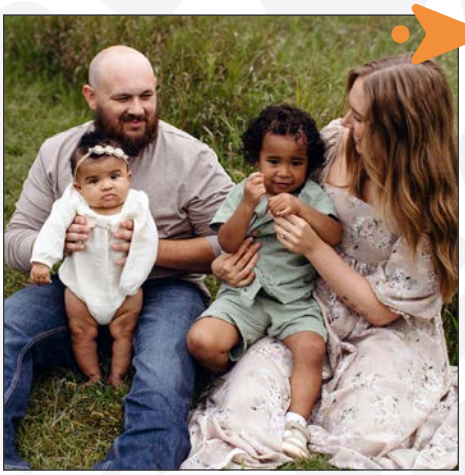
Recent Adoption Spotlights



Russell *came into Aaron and Maria's lives after years of prayer and a calling to grow their family through adoption. Just three months after becoming eligible to adopt through Lutheran Family Service, they connected with Russell's birthmother and knew God was at work. "There is no doubt that God has had His hand over Russell and everyone involved in his adoption journey," they shared.*



Janie*'s story began after Tyler and Kelsey's years-long journey through infertility, prayer, and waiting led them to adoption through Lutheran Family Service. After matching with an expectant family in summer 2025, they welcomed Janie just two months later and finalized her adoption this summer. "Janie is our miracle, our blessing, and the greatest gift we could have imagined," they shared.*



Maryn *joined Mitch and Angela's family after the couple, already blessed with a son through adoption with Lutheran Family Service, felt called to adopt again. After much patience and prayer, they matched with Maryn's expectant mother and had just three weeks to prepare for her arrival. "Our prayers have been answered beyond our wildest dreams, and our family is now complete," they shared.*

New Faces at Lutheran Family Service



Sarah Anderson, *LCSW, PMH-C*
Clinical Social Worker

Serving in Tennessee, Sarah counsels pastors, church workers, and families via telehealth, drawing from her experience as a pastor's wife.

"I've always had a heart for those in ministry and I'm grateful to serve those who serve many."

Connect with Sarah • 865-252-1570



Stephanie Grade, *LMHC*
Mental Health Counselor

Seeing clients in Carroll, Iowa, and statewide via telehealth, Stephanie provides faith-based counseling for individuals, couples, and families.

"More than anything, I want people to leave feeling heard and valued."

Connect with Stephanie • 712-276-9000



Ieva Russell, *Deaconess*
Counseling Intern

Ieva is completing her internship with LFS, combining faith and mental health care for foster and adoptive families around Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"Counseling cares for emotional health, while faith provides lasting hope in Christ."

Connect with Deaconess Ieva • 865-252-1570



Rachelle Sliva, *BS*
Pregnancy & Adoption Caseworker

An adoptive mother of three, Rachelle walks alongside birth mothers and adoptive families in eastern Nebraska.

"We do what we do to honor the Lord, shining the light of Jesus in the adoption world."

Connect with Rachelle • 402-644-8048



Dane Wolfgram, *DCE*
Certified Coach

Based in St. Louis and serving clients nationwide, Dane helps people navigate transitions, decisions, and personal growth.

"I help people tap into their own expertise to solve challenges and take next steps."

Connect with Dane • 605-271-1081



Rev. Les Wolfgram, *Pastor*
Counseling Graduate Student

Pastor Wolfgram combines decades of pastoral ministry and chaplaincy experience to provide Christ-centered counseling in North Dakota.

"We walk with people as Christ's representatives, bringing hope in difficult seasons."

Connect with Pastor Les • 701-532-0996

Blessed by Faithful Women in Mission

This spring and summer, LFS attended several LWML conventions and rallies, sharing our ministry and building relationships. We are grateful for their prayers, encouragement, and generous support.

Gulfport, Mississippi



Rapid City, South Dakota



Camp Okoboji, Iowa



Gretna, Nebraska



Devils Lake, North Dakota



LFS Connects, Celebrates, and Looks Ahead at the 2026 LCMS National Convention

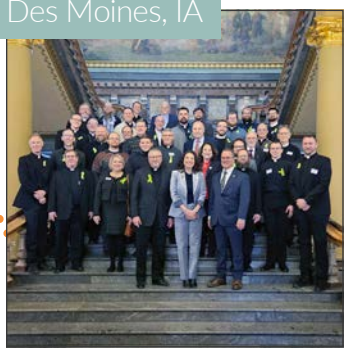




In July, LFS engaged with supporters and ministry partners at the LCMS National Convention in Phoenix, sharing updates on our nationwide Lutheran adoption and church worker wellness efforts. Our "What's Your Beef?" booth sparked meaningful conversations about ministry needs across the LCMS. One highlight came when President Matthew Harrison was spotted wearing a "Lutherans Love Our Church Workers" T-shirt, encouraging those serving Christ's Church.



Des Moines, IA



1/27/26 ***Pastors gathered with LFS, beginning in worship before meeting legislators at the Iowa Capitol. They encouraged leaders to protect life statewide.***

Aberdeen, SD



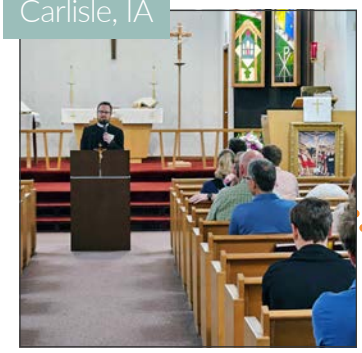
2/22/26 ***Our Savior Lutheran Church welcomed us for an LFS Sunday, where Dreena Wertz and Wanda Pritzel highlighted our outreach ministries.***

Eldora, IA



2/22/26 ***At St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rev. Jonathan Conner engaged youth in discussion about screens, social media, and artificial intelligence.***

Carlisle, IA



5/9/26 ***At the Lutheran Homeschool League Conference, Rev. Alex Post shared LFS resources and encouraged conversations about life issues.***

St. Louis, MO



7/16/26 ***LFS staff attended training on gender identity at the LCMS International Center, gaining tools to support families with Christ-centered care.***

Beemer, NE



7/12/26 ***LFS joined Immanuel and Zion-St. John Lutheran Churches for their annual Mission Festival, sharing ministry, worship, fellowship, and outreach.***

Des Moines, IA



6/20/26 ***At the Iowa March for Life, LFS joined fellow Lutherans in worship, prayer, and public witness for the God-given value of every human life.***

Britton, SD



5/22/26 ***At St. John's Lutheran Church, Dreena Wertz helped Vacation Bible School students explore friendship through a Ruth and Naomi-themed activity.***

Gifts given in *Memory of Loved Ones*

Ron Baker
given by Joe & Mary Holmberg

Marian Berkeland
given by Joel & Cindy Jaeger

Harold & Jean Bern
given by The Bern Family Foundation

Barbara Block
given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Lloyd Boettcher
given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

Rev. Dr. Paul W. Devantier
given by Andy & Jayme Wyss

Gladys Eddie
given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

Paul Elowsky
given by Brent & Debbie Pladna

Shirley Fasbender
given by Doug & Sally Wendel

Daniel Flanscha
given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb

Nancy Good
given by Doug & Sally Wendel

Harry Heins
given by Gary & Barbara Mrosko

Kevin Hertz
given by Ron & Carolyn Rubsam

Blake Hoines
given by Sheri & Len Alberts

Rev. Dr. Robert Holst
given by Andy & Jayme Wyss

Norma Kressin
given by Lance & Paula Olson

Kurt Lehmkuhl
given by Frank & Linda Kastner

Ginny Lewis
given by Duane & Karen Ploeger

Doreen Miller
given by Lance & Paula Olson
given by Kerry & Keri Burmeister

Dwight Morenz
given by Marlene Glasnapp

Deanna Niebuhr
given by Marvin & Joyce Flanscha

Arloa Rapple
given by Mildred Torkelson

Vivian Peters
given by Steven Peters

Duane Peterson
given by Jim & Roxanne Lamb

Marlene Schmidt
given by Ron & Bonnie Cornelius

Delores Telford
given by Mildred Torkelson
given by Lance & Paula Olson

George Theesfeld
given by Dale & Nancy Bruns

Gifts given in *Honor*

Hannah Batchelder
given by Mike & Marie Moeller

Laura Braun
given by Wanda Pritzel

Lucy Brown
given by Floyd & Carol Brown

Katy Crawford
given by Nancy Prine

Faith Greenmyer
given by Faith Lutheran Church

Lori Jenks
given by Sandy George

Pastors' Wives
given by Pete & Elaine Sestak

Karen Schilling
given by Loretta Wuerdeman

Christine Wade
given by Liz Kempfert

Niccy Walla
given by Susan Hartley-Wolfgram

Shelee Warner
given by Robert & Myrna Bohlmann
given by Maurice Brandt
given by Roberta Fischesser
given by Robin Roetzel

Theresa Wendorff
given by Linda Salvini

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.

125 YEARS
Lutheran Family Service

Look for our 2026 year-end appeal booklet commemorating the 125th anniversary of LFS, coming to your mailbox this fall!

Lutheran Family Service
409 Kenyon Rd, Ste. C
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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@LutheranFamilyService



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.

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



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