

# South Dakota Lutheran Secretariat

## Via de Cristo Newsletter

Check out our website -- <http://www.sdlvdc.org>

[January 2025 Edition](#) ..... Enean Mattes & Pastor Steve Carmany, Editors

EXTRA! EXTRA!

READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!

[Lay Encouragement](#)// [VDC Weekend](#)// [Upcoming Events](#)// [Shirt Sale](#)// [Pastor's Corner](#)//

A new year! Ringing in a new year can look different for everyone, some may toast and clink their glasses, a kiss, dance or maybe even fireworks! For others it may come in with a tear, fear, anger, or shaking of the fist to the heavens. Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us "there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven" verse 4 "a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and time to dance".

The past year has brought trial, tears, fear, suffering and loss to our family. Placing all of that into God's hands wasn't the easiest, but knowing God's promise to us of eternal life made it easier on our hearts, although our selfish selves would much rather have Don here with us! I read this about grief, "But in all the sadness, when you're feeling that your heart is empty and lacking, you've got to remember that grief isn't the absence of love. Grief is the proof that love is still there." I feel that grief will always be in my life, I will heal but I will never be the same. Who am I without Don Curtis? That's a loaded question! I am a child of God who loves me and will never leave me. I know I am not alone in all of this. Our VDC family has had much loss this year.

"The love and support that was felt during this time for our family was overwhelming!" God's hands were at work and continue as we go forward into our journey of healing. Through this whole journey I have said "Thy will be done"! I encourage you to take a moment and listen to the song "Thy Will" by Hillary Scott. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAMh3yvmzXs> I know God heard me and I know his plans are for me and goodness is what He has in store for me! Whatever season you are in; may God bless you where you are at!

DeColores!

Be Blessed, Valerie Curtis

**Next VDC Weekend: November 13-16, 2025 \*\*\*NEW DATES**  
Co-Ed weekend @ Swan Lake Christian Camp  
send in your applications!!!

Pray and Start Inviting Right Now!!!

**Deadline** for all applications is **October 13, 2025**

**Early Bird Discount: Applications and Deposit**  
**must be received by September 8, 2025**

- Team Building Day: January 11, 2025 ----- 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
  - Messiah New Hope, Sioux Falls, SD ---- Pizza for lunch
  - ALL 4<sup>th</sup> Day Community & Guests are welcome!!!
  - Discussing: Swan Lake and the date change, SD Secretariat, etc.
  - Participate in: Worship, Fellowship, 4<sup>th</sup> Day Small Groups
- TEC Weekend: March 21-23, 2025 @ Yankton, SD
- TEC Weekend: May 30 -June 1, 2025 @ Sioux City, IA

**T-SHIRTS FOR SALE**

**SHORT SLEEVE - \$16**

**CREWNECK SWEATSHIRT - \$36**

**PROCEEDS GO FOR SCHOLARSHIPS**

**LONG SLEEVE - \$20**

**HOODIES - \$36**

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## Pastor's Corner:

Martin Luther said music is a window to the soul. I tend to believe it as pieces of music I hear are haunting; they make me stop and demand that I listen; all kinds of music, still demanding of my attention. Some are hymns, some are newer piece, some are simple, some complex enough that I miss them the first twenty times I listen to them, but suddenly they draw my attention away from me and the world to – well simply Christ. The Messiah. The only Savior of the world; the amazing gift we just celebrated of what our loving, benevolent Father has done in the sending of His only Son (Jn 3:16-17); the gift we long and wait for with all of our hearts to return and to establish His Kingdom as was always intended in the Creation

One such piece comes from a musical artist, The Future of Forestry in a piece titled The Earth Stood Still. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8Czvwlm\\_eE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8Czvwlm_eE) It calls the listener to see Mary and the child to be: *“A teenage girl and her son-to-be, A simple trip far as they could see, The sky was clear and the hour serene, But did they know what the night would bring?”* Mary, did you know?

Why did she say yes, this teenage girl? Speaking to the messenger of God almighty, “I am the servant of the Lord. I live to do Your will!” That is perhaps the eternal question, yet in her saying [use me as You need Lord to bring Your Word to this broken world,] perhaps she knew how desperate her own, and our condition was.

The next stanza declares it aloud – *“Lonely hearts strung across the land, They’ve been waiting long for a healing hand, My heart was there and I felt the chill, When love came down and the earth stood still, When love came down and the earth stood still.”* You and I were there, with Mary, longing beyond our understanding for what we really needed – a Savior. Humanity still hungers what we have lost. As Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless Lord, until they rest in You!”

*“Shepherds stirred under starry skies, Tasting grace that would change their lives, The angels trembled and the demons did too, For they knew very well what pure grace would do.”* That night as the Angels declared the first gift of Christmas to outcast shepherds, God Himself was wrapped in human flesh. Humble, fragile, powerless, able to lose that life in a moment, like all of us, He came to overcome this humanity, the power of sin that weighs on it, and death, the final enemy. In doing that, we were no longer cast aside, but received with the whole world a gift beyond compare. *“The hope of the world and a baby boy, I remember Him well like I was there that night, My heart was there and I felt the chill, Love came down and the earth stood still, Love came down and the earth stood still”*

As people of the 4<sup>th</sup> day, we too remember we were there that night, and when we ponder this amazing gift which is beyond our reach to truly comprehend it does make us feel a chill. Just as when we moved through our weekend and felt the stir of Christ’s power opening our eyes again to that true gift of Christmas. We also remember standing on a darkening hillside, watching criminal’s sentences being carried out on Roman crosses. There the Christmas gift hung dying on our true Christmas tree, lit and aglow with the glory and beauty of God’s salvation, paying the tab for the whole world dying around Him. And when that gift burst from the tomb, wrappings and packaging all burst and discarded we really saw the Earth stand still, because forever the world, our humanity, and the Devil were defeated. They had their teeth knocked out by the heal of the Christmas child.

So, now it is a New Year. Another year of waiting for that Child to come back and finalize His work already begun in us and creation. What are we to do? Sing. Sing the haunting songs that demand that others too would stop and hear that Christ the King has died for them; He has freed them from sin. Sing the tune ever more deeply, and do what another beloved hymn calls for, *“I wonder as I wander out under the sky, How Jesus our Savior He came here to die, For lost broken people like you and like I, I wonder as I wander out under the sky”*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FonDzi49DYg> De Colores! Pastor Matt Bahnfleth