



SIoux FALLS LUTHERAN SCHOOL

EAGLES NEWS

World Ready. Faith Secure.



Mrs. Tia Esser
Executive Director

Mrs. Brenda Bernard
Preschool Director

Dr. Kristen Newell
Elementary Principal

Mrs. Liz Slavens
Secondary Academic Principal

Mr. James Stubkjaer
Student Life Director

August 21, 2026

An ExtraOrdinary Year Begins

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." —2 Corinthians 4:7



Dear Sioux Falls Lutheran School Families:

There is nothing quite like the first week of school. For months, we have prepared classrooms, made plans, hired teachers and staff, ordered supplies, repainted walls, built schedules, and prayed. But a school doesn't really come alive until the children walk through the doors.

And this week, they did.

Some came running. Some held tightly to a parent's hand. Some walked into a brand-new school knowing almost no one. Some drove themselves for the first time. Others returned to hallways that already feel like home.

QUICK LINKS

[Activities](#)

[Association Churches](#)

[Athletics](#)

[Career Corner](#)

[Chapel](#)

[Counseling Services](#)

[Development](#)

[Eagle Care](#)

[Elementary](#)

[High School](#)

[Middle School](#)

[Music](#)

[Photography](#)

[Preschool](#)

[PTF](#)

[RaiseRight \(aka SCRIP\)](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

And before the doors even opened on that first morning, our seniors gathered beneath a beautiful sunrise to begin their final year together in devotion and prayer. There's something especially meaningful about that picture—young people who have grown up before our eyes, beginning their last first day at SFLS by turning first to the One who has been with them all along.

From our littlest learners to those seniors preparing to leave us at the end of this year, every one of them arrived carrying a story God is still writing.

And somehow, in His remarkable way, God has gathered **all of us** here—students, families, teachers and staff—for this particular year.

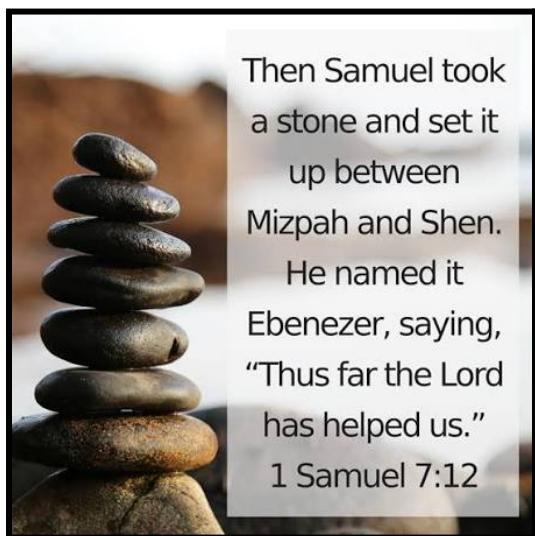
That makes our 2026-27 theme, *ExtraOrdinary*, especially meaningful. We are ordinary people—jars of clay—entrusted with an extraordinary Treasure. And throughout this year, we will be reminded that the light shining through us does not depend upon our perfection, our strength, or even our plans. The power belongs to God.



Thank you for placing your children in our care. We never take that trust lightly. What a privilege it is to love them, teach them, pray for them, and walk alongside them as they become capable Christian servant-leaders in a complex world—growing more *World Ready* while remaining *Faith Secure* in the One who holds every chapter of their story.

I can't wait to see what He does with this *ExtraOrdinary* year!

With Gratefulness,
Mrs. Tia Esser, Executive Director



A Personal Thank You & Update from Mrs. Esser

As we begin this new school year, I must express my deep gratefulness for the extraordinary number of prayers, messages, cards, and words of encouragement my family and I have received from our SFLS family over these past several months. We have felt profoundly loved and supported.

I'm thrilled to report that my August 7 surgery went well, and the final pathology brought the news for which we had prayed: **no remaining cancer** was found. I'm continuing to recover well and am back at school, while my doctors carefully monitor my remaining kidney as it adjusts to doing the work of two.

Again and again, God has reminded me that I don't need to see the whole road ahead. I need only trust the One who does.

Three passages of Scripture have become especially precious to me along the way:

Matthew 8:8 — “Only say the word and my servant will be healed.”

Exodus 14:14 — “The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

1 Samuel 7:12 — “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

And thus far, He most certainly has. **From the bottom of my heart, thank you,** for your prayers—and for walking alongside me through it all.

Annual Used Book Sale—Thank You!

Thanks to all who participated in the annual used book sale at Memorial Lutheran Church, which raised more than \$20,000 to benefit needs-based variable tuition at SFLS! We are grateful for your generous support, which helps us carry out our mission of developing capable Christian servant-leaders in a complex world who are World Ready, Faith Secure.

Dr. Vaughn & JoAnn Meyer Memorial Golf Tournament—Thank you!

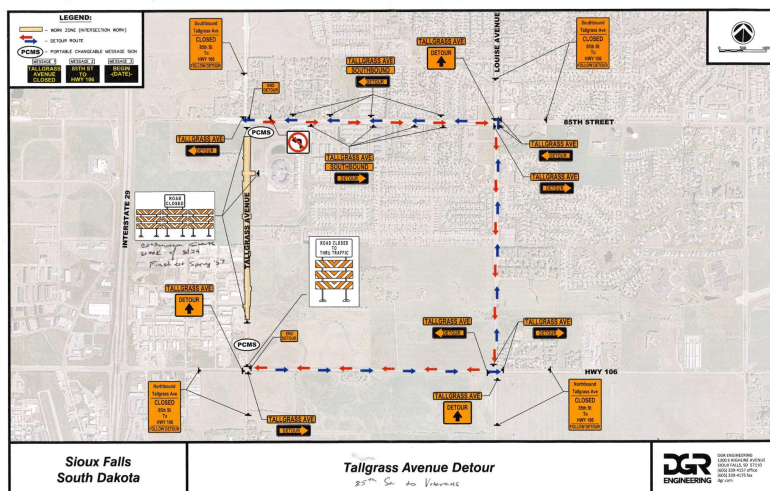
Thanks to all who attended our annual golf tournament at Bakker Crossing last month, which raised over \$29,000 for the SFLS Activities and Athletics Fund! These funds help support athletics, music, art, drama, and so much more for our students. Thank you for your generous support!



License Plate Stickers

Do you have non-profit license plates on your car? Show your SFLS support with these license plate decals! Please contact Mikela Iverson at miverson@sflutheranschool.com to arrange pick up. They are \$10 for a set of 2.

🚧 HEADS UP: TALLGRASS AVENUE (South of 85th) CLOSURE



Families traveling to and from SFLS from **Tea and areas south of Sioux Falls** will want to plan ahead for a significant road closure beginning next week.

Beginning **Wednesday, August 26**, **Tallgrass Avenue** will close south of **85th Street** to approximately one-quarter mile north of **Lincoln County Highway 106 (271st Street)** for a major reconstruction project.

According to City engineers, the road is expected to **remain closed until November or December**, when it will reopen temporarily as a **gravel roadway for the winter months**. Tallgrass will then **close again next spring**, with completion of the project anticipated for **late spring 2027**.

With the ongoing construction surrounding the **85th Street/I-29 interchange**, this closure will especially affect families who typically use Tallgrass to travel to and from school. Please begin thinking about an alternate route and allow a little extra time as everyone adjusts to the new traffic patterns.

We know getting everyone out the door and to school on time can already be an adventure—**road construction certainly doesn't make it easier!** Thank you for planning ahead, driving safely, and packing a little extra patience for the morning commute.

FIRE DRILL

We will have a fire drill next week. All students will be prepared in advance by their classroom teacher to know what to expect during a fire drill. We practice in a very calm manner, walking in the direction of the nearest exit. Our fire alarm even speaks to us in a calm voice. Your child may bring this up at home.

CAREER CORNER

At SFLS, every role—from the classroom to the kitchen to Eagle Care and beyond—plays a vital part in our mission to equip Capable Christian Servant-Leaders in a Complex World: *World Ready, Faith Secure*.

Would you or someone you know make a great addition to our team? We're seeking:

Eagle Care Workers: kind, gentle, fun-loving individuals to serve as part-time workers in our before and after school Eagle Care program. We are especially in need of caregivers who are 18 years and older. Responsibilities include keeping infants- fifth graders safe, happy, and engaged from 3:00pm-6:00pm.

Coaches: Middle School Girls Basketball Head Coach, Middle School Girls Basketball Assistant Coach, High School Boys Basketball JV Coach, Middle School Track Head Coach, Middle School Track Assistant Coach.

Please prayerfully consider joining our team and/or sharing these opportunities with someone you believe would be a good fit! Job descriptions and application instructions are available at www.siuuxfallslutheran.com/careers. Contact Debbie Pankow at dpankow@sflutherschool.com for more information.

CHAPEL

Chaplain for the week of August 26 is Pastor Billy Newell from Lord of Life Lutheran Church.

Chapel times for Wednesday, August 26, in the Meyer Chapel & Performing Arts Center, led by Pastor Billy Newell from Lord of Life Lutheran Church. This year's theme is EXTRAordinary. This month's theme is *Treasures in Jars of Clay*; This week's topic: Chosen by God; God calls ordinary people based on John 15:16.

- 6-12 chapel begins at 8:05 AM; K-5 chapel begins at 8:50 AM

Preschool chapel will be held on Thursday, August 27, led by DCE Liz Peters from Memorial Lutheran Church, in the Early Childhood wing beginning at 8:40 and 9:00 AM. The theme is *Fruit of the Spirit*.

Chapel Offerings This year's offerings will support [The Foster Network](#). Here is a little bit about them: Since our organization began in 2012, The Foster Network has supported local foster families in Sioux Falls, SD, and the surrounding area. We provide essential resources for children in foster care. This includes access to support groups, events, scholarship opportunities, bedroom furniture access, and The Closet, where foster families can receive clothing, supplies, and toys for the children they are fostering. We aim to ensure families have reliable and safe access to the necessary resources to create happy and loving homes.



COUNSELING SERVICES

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year!

The **Sioux Falls Lutheran School (SFLS)**

Counseling Program is gearing up to meet the school counseling and prevention service needs at SFLS. This year we are excited to have full 5 day counselor coverage through the Carroll Institute Adolescent Services Program. **Barb DeVos** will provide primary school counseling services 4 days per week. New this year, **Claire Daniel** will provide prevention counseling services 2 days per week. (Click [HERE](#) to read Claire's Bio) Mrs. DeVos will be at SFLS **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays** while Miss Daniel will be here **Wednesdays and Thursdays**. These days are subject to revision based on Miss Daniel's scheduling needs. Here is additional information about our counseling program and services. Please reach out to welcome Miss Daniel and take a moment to meet her. Many students will remember Miss Daniel, as she completed her bachelors-level social work internship through Augustana University at SFLS last school year.

Miss Daniel will begin providing services on September 2.

Barb DeVos
SD Certified School Counselor
Carroll Institute Adolescent
Services Program



Hello, this will be my 18th school year at Sioux Falls Lutheran School. I provide school counseling services Pre-K-grades 12.

SERVICES PROVIDED

- 4 days weekly, M, T, W, & F
- Classroom guidance
- Parental resources
- Individual student sessions
- Small groups
- Career & Post High School Planning Support
- Collaborate with Teachers & Admin. on social, emotional concerns
- Participate in student 504 Plan, Teacher Assistance Team and other behavioral plan needs
- Provide threat assessments, PRN

CREDENTIALS

- MS, NBCC, LAC, LPC-MH, QMHP, ADHD-CCSP

Contact: Barb DeVos at bdevos@sflutheranschool.com or bdevos@carrollinstitute.com or
Direct: 605.681.7993 (confidential voicemail)

DEVELOPMENT

HAPPY NATIONAL MAKE-A-WILL MONTH 2026

Planning for your family's future is an act of love. So is planning for the future of the ministries that matter most to you.

Since 1977, Sioux Falls Lutheran School has partnered with families to raise capable Christian servant-leaders—World Ready, Faith Secure. Through every season, our community has faithfully invested in the next generation.

This August, Make-a-Will Month is a wonderful opportunity to take a simple step toward caring for your family and creating a lasting legacy.

Through our partnership with FreeWill, you can create a will at no cost and in under 20 minutes. As you make your plans, you also have the opportunity to include a gift to Sioux Falls Lutheran School—helping ensure that generations of students to come have the opportunity to grow in faith, character, and academic excellence.

Your legacy can help build a future where Christ remains at the center of education for generations to come.

Create your Free Will Today—

https://partner.freewill.com/siouxfallslutheran?utm_source=partner&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=202608_siouxfallslutheran_mawm_toolkit_news_long

There is no obligation to include Sioux Falls Lutheran School in your will. We simply want to make sure our families know this free resource is available to them.

PTF (PARENT-TEACHER-FELLOWSHIP)

PTF Meeting: September 8 at 5:30 PM

Where: Elementary Reading Area

**CONNECT WITH THE
PTF ON FACEBOOK**



Scan the QR Code with
your camera app to go
to the SFLS PTF
Facebook Page



Order Dates by 10 AM	Pick-Up Dates after 11 AM
Monday, August 31	Thursday, September 3
Monday, September 14	Thursday, September 17
Monday, September 28	Thursday, October 1
Monday, October 12	Thursday, October 15

EAGLE CARE

Welcome, or welcome back, to Eagle Care at SFLS!

Eagle Care provides before- and after-school care for students from three-year-old preschool through eighth grade. **Before-school care is available from 7:00–8:00 AM, and after-school care is available from 3:30–6:00 PM.**

The cost for Eagle Care is **\$8.00 per hour**, billed in 15-minute increments. For example, care from 3:30–3:45 PM will cost \$2.00.

We will keep track of your charges through a software system connected to your **FACTS account**. You will need a code to check your child in for morning care and will use the same code when you pick up your child after school.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Reid Nusser, the director, at eaglecare@sflutherschool.com.

PRESCHOOL



We are ready for our little Eagles to take flight!

When our toddlers and preschoolers learn new skills, they develop confidence and joy in doing things for themselves. When we support them by creating opportunities to practice all kinds of skills, they become problem-solvers and capable learners.

This is also the beginning of developing a **servant heart**. When you can do something for yourself, you can also begin to help a friend (and your caregivers, too!).

Watch for new challenges coming your little one's way!

ELEMENTARY

What a joy it is to have students back in our building! We are grateful for each and everyone of you and look forward to an *Extra-ordinary* year together.

Please remember, **elementary students may enter the building starting at 8:00 AM** *unless* they:

- 1) Are enrolled in morning Eagle Care (if so, please enter through Door B)
- 2) Have siblings in Middle or High School, in which case they may enter the building through Door A at 7:45 AM and wait with Dr. Newell in the Commons for the 8:00 AM bell.
- 3) Have a parent or guardian with them. If you come in with your child, please wait in the Commons until 8:00 AM.

If your child is *not* enrolled in morning Eagle Care and does *not* have a middle or high school sibling, please do not send them into the building before 8:00 AM. We are not equipped to supervise that many students in the Commons at that time. THANK YOU!

MIDDLE SCHOOL

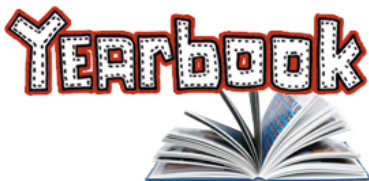
WELCOME BACK: What a great first three days of school! It has been wonderful to see our hallways filled with students again and to watch our 6–12 community jump back into learning, building relationships, and settling into the rhythm of a new school year. We have a lot to look forward to this year, and I am excited to see how God will use each of us in Extra-Ordinary ways. Thank you to our students, families, and staff for helping us get the year off to such a great start!

Start asking your MS child about assignments/learning and sign his/her planner on a daily basis.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **8th Grade Leadership Retreat** to the Black Hills will be September 8-11.
- **6th Grade to Inspiration Hills** - A day trip to Inspiration Hills is being planned for a day in September. You will be informed after we finalize the details.

HIGH SCHOOL



2025-2026 High School Yearbooks

The 2025-26 high school yearbook will be arriving soon! Students and parents who ordered yearbooks last spring will be notified when they arrive.

WELCOME BACK: What a great first three days of school! It has been wonderful to see our hallways filled with students again and to watch our 6–12 community jump back into learning, building relationships, and settling into the rhythm of a new school year. We have a lot to look forward to this year,

and I am excited to see how God will use each of us in Extra-Ordinary ways. Thank you to our students, families, and staff for helping us get the year off to such a great start!

SENIOR CLASS TRIP: The senior class will leave Saturday for their class trip to St. Louis. They will be gone August 22-26. Among their many activities planned, they will spend some time on Sunday at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in worship and doing a service project. Seniors will also tour the International Center, Concordia Seminary, The Gateway Arch, and attend a St. Louis Cardinals game. Check out the [SFLS Facebook page](#) for updates on their trip.

ADD/DROP: The last day to add or drop a course is Friday, August 28. Parents must sign the form before Ms. Holdorf (Registrar) and Mrs. Slavens (Principal).

ACTIVITIES

MARCHING BAND: Friday, September 18, MS & HS Competition at Parker

ORAL INTERP: Monday, October 5 at Milbank

ATHLETICS

ATHLETIC PASSES: Athletic passes can be purchased through [BOUND](#). Click on the link, then click on STORES to find the pass options. Purchase of these passes supports our athletic department. The deadline is September 4. T-shirts that come with the passes will be ordered after September 4.

CROSS COUNTRY:

- Thursday, August 27 at 10 AM: Beresford Invite

FOOTBALL:

- Friday, August 21 at 7 PM: @ Centerville
- MS: Monday, August 24 at 4 PM: @ Centerville
- Friday, August 28 at 7 PM: @ Baltic
- MS: Saturday, August 29: Jamboree @ Alcester-Hudson
 - 11 AM vs Canistota
 - 12:30 PM vs Freeman

GAME TIME VOLUNTEERS: Please use these links to volunteer at our home games. [Football](#) [Volleyball](#)

VOLLEYBALL:

- Tuesday, August 25, beginning at 5 with C/JV/Varsity to Follow: Home vs Colman-Egan
- Thursday, April 27, beginning @ 4:30 with C/JV/Varsity to Follow: @ Waverly-South Shore



[Click or scan to take a look at the SFLS Strings Site!](#)

The Music teachers are excited to see all of our students this week! Please check in here each week and watch for emails from our teachers with updates and information about upcoming events.

If your student is registered for private lessons, we are working on scheduling them now, and most lessons will start after Labor Day (with a few exceptions). Please watch for an email from your student's private lesson instructor with information on lesson day/time, and any materials that need to be purchased.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER Middle School Ensemble Calendar

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming Marching Eagle Events (please note if they are High School - HS, or Middle School - MS, events):

Friday, September 18, 2026 - Parker Marching Band Festival (BOTH MS and HS bands)

Friday, September 25, 2026 - Beresford Watchdog Marching Festival (ONLY MS band)

Saturday, September 26, 2026 - Tri-State Marching Band Festival in Luverne, MN (ONLY HS)

Friday, October 2, 2026 - Menno Band Days (BOTH MS and HS bands)

Saturday, October 3, 2026 - Festival of Bands in Sioux Falls (ONLY HS band)

Saturday, October 10, 2026 - March to the Meridian in Yankton - (ONLY HS band)

The Marching Eagles perform their parade competitions in the mornings for each of these dates. Parade times and step-off times will be coming soon!

We are looking forward to a great year of music!

Mrs. Birnstiehl, Mr. Kandybin, Ms. Goeller, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Prouty, Ms. Temple, Mrs. Thornton and Pastor Whipple

Lord of Life - Rev. Billy Newell

Memorial - Rev. Doug Slavens, DCE Hailey Jo Miller and DCE Liz Peters

Our Redeemer - Rev. Brett Simek

Resurrection - Rev. Chris Ascher

Click this [link](#) for all church worship times!

SUPPORTING MEMBER

ZION - Rev. Greg Lehr

AFFILIATE MEMBER

Risen Savior - Rev. Tanner Sutcliffe

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please visit your FACTS family portal calendar or click this [link](#) to our website for upcoming events.

PHOTOGRAPHY

School Time Photos - Photography by Mark Inc.

Photo packages may still be purchased online. Detailed instructions for placing an online order are provided [HERE](#). If you have any questions, please contact School Time Photos at www.schooltimephotos.com or call 605-362-9221.

Please contact schooloffice@sflutherschool.com with any questions or concerns.



**SIOUX FALLS
LUTHERAN SCHOOL**
World Ready. Faith Secure.

6715 South Boe Lane, Sioux Falls, SD 57108
siouxfallslutheran.com | (605) 335-1923