



Dear Pastor,

A smile, a kind word, a helping hand, a listening ear and the smallest act of caring can make a difference to someone in crisis. I experienced the power of that presence two days after a tornado destroyed part of Wessington Springs. It was important to be there, to be present, to walk with those in need.

LSS carries out a ministry of presence through disaster response. In addition to Wessington Springs, LSS was with ranchers in west river counties when Atlas—an early, severe winter storm—devastated a way of life; and with individuals and families in Canton, and Lincoln and Union Counties as they deal with the aftermath of record flooding.

LSS was present providing understanding, guidance and counseling for those needing emotional and spiritual support as they grieved their losses—and those wondering why their livelihood or homes were spared while their neighbor's were devastated.

And it was no small act when LSS took on the responsibility to coordinate the hundreds of volunteers that came to each of these communities with helping hands. LSS was there. We respond whether disaster strikes a community at a moment's notice or when an abusive situation within a family slowly escalates over time. It can be overwhelming and we are here to help.

We are a social ministry and we believe it is God's love that compels us to serve and to value all people. The core values of LSS are to be compassionate, appreciative, respectful, ethical and strategic. Our values are grounded by our faith in God—they guide our hands and feet, our hearts and words as we serve our neighbors as God intended.

If you go back to those values and line up their first letters—compassionate, appreciative, respectful, ethical, strategic, you have CARES—on many of our materials you will see LSS CARES as a way of helping all of us remember, reflect on and live by our values.

God does see us and through LSS, he can care for us. We have just finished with the last of the re-build work in western South Dakota after that devastating early winter storm. Re-build efforts are underway in Wessington Springs, Canton & Lincoln Counties.

The ministry of LSS would not be possible without the partnerships and support from congregations. If LSS lost the financial and prayerful support of the many partnerships, we would not be present when disaster strikes a community; birth parent counseling would not be free and adoption fees would significantly increase; and there would be no sliding fee scale for counseling services or the Center for Financial Resources.

Thank you for your past support. We ask that you consider LSS in your annual budget or take Lenten, Christmas or special offerings on our behalf. Just like the smallest act of caring can make a difference to someone in crisis, whatever you can give at this time is appreciated and used in outreach ministry.

Last year, LSS touched the lives of our brothers and sisters across South Dakota nearly 50,000 times—people of all ages, races, faiths, and economic levels. They are your neighbors, friends, family, and represent almost every county in the state. Please keep our clients in the forefront of your prayers and financial gifts to LSS.

We try to lift the financial burden by seeking support from a variety of resources including public fees and grants, United Way, individual requests and income from our small foundation. Most clients pay for a portion of the services they receive, based on their income. All sources, including your annual financial gifts, are needed to operate, serve and care for our neighbors. [Last year, 90¢ of every dollar you donated went directly to client services.](#)

*Inspired by God's love, we care for, support and strengthen individuals, families and communities.* On behalf of all those helped by our partnership ministry, thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betty Oldenkamp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "B".

Betty Oldenkamp  
President

P.S. Please share this letter and packet with your church council and prayerfully consider a gift to LSS this year. Please also hang the flyers on your church bulletin board.