



Christian Friends of New Americans celebrate Christmas page 3

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## From the President's Desk:

Bob Dylan once wrote, "The times, they are a changin'." The rapid pace of change and information is staggering for us today.

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# THE VOICE

December 2018

## What Are You Thinking about this Advent?

by Francis Lieb, Missouri District Church Worker Care Team

As you enter the Advent/Christmas Season, what are you thinking about? Chances are that most professional church workers are thinking about all the deadlines and demands of this season. We think about the extra time it takes to get ready for special services, school Christmas programs and celebrations, and special needs of people who are struggling with the holidays because of grief or financial problems. As church workers think about all this, it is not uncommon to struggle with fatigue, emotional exhaustion, frustration, even guilt (thinking you are failing to help everyone who looks to you).

What are you thinking about? Under the Spirit's inspiration, St. Paul has shared encouraging words that have helped many, including me. Sometimes I have struggled with some depression during this busy season, brought on by all the demands and, in part, by the long dark days. I have found strength and peace in these words:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.  
—Philippians 4:8.

What we think about can influence greatly how we feel and how we deal with commitments that often seem overwhelming. Think about the Savior, born to save His people from their sin. Think about the assurance of Jesus recorded in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." Think about the personal love that Jesus has for you as you hear the words, "This is my body...this is my blood FOR YOU!"

There is much to think about as you enter the Advent/Christmas Season. Under God's grace, may the Holy Spirit lead you to think about the goodness of God that has been poured into this holy season through His Son, Jesus. Think about it! And enjoy a peace-filled celebration of Christmas.

If you need a listening ear and an encouraging word, members of the Missouri District Church Worker Care Team are here for you!

The Church Worker Care Team offers free and confidential ministry to church workers in the Missouri District.  
[mo.lcms.org/church-worker-care-team/](http://mo.lcms.org/church-worker-care-team/)



## From the President's Desk

### Good News You Can Believe

Bob Dylan once wrote, "The times, they are a changin'." The rapid pace of change and information is staggering for us today. The television screen has more than just the talking head delivering the news. There are rows of information scrolling across the bottom and even the sides of the screen. Even choosing which network from which one seeks to receive the news is a dicey situation.

There is so much news that people filter which news you receive and what analysis they provide into such news. Finally, we have now crossed over into an era of "fake news." News of questionable veracity has gone far beyond the check-out line at the grocery store. Threats to our nation now come in the form of "Troll Farms/Factories" where hackers create such fake news and disseminate it through social media. When it comes to the news today, who can you believe? How do you know that news is true?

When the angels appeared to the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth, they announced to them that they had "good news." This is a word ripe with meaning. Particularly in Isaiah's prophecies, we hear about the promised Messiah who would bring good news to the people. In Isaiah chapter 40, The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" God's people had not known good news for a long time. They had been promised that the Messiah would come and would bring with Him good news, but the people had waited and waited. Were such promises fake news? Were they words from a charlatan rather than a faithful God?

No! When the time had fully come, God sent His Son to be the fulfillment of those true and certain promises. In appearing to the shepherds, the angel is the herald who announces that God has kept His promise. "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

The angel's announcement is not the product of deceit but a true promise. For thousands of years the people had been waiting for God to keep His Word. When the shepherds behold the promised Messiah, they know that the good news that was announced true. This child came to bring peace between God and His wayward creation. This baby came to bring joy to people who had known only despair. This Messiah came to bring good news of the Kingdom of God coming near to people who lived under the oppression of sinful, selfish, earthly kings.

After Jesus' ascension, the book of Acts is an account of how the good news is spread to the far reaches of the known world. Philip, Peter, Barnabas and Paul are all heralds as they proclaim the good news of peace through Jesus. As this Good News of the Gospel is proclaimed and taught today, God is still fulfilling His promise as heralds announce the Good News of the Messiah. Even though the word is spoken by sinful people this news is true and it is good because it gives joy and peace to all who believe.

As you celebrate our Savior's birth, may you be filled with the same joy and peace as those shepherds who heard the Good News proclaimed by the herald angels. May God bless your celebrations with your church family and all your loved ones! You can count on this good news! "Fear not, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!"

Fraternally in Christ,

President Lee Hagan

## PRESIDENT'S PRAYER LIST:

### PLEASE JOIN ME IN PRAYER THIS MONTH

- Please pray that the Holy Spirit would strengthen the hearts of all those hear the Word as it is preached, read and sung in our churches and schools.
- Also, pray for a time of rest for all who have been so busy in preparation for the celebration of Christmas in our churches and schools.
- Finally, we give thanks to God for the tremendous gift of His beloved Son Jesus.





# Building Friendships with Immigrants and Refugees for the Gospel

When Tim Schrader's sister became a missionary in west Africa, he didn't realize it would have a profound impact on his life in St. Louis. Once she was back in America, his sister got involved with a local RSO of the LCMS, the Christian Friends of New Americans (CFNA).

With a network of partners, CFNA works with immigrants and refugees in St. Louis, offering a wide array of services, including English classes, social connections, spiritual development and much more. Refugees in particular often have a hard time adjusting, because they came here as a result of war in their home country.

Tim's sister encouraged him to volunteer as well. He volunteers with their furniture delivery program, afterschool tutoring and helping with medical appointments. He says, "Refugees are wonderful people. They're a lot of fun and they need a lot of help and it's a joy to give it to them."

## Small Actions Make a Big Difference

Tim has seen many refugees struggle as they acclimate to their new life in St. Louis. Learning English is a significant challenge. In fact, many refugees have valuable skills but have trouble finding working due to language or certification issues.

Tim has found that the simple act of delivering furniture has a profound impact on refugee families, because they have very little material possessions with which to build their new home. After Tim brings the donated furniture into their homes, he offers a prayer. He says that no matter what religious background they are, they always welcome his prayers.



He says, "They don't always want the Gospel, but they want to be my friend. So, we just keep trying."

## Missouri District Office Collects Christmas Donation for CFNA

The Missouri District staff took a holiday collection of blankets, shampoo and other household items for the CFNA. It wasn't long before the staff had filled (and then surpassed) the allocated cardboard boxes President Hagan set out for the donations.



# *The 2018 Christmas party for the Christian Friends of New Americans included guests from Syria, Congo, Liberia, and Yemen.*



Sue Thompson, Ministry Events Coordinator, says, "I feel like I have been very blessed this year personally, and being able to give back is something I look forward to. Being able to share a giving project with those I work with is especially great, because we're a close team!"

## How You Can Help

CFNA's furniture delivery program is seeking donations, and their volunteers will come to your home to collect the donation.

CFNA is seeking volunteers of all skill levels. Whether you can help deliver furniture or help kids complete homework assignments, there are ways you can help immigrants and refugees in St. Louis.

Contact them today to learn more:  
[www.cfna-stl.org/](http://www.cfna-stl.org/)

## Partners in Ministry Celebrate Christmas at Missouri District Office

Every year the Partners in Ministry Christmas Luncheon kicked off with barbeque, devotion, event planning and a Goodwill-themed White Elephant gift exchange. The group includes people in a wide range of service capacities, reflecting the richness and diversity of the ministries in the Missouri District.







# Why Bring Kids to Church?

by Rev. Jason Reitz

“If my kids are in church, I don’t get anything out of it.” “My kid can’t sit that long.” “I don’t want to disrupt the people around us.” These are some of the things I’ve heard over the years when people are asked why they aren’t in church as a family.

I have no doubt that those are actual concerns of parents. They are all true statements. Little children can be disturbing to others, the parents won’t get as much out of the worship experience, and when kids are little, they aren’t used to sitting that long. But it’s worth it!

I don’t remember where to point for these statistics, and it has been a couple of years since I read this, but a study showed the reasons why children stay in church.

**The top two reasons that kids ultimately stay in church is, they were able to talk to their moms about God, and their dad sang in church.**

Those may sound too simple, but it makes sense. When a child sees the value of a relationship with God through conversation and active participation in worship in parents, it stands a much better chance of having lasting value for them.

No matter how often our children, especially as they enter the teen years, will say they don’t care about what their parents do, they are watching, and they do actually care. Family worshiping together has value.

I could dissect the opening statements and tell you why they are only “excuses”, but I would rather share how my congregation has made it important to have the “disruption,” the getting up and down, and parents getting something out of it as well as the kids. At our church, we celebrate the noise. That’s not to say that we applaud a child crying, or throwing things.

**What we emphasize is that if these noises weren’t there, we would be dying.**

What we don’t do, as leadership or as fellow members, is tell them they should leave or give a glare, or whisper to our spouse, or move. Don’t tell the kids sitting in our pews, but I love it when a child breaks free and runs down the center aisle. I love it when a little one says something during the sermon. We will laugh when those moments happen. We may make a joke. Sure, I’ve had the voice tug-of-war with a child, increasing volume as they increased theirs. But I’d rather have that than no kids. That’s the atmosphere the church should convey if they want kids in church. And we do right?

**Having said all that, here’s the number one reason kids should be in church. God wants them there.**

You’ve heard those verses where Jesus calls the children to Him. He wants them close, He wants them to be gathered, and He wants us to not hinder them.

Worship is about being fed by God through His Word and Sacrament. His Word comes to us in EVERYTHING we do in worship, not just the sermon or readings. There is a sacrifice made by parents bringing their kids to church. Being a parent has a lot of sacrifices and a lot of joys too. The sacrifices are worth it, and are only temporary. Our faith is important to us. Having our families worship

together shows its importance. How will our children know if we don’t show them?

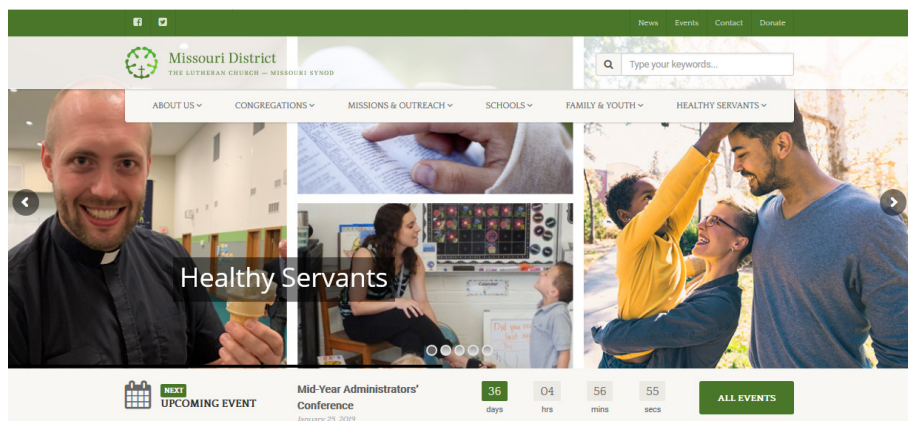
Join us for a conference on ministry to families with young children, March 9, 2019.

*Save the Date!*  
**March 9, 2019**  
Tell the Next Generation:  
A Conference on Ministry to  
Family with Young Children

Christmas came early in  
the Missouri District!  
We have a brand  
new website.  
**mo.lcms.org**



The new website will help you stay up to date with District news, events and strategic goals.



Our new event calendar also includes a daily prayer. Each day we will lift up a congregation, school or circuit in prayer together.

January 2019

| Sun   | Mon          | Tue  | Wed          | Thu          | Fri          | Sat           |
|---|--------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 30  | 31           | 1  | 2            | 3            | 4            | 5             |
| Missouri District Office Closed for Christmas<br>Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer                                       | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer  |
|   |              | Missouri District Office Closed for New Year's Day |              |              |              |               |
| 6   | 7            | 8  | 9            | 10           | 11           | 12            |
| Daily Prayer  | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer                                       | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayers |
|   |              |  |              |              |              |               |
| 13  | 14           | 15   | 16           | 17           | 18           | 19            |
| Daily Prayer  | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer                                       | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer | Daily Prayer  |
|   |              |  |              |              |              |               |



# Events and Announcements

Go to [mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events/](http://mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events/) for more info.

## Peer Ministry Registration Now Open

Peer Ministry Training (PMT) is a two-part training for high school students and youth counselors who want to build relationships to serve in their congregation, school, community and family.



Registration Fee: \$90 per person – includes housing, meals and training (this price reflects contributions from the Missouri District to offset event costs).

## National Youth Gathering MO District Event and T-Shirt Orders

**Minnesota Lumberjack Experience, July 11th from 4:30-6:30 p.m.**

Join groups from across the Missouri District at a one-of-a-kind event Minnesota Lumberjack Experience at Concordia University – St. Paul Wednesday, July 11th from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Located on the Concordia University – St. Paul campus, this event is all about food, fellowship & fun – lumberjack style!

Register and order your t-shirts today.



**Find us on YouTube:  
Missouri District LCMS**

# CALLING CONGREGATIONS

## For Sole Pastors:

Alma, Trinity  
 Appleton City, Trinity  
 Carrollton, Immanuel (Called Rev. Joshua Schultz – Alpena, MI – Declined)  
 Chillicothe, St. John (Called Rev. Alan Hubbard – Princeton, MO)  
 Conway, Zion  
 Frohna, Concordia  
 Independence, St. Paul's  
 Moberly, Zion (Called Rev. Matthew Resner – Menno, SD - Accepted)  
 Park Hills, Trinity  
 St. Clair, Holy Trinity  
 Sweet Springs, Immanuel  
 Trenton, Immanuel

## For Senior Pastor:

Blue Springs, Timothy  
 Des Peres, St. Paul  
 Independence, Messiah  
 Jefferson City, Faith (Called Rev. Eric Gledhill – Paw Paw, MI – Accepted)  
 Jefferson City, Trinity (Called Rev. Samuel Powell – Jefferson City, MO – Accepted)  
 Weldon Spring, Messiah

## For Associate or Assistant Pastor:

St. Charles, Immanuel

## Served by Intentional Interim Pastor or Interim Pastor:

Alma, Trinity (Rev. Mike Gallagher)  
 Independence, St. Paul's (Rev. Steven Streufert)  
 Jefferson City (Honey Creek) (Rev. Dr. Richard Foss)  
 New Melle, St. Paul (Rev. Tom Schoech)  
 Slater, Peace & St. Paul (Called Rev. Walter Snyder – Accepted)

## Vacant (on hold, but being served):

Ashland, Family of Christ  
 Aurora, Grace  
 Barnhart, Immanuel  
 Bethany, Hope  
 Buffalo, Our Savior  
 Center, Trinity  
 Doniphan, Trinity  
 Elk Prairie (Rolla), Peace  
 Hermitage, Hope  
 Ironton, St. Paul  
 Isabella, Faith  
 Kansas City, Immanuel  
 Kennett, Redeemer  
 Malden, Grace  
 Memphis, St. Paul  
 Milan, Peace  
 Oak Grove, Shepherd of the Valley  
 St. James, St. John

St. Louis, Ebenezer  
 St. Louis, Emmaus  
 Sarcoxie, Trinity  
 Sedalia, Amigos de Cristo  
 Sweet Springs, Christ  
 Trenton, Immanuel  
 Valley Park, Zion  
 Vandalia, St. John  
 Washington, Faith

## Pastors Considering Calls

Becker, Andrew (St. John's – Arnold) to St. Matthew – Westland, MI  
 Ehrhard, Jacob (Trinity – New Haven) to St. John's – Chicago, IL (Accepted)  
 Glenn, Micah (Grace Lutheran Chapel) to Trinity – Freistadt, WI  
 Hauptmeier, Tyler (St. Louis, MO) to St. Paul – Doniphan, NE  
 Kapels, Calvin (St. Stephen – Liberty) to Our Savior – Kansas City, KS  
 Kollbaum, Todd (LCMS National Missions – St. Louis) to Trinity – Madison, NE  
 Meyer, Joel (Zion – Rockville) to St. Paul – Kingsville, TX (Declined)  
 Walston, Robert (Christ Memorial – St. Louis) to Timothy – Edmonds, WA (Declined)

# PERSONNEL CHANGES – COMMISSIONED MINISTERS OF RELIGION

## Transferred from Other Districts

Schwartzkopf, Melissa (CNH) to LCMS Office of International Mission – St. Louis 12/13/18 by C. Mizel

## Changes Within District

Gray, Constance (Candidate) to Immanuel – Wentzville 8/12/18 by T. Roma  
 Harms, Sarah (GEO Missionary –

LCMS Office of International Mission – St. Louis) to Career Missionary – LCMS Office of International Mission – St. Louis 12/2/18 by M. Hoehner  
 Ogden, Kathryn (Candidate) to Our Savior – Fenton 12/14/18 by M. Sell

## Deceased

Engelbrecht, Allen (Emeritus) 7/22/18

## Resigned/Removed from Roster

Brown, Irene (Candidate) 12/10/18  
**Transferred to Other Districts**  
 Hammons, Cynthia (Candidate) to KS 12/18/18



## SAVE THE DATE

March 9, 2019 Zion Lutheran Church St. Charles (Harvester)  
 \$10.00 per person

*Tell the Next Generation*  
 A Conference on Ministry to Families with Young Children



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Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD