

The VOICE

August 2019



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

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From the President's Desk: Change and the Church

Change is a favorite word for discussions about the state of the Christian Church and consideration of its future. Church “futurists” propose changes to everything from governance and structure to worship and, among some, doctrinal positions. But as church leaders, we are able to discuss this from the context of God’s promises rather than out of fear. This means, first of all, that the future of the Church is an eternal future as our

Lord has promised that not even the gates of hell will prevail against it. That does not mean that every congregation will always exist or even the Synod. But we know that the future of the Church does not depend upon the changes we make or refuse to make.

Secondly, the Scriptures make quite clear that while the world is in a constant state of flux, our eternal God does not change. He remains the same while the world seems to continue in its chaotic spiral. What a comfort it is for the younger generations, who have known nothing but constant upgrades and improvements, to learn that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. As we talk about a chaotic and changing world, we proclaim the changeless Christ. We can be sure and certain of His mercies that are new to us every morning. We can face each day with joy and confidence knowing that God does not change.

But there are things that do need to change in our congregations today. It is far more important than a discussion of the color of the carpet or the model of governance. What needs to change in our congregations are the hearts of the members. The Greek word for repentance literally means a change of heart. As Jesus began His public ministry, the frequent refrain in His preaching was “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Our Lord calls the Church of every age to change, namely to turn away from their selfish and prideful ways and return to God in repentance and faith. This is the change that is needed above all others. When we as the people of God assemble together at the cross, imploring His mercy and receiving His grace, the Holy Spirit changes hearts through the Word and the Lord’s Supper.

PRESIDENT’S PRAYER LIST:

- For church leaders, who face many difficult decisions about the future of our congregations.
- For Lutheran school principals, teachers and board members, as they strive to provide excellent education in the finest Lutheran Christian tradition.
- For our campus ministries across the Missouri District, as they strive to connect with students at our university campuses.



With changed hearts, we can look to the future without holding on to idols such as buildings and history. Instead, we step out into the changing winds of this world today to proclaim the changeless Christ. We do not change, add or subtract to the Word of God. Rather, our message is the eternal Gospel that is taught in our schools and on our streets, that is announced at the ballpark or the bar, that is shared by parents and pastors, and all of God's faithful witnesses.

My hope is that the conversations about change would be rooted in the promises of our faithful God. While there are things that we are free to change in the congregations, may we never be swept away by the winds of change in our world today and try to change the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. While other church bodies debate whether Jesus is the only way to heaven, may we remain united in our confession of the eternal Gospel and proclaim the message that does not change—Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Fraternally in Christ,



President Lee Hagan



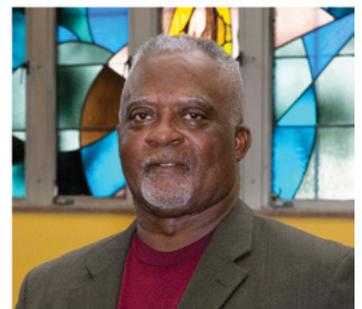
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Healthy Schools

Lutheran North Expands with New Middle School

It's tradition at Lutheran North High School for Peer Ministers to hang welcome signs on the lockers of new students. This year, there were approximately 60 more hand written notes than last year, for the students enrolled in the brand new Lutheran North Middle School. The school opened its inaugural year with 20 students each in sixth, seventh and eighth grade. The mascot waited for the students on their first morning, welcoming them with high fives and cheers.

Even back in the 1990s, educators at Lutheran North saw potential for opening a middle school, and in the early 2000s as well. Dr. Tim Brackman, the principal of both the high school and middle school, says that in previous times, the majority of students attending Lutheran North High School came from other Lutheran schools. That's not what he's seeing from today's students. Like many other Lutheran schools, many students now come from public schools or other parochial schools.

"Our community has found out about Lutheran North over the last many decades. We have a good reputation." Dr. Brackman explains. "The need for a good middle school experience has been pretty well identified. We kept hearing stories anecdotally of families who were unhappy with their public schools that were nearby. Or because they were unhappy, they were leaving our area and driving to other parts of town where there was K-12 or 6-12 school. To us it just made sense to offer that."

Natalie Grice (middle) is starting Seventh grade at Lutheran North Campus and couldn't wait to get started. She looked forward to playing basketball and spending time with her friends.





Natalie Grice, a Seventh grader, couldn't wait to start her first day after seeing the school's website. She's looking forward to meeting new friends, playing basketball and having more responsibility. She previously attended Hawthorn Leadership School for Girls. She knows a lot of the other kids from elementary school, and her cousin also is attending.

Natalie's parents, Michaela West and Geron Howard, say that Natalie is the youngest and most responsible of six girls in their family (they also have a younger son). West's cousin graduated from Lutheran North High School, so when she heard about the plans to open a middle school, she made it one of her top priorities to look into it. In addition, Howard has lived in the area for thirty years and has always had a positive impression of the school and he was impressed with the school's curriculum. The school's location also meant Natalie could be close to home.

The religious education was a considerable draw when selecting Natalie's school. West is a preacher and a Gospel singer. "It's great for [Natalie and her cousin] to be somewhere they can be free and be themselves." Howard adds, "Great character: that's the start to life. You can have all the smarts in the world, but without character, that's not going to get you much."

West feels like the staff and faculty are very approachable, especially Dr. Brackman. She says, "I feel like everyone so far is so loving and warm and welcoming, I don't think [the girls] will have any problems discussing their needs with everyone here." They want to teach their girls to handle their own academic careers, only stepping in when absolutely necessary. They cite parental involvement as a critical factor to helping their kids succeed, both in and out of school.

Dr. Brackman and Dr. Michael Starks, the Middle School Director, both spoke to the middle school students alone, before the high school kids joined them for chapel in the gym. Both principals talked to the students about the historic moment of the school's first class. Dr. Starks emphasized the damage bullying can wreak on peers. During Chapel, the students sang with a praise band and the chaplain incorporated students from both age groups in an interactive lesson, literally having the students juggle together.

Dr. Brackman says that there are other Lutheran schools across the country that have successfully combined middle school and high school. In this endeavor, the team studied similar schools in Nebraska and Colorado, to learn best practices and share ideas.

It's clear that this new school is appealing to families in St. Louis. With a little bit of targeted Facebook ads and other outreach, the school had more applications than seats and has many students on a wait list.



Strengthening Families: Family Ministry as Outreach



Family ministry is one of the most powerful tools for outreach in congregations, because wanting the best for your family is one of the few universal feelings we share. It's also one of the rare ideas that congregations share with our culture.

Brandon Metcalf, a student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, has extensive experience in shaping family ministry outreach. At Tell the Next Generation: A Family Ministry Conference, he led a session on family ministry outreach.

Metcalf says, "Someone may not yet want to go to Sunday morning worship, but if they're worried about their kids and technology, and the church is putting on an event about that, well, that's a way to get them in the door." Similarly, many parents don't attend Christmas Eve services, but they attend the pageant to watch their children perform.

In addition, Metcalf says family ministry is a valuable tool to reach an often hard-to-reach audience, inactive members. Many people become frustrated as members slide away from attending and participating in congregational life.

Because every congregation is serving a different community, there's no one-size-fits-all programming suggestion or approach to family ministry. A lot of people have the misconception that to start using family ministry as outreach, they need to take on new programs. Instead, Metcalf recommends people simply ask themselves the following questions:

- Who haven't we seen recently?
- Does anyone know them?
- Who can invite them to the next event?
- What do our members need to make an intentional invitation?

When it comes to promotion, Metcalf recommends a personal approach instead of a blanket approach, encouraging members to hand deliver post cards about an event or to personally share a Facebook event via messaging. He suggests asking everyone to take two postcards and intentionally consider who they're going to invite.



This way, you can use the initiatives and events already on the calendar to draw people to and back to the congregation. At first, not everyone will do this, of course. It takes time to grow a culture of outreach and intentional invitations. He says, "And when you're reporting on successful events, be sure to highlight people who came because someone invited them. Celebrate the actions of people who are setting a good example. Tell everyone you had 100 kids enrolled in VBS, but then tell the story of the three families who came because of a personalized invitation."

Once you've got parents and kids attending your programming, the next step is activating the parents and getting them further involved. This happens quite naturally with younger kids, as parents help children learn their lines or get ready for sports practice. However, there are plenty of opportunities for involving the parents of older kids, as well. One possibility is to encourage older kids to lead a devotional and invite parents. Like all other aspects of family ministry, it depends on the community you're serving.



Coming Soon!!

The Missouri District is publishing a white paper on teenage anxiety and social media. Learn how you can support young people in your ministry as they navigate peer pressure, their sense of self and counting likes.

Sign up to receive it as soon as it's published:
mo.lcms.org/social-media-youth

District-Supported Missions: Missouri District Partners with Ferguson Ministry to Bring Gospel to Children

In May of 2018 Bethlehem Lutheran Church held an upbeat street ministry event, Taking Jesus to the Streets, in Ferguson. They met more than 100 people a block from the Canfield Apartment complex, the epicenter of the unrest that made the St. Louis suburb infamous. The residents asked them a powerful question, “We’re so glad that you’re here. Are you going to come back or is this just a one-time thing?”

Ferguson residents said many churches and organizations showed up for short-term work, like delivering Christmas presents to children in need. However, most of them left with the news cameras. There has been a palpable absence of the church in building long-term relationships the community dealing with so many challenges.

This realization about the “wilderness of churches” in Ferguson led to a program called More Greater Things, which includes a summer camp for children and during the school year, it serves the same children with a club night three times a week. Kids attend for free and have time with mentors, get some food and have a Bible lesson, while volunteers come from LCMS congregations all over town.

Rev. Schmidtke serves as at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, which has a strong history of building relationships in St. Louis City and surrounding suburbs. Rev. Gerard Bolling, Bethlehem’s Associate Pastor, says they were well positioned to fill this voice because, “being missional is in our DNA.” He also says that they’ve found a lot of success doing one thing really well—reaching local children with the Gospel.

Missouri District Awards More Greater Things Mission Grant

The Missouri District works closely with congregations and other LMCS ministries to support local mission work. The Missouri District has awarded More Greater Things a 2019 mission grant, in the amount of \$40,000.

Rev. Bill Geis, Assistant to the President for Missions, says, More Greater Things stands out because of the impact it’s made very quickly, as well as the integration and support of volunteers from all over town. Many people still want to know how people in Ferguson are holding up, even five years after the start of the unrest. However, most people don’t have the community relationships or know-how to jump right into serving people there on their own.

Rev. Geis says, “One reason I chose the grant was because of its strong emphasis on engaging our area congregations as partners. More Greater Things involves at least 10 LCMS congregations with over 70 volunteers monthly participating in the process. They’re intentionally partnering with north city and north county mission opportunities where our city’s greatest needs are.”



Helping Volunteers Make a Difference that Wouldn't be Possible as Individuals

Such robust programming requires immense volunteer support to keep moving. More Greater Things draws volunteers from across the St. Louis area, which means that the volunteers often come from drastically different backgrounds than the children served in the ministry. It creates a space where people from all backgrounds can learn about each other.

Rev. Bolling describes their process for helping the volunteers acclimate to this unique ministry. First, they simply watch. Then, the next day, they co-lead the activities, and the third time, they lead and the staff watches. After the initial shock of learning what some of these children are going through, the volunteers build relationships that flourish and help both groups of people understand each other. In outreach, Rev. Bolling says, "You're holding people's stories in your heart and responding in an appropriate way, by doing what God has equipped you to do the most."

The Power of Doing One Thing

Sometimes, people want to address every societal issue they encounter. It's tough for volunteers, because it's often their first time working with children who talk about not having enough to eat, or coming home to houses darkened from inability to pay the electric bill. The volunteers learn early on to do their best not to react right away when they hear things like that.

Rev. Bolling says, "When our sister churches come in, suburban churches, it becomes so deep for them when they realize how difficult life is [for the kids] because of so many different circumstances and they see how cyclical poverty is. They realize things go deeper and are more complex than the stories they hear on the news." For example, not having a true sense of home, because you don't have a dedicated bed makes it harder to learn in school. Understandably, many volunteers go through a phase where they want to try to tackle all the problems they can see holding these neighborhoods back. Soon though, they realize that taking the Gospel to children is the best way to infiltrate the negative cycles around them.



If you'd like to learn more about
District Missions, please contact
Rev. Bill Geis at
bill.geis@mo.lcms.org or
(314) 590-6205.



The Missouri District is pleased to provide a mission grant to Bethlehem for this exciting work! Would you like to help fund Gospel outreach in our state? Contact Leah Sieveking at (314) 590-6211 or leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org. God's blessings!

Engaging Communities

Partnerships Enable Congregations to Learn About and Better Serve their Homeless Neighbors

When Todd Barnes, an active member and former president of Zion Lutheran Church, needed a new model for his work with the homeless, he looked at the success of many areas in the country. Lancaster, PA in particular had a model he thought would work in the areas he serves.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had given the Community Council, where he works as the Executive Director, a mandate to completely rework how they worked with clients and referred them for services.

The Community Council is a membership organization focused on collaborative efforts to improve human services in the Tri-County region of St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren Counties. Lancaster County was successful, in part, due to its heavy partnerships with faith communities. So he went along Interstate 70, meeting with different faith communities to learn how they could partner.

The Right Role for Each Player

Like many churches in the area, Zion Lutheran Church would sometimes receive word of someone in need and get a request from them directly about immediate and pressing needs, like housing, gas or food. Without a background in human services, most church workers or members didn't know how best to help, which was discouraging for all involved. Plus, there was no good way for the congregation to follow up with the individual to see if they got long-term assistance.

Mr. Barnes worked to set up a central process for connecting with homeless people in need of services. This way, when a congregation or other entity learned of a person in need, they could refer them directly to the Community Council, who would then do a full assessment and connect them from one central place to as many providers as necessary.

Despite being a prosperous county, St. Charles has a significant homeless population, many of whom are single moms with young children. Their work with Council means congregations are better equipped to help them.



Mr. Barnes says, "Before we had this process, a homeless person would have to call every provider up individually." As a result, the process was exhausting and people would miss opportunities to receive help. It also made sharing data about effectiveness almost impossible. Now, congregations can serve homeless neighbors with a single referral.

Another important role is collecting donations. Funding is always a critical need for organizations like the Community Council. Zion Lutheran Church contributes to a fund that enables case managers to offer people emergency housing, identification, or gas.

Zion Lutheran Church Helps Gather Startling Community Insights

A centralized intake process has had another benefit: information and data. Zion Lutheran Church in St. Charles has been instrumental in helping the Community Council take a census on the homeless population. This meant going in person to speak with homeless people in the cold month of January, visiting people living in tents.

Despite covering some of the most prosperous counties in the state, the Council knows homeless is a real problem, but it's not as visible as it is in some larger cities, like downtown St. Louis. Unfortunately, Mr. Barnes notes that a large number of the people he works with are single mothers with children. These families require different services than a homeless single man.

Community Relationships and Life-Changing Impact

Mr. Barnes often also hears church workers say, "We're great keepers of souls, but we're not good case managers of social services." Now, with a single place to send homeless neighbors, anyone can know the person will get the help they need if they choose to act on the referral to the Community Council.

Zion Lutheran Church also has a vibrant prison ministry. Despite the best efforts of the penal system, recently released prisoners are often at high risk of homelessness. The ministry is often able to work ahead of prisoners' release and hopefully prevent this problem before it starts.

One added benefit of this streamlined system is reporting. The Community Council sends a monthly update to their partners. Since embarking on this process, the organization has assisted 800 people in finding housing.

A Process to Guide Partnerships and Vision

In this case, the Community Council came directly to the congregation and asked them to contribute. It worked well with the congregation's desire to support the homeless population. However, these partnerships don't always materialize so organically.

If you'd like to learn more about the Plus One process, please contact Rev. Bill Geis at bill.geis@mo.lcms.org or (314) 590-6205.

Mission Advancement Snapshot

There's nothing like your very first day of school...especially when you're the teacher!

The Missouri District welcomed several first-year Lutheran teachers this year, and we know they will be a blessing to many students and families. Our sincerest thanks to the generous congrega-

tions and individuals who will walk with these new church workers all year by supporting the district's Care Team and the worker mentorship program. Thank you!



Pastors Wives' Retreat

Chesterfield
Sat. Nov. 2, 2019

Blue Springs
Sat. Nov. 9, 2019

Missions10:02 Prayer Praying for our Schools

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!”

— Luke 10:02

Praying for our Schools

A new school year has begun, and the routines of family, community, study, and even church have reset. Whether you have children of school age or not, this is a call to pray. I'd like to challenge you to a daily routine that takes just two minutes.

First minute: Pray daily for a Lutheran School in the Missouri District

There are 114 educational ministries in the Missouri District. This ministry is a massive undertaking of love and significance in the kingdom of God. The faith formation of children impacted by Lutheran schools is a call to prayer. Alongside of our children, pray for our teachers, administrators, congregations and pastors serving them.

Second minute: Pray daily for a public school in your neighborhood

The engagement of our communities in mission begins with a commitment to pray for them. Our local school districts are a treasure of prayer opportunities. They represent our neighborhoods. They are a lens into the community. They are a mirror of the people we want to see in the Kingdom of Christ. Many congregations participating in our Plus One process are looking at their public schools as places to start with community engagement.

MO District Hosting Disaster Response Training Sessions

LERT certifies volunteers to FEMA standards, and makes them eligible for access to federal disaster sites. Across Missouri, these trained volunteers are ready to step in when the unthinkable happens. The district's goal is to have teams in every pocket of Missouri, so LERT volunteers can serve locally, without the need for travel or extensive lodging.

These 6 to 8 hour trainings are \$35 and include lunch and a LERT vest. These courses will cover:

1. An introduction to the LCMS Disaster Response program
2. Congregation preparedness
3. Lutheran Early Response Teams

Anyone can attend the training session but only LCMS members who are 18 years or older, however, receive certification as LCMS volunteers.

To sign up for anyone of these LERT training classes go to <https://form.jotform.com/81215292634959> to sign up. You will need to insert the four digit code number on the form corresponding to the class that you would like to attend. You will also be asked to upload a photo of yourself which will put on your badge.

Oct. 4, 2019

Heits Point - (Code# 0019)

Includes optional chain saw certification and first aid, to sign up for these, end your name, address, phone number, location of LERT training and which class you are signing up for by email to pastorschultz@att.net.



A Head for Finance... A Heart for Ministry

Casey Carlson, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) - Missouri District Vice President, worked in traditional banking for 15 years, honing his skills and expertise and serving in the private sector. He always felt inspired by the work of LCEF but didn't necessarily believe he'd be a part of it one day. Then in 2016, he learned of a vacancy in Missouri and he got the job.

At its core, the work is similar to his previous career, garnering investors to trust him and LCEF with their money, and then lending that money out. However, the ultimate goal is helping ministries prosper and fulfill their mission of what God's call them to do, wherever they're serving. He says, "It's truly an amazing experience and I've been blessed to be a part of it."



Introduction to LCEF

Lutheran Church Extension Fund is the financial arm of LCMS congregations, schools and other organizations. Incorporated in 1977, LCEF now has almost \$1.9 billion in assets, in addition to approximately \$1.5 billion in active loans, helping ministries thrive and grow.

On Being Part of the Missouri District Team

Carlson describes his presence in the Missouri District office as "vitaly important. Our missions are aligned, not only with LCEF and LCMS as a whole, but when you drill down to the district level. I'm on the executive team here and in all our meetings, talking about how we can engage and serve our congregations."

Carlson thrives on the variety of service opportunities in his role. He says, "I could be here in the office or I could be traveling to the other side of the state. I could be going to a council or committee meeting in the evening somewhere. So you never know where you're going to be as a district vicepresident, but that's what I find exciting—to go where the work is and where people are asking me to walk alongside them."

What He Loves About his Job

Seeing ministries grow is awesome, but Carlson gets especially excited when he sees them think outside the box. "You really have to be adaptive to what's going on out there," he says. "It's truly awesome to see how they connect to the people around them."



Carlson is currently working with Zion Lutheran Church in Maryland Heights, MO on an LCEF-financed project. The congregation is renovating the lower level to make a coffee shop. The pastor recognized the potential of their location, which gets passed by 30,000 cars a day, as well as the need for a local coffee shop, Higher Groundz.

Looking at communities today, Carlson observes some changes that indicate the necessity

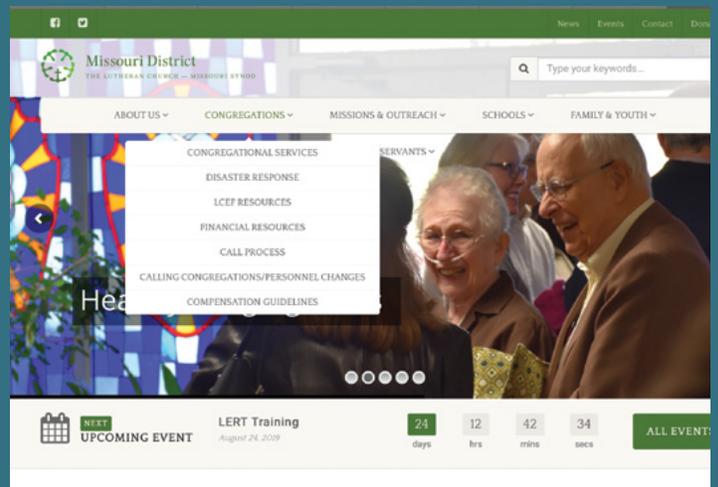
for creative outreach from churches. "Institutions are changing, he says. "You've got to think of the church as an institution. Our lives are changing. We're just so busy. Myself included. I have five kids, we have so many different activities going on. Everyone is asking for a piece of your pie, of your time dividend."

He points out that twenty years ago, the church was the center of influence, but that's not the case any longer. Carlson says churches have to think in new ways to attract people, because they're not simply going to walk into worship unprompted.

Calling Congregations and Personnel Changes Now Available Online!

Go to mo.lcms.org/personnel/ to see information about calling congregations and personnel changes (both ordained and commissioned ministers of religion).

Find this information under the congregations tab on our website: mo.lcms.org





Rev. Cory Stallings,
Exchange Communities



Ordination Photos



Ordination of Rev. Andrew Lehenbauer, on Aug. 4 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Lake Ozark. He was ordained by his father, Rev. Ron Lehenbauer.

Back Row

Rev. Tony Alter, Rev. John Mehl,
Rev. Paul Mehl, Rev. Sam Powell

Middle Row

Rev. Kristopher Morris, Rev. Michael
Hanel, Rev. Aaron Hutton

Front Row

Rev. Peter Lange, Rev. Guillaume
Williams Sr., Rev. Ron Lehenbauer,
Rev. Andrew Lehenbauer, Rev. Michael
Pottschmidt, Rev. Joshua Knippa,
Rev. William Wrede