



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

The VOICE

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Black History Month at Lutheran North High School includes many types of lessons and celebrations



St. Paul Lutheran Church in Jackson hosted Night to Shine, with the Tim Tebow Foundation
Photo by Laura Mae Photography



From the President's Desk: Time of Grief or Opportunity?

For the middle part of the Twentieth Century, people in our country streamed into our churches. New churches were planted as people from rural communities left the farm for sprawling cities and new suburbs and subdivisions that began to spring up everywhere.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod grew to 2.8 million members during this period that could be classified as the glory days of American Protestantism. Lutheran Christians were led to believe, “If you build, they will come.” Community engagement in our congregations was little more than opening the doors because they were coming. Church attendance was much higher among members and instruction classes were full of young engaged couples or newlyweds. We were building and they were coming.

But it stopped. A mixture of the culture’s hostile influence and the church’s apathy has led to the startling and painful realization, they’re not coming anymore. Young couples are seen in our congregations far less than the previous century. New membership classes seem much smaller these days. Church attendance for many congregations declines even among members. Older pastors and parishioners alike grieve for the way things used to be when they were coming in droves.

But the Church should not expect them to come to us. That was not the pattern of our Lord’s earthly ministry. While He had great zeal for His Father’s house, He did not remain there to the neglect of people in need. Jesus was the ultimate model of community engagement as He encountered the blind, the deaf, the lame, the sick, the forgotten, the forsaken, the least and the lowest. He never expected them to come to Him, rather He goes to where they are in their sin and brokenness. He is the One who seeks out the tax collectors and prostitutes to show them mercy and love. While news of Jesus spread and people were seeking after Him, He never stopped going to them.

Even in the early years of our own church body, mission work was done among Native Americans and African-Americans. Mission work among Chinese immigrants was begun in St. Louis in 1875. There was never an expectation that

non-German speaking were going to suddenly seek out a Lutheran congregation. Instead, Lutheran congregations were actively engaging their communities through acts of mercy and love, all for the sake of bearing witness to Christ. In the first century of our own church body, we were not waiting for them to come to us, but knew that we were sent to them.

So where do we go from here? In these dark and latter days that are full of challenges, we can sit around grieving for the past and hoping they will come back or we can be the Body of Christ that goes to where hurting people are with the healing balm of the Gospel. The reality is that God the Father did not wait for us to find our way back to Him. Instead, He sent His Son with the mission to seek and to save the lost chiefly by suffering and dying on the cross. And because we could not by our own reason or strength come to Him, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to call us to faith in Christ. God does not wait for people to come to Him, but He goes to them still today as the Church carries out His mission to seek and to save the lost by bringing the Gospel to those who are lost in sin and unbelief.

Now is not a time for grief as we mourn the past! It is a time of opportunity for our congregations to engage our communities with the Gospel. We cannot wait for them to come to us. Rather God is sending the Church to them. If you’re congregation needs help engaging your community, please contact me (lee.hagan@mo.lcms.org). We stand ready to help. My hope and prayers is that all of our congregations would be active in our communities reaching out to people with God’s love in Jesus.

Fraternally in Christ,

President Lee Hagan

PRESIDENT’S PRAYER LIST: PLEASE JOIN ME IN PRAYER THIS MONTH

- Pray for our congregations to be active in their communities.
- Pray for missionaries across the globe.
- Finally, give thanks for the 110+ congregations participating in Plus One



Now Accepting Nominations for LYF Leadership Program

Each year, we bring four new young people on board as our seniors leave us to step into the future God has planned for them. These four new young people must currently be in their freshman year of high school.

You are invited to nominate a young person from your congregation to serve in this important capacity.

The LYF Team serves as the teen leadership team at several District ministry events: a spring and fall junior high youth retreat, a senior high gathering, a teen leadership initiative workshop, and other youth events as necessary. Many of these events are weekend-long and attendance by the LYF Team is expected at them, so please keep that in mind when nominating a young person.

Priority in selection will go to those young people who exhibit maturity in Christian character, exhibit leadership qualities, and are able to attend the various ministry event described above. A young person's ability to have a flexible schedule and occasionally miss a day of school is considered an asset by the selection committee.

Other personal qualities highly sought are growing faith in Jesus Christ, a lifestyle that reflects the teachings and beliefs of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, a passion to be involved in youth ministry, the demonstrated ability to work with other youth and adults and a positive, enthusiastic spirit. Benefits of selection to the team are wide-ranging, and include exposure to and participation in the work of the church at large, growth in leadership skills and opportunities to share Christ with other youth.

To nominate:

1. Download the nomination form at mo.lcms.org/youth-ministry and complete your section.
2. Work with the student to complete information and collect letters of recommendation, which must include the reference's contact information.
3. Submit complete materials on behalf of the nominee to Sue Stiegemeier at [sstiegemeier@stpauljackson.com](mailto:ssstiegemeier@stpauljackson.com) or mail them to St. Paul Lutheran Church, 223 West Adams, Jackson, MO 63755.

Nomination forms and three letters of reference are due to Sue Stiegemeier no later than April 1st 2019.

Contact Sue Stiegemeier with any questions at (573) 243-2236 or [sstiegemeier@stpauljackson.com](mailto:ssstiegemeier@stpauljackson.com).



The 2020 Compensation Guidelines are here!

Go to mo.lcms.org



2020 Compensation Guidelines

Intended for use in fiscal year 2019-20 or calendar year 2020

These guidelines were prepared to assist congregations in studying and arriving at equitable salaries for their workers and were approved by the Missouri District Board of Directors on January 10, 2019.



Missouri District
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD





Healthy Servants: Shared Weakness

by Rev. Elden Kohn

Church worker care begins from a place of shared weakness. It begins as we are found vulnerable together in Christ. Paul expressed this shared need to the Corinthians:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

—2 Co 1:3-4

The comforted comforting.
The helped helping. The
needy meeting the needy in,

with, and through Christ. Far from those who have it all together helping those who don't, church worker care takes shape as those who have struggled under the cross (and still do!) meet other cross-bearing travelers along the wearying and winding paths of ministry.

So, how do we meet in our weakness to help one another? How do we share together in our vulnerability at the cross? We listen for and listen to. We listen for hurts, for needs, for opportunities to help and be helped, for sure. But that happens as we...

Listen to the Word

Our Father's lamp for our feet and light for our path (Ps 118:105) is revealing (sometimes, more so than we'd like). As you "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest," consider how the instruction of Scripture invites your care for other workers, as well as your care for yourself. Many a daily devotion has made me pause and ask, "Is this an area of my life I need to be thinking about more?" "Does a brother or sister in Christ need my help with this?" Listen to the Word's guidance.

Listen to God's People

Clergy killers and gossips aside, I believe most congregation members do have the well-being of pastors and church workers in mind. Listening to the faithful can be helpful and insightful. I've learned the hard way that not giving adequate time or credence to their gently expressed concerns can cost in the long run. Yet, it is those closest to us and our fellow workers who know us best; and it is they who endure life and ministry with us—for better and for worse. Spouses, children, fellow workers: when these begin to speak and act in ways that express concern, it's time to pay attention. Their cries for help are just as important (and revealing) as our own. Listen to God's people around you.

Listen to Yourself

Ever have a gut feeling that something was off? That someone was in need? Perhaps that wasn't just your gut speaking; maybe it was an endocrine nudge from the Holy Spirit—one that shouldn't be ignored. Or maybe your conscience has been prodding you to speak with a co-worker (or to give attention to an aspect of your own life). It can be helpful to listen to and discern those voices within—especially since the Holy Spirit is at work within us as new creations in Christ. If you sense something off in yourself or a fellow worker, don't ignore it. Listen to yourself.

The grace of Christ shared together by needy and vulnerable Christians: that's what church worker care is. Most often, it begins with the simple act (and art) of listening. Listening brings us to a place where we can cry together, seek comfort and healing together in Christ, and call out together in praise:

Of Him who did salvation bring,
I could forever think and sing:
Arise, ye needy, He'll relieve,
Arise, ye guilty, He'll forgive.

Ask but His grace, and lo, 'tis given!
Ask, and He turns your hell to heaven:
Though sin and sorrow wound my
soul, Jesus, Thy balm will make
it whole. Amen.

*Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), Closing
Prayer in For All the Saints, vol. 3, p. 384*

If you'd like to learn more
about church worker
health, visit us online at
mo.lcms.org or contact
Rev. Gene Wyssman at
Gene.Wyssmann
@mo.lcms.org.

Healthy Congregations

Whether it's a big church or a small church, a rural or city church, it appears there is a genuine reluctance to address stewardship. This hesitancy can be found both in pastors and laity.



Embracing Stewardship

by Rev. Gene Wyssmann

It seems there is a pattern across many of our congregations. There is an aspect of ministry that seems to consistently trip people up. Whether it's a big church or a small church, a rural or city church, it appears there is a genuine reluctance to address stewardship. This hesitancy can be found both in pastors and laity. What makes it even more challenging, is if a congregation doesn't have an established time for addressing stewardship. If this is the case, it can feel like an enormous task to start bringing it up, seemingly out of nowhere.

There are several reasons pastors and leaders might find it daunting to bring up stewardship with their congregation. Sometimes there is the impression that stewardship only deals with money. Any dialogue that involves money and finance, whether personal or institutional, can feel awkward and uncomfortable. And let's be honest, most men didn't feel called or inspired to go to Seminary because they enjoy asking people for money.

The good news is that simply talking about money, or even asking for it, is not what stewardship is all about.

Christian stewardship is really a spiritual issue. It's a heart issue. Stewardship is our response to God's grace for us in Jesus Christ. Stewardship is managing wisely the blessings that the Lord has entrusted to us, motivated by His grace.

It means recognizing and assessing the many resources He has given in our lives and drawing on these blessings to make a meaningful contribution of time, talent, and treasure to His Kingdom. Consider the LCMS definition of stewardship:

“Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of God's family — the church — in managing life's resources for His purposes.”

The truth of the matter is that even if your congregation has not addressed stewardship systematically—or at all, it's a great time to begin. Our Christian stewardship is rooted in scripture. In my opinion, there's no better place to start than the biblical study of stewardship. Chapters 8 and 9 of II Corinthians are authoritative scriptures on this topic, and there are many more.

If you're struggling to get started with meaningful stewardship in your congregation, immerse yourself in God's Word and see what Paul has to say about it in those chapters in II Corinthians.

There's a chance you might find it helpful to rethink your notion of stewardship. As was said before, it's not only about money. Stewardship, at its core, means managing well and returning to God from what He's already given us. It doesn't mean giving what we don't have. Our healthiest stewardship involves gifts of our time, our talent and our treasure. If you've been limiting stewardship to finances, this expanded concept is very helpful.

One reason stewardship campaigns are successful is they take this easy-to-avoid topic and offer it a prominent place on the congregation's calendar.

This then gives members the opportunity to search the Scriptures, to listen to what God may be calling them to give, and to consider what the needs and ministry opportunities are. Don't forget, there are people for whom giving money is a great joy. For others, their greater joy is found in giving of their time and talent.

It often seems to be the case that if you avoid talking about stewardship in an intentional way during a predetermined time of year in the congregation, there's a good chance you will find yourself talking about it all year long.

This takes the form of wondering why people aren't more excited to support the ministries in your congregation or wondering how to motivate giving.

May God bless you in your personal stewardship and may He bless the stewardship efforts in your congregation. May all your gifts be given, responding to God's grace for you in Jesus Christ, realizing you are freed to serve, and joyfully responding to His call to commitment.

*"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
-2 Cor. 9:7*

Here at the Missouri District office, we have staff and programs available to assist you as you build up healthy, Christian stewardship, based on the principles outlined in scripture.

Contact us today to learn more at gene.wyssmann@mo.lcms.org, and check out the resources at lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/stewardship-ministry

Healthy Schools

Celebrating Black History Month in Our Schools

Lutheran schools are vibrant, diverse learning communities thriving in a Christ-centered environment where Christ's love and mercy abounds. During the month of February, LCMS schools throughout the Missouri District are celebrating in our diversity and commonality as they celebrate Black History Month.

During this time of celebration Lutheran schools are crafting engaging, interactive programming to honor, celebrate, teach and learn about specifically about Black History.

Throughout February, Lutheran High School North in St. Louis added a Black History fact each day. At the end of the month, they hosted a trivia night based on these facts. In addition to the daily facts, Lutheran North hosted weekly poetry slams and spaces for other performances. Students were taught to express themselves about topics such as racial tension, with Christ in their midst. The Lutheran North staff organized community speakers, including Shirley Washington from a local news channel.

To conclude the month-long learning opportunity, Lutheran North holds an annual Black History EXPO. Each year, the students come up with a theme. This year's theme was, it's **TELEVISED**, which stems from a student-written skit about social media and African American culture today. Outside of the script, there's a fashion show, step-team performances, and other performances to highlight Black history including the Gospel choir and praise dance team performing during Chapel.

Word of Life Lutheran School in South St. Louis held a school-wide assembly, in which every class contributed through music, media presentations, poetry, guest speakers and even enjoying homemade desserts. James Davis, a Seventh grader at Word of Life, was introduced to the work of renowned African American poet and author Maya Angelou. He'd heard of her before, through a few podcasts and documentaries, but this was his first experience studying her words in-depth.

James' favorite part of Word of Life's Black History Month assembly was listening to the spirituals. He says, "The assembly showed how as Black people, we can be inspired to do anything we put our minds to. We can try our hardest and become legends. Even if we have physical disabilities, we can be athletes."

Lutheran schools continue to provide educational excellence and amazing learning opportunities in a Christ-centered environment. You can learn more about the advantages of Lutheran education at mo.lcms.org/school-directory.

To support scholarships for students in our schools, in colleges pursuing church work vocations, or in seminary, contact Leah Sieveking at leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org or (314) 590-6211.



"The assembly showed how as Black people, we can be inspired to do anything we put our minds to. We can try our hardest and become legends. Even if we have physical disabilities, we can be athletes."
—James Davis, 7th grader, Word of Life Lutheran School



Strengthening Families

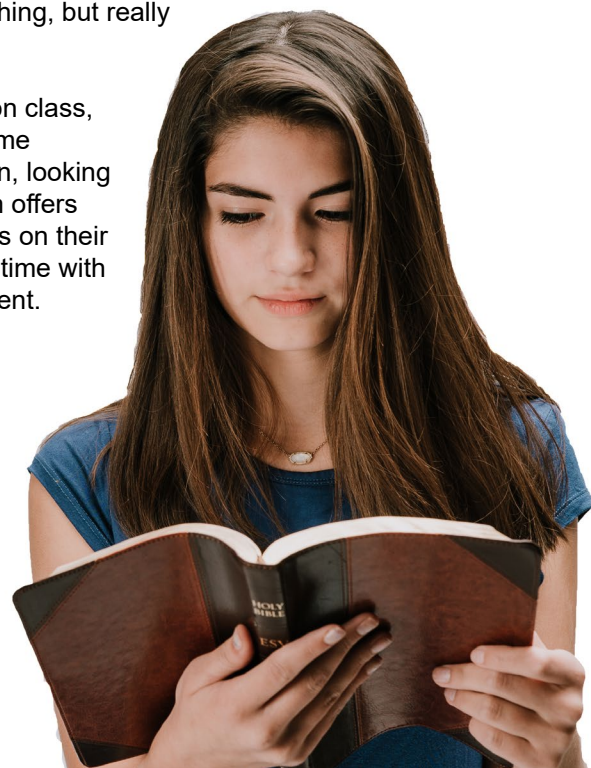
Helping Families Navigate the Culture of Busyness

Jolene Siebarth, DCE at Immanuel Lutheran Church, has been working with families and youth for almost 20 years. In that time, much has changed, but much has also stayed the same. One thing that has remained constant is the family's role in faith formation. Jolene says, "Let's say a family attends worship each week and attends a weekly Bible class. That's two hours a week at church, compared with how many hours a week with their family?"

In her work with students across many different school districts, Jolene has noticed almost all families seem to be struggling with the culture of business. "All parents want what's best for their kids," she says, "and what's best is Jesus." Not all families feel confident in their ability to teach the faith or in asking for help. It's easy to put Bible study on the back burner when parents are working to provide for their families, run households and manage everyone's competing schedules. Here are some of Jolene's recommendations:

1. Make time to talk openly with your children about your faith and encourage them to ask questions. Build regular (screen-free) meals together into everyone's calendar, even if it can't happen every single night. Take advantage of time together in the car. Time management is going to be different for every family, so really consider what will work for you. Look for hidden pockets of time throughout each day.
2. Ask your congregation for resources, such as family devotions. Whether you grew up going to church every week or you're new to the faith, spending time in prayer and God's Word as a family will lay a strong foundation and make it more likely your kids will feel comfortable coming to you with questions or talk about their experiences.
3. Be intentional about your children's schedules. The culture of busyness makes it seem like kids need to be in every activity and challenging class that interests them. However, no one can do everything. It's hard to tell your children "no," especially when they care about something, but really help your kids prioritize.
4. Take advantage of confirmation classes. In her confirmation class, Jolene includes topics like technology, social media and time management. In addition to the usual topics in confirmation, looking at these tools within the context of Christ and His Kingdom offers another filter through which kids can consider the demands on their time and attention. This helps them know how to prioritize time with God, instead of trying to squeeze it in at any leftover moment.

Strengthening families is a critical target of the Missouri District office for 2019. We also host several events for both junior and senior high school students to take a step back and focus on their faith.



Tell the Next Generation: A Family Ministry Conference

March 9, 2019 | Zion Lutheran Church | St. Charles, MO



We're not losing young people after confirmation.
We're losing *children after baptism.*
Learn what you can do about it.

Maybe you've noticed your worship services are a bit quieter these days. Or maybe Sunday School simply isn't getting the results it used to. If you're finding it harder to reach families—or reaching the same few families again and again—you're not alone.

Join us on March 9, for a day of ideas, reflection and speakers, designed to help you equip families and parents to teach the faith at home. Because parents are the first and most prominent faith leaders in their children's lives.

We suggest registering by March 4. However, if you would like to attend, or better yet, send a team, please contact Sue Thompson at sue.thompson@mo.lcms.org as soon as possible.

Engaging Communities

Missions10:02

by Rev. Bill Geis



Pray for Bourbon! Do I have your attention? I'm not talking about "spirits" you can bottle, but the Spirit at work among the saints in the small town of Bourbon, Missouri, population 1601. About an hour southwest of St. Louis, I-44 zooms past their quaint community where Concordia Lutheran Church is reaching out as a new Plus One congregation.

Wannette, a teacher at Bourbon Elementary and member at Concordia, saw the need of students and families in their community to have a Christian after-school ministry. Pastor John Roach, who serves the congregation as a part-time retired pastor enthusiastically supported the effort. Quickly other teachers and volunteers began planning their effort late last fall. They talked to the school principal, developed a school-approved questionnaire to assess parent needs and contacted the Missouri District for help with a Plus One coach.

After the Christmas break, the partnership with Concordia and school district launched. There's now a bus stop at the church and students can participate in the daily Christian program which runs till 6:00 p.m. When kids arrive, they have a snack prepared by the congregation. Next there's time for personal help with homework and reading areas for students. They learn Bible stories, participate in crafts and baking. When the weather warms up, they will have outdoor recreation, too.

Less than two months into the program, the congregation already has an average of nine daily students. They are building relationships with new families. They've obtained resources from their coach, John Perling. They have ten active volunteers from a congregation with an average worship attendance of 57 and growing.

Pray for Bourbon! Pray for the volunteers of Concordia Lutheran and the Spirit at work within them. Pray for relationships that bring Jesus to these children and families. Pray for Bourbon Elementary where 418 students (pre-K through 4) have a community church in Concordia that is bringing them Good News by taking one new step.

Mission Grant Application Process Still Open

Every year the congregations all over the District submit major mission proposals for engaging new people and communities with the Gospel. This week opens that application process (January 25- March 4). As we begin a new season of partnering with congregations, pray for our congregations and leaders to be bold in taking new steps.

Contact Rev. Bill Geis at Bill.Geis@mo.lcms.org for more information.



Learn more at mo.lcms.org/district-missions/

LCEF Data Gives Trinity Lutheran Snapshot of Community as They Consider Early Childhood Educational Ministry

When communities change, it can be hard to notice from the inside.

For example, Kathryn Chapin asked members of Trinity Lutheran Church how many babies would likely be born in an upcoming year. The estimates were approximately 30 times smaller than the real number. Most members estimated (on average) that there would be 25 births within five miles of their church. The projected number was 749.

The projection came from a Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) demographic study. Kathryn understands how hard it can be to truly get a pulse on your local community. It isn't always easy to spot population growth or other trends, especially in rural areas, like Trinity's little corner of St. Charles.

Kathryn says, "People see the developments, but they don't always know what exactly is happening inside them. They also see all the corn."

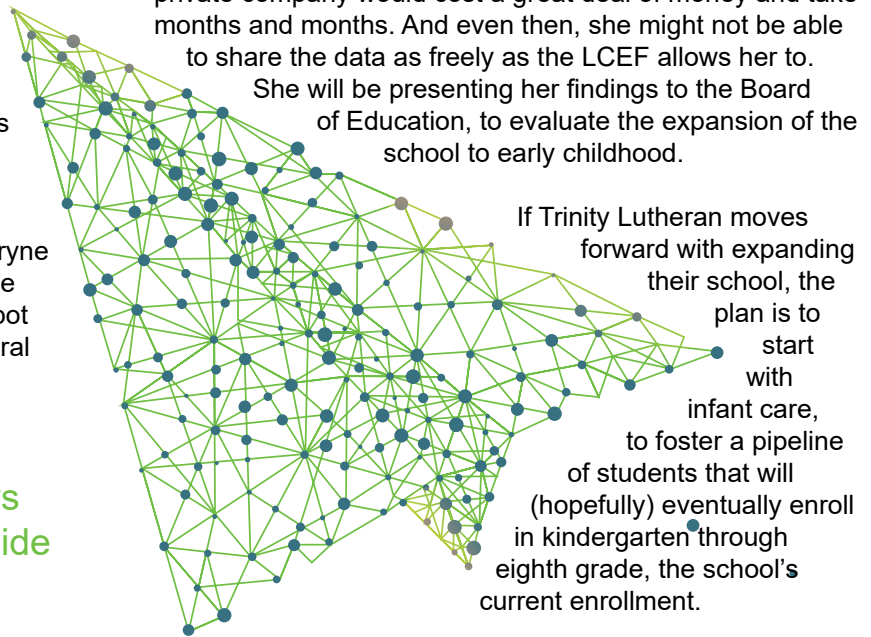
She describes the LCEF demographic study as, "a Godsend with perfect timing." The LCEF had recently put together a study around the exact area she needed (though they often put together custom reports as needed).

If your eyes glaze over slightly when you hear the words, "demographic study," you're not alone. However, Kathryn says, "It was so much more than just numbers. It really was a picture, or a snapshot of our community. In fact, the first page was called the 'Story View,' and that's exactly what it did. It told the story of our community."

Kathryn has relied on the LCEF demographic study for her graduate work in educational administration, as well as to assess the viability of expanding Trinity Lutheran

School to include preschool. To get similar data from a private company would cost a great deal of money and take months and months. And even then, she might not be able to share the data as freely as the LCEF allows her to.

She will be presenting her findings to the Board of Education, to evaluate the expansion of the school to early childhood.



If Trinity Lutheran moves forward with expanding their school, the plan is to start with infant care, to foster a pipeline of students that will (hopefully) eventually enroll in kindergarten through eighth grade, the school's current enrollment.

In addition to looking at early childhood opportunities, the congregation's Ministry Action Team is also looking at the study to consider opportunities for better community engagement. It will also help them consider how they can reach the community, while maintaining their traditional identity.

They plan to use the insights to plan meaningful community events, to market and to learn more about the people they wish to serve and attract.

"It's amazing," Kathryn says. "We can look at birth rate, death rate, migration and so much more. There are so many different types of diversity all around us. You can find diversity in the most seemingly homogeneous communities."

Trinity Lutheran School started in the Civil War, and it's easy to see how the landscape and people have changed over time. Kathryn says, "These could be the seeds we're planting for generations to come, where someone might say her great, great grandmother attended our preschool."



Contact Casey Carlson to reap the benefits of an LCEF demographic study.
casey.carlson@mo.lcms.org

Missouri Congregations Partner with Tim Tebow Foundation for Night to Shine

On Feb. 8, 2019, cameras flashed on red carpets across the country, as people walked through crowds of cheering fans. These were not celebrities, but people with special needs who were honored guests for an event called Night to Shine, a prom night experience for people with special needs. Night to Shine is a program of the Tim Tebow Foundation.

When Jordan Myer was in college, she volunteered at this event regularly. When she moved back to Jackson after college, she approached her pastor, Rev. Eric Longman, about applying to host the event. He quickly agreed. Once approved as an event site, St. Paul Lutheran Church received logistical support and guidance from the foundation. Jordan, who works with people with special needs, chaired the committee and communicated its heart to everyone.

"This event is a prom night centered on Christ's love," Rev. Longman explains. "It's about showing people with special needs that we're all made in God's image and loved by God." Judy and Richard Aufdenberg agree. Their son, Matt, has Down Syndrome and sported a cowboy hat and tuxedo as he danced with his best friend Scotty, and made new friends from across the region.

When he learned they'd been selected to host, Rev. Longman wasn't certain how they were going to attract enough guests. The goal set by the Tim Tebow Foundation is 75 guests, which felt quite daunting. In the end, 115 guests showed up (and rocked out). A reporter from the local paper spotted one of the Facebook posts about the event and conducted an interview.

Community and Media Partnerships Critical to Success

The news interview did wonders for recruiting volunteers. Despite Rev. Longman's initial concerns guest registrations started to come in. The team had been recruiting with the help of service organizations across the region. For every guest, there's a background-checked buddy, who shows them around the event and makes sure they can participate in the activities. In the end,

it took 220 volunteers to pull off the event.



Photos by Laura Mae Photography

Mission Advancement Snapshot

Future church leaders from Missouri are being encouraged and strengthened through your prayers and financial support. This year, \$141,000 has been budgeted to supply scholarships to students attending Lutheran elementary

and high schools, as well as to those enrolled in church worker programs within the Concordia University System and residential programs at Synod's two seminaries. Thank you for being a blessing to this next generation!

To put together such a phenomenal event, which included limo rides, pony rides, karaoke and more, St. Paul relied on the greater community. Approximately two thirds of the volunteers came from outside the congregation. In addition, at one point, a community member from outside the congregation wrote a \$1,000 check to help make the event as special as possible.

As the night unfolded, joy radiated from every face, volunteers and guests alike. Rev. Longman saw a young man named Roger and asked him how the night was going for him. Roger said, "It's okay, but they haven't played my song yet." Rev. Longman asked him, "What's your song?" "Cha Cha Slide," Roger replied. Rev.

Longman assured him, "I know that song is on the playlist. I promise you they'll play it." Twenty minutes later, he saw Roger on the dance floor, grinning from ear-to-ear. Rev. Longman said, "They played your song, didn't they?" Roger said, "Yeah they did!"



Laura Mae Photography

Including Parents and Guardians

Meanwhile, throughout the festivities, the parents and guardians enjoyed a night of their own in the basement, where the event was livestreamed. The committee brought



in massage chairs and served them dinner and dessert as they shared in their children's joy and compared notes about their experiences.

With clear emotion in his voice, Richard describes what this event has meant to their family. He says, "These kids and these adults, they always seem to be pushed to the back, but this night was their night. People were cheering and hooping and hollering for them as they came down the red carpet and the guests were just beaming...He's had some extra issues, but Matt's brought so much joy and love to us and the congregation. He's a greeter and he'll walk right up to strangers and say 'Hi, I'm Matt.' It was just great to see everyone come together for this."

Matt couldn't decide what his favorite part of the event was, but he spent a lot of time on the dance floor and the karaoke room. He's especially adept at break dancing. Eventually, everyone was crowned Prom King and Queen (Matt gave his hat to a friend for safe keeping at this point).



“

"These kids and these adults, they always seem to be pushed to the back, but this night was their night. People were cheering and hooping and hollering for them as they came down the red carpet and the guests were just beaming...He's had some extra issues, but Matt's brought so much joy and love to us and the congregation. He's a greeter and he'll walk right up to strangers and say 'Hi, I'm Matt.' It was just great to see everyone come together for this."

—Richard Aufdenberg, father of Matt

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Night to Shine Lights Up Across Missouri District

A few other Missouri LCMS ministries hosted Night to Shine. Stephanie Silbey, who worked on the event for Messiah Lutheran Church in Weldon Spring, fielded calls on a daily basis from interested volunteers. In the end, they worked with over 300 volunteers to host the event for 134 guests. Many volunteers want to participate in the event again next year.

Concordia Lutheran Church in Kirkwood had a similar experience. Like other organizers, Jessica Crawford initially found the number of required volunteers daunting. However, enthusiasm for the event overtook such doubts. She explains, "The Special Needs Ministry at Concordia has been serving children, youth and adults with special needs for over two years now. Hosting Night to Shine seemed like the perfect opportunity to not only celebrate the individuals we are currently serving but also as a way to reach further into the community to let them know not only that God loves them, but that Concordia has a place for them."



Lauren Ashley Photography

Calling Congregations

For Sole Pastors:

Appleton City, Trinity (Calling Seminary Candidate)
Brunswick, St. John (Calling Seminary Candidate)
Carrollton, Immanuel (Called Rev. John Gutz – Streator, IL - Declined)
Conway, Zion
Frohna, Concordia
Independence, St. Paul's (Called Rev. Andy Weden – Stevens Point, WI Declined)
Park Hills, Trinity
St. Clair, Holy Trinity
Sweet Springs, Immanuel (Calling Seminary Candidate)
Trenton, Immanuel
Warsaw, Faith (Calling Seminary Candidate)

For Senior Pastor:

Blue Springs, Timothy
Des Peres, St. Paul
Independence, Messiah (Called Rev. Bart Mueller – Concordia, MO as IIM – Accepted)
Weldon Spring, Messiah

For Associate or Assistant Pastor:

Concordia, St. Paul (Calling Seminary Candidate)
Jefferson City, Trinity (Calling Seminary Candidate)
O'Fallon, Holy Cross (Called Rev. Samuel Pitsch – Gretna, NE – Declined)
Perryville, Immanuel (Calling Seminary Candidate)
St. Charles, Immanuel

Served by Intentional Interim Pastor or Interim Pastor:

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. Peters – Eastpointe, MI (Declined)
Glenn, Micah (Grace Lutheran Chapel) to Trinity – Freistadt, WI (Declined); to Lutheran Hour Ministries – St. Louis, MO (Accepted)
Kapels, Calvin (St. Stephen – Liberty) to Our Savior – Kansas City, KS (Declined)
Kollbaum, Todd (LCMS National Missions – St. Louis) to Trinity – Madison, NE (Accepted)
McBurney, David (Abiding Savior – St. Louis) to Trinity – Bloomington, IL
Wolters, Luke (Grace – Wellsville) to St. Matthew – Warrens, WI (Declined)



Personnel Changes — Ordained

Transferred to Our District

Gledhill, Eric (MI) to Faith — Jefferson City 2/2/19
by L. Hagan
Resner, Matthew (SD) to Zion — Moberly 2/10/19
by L. Hagan

Transferred to Other Districts

Earl, Brian (Chai v' Shalom — St. Louis) to NE 2/11/19
Hauptmeier, Tyler (Candidate) to NEB 2/11/19
Matro, Lawrence (LCMS Office of International Mission —
St. Louis) to MI 2/25/19

Changes Within District

Albers, Steven (Emeritus) to Trinity — St. Louis 1/20/19
by J. Hatcher
Moser, Stephen (Candidate) to Redeemer — Springfield
2/10/19 by W. Marler
Candidate Status
Lail, Robert (Concordia Publishing House — St. Louis)
1/12/19

Deceased

Meyer, William (Emeritus) 2/1/19
Rogers, James (Emeritus) 2/16/19

Personnel Changes — Commissioned Ministers of Religion

Graduates Installed

Evans, David (M '14) to Bethlehem
— Raymore 2/3/19 by D. Reimnitz
Gerhardt, Matthew (M '12) to St. Paul's
— Des Peres 2/3/19 by G. Thomas

Transferred from Other Districts

Hinz, Rachel (MI) to Candidate 11/1/18
Wenger, Patricia (KS) to Emeritus 12/19/18
Wischmeyer, Donald (RM) to Emeritus 1/12/19

Reinstated

McKeage, Karla (Reinstated by COP 2/19) to Candidate

Changes Within District

Schmidt, Rebecca (Associate Director of School Ministry,
LCMS Office of National Mission — St. Louis) to Director
of School Ministry, LCMS Office of National Mission
— St. Louis 1/28/19 by H. Mueller

Candidate Status

Onnen, Kathrine (Immanuel — Higginsville) 1/8/19

Retired

Bargen, Christine (Candidate) 2/7/19
Engelking, Cynthia (Candidate) 1/26/19
Hodgson, Carol (Candidate) 1/21/19

Resigned/Removed from Roster

Falls, Brian (Candidate) 2/20/19

Transferred to Other Districts

Battle, Joe (Emeritus) to FG 1/17/19
Carnehl, Lisa (Candidate) to MNS 2/6/19
Kinsey, Melissa (Candidate) to SW 2/6/19
Utecht, Justina (Candidate) to NEB 1/28/19
Wachter, David (Emeritus) to RM 2/11/19



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Missouri District

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