

# The VOICE

September 2019



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

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*Hope and Recovery  
after Flooding  
in Orchard Farm*





## *From the President's Desk:* Misguided Expectations

Some church members communicate with some sense of disappointment that they are not having their expectations met by their respective congregations. From buildings and parking lots to music and programs, people often express their dissatisfaction at what they find at their congregation. Pastors are not professional enough and programs are not effective enough. They long for a church that is bigger or better in some way. What's ironic is that the world looked upon Jesus quite the same way.

Straw and swaddling clothes? Cross and thorns? From the very beginning, our Lord Jesus was not the kind of Savior that the people were expecting. Even after His resurrection, Jesus' own disciples asked if this was the time at which He was going to restore Israel. But Jesus came not to rule by power and might, but to sacrifice and serve. What kind of Savior should we expect? The Father sent His Son to be born in humility, to serve rather than be served and to die a sinner's death as the sacrifice for all the world. The King of kings and Lord of lords took on the servant's form and became obedient to death on the cross. The death of the promised Messiah was not what was expected.

Neither did they expect a resurrection. On that first Easter, the disciples all should have been there waiting in expectation to find Jesus alive as He had said. But they did not expect one who had died would rise again. But God the Father raised Him from the dead and exalted Him as He would ascend to the Father's right hand. The problem was not with the expected Messiah who came as a Suffering Servant, but people's misguided expectations.

Our gracious God still is hidden under the ordinary means of water and word, bread and wine. Like Solomon, we often wonder, "Will God indeed dwell on earth? (1 Kings 8:27). While many still expect God to come in power and might, He deigns to reveal Himself in the ordinary and lowly means of bath, table and word. No glitz and glamour! No bright shining glory! But God is still taking

### PRESIDENT'S PRAYER LIST:

- Please pray for our congregations in their work of equipping parents to teach the Christian faith to their children.
- Also, pray for our young people to not be conformed to the pattern of the world, but to live as disciples of Jesus.
- Please pray for the families of our church workers that God would strengthen the bonds between spouses and parents and children.



# Mission Advancement Snapshot

New to our budget this fiscal year is the Campus Ministry Network—a partnership of 16 LCMS campus ministry sites throughout Missouri. These sites are sharing ideas and

resources as they go about the task of making disciples of Jesus Christ on college campuses and beyond. Thank you for walking with these ministries with your prayers and gifts.

on the servant's form as He comes to forgive our sins and strengthen our faith. While the world may be blind to the significance of what happens in our congregations each time we gather for worship and we may even need to be reminded, the Almighty God of heaven and earth dwells on the earth whether it is for thousands or two or three.

What should we expect from our congregation each week? The answer is Jesus, as He serves us through His Word and His bodily presence in the Lord's Supper. Jesus deigns to dwell among us as Immanuel, serving us by covering over our sins and restoring our relationship with the Father.

All of us have at times had misguided expectations of God and His Church. It is good for us to be reminded that God never sought to meet people's expectations. But congregations should never use the Gospel as an excuse for the Church to neglect its role of preaching, teaching and reaching. Faithful proclamation in the Sunday Divine Service is not the only way in which God serves His people through congregations. The Church's role in equipping parents, caring for children and youth and strengthening families are some of the ways that God serves His saints through His Word. The expectation of families for congregations to assist them is not a misguided expectation, but an understanding of how God still serves through His Word both preached in the congregation, but also taught in the home. May God help us to understand and expect our congregations to be places where Christ is present to serve us through His Word and Sacrament!

Fraternally in Christ,



President Lee Hagan



## Pastors' Wives Retreat

Nov. 2

Eastern MO

Nov. 9

Western MO

Join us for a time of:

- Fellowship with Other Ministry Wives
- Light Breakfast and Lunch
- Fun Activities
- Bible Study and Prayer
- Service Opportunity

Babysitting will be provided upon request.

The cost to register is \$20. Please contact Kathy Chinberg at [dwchinberg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dwchinberg@sbcglobal.net) for more detailed instructions.

# Hope and Recovery after Flooding in Orchard Farm

In Orchard Farm and surrounding communities, evidence of this spring's monster flood is both everywhere and nowhere. The water line is still visible on many homes, some of which bear orange stickers that designate the insurance company's order to raise the home. However, in other spots, the impact of the recent devastation hides under vibrant leaves of beans, which have taken over fields recently covered by water.

Steve Schade (below right) is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church who lost his home in March 2019. He took Missouri District staff on a tour of the flooded areas last Spring.



The problem with the field of beans is that these plants are not thriving. For starters, they should be much taller. After a flood, farmers have to choose from a variety of bad choices. There's approximately a ten percent chance of yielding profit from "late beans," as farmers call them. The best time of year to plant these beans is around April. Most of the beans growing in and around Orchard Farm were planted in July, when the flood water relinquished the soil. To the naked eye, the fields look great. But the reality is that the hardships created by recent flooding are still flowing through the community, sometimes invisible to the naked eye. Other signs of the ongoing recovery are obvious, like the closed post office and library in the nearby town of Portage des Sioux.

Another member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Steve Schade, has been displaced from his home since March 15, 2019. He had water in the second story of his house, which was adjacent to a duck hunting club he helped manage. After the water receded, they were unable to plant the corn that would typically attract the ducks. Instead, they hired some aerial planters to drop Japanese millet, which they would be able to grow in the truncated time until duck season.

Mr. Schade has been fortunate to find a new property, one still close to the duck club. He has had a positive experience decorating it with rustic furniture and other pieces that reflect his love of nature and hunting. Despite the bright spots, there is still a long road ahead to recovery. For people with coverage, insurance companies are notoriously difficult to work with and even if people have the means to rebuild their homes or find a new one, some will have to move away due to the distinct housing shortage created by the flood. He knows many people who have not yet found a new home, as well as many farmers who will be dealing with the aftermath of this flood for years to come.



The Missouri District has been collecting and distributing donations to victims of this historic flooding. In Orchard Farm, Trinity Lutheran Church used district-allocated dollars to rent storage pods and fill them with cleaning supplies. With the assistance of the local media, they let the community know that the supplies were available to anyone in need, free of charge. Upon arrival, families had the option to request a visit from the pastor, which a handful of people requested.

Ms. Wehmeyer said that people were sometimes uncomfortable needing to ask for help. But in the aftermath of a flood, the supplies they were offering included bleach, mold killing chemicals, plastic spray cans, squeegees, paper towels, and were an absolute necessity. She offered them insights from a sermon she heard back in the great flood of '93. She told them, "Sometimes you have to be the one asking for help, so other people can experience the joy of giving." These words echoing from a thousand Sundays ago added additional comfort to this ministry.



Almost exactly six months after being displaced from his home, Steve Schade was able to purchase a new home, one not far from the duck club he manages. "I don't know why God is so good to me," he says.

The Missouri District is continuing to accept and allocate donations to assist people in what will surely be a long-term effort to rebuild homes and livelihoods. In Mound City, people are still waiting for waters to recede and are at risk for further flooding.

To donate, contact Leah Sieveking at (314) 590-6211 or [leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org](mailto:leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org). You can also visit [mo.lcms.org/donate/](http://mo.lcms.org/donate/).

# The Wehmeyer Family Reflects on a Hard Year



Cindy Wehmeyer is the secretary of Trinity Lutheran Church in Orchard Farm as well as the wife and mom of a proud farming family. Back when the water was blocking roads, she had to commute to work by boat. Cindy, her husband Greg and their daughter, Gwen, are the human faces of the stark reality the flood left behind. Gwen said recently:

"Sometimes, I catch myself going back to flood pictures. In a very odd way, I find myself reminiscing on what I really experienced: the rotten-gut wrenching stomach aches at various sites, the heart ache in my parents' eyes, the tears when Mom cried, the trips to Lowe's with Dad to get lumber for blocking things up, while remembering what we needed, because he was too exhausted to function, multiple trips with a truck and trailer to haul the house and sheds out, while placing our life and decisions on one 24-hour river forecast, talks with Dad how the rivers ran and functioned, the boat rides over roads we drove over the day before, absence from graduate school for a month with minimal care simply because my family and our farm come first, and a very tear filled airplane ride back to Oklahoma.

Today, I called Dad to see what he was doing. He was combining what little corn we had this year, while expressing his eagerness to 'get it out and just be done with this year.'

Farmers like dad, just can't give up when the going gets tough. There are still insurance claims to deal with, sheds to put back in order, to somehow find the house again, to harvest, and clean up from what Mother Nature previously placed in our laps.

Sometimes, my heart gets incredibly heavy when I look back and see what actually happened, but it truly shows the resilience and passion farmers have and give every day. It takes a special kind of stubborn and love to do what they do. I'm so very blessed to be a Farmer's daughter."

—Gwen Wehmeyer



# Identical Twins, Unique Missouri District Calls



Revs. Jesse and Joseph Schlie grew up in Fort Wayne, IN, where their dad was a pastor. Many people watching the Call Day service at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne would remember them as the identical twins called to the Missouri District.

Personality-wise, it seems like the brothers were as similar as their physical appearance. Both brothers think people can tell them apart after they get to know them a little bit, though it's usually hard in the beginning.

Throughout their childhood, the brothers got along well. Not all twins are as compatible as they are, as both Joe and Jesse describe a strong bond. The twins attended Indiana University and then Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne together. When it comes to having a twin, Joe says, "It's having a lifelong best friend. We didn't have to do the college roommate lottery." Jesse says, "It's like a having a mirror connected to your brain. There's no worse or more accurate critic than a twin who knows the thing you need to hear sometimes."

When the twins were in college, they both had similar journeys to feeling God's call to seminary. Joe and Jesse both were active in campus ministry and dealing with the death of their mother. She died from a form of cancer after another more aggressive form of cancer went into remission. Joe believes facing the death of a parent definitely has helped him as a new pastor. He says, "It gives you empathy, because you've experienced something similar to a lot of people, but you have to be careful, because people all deal with grief differently. It did definitely help me deal with intense situations, because I've been there, and you don't want to be putting your foot in your mouth as a pastor."

When Jesse felt called to go into ministry, it was also around the time of his mother's cancer diagnosis and death. He changed his major from education to history to better reflect his interests and goals. He spent his second year

of seminary at the sister school in Cambridge, England, Westfield House. It was the first time the brothers had lived apart, followed by vicarages on opposite sides of the country. Jesse went to Tucson, Arizona and Joe went to Philadelphia.

Even though they were in vastly different places, the brothers remained on a similar trajectory in that they both had the chance to experience college ministry from the other side on their vicarage. Since Joe and Jesse credit their campus ministry experience with having a large impact on their decisions to become pastors. Each brother had a different layer to his vicarage, in addition to campus ministry. Joe met weekly with a homeless man going over the small catechism and Jesse split his time between campus ministry at University of Arizona and a smaller congregation in a nearby town.

Jesse and Joe both enjoyed all four years of seminary, even the two they lived far apart. When Jesse was in England, it wasn't really possible to keep in touch much due to the different time zones. So when it came time for Call Day, the brothers were curious, but not necessarily in suspense about whether they'd be called to congregations close to each other.

They'd both done vicarages in the English district, but also had both interviewed primarily in the Missouri District. So, it wasn't exactly a surprise when they both got called here. In fact, Joe had told his wife, Kristen, "We may end up going to Missouri." Joe was called to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Perryville and Jesse was called to Trinity Lutheran Church in Jefferson City.

Call Day was an eventful one for both brothers, who each had a new daughter. Unfortunately, Jesse spent the afternoon of Call Day debating if he should even attend the service. His baby girl, Nora, had alarmingly high levels of jaundice and had been admitted into the emergency room, with the medical team considering a blood transfusion. Once the team decided the transfusion was unnecessary and Nora's levels started to normalize, Joe decided to attend the Call Day service.

He says, "It was almost a good object lesson about ministry. I was supposed to be thinking about what it means to become a pastor and leading the body of Christ, but honestly, I spent a lot of time thinking about my family."

Jesse's introduction to Missouri was a little tumultuous, with a tornado hitting the hotel he was staying in with his wife and infant. Recalling the tornado, Jesse laughs and says, "I told my congregation that God speaks to us through the Word and Sacraments. Don't read into this." Things have settled down, and Jesse and his wife, Keegan, happily live in a house with a finished basement. The twins now live three hours apart and take turns visiting each other with their families.





# Comfort Dog Handlers Draw People into Conversation and Prayer

There's a rising trend of using Comfort Dogs to help people deal with stress and trauma. The benefits of petting a dog on blood pressure and soothing a troubled mind are well documented. What separates the Lutheran Charities K-9 Comfort Dog Ministries from other programs is that in addition to a highly trained golden retriever, these comfort dogs come with handlers who receives specialized training to share the love of Christ with people in need.

In the Missouri District, several congregations are working with comfort dog ministries to build relationships and share Christ's love with people in their toughest moments. Ruth Agne and Sharon Shearman of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Des Peres, Deaconess Ruth McDonnell and Sue Nielsen of Timothy Lutheran Church in St. Louis and Dennis and Julie Lueck Immanuel Lutheran Church in St. Charles are all active handlers of comfort dog ministries.



Noah, the comfort dog for Timothy Lutheran Church, came to St. Louis because Sue Nielsen saw a special on television about comfort dogs after the tragedy at Sandy Hook. Ruth McDonnell, a deaconess, arranged for the congregation to meet with another LCMS deaconess who was working with a comfort dog ministry. Within a year, the congregation had raised enough money to step into this unique ministry.

Noah was a little over a year old when he graduated from his training,

which included more than 2,000 hours. Named after the Old Testament patriarch, Noah carries cards in his work vest that contain scripture on the back of his business card. Kids are especially enthusiastic about collecting the business cards of the different comfort dogs. All the comfort dogs have biblical names and a corresponding bible verse. The vests say, "Pet Me," because many service dogs should not be touched while on duty.

Comfort dogs are different than other service dogs (such as a seeing eye dog), because one of their primary jobs is to attract attention and draw people into conversations with their handlers, who can then pray with people, talk about their congregations and offer the comfort of the Gospel that is appropriate for that situation. Mr. and Mrs. Lueck have taken Zillah the Comfort Dog to nursing homes, libraries, adult day cares, hospitals, funerals, and many other places. Most of these appointments are publicized by the inviting organization.

Lutheran Church Charities will deploy comfort dogs to tragedies, such as shootings. One of the dogs, Tabby, went to visit the memorials that went up after the shooting in Parkland, Florida. Mrs. Shearman said one teen who had been in the school the day of the shooting had never shared her experience with anyone, but she felt able to discuss it in with Tabby.

Sometimes, the dogs are able to jumpstart conversations on the way to the intended site. One the way to the memorial, Mrs. Shearman saw the dog pulled towards a woman, who said "God must have sent her here." One of this woman's close relatives had just been admitted to the hospital and she needed prayer. All of the handlers agree that there are times when the dog can sense something people can't, and that trusting the dog's instincts have led to many encounters with people receptive to support in that moment.

Mrs. Nielsen often works with an adult daycare center with Noah. She received a call one day asking if she could bring Noah, because they'd had an emergency response situation and their clients were dealing with the trauma from that experience.

Because the reasons people gravitate towards the dog's calming presence, which gives the handler the opportunity to assess the best way to serve that person.

Deaconess McConnell says, "As people are petting the dog, you can pray with them, you can let them know you're there to share the love of Christ."

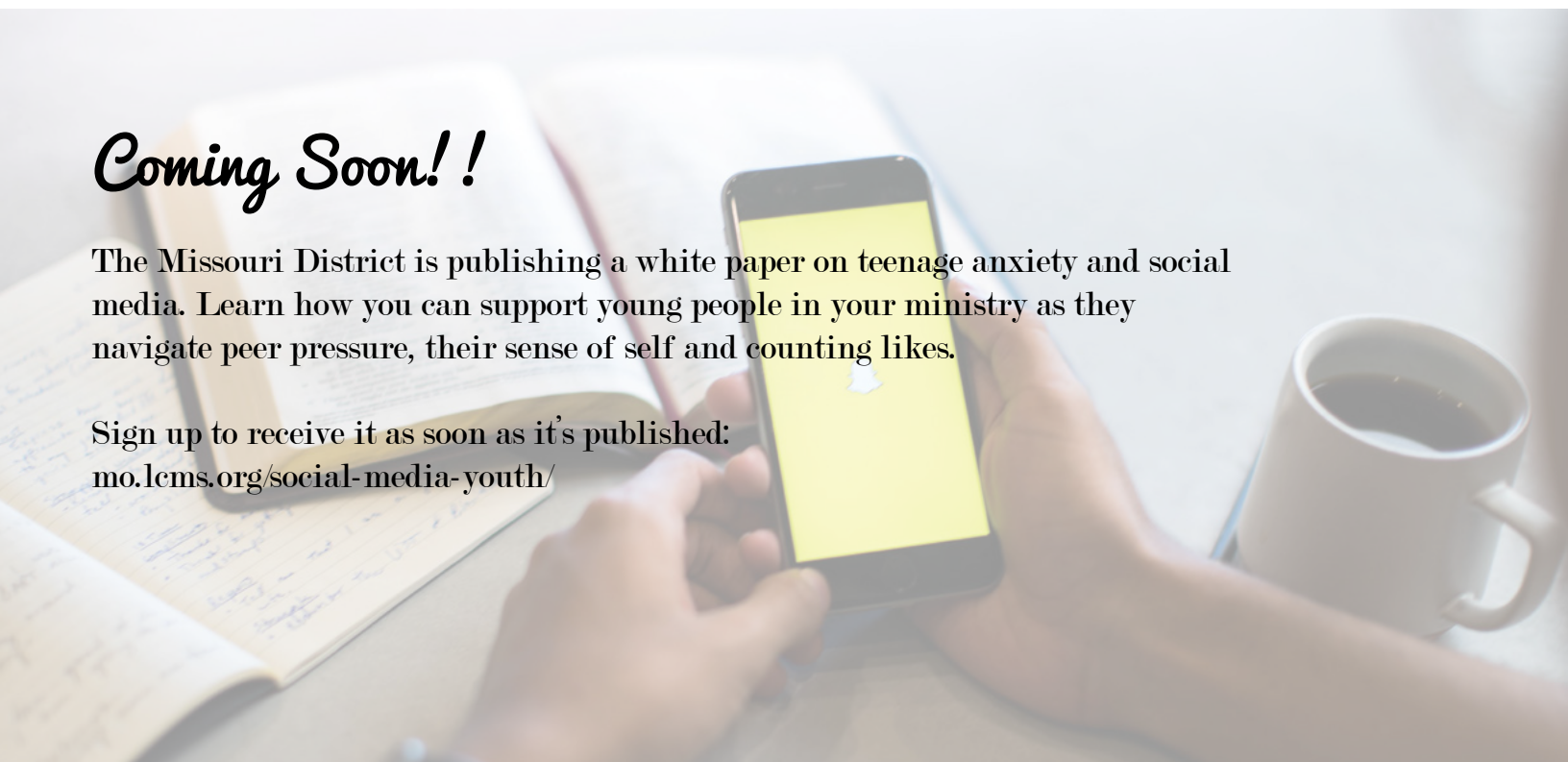


## Coming Soon!!

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/](http://mo.lcms.org/social-media-youth/)



# Engaging Communities

## Missouri District Partners with LUMA to Hire Community Outreach Coordinator to Help Guide Congregations in Outreach

As an LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO), Lutheran Urban Mission Agency (LUMA) works alongside pastors, lay leaders and congregations in urban and multicultural outreach. Partnering with both the Missouri and Kansas Districts means they can work across the entire Kansas City Metro area and beyond.



As part of our mission work, the Missouri District has assisted LUMA with the salary of Kelsha James, a Community Outreach Coordinator. With a background in psychology and outreach, Ms. James is as skilled in building local relationships as she is in advocating for the people she serves.

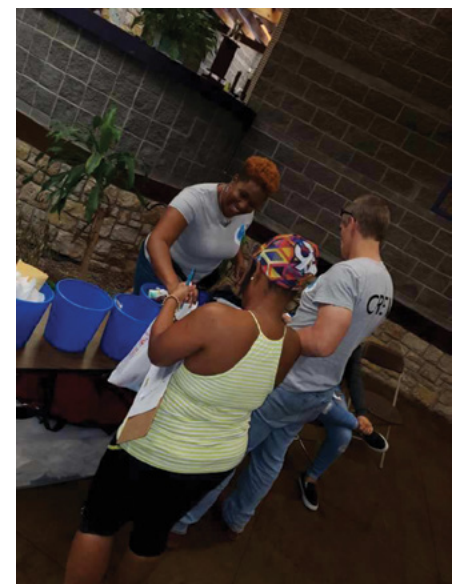
Ms. James started in June and has already made a big difference. There was a group of 128 Congolese immigrants, who were already Lutheran but interested in joining the LCMS. They needed a place to worship and they also needed transportation. Kelsha found a 12 passenger van in great condition and wasn't afraid to get it for the lowest price she could. LUMA's Chairman of the Board, Vic Cook, said he would have had a hard time opening negotiations with such a low number. Kelsha's response was clear and emphatic. "I didn't care," she says, "They needed it."

The idea of need is one that is central to community outreach. In addition to an extensive background in this type of work, Kelsha grew up in the neighborhood, which means people will feel more at home as they talk to her and share what would really help them. It takes the guesswork out of ministry. What she learns from people in the community will help LUMA inform the work of congregations and pastors, as well as LUMA's own ministry. In today's world, people need to know that churches are providing something of value, because the church no longer has automatic influence. It must be earned. The team is communicating with members and working to set up a weekly Bible study, in addition to the food pantry they run.

Sharing Christ's love with their homeless neighbors has also been a large emphasis. Kelsha has conducted interviews for local media about LUMA's work providing hygiene supplies for people. They also partnered with Project Homeless Connect and Clean Slate to connect people with services such as, medical and immunizations, vision screenings and glasses, dental services, identification services, family and child service providers, counselors, family portraits, haircuts, showers and more.



In addition, the LUMA team helped distribute backpacks to 105 kids in the neighborhood of Immanuel Lutheran Church and are planning an event to give away school supplies after the Christmas break. They're branding this event a "restock," because most organizations only donate school supplies in the fall. LUMA's work is a long-term sustainable model that will strengthen the abilities of the ministries in the Missouri and Kansas Districts to meet people in urban areas where they are. Kelsha's relationships and outreach will help ensure that in proclaiming the Gospel, the dedicated church workers and lay leaders are taking an approach meaningful to their audience. To receive occasional updates about LUMA and this critical support, please follow the Missouri District on Facebook and sign up for our newsletters.



# Missouri District Hosts Churches Planting Churches Conference, Introduces New Paradigms



At first, church planting can feel daunting for pastors, elders and lay leaders. Some people imagine expensive buildings, mission developers and intense volunteerism and it can feel overwhelming. So it might surprise you that nearly all of the 13 of the congregations who participated in our recent Churches Planting Churches workshop have less than 100 people in worship and four of them are served by vacancy pastors.

Each congregations had previously worked with District staff, circuit forums and Plus One coaches exploring opportunities to multiply missions over the past year. Churches Planting Churches brought together people from these churches and organized them into workgroups, who spent two days planning new ministries with 12 biblical principles of ministry multiplication.

Multiplication is a concept at the heart of the Missouri District philosophy of missions. Multiplication is healthy in people, organizations and congregations. Dr. Peter Meier, Executive Director for the Center for United States Missions, facilitated the process with these congregations. In an informal evening kickoff, Dr. Meier shared stories of small churches all over the LCMS who multiplied ministry.



Dr. Meier says, "It was wonderful to see how the participants integrated the concepts we taught into vision and planning for their target neighborhoods and groups. President Hagan's participation was most encouraging, and Pastor Geis' work in following up with the participant teams and leaders will lead to new faith communities in the Missouri District."

Duane Moudy, president of Faith Lutheran in Springfield who hosted the conference recalled, "I saw excitement in the churches. We need to hear the stories of multiplication and mission." He added, "the Biblical principles united and inspired ideas as we worked together." The experience gave him a new perspective for his church and their church plant in nearby Ozark, Missouri. He says, "I'm convinced we need to be more connected to church planting. I believe multiplication is the best way for churches to reach their communities."

One shared ministry involves congregations in Marshfield, Rader and Digger, with their attendees all working together in one learning cohort. Kathy McGovern from Rader recalled how this church grew by planting several churches from Springfield to Lebanon in the 19th century. She says, "our church isn't planting right now, but now we are working together with other churches to plant new ministries that would not have happened if it were not for this workshop." Over the course of the two day conference, the churches drafted a plan to engage public school districts throughout Webster County together.

The Churches Planting Churches participants formed eight learning cohorts and worked through a process together. The two-day event included training and gave participants the chance to apply the 12 biblical principles to their own context. The congregations involved were considering everything from revitalization plans, shared ministries to rural and small towns, outreach to schools and more. After working through the process with Rev. Bill Geis, Assistant to the President for Missions, and Missouri District President Lee Hagan, participants gave presentations to the entire group about their plans.

Upon returning home, each group will work with a coach from the Center for United States Mission, which like the conference itself, will be funded by the Missouri District. It's the goal of the Missouri District to offer this conference every August. To that end, the district is providing training for three pastors to be able to lead Churches Planting Churches in future years.



**If your congregation would like to know more about this process of multiplying ministry in congregations of every size, contact Rev. Bill Geis who prepared congregations for these learning cohorts. Reach out to him today at [bill.geis@mo.lcms.org](mailto:bill.geis@mo.lcms.org) or (314) 590-6205.**

# Junior High Youth Gathering



The Missouri District LCMS  
**LUTHERAN JUNIOR HIGH RETREAT**  
Camp Windermere, Lake of the Ozarks

LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM  
TABLE OF DUTIES  
CHRISTIAN VOCATION

SARAH SALZBERG  
Orange, California

BREAD OF STONE

BREAD OF STONE  
Sioux City, Iowa

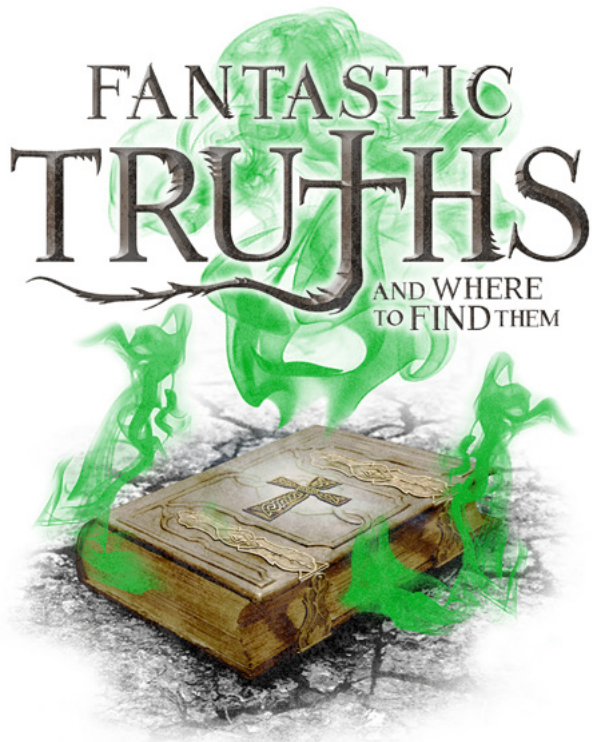
**PeaceRULES**  
COLOSSIANS 3:15

October 25-27, 2019  
March 27-29, 2020

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Learn more at [mo.lcms.org/event/junior-high-gathering](http://mo.lcms.org/event/junior-high-gathering)

# Senior High Youth Gathering



The 2019 Fall Senior High Gathering will take place Nov. 22 to 24 at Cross Pointe Retreat Center.

\$165 per person

Learn more at  
[mo.lcms.org/event/2019-fall-sr-high-youth-gathering](http://mo.lcms.org/event/2019-fall-sr-high-youth-gathering)

# Equip and Encourage: E2 Conference Schedule

All conferences are Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

November 2, 2019  
St. Matthew, Lee's  
Summit

January 25, 2020  
St. John, Arnold

February 15, 2020  
Calvary High  
School, Jefferson  
City

February 29, 2020  
Saxony Lutheran  
High School,  
Jackson

Go to [mo.lcms.org/event](http://mo.lcms.org/event) to learn more.

## Installation Photos



Rev. Benjamin Theiss Installation



Rev. Jonathan Meyer Installation

## Calling Congregations and Personnel Changes Now Available Online!

Go to [mo.lcms.org/personnel/](http://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](http://mo.lcms.org)

