

# The VOICE

March 2021

Missouri District Newsletter



**In This Issue:  
Church Worker Health and Resources**



# From the President's Desk

## Supporting God's People

The last year has been challenging for congregations, schools, and our church workers. At the same time, we continue to strive to faithfully teach the Word of God in our congregations, schools, and homes. This issue of the VOICE is focused on the care and support of church workers. I would like to share with you about District initiatives that seek to support our servants, congregations, and schools.

**PULPIT SUPPLY-** The Missouri District, with the assistance of retired pastors, is providing pulpit supply for pastors who are in need of a respite during the Easter season beginning on April 11. More than 15 pastors were able to be blessed by this initiative during the Epiphany season. For more information, check out the District website <https://mo.lcms.org/pulpitsupply/>. We pray that this will be a blessing to your congregation and pastor.

**TELL THE NEXT GENERATION CONFERENCE-** The Missouri District is hosting another Tell the Next Generation on Saturday, March 13 online from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon. The conference will focus on equipping families in faith formation in the home (especially for primary grade children and adolescents). The conference being online enables us to draw family ministry leaders from across the Synod in supporting our congregations and schools in Missouri District. Like our 2019 Conference, there will be two plenary presentations, Bible study, and break out presentations. The conference will be held on March 13 at no cost to the participants. Elders, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, Pastors, Directors of Christian Education, and anyone who is concerned about retaining our youth and families should attend. To register, go to <https://modistrictlcms.regfox.com/2021-tell-the-next-generation-conference>

**DISTRICT YOUTH GATHERING-** The Missouri District is hosting a combined Junior and Senior High Youth Gathering online on April 7-10 from 7-10 p.m. The gathering theme is "Take Heart" and will include Rev. Dr. Gerard Bolling as the speaker and once again feature Bread of Stone providing music. Though we may be scattered across the state, it will be a great opportunity for us to encourage one another to "Take Heart!" Check out the District website for more information and to register your group <https://mo.lcms.org/youth-ministry/>.

**SHINE! DISTRICT SERVANT EVENT-** We are also overjoyed to host *SHINE!*, the first Missouri District Servant coming up April 16-25. Each congregation, school or campus ministry across Missouri are encouraged to consider hosting a servant event in their community as together we serve our neighbors across the state. Groups of any size can participate, but need to register by March 15 to get their free *SHINE!* t-shirts. The District website has more information about *SHINE!* and the link to register <https://mo.lcms.org/shine/>.

Please join us in praying for our church workers, congregations, schools and these upcoming events. May God bless all the ways in which we share Christ's love in word and deed across Missouri.

Fraternally in Christ,



President Lee Hagan



# Supporting Church Worker & Congregational Health

*"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases"*

Psalm 103:2-3

Being a church worker is a calling. There are many beautiful and wonderful aspects to serving as the Lord's hands and feet. But this calling also brings with it many challenges. And while serving during circumstances such as COVID-19 can most certainly heighten these challenges, struggles in our congregations occur at any time. This is where my role at the District Office can help.

I support and encourage congregations during times of struggle using Bible-based reconciliation. This often presents itself as supporting a specific ministry and/or staff members through educational workshops or facilitating training events for elders. And while I sometimes know about when a church may need assistance, such as when I help churches during a call process, often I am unaware of struggles until your congregation contacts me. So, please—contact me whenever your church encounters conflict. Together we can proactively work towards adding systemic support! All church workers and elected church leaders can contact me directly for District support. I'm just one phone call away.

Church leaders serve a unique position of maintaining the proclamation of Christ crucified in an ever-changing world. I encourage you to steward current unique issues by prayerful confidence in Jesus. God hears your prayers. God has called me to support you and your congregation—to help you lean into the challenges.

The next few pages reflect some of the resources I most commonly use with congregations. They are Bible-based – for who can do anything apart from the Word? (*John 15:5*) And, whether navigating difficult circumstances within a congregation or helping support church workers, they serve to build spiritual strength.

God's blessings as you explore these options. And feel free to contact me with any questions or assistance needs.



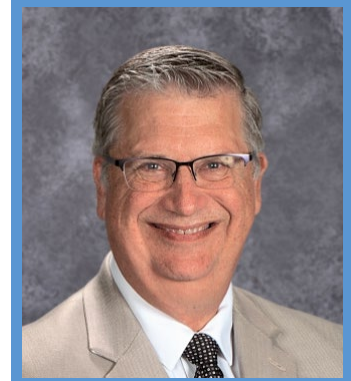
**Rev. Marty Hasz, PLPC**

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# BUILT ON THE ROCK

One of the strongest resources regarding conflict that the Missouri District offers to church workers and congregations is *Built on the Rock*. Authored by Ted Kober, who has vast experience with reconciliation through a Christ-focused center, *Built on the Rock* takes congregations and congregational leaders through conflict resolution. The book, however, serves as more than just a guide for navigating conflict, but also helps congregations provide long term reconciliation. It's divided into four parts: the foundation for health, practical applications for improving spiritual health, restoring health and nurturing spiritual wellness, and healthy spiritual leadership. There are also discussion questions to accompany each chapter.



Rev. Stephen Moser

Rev. Steven Moser, a pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Springfield, and his elders are using this book to help their church. Moser notes that even though their congregation is on a healthy footing, they are in a bit of a transition since their senior pastor accepted a call. Moser comments that he first heard *Built on the Rock* at a District E2 conference where President Hagan referenced the material. Easy to incorporate into existing studies, Moser notes that their elders take 30-45 minutes before their regular meetings to read a chapter. Down the road, they are looking to share a condensed version of the resource with the congregation. "I would highly recommend it," remarks Moser, "We're reading our next chapters at the beginning of elder meetings and our response with all the elders has been extremely enthusiastic."

Rev. Steven Theiss, currently serving as a vacancy pastor, also used *Built on the Rock* to help congregation members to find constructive ways to talk to each other. "[*Built on the Rock*] was first referred to us by Marty Hasz," explains Theiss, "We worked with the board of elders... and we used it for a church leadership study and review with the focus of who we are as God's people and how we're called to live with each other based on the Word of God...The Holy Spirit is working through the Word." Theiss encourages, "This should be something that every seminarian should be exposed to, that every pastor should bring with him... for addressing Satan's attacks on the church."

To purchase *Built on the Rock* for your congregation, visit [Ambassadors of Reconciliation](#).



**"*Built on the Rock* is a LCMS theologically faithful resource that helps congregations clarify leadership issues such as proper order, elder training, spiritual health assessment and policies and processes for a Biblically-based congregation. Ted Kober is a rare gem for our LCMS leadership. God has equipped him as a provision promoting the peace of Christ among our Synod's lay and professional church worker leadership. He has written a series of accessible and practical Gospel-driven tools unlike any other."**

**Rev. Marty Hasz, PLPC**



# "TAKE HEART!" DOXOLOGY RETREAT A RESPITE RETREAT FOR PASTORS

DOXOLOGY: The Lutheran Center for Spiritual Care and Counsel was "delighted to plan the "Take Heart!" Respite Retreats initiative at the suggestion of the Office of National Mission," said Beverly K. Yahnke, Ph.D., DOXOLOGY's Executive Director for Christian Counsel.

"A respite curriculum was created to refresh pastors in the Word and to invite them to step away for a few days into a quiet retreat setting for worship and study. Pastors participate in advanced training regarding care of the soul and are invited to 'take heed unto' themselves, their family and their well-being," Dr. Yahnke explained. Pastors are "also given an opportunity to examine resilience strategies which can equip them to respond in healthy ways to ongoing challenges."



*Dr. Beverly K. Yahnke*  
DOXOLOGY

"The retreats, sponsored fully by the Office of National Mission, allow pastors to step away for three days and two nights," said Yahnke. "ONM has funded 15 respite retreats for this calendar year. The only cost to the pastor/parish is the cost of transportation. The early retreats have filled up within days of posting registration availability. Additional retreats are being added for the weeks after Easter and into early summer." Six respite retreats have been held thus far.

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive and heartening," Yahnke notes. "Pastors report that the retreats have been precisely what they needed. ...They are returning to their families and their parish refreshed and equipped once again to serve... When DOXOLOGY asks pastors what they would tell a friend in ministry, the answer is always, "Go!" Sometimes the answer is, "Go NOW!" The pastors who attend are young and old, newly ordained, and seasoned, faithful men. Each retreat seems to feature an equal number of grads from each of our seminaries."



*Rev. Dr. Tyler Arnold*  
Christ Lutheran

Rev. Dr. Tyler Arnold, pastor at Christ Lutheran Church (Platte Woods), serves as a "Take Heart!" retreat chaplain (including leading prayer services, providing spiritual care in conversation or in confession absolution). "These retreats have been a real delight for pastors," Rev. Dr. Arnold said. "It's an opportunity to practice self-awareness of being receivers... That has been beneficial and encouraging."

Pastor David C. Fleming, Executive Director for Spiritual Care, DOXOLOGY notes, "Pastors have found comfort, wisdom, and encouragement in, what Luther called, 'the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren.' At meals, breaks, and receptions the men are engaged in lively conversation about the presentations, the sermons, and how these apply to their particular situations."



*Rev. David Fleming*  
DOXOLOGY

For additional information and to register, go to:

<https://www.doxology.us/respire-retreats-for-pastors-take-heart/>

# Reclaiming the Joy of Ministry



Rev. Dr. Darrell  
Zimmerman

Rev. Dr. Darrell Zimmerman, longtime pastor and Grace Place Wellness Ministries' Executive Director and CEO, has authored the new book *Reclaiming the Joy of Ministry*. Grounded in scripture and following the story of the prophet Elijah, *Reclaiming the Joy of Ministry* is a practical guide for developing skills vital to a successful life in ministry, including self-care, balance, healthy relationships, and spiritual well-being.

Drawing upon his 20 years of experience developing retreat experiences for Lutheran church workers (including couples retreats and congregational retreats for both church members and staff), Rev. Dr. Zimmerman's favorite adage is the "airplane oxygen mask speech"—that church workers must tend to their own wellness needs before they can provide care for others. Top priorities should include vocational, physical, and financial health.

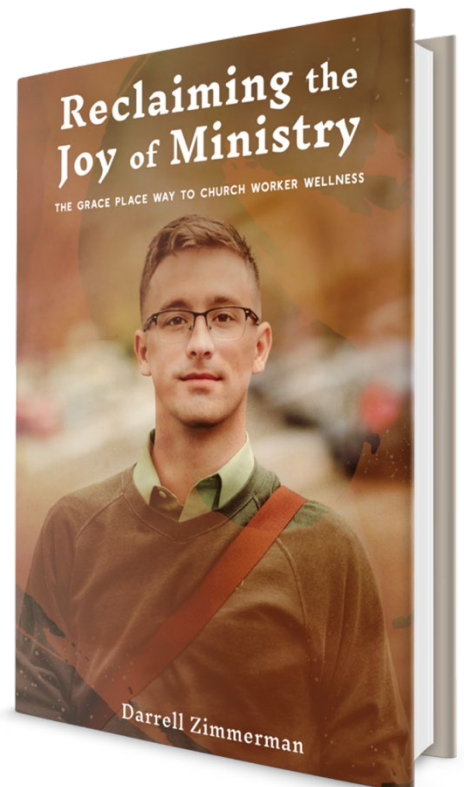
The first chapter of the book (lesson one of ten) is entitled "Ministry is Great, But Hard," and is typically an early lesson for church workers. "People depend upon their pastor to be at their best during a crisis when you need them," said Rev. Dr. Zimmerman. "You have to take care of your spiritual and physical life and your well-being so that when the Lord calls, you can get up and go."

Rev. Dr. Zimmerman stresses to church workers that they do not have to present themselves as perfect in every way. "Humans make the best pastors. We all depend on the grace of the Lord. ... to share the gifts of God, you have to be a receiver of gifts yourself."

Regarding the book's scriptural foundation, Rev. Dr. Zimmerman explains, "Elijah is a biblical example of a church worker who lost the joy of ministry. He went on a mountaintop retreat and the Lord came and ministered to him... The famous story of Elijah collapsing serves as a model for us – he became frustrated and discouraged and he was renewed – that's the model that we follow in the book."

Rev. Marty Hasz, PLPC, Assistant to the President for Church Worker and Congregational Health (Missouri District LCMS) added, "Rev. Zimmerman's book ... contains a series of best practices founded on our one trustworthy resource, the Word of God. In my counseling research I learned that joy is the single emotion that prepares humans to venture closer towards one another... Darrell's Gospel-centered encouraging writing would be great for a Bible study, book discussion group, among church leaders, elders, staff or for individuals. The Missouri District has purchased a copy for each Circuit Visitor."

Purchasing *Reclaiming the Joy of Ministry* directly from Grace Place's website (<https://graceplacewellness.org/book/>) saves readers 25%, verses purchasing off Amazon. An e-book is also available on Kindle.



# TELL THE NEXT GENERATION

*A free online conference March 13, 8:30AM–12PM*

The Missouri District is hosting the TELL THE NEXT GENERATION conference on Saturday, March 13 online from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon. The conference will focus on equipping families in faith formation in the home (especially for primary grade children and adolescents). Since the conference is virtual, family ministry leaders from all across Missouri and the Synod are able to lead the plenary presentations, Bible study, and break out presentations.

Topics include sexual identity, raising adolescents, maintaining a Christian worldview, Youth Ministry practices, involving parents in confirmation, and handling fraud.

Open for all to attend – families, church workers, and all who are concerned about retaining our youth and families.

There is no cost to participate, but to receive the links for conference access, register at <https://mo.lcms.org/ttng>



April will be a very bright month in the Show Me State!

The Missouri District is pleased to announce the very first statewide servant event, happening April 16-25, 2021. Based on Matthew 5:16, the initiative is called *SHINE!* and encourages participants to serve others so that God may be glorified.

The concept is simple: All churches, schools, ministries, RSOs, etc. throughout Missouri are welcome to register on the District's website. Groups are then free to assess the needs of their community and find a project that works for both the size

and skillset of their group. Teams may safely work side-by-side or complete tasks as individuals (e.g., A group commits to writing letters to troops, but members do so from their homes to limit exposure to others.)

Anytime between April 16 and April 25, teams can then serve for an hour, two...or more!

To add to the brightness of the initiative, the Missouri District is blessed to work with generous sponsors to provide participants with an official *SHINE!* t-shirt to wear as they serve.

To get things started for your group, head to <https://mo.lcms.org/shine>



# UPCOMING MISSOURI DISTRICT EVENTS



## Tell the Next Generation

March 13, 2021 Virtual Conference

HAPPENING THIS SATURDAY! Not too late to participate in this free, virtual conference. Simply register to access the meeting links: [mo.lcms.org/ttng](https://mo.lcms.org/ttng) (See page 7 for more details about this great event!)



## Meet the Missionaries

March 23, 7PM Virtual Series

Our "Meet the Missionaries" virtual gatherings are going strong in 2021! Join us on March 23 for a Campus Ministry Spotlight and on April 13 to hear about Church Planting Through Lutheran Schools. Also hear about how to be involved through prayer and gifts. Visit: <https://mo.lcms.org/missionaries> for details and to watch past videos.



## LERT Training

March 20, 2021 Lake Ozark

Do you have a desire to help with disaster response? Did you know that to help in an official capacity, you need to be LERT trained? Join leaders at Christ the King in Lake Ozark 9:30AM-3PM. Contact [pastorschultz@att.net](mailto:pastorschultz@att.net) to register for this event.



## TAKE HEART Youth Event

April 10, 2021 7PM-10PM

Join in this special Youth Gathering from wherever you are in Missouri! Live emcees will lead speaker sessions with Rev. Dr. Gerard Bolling, reflection discussions, music from Bread of Stone, and live Q&A sessions. You can watch from your home or plan a party! Registration is required, but there is no cost to participate. <https://mo.lcms.org/youth-ministry/>



## SHINE! Servant Event

April 16-25, 2021

While your group can register at any time to participate in *SHINE!*, the deadline to get t-shirts is MARCH 15! (Check out page 7 for more details.) Register online: <https://mo.lcms.org/shine>



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD