

The VOICE

October 2021

Missouri District Newsletter



In This Issue: **Older Adult Ministry**

***Rev. Dr. Al & Carol Schmidt attending
the Lutheran Older Adult Retreat in IL***



From the President's Desk

Service to **AND BY** Older Adults

The Scriptures are full of examples of God using unlikely people for His purposes. Abram was seventy-five when the Lord called him to leave his country and settle in Canaan, while Samuel was just a young boy when the Lord called him to be a prophet. In other words, God does not limit Himself by age when it comes to what He can accomplish through the gifts and service of His holy people.

At my recent class reunion, a pastor from Florida said that it is difficult to involve those who have retired and move down to their community because their response is "I have already done my time." However, there is no such thing as "doing our time" for God. St. Paul calls Christians to offer their bodies as living sacrifices as this is part of our spiritual worship. That does not mean that becoming a Sunday School teacher is a "life sentence," but it means that throughout our days we live out our vocations as children of God by serving Christ and His Church with the gifts that we have received from God. Our service may change over time, but not the One who we serve. I often think of a Lutheran school teacher, who in retirement shifted her service from children to older adults, but never stopped her serving.

Our congregations are full of older adults with gifts and talents that they joyfully share in service each and every day. My prayer is that our congregations would be what St. Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." We hope that our congregations are truly functioning as the Body of Christ and each part is doing its work for Christ's sake.

This issue of The VOICE focuses on older adults, but it should not be seen as only the Church's service to older adults, but also how older adults are busy serving the Church, their communities and their Savior. Sometimes we acknowledge that our congregations have large numbers of older adults almost apologetically. The reality is that the older adults of our congregations are blessings from God. We know pray that God would use older adults to mentor and build up the younger generations to follow in their example of faith and serve with joy in Christ's Church.

Fraternally in Christ,

R. Lee Hagan

President Lee Hagan



Lutheran Senior Services

For many families, caring for aging loved ones has become part of daily life. Lutheran Senior Services (LSS) has locations in the greater St. Louis area, Central Missouri (Columbia and Jefferson City), and Central Illinois Glen Carbon, Peoria, and Springfield areas. In addition to highly rated facilities, one of the biggest blessings of LSS is the spiritual care they provide.

"The Scriptures urge us to care for the widows and the elders among us, not only for the sake of their livelihood and protection, but also because our elders are often the source of wisdom and blessing for our communities" says Rev. Dr. Travis Scholl who serves as LSS's Chief Missions Officer. "These ministries ensure that older adults continue to live life to the fullest, especially within a society that sometimes does not value their life experience as much as we do."

There are chaplains at every LSS community offering a wide variety of spiritual support including divine services, Bible studies, and more. They also use pastors and deaconesses to assist in serving residents.

LSS offers a wide variety of services to senior citizens including independent living, assisted living, memory care, long term care, and rehabilitation. All residents benefit from the social aspect of community living. (The main difference between independent living and assisted living is that there is no medical oversight in independent living.) Some St. Louis locations even have affordable housing, home-based care, hospice, and a call-in resource called "Aging Answers." Scholl notes that, "In all these services, LSS practices person-centered care that is rooted in God's life-giving promise in Christ: 'I came that they might have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10)."

"Older adult ministry can be both a career and a calling," explains Scholl. "It is a wonderful way to live out your faith in service to others. And there is no shortage of opportunities for volunteering and employment in a wide variety of skills and capacities. For LSS, our mission of 'life to the fullest' isn't just for our residents, it's for our staff and everyone who is in some way connected to our communities."



*Rev. Dr. Travis Scholl
of Lutheran Senior Services*




**LUTHERAN
SENIOR
SERVICES**



Did you know?

Don't live in an area where Lutheran Senior Services are located? There are several independent living facilities throughout Missouri. Be sure to check in a town near you.



"To see Jesus is not to look for Him in evident glory and success; that was the mistake of the crowds at Palm Sunday. Jesus' way of revealing himself means first seeing him in his 'glorious suffering.' First the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies. Then, raised to life, it produces much fruit. This pattern by which we truly see Jesus is also the pattern for our lives as Christian disciples."

An excerpt from Rev. Dr. Jeff Gibbs' retreat presentation.

Lutheran Older Adult Retreat

A great opportunity for seniors on the eastern side of Missouri are the Lutheran Older Adult Retreats (LOAR). These retreats are held every 18 months or so and are a joint effort from the Missouri District and the Southern Illinois District. The most recent retreat was held October 20-21, 2021. The retreats usually utilize the Pere Marquette Lodge in Grafton, Illinois. Though originally postponed from fall of 2020, it was an exciting event with over 100 in attendance and much joyous fellowship.

The event featured keynote speaker Rev. Kenneth Holdorf and Rev. Dr. Jeff Gibbs led Thursday's Bible Study focusing on John 12:21b "It Doesn't Look Like Glory to Me: Seeing Jesus as He Wants to Be Seen." Other retreat topics included What Scammers Don't Want You to Know, Faith Stories: Leave a Legacy That Matters, Protect Yourself in a Digital World...Even if You Think You Don't Live There, Do We Really Hate Each Other That Much?, Faces of the Reformation: Twenty Three Portraits of the 16th Century Reformation, Seeing Jesus Through Words: Creative Writing Workshop, and more. Attendees were invited to stay at the Pere Marquette Lodge or commute each day. There are also fun activities and evening entertainment planned.

Rev. Richard LaBore serves on the committee for these retreats. He notes that senior ministry is one of a host of other "numerous ministries that we consider important: children's, youth, collegiate, singles, married, couples, deaf, blind, widow/widower, confined, nursing homes, rural, urban, etc., as well as the seniors cluster."

He notes that the need for having a senior ministry is a natural one for congregations as, "[seniors are] all around us in increasing numbers." There are a variety of ways for churches and organizations to provide support for senior citizens in their communities. Some great ideas include "reading sessions in homes and schools; free "taxi" services to appointments, shopping, and church events; minor home repair crews, nursing home ice cream vendors, tax return prep, and the list keeps growing." LaBore notes that one of the main ideas with senior ministry is don't just "let the younger folks' do [things]." Most seniors wish to be engaged and still serve.



*Rev. Dr. Richard & Gaylene LaBore
at the LOAR in Pere Marquette*

Old: What Does This Mean?

"Old begins the day you are born" is a phrase learned from the Lutheran Older Adult Retreat that happened earlier in October. "It's always 'How old is she?' They never ask how young [a baby] is," explains Rev. David Meggers, Associate Pastor for Adult Ministries at Concordia, Kirkwood. Many in the Missouri District are blessed to have senior citizens sitting in the pews on Sunday morning. But what are some key ways to engage and reach older adults?

While Pastor Meggers serves as a spiritual resource, he explains that the key for senior ministry at Concordia, Kirkwood is that it's member driven, led, and resourced.

One of the ways that Concordia builds community is through their monthly "Lunch N' Learn" programs. What started as gathering with bagged lunches has grown into an event with themes and a service element. For example in October, an Oktoberfest will happen while November will host a speaker from the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, plus a Christmas party in December. Service elements include an in-gathering for a hospice center and gathering needed items for veterans.

Something that's very important to note about senior ministry, though, is that there isn't just "one program" that will serve everyone. Older adults are a varied and diverse group. Anyone from their upper 50s to beyond their 90s is considered an "older adult". This means that there are people at very different phases of life. There are people retired and still working, those with mobility problems and those running marathons, some with spouses and others without, there are those who aren't yet grandparents to even those who have taken on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren.

"One of the things that I'm always trying to make myself aware of is that it's always a shifting demographic," notes Meggers. "Everybody is getting older. And everybody is going through these different seasons and transitions in life. So the question always comes back to, how will we continue to care for one another, be the church for one another, as we go through whatever seasons of life we're going through."



*Rev. David Meggers
Associate Pastor for Adult
Ministry at Concordia, Kirkwood*

There is a stereotype of older adults as being in nursing homes. "But, in reality it's only 3%," says Meggers. "So you've got all these age-stages, but you've also got so many stages of mobility and ability and so many gifts and so forth in these age groups that are still very important to the church and still very viable."



“Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers” Makes an Impact!

This summer, the Missouri District was excited to launch “Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers”—a campaign with two key purposes: build awareness of church work vocations and help alleviate student debt for those headed into ministry.

Since its debut, the campaign has been informative and inspiring. Video prayers were said for all types of church work roles and shared online (still available on the District social media channels). Articles were written about the various roles and shared throughout the state.

Congregations and schools were then encouraged to include “Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers” in their offerings, and individual households were presented with the same challenge. Funds collected would be added to the Missouri District Church Worker Student Aid Endowment. It’s from this funding source that the District provides scholarships to men and women from Missouri attending an LCMS university or seminary every year.

Our sincerest thanks to the many generous donors that have supported “Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers.” To date, more than \$42,000 has been received from individuals, congregations, and schools. Praise God!

Your forward-thinking generosity is a source of encouragement to the men and women who will one day serve in our churches and schools. Thank you for walking with them and the future generations they will one day serve.

Youth at Immanuel in St. Charles





You've Got Options

The work of the Missouri District has always been and will always be a group undertaking—funded by the generosity of our congregations, foundations, and individuals. Thank you for making an investment in the mission field that is the state of Missouri.

When it comes to giving, please know that there are a variety of ways to support mission and ministry. For many, writing a check or making an online gift are preferred methods of giving. Others may be looking for alternate ways to make gifts to the Missouri District. These other methods can include:

Individual Retirement Accounts
Investments
Donor Advised Funds
Securities (grain, livestock, etc.)
Wills and Trusts

If you'd like to know more about giving to the Missouri District—in both tradition and non-traditional ways—please contact Leah Sieveking at 314-590-6211 or leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org.

Thank you for your support.



Upcoming Events

For registration and more information about these events, visit <https://mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events> or call 314-590-6200.



Meet the Missionaries

Nov. 2, 2021 7PM

Connect with Rev. John Perling and Rev. Jon-Michael Schweigert and learn how they reach the military communities of Fort Leonard Wood and Whiteman Air Force Base. Free to attend. Join us for this virtual event!

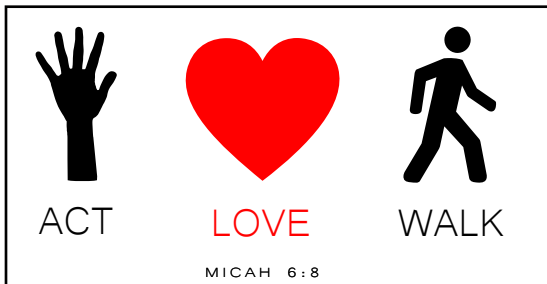
<https://mo.lcms.org/missionaries>



Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Nov. 3, 2021 9AM-11AM

Virtual Seminar on conflict resolution. See how God's ministry of reconciliation is meant to be lived out in your daily life. Free to attend. For more information and registration visit <https://mo.lcms.org/ambassadors-of-reconciliation/>



Educators' Conference

"Remember What Hasn't Changed"

Nov. 22-23, 2021

Come together for conversation, education, and fellowship. Hosted by the Lodge of Four Seasons at Lake of the Ozarks. Andrew McPeak serves as the main speaker. Registration deadline is November 15, 2021.

Coming in 2022



E2 Conferences
Early Spring



SHINE!
April 22-May1



Convention
June 12-14



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD