



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

# Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

# Our Mission

To serve and encourage congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and promote unity of the true faith.

**1,682**  
Rostered Workers



**290**  
Congregations



**49**

Early Childhood  
Centers



**50**

Elementary  
Schools



**9**

High  
Schools



@LCMS\_MODist



The Missouri  
District LCMS

## Let's Connect!

There are many ways to get the latest news on all things happening in the District. You can follow us on your favorite social media platform or you can sign up for email news including installations, obituaries, upcoming events, and President Hagan's weekly devotional, *Encourage*. Sign up online at [mo.lcms.org/resources](http://mo.lcms.org/resources).



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Missouri District  
LCMS



## Dear Saints of God,

There is an old Yiddish proverb, “Man plans. God laughs.” Put another way in Proverbs 19:21, “Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.” This annual report of the Missouri District gives a glimpse into how congregations, schools, and the District staff adapted during the pandemic. It is an account of how God carried out His plans through His people, the Church.

One of the primary concerns in the midst of the pandemic has been the care and support of our called church workers. From webinars and Zoom meetings to guest preachers and one-on-one visits, the Missouri District staff and leaders have been intentional about the ongoing care of pastors, teachers, Directors of Christian Education, deaconesses, and other servants. It has been a stressful season for the church’s servants, but our merciful God has provided us with the strength of His Word and the encouragement of God’s faithful people to assist us in the midst of this trial.

Though there were challenges, the Lord continued to bless our congregations as the Gospel was preached and as the people of God bore witness to Christ in their communities. One thing for us to celebrate is what God accomplished through *SHINE!*, the Missouri District’s first statewide servant event.

For a ten day period in April, more than 5,100 people from 130 groups within Missouri District congregations held servant events in their communities. Clothed in their *SHINE!* t-shirts and armed with the Word of God, they served in many and various ways, all for the purpose of telling others how Christ has served us. We are thankful that so many congregations and schools participated. We also invite you to take part in the next *SHINE!* servant event that will be coming in 2022!

This annual report has other information so that you and your congregation have a better sense of how we serve the congregations, schools, and servants of the Missouri District. Thank you for your support! We strive to be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us as we serve and encourage congregations in carrying out the Great Commission in our communities. I pray that this information is helpful and that you will continue to support the work of the Missouri District with your prayers and your gifts.

Peace in Christ,

President Lee Hagan





History was made this year with the arrival of the Missouri District's first ever statewide servant event. Based on Matthew 5:16, *SHINE!* encouraged congregations and schools to form teams and be a witness to Jesus Christ while serving their neighbors. From April 15-26, more than 5,100 men, women, and children from approximately 130 teams shined brightly throughout Missouri!



“During our intergenerational *SHINE!* servant event junior and senior high youth, college students, and even entire families were able to serve side-by-side to clean and beautify our church campus. One of the best parts of the event was the opportunity for connection between members and non-members of all ages (from two months old to 90 years old!). Through their hard work, these families were able to shine God’s light to the rest of our church family and everyone around us. I still smile and thank God when I see members wearing their *SHINE!* t-shirt and remember the fun and hard work we had that day.”

Hannah Knehans  
Director of Family Life Ministry, Trinity—Springfield

“We decided to participate in the *SHINE!* event to remind our community that they are loved. The pandemic has been hard on our community workers, especially those in the medical field. We wanted to remind them that God loves them, and we appreciate their dedication. We helped a nursing home and a handicap facility by surprising them with basic need items like shampoo, soap, deodorant, and more. We collected and donated games, coloring books, and puzzles. We also supplied lunch for the staff and artwork made from the children for the residents to enjoy. It was a great experience for the children, our staff, and our families.”

Kathie Nelms  
*Director, Immanuel Preschool—Festus*

“Participating in the 2021 Missouri District *SHINE!* event gave our little town a sense of making a much bigger impact, knowing others were working across the state! We chose to paint the town ball field bleachers as our project. In our small town, the ball field is used at least four nights a week to host little league games, as well as the local churches’ softball league. We were blessed with perfect outdoor painting weather to freshen a local gathering spot, while working side-by-side with Christian friends—young and old!”

Amy Hoemann  
*Concordia—Frohna*

“St. Stephen’s District *SHINE!* event was a huge success, as we had a lot of volunteers and helped a community member get his backyard back under control. We also built some good bridges into our community. Recently, the City of Liberty has reached out to us to see if we would be interested in helping others. Of course we would, as it brings us great joy to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community.”

Rev. Joe Rodriguez  
*Pastor, St. Stephen—Liberty*



# District-Supported Missions

Campus ministry sites and military outreach. Rural partnerships and urban ministry. Church plants and sharing the Gospel with the nations. The state of Missouri is a mission field with it all! Thank you for your partnership in this work. Look for a list of Missouri District mission projects on page 15.

## Multi-Ethnic Ministries: “God’s love for me never changes.”

The Missouri District is blessed to walk alongside six unique students at Concordia Seminary this academic year in the form of mission grants. These four men and two women are enrolled in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT)—a program specifically for those preparing to be pastors and deaconesses who will eventually serve in U.S. communities with immigrants and ethnic minorities.



All six students know firsthand the joys and challenges of those they will serve—having been born in places like China, Nepal, and Ethiopia. Helen Qui, deaconess student and director of Light of Christ Chinese Mission Community Center in Olivette, is motivated to further her role in the church because of God’s great love.

“I first learned about God when I moved to the U.S. Since then, my life has changed. God loves me so much and gives me new life. To return His love, I want to serve God and share God’s great gift with more people who have never heard about Him,” she shares.

Fellow deaconess student, Kan Hsu agrees. This is all about love.

“God has blessed me in many ways. Even though I am often weak in faith and often sin, God’s love for me never changes and continues to bless me with His forgiveness, peace, joy, and hope. He has been a constant light in my life. We are all called to be the light of the world to share this light. With this, I feel called to share this true blessing of eternal value,” Kan concludes.

Ratna Mangar is from Nepal and has been helping at St. John’s, St. Louis, in addition to completing his studies. He feels blessed to have this opportunity to further his education.

“I’ve learned a lot of important things. If I have not attended this EIIT at Concordia Seminary, I would miss a special thing, which is my spiritual wisdom. I am very much blessed and content with this opportunity.”

In addition to a Missouri District mission grant, these EIIT students are receiving mentorship from LCMS Recognized Service Organization, Christian Friends of New Americans, and their St. Louis metro area home congregations.

## Church Planting: “God-sized Dreams”

At 290 congregations strong, the Missouri District is one of the largest in the LCMS. It is our prayer that this number would continue to grow as the church looks for ways to multiply itself through the planting of new congregations. Expansion is important, as it will pave the way for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared with future generations.

The process of planting a church requires years and significant financial resources. Location and timing are key factors—all best determined by God. The Missouri District is home to several church plant sites, one being just south of Springfield in Ozark.

With a population of approximately 20,000 residents, Ozark is one of the fastest growing communities in Missouri. Forty-two percent of the population claims no church affiliation, and this number is growing. A prime location for what church planter Rev. James Bartok calls “God-sized dreams.”

Pastor Bartok and a team of core leaders are planting My Church, a congregation committed to shining God’s light in a hurting world. Their work began by simply getting to know neighbors through prayer walking, cupcake parties, and youth sports. From there, conversations about the nature of God and invitations to Bible studies could flow.

“My oldest daughter and I went fishing at the river after dinner one night. As we were getting ready to head home, a father walked by and we started talking. I mentioned that I was a pastor and that on Sunday mornings we do church at the park under the pavilions. When I said that he got excited and asked if I would follow him over to his wife, who was at the park with their kids, and tell them more about the church—which I did of course! We went fishing for fish but ended up being fishers of men. I always tell people that we are a family of church planters because God is using all of us to help people encounter Jesus,” Pastor Bartok shares.

My Church is big on small groups, knowing that conversations about God are far less intimidating to a new believer when in a smaller setting among friends. The goal is to have 75 people connected to a group by the end of 2021. These small groups eventually convene for a large group worship service—which were moved outside to the local park when the weather allowed during the pandemic.

Members take service towards others personally, with the group collectively logging hundreds of hours caring for their neighbors. They also relish time in God’s Word. “I’ve never read this much in my life,” says J—a member who started reading his Bible on his lunch breaks six months ago.

“Broken people in a broken world need unbroken truth, and the solution is always more Jesus,” Pastor Bartok notes. My Church is excited about transforming lives for Christ.



# Schools



Our Lutheran schools are a wonderful blessing for families throughout the state. Small or large, urban or rural, all schools focus on raising the next generation of Christian leaders. Last school year presented an interesting challenge: How does an institution safely navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic while providing the best education in a Christian setting?

## Word of Life

*St. Louis*

“Our staff went above and beyond to keep our staff and students safe, our church partnered with us above and beyond what they usually do to supply us with all that we needed to have as safe an environment as possible. Our appreciation for what we have here increased, which was voiced by many of our families. That our families felt ‘at home’ here, that their kids are safe, nurtured, loved, and cared for was repeated by many of our precious families.”

## Saxony Lutheran High

*Jackson*

“I believe that face-to-face learning is most valuable!...I was most proud of the fact that our staff and teachers worked together wearing masks, social distancing, and taking the precautions so we were able to be in school all year and our extracurricular programs missed no events!”

## Immanuel

*Lockwood*

“My teachers worked harder than anything I could have ever imagined or asked for. This group of individuals came together, during one of the most trying times ever, to create this team that was willing to reach outside of their comfort zone and do things they had never done before. Every day they pushed through new obstacles and stressors to provide the best education possible for our children.”



“We are thankful and blessed to have so many dedicated teachers, staff, and administrators. (And parents who support them!) They worked hard to prepare their school and students for in-person learning while adapting to a variety of hybrid learning options when needed. May our schools continue to be a blessing in raising the next generation of Christian leaders!”

**Alan Freeman**  
*Asst. to the President: Schools*  
Missouri District

## Scholarships

In 1982, members of the Missouri District Board of Directors made the forward-thinking decision to establish an endowment for the purpose of providing scholarships for men and women entering church work vocations. Decades later, the impact of this decision is still being felt. This current academic year, the Missouri District is blessed to support 48 students with scholarship assistance from this same endowment.

The District launched “Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers” in July. The purpose of the campaign was twofold: build awareness of church work vocations and strengthen the endowment to provide even more academic aid to future leaders. Individual donors, churches, and schools were asked to join this effort, and wow, did they ever! We are so thankful to everyone for their support and excited to help alleviate educational debt for the next generation of church workers.



# Circuit Visitors: Bridging Church Workers and Health

One of the Missouri District office's greatest resources for church workers are circuit visitors. Divided geographically, the District is comprised of 28 circuits, with one circuit visitor for each. These pastors are elected by the congregations within that circuit. In short, their job is to serve as a go between for the District president and the congregations in their care. But the role has a much larger scope.

Rev. Matt Roeglin, pastor at Blessed Savior Lutheran Church in St. Louis, has served as circuit visitor for the St. Louis North Circuit for more than nine years. He notes, "In the past, circuit counselors (as they were formerly named) really only came in [to visit a congregation] when there was trouble or when calling a new pastor. But Synod has really been focusing on building congregation and District relationships before there's trouble." By focusing on building relationships, circuit visitors can better know the congregation's areas of ministry and connect churches to resources that will aid them in their work.

Most circuit visitors also serve as a called pastor within their circuit. For circuit visitors like Pastor Roeglin, who is sole pastor of his congregation, this can make Sunday morning visits difficult. But he and others know that creating connections and providing support is important. When needed, Pastor Roeglin works with the Church Worker Care Team from the Missouri District office. He also makes an effort to meet with pastors outside of Sundays or visit their churches on one of his weekends off. Even just touching base socially is essential for keeping a positive relationship for church workers' health. Sometimes a potential congregational conflict can be solved simply by talking through the problem over lunch. Other times there are difficult situations for pastors that only a fellow pastor understands.

There are other District resources that circuit visitors can help connect to your congregation. These include working with staff members Rev. Marty Hasz and the Ambassadors of Reconciliation trainings or with Rev. Bill Geis who provides mission ideas and guidance concerning leadership structure and stewardship.

Ultimately, know that a circuit visitor is "a bit like a resident assistant in college," says Pastor Roeglin. "I just want to build a positive relationship with workers in my circuit and help them when needed."



# Tell the Next Generation

Youth and family ministry is an important element of the Missouri District's work. Here are some of the ways the District was able to strengthen this ministry in 2021:

## Ministry Shift During COVID-19

Sharing the Gospel while keeping our neighbors safe has been at the forefront of ministry practices for more than a year now. The Missouri District has worked to keep many pandemic-related resources free and easily accessible. In the last year, the District hosted monthly webinars on topics for church support and ministry growth. Featured themes included Caring for the Flock, Ministerial Pain: Managing What You Didn't See Coming, Senior Ministry, Youth Ministry in a Pandemic, Pandemic Spirituality, Imagining Children's Ministry, and Helping Families Keep Lent in Their Homes, plus information sessions on Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) training and the *SHINE!* statewide servant event.

## "Tell the Next Generation" Conference

In March, the Missouri District hosted an online "Tell the Next Generation" Conference, with a focus on equipping families in faith formation in the home. Because the conference was virtual, family ministry leaders from across Missouri and the Synod were able to lead the plenary presentations, Bible study, and breakout presentations. Topics included sexual identity, raising adolescents, maintaining a Christian worldview, youth ministry practices, involving parents in confirmation, and handling fraud. It was open for all to attend—families, church workers, and all concerned about retaining our youth and families. Participants and watch parties joined in from all corners of Missouri. While in-person will always be a preferred method of gathering, it was still a joy to be able to come together.

## MEGA Gathering

With the theme "Take Heart," the District youth team worked together to coordinate a special online event for the junior and senior high youth of Missouri. Groups were encouraged to gather earlier in the day for service in their community, enjoy dinner together, and then join in on worship and learning. Using a unique hybrid approach, Daniel Meyer (DCE at Christ Memorial, St. Louis) hosted the event live-like a DJ. The musicians from "Bread of Stone" and Bible study host Rev. Dr. Gerard Bolling were present for live Q&As. A great time was had by all the groups who joined across Missouri!



# Shared Ministry in the Bootheel

In July, Faith Lutheran in Dexter and Concordia Lutheran in Sikeston held Vacation Bible School together. Concordia provided the space and both congregations supplied adult volunteers and excited kids. It's just one way these two congregations are working together, not only to strengthen the individual churches, but also to enhance ministry in the entire Bootheel.



A function—and a joy—of being the Missouri District is the reality that no congregation, school, or church worker need ever face the highs and lows of ministry alone. By sharing resources—personnel, facilities, and Missouri District mission grants—joint ministry efforts will continue shining the light of Christ brightly in communities.

VBS in the Bootheel hasn't been Faith and Concordia's only shared effort. The churches did a pulpit swap during Lent, allowing both congregations to meet another area LCMS pastor. Members are getting to know each other, too.

When asked why these two churches would work together, Rev. Justin Sponaugle of Faith says, "It can be isolating, so there is a need for encouragement. There's a joy that comes from being with fellow believers." Newly ordained Rev. Matthew Berry at Concordia is excited that his Call documents specifically include this shared ministry. "There's no competition. We're sisters," he shares. "We need to be invested."

The strength of the partnership between these two congregations and their pastors paves the way for more ministry in other area churches. Pastor Sponaugle has been working closely with Zion in Poplar Bluff, and both he and Pastor Berry take turns preaching once a month at Redeemer in Kennett.

"There's a great need for Christ and His teachings," Pastor Berry says of the area. Pastor Sponaugle agrees. "Many have not heard or understood the Gospel very well," he adds. Both see significant potential in all these communities.

Shared ministry efforts are also forming in the Lakes Region and along the I-44 Corridor. Wherever the location, prayers for these endeavors are most welcome. "Pray for your family and the opportunities that are unknown. Pray that our hearts are open to those opportunities," concludes Pastor Berry.



# We know. We've seen it.



“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

The love you have for God and one another makes it all so clear—we know you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. Your concern for others and the desire to make His love known throughout Missouri has been very apparent as of late.

It was clear during our statewide servant event in April when more than 5,100 people served their neighbors and were a witness to our Lord. It came up again as you continued to pray for church workers. When mission and ministry carried on throughout the Missouri District due to the financial generosity of congregations, foundations, and individuals—especially in uncertain times—it was all so obvious.

Thank you for heeding Christ’s command and showing such love. Working with you in God’s Kingdom is a privilege and a source of great joy. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the Missouri District looks forward to strengthening our commitment to God and the work He has set before us, as well as the bonds we now have with all of you. We’re excited about the future and certainly welcome you to join us.

Gifts can be made to the Missouri District in a variety of ways:

- Sending a gift in the centerfold envelope
- Giving online at [mo.lcms.org/donate](https://mo.lcms.org/donate)
- Calling 314-590-6200 for gifts with a credit or debit card
- Using your own envelope and directing a gift to:

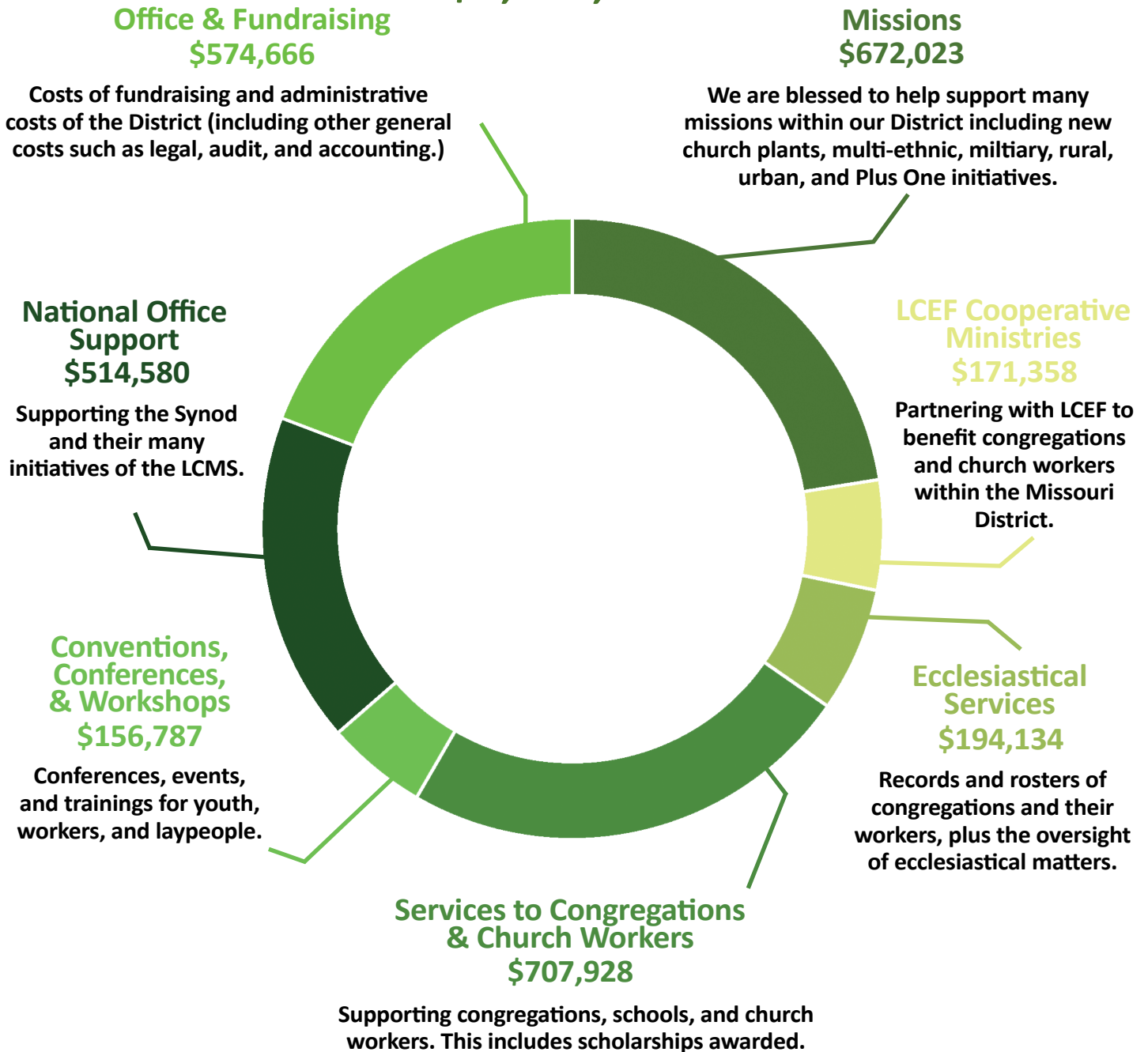
Missouri District LCMS, 660 Mason Ridge Center Drive, Suite 100, St. Louis, MO 63141

Thank you for your continued support. Should you ever have questions, please feel free to reach out to Leah Sieveking at 314-590-6211 or [leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org](mailto:leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org).

God’s richest blessings!

# 2021 Missouri District Budget

## \$2,991,476



**48**

**Scholarships  
Awarded**

*To Students Entering Church Work*

**35+**

**District Supported  
Missions**

*In 2022*

# MISSOURI DISTRICT STAFF

REV. DR. R. LEE HAGAN  
President

## *Leadership Team*

CASEY CARLSON  
Assistant to the President,  
Lutheran Church Extension Fund

ALAN FREEMAN  
Assistant to the President,  
School Ministry

REV. BILL GEIS  
Assistant to the President,  
Missions & Congregational Services

REV. MARTY HASZ, PLPC  
Assistant to the President,  
Church Worker & Congregational Health

PETER KREGE  
Chief Financial Officer

DANIEL KREIENKAMP, DCE  
Assistant to the President,  
Family Life & Youth

LEAH SIEVEKING  
Assistant to the President,  
Mission Advancement

## *Office Staff*

CASSIE BEHRMANN  
Financial Specialist

ELSA MORT  
Strategic Communications

MARTHA SCHELLIN  
Rostered Worker Support Specialist

SUE THOMPSON  
Events Specialist

COLLEEN ZARUBA  
Administrative Assistant & Receptionist

# FISCAL YEAR 2022 MISSION PROJECTS

## Campus Ministry Network

Campus Ministry Network | Columbia  
International Student Ministry | St. Louis  
Lindenwood University | St. Charles  
Missouri State University | Springfield  
Northwest Missouri State | Maryville  
Southeast Missouri State | Cape Girardeau  
Saint Louis University–Reliant | St. Louis  
University of Central Missouri | Warrensburg  
University of Missouri | Columbia

## Military Ministry

Faith Lutheran Church | Knob Noster  
Faith Lutheran Church | St. Robert

## Multi-Ethnic Ministry

Amigos de Cristo | Sedalia  
Christian Friends of New Americans | St. Louis  
Congolesse Ministry | Independence  
Hodiamont Outreach | St. Louis  
Immanuel | Kansas City  
Jesus el Buen Pastor | Kansas City  
Light of Christ | St. Louis  
LUMA | Kansas City  
Nepalese Ministry | St. Louis  
Oromo Outreach | Kansas City

## New Starts

My Church | Ozark  
All Nations | University City  
Emmaus Replant Partnership | St. Louis  
Greater Things 2 | St. Louis  
Northland Lutheran Outreach | Smithville

## Rural & Small Town Ministry

Bootheel Area Ministry  
Centralia Area Ministry  
Our Savior Lutheran Church | Buffalo  
St. John | Arnold *with* Immanuel | Barnhart

## Urban Ministry

Al1gn | St. Louis  
Immanuel Chapel | St. Louis  
Independence Area Ministry  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church | Kansas City  
Saint Trinity | St. Louis  
St. Paul | St. Louis



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## Open to read the 2021 Annual Report from the Missouri District's office!

