

The VOICE

November 2021

Missouri District Newsletter



***In This Issue:
A Blessed Fall!***

From the President's Desk

Give Thanks in All Circumstances



The last twenty months have been difficult for individuals, but especially for families. We have grown tired of social and physical distancing. The spreads on family tables for Thanksgiving meals last year were far smaller in many cases. The table prayers offered last year often included a petition that God would deliver us from this pestilence and allow families to gather together again. While many families will be able to celebrate together this year, God has not yet fully delivered us from the pandemic. When we

consider what the Scriptures say about our circumstances, this side of eternity, we are not promised lives of comfort and ease. Yet, our Lord would have us to look upon His gifts with glad and sincere hearts. Our Lord calls us to give thanks to Him in all circumstances, good and bad, times of plenty and times of scarcity. For our faithful Shepherd has promised that He will give us all that we need to support this body and life.

It is why Christians can sing hymns of joy and praise at funerals. It is why we can rejoice, even in our sufferings. Our good and gracious God has promised that nothing in all creation can separate us from His love, which is ours in Christ Jesus. This is why we have so many things for which we can give thanks to God once again this time of year. There may be fears associated with the pandemic. Many may be anxious about the economy. There are some who have lost loved ones recently. Most of endured some type of hardship in the last year. However, as congregations, families and individuals take time from their hectic lives on the last Thursday in November, we have so much for which we give thanks to God.

We can bear witness to the world around us about the faithfulness of God as we offer to God our sacrifices of praise and worship, talents and treasures. As our families gather around tables large and small, we give thanks to God not simply for food, family and football, but for God's faithfulness through this pandemic. We give thanks to God for all of His First Article gifts for the body and for all of His Second and Third Article gifts for the soul. Whether the table is set for one or twenty-one, we offer to God our thanks for His gracious providing for here in time and there in eternity. May God bless and keep you and yours in His loving care in all the days ahead and may you receive His gifts with humble thanks!

Fraternally in Christ,

President Lee Hagan



Pastors' Conference 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on our country, communities, congregations, and even pastors. The 2020 Professional Church Workers Conference was held as an online conference due to the pandemic. The Conference Committee that planned this year's pastors conference sought for the event to be a time of encouragement among brother pastors, particularly in response to the challenges of ministry during the pandemic. Rev. Mark Rouland, senior pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in St. Charles, described well the burden that our pastors have borne and the blessing that the conference can provide. He said, "Throughout these years, I've tried to tell my congregation hundreds of times that we're going to get through this, but though I've said it often, having time with the brothers helped me hear that message too."



The theme for this year's conference was "Joy in Ministry." The conference presenters included seminary presidents Dr. Thomas Egger and Dr. Lawrence Rast, as well as Lutheran Hour speaker, Dr. Michael Zeigler. This year's conference also allowed for more time for "mutual consolation and conversation of the brethren."

Pastor response to the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Rev. Joe Rodriguez, pastor at St. Stephen in Liberty said, "This was the best conference by far. I appreciated the fellowship aspect and the speakers were spot on to what so many of us have been dealing with." Rev. Greg Truwe, pastor at Trinity in Cole Camp, also had praise for the conference. "This year's conference was a wonderful time, especially fellowship with the brothers. The camaraderie of the brothers is critical to the health of the brethren. While I am blessed to have this sort of camaraderie in my circuit; it is difficult to get to know brothers across the District without having these gatherings."



The 2022 pastors conference will be held again at Margaritaville – Lake Resort on October 23-25. We are thankful that the conferences are a blessing to the workers of the District and give thanks to God for the support of the congregations to not only allow their pastors to participate, but to encourage their attendance. As Rev. Mark Rouland said, "I certainly enjoyed hearing from our speakers, but I go to conferences to reconnect with brothers across the state and strengthen the ties with my fellow circuit guys. I'm so thankful that happened. It was worth the drive and time away just to do that for me." We look forward to next year's conference and the support that it provides to the pastors of the District.

Coaching People to Reconcile Practicum

We are proud to offer an online practicum “Coaching People to Reconcile”. This special event is hosted by Ambassadors of Reconciliation and is sponsored by the Missouri District.

These past twenty months have been very difficult for everyone. Having to undergo so much stress for such a long time has led to many people feeling “burnt-out”. All of this only leads to more conflicts. And while conflicts aren’t wholly avoidable, knowing steps and processes on how to handle a situation when it arises can navigate people through conflict more peacefully and lead to positive, Christian reconciliation.

Given the many months of stress, the Missouri District would like to offer a special price for participants of just \$40 (a discount of several hundred dollars). Registrants will participate in the five week course where each lesson is taught by a live instructor from Ambassadors of Reconciliation and Missouri District’s own Rev. Marty Hasz, PLPC. Participants will also receive online access to the accompanying resources, course manuals, and discussion forums which can be accessed even after the course. The course runs on Wednesdays from January 5th to February 2nd, 2022 from 9 a.m.-11 a.m.. The course is run via a Zoom link, so you can participate from anywhere that has an internet connection.

This practicum is designed and hosted with pastors and church workers in mind, but it is open for anyone – even parents have found it a helpful resource for raising kids.

Register online: mo.lcms.org/ambassadors-of-reconciliation



**Ambassadors
of
Reconciliation™**



I find that AoR’s training practicum connects the scriptural “dots” for pastors and church members. The skills practiced in this course are helpful for both lay people and professional church workers, as they can be applied to all types of conflict. Practicing Lutheran, Gospel-based reconciliation is so essential because it gives people the tools to navigate and resolve conflicts gracefully, rebuilding relationships through the Gospel.

Add to that, the leaders at Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Dr. Ted Kober, Dwight Schettler, and Rev. Ed Keinath are supportive and knowledgeable experts in their field and are a great ongoing resource for participants to engage with and foster long-term health in ministry.

Marty Hasz, PLPC

Assistant to the President: Church Worker and Congregational Health

"Shine on, Missouri!"

April 2021 was a very bright month in the Show Me State! For the first time ever, the Missouri District held a statewide servant event and based it on Matthew 5:16. Dubbed "*SHINE!*", the initiative took place April 16-25, 2021.



The concept was simple: All churches, schools, ministries, RSOs, etc. throughout Missouri were welcome to register on the District's website. Groups were then free to assess the needs of their community and find a project that worked for both the size and skillset of their group. Teams could then safely work side-by-side or complete larger tasks as individuals. Service could last for an hour or all ten days, whatever fit into the schedules of participants. To add to the brightness of the initiative, the Missouri District was blessed to work with generous sponsors to provide participants with an official yellow *SHINE!* t-shirt to wear as they served.

"Because this had never been attempted before, we didn't have any sense of how this would be received," says Missouri District *SHINE!* coordinator, Leah Sieveking. "God already had everything planned, and His ideas are always bigger and better than anything we could have imagined."

In the end, more than 5,100 men, women, and children from approximately 130 teams served their neighbors and were a witness to Jesus Christ. Given the large participation numbers and the joy experienced in sharing Christ with others, the Missouri District knew it had to seriously consider the possibility of holding *SHINE!* again. Making that decision wasn't difficult.

Mark your calendars for *SHINE!—The Sequel*—happening April 22-May 1, 2022. Once again, groups are able to select their own projects and be outfitted in the official *SHINE!* t-shirt. (Everyone will be wearing green next spring!)

Registration is now open and can happen at mo.lcms.org/shine.

We've already seen what God can do with this initiative, so being excited about April 2022 is a given. Shine on, Missouri!

Leah Sieveking
Assistant to the President: Advancement
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Conferences to Return in 2022

The Missouri District's Encourage and Equip (E2) Conferences are held every other year at five locations throughout the district. The last conference was held on March 7, 2020 in Springfield, just as the world was about to change. A lot has happened since then. From late January through the end of March, we will once again hold these conferences as support for congregation leaders and volunteers.

This year's conferences will certainly address the backdrop of how congregations have been affected by the global pandemic on both a short-term and long-term basis. This year's topics will include topics that are both regular areas of interest (e.g. community engagement, teaching faith in the home) and timely responses to our congregation's work during the pandemic (e.g. the relationship of the church and technology, and ministry during anxious times). Missouri District staff and leaders from across Missouri will serve as conference presenters.



The conferences are held on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon. The dates and locations of the conferences are:

- Kansas City (St. Matthew – Lee's Summit) – January 22, 2022
- Southeast Missouri (Saxony Lutheran High School, Jackson) – January 29, 2022
- St. Louis (Concordia – Kirkwood) – February 5, 2022
- Central Missouri (Calvary Lutheran High School, Jefferson City) – March 5, 2022
- Springfield (Faith – Springfield) – March 12, 2022

The conferences are designed for church leaders (lay leaders, as well as church staff) to be able to attend and find topics of interest to them and of benefit to the congregation. What congregations that have participated in the past have found most helpful is the conversation that attendees have on the way home or over lunch, to discuss what was helpful for their congregation to consider for strengthening their work and life together. There is no cost to attend the conference, but we ask that you register so that we can have enough materials for everyone. For the schedule, breakout sectional information, and the registration link, go to mo.lcms.org/e2-conference-equip-encourage. The link also includes a short video of testimonials from past participants at previous conferences that would be great to share with church leaders.



We hope that your congregation will attend one of these conferences in early 2022.

See you there!

Two Opportunities for Educators

The Missouri District is blessed to be able to hold two education-based conferences in the coming months. The first is our Educators' Conference, taking place November 22-23, 2021 at the Lodge of the Four Seasons in Lake Ozark. The theme is "Remember What Hasn't Changed". One thing COVID-19 hasn't changed is the calling God has for us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Him, based on Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."



ACT



LOVE



WALK

MICAH 6:8

REMEMBER WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

Andrew McPeak is the keynote speaker. Amongst many things related to research and communication, McPeak is known for co-authoring "Marching off the Map" and "Generation Z Unfiltered". Utilizing insights gained from the latest research and personal stories of successful leaders across the country, "Generation Z Unfiltered" helps adults understand how to best connect with today's youngest population and how to lead them through the nine greatest challenges they will face in the 21st century. Educators will learn how to understand and connect with this generation which can sometimes be frustrating and draining.

The Educators' Conference has a unique approach this year. Most are registered to attend in person, but for those who couldn't make the trip or prefer to remain virtual, there are Zoom sessions for even more across the state to join in. "While in person gathering and fellowship is a huge blessing, we also understand that some may need to still be virtual at this time," explains Alan Freeman, Assistant to the President: Schools, "We are happy and blessed to be able to adapt and engage so many educators this year and are excited to share Andrew McPeak's research and guidance to those across Missouri."

And finally, there is a Mid-Year Administrators' Conference on January 28, 2022. This event will be held at Campus Lutheran in Columbia, and will feature speaker John Dize, CRFE. Dize is a consultant and fundraising coach to schools, churches, and other Christ-based non-profits, working with small and large organizations to start advancement programs, resurrect lapsed programs, and fill interim needs during times of transition. He will be discussing "The SGO Tax Credit: A Catalyst for Philanthropy at your Lutheran School". And while the SGO system and final guidelines are not yet finalized, there are universal best practices for fundraising. Dize will

share best practices developed over his years of experience, and how SGO efforts were a catalyst for Lutheran schools to initiate a deliberate, systematic fundraising program.



We are in new territory. The "old maps" we used successfully in education, leadership and parenting to help guide our students through adolescence are obsolete in the face of the challenges we now face. We desperately need new strategies giving us guidance to navigate this new landscape. Our mission has never been more critical, and that is why I can't wait to join with educators of the Missouri District Educators' Conference as we discuss how to best "March Off the Map!"

Andrew Mc Peak

Keynote at the 2021 Educators' Conference

Boot Scoot with the District at NYG

Next summer is an exciting time for our District! Not only will we have our triannual District Convention, but it's also time for the National Youth Gathering! Senior high youth from across the country will gather in Houston, Texas from July 9-13, 2022. The theme is "In All Things", drawn from Paul's letter to the Colossians. Participants of the gathering will have opportunities for on site servant projects, attending concerts, growing in faith through Bible studies and presentations, plus gathering together in communion and worship.

Another great opportunity for participants is gathering with other Missouri youth in the Missouri District sponsored event, held at The Houston Stampede July 9th from 12-2 p.m.. This will be a real Texas experience complete with armadillo racing, riding a mechanical bull, and getting your picture taken with a real long-horn cow! There will be lots of other fun things to do too, like corn-hole, giant Jenga, pool tables, dart boards, and karaoke. Not to mention, what would a Texas experience be without a big ol' Texas barbeque? Come hungry because there will be lots of food at the BBQ buffet meal! This event is open just for groups from Missouri. It's \$35 per person, plus \$10 if participants want a shuttle bus ride from the convention center. Registration will open in January and will be available at mo.lcms.org/youth-ministry.



"This is going to be a lot of fun and a great opportunity to be with your friends and enjoy some Texas style entertainment," says DCE Mark Engelhardt (pictured left) from Our Savior Lutheran St. Charles. He's pictured here with DCE Daniel Kreienkamp at the NYG leader training in Houston last July.



Stand out amongst the sea of Lutherans by wearing the Missouri District t-shirt, back again for 2022! Shirts will be \$17-\$19, depending on size, and will feature your church name and city, plus will cover the cost of shipping to your church. Orders can be placed starting in January (sample shirts will be available at all NYG information meetings).

For more news from the District office, sign up for email communications at mo.lcms.org and follow us on social media.



Missouri District

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