

The VOICE

November 2022

Missouri District Newsletter



In This Issue: *Fall Events Around the District*

Pictured: Students from Saint Paul, Concordia at the District's Lutheran College Fair.

From the President's Desk

Thankfulness for Saints Past and Present and Prayers for the Future Harvest

Following his epic blessing in Ephesians chapter 1, St. Paul writes, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." (1:16) This time of year is marked by gatherings of congregations and families where we acknowledge and give thanks to God for all kinds of First Articles gifts such as "clothing, shoes, food, drink, house, home." It is good to take time to give thanks to God for the ways in which He daily and richly supplies us with all that we need to support our bodies and lives.

It is also good for us to take time to give thanks to God for the great cloud of witnesses with which He has surrounded us. Young and old alike have been blessed by those people who have borne witness to Christ and taught us the Christian faith. For some, those were faithful parents and grandparents. In many cases, there were also pastors and teachers, Directors of Christian Education and youth counselors, coaches and mentors. In some cases, those witnesses now rest from their labors with their Lord. Though they are not among us now, we can still praise God for their faithful witness to us and look forward to being reunited with those who have gone before us in the faith. How truly blessed are we for those whom God placed in our lives to speak the Word of God to us and for this we give thanks!

As we give thanks for the saints who have surrounded us, it is also good for us to pray for those who will speak the Gospel to us in the future. Our Lord invites us to pray to the Lord of the Harvest for future laborers working in the fields by preaching and teaching the Word of God. At this time when we give thanks for the earthly harvest, pray for those who will serve by being part of God's spiritual harvest as the seeds of the Word of God are sown and God brings forth growth for the sake of His kingdom. May God grant it for Jesus' Sake!

Fraternally in Christ,

R. Lee Hagan

President Lee Hagan

Pictured below: A representative from Concordia University, Nebraska interacts with potential students at the District's College Fair



Lutheran College Fair

Our Concordia Universities offer a wonderful place to grow in faith and excel in academics. But how to choose between them? Each school has a unique flare and set of degree programs. So, we brought them to your backyard (or at the least your state.)

This fall, the Missouri District hosted its first ever Lutheran College Fair. Over 111 students, plus their families, gathered to learn all about these amazing opportunities. Students got to interact with representatives from Concordia Irvine, Chicago, Wisconsin & Ann Arbor, St. Paul, and Nebraska. Plus, representatives from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF); the LCMS's Set Apart to Serve; Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis were present.

Also, there were a number of breakout sessions highlighting different aspects of college, like Financial Aid for College, 10 Tips for Choosing a College, Making a Concordia Education Affordable, The Concordia Difference, plus a panel on Church Worker Professions featuring a pastor, teacher, DCE, and Deaconess.

Lunch was catered by Chick-fil-A. And there was plenty of fun to be had, as participants throughout the day won "swag bags" filled with Concordia branded goodies. Plus, five participants won \$100 Visa gift cards from LCEF!

The event was hosted on the grounds of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Visitors from near and far loved getting to stroll the beautiful campus, which was naturally adorned by amazing fall colors.

Our Concordia Universities are such blessings and do a wonderful job of preparing students for life. If you haven't considered one yet, we encourage you to connect with them!



Shared Ministry In Missouri

Shared ministry exercises good stewardship of our collective God-given gifts. It embraces all congregations—small or large, rural or urban. It is simply an effective way to collaborate in various ministry areas and provide mutual benefits and greater opportunities for sharing the Gospel.

To help congregations to engage in shared ministry, Shared Ministry Collaboration is one of the critical targets for this triennium. Included in this, is an emphasis on shared ministry workshops—where church and lay leaders are brought together to design actionable steps for ministry initiatives, circuit collaboration—where circuits are encouraged to hold a Circuit Convocation in a non-convention year to discuss greater collaboration for the sake of the Gospel, and a shared ministry resource toolbox—where best practices and tools will be gathered together and ministry coaches will be trained to assist congregations in all aspect of ministry.

One of these shared ministry workshops was held this fall in Freistatt. President Lee Hagan and Rev. Bill Geis, Director of Mission Services, met with several churches in the Southwest Circuit. Rev. Ken Lampe of Grace in Aurora was in attendance. Pastor Lampe has previously served as president of the Mid-South District, and now, in his retirement, serves as an interim pastor at Grace, whose weekly worship averages between 30-45.

He says that the meeting presented many different ideas and ways to connect with neighboring congregations. And he notes that shared ministry can be more than just two churches sharing a pastor on Sunday mornings. Nearby churches can partner on things like having LWML events or having combined youth group events. Some congregations could connect and rotate pastors doing nursing and homebound visits. “It’s a different way of thinking,” notes Pastor Lampe, “becoming a team.”

But this partnership takes relationships. “I think part of the feeling is that in this high-tech society, we’ve lost a lot of the relationship activities that congregations were involved in,” Pastor Lampe comments. “If shared ministry is going to work, you have to trust each other, and to get to trust each other, you have to get to know each other.” Sometimes these steps can be as easy as sharing congregational news with one another, either through electronic news, Sunday announcements, or a bulletin board. “I don’t think anybody has an exact solution,” Pastor Lampe concludes. “But we are looking at options and know that God will guide.”

Women of Grace in Aurora helping in Project Rise, a financial learning program for the community.





Family Ministry Update

Family Discipleship Coaching information mailing including the registration sheet to submit and information about the Family Discipleship Coaching Initiative was sent in early November to each Missouri District congregation. Four coaches and the congregations they are serving have begun the Coaching Initiative. All thirteen coaches are ready to serve with prayerful and eager hearts: "I am open to help whatever congregation the Lord might lead too," said one. First step in the process of the Coaching Initiative and be assigned a coach is to complete the Registration and Commitment Form and send it to the District Office.

Family Discipleship Coaching Facilitator, Pam Nummela, recently began serving the Missouri District to connect congregations and coaches for the Coaching Initiative. Pam is one of the 13 coaches and has served the LCMS as a teacher, DCE, principal, and CPH VBS editor. One of her greatest joys is to walk alongside families as they grow as disciples of Jesus with Christ-center homes and in their congregations. Contact Pam at 913-515-9276 or family@mo.lcms.org.

The Call to Action: Family Ministry Webinar is available on the website. Rev. Steve Andrews and DCE Pam Nummela discuss Family Ministry in the home and the Family Discipleship Coaching Initiative that will equip you, your pastor, and congregation to move to home centered, church supported faith formation. Make changes now to enable parents to grow in faith and raise their children in a home where faith practices like prayers, Bible reading and talking about God's Word, His love and grace, and habits of Christian living are lived and taught. If you want to share or see the webinar, the recording is available at this link: <https://mo.lcms.org/webinars/>

Tell the Next Generation Conference: Christ-Centered Homes will be held in person on March 11 at Lutheran High School St. Charles at 5100 Mexico Road in St. Peters. Pastors, church staff, lay leaders, parents, and grandparents – anyone interested in ways to grow as disciples and tell the next generation about Jesus our Savior should attend. Registration will begin in January.

Pam Nummela at the 2022 Pastors' Conference.





SHINE! Gears Up for a Third Year

The Missouri District is pleased to announce the new dates for our third statewide servant event. *SHINE!* will take place April 14-23, 2023. As in previous years, groups of all sizes are encouraged to be a witness for Jesus Christ while serving their neighbors during this 10-day timeframe.

Once again, participants will be outfitted in the official servant event t-shirt. Our sincerest thanks to Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Rod's Sports, Concordia Plan Services, Concordia Seminary-St. Louis, and Immanuel Lutheran in St. Charles for serving as our generous sponsors in 2023. After wearing yellow in 2021 and green in 2022, we look forward to seeing everyone wearing blue t-shirts in April.

"Perhaps the most exciting announcement concerning *SHINE!* is the addition of another LCMS district!" says Missouri District *SHINE!* Coordinator, Leah Sieveking. "For two years now, this has been such a blessing for our state—something we'd love our neighbors to experience as well. How awesome that we'll be joined by the churches and schools of the Northern Illinois District next spring."

Sue Green, *SHINE!* Coordinator for NID, actually met with Missouri groups during last year's servant event to see how the process works on both a district and local level. She returned to the Chicagoland area with a stack of sample green shirts and a lot of enthusiasm.

"We are grateful for the invitation to participate in this amazing servant event so our congregation members can bless people Jesus-style in their communities," Sue says. "How exciting when we, along with the members of the Missouri District, serve others and share the love of Jesus. We're grateful for this partnership!"

Registration for *SHINE!* 2023 will open in the new year. Until then, mark your calendars with the new dates, start looking for ways to serve in your community, keep participants in Missouri and Illinois in your prayers, and stay tuned to District communication channels for additional updates. See you in April!



MOScholars: a Unique Opportunity

Taxpayers to the state of Missouri—both individuals and businesses—now have the unique opportunity to direct up to 50% of their state taxes to Lutheran Education. This summer, the Missouri State Treasurer's Office launched a new tax credit program called MOScholars. The program allows organizations like the Missouri District to convert these tax dollars into scholarships for qualifying students attending LCMS schools throughout the state.

To date, taxpayers have worked with the District through MOScholars to provide scholarships for 23 students to attend Lutheran schools. These children are now receiving a quality education and hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For many, this opportunity would simply not have been possible without MOScholars. There are currently 75 additional students awaiting LCMS scholarships for this school year. The deadline for helping these students is December 31, making now a great time for taxpayers to participate in MOScholars.

Directing your taxes to Lutheran education through this program is as simple as completing an online form and pre-paying a portion of your taxes in the amount of your credit reservation. The Missouri District website (mo.lcms.org) contains even more information on MOScholars, as well as the links to get the process started. Leah Sieveking at the District office can be reached at leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org or 314-590-6211 with any other questions.

At no additional cost and with minimal effort, MOScholars allows taxpayers to decide how their tax dollars should be spent. Directing these tax dollars for scholarships to attend Lutheran schools is a blessing to children and families that will make an eternal difference. Thank you for your participation in MOScholars through the Missouri District.



Youth Gathering

The Missouri District Youth Gathering returns on March 24-26, 2023 to the Lake of the Ozarks! For youth in grades 6-12, the combined Junior and Senior High ministry weekend features FLAME (Marcus Gray)— an award-winning Christian Hip-Hop artist with a degree from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis; as well as Rev. Brandon Metcalf, long-time church worker in Missouri and popular youth presenter. Both FLAME and Pastor Metcalf were featured presenters at the Houston LCMS Youth Gathering last summer.

The theme for the District Youth Gathering this Spring is focused on Holy Baptism. We will also be revisiting a previous LCMS Gathering Theme: Live Love(d). Open to all youth and congregations in the Missouri District, our weekend of worship, Bible study, fellowship and fun will take place again at Cross Pointe Retreat Center in Rocky Mount, Missouri. More information can be found online and on social media, with more news to come in the weeks ahead. Registration is open now at mo.lcms.org/youth-ministry.



Upcoming Events

Visit mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events for more information on these events.

**Missouri District Office
Open House**
December 2, 10AM–1PM

**Webinar – *Building Relationships
Despite Disagreements***
January 18, 12PM

AOR Training
Weekly Starting January 11

Youth LEAD!
February 18–20

Youth Gathering
March 24–26

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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