



The VOICE

January 2023

Missouri District Newsletter

In This Issue: ORGANIZING THE LEFT HAND KINGDOM



From the President's Desk Behind the Scenes

Most congregation members only see what happens in congregations on Sunday mornings. They are blessed by the Divine Service, preaching, hymns and Lord's Supper. They do not always think about the work of the altar guild, organist, secretary, ushers, and elders. There are prayer lists and hymn choices that all are done in advance of the service. However, there is so much more than is happening to as part of the organization and work of the Congregations. The electric and gas bills are paid so that there are lights and heat or air conditioning. Copy machines are serviced. Church buildings are maintained. There is a lot of work that is done by church volunteers and staff behind the scenes that support the primary work of preaching the Gospel.

This issue of The VOICE addresses some of the topics related to how congregations work and function behind the scenes. Congregations regularly reach out to the district office to look for assistance in managing finances or properties. We receive questions regarding everything from cemeteries to school lunch programs. Our work is also behind the scenes. Like treasurers and altar guild members, we support congregations so that the primary work of proclaiming Christ can happen in the Divine Service, but also out in our communities through our individual and corporate witnessing.

Congregations should be attentive to the importance of training and equipping those who are given responsibilities of leadership in congregations. The Missouri District offers training through our E2 (Encourage and Equip) Conferences, but also through individual consultations. Our prayer is that your congregation has the support and resources that you need so that the behind-the-scenes work of finances, properties, human resources and many other areas can function well to support mission and ministry. If your congregation ever needs assistance in any area, please contact us in the Missouri District office so that we can support your kingdom work.

Fraternally in Christ,

R. Lee Hagan

President Lee Hagan

Church Governance Tips

by Rev. Marty Hasz, Missouri District Director Church Worker Support

Many congregations are looking for guidance on governance issues. Many congregations struggle with some unhealthy behaviors that lead to frequent dissension. Likewise, filling elected positions is increasingly difficult. Below, offers some simple tips to congregation leaders to consider as they strive to improve governance.

Start Small

Healthy churches can develop naturally from small adjustments to church structures, regardless of church size. Imbedding the building blocks of a healthy church structure has a trickle effect across relationships resulting in a sensible modification to a bylaw or policy.

Other Worldly Governance – Resist the temptation to act the world does.

Begin to make healthy shifts based guided by the Word of God. Healthy governance shifts are made over time and by working with people through the Word of God. Congregations strive for reaching consensus in making decisions rather than just one side winning the vote. As St. Paul calls the Church to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:3)

Healthy Behavior Leads to Healthy Governance

In a board meeting, it’s much easier to bring a motion for policy change when a new healthy behavior is already in place. This could include study of God’s Word, prayer before voting, taking time to ensure every voice is heard. It’s also good accountability. Policies do not change people’s behavior, but the Word of God does.

Don’t Look For Silver Bullets

I hear it said, “If we only did this... then... will be better. Many times we get the impression that somewhere out there is a simple solution to what is a really complex system of church life. Huge bylaw overhauls, large sweeping policy changes or renewed contractual agreements with strategically engineered outcomes rarely usher out dysfunctional practices without significant damage. Most people can’t distinguish their faith from faith in church leaders.

Healthy governance structures are challenging to find. Boards of Elders, church presidents, church workers can assess and review the “Leader’s Pack” tools developed by Ted Kober from Ambassadors of Reconciliation. In it you’ll find various church leadership study materials, sample structures, policies and bylaws consistent with our LCMS polity.

Reference: Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation Leader’s Pack by Ted Kober. www.AoRhope.org



Next Generation Leaders

by Rev. Bill Geis *Missouri District Director of Mission Services*

Many congregations share a common yearning for the next generations of leaders. As a pastor, father, and grandfather, encouraging next generation leaders is a personal priority. I asked 13 church servants to share insights on leadership development. I've shaped their words around our four District critical targets.

Support for Families

Our District supports coaching for churches who desire to be a spiritual family around their congregational households.

"Age is not the primary qualification. Primary is a commitment to Christ, along with humility, service, honesty, and love."

"Focus on the heart rather than the head, encouraging disciplines that develop character rather than skillset."

"Retreat with those you lead, learn their passions; and they can learn from you!"

"Jesus chose the overlooked and undervalued. I've got my eyes open for people who might be easily ignored."

Shared Ministry

The challenge of leadership development is a common need of our churches. Our District seeks to facilitate relationships that help us work better together. Shared Ministry helps "tie new leaders to the bigger picture—God's mission. It celebrates God's wins and our shared stories."



Recruitment

Where are we going to find leaders? Jesus says, "pray and see what God sees!" "For the leader to pray is of foremost importance." Prayer sees recruitment beyond the job. "If we're flexible with how God will develop someone, we'll have more fun identifying leaders." Prayer shapes hearts so leaders are, "seeking to develop their empathy and displaying their curiosity for the people in their sphere of influence." Prayer humbles mentors. It confesses, "I'm just the one being chiseled by God's Word, seeking to share, and inviting others to live with hope."

Engaging Community

We're more relevant in our communities when developing leaders. Intentionality and flexibility are critical.

"Overwhelmed? Start with one person. Say, 'I see God working in your life. Let's discover where He's leading.'"

"Readers are leaders. One of the best ways to grow is to read with someone you're leading."

"Using both formal and informal mentoring helps people understand their baptismal identity, gifts, and opportunities."

"Take a small group, pour into them, then ask them to go out and do the same."

"Love people and trust God to use their gifts. Trust is challenging but reproduces leaders."

"FOR, WITH, BY: I was a leader FOR youth as teacher. When invited, they accept teaching roles WITH me as mentor. Now they continue BY my side offering support and encouragement."

Good Business and Financial Practices

with Peter Krege, Missouri District CFO

Partnering with neighboring congregations in shared ministry has applications outside of pastoral ministry; it can also provide a great benefit to a church's business practices and financial health, like enabling skills sharing. Look to use the gifts that God has given His people. For example, an accountant might not have time to serve as a bookkeeper, helping with day to day tasks. But, they may be able to advise on what software a church should be using or help set up the accounts in a way that is easier to use. The same is true for a lawyer, manager, handyman, digital communications, photographer, and more. Use the skills around your congregation.

One area that churches can struggle is property maintenance. While upkeep can be rather costly in a year's budget, deferring maintenance can be a problem. Over time, there's no way to know what is being deferred. There could be paint peeling on the walls with lead based paint or floor tiles with asbestos, and more. It creates a safety concern. Instead, take the time to incorporate maintenance into fiscal plans.

It's important for churches to actively take steps to protect themselves and those in their congregation. Protecting children and youth is a paramount concern. Churches should give background checks on anyone working with children and youth, including volunteers, Sunday School teachers, and travel chaperones. Everyone should know the "rule of three" and adhere to it. There are property elements associated with this also, like making sure the facility is safe with properly locking exterior windows and doors. Some insurance companies like Church Mutual and Guideone have resources to help with this.

Additionally, organizations should have an evaluation system, either on an individual basis or as a group. There should be raises for employees every year. The Missouri District offers a compensation guidelines packet as a resource. This is full of great information, read it front to back (available online at mo.lcms.org/compensation-guidelines)

Interested in learning more about positive financial and business practices for your congregation? Join us for a webinar on church finances on Wednesday, March 15 at noon. This hour long webinar will build off the topics discussed here, addressing vital financial and administrative matters. Congregational treasurers, business managers, newly elected congregational leaders, and anyone interested in a church's finance are encouraged to attend.



Changes to Missouri District Staff

The Missouri District is pleased to welcome Rev. Peter Kirby to the staff. He will serve in a newly created position, Executive Director of Congregational Services. In that role, Rev. Kirby will work with President Hagan and the twenty-eight circuit visitors in assisting congregations in the process of calling pastors. Additionally, he will organize the implementation of the district's strategic plan and coordinate the district's support and services to congregations. Most recently, Rev. Kirby has served as regional director for Europe and Central Asia for Lutheran Hour Ministries' global outreach efforts since 2012. Prior to joining LHM, he served as senior pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Carlinville, Illinois and as a missionary and church planter in Jamaica.

President Hagan says, "Peter Kirby is a respected church leader who consistently demonstrates faithfulness to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions and a zeal for God's mission to reach the lost. He will bring experience as a missionary, pastor, circuit visitor and team leader to this new role with great care and strong commitment." Pastor Kirby will be installed at the upcoming Circuit Visitors training at Campus Lutheran Church on January 26. Please join us in welcoming Rev. Peter Kirby to the Missouri District staff.

Missouri District Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice-President Casey Carlson has accepted a new position with Concordia Plan Services starting with the new year. Casey served the Missouri District for more than five years. President Hagan said, "Casey was the consummate team player. While we will miss him in the district office, we are looking forward to continue to work with him in his new role with Concordia Plan Services.

A search process for a new LCEF Missouri District Vice-President has begun. To apply for the position or learn more about the position, go to lcef.org/careers

May God continue to bless the staff of the Missouri District in supporting congregations, schools and church workers in the kingdom work given to us by our faithful God!





Ready to **SHINE!** for the third time?

Registration is now open for our statewide servant event happening April 14-23. The concept is simple: Find a group. Identify a need in your community. Register with the Missouri District at mo.lcms.org/shine. Serve during that 10-day span wearing the official **SHINE!** t-shirt. (Big news! The shirts are blue this year.) We're looking forward to seeing thousands of men, women, and children live out Matthew 5:16 this spring!



Upcoming Events

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

Mid-Year Administrators' Conference

February 10, 2023

YouthLead

February 18–20, 2023

"Developing Today's Child" Early Childhood Conference

January 11–February 8, 2023

"The Christ Centered Home" A Tell the Next Generation Conference

March 11, 2023

Webinar – *Congregational Financial Forum*

March 15, 2023 12PM

"LiveLoved" District Youth Gathering

March 24–26, 2023

SHINE! A Statewide Servant Event

April 14-23, 2023

Webinar – *A Blessed Marriage*

April 19, 2023 10AM

"Thy Kingdom Come" Pastors' Wives Retreat

May 19–21, 2023

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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