

The VOICE

May 2023

Missouri District Newsletter



In This Issue: *Headed into Summer*

A woman wearing a grey cap and a dark long-sleeved shirt is walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a forest. She is carrying a baby in a tan-colored carrier. A young child in a dark blue jacket is walking beside her, holding her hand. The path is covered with fallen leaves and branches, and the surrounding trees have green and yellowing foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. The sun is visible through the trees in the upper left corner, creating a bright, hazy effect.

From the President's Desk

Growing in Christ

The winter and spring seasons of the liturgical calendar are marked by Sundays and festivals that focus on Jesus, His coming, birth, suffering, resurrection, and ascension. The summer season of the calendar focuses on the growth of the Church. This theme also fits for the life of congregations and church workers. While many congregations host Vacation Bible school or other adult education opportunities, the summer is often a time for continuing education for pastors, teachers and other church workers. Our seminaries host continuing education courses across the country to help pastors and other servants continue to sharpen their skills and grow as theologians. Many of our Lutheran school teachers are busy in the summer working on graduate programs as well.

Our hope is that the congregations and schools of the Missouri District would value and support the ongoing growth of our servants. Our world continues to spiral out-of-control at an alarming rate. While our theology does not change, the questions that are being asked and the issues that we are facing are different today than they were when many of our church workers were preparing for their service. We need pastors and teachers who are well-equipped to teach and apply God's Word to children and adults in these turbulent times.

The summer also provides a time for Sabbath rest for many of our church workers to spend time with their families. That time is also important time for growth as church workers tend to their vocations within the homes. Please pray for all of our church workers as they grow in all of their respective callings that the summer would be a blessing for them whether at work or rest.

Fraternally in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Lee Hagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President Lee Hagan

Theology Workshops 2023

This June, there are several opportunities to dive deeper into theology. In summer, some professors from our two seminaries offer courses across the country. Hosted by local churches, these are great times for learning deeper and practical applications of our Lutheran theology. These courses are for everyone. The material is designed so that both church workers and laypersons will find it engaging to attend.

There are three topics being presented in our District. See below for their full details. The registration for these classes closes two weeks before the start date. For more information and the registration link, visit <https://mo.lcms.org/theology-workshops-2023/>.



LUTHER AND THE PSALMS

REV. DR. BRIAN GERMAN

MONDAY, JUN 05- WEDNESDAY, JUN 07

Holy Cross Lutheran Church Kansas City, MO



This course examines some of the most influential works of Dr. Martin Luther on the psalms and places a particular focus on how the psalms shaped Luther as a pastoral theologian.

PROTREPTICS: AN APPROACH TO HOLY CONVERSATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

REV. DR. CHAD KENDALL

TUESDAY, JUN 20- THURSDAY, JUN 22

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Mound City, MO



Our world today is looking more like Clement of Alexandria's who conversed and sought to persuade a variegated and syncretistic Alexandrian culture. This course will define this ancient approach called protreptics, provide a historical background to protreptics and allegory, examine 2nd- and 3rd-Century Alexandria, with an opportunity to understand Clement's teaching method, and suggest a protreptic approach to engage people today in the post-Christian world.

LUTHERANS LISTENING TO C.S. LEWIS

REV. DR. ERIK HERRMANN

MONDAY, JUN 26- WEDNESDAY, JUN 28

Trinity Lutheran Church Springfield, MO



C.S. Lewis continues to be one of the most important modern authors among English-speaking Christians. His fiction has delighted children and adults alike, and his nonfiction has encouraged and challenged the Christian as well as the skeptic. This workshop will look at the thought and writings of Lewis, especially as they intersect with themes important for Lutherans, such as the theology of the cross, faith, science and reason, and the role of beauty for belief and ethics.

Missouri Pastors Learn to “Extend the Bench”

“Extending the Bench” is a quarterly training provided by Whiteman Air Force Base chaplains for area clergy and laity in best practices in responding to an emergency. The concepts addressed enable those trained to be of better service to the base community—particularly in the event of a crisis situation where base chaplains would need additional support.

The March training began with an unscheduled phone call, so participants got a feel for timing how long it would take them to drive to the base and pass through security. That morning, a tent was erected outside of the base chapel. As area pastors arrived and gathered inside, a conversation took place with chapel staff on what supplies for ministry may be beneficial in a crisis situation—including how the tent where they gathered could be a temporary chapel if buildings were destroyed.

The 10 participants—including three Missouri District pastors and two laypeople—were joined by a dozen members of the chapel staff on a base tour that included the Installation Deployment Readiness Center where airmen pass through before being sent throughout the world. An MRE lunch kicked off an afternoon of “Triage Guidance” with Ch, Maj Bill Mesaeh.

“Avoid assuming you need to find the silver bullet,” says Chaplain Mesaeh about ministering to members of the military in times of crisis. “There is no silver bullet.” He highlights how the military is a slice of America—offering a diverse population with differing religious beliefs. Chaplains are available to support the religious needs of airmen of all faith traditions. What matters in these moments is the ability to have interactions that stabilize the situation by providing comfort through active listening and reassurance. Christian chaplains are able to pray in Jesus’ name—with chapel staff agreeing how that’s often the expectation once they arrive on the scene. Crisis intervention is a ministry of presence, adds Mesaeh. “Sometimes we just sit in the ashes with them.”

After reviewing these key principles, attendees then had the ability to put these concepts into action through role playing unique scenarios. It was this portion of the training day that stood out for Pastor Jon-Michael Schweigert of Faith in Knob Noster. “I particularly liked the scenario training. Proverbs 27:17 reminds us, ‘As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another,’” he shares. “Being able to see the expertise of my fellow servants certainly sharpened my own pastoral care. We do better together!” The group looks forward to reconvening in June for another “Extend the Bench” training day with more attendees.

Rev. Schweigert in a Role Play Scenario



Airmen Pass Around MRE Lunch

The ABCs of Synodical Convention

This summer, the LCMS Synodical Convention will be held from July 29 – August 3 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The convention theme is “We Preach Christ Crucified”, based on 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. For anyone wondering what all happens at our national convention, check out the boxes below for some information.

What is a convention?

Conventions are an organizational structure conference that brings people together for worship, fellowship, and communication. There are also elections, discussions, and voting on reports, overtures, and resolutions.

Who can attend?

Anyone can attend the convention. The public are welcome to view the proceedings and visit the exhibitors for no fee. Voting representatives are established in advance. Check with your Circuit Visitor to see who your representative is.

Presidential Election

The presidential election occurs before the convention starts. Voting occurs electronically, and each eligible congregation has a lay and pastoral elector. [Nominations for Synod offices are available by clicking here.](#)

What are resolutions?

Resolutions are created from reports and overtures. They are voted on at the convention. They will be included in the publication of the first pre-convention “Today’s Business”.

What’s an overture?

Overtures are documents penned by congregations or districts that can suggest a mission emphasis; address current topics, challenges, or opportunities; and suggest amendments to the Synod Bylaws and Constitution. Overtures are given to the floor committees to be discussed and may become resolutions.

Keep Up to Date

There are multiple ways to follow along on all convention updates and proceedings.

Click below for:

[Watching proceedings via livestream;](#)
[Election Reports](#)
[Resolutions](#)





SHINE! 2023

We are in awe of everything God did through His children this spring. Food drives, yard work, clean up, construction projects, quilting, encouragement for first responders, visiting senior living centers, making meals, and so much more— thank you to the 10,000 people across the state who donned a blue shirt! You gave such a joyful witness for Jesus Christ while serving your neighbors.

It's been such a blessing for *SHINE!* grow over the years. Whether a group of 5 or 500, watching and serving alongside is a beautiful reflection on what it means to live out Matthew 5:16. We can't wait to *SHINE!* with you in 2024!



Word of Life: A Diverse and Thriving School



Word of Life has been a beacon of light in the south St. Louis neighborhood since 1973. Sustaining a school over so many decades in a neighborhood that is constantly changing is no small feat, yet Word of Life has a rich, diverse, and growing student body with over 200 students across three campuses.



Word of Life has several church partnerships, and they are intentional in cultivating a welcoming environment for people from all walks of life. It's more than simply a reflection of their neighborhood. They have worked hard to build an identity as described in Revelation 7:9 - After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. Joel Akridge, Word of Life's Marketing and Admissions Director, notes that many families drive from "a variety of areas of St. Louis from the more affluent neighborhoods to lower income. They send their children to us, some quite a few miles away, because they desire a high quality education that is in a loving, nurturing, and diverse environment."



One of the ways they do this is through their relationship with Christian Friends of New Americans, who serve refugee and new-to-America families. They work closely together, as CFNA Executive Director Rev. Dr. Stanley Stanish explains, "CFNA is grateful for its mission partnership with Word of Life Lutheran School because it facilitates the on-going Christ-centered growth and development of the 1.5 and 2nd generation New Americans (refugees & immigrants) with whom CFNA connects in St. Louis. By impacting this next generation of New Americans with the love and message of Jesus, Word of Life is contributing to Kingdom building while providing quality academic education to our new neighbors."

Word of Life not only looks around for ways to include their neighbors, but most importantly, they look to God. "From staff to students there is an expectation that Jesus' love is our focus and everything else flows from it," says Akridge, "The love of Jesus flows through everything we do and you can sense it from the classroom to the gym and it is something that can't be faked or manufactured. The spirit, the mission, within the halls is real. It is simply from the mission of the love of Jesus and a staff who is committed to not only sharing that love, but demonstrating it..."



We want to hear from you!

Our pastors, deaconesses, teachers, directors of family education, family ministry, and music ministry, and so many more work hard to support us and give the saving message of Christ crucified for us.

We are collecting stories of times where a church worker has made an impact in your life, like that fourth grade teacher that inspired you when things were difficult, the church musician that gave you piano lessons, or that pastor who came to support your dying relative in the middle of the night. These stories could be about a current church worker or one from years ago, and this is open to all ages and walks of life. (Church workers, we know people have inspired you too!)

Email submissions to elsa.mort@mo.lcms.org or you can connect with us via the phone at 314-590-6219.

Upcoming Events

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

July 27-28

School Administrators Conference

July 29-Aug 3

LCMS National Convention

Aug 24-25

New Church Worker Orientation

Oct 10-13

Professional Church Worker Conference

Interested in presenting at this conference? Click for details.



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD