

The VOICE

August 2023

Missouri District Newsletter



Back to School!

Pictured: Administrators' Conference

From the President's Desk

God Works All Things for Good

The pandemic wreaked havoc on all schools, but Lutheran schools have come out stronger on the other side. Missouri District schools have seen a 22% increase in enrollment over the past three years. Two things happened in public schools that led families to look at Lutheran schools. First, many parents spent significant amounts of time working with their children in public schools during online learning. What they discovered in some cases was that their children were being taught values that were not in line with their own. They found an educational agenda that was alarming to them and they began to look around for better options. Second, Lutheran schools returned to in-person learning far more quickly than most public schools. In many communities this led to families coming to Lutheran schools in 2021 or 2022 as they wanted to find schools that provided excellent education, but also values. When the families came to Lutheran schools, they have mostly stayed.

The last three years have provided an opportunity for Lutheran schools to show who we are and what we do. Our schools have shown love and care for the new families that have joined us and helped children to know who they are as children created in the image of God and for whom Christ died. Ultimately, it does not matter what led new families to our Lutheran schools. What matters is that we teach children and parents alike the good news of Jesus Christ and our place in the amazing world that He created.

From early childhood centers to elementary schools to high schools, we are thankful for each child and family we are able to reach. We pray that more and more children will come to our schools. While waiting lists are a nice problem to have for some of our schools, we never want any child to have to wait to receive a Christ-centered education. We are also thankful that one of our congregations is currently engaged in a feasibility study for beginning a new Lutheran school. This month as students return to our Lutheran schools, continue to pray for their vital work in teaching the faith to young children through young adults. May more and more children be blessed by a Lutheran school where they can grow in knowledge and faith as a child of God.

Fraternally in Christ,

R. Lee Hagan

President Lee Hagan



Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers Celebration Begins

Rev. Steve Resner of Immanuel Lutheran in Honey Creek says it was “a given” that he’d be a Lutheran church worker—either as a teacher or a pastor. As of June of 2023, he can now say he’s done both! After 36 years of teaching at a Lutheran school—24 of those years at Trinity Lutheran in Jefferson City—he was ordained and installed this summer as Immanuel’s pastor.

Professional church work vocations are actually commonplace in the Resner Family. In fact, there’s more than one Pastor Resner in the Missouri District! On the day of Steve’s ordination, the preacher was one he knew well—his son, Rev. Matthew Resner of Zion in Moberly.

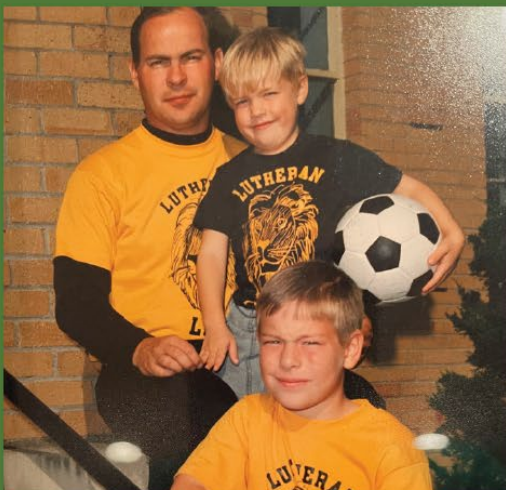
As is our custom each fall, the Missouri District celebrates Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers—the annual campaign to raise awareness of church work vocations and bolster financial support for those preparing to enter these roles. For more than 40 years, the Missouri District Student Aid Endowment has provided scholarships for students attending both seminaries and the Concordia University System.

Matthew Resner was a District scholarship recipient years ago and describes what it meant to him: “Without the support of those around me, I would’ve never made it to where I am. This includes things like my parents, my wife, extended family, friends, church members, and the District at large,” he shares. “There are so many people that have helped bring me to this point, and their support has included things like prayer, an encouraging word, and even financial assistance. Whether it was a gift card or a scholarship, it provided the encouragement and the help I needed to make it through my studies.”

Today we invite you to join many others across the District in being the encouragement for men and women as they prepare to be the next generation of church workers. Would you please prayerfully consider making a gift to the scholarship endowment that will provide support to those furthering their education in preparation for these roles in God’s kingdom? Gifts can be made online at mo.lcms.org/donate, via mail, or through your congregation’s offering plate.

Tomorrow’s Teachers & Preachers is a bold and joyful step taken by the Missouri District to address head-on the shortage of professional church workers within the LCMS. By God’s grace, and with His guidance, it is our prayer that workers within the harvest field will be plentiful well into the future.

TOMORROW'S Teachers & Preachers



SIMPLE STEPS FOR A CHRIST-CENTERED HOME

God's intent is for families to raise children with Jesus in the center of family life; through joy, sadness, calm, fear, health, illness— in any and all times. However, in today's culture, it can be challenging to establish a Christ-centered routine. Here are some simple first steps that your family can start today.

READ BIBLE STORIES Begin regularly reading the Bible as a family. Start with stories about the life of Jesus. Then talk about the story and ask questions based on the kids' age and comprehension levels, "Can you imagine how much fish there was to feed over 5,000 people?"

PRAY TOGETHER Take time to pray and talk with Jesus. This is a great opportunity for parents to model asking for forgiveness. Thank Him, ask Him for help, apologize for sins, and ask for His forgiveness. Faithful families include prayer as part of their regular routine in the morning, bedtimes, or mealtimes. When families talk about their day— the highs and the lows—a simple prayer thanking Jesus for the blessings received and asking Him for help puts Christ in the center of the family.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS Our District's Tell the Next Generation emphasis, the Family Discipleship Coaching Initiative, helps pastors and congregations connect and support families to live with Jesus every day.

In the coming weeks, two circuits are hosting Family Life events. Everyone is welcome to attend. Saturday, October 7, at Hanover Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau is the "Empowering Parents in their Role in Faith Formation" conference. And the Rolla Circuit is hosting a workshop "Joining Jesus as a Family" on Saturday, September 9 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at Redeemer in Rolla. This event will help parents become more intentional and practical in raising the next generation of Christians. Contact these churches for more information, and make Christ a central part of your family today.



Missions Across Missouri



Saint Trinity St. Louis

There has been a boom of kids in the building at Saint Trinity over the last few months. The amazing thing is they are kids from all over the world. Some are born and raised right in south St. Louis. But many have birth places like Uganda or Congo or Nepal, or Ethiopia or Eritrea.

Using a school building constructed by German immigrants a century ago, today there is a rich diversity of young people and adults gathering regularly for sports, food, conversations, music and activities and always with Jesus time. Built into all of these gatherings is an intentional time of telling and inviting these young people to know and trust the Savior that loves them and saves them no matter where their birth place is.

Through partnerships, Saint Trinity is becoming a hub of mission and is pushing heavily into a commitment to help "1.5" and second generation New Americans come to know Jesus, thrive in their new homeland and build friends and relationships with native Americans and others from around the world. Mission at Saint Trinity looks a lot like John's vision of heaven: "After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb." Revelation 7:9



Lutheran Student Center Warrensburg

The seeds planting in campus ministry take grow in many ways. For Jonathan Sharp and his wife, Bridgette, it took them to seminary! Jonathan and Bridgette were a couple at the Lutheran Student Center in Warrensburg, and moved to seminary so that Bridgette could enroll in the deaconess program. During their time there, Jonathan was moved to enroll in the M. Div program. This summer, now Pastor, Jonathan Sharp was ordained and installed. God leads faithful Lutherans from campus ministry to the mission field!



Good Shepherd Centralia

While looking for ways to expand their ministry into nearby communities, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church decided to partake of a Centralia event called "Second Saturdays", which runs from April through November. Vendors and food trucks from all over come to make this quite an occasion, not just for locals, but even visitors from larger towns like Mexico and Columbia.

Good Shepherd hosts a table with "Pray and Play". Visitors can do a fun activity and also meet with members to discuss life and make prayer requests.

Then, on Sundays, members have added special time during Sunday School to pray for the requests collected the Saturday before. It's a great way to engage and get to know the community, and lift up our neighbors in prayer.



COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

2 Corinthians 5:6-8

Administrators' Conference

This year's Summer Administrators' Conference was a great success! Over 60 administrators from across the state gathered in Columbia (a special thanks to Campus Lutheran for hosting!) The theme was "Courageous Leadership" and participants studied how to lead like a lion.

"The Summer Administrators Conference theme focused on Courageous Leadership in today's world. The keynote speaker, Jennie Williamson led inspiring conversations about God's healing and peace, how we are all unique and designed for God's purpose and calling in leadership ministry, how we utilize our gifts to provide LiFT for those we serve, and how we get to have courage in ministry because of God's promise to be with us."

Josh Swartz
Director of Schools



COLLEGE FAIR

NOVEMBER 4

10AM–2PM

CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

MEET REPS FROM THE CONCORDIA UNIVERSITIES,
LEARN ABOUT FINANCIAL AID AND MORE!



Come and meet with representatives from the Concordia Universities and both seminaries. Plus learn the latest information with presentations on topics like financial aid and tips for choosing a college.

The event is held on the campus of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis (in Sieck Hall.) This is a free, open house styled event, but participants who register qualify for prizes and get lunch provided. Watch our website and social media channels for updates.

Bring your questions and learn why our Concordias are amazing places to continue your education and grow your faith!

Upcoming Events

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

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| Aug 24-25 | New Church Worker Orientation |
| Sept 22 | New Teacher Orientation |
| Sept 23 | Reconciliation Seminar <i>(in Columbia)</i> |
| Sept 29-30 | Servant Leadership Academy I |
| Sept 30 | Reconciliation Seminar <i>(in Lee's Summit)</i> |
| Oct 10-13 | Professional Church Worker Conference |
| Nov 4 | College Fair |



Missouri District

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