

# The VOICE

June 2024

Missouri District Newsletter



**Summer Across Missouri**

*Pictured: Fun at Family Camp  
in Heit's Point*

# From the President's Desk

## Values and Priorities

"If you get the First Commandment right, everything else just falls into place after it." I remember being struck by that statement as a first-year seminary student. God is the Giver of all good gifts. When we look to Him for the highest good and the source of all that we need to support our bodies and souls, then we are not misled into the devil's schemes. However, there are so many things that vie for not just our attention, but the primary focus in our lives. It is so easy for people today to see God and the Church as choices on the buffet line of life. Some days you can sprinkle in a little bit of Christ and His Word with all of the other things. Other days, there is just no place for God in people's hectic lives.

The Church serves families well when parents are taught the primacy of the First Commandment. God is indeed a jealous God who will not share His glory with another and seeks the worship of His creatures as the fear, love and trust in Him above all things. While this is not intended to be another diatribe against the importance of athletics in our culture today, pastors and church leaders should not be afraid to address the First Commandment to families and how it is lived out on the calendar and with the bank account. How we spend our time and money demonstrates what we value. Families need help reconsidering their priorities and where God fits into their daily lives (more than just an hour one Sunday a month).

However, the Church serves families well by helping them to see that in weekly worship, Christ provides them forgiveness, life, salvation and strength for daily life. Worship is not what we do for God, but how He serves us. Like so many electronic devices that have been away from their charging station for too long, we need the power that is provided to us through the Word as it is preached, prayed and sung. What a blessing it is for parents and children who struggle with temptation each day to be able to hear that their sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Finally, Christ feeds and strengthens us with His very own body and blood so that we can live in this complicated world.

Worship is not optional. God commands it, but we also desperately need what He gives to us in the Divine Service. As the summer begins, families will be busy with a host of activities on a daily basis and may even be absent from worship. It is good for pastors and church leaders to remind them of the great blessings that we receive in worship and how God strengthens and sustains us there with His gifts.

Fraternally in Christ,

*R. Lee Hagan*

President Lee Hagan





## Family Camp a Success

This June served as the inaugural start to Family Camp, a weeklong opportunity to learn family discipleship skills while enjoying God's nature together. Dr. Mart Thompson, of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, served as Bible study leader and family discipleship skills facilitator.

From June 9 through 14, five family groups (with about 30 in attendance) gathered at Heit's Point on the lake in Lincoln, Missouri. Each day of camp would start with a group devotion outside. After breakfast, the group divided, parents had education time and kids got to play and explore and with the excellent camp counselors. After lunch, parents got to put into action what was learned in the morning. The days ended with community fun time and devotions around a fire pit. One attendee noted, "I have learned so much in the time that we've been here. It's exactly what I needed to hear."

There are already dates booked in 2025 and 2026 for more Family Camp. So, pencil in the second week of June for your family and take advantage of this great opportunity!



# Ministry in Spanish Lake

*"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:11

In the thick of any ministry, it can be easy to become discouraged by the context around you. In Urban ministry, this feeling seems to be accelerated in many ways by the geographical and sociological factors that come into play as well. It can be difficult to see the ways in which God is moving when you feel as if there are so many challenges. Has God left the building? Is His Word still working?

At St. Peter Lutheran Church in Spanish Lake—The Word of God is going out and not returning void. The church oversees a small farm in its backyard that grows plants/produce for the community. While the produce grows in the backyard from small seeds, the people of God grow in His House from small seeds as well—the ministry starts with the children.

Through the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Northside Urban Ministry Coalition (NUMC), new life is coming back to the community through the lives of young people. In an intentional partnership with neighborhood schools, the Spanish Lake Campus was able to serve over 75 different kids this school year with intentional after school programming. Each child not only received a healthy meal and a safe place to be after school, but they also received the Word of God through biblical study and devotion with loving Christian adults at our program. The Seeds of Hope Farm in the backyard of the congregation provided important agricultural learning as our kids learned about healthy habits/eating from the farmers! The ministry continues this summer as we invited those same children to attend full day Summer Camp! What an awesome summer it will be as we spread the Gospel for 8 hours a day at camp.

This is also an exciting time as God is adding new workers to the harvest to serve and help in the Spanish Lake Community. In addition to Pastor Bolling serving as Lead Pastor at Bethlehem, we have also brought on a new Associate Pastor—Pastor Chris Knepper. Pastor Knepper's role is be focused on community engagement on the Northside for our ministry sites—one of which is Spanish Lake. The goal is to engage Team Ministry so that the Gospel of Hope can be planted in many hearts and minds within the Spanish Lake community.

On the first day of summer camp—the kids planted seeds and were encouraged to watch them grow in the garden. We pray that just like the seeds of Hope planted in the ground, the Word of God would be planted in the hearts and minds of the children served daily at Spanish Lake and at all of Bethlehem's Northside ministry locations! It will certainly not return empty.





## Shared Ministry in Southwest Missouri

Shared Ministry is a great way for churches to engage in good stewardship of the gifts and resources that God has given to a congregation. It's also quite adaptable, as there are a variety of ways that churches can engage in shared ministry with one another. In Southwest Missouri, the congregations of Zion Lutheran Church in Bolivar and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Buffalo walk together in shared ministry.

Rev. Jeff Sippy is serving a pastoral call at Zion and Our Savior, which functions as one ministry with two geographic locations. Originally from Seattle, Washington, Pastor Sippy has served in Missouri for many years, including as a vacancy pastor at Our Savior when he got the call to serve in this shared ministry. Pastor Sippy notes, though, he didn't author this shared ministry idea, "Two congregations said, 'what would it look like if you were serving us'. I didn't author or develop it. I just think if you see something or someone in need, what solution do you bring to the table?" The shared ministry conversation started from congregational leaders from Zion and Our Savior early in 2023. Pastor Sippy was looped in November 2023, and officially installed in spring 2024. He serves both congregations, together.

It's a great relationship, with members from both churches invited to studies and events at the other congregation. Each church has a Sunday service. Pastor Sippy starts Sundays with an earlier service in one location, then drives 25 minutes to the next church and has a later morning service. Both congregations are visited by Pastor Sippy every day of the week, and he does visitations, Bible studies, and helps at fellowship and servant events.

It's a beautiful ministry and a great example of how walking together in ministry with other congregations is an excellent way to share resources and help spread the Gospel.



# From Friends to Family

## University Lutheran Chapel of Hope in Cape Girardeau

Students at the Campus Ministry in Cape Girardeau have had a great year! As part of their ministry, they host a free lunch and Bible study on Wednesdays. At the start of the 2023-2024 school year there were many new students to the ministry. Often students would have lunch and leave quickly after the study was completed. But, as the months progressed, the students spent more and more time together. By the time of the Christmas party, students gathered for worship at 3pm, and then stayed well into the night playing games. It's great seeing fellowship of believers coming together like a family!

In the spring, SEMO University held a big event for the total solar eclipse. There were bounce houses, inflatable rock-climbing walls, slides, food trucks, and more. Since the campus ministry at Lutheran Chapel is a registered organization with the university, they are able to participate in on-campus activities. So, Chapel of Hope had a table to meet people and increase visibility on campus. They handed out eclipse themed goodies, like Moon Pies, Milky Way candy bars, and Starbursts. They also handed out pamphlets and Portals of Prayer. Nicely done on a year of campus ministry!

If you are a student or have a student heading to a Missouri college or university this fall, it's easy to get connected to the LCMS campus ministry near you with the Campus Ministry Network. Visit [www.molcms.college](http://www.molcms.college), click on the school of attendance, fill out the short form, and the information will be passed on directly to that campus ministry. It only takes a couple of seconds to complete the form. The first 30 days on a college campus sets up habits for the whole year. Move into the next chapter of your life connected with your new Christian campus family!



# SHINE! has Biggest Year to Date

For the fourth year in a row, the Missouri District held SHINE!—the annual statewide servant event occurring each April. Based on Matthew 5:16, SHINE! encourages groups of all sizes and skillsets to serve their neighbors and be a witness for Jesus Christ. This year was the largest yet with approximately 10,800 participants from 150 groups. SHINE! has also now spread to four states. Additional teams from Illinois, Nebraska, and Virginia also headed out into their communities this spring.

As in previous years, participants were outfitted in the official servant event t-shirt. A huge thank you to the 2024 sponsors: Lutheran Church Extension Fund, Rod's Sports & Apparel, Concordia Plans, and Timothy Lutheran Church in Blue Springs. The teams looked great wearing the color red.

While the 10-day window for SHINE! may have passed for 2024, those serving this year were quick to share that glorifying God through service is something that can happen all the time. Matthew 5:16 is a way of life!

"You know, Jesus is the reason we do everything. And when He's not...He should be!" said Marilyn Haldiman, group leader for Redeemer Lutheran in Springfield. Her team cleaned and made repairs to the Lutheran Student Center at Missouri State University. "This is just a great reminder to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a place that needed a little 'shining.' No pun intended."

"The spotlight is always on God," added Shirley Jackson, group leader from Transfiguration Lutheran Church in St. Louis. "We're praising Him even when we don't know we're praising Him. Our walk, our talk, the things we do. We always have that opportunity to lift up God's name."

So until the Missouri District serves all together again in April of 2025, continue to shine His light for all to see!



# Continuing Education Opportunity!



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## Law, Virtue, and Life in Christ

*Dr. Gifford Grobien*

**July 8-10, 2024**

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Holy Cross,  
Kansas City

## It Stands Written

*Dr. Kevin Golden*

**July 29-31, 2024**

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Trinity,  
Springfield



## Upcoming Events

Visit [mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events](https://mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events) for more information on these events.

- Jun 22**      **LERT Basic Training**  
*Zion Lutheran, Macon*
- Jul 18-19**    **Summer Admin Conference**  
*Campus Lutheran, Columbia*
- Jul 22-26**    **Jesus Signs Workshop**  
*Immanuel Lutheran, St. Charles*
- Aug 22-23**    **New Called Worker Orientation**  
*Missouri District Office*
- Sep 20-21**    **New Teacher Orientation**  
*Margaritaville, Osage Beach*
- Sep 27-28**    **Servant Leadership Academy**  
*Missouri District Office*
- Oct 20-22**    **Pastors' Conference**  
*Margaritaville, Osage Beach*
- Nov 24-26**    **Educators' Conference**  
*Four Seasons, Lake Ozark*



Missouri District  
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