



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

September 27, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church!

One of the key tenets of Lutheran theology is that individual Christians are citizens of two kingdoms, the “right-hand kingdom” of the Church and the “left-hand kingdom” of the state. God works through both kingdoms, though in very different ways, to preserve and protect life (left-hand kingdom institutions and laws) and to bestow the gift of eternal life in Christ (right-hand kingdom means of grace). Christians are called to live and serve within *both* kingdoms. In the Table of Duties in the Small Catechism, Dr. Luther reminds Christians of their obligations to the state by quoting from the Scriptures (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:5-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14). Christians should not retreat from civic involvement. Instead, we should see that part of our calling from God as citizens is to engage in the processes of government and politics. We can fulfill this calling by educating ourselves on issues and participating in elections at the national, state, and local levels.

At the same time, we are mindful of Paul’s encouragement in 1 Timothy 2:1-3 to pray for all those in authority. We, as LCMS Christians, should be active in the “left-hand kingdom” of civil government, while producing the fruit of the Spirit as we do so (Galatians 5:22-23). We are not afraid to be involved, but we strive to avoid adding to the divisive rhetoric that is so common in our current political climate. An election year is a good time to remember this, and I want to take this opportunity to provide you with some resources as you exercise your calling as a citizen and encourage members of your congregation to do the same in the coming months.

I also want to address a particular piece of legislation that will be on the ballot at the upcoming election: Amendment 3, a proposed amendment to the State of Missouri’s constitution. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and her congregations have consistently spoken out on issues related to the sanctity of life. I am reminded of the words from Proverbs 31:8-9 to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Over the years, our church body has adopted many official resolutions related to the topic of the sanctity of life. The LCMS holds that “The Bible clearly states that the child in a mother’s womb is a living human being (Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:16; Is. 49:1, 5; Luke 1:41, 44)” and that “with one voice the LCMS in convention denounce any legislation or action that supports or funds abortions” (2010 Resolution 6-02A).

Please help fellow members of our Missouri District congregations to become aware of the ramifications of the potential adoption of Amendment 3. It would not just legalize abortion, but it would be an amendment to the Missouri constitution that essentially guarantees abortion under almost any circumstances with no meaningful caveats. The amendment would mandate abortion

access through all nine months of pregnancy, including the right to what are commonly called “late-term abortions.” It also would guarantee the “right” to an abortion — even among minors and without parental consent. Beyond this, the measure would repeal all relevant existing protections for women and children and prevent future ones from being put into place. It would also give public approval (and perhaps government funding) to abortions statewide for any reason at all.

Pastors and church leaders are strongly encouraged to educate members about Amendment 3 and how it relates to the clear, Scriptural position of the LCMS on the sanctity of life. The Missouri District will provide a bulletin insert that will help people to understand the ramifications of Amendment 3. Links to other resources regarding the LCMS position on the sanctity of life, the actual amendment language, and other related resources can be found at <https://mo.lcms.org/a-letter-from-president-hagan/>.

Finally, please pray for the upcoming elections from the local to the national level. Our hope is that members of Missouri District congregations, and all Missouri voters, will be informed and exercise their rights as citizens to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.” We also pray that the Church would be active in demonstrating Christ’s love and mercy to our neighbors in need, especially in caring for children and their mothers both before and after birth.

May God bless and guide your congregation and her leaders as you fulfill your vocations as citizens and speak up for life.

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Lee Hagan".

Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan

President

Missouri District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod