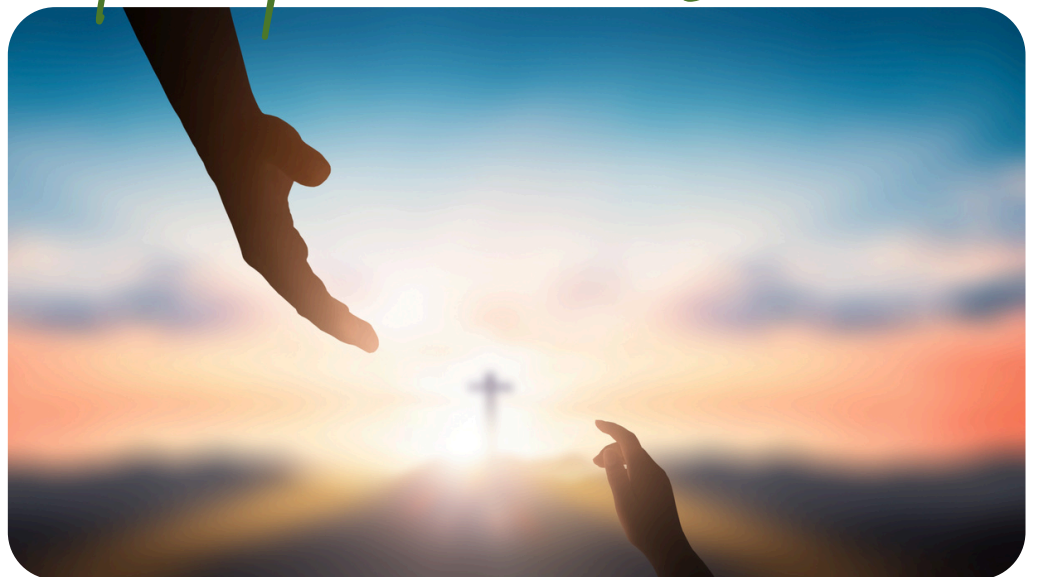




THE "VOICE"



"Faith, Hope, and Love"





From the President's Desk

"Faithful Teaching About Stewardship"

There are certain topics that pastors may be uncomfortable addressing in their preaching and teaching. However, faithfulness to the Lord and His Word means confronting even the hard topics whether corporately through preaching and teaching or individually through pastoral care. Christians are often uninformed if no one has ever intentionally taught them what the Scriptures have to say about the specific topic. Stewardship is frequently one such topic.

Many congregations are struggling in this particular area. For whatever reason, pastors and church leaders have been hesitant to address it in preaching and Bible classes. If our congregations are to be shaped and formed by the Word of God, then we need to confront this teaching of God's Word directly. It means confronting the sinful attitudes that often underlie the practice of our personal stewardship but also providing clear Christ-centered teaching about the gifts that we receive from God's gracious providing.

Pastors Nathan Meador and Heath Curtis wrote a small book, "Stewardship for the Care of Souls" that helps church leaders lay out a plan for addressing stewardship in the congregation. Pastor Curtis writes, "Changing the stewardship culture in a congregation is a big job. It must be based on and flow from the biblical message, and it must be approached with patience and wisdom." (p. 68-69)

My prayer is that pastors and church leaders will try to change the culture by teaching the whole counsel of God based upon His Word. There are good resources out there to assist congregations. If your congregation needs help in this area, contact our office so that we can talk about how to support you in the faithful teaching of God's Word about stewardship.

Fraternally in Christ,



R. Lee Hagan

DISTRICT CONVENTION: CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT

NOMINEE: REV. DR. R. LEE HAGAN

Home city and state:
St. Charles, MO

Seminary (location and year of graduation):
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, M.Div (1996); D.Min,
(2011)

Number of years in the Synod as a member of a congregation: 25
years

Present position:
President, Missouri District (since 2015)

01



DISTRICT CONVENTION: CANDIDATES FOR FIRST VP

01



NOMINEE: RANDY ASBURY

Home City, State, ZIP:
St. Louis, Missouri 63109

Seminary (including location and year of graduation):
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (M.Div.) 1990

Number of years in the Synod as a member of a congregation: 44

Present called position:
Sole Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri

NOMINEE: REV. RICHARD SCOTT CODY

Home City, State, ZIP:
St. Joseph, Missouri, 64505

Seminary (including location and year of graduation):
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, class of 1996

Number of years in the Synod as a member of a congregation: 54

Present called position:
Sole Pastor, St. Peter Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, Missouri

02



03



NOMINEE: REV. CRAIG D. OTTO

Home City, State, ZIP:
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

Seminary (including location and year of graduation):
Concordia Seminary—St. Louis 1995

Number of years in the Synod as a member of a congregation: 38

Present called position:
Senior Pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran in Lee's Summit

NOMINEE: JOHN FRIEDRICH PERLING

Home City, State, ZIP:
St. Robert, MO 65584

Seminary (including location and year of graduation):
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1997)

Number of years in the Synod as a member of a congregation: 54

Present called position:
Sole Pastor, Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, St. Robert, MO

04



NOMINEE: SAMUEL POWELL

Home City, State, ZIP:
Jefferson, City, MO 65101

Seminary (including location and year of graduation):
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Number of years in the Synod as a member of a congregation: 41

Present called position:
Senior Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Jefferson City, MO

05





Ministry FOCUS

One of the greatest challenges for church workers today is the high cost of ministry education and mounting college debt which creates financial stress. When personal debt distracts pastors and called workers from their work, congregations and schools suffer, and the result is that people don't hear about Jesus. MinistryFOCUS is a volunteer non-profit Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod that believes that the realities of educational debt negatively and irreparably harm ministries and congregations. Their goal is to raise money and award grants to help reduce and eliminate financial burdens, allowing ministry leaders to... well, focus on ministry.

On January 31, 2024, MinistryFOCUS proudly awarded \$165,000 in grants to 55 LCMS church workers in 19 states. Each individual \$3,000 grant will provide financial assistance to relieve the burdensome debt of pastors and other called workers. Since 2015, MinistryFOCUS has awarded 313 grants, totaling \$810,000 to pastors, Lutheran school teachers, directors of Christian outreach (DCOs), directors of Christian education (DCEs), and missionaries. Rev. Ken Krueger, President and Chairman of the Board of MinistryFOCUS relates, "Each year when I read the applications, I am struck by the dedication of so many of our called workers, even in the face of challenging financial realities. We pray that the grants we can award help rostered church workers focus on ministry, so that faith is strengthened and more people come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."

One recipient of a grant wrote, "Thank you so much [for the grant toward my student loans.] I am currently teaching full-time and working a second job to help pay back my student loans and some life expectancies. This grant will allow me to use Dave Ramsey's Debt Snowball Plan, helping me get out of debt sooner and eventually quitting my second job. That will "snowball" into having more time for re-energizing for ministry. Know that you have been in my prayers of thanksgiving, and I appreciate this very much."

Rostered church workers in need of debt relief can apply for the grants at the [MinistryFOCUS website](#) in Fall 2025 for 2026 grant awards. If you have resources and motivation to support these grants and relieve the burden of debt for church workers, please click the link on the MinistryFOCUS website to send a donation to this mission.



LCEF Rebranding

For decades, Lutheran Church Extension Fund has stood alongside The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), faithfully pursuing the mission of sharing Christ’s love with the world, while providing crucial ministry financial support.

As we unveil a bold, new look for LCEF, we reaffirm our dedication to the core values and mission that have always guided us, while paving a way for a stronger future.

This rebrand:

- Marks the beginning of a modern, enhanced experience for our investors, borrowers and partners.
- Will better equip us to meet the evolving needs of the ministries we serve.

We continue to serve LCMS churches, schools, organizations, workers and members with innovative financial solutions today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

Together, we will continue to build on the foundation laid by those who came before us, giving the church the resources it needs to reach more lives with the love of Christ. Our dedication to this mission is unwavering.

Join us as we confidently step into this new chapter.

Finance for the Faithful

Together in faith, we’ll unite resources to serve God’s kingdom.

Learn more about our rebrand at lcef.org/TogetherInFaith.



**LUTHERAN CHURCH
EXTENSION FUND**
FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS. TOGETHER IN FAITH.



INVESTMENTS



LOANS



MINISTRY SOLUTIONS



REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF’s Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks.

2025 DISTRICT YOUTH GATHERING



We are thrilled about "Believe!" The upcoming District Youth Gathering will take place April 4th-6th at the Cross Pointe Retreat Center. This exciting weekend is open to all youth from the Missouri District, grades 6-12. Whether you're a middle schooler or a high schooler, we've designed unique tracks to meet the needs of each age group, ensuring a meaningful experience for everyone.

Our Junior High youth will engage in a hands-on service project supporting Alaska missions. They'll help prepare materials for 300 children in Hooper Bay, Alaska, who will take part in a summer VBS. It's a unique chance to make a global impact while sharing God's love. Senior High youth will deepen their faith and leadership skills through YouthLead breakout sessions. These sessions will equip them to communicate effectively, serve with compassion, and become confident leaders within their church and community. Throughout the weekend, there will also be singing, worship, games, and plenty of fellowship - giving youth the opportunity to experience the joy of serving, learning, and celebrating together in Christ.

We're also excited to welcome Pastor Brian King from Webster Gardens Lutheran Church in St. Louis, MO, as our speaker for this year's gathering. Pastor King will guide us in exploring John 20:31, a powerful passage where God invites us to believe in Jesus as His Son.

He'll help us understand what it means to trust in God's identity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "God wants us to know who he is... God describes himself to us as Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, so we would believe and trust in him." We can't wait for you to experience this deep dive into faith and scripture with him! The registration deadline is March 5th, so be sure to sign up soon! Last year, over 400 middle school and high school youth, along with adult leaders, gathered for an unforgettable weekend. This year promises to be even bigger and better, with more opportunities to worship, learn, and grow in Christ.



For more details, including registration information, a video guide to assist you, and a sample schedule, visit the official event page: [District Youth Gathering Information](#). We can't wait to see you at the 2025 District Youth Gathering—get ready for an unforgettable weekend of faith, fun, and fellowship!

Upcoming Events

Apr. 4-13: SHINE!

Apr. 4-6: District Youth Gathering
Cross Pointe, Rocky Mount

June 6: Mental Health First Aid Training Session #2
Virtual

June 22-24: Missouri District Convention
Columbia, MO

July 19-23: LCMS National Youth Gathering
New Orleans

Aug. 1: Mental Health First Aid Training Session #3
Virtual



FIND AN OPPORTUNITY

Ask around your community.
The options are endless!



SERVE

Pick a day and time that
works well for your team!



GET AMAZING T-SHIRTS FOR YOUR GROUP

Be sure to send us a picture of
your group in your gear!

QUESTIONS?

Contact Leah Sieveking
Director of Mission Advancement
leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org
314-590-6211

Shine!