

March 2025

# The VOICE



## OUR MISSION

The Missouri District is to serve and encourage congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and to promote unity of the true faith. Follow us on social media for more photos and updates on events happening throughout the Missouri District! Pictured above, Pastor Brandon Boos, from Faith Lutheran Oakville in St. Louis, Mo., spoke on "Living Life's Purpose as Followers of Christ" during the annual Go Leadership Retreat, held Feb. 28–March 1 at Campus Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo. *Photo: Leah Sieveking.* Pictured below, the installation of Rev. Erik Johnson as sole pastor at Concordia Lutheran in Maplewood. *Photo: Kati Gaschler*



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# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends,

*“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” (Mark 1:35 ESV)*

As the Lenten season begins, our Lord sets for us a godly discipline of seeking out a quiet place for prayer. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus frequently escaped from the crowds and the disciples for a time alone in prayer. In such times, He turned to His Father for strength and prayed that the Father’s will would be done. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, the words He gave them are similar with His own prayers.

One of my favorite parts of vicarage was being able to walk into the church sanctuary and spend time in prayer. The beauty and the solitude of the empty space provided a regular invitation to step away from my office and to-do lists to sit in the church pews, read from the Psalms, and pray. The congregation also had a side chapel that was the perfect space for escaping from the overwhelming responsibilities of daily life and turn to the Lord in prayer. Still today, I slip into the chapel at Lutheran Hour Ministries for a time of quiet prayer.

Prayer is a godly discipline for all seasons of the church year and life. You do not have to escape into a church sanctuary for such time; Jesus’ pattern of finding a solitary place is a good practice wherever that may be. During this Lenten season, it is especially fitting for us to seek the Father’s will by focusing our hearts and minds on Christ and His offering of Himself on the throne of the cross.

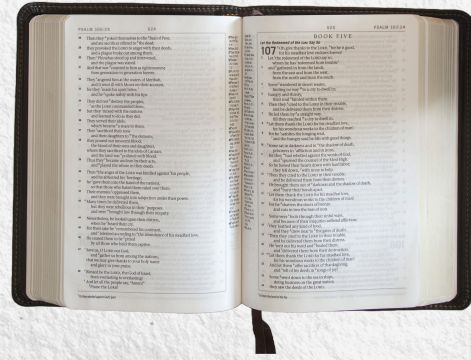
May God bless your Lenten journey as you devote yourselves to prayer and seeking the Father’s will.

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

# Biblical Self-Care



BY JOSH SWARTZ

Thirty-seven educational leaders gathered at Campus Lutheran in Columbia, Mo., on Feb. 7, 2025, for the Mid-Year Administrators' Conference. Themed Biblical Self-Care: Reflecting God's Design for Healthy Ministry, the conference emphasized the importance of self-care as an essential component of effective leadership and service.

Participants explored the biblical foundation of self-care, recognizing that caring for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is not selfish but a responsibility God gives. Guided by 1 Cor. 6:19-20, they reflected on how maintaining their health allows them to serve others more effectively. Through self-assessment exercises, they identified personal strengths and areas for growth, gaining greater clarity on how their unique circumstances fit into God's holistic design for well-being.

Another key focus of the conference was the science of habit formation. Attendees learned how small, consistent actions can create lasting positive change, both personally and professionally. Practical strategies were introduced to help participants establish sustainable routines, overcome obstacles, and develop habits that align with their faith and responsibilities.

By the end of the conference, participants had a deeper understanding of biblical self-care, an awareness of their personal health strengths and challenges, and the tools to implement new habits. They left equipped with actionable steps and a personalized plan to foster long-term well-being. With these insights, they are better prepared to sustain their energy, avoid burnout, and serve their schools while honoring God's design for a balanced and healthy life.

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*Josh Swartz is the director of schools at the LCMS Missouri District.*

**"Self-care is not selfish but a responsibility entrusted to us by God."**

— JOSH SWARTZ

*Pictured below: Brandy McCoid, keynote speaker at this year's conference, combines her master's in theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and eight years as an American Council on Exercise (ACE) certified health coach to help Christians root their health journey in Biblical truths through Bethel Wellness. Outside of coaching, she's a triathlete and mom of four.*



# LEA Recognizes Individuals with 2025 Awards

BY JOSH SWARTZ

The Lutheran Education Association (LEA) has honored three outstanding individuals for their dedication to Lutheran education and outreach. Dee Leible has been named Distinguished Lutheran Middle School Teacher, John Maas has been selected for the Distinguished Retired Lutheran Educator EncourAGING Award, and Kris Schuldt has been recognized as LEA's Leader in Outreach.



**Dee Leible**

Faith-Driven Teaching

Dee Leible, a middle school teacher at Christ Community Lutheran School in Kirkwood, Mo., has been honored for her excellence in education. As a fifth-grade homeroom teacher, she leads discipleship, math, and technology courses while also teaching seventh-grade math and coaching the Youth Coding League for grades 5-8. Leible's passion for integrating faith into education is evident in her teaching. Parents praise her Christ-centered approach; every conversation and lesson reflects her devotion. Her pastor commends her ability to weave faith into math instruction, providing students with a strong spiritual and academic foundation. Described as a "superstar teacher," Leible effectively incorporates technology and experiential learning to challenge and inspire her students. Her mission is to glorify God through humility, curiosity, and love, fostering a classroom where faith and learning thrive.



**John Maas**

A Lifetime of Service

John Maas, a retired educator with 41 years of service, most recently taught at Martin Luther Academy in Kansas City, Mo., where he continues volunteering. He founded the Scooter Club, mentoring students in small engine repairs, remodeling, and model train projects. Maas also plays a key role in school events, ensuring lighting, sound, and setup run smoothly. Beyond the classroom, Maas remains deeply involved in his church and community, serving on multiple committees, mentoring Confirmation students, and playing in the handbell choir. He also repairs bikes for children and fixes cars for those in need. His lifelong commitment to faith and service makes him a deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

**"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10, ESV)**



**Kris Schuldt**

Leading Outreach with Compassion

Kris Schuldt has been selected by LEA's Board of Directors to receive the Leader in Outreach Award, recognizing his commitment to incorporating outreach into ministry while proclaiming Christ's message. As Missouri District Disaster Response Coordinator, Schuldt leads LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) to provide relief to disaster-affected communities. He describes LERT as a Mission of Mercy and Presence, demonstrating Christ's love through service and compassion. His leadership emphasizes cultural sensitivity, patience, and kindness in assisting survivors. A colleague describes Schuldt as a leader who "puts the person in need before the physical work," valuing listening as a key tool in disaster relief. His faith is evident in his actions, from leading scripture and prayer before work to offering peace in chaotic situations. His pastor affirms, "Kris epitomizes what it means to be a follower of Jesus, taking the Great Commission to heart." His unwavering commitment to outreach makes him a deserving recipient of this award.

We give thanks to God for John Maas, Dee Leible, and Kris Schuldt (read more on Page 6). They continue to exemplify the heart of Lutheran education and outreach, using their talents to serve students, schools, churches, and communities. Their dedication to faith, service, and education inspires many.

# Wonder-Filled Days at Family Camp

BY DCE PAM NUMMELA

Parents! Family Camp is a **wonderful** way to “Tell the Next Generation” about the **wonders** God has done and encourage them to set their hope in God!

Families often want to grow in their practice of faith habits but don't know exactly how or find themselves frustrated by the distractions in the whirlwind of daily life. At Family Camp, families spend five **wonderful** days learning and growing in their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about living their faith at home in the middle of God's **wonderful** creation, all while enjoying the joy and fun of time together.

Last summer, families found it to be a great “vacation with purpose!” One mom, who was interested in ways for her family to grow in faith together, loved the three meals a day and the family fun! Family Camp exceeded her expectations—it was **wonderful!**



## Wonderful for kids!

Kids spend the week with parents and a **wonderful** group of camp counselors who love Jesus and who are there to share God's Word and their love for Jesus. Counselors engage with the kids and parents as they swim in the lake, fish, canoe, hike, play games, and have a **wonderful** time! Watching campers try new skills and have **wonderful** adventures led by counselors was a highlight of 2024!

## Wonderful for pastors and congregations!

Add Family Camp to the ways your congregation enables parents to grow in their faith-at-home practices! Identify families eager to build skills, make sure they know about this opportunity, and, if needed, provide support such as funding and other encouragements to make attendance possible! The result? We trust our God to work His **wonders** in and through those families as they return home and share their faith using the practical skills they learned. **Wonderful!**

## Wonderful learning!

Families at Camp will explore how to DO spiritual habits, SYNC family relationships, SAY spiritual conversations, SERVE as a family, and PARTNER with their congregation.

## What a wonderful opportunity!

Parents and children go home knowing more about God's **wonderful** plan for their family and how to live with Jesus now and forever!

*DCE Pam Nummela is the family discipleship coaching facilitator at the LCMS Missouri District.*

## UPCOMING EVENT



### Family Camp

Date: June 8-13, 2025  
Registration is open now!  
Check out the details at [Heit's Point Ministries Family Camp](#).

### Wonderful leaders!

Pictured above with their family are Rev. Dr. Mart and Cheryl Thompson. Mart currently serves at Concordia Seminary and also served as a pastor. Cheryl is a licensed professional counselor, trained in Gottman Couples Therapy and certified as a Prepare and Enrich Facilitator.

# BOLD HOPE IN CHRIST

2 CORINTHIANS 3:12

MISSOURI DISTRICT CONVENTION  
JUNE 22-24, 2025

The Missouri District Convention will be June 22-24, 2025, at the Wyndham Executive Center in Columbia, Mo. Links are now available on the [District Convention webpage](#) to reserve a hotel room at our group rate at the Wyndham Executive Center (formerly the Holiday Inn) or at the nearby Drury Inn & Suites Columbia Stadium Boulevard.

The theme for this District Convention is “Bold Hope in Christ” based upon 2 Cor. 3:12. Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology Rev. Dr. Kevin Golden at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will serve as the District Convention essayist. The Divine Service will take place 7 p.m. Sunday, June 22, at the District Convention Hall, hosted by St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Concordia, Mo. LCMS First Vice-President Rev. Peter Lange will serve as the guest preacher and will present the Synod report to the convention. LCMS Second Vice-President Rev. Benjamin Ball will also be in attendance.

**"Since we have  
such hope, we  
are very bold."**

(2 Cor. 3:12, ESV)

The District Convention floor committees met Feb. 22 to review overtures and reports. The committees have prepared 21 resolutions for the District Convention’s consideration. These resolutions, reports, and nominee information will be included in the 2025 Missouri District Convention Workbook, which will be available on the LCMS Missouri District website by March 31, 2025. Questions or feedback regarding the resolutions can be directed to the chairman of the appropriate floor committee at least one week prior to the District Convention (see LCMS Handbook 3.1.8.1a).



Registration is still open for pastoral voting, lay voting, and advisory delegates. Please mail pastoral and lay delegate forms as soon as possible. Pastoral and lay delegates must also register online. Advisory delegates only need to register online, and alternate delegates do not need to register online. For questions regarding registration or housing, please contact Sue Thompson, events assistant at the LCMS Missouri District office.



*2022 Missouri District Convention moments pictured left and above.*

# RESPONDING WITH PURPOSE

BY REV. MARTY HASZ, LPC

## WHAT IS LERT?

Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT), composed of individuals from LCMS congregations who work collaboratively with people from the community, provide assistance during times of need. Sometimes, Christians may feel distant and unsure of how to help those affected by disasters, but LERT offers a hands-on avenue for the church to get involved and support those in need. However, LERT is not just for disaster response—teams also remain active during "peace time," providing ongoing service to their communities.

## PREPARATION

Teams receive training in a one-day workshop designed by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) church body. With the Gospel at the ready, LERT prepares us to joyfully and faithfully engage with neighbors and build up the Body of Christ.

Pastors and church workers experience great joy in ministry when church members engage in training events led by our Missouri District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC) Kris Schuldt. Congregations are encouraged to consider the collaborative ministry opportunities of LERT to be at the ready as a strong local ministry support for their congregation, neighbors, community, and leaders.



*Kris Schuldt, pictured center left.*

## SCHULDT'S LEADERSHIP

In the last couple of years, the Missouri District has been blessed with the volunteer service of Kris Schuldt, a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wentzville, Mo., who is receiving the Lutheran Education Association's (LEA) 2025 Leader in Outreach award. Schuldt has led a LERT team in the area, supported by many volunteers throughout the district, especially as ministry support is advanced through LERT training events.

"Missouri District's LERT volunteers were very busy in 2024. Men, women, and youth were deployed to assist with tree damage after five different tornadoes touched down across the state. Volunteers also deployed in several local Missions of Mercy. LERT teams statewide also began conducting repairs, cleanup, tree work, and other restoration efforts at Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Frohna, Mo. This project is anticipated to span

two to three years," said Schuldt. "Additionally, five Basic LERT classes, two chainsaw classes, and one advanced first aid class were taught in 2024. In 2025, three Basic LERT classes, and one chainsaw class are scheduled with additional classes in the planning stages. Two new chainsaw instructors were certified in 2024, and in 2025, three new Basic LERT instructors are in the process of being certified."

## LEARN MORE

For more information about the LERT program, to inquire about setting up a class or team in a local congregation, or scheduling a short presentation about LERT, please contact DDRC Kris Schuldt at [pitchatentofmeeting@gmail.com](mailto:pitchatentofmeeting@gmail.com). For additional details, visit the Synod website at [lcms-lert.org](https://www.lcms-lert.org)

*Rev. Marty Hasz, LPC, is the director of church worker support at the LCMS Missouri District.*

# SHINE! Registration Now Open



The LCMS Missouri District will “SHINE!” for the fifth consecutive year in our statewide servant event, taking place from April 4-13, 2025. Based on Matt. 5:16, these 10 days of service encourage groups of all ages and skill sets to serve their neighbors and be a witness for Jesus Christ. **The process is simple:**

- **Form a Team:** Round up your family, friends, and classmates—everyone is welcome!
- **Identify a Need:** Find a neighbor or organization in need of help.
- **Register:** Sign up with the Missouri District at [mo.lcms.org/shine](https://mo.lcms.org/shine).
- **Serve:** Use those God-given skills to bless others!

While the cutoff for complimentary servant event t-shirts has passed, we’re excited to share that Rod’s Sports & Apparel has created an online store for teams to purchase shirts at a discounted rate. Orders must be placed by Tuesday, March 25, 2025. Stay tuned for more updates and information via the Missouri District website and social media. We can’t wait to see you all in action this spring. Shine on, Missouri District!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

APR  
4-6

### DISTRICT YOUTH GATHERING

Cross Pointe Retreat Center, Rocky Mount, MO

JUN  
22-24

### MISSOURI DISTRICT CONVENTION

Wyndham Executive Center, Columbia, MO

JUL  
23

### LCMS YOUTH GATHERING DISTRICT EVENT

The Bayou Barn, Marrero, LA

LEARN MORE!



[mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events](https://mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events)  
Phone: 314-590-6200



## A LOOK AHEAD

MAY 16-18: PASTORS' WIVES' RETREAT  
JULY 17-18: SUMMER ADMINISTRATOR'S CONFERENCE

OCT. 12-14: PASTORS' CONFERENCE  
NOV. 8: TELL THE NEXT GENERATION CONFERENCE