

May 2025

The VOICE

FEATURES

- 1 FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 2 CALL DAY SERVICES SEVEN OF THE WORD
ASSIGNMENT
OF VICARAGES AND
DEACONESS INTERSHIPS
- 3 CALL DAY SERVICES
- 4 SHINE! THE SECOND WEEK OF EASTER
- 5 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
- 6 CHANGE IN DISTRICT MISSION STAFF
- 7 UPCOMING EVENTS

The Missouri District is to serve and encourage congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and to promote unity of the true faith. Pictured above: Deaconess Intern Pamula Vue, before the Call Day vicarage and internship service at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

Photo: Christie Hampton

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,



The celebration of Martin Luther's 500th birthday in 1983 began a series of celebrations that have only increased since 2017. June 13, 2025, marks the 500th anniversary of Martin and Katie Luther's wedding. The significance of that event cannot be understated for both the Church and the home.

Luther's action followed the marriage of other pastors supportive of the Reformation, but it also encouraged priests to marry—a topic later addressed in the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIII.

Additionally, Luther's experience as a husband and father deeply influenced his writings throughout the rest of his life. In particular, his doctrine of vocation offered practical applications for Christians living out their unique callings. The Table of Duties in Luther's Small Catechism helps Christians see how they serve God in their vocations—whether in the home, church, or society—according to their God-given positions, including as husbands or wives.

Lutheran theology is not theoretical or cerebral—it is theology for ordinary life. The fact that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus' saving work on the cross means that we are free to serve God in our varied callings. Christians do not have to flee from the world to a monastery or go to the other side of the world to serve as a missionary. We serve God in our church, home, workplaces, and community. From Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian* to the Table of Duties in Luther's Small Catechism, Luther shows us how to live out our callings from God.

This summer, amidst many wedding and anniversary celebrations, take a moment to give thanks to God for the marriage of Martin and Katie Luther—and for the example of faithful Christians who serve one another in love. May God bless us as we serve one another in all our various callings, especially in the sacred calling of marriage, as husbands and wives, serving one another.

Fraternally in Christ,

R. Lee Hagan

President Lee Hagan

CELEBRATING CALL DAY SERVICES

BY CHRISTIE HAMPTON

The 2025 Call Day events at our seminaries April 28–30 were filled with joy and celebration as seminarians from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind., and Concordia Seminary (CSL) in St. Louis, Mo., received their pastoral and diaconal ministry placements, as well as vicarage and internship assignments. This milestone marks a significant step in their journey to serve congregations and ministries within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Please continue to pray for these men and women.

CALLS INTO THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

CTSFW SEMINARIANS

CSL SEMINARIANS



Daniel Heitschusen
Sole Pastor
Grace Lutheran Church
Aurora, MO



Jonathan Anderson
Missionary
LCMS Board of
International Mission,
St. Louis, MO



Christopher Shearman
Executive Director / Sole Pastor
Lutheran Development Group
St. Louis, MO



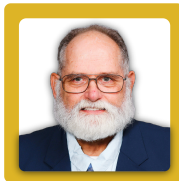
Brett Arrasmith
Sole Pastor
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Marshall, MO



James "Brock" Stockland
Sole Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church
Clinton, MO



Eric Bear
Chaplain
LCMS Board of National Mission,
Ministry to the Armed Forces
St. Louis, MO



Daniel Wallis
Sole Pastor
Holy Cross Deaf Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO



Ryan Groh
Sole Pastor
St. Johns Lutheran churches
Schubert and Babbtown, MO



Benjamin Wescoatt
Sole Pastor
St. John Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO

CALL INTO THE DIACONAL MINISTRY



Jessica Thompson
Program Manager
Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, Inc.
St. Louis, MO

If you want to watch the livestreams, recordings of the services are available online:

- ctsfw.regfox.com/2025-call-day
- csl.edu/call-day

VICARAGES



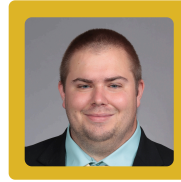
William Bible
Vicar
Village Lutheran Church
Ladue, MO



Ryan Pfendler
Vicar
Messiah Lutheran Church
Weldon Spring, MO



Nathan Bublitz
Vicar
Hanover Lutheran Church
Cape Girardeau, MO



Ryan Philpot
Vicar
St. Paul Lutheran Church
St. Joseph, MO



Meseret Gobena
Vicar
Christ Memorial Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO



Steven Steingraber
Vicar
Immanuel Lutheran Church
St. Charles, MO



Justin Hilton
Vicar
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Olivette, MO



Luke Symmank
Vicar
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO



Gavin Johnson
Vicar
LCMS Board of International Mission
St. Louis, MO



Marius-Sergiu Trifa
Vicar
LCMS Board of International Mission
St. Louis, MO



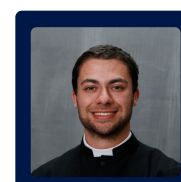
Robert Laird
Vicar
Our Savior Lutheran Church
St. Charles, MO



Zachary Turley
Vicar
LCMS Board of International Mission
St. Louis, MO



Noah Oloff
Vicar
Trinity Lutheran Church
Springfield, MO

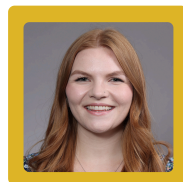


Peter Williams
Vicar
LCMS Board of International Mission
St. Louis, MO

DEACONESS INTERNSHIPS



Aine Molvic
Deaconess Intern
LCMS Office for
National Mission
St. Louis, MO



Abigail Reynolds
Deaconess Intern
Peace
Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO



Pamela Vue
Deaconess Intern
Bethlehem
Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO

Christie Hampton is communications specialist at the LCMS Missouri District.



SHINE! **Has Biggest Year Yet**

BY LEAH SIEVEKING

More than 11,000 men, women, and children served this spring in the Missouri District's annual statewide servant event rooted in Matt. 5:16. Now in its fifth year, *SHINE!* 2025 set new records for both the number of participants and registered groups. Although the official window for service ran from April 4–13, many groups continued serving well into May.

SHINE! encourages people of all ages, skill sets, and group sizes to share the light of Christ by serving their neighbors. "Serving the neighbor is part of what our faith is. It's what Jesus has instructed: to love your neighbor as He has loved us," says Rev. Steve Andrews of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Lee's Summit. Members of his congregation served at a food pantry, assembled hygiene kits, and delivered cookies to local fire stations.

"Jesus has instructed: to love your neighbor as He has loved us."

— REV. STEVE ANDREWS

Many participants wore the official *SHINE!* t-shirt, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors including Rod's Sports & Apparel, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), Concordia Plans, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's (LCMS) Disaster Response, and Timothy Lutheran Church in Blue Springs. With most service projects taking place during Lent, wearing purple was a fitting visual reminder of the Church Year season.

Amanda Cole, Principal at Springfield Lutheran School, and her staff provided a meal for students attending Missouri State University. "We do this because of our love for Him," she said. "It's such a great way to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ. And to those who maybe don't know about Christ, what an opportunity for them to see others serving."

What began in Missouri in 2021 is now growing beyond state lines. In 2023, the Northern Illinois District joined in *SHINE!* efforts and the Nebraska District joined a year later in 2024. Be sure to check the social media channels of all three districts for photos, encouragement, and creative ideas for how your group can continue living out Matt. 5:16 all year long. Shine on, Missouri District!

Pictured: student Prin Scott,
serving April 11 at
Child of God Lutheran School
in St. Peters, Mo.

Photo: Christie Hampton.
Leah Sieveking is director of
mission advancement at the
LCMS Missouri District.

Mental Health Awareness in the Missouri District

BY REV. MARTY HASZ, LPC

May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month in Missouri, offering a timely opportunity, following Easter, to reflect on the hope of Christ's resurrection and the ongoing need for emotional and spiritual care, especially for those serving in ministry. To support church and school workers, the Missouri District is partnering with Concordia Plans to offer free, nationally accredited Adult Mental Health First Aid training. While the **June 6 session is now full**, additional opportunities are available **Aug. 1 and 8**. This virtual training equips participants to recognize mental health symptoms, respond to crises, and connect others with appropriate care. Topics include signs of mental, emotional, and relational fatigue and challenges; trauma and resilience; crisis response; and self-care strategies. The training consists of two hours of self-paced pre-work (due 48 hours prior) and a one-day, 6.5-hour live virtual session. [Register here!](#)



Building Support Teams for Workers

Congregations are also encouraged to form church and school worker support teams to foster healthy, ongoing environments of mutual encouragement. One such model is active at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in O'Fallon, inspired by *Holding Up the Prophet's Hands* by Rev. Dr. Bruce Hartung. A YouTube video resource is available to assist you in developing a [Church Worker Support Team](#) in your ministry.

Lasting hope in Jesus Christ

In the face of anxiety, grief, and emotional strain, we find lasting hope in our resurrected Lord Jesus. His victory over death offers both eternal assurance and daily strength. Though our struggles are rooted in sin's brokenness, in Christ, we are never without help or hope.

Faith-Based Mental Health Tools

This initiative complements The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod program [Upheld by God's Hand](#), which offers a theological foundation for mental health support and access to suicide prevention programs such as LivingWorks and QPR Institute.

Caring for Those Who Serve

Missouri District church and school workers seeking professional counseling services, support information, and guidance—including how to choose a counselor—may contact Rev. Marty Hasz, LPC, Director of Church Worker Support, at marty.hasz@mo.lcms.org.

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

Director of Mission Services
Rev. Bill Geis, who has served
the LCMS Missouri District,
has accepted a position as
VP and Chief Organizational
Development Officer with
Lutheran Child and Family
Services (LCFS) of Illinois. He
will conclude his service with
the District on May 15.

He has faithfully served the
District since 2017 and has over
35 years of ministry experience,
including 27 years in
parish ministry.

Seeking the Next Director of Mission Services

The Missouri District is now beginning
the search process for a new Director of
Mission Services. For more information
or to review the ministry description,
please contact Executive Director of
Congregational Services, Rev. Peter Kirby,
at peter.kirby@mo.lcms.org or
314-590-6221. Nominations should
be submitted by June 30, 2025.

The Director of Mission Services
oversees the District's mission grant
process and coordinates mission work in
five key areas:

- Church planting
- Rural/small-town ministry
- Urban ministry
- Ethnic ministry
- Campus ministry

Change in District Mission Staff



Throughout his time with the District,
Geis has been a strong advocate for
missions and shared ministry.

His leadership helped strengthen
rural ministry efforts, expand mission
partnerships in urban areas, develop
missional leadership, and guide new
church planting initiatives across
Missouri. In his new role, Bill will
serve LCFS and its advocacy for
children and families.

Those wishing to extend their thanks
or well-wishes to Geis may do so
by contacting him at
wsgeis314@outlook.com.

We are grateful for his years of faithful
service and ask God's continued
blessings on his new ministry
in Illinois.



BOLD HOPE IN CHRIST

2 CORINTHIANS 3:12

MISSOURI DISTRICT CONVENTION
JUNE 22-24, 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUN
6

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Virtual training for church and school workers

JUN
22-24

MISSOURI DISTRICT CONVENTION

Wyndham Executive Center, Columbia, MO

JUL
17-18

ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE

Campus Lutheran Church, Columbia, MO

LEARN MORE!



mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events
Phone: 314-590-6200



A LOOK AHEAD

JULY 19-23: LCMS Youth Gathering
JULY 23: LCMS Youth Gathering Missouri District Event