



## Tell the Next Generation Conference

**“Guided by God’s Truth”**

**November 8, 2025**

**Lutheran High School - St. Charles**

### Breakout Sessions

#### Sectional A – 10:05 a.m.

Sectional	Title	Facilitator
A-1	Family Discipleship in Small Congregations	Dan Hall
A-2	Scrolling Minds: Hidden Impact of Social Media	DCE Christina Stackle
A-3	Equipping Parents to Lead Homes in Faith Formation	Hannah Knehans, DFLM
A-4	Bible, Catechism and Hymnal: Key for Growing Faith at Home	DCE Pam Nummela
A-5	Family Camp	Rev. Dr. W. Mart & Cheryl Thompson

#### **A-1: Family Discipleship in Small Congregations**

How we can grow Family Discipleship in congregations with very few, or even no children. Topics include a broader definition of Family Discipleship, doing more with less, collaborating within our circuits, and a simple process to use Family Discipleship to grow our congregations. You will leave with something you can implement right away!

##### **Dan Hall**

Dan Hall started in ministry as a Lutheran School teacher, and then a principal. Then worked in curriculum development, personal finance, overseas missions, and is now the Family Ministry Coach for the Rolla Circuit in the Missouri District. He and his wife Dawn have six adult children, and nine grandchildren so far. He loves finding simple, creative ways to make disciples who live the truth of God's Word.

#### **A-2: Scrolling Minds: Hidden Impact of Social Media**

We will be discussing the hidden impact of social media on youth and how parents can guide the way.

##### **DCE Christina Stackle**

DCE Christina Stackle has been a DCE for 26 years and currently serves at Peace Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Mo. She has the privilege of navigating life together with her husband, Ed. Together, their goal is to love their two teenage children to heaven. Jacob (18) and Hannah (15).

#### **A-3: Equipping Parents to Lead Their Homes in Faith Formation**

Most Christian parents want to raise their children in the faith, but they feel unqualified. Congregations are uniquely equipped to provide parents with education and resources which will help them create an intentional plan for faith formation in the home. Learn practical strategies for congregational parent education.

## **Hannah Knehans, DFLM**

Hannah Knehans has served as the Director of Family Life Ministry (DFLM) at Trinity Lutheran Church in Springfield, Mo. since 2020. She is passionate about equipping her congregation to confidently lead their homes in family discipleship and daily practices of faith formation. Hannah's highest priorities are her vocations as baptized child of God, wife, and mother.

### **A-4: The Bible, the Catechism, and the Hymnal: Key for Growing Faith at Home**

God will be at work as families read the Bible and Luther's Small Catechism at home. Asking the questions like "What does this mean for *us*?" lead to spiritual conversations. Families can use the resources in the Hymnal to worship the Lord all seven days of the week. Encourage all of God's children to use and treasure these three gifts of God.

## **DCE Pam Nummela**

DCE Pam Nummela serves the Missouri District as Lead Facilitator for Family Discipleship. Officially "retired," she is glad to connect with pastors, other workers, lay people about growing faith at home.

### **A-5: Family Camp: To Facilitate Family Discipleship in Homes and Congregations**

The Thompsons will describe a week-long Family Camp that facilitates family discipleship practices. This can be done at a district camp or as a congregational activity. They will share how they teach practices to support the home with spiritual habits, family relationships (including discipline), spiritual conversations, and family service activity in a partnership of home and congregation, all for the sake of effectively raising children in the faith for life.

## **Rev. Dr. W. Mart Thompson**

Rev. Dr. W. Mart Thompson (D.Min.) is associate professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Family discipleship and whole life catechesis are among his specialties. Prior to being called to the Seminary faculty, for three decades he served as a campus pastor, sole pastor, and senior pastor in congregations. He is an author and presenter at workshops and conferences on raising children in the faith.

## **Cheryl Thompson**

Cheryl Thompson is a retired Licensed Professional Counselor. She has worked with children, couples, and individual adults using her specialized training in addressing anxiety, mood and trauma disorders. She has extensive training in Gottman Couples Therapy, working with master trainers from the Gottman Institute. Cheryl is also a certified Prepare and Enrich Facilitator. Mart and Cheryl are blessed with three children who are married and have children of their own. Thankfully, the family discipleship legacy continues in all of their homes.

### **Sectional B – 1:25 p.m.**

Sectional	Title	Facilitator
B-1	Understanding the Next Generation	DCE Charity Smith
B-2	Developing a Culture of Family Discipleship	Rev. Andy Becker

B-3	Faith & Life Survey: Identify Needs to Enhance Family Discipleship	Matthew Knehans
B-4	Teaching the Faith at Home: The Faith at Home Milestone Series	Rev. Steve Andrews, Jr.
B-5	Partners in Parenting: Nurturing Faith and Families from the Start	DCE Maggie Tritten

### **B-1: Understanding the Next Generation**

Gen Z and Gen Alpha are growing up in a world you did not. They have different cares, concerns, community and culture than you grew up. We'll explore research from Barna, Stanford, Jonathan Haidt and more to help unpack the coming generations.

#### **DCE Charity Smith**

DCE Charity Smith is at Holy Cross in O'Fallon, Mo. She has been a DCE for 13 years and holds a masters degree from Kansas State University (KSU) in Manhattan, Kans., in Family Studies and Human Services.

### **B-2: Developing a Culture of Family Discipleship**

How do you develop a culture of family discipleship in a congregation? Join us for this practical discussion on being intentional in conversations, rituals, meetings, planning, and programming to help a congregation shift from a church centered model of discipleship to a home centered model.

#### **Rev. Andy Becker**

Rev. Andy Becker serves as the manager of Family Discipleship for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Before joining the team at the Office of National Mission, he served for 14 years as family life pastor at St. John's Lutheran in Arnold, Mo. He served as a DCE in Texas before going to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and has a master's degree in Family Life from Concordia University Nebraska. Andy is married to Nikki and they have two teenage boys.

### **B-3: Faith & Life Survey: Identify Needs to Enhance Family Discipleship**

Church leaders will learn how to better serve their congregation with direct input from individuals and families. This objective, anonymous, and comprehensive survey affirms strengths and identifies concerns and warnings that will provide direction and prioritization in your future ministry planning.

#### **Matthew Knehans**

Matthew Knehans is the Research and Operations Specialist at Concordia Center for the Family. He has a master's degree in secondary mathematics education. Matthew and his wife, Hannah, have two sons and live in Springfield.

### **B-4: Teaching the Faith at Home: The Faith at Home Milestone Series**

Milestones are a series of classes a congregation or a group of congregations can offer to help encourage and equip parents to be able to teach their children to trust in Jesus throughout their life. In this session, you'll learn about the Faith at Home Milestone series which has been developed over the past decade to

offer classes and events every year of a child's life from birth through high school graduation, when a young adult tends to move out on their own for the first time. Themes include the common ideas of how to use a Bible and to sing hymns, as well as talking about hospitality, marriage, stress, technology, and more. Each year includes a gift that can help the family in their home devotions, and the events are a wonderful opportunity to build relationships with other families within your congregation. Pastors and laity are all welcome to hear more.

#### **Rev. Steve Andrews, Jr.**

Rev. Steve Andrews Jr. is a baptized child of God, husband to Hannah for the past 14 years, and father of five daughters, as well as one child who sadly never made it out of the womb. He served as an associate pastor with an emphasis on family discipleship for five years in Minnesota and now seven years in Lee's Summit, a southeast suburb of Kansas City. He has been teaching milestones throughout that time and started writing some new ones and rewriting others to be specifically suited for Lutheran families.

### **B-5: Partners in Parenting: Nurturing Faith and Families from the Start**

Description of Presentation: Partners in Parenting is a faith-based support program for parents of young children, designed to foster both child development and spiritual growth. This session shares how the program equips parents with practical tools and builds intentional community to support families in the early years.

#### **DCE Maggie Tritten**

DCE Maggie Tritten is the director of Children's Ministry at Immanuel Lutheran in St. Charles, Mo., working with preschool through fifth grade. She finds joy in holding conversations with small children, encouraging and equipping parents, and inspiring those young and old to look for small ways that God is working in everyday life. In her free time, Maggie loves to sew and quilt, participate in music ensembles around St. Louis, and spend time outside with her family and friends.

### **Sectional C – 2:15 p.m.**

Sectional	Title	Facilitator
C-1	Advent & Lent Family Devotions	Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan
C-2	How to Reach Out in a Secular Age	Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies
C-3	Parenting Middle Schoolers: How to Foster Emotional and Spiritual Health	Dr. Laura Fleetwood
C-4	Speaking with One Voice: Teaching the Faith in the Home, Congregation & School	Rev. Dr. Gregory Truwe
C-5	Family Discipleship Facilitators Gathering	DCE Pam Nummela (moderator)

#### **C-1: Advent & Lent Family Devotions**

Advent and Lent Devotions – Advent and Lent provide great opportunities for developing the practice of devotions in the home. President Lee Hagan will lead this sectional designed to assist congregations with equipping families and individuals for a rich devotional life as the Word of Christ dwells within us richly.

#### **Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan**

Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan serves as the president of the Missouri District. Previously, he served as senior pastor

of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Concordia, Mo. from 2002–15. He is a graduate of Concordia University Nebraska and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. He is married with two children and one grandchild.

## **C-2: How to Reach Out in a Secular Age**

We live in a secular age. The culture is hostile. We weren't trained for this, and we feel unprepared. We're frustrated and exhausted in trying to figure out how to offer a winsome and effective witness. What if there's a better way? What if we can understand the culture better? What if there are helpful strategies for better sharing our faith? This presentation will help you better tap into the openness to the Gospel that's all around us and teach you an effective strategy for outreach.

### **Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies**

Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies is the vice president for Ministry Engagement at Lutheran Hour Ministries in St. Louis, Mo. His work centers around helping the church become more outreach focused by empowering it to share the Gospel with non-churched individuals at more personal levels. His former life as a non-believer provides exceedingly relevant experience for thinking about how to engage with our friends and neighbors outside the kingdom of God. He is the author of *How the Light Shines Through: Resilient Witness in Dark Times* (Concordia Publishing House, 2024), a guide for helping the church engage in winsome witness while facing the challenges of contemporary culture.

## **C-3: Parenting Middle Schoolers: How to Foster Emotional and Spiritual Health**

Learn how and why the developmental window of ages 8-12 is a critical time to help tweens develop emotional and spiritual resilience muscles. Discover key parenting strategies for this age group that will pay dividends well into the future.

### **Dr. Laura Fleetwood**

Dr. Laura Fleetwood is a published author, national faith speaker, podcaster, leadership/parenting coach, and non-profit founder. Laura earned her doctorate in leadership at Portland Seminary and is currently the director of Communication & Discipleship at her home church, Messiah Lutheran in St. Charles, Mo.

## **C-4: Speaking with One Voice: Teaching the Faith in the Home, Congregation & School**

Parents are called by God to teach the faith to their children. Pastors also have a divine call to teach those entrusted to their care. And where there is a school, teachers have the unique and blessed privilege of partnering in this process of handing down the faith. Join Pastor Truwe as he shares a method of instruction that synthesizes what is taught by each of these teachers, so that the home, congregation, and school work in wonderful concert to let the Word of Christ dwell richly in the hearts of our children.

### **Rev. Dr. Gregory Truwe**

Pastor Truwe is husband to Jamie for 23 years and together they are blessed with six living children, ages 19 to five. He is senior pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Cole Camp, Mo., and is blessed there also to teach the faith at Trinity Lutheran Preschool, Trinity School of Music, and the Lutheran School Association. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors for David's Harp, "A Center for Musical Development."

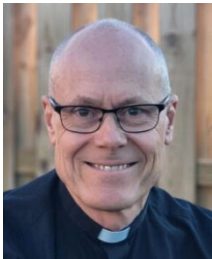
## C-5: Family Discipleship Facilitator Gathering

Trained Family Discipleship Facilitators, pastors, staff, and lay leaders will gather to share their "aha" moments, stories of impact on parents and families, barriers and frustrations, and their bold hope in Christ Jesus to grow in faith in their own homes and the homes of their congregations and community.

**DCE Pam Nummela** will be the moderator for the session. Pam serves as family discipleship lead facilitator for the Missouri District.

## About our Plenary Presenter

**Rev. Dr. Todd A. Biermann**, who served as a parish pastor for 33 years, now serves as the executive director of the Concordia Center for the Family, a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). With a Doctor of Ministry focus on Christian marriage and family, he provides guidance to homes and congregations in their mission to make lifelong disciples of Jesus. Biermann is the author of the award-winning book *Handing Out Life* and several other works focused on family discipleship and Christian living, including the *Life in God's Way* series and a new companion piece to the Lutheran Study Bible from Concordia Publishing House (CPH), *Everyday Word: A Two-Year Bible Journal*.



### Plenary Sessions:

#### Life in God's Way: Worldview

What's your worldview? What guides your thinking, planning, dreaming, and acting throughout every moment of every day? We all have a worldview. If it's shaped by the world, we're in for trouble. However, if our worldview is shaped by the Truth of God's Word, it will guide us to a life of peace, contentment, and lasting joy. Biermann provides a simple, memorable and Christ-centered presentation of God's plan for such a life shaped by the truth of His Word. Based on the teachings in his award-winning 2016 book, *Handing Out Life: The Simple Way to Rewarding Relationships in All of Life*, this presentation will show how every home can delight in Christian discipleship every day.

#### Life in God's Way: Family Discipleship

In Matt. 28:19-20a, Jesus instructs his disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (ESV). Concordia Center for the Family takes this seriously with its mission of uniting homes and congregations in making lifelong disciples of Jesus. Biermann shares how this happens in every family ... parents with children, one person alone, blended families, grandparents with grandchildren, or any other family structure. Family discipleship prospers when homes and congregations unite to live according to God's way (building on Biermann's previous "Worldview" presentation).

#### Life in God's Way: For ALL of Life

Once you have a worldview shaped by God's Word of Truth that empowers and inspires you to love as Jesus loved you, it will guide and bless ALL of your relationships in life. Biermann will build on his earlier presentations to help you apply God's Truth in this way. You'll be equipped and inspired to live a purposeful and joyful life of love and witness in God's way.