

Memorial Service

Missouri District First Vice President Rev. Bill Marler led delegates in the Matins Memorial Service on Tuesday morning. In his sermon, based on Matt. 25:21, Marler reflected on the lives and faithful service of pastors and church workers who have entered eternal rest.

He reminded listeners that while no one is indispensable, each servant is used by God to carry out His mission. “To live is Christ,” Marler said, means that every season of life—even one marked by weakness or weariness—still has purpose in Christ. With humility, faithfulness, and courage, we serve until we are called home.

As we remember those who have gone before us, we are strengthened to take up our call anew, encouraged by the promise of hearing one day: “Well done, good and faithful servant. Come and share your Master’s happiness.” In the words of Marler, “Let us leave here with a renewed will to march on, even through the mud and mire, just to reach it.”

The service also included Rev. Michael Pottschmidt, senior pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Concordia, who read the names of church workers who entered eternal rest between June 1, 2022, and May 31, 2025. As each name was read, a bell was rung in memoriam. A complete list of names was published in Monday's *Today's Business* and is available online at mo.lcms.org/district-convention.



Essayist Part Two

Rev. Dr. Kevin Golden, essayist for the District Convention, delivered Part II of the convention essay series on Tuesday morning. Continuing the theme “Bold Hope in Christ,” drawn from 2 Cor. 3:12, Golden offered a theological meditation on two Old Testament accounts of hope, illustrating the boldness that arises when God’s people are held by His promises.

The first account began with the people of Israel entering the Promised Land in the book of Joshua. Golden recounted the Lord’s provision—from the Exodus through wilderness wanderings to the conquest of Jericho—highlighting the faithfulness of Yahweh in delivering His people. But the narrative turned with the sin of Achan, who took devoted items from Jericho in disobedience to Yahweh’s command. As a result, Israel suffered a humiliating defeat at Ai, and Achan was put to death in the Valley of Achor—literally, the “Valley of Trouble.” A pile of stones was left as a memorial to the communal consequence of one man’s sin.



Yet, Golden emphasized that the story of Achor does not end in judgment. Over six hundred years later, in Hosea 2:15, the Lord promised to transform the Valley of Achor into “a doorway of hope.” Despite Israel’s ongoing idolatry, Yahweh would restore His unfaithful bride, Israel. This eschatological promise found its fulfillment in Christ, the second Adam, who brings life where once there was death. Golden noted the shocking mercy of the Gospel—that Christ redeems even those who, like Hosea’s wife, had become unfaithful. With that confidence, the Church boldly proclaims Christ to all, for no one lies beyond the reach of His grace.

The second account moved forward in redemptive history to the Babylonian exile. After decades of captivity, Judah was freed by the Edict of Cyrus in 539 BC. Yet, upon returning to Jerusalem, the people found only ruins where the temple once stood. Golden invited delegates to relate to that feeling of loss, noting common laments heard today: empty pews, dwindling Sunday school classes, or once-vibrant ministries now quiet.

Still, the prophet Zechariah addressed the returned exiles with a startling proclamation: “Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope” (Zechariah 9:12). Though they had known captivity and desolation, Yahweh bound them not to fear, but to the hope of a coming King. That hope was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who entered Jerusalem on a donkey to suffer, die, and rise. Golden reminded the assembly that although physical buildings may fall and earthly institutions waver, the reign of Christ continues wherever His means of grace are delivered—Word, Baptism, Supper, and Absolution.

The essay concluded with a personal reflection, as Golden shared photos of the three congregations he has served. Each, he said, bears its own “account of hope,” because each is filled with Christ. He encouraged congregations to look not at what has been lost, but to see their communities through the lens of bold hope. Whether it is engaging preschool families, caring for the elderly, or responding to human need, congregations are to act boldly, for the Church is not a relic of the past but Christ’s living body in the present.

Golden reminded delegates: “You are not surrounded by decline. You are surrounded by hope—because you are held by Christ.” With that certainty, the Church presses on, acting with great boldness in proclaiming and living the hope that is hers in Christ alone.

2025 Circuit Visitor Installed

1. AltenburgRev. Dr. Paul Winningham
2. ArnoldRev. Dr. Jason Wagner
3. Cape GirardeauRev. Weston Wildauer
4. CarroltonRev. Elden Kohn
5. ColumbiaRev. Anthony Alter
6. Concordia NorthRev. Mark Junkin
7. Concordia SouthRev. Joel Kurz
8. FarmingtonRev. Kyle Castens
9. Jackson BootheelRev. Jacob May
10. Jefferson CityRev. Brian Whittle
11. Kansas City CentralRev. Gary Stolle
12. Kansas City NorthRev. Gregg Reiser
13. Kansas City SouthRev. Steven Andrews, Jr.
14. Northeast MissouriRev. Jeffrey Dock
15. RollaRev. John Perling
16. St. CharlesRev. Ryan Taylor
17. St. JosephRev. David Moore
18. St. Louis AfftonRev. David Gruenwald
19. St. Louis EllisvilleRev. Trevor Freudenburg
20. St. Louis KirkwoodRev. Scott Jonas
21. St. Louis NorthRev. Nathan Ruback
22. St. Louis OverlandRev. Dr. Mark Femmel
23. St. Louis SouthRev. Matthew Clark
24. SedaliaRev. William Smith
25. Southwest MissouriRev. Andrew Kennell
26. SpringfieldRev. Joel Krueger
27. Washington.....Rev. David Roth, Jr.
28. WentzvilleRev. Donald Stock

Resolutions Adopted Tuesday 6/24/25

**Denotes resolution was adopted as amended. See section “Resolutions Amended” for changes.*

Floor Committee 3 – Theology, Church, and Culture

3-05: To Commend Congregations, Lutherans For Life, and other Appropriate RSOs Involved in Sanctity of Life Efforts

*3-06: To Oppose Missouri State Amendment 3

*3-07: To Defend God’s Gift of Life

Floor Committee 4 - Structure and Administration

*4-08: To Affirm That Pastoral Formation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is Done By Synodically Approved Seminaries

Resolutions Amended

Resolution 3-06

To Oppose Missouri State Amendment 3

Whereas, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention has repeatedly condemned abortion on demand and affirmed the right to life for all, including the preborn in the womb (2019 Res. 11-01A, 2010 Res. 6-02A, 2007, Res. 6-06, 1998 Res. 3-14 and 6-02, 1979 3-02A, 1971 Res. 2-39); and

Whereas, the landmark 2022 Supreme Court Decision, *Dobbs v. Jackson*, overturned the ~~constitutional~~ right to abortion that had been enshrined in 1974 1973’s *Roe v. Wade* and 1992’s *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, returning the issue of abortion rights to the states **people and their elected representatives**; and

Whereas, 2024 Missouri Constitutional Amendment 3 amended the state constitution to establish a right to abortion up to “fetal viability,” limiting restrictions on or prohibition of abortion to the period after “fetal viability”; and

Whereas, congregations and workers of the Missouri District desire to stand against abortion and the harm it inflicts upon families and children within the State of Missouri, trusting the better hope found in God, our Maker and Redeemer; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Missouri District in convention publicly declare its opposition to Amendment 3; and be it finally

Resolved, that the Missouri District encourage congregations to peacefully and proactively speak about God’s gift of life within their callings and support political action at the **federal**, state, and local levels to abolish abortion.

Resolution 3-07

To Defend God's Gift of Life

Whereas, Scripture clearly teaches that life begins at conception (Job 10:9-11; Ps. 51:5; Ps. 139:13-17; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:41-44), and that the child in the womb is a living human created by God to be protected from all harm, including murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:33; Acts 7:19; 1 John 3:15); and

Whereas, the joy of Christ's birth is also for the child inside his mother's womb (Acts 2:39), as attested by the account of John leaping in Elizabeth's womb (Luke 1:41, 44), and

Whereas, the eternal Word becoming flesh in the womb of the Virgin is essential to how sinful man is saved (Gal 4:4-5; 1 Tim 2:5), since, as Gregory of Nazianzus put it, "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved (Critique of Apollinarianism, par. 5);" ~~therefore, be it~~ **and**

~~**Whereas**, to teach in the church that the personhood is only conferred at birth or afterwards is to reject God's the Son's incarnation in the womb, therefore be it~~

Resolved, that the congregations and workers of the Missouri District be encouraged to pray for and work toward an end to abortion; and be it further

Resolved, that pastors and laity be encouraged to study the forthcoming CTCR update to its 1984 report on abortion, as requested by the 2023 Synod in Convention (2023 Res. 11-03); and be it finally

Resolved, that the Missouri District of the LCMS in convention memorialize Synod in convention to declare, that the ~~pro-choice and abortion rights ideology is a heresy~~ **teaching in the church that abortion is acceptable due to the non-personhood of the fetus is a false teaching that rejects a full understanding of the incarnation**, which no Christian in good conscience can hold.

Resolution 4-08

To Affirm That Pastoral Formation in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is Done By Synodically Approved Seminaries

Whereas, the Office of the Holy Ministry has been instituted by Christ Himself (John 20:19-23, Ephesians, 4:11-16), and

Whereas, the third Objective of the LCMS Constitution (Article III) is to "Recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth," and

Whereas, a central purpose in the formation of the LCMS, 178 years ago, was to share together in the task of preparing and recognizing LCMS pastors, whom LCMS congregations would then be free to choose and call for service. Thus, the LCMS has, from its beginning, supported and operated its own seminaries: Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and

Whereas, in May 2025, the president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the president of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, wrote letters to the LCMS responding to questions about non-LCMS online theological programs appealing to LCMS students and donors, and

Whereas, the presidents of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, clearly stated in their letters that graduates of ~~neither of these~~ **non-approved** programs may be ordained or installed in an LCMS congregation or ministry. Further, ~~neither of these~~ **non-approved** programs **is are not** owned, operated, or governed by the LCMS, and

Whereas, these two presidents (of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne) are two of the three members of the Pastoral Formation Committee. This Committee's primary role is "... ensuring that the Synod's objective of training pastors is fulfilled consistently (Bylaw 3. National Organization and Responsibilities, 3.10, Other Councils, Committees, and Boards, D. Pastoral Formation Committee and Constitution Article III, 3)," and

Whereas, the 2023 Synodical Convention, in Resolution 6-02A, resolved that "districts and members of the Synod honor, use, and promote Synod-approved programs and not create independent programs of pastoral preparation or direct men to a pastoral preparation program outside of our Synod's seminaries," therefore be it

Resolved, that the Missouri District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in convention acknowledge and affirm LCMS Bylaw 2.5.2 regarding calls and proper service, which states:

"Congregations that are members of the Synod and their association schools shall call and be served only by (1) ordained ministers who have been admitted to their respective ministries in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth in these Bylaws and have thereby become members of the Synod; (2) candidates for the pastoral ministry who have satisfied the qualifications and requirements for assignment of first calls by the Council of Presidents acting as the Board of Assignments; or (3) ordained ministers who are members in good standing of church bodies that have been formally recognized to be in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Synod when agreements for such calls are in place"

and be it further resolved

Resolved, that any congregation that should call or be served by a man not certified to serve as a pastor in the LCMS be addressed by the appropriate Synodical disciplinary process as described in Bylaw 2.5.4, which states:

"Congregations that violate these requirements and persist in such violation shall, after due admonition, forfeit their membership in the Synod." and be it

Resolved, that the Missouri District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod also acknowledge and affirm Synod Bylaws 2.6.2. and 2.6.3, regarding qualifications for and right to Synod membership, which state:

Bylaw 2.6.2

"Individuals who have been declared qualified for a first call and assigned first calls in accordance with Bylaw sections 2.7–2.9 shall, by the rites of both ordination or commissioning and installation in accordance with Bylaw section 2.10, become members of the Synod,

Bylaw 2.6.3,

"There is no inherent right to membership in the Synod, and the decision as to qualification for a first call and the assignment of first calls shall be at the sole discretion of the Synod" and be it

~~And be it finally~~ **Resolved**, that the Missouri District in convention give thanks to God for the work of our seminaries and the Gospel they proclaim, ~~and be it finally~~

Resolved, that the Missouri District send this resolution as a memorial to the 2026 Synod Convention.

Committee on Nominations Elections

Ordained: Rev. Dr. James Fickenscher and Rev. Brian Thieme
Commissioned: DCE Clint Colwell and Deac. Sarah Longmire
Lay: Erik Burgdorf and Russell Kruse

Closing Devotion and Installations

The Missouri District Convention concluded with a devotion led by Second Vice President Rev. Brian Thieme, centered on Peter's confession in John 6:68–69: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Drawing from Scripture and the faithful examples of biblical figures, the devotion reminded delegates that Christ alone is our anchor in times of uncertainty, and His Word alone brings eternal life. With a call to bold confession and continued trust in Jesus, Rev. Thieme encouraged delegates to leave strengthened in faith. As part of the service, the newly reelected Missouri District President, Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan, along with the circuit visitors, were installed. The convention adjourned at 12 p.m.



Thank You, Student Assistants

We are deeply grateful for the dedicated service of our student assistants, who supported the District Convention in countless ways—from photography and writing to keeping our speakers hydrated, hauling ice, and even carrying electric pianos. Their behind-the-scenes work made a big impact and helped everything run smoothly. Thank you to (pictured left to right) Kaitlynn Swartz, Kiera Swartz, Jack Hagan, Noah Clark, Caroline Moede (not pictured), and Ella Bradley (not pictured), for your cheerful hearts and willing hands. Your efforts did not go unnoticed, and we are truly thankful!



Save the Dates

Missouri District Pastors Conference

Oct. 12-14, 2025

Margaritaville Lake Resort – Osage Beach, MO

Theme: Restore the Roar

Plenary presenter: Rev. Dr. Reed Lessing, professor of Theology and Ministry, Director of the Center for Biblical Studies, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN

- Breakout proposals due June 30
- Registration opens August

Tell the Next Generation Conference

9–3 p.m. Nov. 8, 2025

Lutheran High School of St. Charles

Plenary presenter: Rev. Dr. Todd A. Biermann, executive director of the Concordia Center for the Family

- \$20 per person (includes lunch)
- Registration opens July

E² Conferences 2026

Encourage and equip your congregation's leaders and volunteers through practical presentations, partnerships, and networking. Free to attend!

All events run 8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

- Jan. 31: St. John's Lutheran Church – Arnold
- Feb. 7: St. Matthew Lutheran Church– Lees Summit
- Feb. 21: Faith Lutheran Church – Springfield
- Feb. 28: Calvary Lutheran High School – Jefferson City
- March 7: Saxony Lutheran High School – Jackson

Registration opens this fall