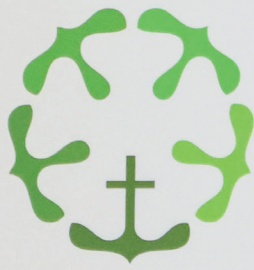


MISSOURI DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-28





Missouri District
LCMS



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT:

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Bold Hope in Christ” was the theme for our 2025 District Convention. However, it was more than a theme. It is our prayer. Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, we read of them boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet it began with a prayer. When Peter and John were released by the religious leaders in Jerusalem, they prayed, “And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,” (Acts 4:29, ESV). God not only heard their prayer, but also granted it. We read, “And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness,” (Acts 4:31, ESV).

In these days, we also pray that the Holy Spirit would enable us to speak the Word of God with all boldness. Whether in a large city or in a small town, to hundreds or just a handful, our prayer is that our congregations would be places where the Word of God is preached faithfully and boldly so that the saints of God are strengthened for faithful service and those who have not yet believed may be brought to faith. “Bold Hope in Christ” remains our prayer for every congregation, school, church worker, and baptized child of God!

THE DISTRICT CONVENTION ADOPTED FOUR CRITICAL TARGETS FOR THIS TRIENNium:

CHURCH WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Missouri District will continue to actively promote church work vocations among our congregations and schools, while also providing care and support for those who serve.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME

We will focus on the importance of faith formation within the home and how the District can support congregations and schools in equipping the saints for this task.

MISSION FIELD: MISSOURI

Missouri is a mission field of three million souls. This target will encourage collaboration and intentional outreach efforts through congregational and circuit-based missions to reach the lost in our communities.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

There is an increased need for leadership training and support for lay and called church leaders in our congregations and schools. This target will focus on helping develop faithful leaders with simple and flexible governance structures.

Our collective prayer remains that the Word of God will be proclaimed boldly across Missouri, as congregations, schools, and the saints of God faithfully live out their callings. May these four targets support and assist your congregation in this important work so that God's name be glorified and many will hear the Gospel and be brought to saving faith in Christ!

In His Service,



President Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan

**THE MISSOURI DISTRICT
SERVES AND ENCOURAGES
CONGREGATIONS TO FULFILL
THE GREAT COMMISSION
AND PROMOTE UNITY
OF THE TRUE FAITH.**

BOLD HOPE IN CHRIST

AS THE CHURCH

“Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,” (Eph. 6:18b-19, ESV).

AS INDIVIDUALS

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,” (1 Peter 3:15, ESV).

THE DISTRICT'S SERVICES

MISSIONS

CHURCH PLANTING AND REVITALIZATION

As Jesus Christ calls people to faith, He gathers them into congregations where their faith can be nourished and grow. The Missouri District proactively looks for opportunities to plant new Lutheran congregations around Missouri and seeks to equip congregational and circuit partners with training and resources to assist in church planting. We also seek to revitalize the ministry of existing congregations so that they can become more fruitful and robust.

MULTI-ETHNIC MINISTRY

God is bringing the nations to our doorstep as refugees and immigrants, as they seek education, employment, and better opportunities for their families. We are increasing multi-cultural ministries in partnership with congregations and Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) to connect with new Americans and existing ethnic populations. We will work to identify, support, and train multi-cultural church leaders, connecting them with Concordia Seminary for pastoral or diaconal training.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jesus calls us to see the needs of our neighbor and seek to love them through our actions. Through *SHINE!* servant events, conferences, and training, we are encouraging and equipping our congregations and their members to embrace their communities with the love of Christ.

MISSION SUPPORT

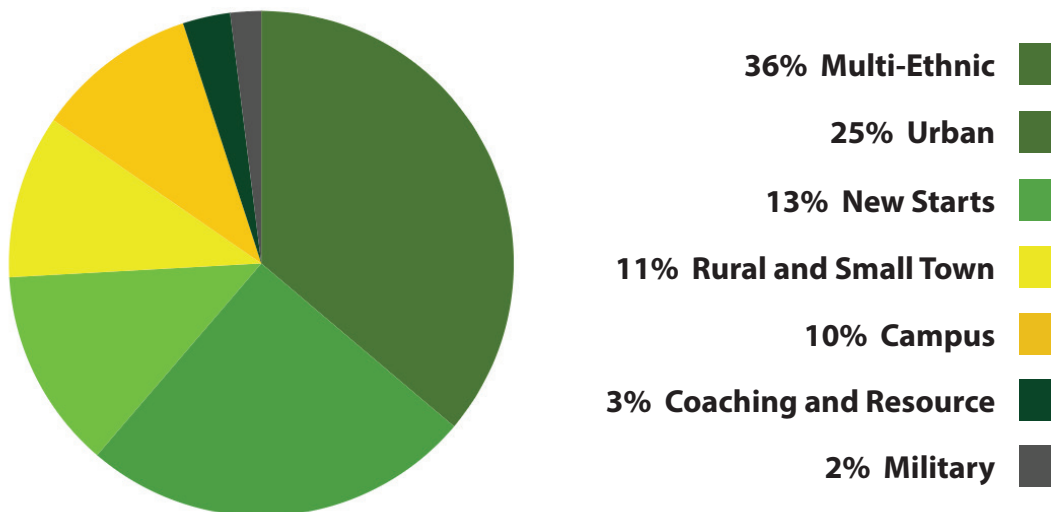
The District provides program resources, leadership development, consultation, and coaching and to our congregations and RSO based missions that reach out to the people of Missouri with the love and peace of Christ. The District seeks to coordinate efforts beyond what congregations can do individually.

MISSION GRANTS

The District provides mission grants, leadership training, and support in these critical areas:

- Church plants
- Urban and rural ministries
- Multi-ethnic, immigrant, and refugee ministries
- Campus ministry
- Military outreach

\$505,900 GIVEN IN MISSION GRANT SUPPORT



CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCES AND TRAINING

The District researches and networks to bring ideas and programs from around the LCMS to provide resource sharing and training for congregations and leaders. This includes elder and church officer training, stewardship education, resources, conferences on ministry to families and youth, witnessing and community engagement, and partnering with LCEF to provide community demographic research.

DISASTER RESPONSE

The District supports Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) training to provide a disaster response network prepared for deployment to assist communities and congregations after disaster strikes.

CALL PROCESS

The District provides guidance and support to congregations calling ordained and commissioned ministers.

RECONCILIATION

The District assists congregations, schools, and church workers in addressing conflict through Bible-based reconciliation processes. These are intended to be proactive rather than reactive, helping congregations remain healthy and well-functioning.

LCEF

Our partnership with Lutheran Church Extension Fund includes the District LCEF vice president, who works through the District office to assist congregations in starting, sustaining, and strengthening LCMS ministries through financial and strategic partnerships. Services include investments, lending, capital campaigns, ministry clarity, demographic analysis, and real estate solutions.



CHURCH WORKER CARE

WORKER WELLNESS

Missouri District staff build relationships with ministry workers to provide personal and group-based encouragement, support, and access to wellness resources.

NEW WORKER CARE

The Missouri District hosts onboarding events to welcome new ministry workers, offering encouragement, guidance on church polity, and opportunities to form mentoring relationships and resources.

CONGREGATION AND CHURCH WORKER OVERSIGHT

The District President provides oversight of the doctrine and practice of the congregations, schools, and church workers of the District. This includes the authorization of ordinations, commissionings, and installations of church workers, as well as their rostering.

CHURCH WORKER SCHOLARSHIPS

The Missouri District provides grants for which students from District congregations—who are preparing for church work vocations at LCMS universities or seminaries—may apply.

MISSOURI DISTRICT 2025–26 CHURCH WORKER SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS



UNIVERSITIES

43 students

\$59,025 given in support

SEMINARIES

37 students

\$35,625 given in support



LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

Through a variety of programs and services, the District aims to strengthen Lutheran education across the state.

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

The District hosts professional conferences designed to meet the needs of educators, administrators, and early childhood educators. These gatherings offer opportunities for learning, encouragement, and collaboration, equipping educators to serve more effectively in today's educational landscape.

CALL PROCESS SUPPORT

The District provides guidance and support to schools throughout the process of calling teachers and principals.



ACCREDITATION

The Director of Schools oversees the National Lutheran Schools Accreditation (NLSA) process within the Missouri District. This includes organizing training for school consultants and team captains, ensuring that each school's accreditation journey is thorough, supportive, and aligned with Lutheran values.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A curriculum platform is available to all schools within the District to support consistency, collaboration, and shared resources. This tool fosters a curriculum map resource and allows schools to collaborate on resources and ideas.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

The District offers board development and training informed by best practices in governance. These sessions equip local school boards to carry out their responsibilities with clarity, confidence, and a strong understanding of their roles in supporting school ministry.

NEW TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL ORIENTATION AND COACHING

The District provides an orientation program for teachers new to the District, as well as in those in their first two years of teaching. New principals are also intentionally supported and connected with leaders who offer guidance, encouragement, and leadership coaching during their role transition.

DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT


Through partnerships and leadership programs, the District supports the ongoing growth of principals and early childhood directors. These opportunities focus on best practices and help leaders grow professionally while strengthening their impact on school culture and mission.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The District helps make Lutheran education more affordable by providing scholarships through an endowment trust and the MOScholars Empowerment Program. These financial resources support families and expand access to Christ-centered education across the state.

SCHOOL MINISTRY SUPPORT

District staff provide personal and ongoing support to congregations and schools in areas such as recruitment, financial management, strategic planning, marketing, new school start-ups, and human resources. Through regular communication, consultation, and shared best practices, the District helps schools thrive in their ministry and mission.



FAMILY LIFE AND YOUTH

TELL THE NEXT GENERATION **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

We partner with congregations, schools, and Recognized Service Organizations (RSO) to provide events and support for the discipleship of individuals and families. Training is offered through the District's biennial *Tell the Next Generation* Conference, Family Discipleship initiative trainings led by District facilitators and Concordia Center for the Family, and other events. These opportunities encourage and equip pastors, parents, and congregational and school leaders for nurturing faith in the home.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Training for high school youth is provided to build leadership skills so they may serve in all areas of life, including as future church workers and lay leaders in the church.

YOUTH GATHERINGS

The District produces annual gatherings for junior and senior high youth to proclaim the Gospel, build community across congregations, and nurture faith formation. The Missouri District also supports congregation and youth participation in the triennial LCMS Youth Gathering, including hosting a District event during the gathering.

COLLEGE FAIR

The District regularly hosts a College Fair featuring LCMS seminaries and universities to encourage youth and their parents to explore Christ-centered higher education and training in church work vocations.





STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-28

This strategic plan will guide our work from 2025 through 2028, focusing on four key areas: Church Worker Recruitment and Retention, Discipleship in the Home, Mission Field: Missouri, and Leadership Development. Each of the key areas includes a goal on development of Devotion and Prayer Resources to support that area.

CRITICAL TARGET 1: CHURCH WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The congregations and schools of the Missouri District have been richly blessed with faithful pastors, teachers, and other servants. As we look together at the challenges facing the Church, we recognize the need to be intentional about recruiting servants for the future and providing support to care for those who serve. This target remains a top priority for the Missouri District.

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS & PREACHERS

The Missouri District will continue its *Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers* efforts to promote church work vocations and support the Missouri District church worker endowment fund.

- The Missouri District will promote church work vocations each August through District communication platforms and provide video and print resources that congregations can use to highlight various church callings. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2026*
- The annual *Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers* congregational door offering will seek participation from 75 Missouri congregations. *Timeline for completion: Sept. 2027*
- 60% of Missouri Lutheran elementary and high schools will designate chapel offerings to support *Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers*. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*

WORK TO ADDRESS FINANCIAL PRESSURES

The Missouri District will work to address the financial pressures facing prospective and current church workers regarding educational expenses.

- The Missouri District sets a goal to increase the church worker Endowment by 10%. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- District staff will develop materials to promote non-cash gifts for the church worker Endowment fund and meet with thirty donors to promote the fund. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- The Missouri District will host separate webinars for pastors and commissioned ministers about Ministry Focus grants for educational debt and include a presentation at the Professional Church Worker Conference. *Timeline for completion: Nov. 2026*
- New worker orientation programs will include presentations on personal financial health. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2026*



PROMOTION OF CHURCH WORKER VOCATIONS

The Missouri District will provide training for congregational and school mentors to promote church work vocations.

- The Missouri District will promote LCMS *Set Apart to Serve* materials among congregations and schools by distributing these resources directly to them. *Timeline for completion: Jan. 2026*
- A guide for mentors will be provided to every congregation and school.
Timeline for completion: Jan. 2026
- The Missouri District will provide training for mentors at *E*² conferences and the Professional Church Worker Conference. *Timeline for completion: March 2028*

PRAYER RESOURCE

The Missouri District will provide a prayer calendar for congregations, schools, and individuals that includes prayers for God to send out laborers into the harvest field, as well as for congregations, schools, universities, and seminaries.

- The Missouri District will provide a weekly prayer calendar for use in the prayers within congregations, schools, and homes, including prayers for future church workers.
Timeline for completion: Aug. 2026

CRITICAL TARGET 2: DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME

The Scriptures and the Confessions teach that the home is the primary place of faith formation. The Missouri District will continue this emphasis by working with congregations, schools, pastors, and school administrators to provide training and resources, so that each home can be a place where Christ is at the center and families are growing through learning God's Word and the Small Catechism.

BIBLE AND CATECHISM IN EVERY HOME

The Missouri District will strive to ensure that every congregation member's and school family's home has a Bible and Luther's Small Catechism, along with offering training to use them faithfully.

- Each congregation and school will be provided a template for training the families of every child/student to use a Bible and Luther's Small Catechism at home.

Timeline for completion: March 2028

- Missouri District Tell the Next Generation facilitators aim to work with thirty congregations in equipping families for discipleship in the home. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- The Missouri District will continue to provide training for discipleship in the home through conferences. *Timeline for completion: March 2028*
- Twenty schools will develop Discipleship in the Home training programs for their families.

Timeline for completion: June 2028





INTERGENERATIONAL TEACHING AND ACTIVITIES AT CONGREGATIONAL AND CIRCUIT LEVELS

The Missouri District will provide models and resources for intergenerational faith formation.

- Missouri District staff and facilitators will lead intergenerational faith formation workshops in twelve circuits. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- Missouri District staff will provide training and resources for circuit visitors so that twelve circuits hold joint confirmation activities and instruction. *Timeline for completion: Jan. 2027*

EQUIPPING FOR DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME THROUGH EVENTS

The Missouri District will partner with congregations, schools, and Recognized Service Organizations to provide events and support that encourage discipleship of individuals and families.

- The Missouri District will provide support so that retreats and training opportunities are provided for parents, couples, grandparents, and singles. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- The Missouri District will partner with Heit's Point Lutheran Ministries and Concordia Center for the Family to increase participation in the annual family camp. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2027*
- The Missouri District will develop a family servant event guide for the annual *SHINE!* District servant event and encourage participation by family groups. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2027*

DEVOTION AND PRAYER RESOURCE FOR EVERY HOME

The Missouri District will provide a devotional guide for congregations, schools, and homes that utilizes the Bible, Small Catechism, and hymnal, along with a prayer guide for prayers for the ministries of the District and the Synod.

- The Missouri District will provide a devotional guide for congregations and schools to share with families, that utilizes the Bible, Small Catechism, and hymnal. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2026*

CRITICAL TARGET 3: MISSION FIELD: MISSOURI

We live in a mission field of more than three million people who are not connected to any church. This critical target establishes the priority of providing resources and training for congregations to collaborate in reaching the lost with the Gospel.

MISSION FIELD: MISSOURI

The Missouri District will provide *Mission Field: Missouri* training to help congregations reach the lost in their communities with the Gospel.

- Congregations from each circuit will participate in *Mission Field: Missouri* training to help congregations respond to the local mission field in their communities and implement ongoing efforts. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- Missouri District staff will provide a toolbox of witness and outreach resources for congregations to access. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2027*

CIRCUIT MISSION STRATEGIES

The Missouri District will foster conversations about mission opportunities within each circuit, facilitated by circuit visitors.

- Missouri District staff will provide circuit visitors with resources to guide annual circuit forums and the triennial circuit convocation, with the purpose of developing circuit mission goals and shared ministry efforts. *Timeline for completion: Nov. 2027*
- Missouri District will provide circuit visitors and circuit forums information about ethnic mission opportunities and potential church planting targets in their region. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*

CHURCH PLANTING AND NEW MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

The Missouri District will provide training for congregations interested in or identified as having potential for church planting efforts.

- Missouri District staff will invite six interested congregations to church planting training. *Timeline for completion: March 2028*
- The Missouri District will work with congregations and mission partners to begin six new ethnic missions. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- The Missouri District will support congregations in three new church planting efforts. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*

PRAYER RESOURCE FOR GOD'S MISSION

- The Missouri District will provide a weekly prayer guide for congregational corporate and individual prayers for reaching the Missouri mission field, as well as for specific missions of the District and Synod. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2026*



CRITICAL TARGET 4: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Congregations and schools are in need of leadership training for both staff and lay leaders. Governance models of the past are not serving our existing structures well. The Missouri District will provide training and support related to governance models and for various leadership roles in congregations and schools for both rostered workers and laity.



GOVERNANCE AND LAY LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Missouri District will assist congregations and schools in providing guidance and training for lay leaders to assist them in matters of governance and leadership.

- The Missouri District will provide governance training for congregations (including multi-point parishes) and schools, with templates for simple structures suited to their needs. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- The Missouri District will offer training for congregational presidents and treasurers to help them better carry out their responsibilities. *Timeline for completion: Nov. 2027*
- The Missouri District will offer six elder trainings at the congregational, circuit, and district level. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*

TRAINING FOR PASTORS AND EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

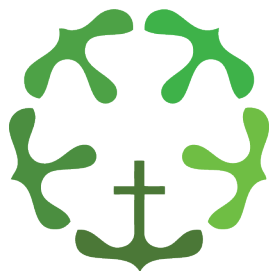
The Missouri District will provide training and support for pastors serving in various ministry settings, as well as leadership development for educational administrators.

- The Missouri District will develop a learning community for pastors serving in congregations with schools, helping them understand key issues and be equipped to lead complex ministries. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2027*
- The Missouri District will develop a learning community for multi-point parish pastors to help them consider and share best practices. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2027*
- The Missouri District will help prepare students for the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program and other seminary training programs, including the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) and Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS) at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. *Timeline for completion: June 2028*
- The Missouri District will provide leadership development training for current, new, and future school administrators, in partnership with LCMS school organizations. *Timeline for completion: Jan. 2028*

DEVOTIONAL AND PRAYER RESOURCE

The Missouri District will provide devotional resources and prayer guides to support church and school leaders in their work.

- The Missouri District will develop a weekly prayer guide that includes prayers for the needs of the congregation and school, as well as other congregations and schools in the circuit and across the District. *Timeline for completion: Aug. 2026*



Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

[MO.LCMS.ORG](https://mo.lcms.org)

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