

LCMS Missouri District Newsletter

October 2025

The VOICE



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The Missouri District is to serve and encourage congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and to promote unity of the true faith.
Pictured above: The Missouri District office processional cross.

Photo: Christie Hampton

FROM THE INTERIM DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

I will speak of Christ again.

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, *‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life,’*” (John 8:12, ESV).

“*The true light*, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him,” (John 1:9-10, ESV).

“*God is light*, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin,” (1 John 1:5b-7, ESV).

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in *one Lord Jesus Christ*, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, *God of God, Light of Light*, very God of very God. – The Nicene Creed

[Jesus said] “*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others*, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven,” (Matt. 5:14-16, ESV).

The Gospel seems too good to be true. Jesus, God of God, has come into this world speaking words of eternal life. To whom shall we go, other than to Him, to find forgiveness for our sins and the assurance of eternal life?

People near you live in the darkness of their own beliefs and need these same gifts from Him. Because you are in Christ, and He is in you, you are the light of the world.

At home, at school, at church, wherever you are ... speak of Christ.



Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Craig D. Otto". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Interim District President Rev. Craig D. Otto

TELL THE NEXT GENERATION CONFERENCE

NOV. 8

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL OF ST. CHARLES



BY DCE PAM NUMMELA

How can families live each day as disciples of Jesus, guided by His truth? The Missouri District's Tell the Next Generation Conference, Guided by God's Truth, is designed to encourage and empower homes to do just that.

God's Word—His truth—continually strengthens us as we follow Him. This year's keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Todd A. Biermann, executive director of the Concordia Center for the Family, will lead three plenary sessions from his Life in God's Way series. With decades of pastoral experience and a focus on Christian family life, Biermann will help participants shape a Christ-centered worldview, strengthen family discipleship, and navigate life transitions with purpose and grace.

This practical and Christ-centered conference is for parents, grandparents, elders, Sunday School and youth leaders, teachers, church workers, and anyone passionate about building Christ-centered homes.

Registration is \$20 and includes lunch. Sign up by Oct. 24 at mo.lcms.org/guided-by-gods-truth and view the schedule and explore plenary sessions and 15 breakout sectionals. Contact DCE Pam Nummela at family@mo.lcms.org with any questions.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Family Discipleship in Small Congregations – **Dan Hall**
- Scrolling Minds: Hidden Impact of Social Media – **DCE Christina Stackle**
- Equipping Parents to Lead Homes in Faith Formation – **Hannah Knehans, DFLM**
- Bible, Catechism, and Hymnal: Key for Growing Faith at Home – **DCE Pam Nummela**
- Family Camp – **Rev. Dr. W. Mart & Cheryl Thompson**
- Understanding the Next Generation – **DCE Charity Smith**
- Developing a Culture of Family Discipleship – **Rev. Andy Becker**
- Faith & Life Survey: Identify Needs to Enhance Family Discipleship – **Matthew Knehans**
- Teach Faith at Home: The Faith at Home Milestone Series – **Rev. Steve Andrews, Jr.**
- Partners in Parenting: Nurturing Faith and Families from the Start – **DCE Maggie Tritten**
- Advent & Lent Family Devotions – **Andrea Trampe**
- How to Reach Out in a Secular Age – **Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies**
- Parenting Middle Schoolers: How to Foster Emotional and Spiritual Health – **Dr. Laura Fleetwood**
- Speaking with One Voice: Teaching the Faith in the Home, Congregation, & School – **Rev. Dr. Gregory Truwe**
- Family Discipleship Facilitators Gathering – **Moderator: DCE Pam Nummela**

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



JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE



**SATURDAY
NOV. 15**

You're Invited!

BY REV. PETER KIRBY

The LCMS Missouri District will again be sponsoring a Lutheran College Fair Nov. 15, 2025, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Sieck Hall on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Representatives from the six campuses of the Concordia University System have been invited along with recruitment staff from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft Wayne. We also expect to have display tables from the *MinistryFocus* and *Set Apart to Serve* initiatives.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

10 a.m.–2 p.m.	Booths open
10:40–11:10 a.m.	Church Work Panel
11:15–11:50 a.m.	Financial Aid Presentation
11:30 a.m.	Lunch (Chick-fil-A)
11:55 a.m.–12:25 pm.	Why a Concordia? Session
12:30–1 p.m.	Financial Aid Presentation (repeat)
1 p.m.	Drawings for Giveaways
1:15 p.m.	Concordia Seminary Campus Tour
2 p.m.	Lutheran College Fair ends

This open-house-style event is free to attend. Registration is now open at: mo.lcms.org/lutheran-college-fair

Those who register will receive a Chick-fil-A lunch and be entered into drawings for gift cards and other giveaways from the colleges. Many Lutheran high schools in Missouri and the high schools in Greater St. Louis send groups of students—Individual attendees are welcome too. Don't miss this chance to learn more about Lutheran higher education!

Rev. Peter Kirby is executive director of congregational services at the LCMS Missouri District.

Collaborating for the Sake of the Gospel

Missouri Churches Unite for Youth Ministry

BY VICAR RYAN PFENDLER

“That was the closest I have felt to God in my relationship with Him in a while.” These words from Carly, a high school junior, capture the heart of the One City Conference, held Sept. 13 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Weldon Spring. The event brought together more than 70 high school youth and adult leaders from seven Lutheran churches across the St. Louis area—demonstrating the power of churches collaborating for the sake of the Gospel.

At its core, One City is more than just a youth event. It’s a movement of unity—churches creating shared experiences where teens are encouraged, equipped, and reminded they are part of something bigger. The theme, “Made For More: You Belong. You Matter. Your Life Has a Purpose,” anchored the day in Gospel truth.

Worship and main sessions were led by teams from Faith Oakville, Messiah Weldon Spring, and Pathfinder Church, while breakout sessions were facilitated by youth leaders and pastors from across the region.

For many students, the experience was both spiritually impactful and emotionally uplifting.

“I had a rough week, and I knew that God was with me at One City,” said participant Blake.

“The session about faith in college was impactful,” said Asher, a high school junior. “It gave me a good idea of what to look for when I go to college.”

A senior in high school, Ella, added, “It brings you closer to God. You connect with other believers and grow in your faith.”



Pictured above: Participants during the One City Conference held Sept. 13 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Weldon Spring. Photo provided by: Vicar Ryan Pfendler

Collaboration in Action

Events like One City reflect growing momentum across the Missouri District—churches working together to impact the next generation.

This is reflected in a number of initiatives, including but not limited to:

- District Youth Gatherings
- The Partners in Ministry network
- The upcoming YouthLead Retreat in Kansas City

These efforts reflect a unified mission: to help youth hear, learn, and live out the gospel—together. One City 2026 is already in the works. To get involved, contact Ryan Pfendler at rpfendler@messiahnetwork.org.

Vicar Ryan Pfendler is director of student & young adult ministry at Messiah Lutheran Church in Weldon Spring, Mo.

Equipping Leaders, Strengthening Ministries



Pictured left: Members of the 2025 P360STL cohort are pictured at the Royal Sonesta Chase Park Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, Sept. 14, 2025. Front row, from left: Lisa Waltenberger, principal, Green Park Lutheran, St. Louis, Mo.; Ashley Ponder, principal, United in Christ Lutheran, Frohna, Mo.; Cindy Miller-Morgan, former principal, Immanuel Lutheran, Lockwood, Mo.; and Dr. Yvonne Mackey Boyd, principal, River Roads Lutheran, St. Louis, Mo. Middle row, from left: Megan Deines, principal, St. Mark's Lutheran, Eureka, Mo.; Stephanie McSwain, early childhood director, Our Savior Lutheran, St. Charles, Mo.; Sara Grein, principal, Trinity Lutheran, Fremont, Neb.; and Mollie Ramstad, principal, Martin Luther School, Joplin, Mo. Back row, from left: Sarah Popp, principal, Iowa Great Lakes Lutheran, Spencer, Iowa; Dr. Doug Kuhlmann, executive director, Lutheran High School, St. Charles/St. Peters, Mo.; Ben Lausmann, principal, Christ Lutheran, Kansas City, Kan.; Jon Sprengel, principal, Trinity Lutheran, Jefferson City, Mo.; Tyler Mattlin, principal, Calvary Lutheran, Kansas City, Mo.; and Kendra Kendall, principal, St. Paul Lutheran, St. Joseph, Mo. Photo by Henry David Photography.

We are thrilled to celebrate the culmination of an 11-month leadership master class that has equipped 12 educational leaders in Missouri to carry forward a strategic vision in their ministries. This cohort engaged in five rigorous courses: *Leading a Successful School in the 21st Century*, *Academic Excellence*, *School Finance*, *Recruitment & Marketing*, and *Innovation in the Lutheran School*. Over that time, participants refined mission, vision, and values; advanced emotional intelligence (EQ); and built healthy culture and crafted strategic initiatives with stakeholder input.

The emphasis on EQ is timely and evidence-based. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are 25–30% more likely to outperform peers in key metrics¹, and emotionally intelligent leaders improve team attitudes, reduce conflict, and enhance outcomes². Employees led by high-EQ managers are up to four times less likely to quit³, and leadership drives roughly 70% of employee engagement⁴. Strong leadership, rooted in EQ, is essential to cultivating the healthy cultures our schools and ministries need.

We extend deep thanks to the *Principal 360 instructors and coaches* for their investment in these leaders and to Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation (CLEF) for developing and organizing the P360STL program. Their commitment has been a tremendous blessing to our schools and ministries. It is with joy that we anticipate new heights to which these ministries will rise. We give all glory to God, trusting that He will use these leaders' efforts mightily for His kingdom and the flourishing of His people.

Endnotes

1. Ocejo, M. (2025). "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership," Secured Finance Network. <https://www.sfnet.com/home/industry-data-publications/the-secured-lender/magazine/tsl-article-detail/the-role-of-emotional-intelligence-in-leadership>
2. Ricardo, S. et. al., (2023). "The impact of emotional intelligence on operational effectiveness: the mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior and leadership." National Library of Medicine. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10395873>
3. Bennett, M., (2023). "The Statistics on Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace." (April 18, 2023). Niagara Institute. <https://www.niagarainstitute.com/blog/emotional-intelligence-statistics>
4. "100 Interesting Leadership Facts & Statistics." (2025). Digital Defynd. <https://digitaldefynd.com/IQ/leadership-statistics>

DISCOVERING CLARITY

A New Season of Ministry BY MIKE WADLEY

In every season of ministry, there comes a time to pause, pray, and ask big questions: *Who is God calling us to be? What should we be doing – and how do we move forward faithfully and effectively?*

That's where Ministry Clarity comes in.

What is Ministry Clarity?

Ministry Clarity is a guided process offered by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) that helps LCMS congregations rediscover their identity, assess ministry health, and build a sustainable plan for the future.

Unlike a pre-packaged “strategic plan,” this process begins by asking God:

“Who do You say we are?”

From there, Ministry Clarity equips leadership and members to listen, plan, align resources, and communicate with purpose.

Why it matters

In today's world, many congregations face challenges like:

- Changing communities or demographics
- Leadership transitions
- Unclear direction or ministry “drift”
- Financial or facility questions
- A desire to reach new people or revitalize current ministry

Ministry Clarity offers a Spirit-led, congregation-driven way to address those challenges with focus, unity, and hope.

What to Expect

The process includes:

- **Visioning:** Prayerfully discerning our congregation's God-given identity
- **Ministry health review:** Supporting the well-being of staff and leaders
- **Planning:** Equipping leaders to develop a living, adaptable ministry plan
- **Campus and financial alignment:** Ensuring our facilities and finances support the mission
- **Communication:** Sharing the journey clearly and transparently with all members

Ministry Clarity from LCEF is more than strategic planning or vision statements. It is a process of discerning God's direction, strengthening leadership and infrastructure, aligning facilities and finances, and equipping congregations (or schools) to move forward with confidence. For any congregation seeking to better align its heart, mission, and actions – especially in times of transition or uncertainty – Ministry Clarity offers a structured, relational, faith-rooted path forward.

Together, let's move ahead with clarity and faith.

“Where there is
no vision, the
people perish...”
— Prov. 29:18

Learn more about Ministry Clarity at:

lcef.org/church/ministry-solutions/ministry-clarity

*Mike Wadley is your LCEF
Missouri District vice president.*

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 – Lee's Summit
Feb. 21: Faith Lutheran Church – Springfield
Feb. 28: Calvary Lutheran High School – Jefferson City
March 7: Saxony Lutheran High School – Jackson



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT
24-25

YOUTHLEAD MISSOURI RETREAT

Lutheran High School of Kansas City

OCT
-NOV

PRE-RETIREMENT AND TREASURER WORKSHOPS

Oct. 25 - Timothy Lutheran Church, Blue Springs, MO
Nov. 8 - Faith Lutheran Church, Springfield, MO

NOV
8

TELL THE NEXT GENERATION CONFERENCE

Lutheran High School of St. Charles

2025

NOV 14-16: ELDERS RETREAT
NOV 15: LUTHERAN COLLEGE FAIR
DEC 5: CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

2026

JAN 31, FEB. 7, 21, 28, MAR. 7: E² CONFERENCES
FEB 6: MID-YEAR ADMIN. CONFERENCE
MAR 7: EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE
APR 10-19: *SHINE!*
APR 17-19: DISTRICT YOUTH GATHERING
JUL 16-17: SUMMER ADMIN. CONFERENCE
JUL 18-23: LCMS SYNOD CONVENTION
SEPT 25-26: SERVANT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
OCT 18-23: PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS CONFERENCE

LEARN MORE

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

