

Plenary and Sectional Guide

Schedule of Speaking Events

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Tuesday, October 20

9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	<i>Registration is open for Pastors</i>
1:00-1:15	Opening Devotion
1:15-2:15	Plenary I: Rev. Dr. Jason Lane
2:25-3:15	Sectional A
3:25-4:15	Sectional B
4:15-5:45	Happy Hour! <i>Gemütlichkeit!</i>

Wednesday, October 21

10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.	<i>Registration is open for Educators</i>
8:30-8:35	Announcements & Opening Devotion
8:50-9:50	Plenary II: Rev. Dr. Jason Lane
10:10-11:00	Sectional C
11:10-12:00	Sectional D
12:00-1:30	Pastors Lunch
1:30-2:20	Sectional E
2:30-4:00	Plenary III: Rev. Dr. Jason Lane
6:00	Dinner (all registrants)

Thursday, October 22

6:30-8:30 a.m.	<i>Registration is open for Educators</i>
8:30-10:00	Worship
10:15-10:20	Announcements
10:20-11:45	Plenary: Dr. Bernard Bull
12:15-1:15	Educators Lunch
1:15-2:05	Sectional F
2:15-3:05	Sectional G
4:10-5:00	Sectional H

Friday, October 23

8:30-8:50 a.m.	Announcements & Opening
9:00-9:50	Devotion Sectional I
10:00-11:00	Plenary: Jennifer Tanner
11:00	Closing

Tuesday, October 20

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

Plenary I (Part I)

Tuesday, October 20

“Revisiting the Doctrine of Vocation: Luther’s Instruction on the Christian Life”

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Jason Lane](#)

The doctrine of vocation has made a resurgence ever since the Luther Renaissance of the late 19th century. In the LCMS, Luther’s teaching of “one’s calling” has been popularized among pastors by Gustaf Wingren’s study, “Luther on Vocation” (1958). More recently, Gene Edward Veith Jr.’s books, “Spirituality of the Cross” and “God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life,” have made Wingren’s study and Luther’s teaching on love of the neighbor more accessible to laity. These helpful treatments of Luther’s thinking on the Christian life seek to address the apparent and persistent problem with Lutheran theology: that our emphasis on faith alone leaves Lutherans lacking in sanctification and good works. Under the theme of “Live as You Are Called” we will examine God’s will for our Christian life in Christ based on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and Luther’s writings.

In the first session, I will present the doctrine of vocation from Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and offer a critical reading of Wingren based on Luther’s writings. I will attempt to demonstrate that our vocabulary today concerning “call” or “calling” has evolved beyond Scripture and the Confessions and has sometimes caused more confusion than clarity for our people and our churches.

The term “calling” in the sense of station in life or the way one is set in relationship to others, as found in 1 Cor. 7:20, cannot be understood apart from the call of the gospel and the ministry of the church through which God awakens faith, forgives sins, and gives eternal life. Where faith is established the fruits of faith—including love, duty, and service for others—flourish. Where love and duty are demanded without faith, sinners become trapped in the Law by either pride or despair. Therefore, St. Paul writes, “live as you are called,” that is, live as you are called by the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the forgiveness of your sins.

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2:25 – 3:15 p.m.

Sectional A (Pastors)

Tuesday, October 20

Sectional	Title	Presenter
A-01	Promises for the Church	Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan
A-02	Practice What You Preach...DAILY	Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann
A-03	Using the Small Catechism to Teach the Bible	Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine
A-04	Pastor and Church Worker Mental Health: Caring for Those Who Serve Christ's Church	Rev. Dr. Gary Ellul
A-05	Closing a Church: It Sucks! Let's Talk About It	Rev. Jeff Dock
A-06	A Goldmine in Your Midst: Reaching Out to Veterans	Rev. Dr. Steven Hokana Rev. Craig Muehler
A-07	Strategic Planning for the Parish	Rev. Dr. Eric Kennaugh

A-01: Promises for the Church

Presented by: [President Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan](#)

While many search for gimmicks that will cause the Church to grow, we are comforted by the sure promises of God. This enables us to live in confidence rather than desperation as we trust in God's Word.

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A-02: Practice What You Preach...DAILY

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann](#)

Our vocation as pastors includes teaching ALL families to be growing as disciples of Jesus daily. What happens when we don't practice this in our own homes? Jesus graciously supplies His gifts daily for you to enjoy and winsomely share with your people. It's as easy as giving Jesus a "Thumbs Up." What's that mean? CCF's Exec. Dir. will give you practical guidance and tools for new vibrancy. (conordiafamily.org)

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A-03: Using the Small Catechism to Teach the Bible

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine](#)

Learning the Catechism should never be the last thing in a Christian's faith life. Instead, learning it should open up the Holy Scriptures and a faithful Christian life of love toward God and neighbor. This presentation will walk through what aspects of the Small Catechism make it well-suited for this, and describe some approaches to the Catechism that help turn it from an end itself into a foundation for Christian life.

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A-04: Pastor and Church Worker Mental Health: Caring for Those Who Serve Christ's Church

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Gary Ellul](#)

As pastors and church workers, we are called to serve Christ's Church according to the vocations and responsibilities our Lord has entrusted to us. Like those who have gone before us, we respond to His call with the words, "Here am, Lord." Yet within the blessings and responsibilities of ministry, we also experience the realities of human weakness, fatigue, discouragement, and isolation.

At times, the weight of ministry responsibilities, congregational challenges, and personal struggles can leave pastors and church workers feeling overwhelmed and uncertain about where to turn for support, many who eventually seek help express feelings of discouragement, inadequacy, or concern that they have somehow fallen short in their calling. Too often, those serving others delay seeking encouragement and care for themselves until they are deeply exhausted or struggling.

This presentation will explore the importance of pastoral and church worker well-being through a Christ-centered and practical lens. Participants will be encouraged to recognize the value of healthy support systems, appropriate boundaries, resilience in ministry, and faithful self-care practices that strengthen long-term service to Christ and His Church. Practical tools and strategies will be discussed to help pastors and church workers navigate ministry pressures while continuing to serve with faithfulness, wisdom, and hope.

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A-05: Closing a Church: It Sucks! Let's Talk About It

Presented by: [Rev. Jeffrey Dock](#)

Closing time, every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end...

I'm in the midst of merging two congregations together which will result in the unfortunate closure of one of them. While by no means an expert on this situation, I hopefully have some advice and reflections worth sharing with other pastors or circuit visitors who might be facing such situations.

Probably will largely be an open discussion of these issues and any situations you're dealing with.

No judgment. No magical solutions. Just faithfulness in the midst of adversity and hopefully some hidden blessings along the way.

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A-06: A Goldmine in Your Midst: Reaching Out to Veterans

Presented by: [Chaplain Steven Hokana](#), [Rev. Craig Muehler](#)

Veterans permeate all communities in the Missouri District. They need you! They need to hear the redemptive message of the Gospel. This solution-focused class will discuss the uniqueness of being a veteran as well as ideas to bring the veteran and their families the good news of the Gospel.

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A-07: Strategic Planning for the Parish

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Eric Kennaugh](#)

How can churches move from simply maintaining ministry to intentionally advancing their mission? In this engaging presentation, Rev. Eric Kennaugh explores a practical framework for parish strategic planning that helps congregations clarify their unique calling, evaluate current ministries, align resources with mission, and create a sustainable plan for future growth. Through real-world examples and actionable insights, church leaders will learn how to focus on what matters most, strengthen ministry effectiveness, and build a roadmap that reflects their congregation's God-given purpose and context.

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Sectional	Title	Presenter
B-01	Revival in Gen Z? How the Lutheran Church Can Respond to God's Movement in Young Adults	Rev. Brandon Boos
B-02	Working Mission in Missouri Like International Missionary	Rev. John Perling Rev. James Sharp
B-03	Discipleship in the Home	Pam Nummela
B-04	Called Together: The Relationship at the Heart of Team Ministry	Rev. Joshua Schmidt
B-05	A Trajectory for Disability Theology: Original Sin in the Lutheran Confessions	Rev. Erik Rottmann
B-06	Why Pastors Need to Leave (So They Stay): Case for Sabbaticals	Rev. James Uglum
B-07	Building a Foundation for the Future	Matthew Bergholt (LCEF)
B-08	The Fullness of the Gospel	Rev. Phil Cook

B-01: Revival in Gen Z?**How the Lutheran Church Can Respond to God's Movement in Young Adults***Presented by:* [Rev. Brandon Boos](#)

This presentation will discuss the real data in young adults return to church and its impact on the Lutheran church. It will then provide practical strategies on how every church context can respond in order to better integrate young adults into their ministries and send them into the mission field.

[Return to Sectional B](#)[Return to Top of Guide](#)**B-02: Working Mission in Missouri Like International Missionary***Presented by:* [Rev. John Perling](#), [Rev. James Sharp](#)

Mo District Director of Mission Service, Rev. John Perling and Latin America Area Facilitator, Rev. James Sharp, based in San Juan, Puerto Rico will facilitate a mission strategy conversation. What mission and ministry focal points serve as guiding lights for our international missionaries? What best practices from International Missions translate to our local ministries? What will your members learn on short-term mission trips that they can bring home to make disciples in Missouri? Your members can love their neighbors by guiding them to seek baptism and formal teaching in the Word.

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B-03: Discipleship in the Home

Presented by: [Pam Nummela](#)

How is God working in the hearts, minds, and lives of people to partner with people in our homes and congregation to lives as His disciples with His guidance and presence?

Specifically, “Discipleship in the Home” in the Missouri District Strategic Plan focuses on the partnering of homes, congregations, and schools for 1) the use of the Bible, Catechism, and hymnal in homes; 2) recognizing and expanding the blessing of intergenerational teaching and activities; and 3) encouraging training opportunities.

Discussion based, this session will share stories from families and congregations, “tweaks” that helped, resources used, and lots of encouragement.

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B-04: Called Together: The Relationship at the Heart of Team Ministry

Presented by: [Rev. Joshua Schmidt](#)

Using two widespread surveys conducted by the Wellspring Center of Leadership and Wellness, this presentation explores the relationship between Senior and Associate Pastors. How satisfied and fulfilled are they in their work and life together? What are the key factors that contribute to a healthy relationship? What do each need to keep in mind as they serve with each other? While the surveys concentrate on pastors in team ministry, this presentation can be beneficial to anyone who works in team ministry.

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B-05: A Trajectory for Disability Theology: Original Sin in the Lutheran Confessions

Presented by: [Rev. Erik Rottmann](#)

You are acquainted with Christians who are burdened by a disability, either personally or as a caregiver. Many books address disability from the viewpoint of Liberation Theology, or from some other unfaithful perspective. The Lutheran Book of Concord speaks the Scriptural doctrine of original sin faithfully, thereby providing essential guidance for thinking rightly about the burdens we bear.

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B-06: Why Pastors Need to Leave (So They Stay): Case for Sabbaticals

Presented by: [Rev. James Uglum](#)

Healthy ministry isn’t sustained by constant output—it’s sustained by rhythms of renewal. This presentation explores why intentional seasons of rest, reflection, and study are not a luxury for pastors, but a biblical and practical necessity for long-term, faithful service. This session will offer practical guidance for churches: how to thoughtfully develop and implement a sabbatical policy, what to plan for during a pastor’s absence, and how to ensure that both pastor and congregation are strengthened through the process.

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B-07: Building a Foundation for the Future

Presented by: [Matthew Bergholt](#)

Today's church and school ministries find themselves operating in a very different environment than has historically been the case. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, social and cultural changes which emerged after the COVID pandemic, and new expectations of constituents and staff have resulted in challenges at every turn. More importantly, this environment is projected to continue changing at a rapid pace for the coming years. As such, ministry leaders must be prepared to respond in such a way that best positions their ministries to thrive in a future centered around data, communication, and responsiveness to social and cultural expectations. Thus, we will explore what it will take to best prepare your ministry's operational foundation to weather what you are facing now and build a flexible and sustainable structure to respond to future challenges.

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B-08: The Fullness of the Gospel - how a more complete understanding of God's answer to all the problems of sin can lead us to a more comprehensive ministry

Presented by: [Rev. Phil Cook](#)

Can helping actually hurt? Countless dollars have been poured into poverty relief, and yet the issue of poverty remains largely unchanged. At the same time, many attempts to proclaim the gospel have skipped over significant issues in people's lives, leaving them more hurt and confused. As we return to Genesis 3, we see four kinds of poverty created by the fall into sin: poverty in our relationship with God, with self, with others, and with the material world. As God responds to the consequences of sin, his good news applies to all four of these areas. As we begin to share the fullness of the gospel in all four of these areas, we can begin to see God's grace at work in more comprehensive ways.

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Wednesday, October 21

8:50-9:50 a.m.

Plenary II (Part II)

Wednesday, October 21

“Revisiting the Doctrine of Vocation: Luther’s Instruction on the Christian Life”

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Jason Lane](#)

The doctrine of vocation has made a resurgence ever since the Luther Renaissance of the late 19th century. In the LCMS, Luther’s teaching of “one’s calling” has been popularized among pastors by Gustaf Wingren’s study, “Luther on Vocation” (1958). More recently, Gene Edward Veith Jr.’s books, “Spirituality of the Cross” and “God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life,” have made Wingren’s study and Luther’s teaching on love of the neighbor more accessible to laity. These helpful treatments of Luther’s thinking on the Christian life seek to address the apparent and persistent problem with Lutheran theology: that our emphasis on faith alone leaves Lutherans lacking in sanctification and good works. Under the theme of “Live as You Are Called” we will examine God’s will for our Christian life in Christ based on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and Luther’s writings.

The second session will suggest ways that Luther taught vocation as living by faith in Christ in every situation and according to God’s word. I argue that a return to Luther’s teaching on faith in Christ will preserve our teaching concerning love for others, whereas our teaching of earthly matters is always at risk of losing Christ and the Gospel.

The term “calling” in the sense of station in life or the way one is set in relationship to others, as found in 1 Cor. 7:20, cannot be understood apart from the call of the gospel and the ministry of the church through which God awakens faith, forgives sins, and gives eternal life. Where faith is established the fruits of faith—including love, duty, and service for others—flourish. Where love and duty are demanded without faith, sinners become trapped in the Law by either pride or despair. Therefore, St. Paul writes, “live as you are called,” that is, live as you are called by the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the forgiveness of your sins.

10:10 – 11:00 a.m.

Sectional C (Pastors)

Wednesday, October 21

Sectional	Title	Presenter
C-01	Technology: Something’s Different, Part I	Rev. Elden Kohn
C-02	Speaking with One Voice: Catechesis for the Home, Congregation, and School	Rev. Dr. Gregory Truwe
C-03	LCMS Requirements for Worker Onboarding & Retaining	Rev. Marty Hasz
C-04	The Aftermath of Forgiveness	Rev. Kirk Griebel
C-05	Spiritual Warfare & Christian Identity	Rev. Dr. Jon Furgeson
C-06	Beyond the Walls: Reimagining Your Building for Ministry Sustainability	Kellie Lohmeyer Allison Brewster (LCEF)
C-07	Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime: Equipping Everyday Believers for Mission Where They Live, Work, Learn, and Play	Rev. Matt Peebles

C-01: Technology: Something’s Different, Part I

Presented by: [Rev. Elden Kohn](#)

This two-part presentation will help participants pause, reflect, and sort through “technology” in the digital age. Part one will provide a framework for thinking about (and language for speaking about) technology. Part two will apply that framework and language in consideration of two specific digital tools: algorithms and AI. The goal: keeping watch over the flock, guarding the hearts and minds of those precious to Christ and redeemed by His blood.

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C-02: Speaking with One Voice: Catechesis for the Home, Congregation, and School

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Gregory Truwe](#)

To plant the Word of Christ richly into the hearts of those we serve (Col 3:16): this is the goal of pastors, parents, and Lutheran school teachers. This work of teaching the faith is also fundamental to the calling/vocation of each of these God-given authorities. Parents are called to teach their children diligently (Deut. 6). Pastors are called to devote themselves to teaching (1 Timothy 4:13). And where congregations have parochial school, those teachers have a wonderful opportunity to participate in this vital, life-giving, work. When all of these God-given teachers of the faith are united with one voice, in one common teaching, with a synthesized language, the blessings for those who receive this teaching are multiplied. So, join Pastor Truwe as he shares a method of teaching the faith that synthesizes what is taught in the home, the congregation, and the school for the benefit of those we are called to serve.

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C-03: LCMS Requirements for Worker Onboarding & Retaining

Presented by: [Rev. Marty Hasz](#)

Ministry worker-employer relationships are official public offices requiring both joyful function and freedom from legal entanglements. This sectional will provide a tutorial and handouts to increase the competencies expected to establish and maintain ministry relationships in the LCMS. This sectional directly applies to those responsible for leading/advising/shepherding boards, teams and/or committees, hiring contracted workers, supervising workers or managing worker HR. Handouts will clarify the LCMS requirements, terms & definitions that supersede State of Missouri employee relationship dynamics and provide worker support references for recruitment, onboarding, retention.

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C-04: The Aftermath of Forgiveness

Presented by: [Rev. Kirk Griebel](#)

Our churches rightly teach that all who repent of their sins are to be forgiven for the sake of Christ. But in our life together in the church should repentant sinners face consequences for their sins? And who decides what those consequences should be? This presentation will engage participants in looking at the aftermath of forgiveness in a wide range of situations from Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden all the way to incidents of abuse in today's world.

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C-05: Spiritual Warfare & Christian Identity

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Jon Furgeson](#)

This presentation will focus on a Confessional Lutheran definition of spiritual warfare and its impact on how we understand our lives as God's children in Christ Jesus. The first part of the presentation will concern itself with understanding spiritual warfare as the fallen powers of creation railing against the reign of Christ, breaking down that definition for understanding. The second part will discuss the motivations of those fallen powers in relation to God and, by extension, to the Christian. The final part will overview the impact this may have on how we view the Christian life individually and corporately in light of the Word and our daily vocations.

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C-06: Beyond the Walls: Reimagining Your Building for Ministry Sustainability

Presented by: [Kellie Lohmeyer](#), [Allison Brewster](#)

We are called to teach, confess, and live out the Gospel in service to others - and the buildings we steward are part of that calling. Lutheran schools across the country, from preschools and startups to established K-12 programs, are discovering that their facilities hold far more ministry potential than they may realize. This interactive session invites school administrators and ministry leaders to think creatively and prayerfully about the spaces God has entrusted to them. Through real examples, guided discussion, and a collaborative framework, participants will explore how schools like theirs are turning underutilized space into opportunities for growth, sustainability, and deeper community impact. You will leave with fresh perspective, practical ideas, and language you can bring back to your leadership team, your board, and your congregation - so that together, you can live out your calling beyond the walls.

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C-07: Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime: Equipping Everyday Believers for Mission Where They Live, Work, Learn, and Play

Presented by: [Rev. Matt Peebles](#)

Most pastors and church leaders want to see their people confidently share their faith and make disciples, but many congregations lack a simple pathway to help believers move from attending church to living on mission. Drawing from the Missionary Pathway and Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime resources, this workshop will explore practical ways to equip ordinary Christians to recognize the mission field God has already placed around them. Participants will discover how to help believers engage their neighbors, coworkers, classmates, teammates, and friends with the Gospel in the places they live, work, learn, and play. Attendees will leave with a reproducible framework, practical tools, and actionable next steps for cultivating a culture of everyday disciple-making in their congregation.

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11:10 – 12:00 p.m. Sectional D (Pastors)

Wednesday, October 21

Sectional	Title	Presenter
D-01	Technology: Something's Different, Part 2	Rev. Elden Kohn
D-02	Set Apart to Serve: Mentor Training for Pastors	Rev. Peter Kirby
D-03	Esther in Hebrew and Greek – Which is More Powerful in Our Lives of Faith?	Rev. Dr. Philip Penhallegon
D-04	FORO: An Opportunity to Plug Into Mission to Extend the Kingdom of God in a Particular Place	Rev. Dr. Mark Rabe
D-05	The Mission Field of the Family	Rev. Andy Becker
D-06	Called to Be Worshipers	Rev. Kyle Wright II
D-07	MO District Mission Grant Application and Accountability	Rev. John Perling

D-01: Technology: Something's Different, Part 2

Presented by: [Rev. Elden Kohn](#)

This two-part presentation will help participants pause, reflect, and sort through "technology" in the digital age. Part one will provide a framework for thinking about (and language for speaking about) technology. Part two will apply that framework and language in consideration of two specific digital tools: algorithms and AI. The goal: keeping watch over the flock, guarding the hearts and minds of those precious to Christ and redeemed by His blood.

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D-02: Set Apart to Serve: Mentor Training for Pastors

Presented by: [Rev. Peter Kirby](#)

We desperately need more church workers. Pastors have a pivotal role in identifying and encouraging children, youth and adults who the Lord may be preparing for church work roles. This session will present and discuss mentoring tools developed by the Set Apart to Serve initiative that can assist pastors to identify and challenge potential church workers appropriately.

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D-03: Esther in Hebrew and Greek – Which is More Powerful in our Lives of Faith?

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Philip Penhallegon](#)

The two Greek versions of Esther both add 6 significant blocks of material and make many other changes throughout the Hebrew text. In these additions and changes, God, prayer, and obvious piety are inserted into a challenging book that never mentions God and has no obvious piety or prayer practiced by the main characters. Jerome and Luther both removed the additions and reverted to using the Hebrew text. This presentation describes the changes and argues that the Hebrew Esther without explicit references to God, prayer, and piety is more powerful in our Christian lives than the Greek versions that try to spell it all out.

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D-04: FORO: An Opportunity to Plug Into Mission to Extend the Kingdom of God in a Particular Place

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Mark Rabe](#)

What is a FORO? How can congregations, LCMS Districts, RSOs, Short-term teams and Synod Departments get plugged into the mission of extending the Kingdom of God in a particular place? This presentation will explore ways of collaboration to further God's mission through the planting of Lutheran churches.

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D-05: The Mission Field of the Family

Presented by: [Rev. Andy Becker](#)

Families are navigating increasing pressures, isolation and uncertainty. How can the Church respond with the hope and love of Christ? In this session, participants will explore how to identify the needs of the families God has already placed in their communities and leverage the people, relationships, and resources God has already given their congregations.

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D-06: Called to Be Worshipers

Presented by: [Rev. Kyle Wright II](#)

Hearing the preaching of Law and Gospel in the Divine Service continues to help shape who we are as worshipers. This paper/presentation will discuss the joy of living out our calling as worshipers, addressing foundational questions such as:

- What does it mean to worship?
- What flows from worship?
- Who/What are we called to worship?

This presentation is not a "how-to" manual for corporate worship, but rather an emphasis on the essence of worship and its fruits. How do the events of Divine Service shape our calling as worshippers in our sanctified lives? And how are we to encounter God as Deus revelatus (the revealed God) or Deus nudus (the naked God)?

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D-07: MO District Mission Grant Application and Accountability

Presented by: [Rev. John Perling](#)

This breakout sectional will detail the Missions Grant Writing Application process and the accountability process in place after your grant is submitted, approved and funded. Mission grants require measurable goals with clear objectives, but we are happy to support applicants through the grant development process. Mission grants facilitate baptizing and teaching for the sake of making disciples of all nations.

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1:30 – 2:20 p.m.

Sectional E (Everyone)

Wednesday, October 21

Sectional	Title	Presenter
E-01	The God Who Rejoices Over You: Jennie Williamson and Fields of Zephaniah, a Perry County Ministry of Rest, Renewal, Refuge and Wisdom	Jennie Williamson Brian Williamson
E-02	Your Ministry Has Vitality! Revitalization Made Simple	Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe
E-03	Raising Your Children in the Faith: Key Insights for Church Worker Homes	Rev. Dr. W. Mart Thompson
E-04	Leading From the Middle: Operational Excellence in Ministry Settings	Kellie Lohmeyer Allison Brewster (LCEF)
E-05	Available to You: A Financial Assistance Program for LCMS Church Workers	Rev. Ken Krueger
E-06	Children Are a Heritage from the Lord: Toward a Procreation-Centered Approach to Marriage and Sex Education in the Church	Rev. Dr. Nicholas Hagerman
E-07	Focus on Your Financial Future (Concordia Pension, CRSP)	Keith Duesenberg Concordia Plans

E-01: The God Who Rejoices Over You: Jennie Williamson and Fields of Zephaniah, a Perry County Ministry of Rest, Renewal, Refuge and Wisdom

Presented by: [Jennie Williamson](#), [Brian Williamson](#)

Rooted in the promise of Zephaniah 3:17, Fields of Zephaniah is a new ministry at Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Perry County dedicated to providing church workers with rest, renewal, refuge, and wisdom for the road ahead. Join Jennie Williamson as she shares how decades of ministry and thousands of conversations with church workers inspired this vision. Discover how Fields of Zephaniah seeks to encourage pastors, teachers, and other church workers through meaningful relationships, Christ-centered renewal, and thoughtful support. Learn how Fields of Zephaniah is creating space for peace, hope, encouragement, and wisdom rooted in God's promises.

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E-02: Your Ministry Has Vitality! Revitalization Made Simple

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe](#)

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus commissions His church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching - gathering the scattered and shepherding the gathered. It sounds simple, but real life is often more complicated. We wish more people would worship each week. We want our Bible studies to be better attended. We want more people engaged with the mission of the church. And we want to make a bigger impact on our community!

Join Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe, LCMS Director of Discipleship Ministry, for a discussion about revitalization. Trampe will cover time-tested principles for strategic planning, outreach, incorporation, ministry to inactive members, and more. He will also draw from over a decade of implementation in the parish, serving three growing parishes in three different districts.

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E-03: Raising Your Children in the Faith: Key Insights for Church Worker Homes

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. W. Mart Thompson](#)

Rev. Dr. W. Mart Thompson shares an effective, natural, Christ-centered, Lutheran approach to raise children in the faith, described in his new book, "Family Discipleship: A Map of God's Promises for Congregations and Families" (CPH, 2026). This biblical, research verified, practical paradigm served him and Cheryl very well in raising their children in the faith and can work in any type of home or size of congregation. It connects habits in the home with educational ministry in the congregation and captures Luther's intention for raising children in the faith as seen in his writings and personal life.

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E-04: Leading From the Middle: Operational Excellence in Ministry Settings

Presented by: [Kellie Lohmeyer](#), [Allison Brewster](#) (LCEF)

Many professionals, including church workers lead without a title, influencing teams, managing operations, and driving change from the middle of their organizations. This session explores how to elevate administrative and operational work from task execution to strategic ministry partnership. Participants will learn practical frameworks for building scalable systems, leading cross-functional teams, reducing reliance on undocumented workflows, and positioning their operational role as a catalyst for organizational health and Gospel impact. Whether you lead a school, a ministry team, or a parish office, this session will give you tools to lead with greater clarity, structure, and confidence.

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E-05: Available to You: A Financial Assistance Program for LCMS Church Workers

Presented by: [Rev. Ken Krueger](#)

Since 2015, MinistryFocus has provided approximately \$1.5 million in financial assistance and education to 472 LCMS church workers. In this presentation, we will discuss the importance of financial well-being to one's ministry, as well as how one may apply for a MinistryFocus grant.

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E-06: Children Are a Heritage from the Lord: Toward a Procreation-Centered Approach to Marriage and Sex Education in the Church

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Nicholas Hagerman](#)

In the past several decades in the church, instruction on marriage and sexuality has tended to focus on purity above all else, with great emphasis placed on the sinfulness of extramarital sex and the consequences of breaking the Sixth Commandment. While such teaching is certainly right and orthodox, it fails on its own to address the positive aspects of marriage and sexuality, especially the procreation of children and formation of families. This session will explore why it is important to emphasize to youth in today's world the positive good of procreation and how church workers might teach this in their congregations.

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E-07: Focus on Your Financial Future

Presented by: [Keith Duesenberg](#)

God entrusts us with the privilege and responsibility of joyfully managing life's resources for Him. During our time together we will examine our Concordia Retirement Plan Pension and why we still need to be diligent with our personal savings. We will discuss our savings opportunities in the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b) and how roster status can affect this option.

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“Revisiting the Doctrine of Vocation: Luther’s Instruction on the Christian Life”

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Jason Lane](#)

The doctrine of vocation has made a resurgence ever since the Luther Renaissance of the late 19th century. In the LCMS, Luther’s teaching of “one’s calling” has been popularized among pastors by Gustaf Wingren’s study, “Luther on Vocation” (1958). More recently, Gene Edward Veith Jr.’s books, “Spirituality of the Cross” and “God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life,” have made Wingren’s study and Luther’s teaching on love of the neighbor more accessible to laity. These helpful treatments of Luther’s thinking on the Christian life seek to address the apparent and persistent problem with Lutheran theology: that our emphasis on faith alone leaves Lutherans lacking in sanctification and good works. Under the theme of “Live as You Are Called” we will examine God’s will for our Christian life in Christ based on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and Luther’s writings.

The term “calling” in the sense of station in life or the way one is set in relationship to others, as found in 1 Cor. 7:20, cannot be understood apart from the call of the gospel and the ministry of the church through which God awakens faith, forgives sins, and gives eternal life. Where faith is established the fruits of faith—including love, duty, and service for others—flourish. Where love and duty are demanded without faith, sinners become trapped in the Law by either pride or despair. Therefore, St. Paul writes, “live as you are called,” that is, live as you are called by the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the forgiveness of your sins.

Thursday, October 22

10:20 – 11:45 a.m.

Plenary

Thursday, October 22

“Features of Fidelity and Flourishing Lutheran Schools”

Presented by: [Dr. Bernard Bull](#)

In this session, Dr. Bernard Bull draws from over twenty years of research to offer insights on the habits, practices and features that we find in faithful and flourishing Lutheran schools and classrooms.

1:15 – 2:05 p.m.

Sectional F (Educators)

Thursday, October 22

Sectional	Title Target audience: (Administrators, EC, Elementary, HS, School Counselors)	Presenter
F-01	A Guide to Disciplinary Discipleship (All)	Dr. Bernard Bull
F-02	Church and School: One Mission, One Ministry Partnering to Raise the Next Generation in Christ (Admin)	Elissa Beaver, Rev. Matthew Bohlmann, Rev. Ryan Taylor, Rev. Scott Schmieding, Scott Huster
F-03	Mathematizing Our Early Childhood Classrooms! (EC, Elem)	Cheryl Haun
F-04	Crisis Management Plans (Admin)	Mary Schuldheisz
F-05	Hands On Learning (EC, Elem)	Mindy English
F-06	Care for Our Hearts: Finding Hope, Grace & Peace in the Fire! (All)	Alan Wunderlich
F-07	Learning Standards Reimagined Through the Lens of Whole Child Development and Schema Play (EC)	Janelle Hendricks
F-08	Instructional Culture by Design: Turning Mission into Practice (Admin)	Jonathan Bernhardt

F-01: A Guide to Disciplinary Discipleship

Presented by: [Dr. Bernard Bull](#)

A Guide to Disciplinary Discipleship, nurturing the faith of students while teaching any and all subjects.

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F-02: Church and School: One Mission, One Ministry - Partnering to Raise the Next Generation in Christ

Presented by: [Elissa Beaver](#), [Rev. Matthew Bohlmann](#), [Rev. Ryan Taylor](#), [Rev. Scott Schmieding](#), [Scott Huster](#)

A thriving ministry is built when church and school leaders intentionally partner to create one mission, one message, and one community rooted in Christ. Participants will engage in meaningful conversations focused on fostering intentional communication, visible presence, collaborative leadership, and authentic community. This session will examine practical strategies for building trusting relationships between pastoral leadership, early childhood, and elementary administration. Together, we will explore how unified leadership can support children, families, and staff while equipping them to live as walking, talking billboards for Christ in their homes, schools, churches, and communities.

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F-03: Mathematizing Our Early Childhood Classrooms!

Presented by: [Cheryl Haun](#)

Early knowledge of math not only predicts later success in math, but also predicts later reading achievement even better than early reading skills. We will consider our "math identities" and actively engage in mathematical strategies to take back to our early childhood classrooms!

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F-04: Crisis Management Plans

Presented by: [Mary Schuldheisz](#)

If your church/school does not yet have a Crisis Management Plan, this workshop will SCARE you into writing one and beginning to write one in the workshop on a template that will be provided to you electronically - bring your electronic device!!!!

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F-05: Hands On Learning

Presented by: [Mindy English](#)

In this presentation teachers will learn multiple ways to make reading and other subjects hands on, while still grounded in the Science of Reading, from learning motions to letter sounds, syllable types, and spelling rules, to moving around the room to apply those rules. How to use the simplest tools and supplies in your classroom to make it kinesthetic, and therefore helping all learners at different levels master the concepts you are teaching while naturally differentiating.

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F-06: Care for Our Hearts: Finding Hope, Grace & Peace in the Fire!

Presented by: [Alan Wunderlich](#)

What do you do when the ministry, people, parents, members, students, boards, fellow staff, and not just our professional life, but our personal life get in the way of our joy for ministry? We sometimes feel we are not allowed to get down in what we do, “but, Jesus, do you realize what I am dealing with???”- YES HE DOES!

So, what is the condition of your heart? Have you found yourself:

Instead of feeling like getting up and attacking the world I begin feeling overwhelmed.

Instead of feeling compassion for others I feel calloused.

I become critical of others.

I get frustrated easily.

Through the use of scripture, music, stories, good discussion and prayer we will examine not just the condition of our hearts but discuss and receive good resources to utilize in these doldrum times.

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F-07: Learning Standards Reimagined Through the Lens of Whole Child Development and Schema Play

Presented by: [Janelle Hendricks](#)

Early Learning Standards are there to outline the expectations of what young children should be exposed to throughout their early childhood years. How can we blend this reality with the reality of the individual children that walk through our doors each day? This session will focus on taking what we know and need to know about child development, learning standards, and schema play theory and allowing those to support rather than mandate what we do with and for the children in our care.

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F-08: Instructional Culture by Design: Turning Mission into Practice

Presented by: [Jonathan Bernhardt](#)

A mission statement should be more than words on a website or a plaque on the wall—it should shape every aspect of a school's culture and instructional practice. This session will provide a practical framework based on an established mission, supported by core values, and resulting in a shared educational philosophy and core behaviors reflected in daily instructional practice. Participants will learn how to create alignment between mission, beliefs, and daily classroom actions, resulting in a cohesive instructional culture.

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Sectional	Title Target audience: (Administrators, EC, Elementary, HS, School Counselors)	Presenter
G-01	God is Great! The Joy of Proclaiming a Great God (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Jennie Williamson
G-02	Technology: Something's Different, Part I (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Rev. Elden Kohn
G-03	Partnering with Families Through Personal Faith Stories (EC, Elem)	Cheryl Haun
G-04	Navigating MOScholars as an Administrator, Parent, and Contributor (Admin)	Scott Dixon
G-05	Showing Your Shield: Using School-Wide Data to Measure the Impact of Biblical Character Formation (Admin, EC, Elem, HS)	Brandi Hallemeier
G-06	Meaningful, Actively Engaged Learning: How Playful Learning Brings Joy to Your Classroom (EC, Elem)	Andrea Lohman
G-07	Building a Positive Culture in the Middle Grades Classroom (HS)	Alexandria Newsome
G-08	Ninja Camp: 15 Minutes That Matter (Elem)	Sean Kelly Joanie Smith

G-01: God is Great! The Joy of Proclaiming a Great God*Presented by:* [Jennie Williamson](#)

Jennie Williamson brings an energy and excitement for Jesus that is contagious. Through the God Is Great! series, her music has encouraged youth, families, schools, and churches with messages of God's love, joy, and hope. Drawing from more than two decades of ministry and thousands of experiences in schools, churches, and communities across the country, Jennie will share songs from the God Is Great! series along with stories that celebrate God's faithfulness. Join her for an uplifting reminder of the joy, hope, and confidence that come from knowing a Great God.

[Return to Sectional G](#)[Return to Top of Guide](#)**G-02: Technology: Something's Different, Part I***Presented by:* [Rev. Elden Kohn](#)

This two-part presentation will help participants pause, reflect, and sort through "technology" in the digital age. Part one will provide a framework for thinking about (and language for speaking about) technology. Part two will apply that framework and language in consideration of two specific digital tools: algorithms and AI. The goal: keeping watch over the flock, guarding the hearts and minds of those precious to Christ and redeemed by His blood.

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G-03: Partnering with Families Through Personal Faith Stories

Presented by: [Cheryl Haun](#)

Using one of the Independent Learning Series (ILS) videos developed by the CUNE Early Childhood Initiative, participants will explore effective strategies for partnering with families through personal faith stories as developed by Tracie Douglas. Cheryl Haun will facilitate the session and guide participants in reflecting on practical ways to strengthen relationships and share the Gospel with children and families.

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G-04: Navigating MOScholars as an Administrator, Parent, and Contributor

Presented by: [Scott Dixon](#)

This presentation provides actionable guidance on enrolling families and maximizing program engagement. We will explore the platform from both perspectives, comparing the family user experience directly with the administrator dashboard. Participants will gain strategic marketing insights to increase constituent awareness and boost program contributions. Finally, I will share bookkeeping practices for tracking participants, alongside strategies and hard lessons learned along the way.

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G-05: Showing Your Shield: Using School-Wide Data to Measure the Impact of Biblical Character Formation

Presented by: [Brandi Hallemeier](#)

Christian schools are called not only to pursue academic excellence but also to develop disciples who reflect Christ in their daily lives. At Child of God Lutheran School, this mission is supported through Show Your Shield, a school-wide character development framework centered on four Fruits of the Spirit: Love, Kindness, Faithfulness, and Self-Control. This presentation explores how a culture intentionally rooted in God's Word can be measured through school-wide data. Participants will examine behavioral trends, climate survey results, student recognition systems, attendance, discipline data, and stakeholder feedback to see how these indicators provide evidence of Christ-centered character growth and a thriving school culture. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for cultivating, measuring, and communicating the impact of Biblical character formation within their own school communities.

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G-06: Meaningful, Actively Engaged Learning: How Playful Learning Brings Joy to Your Classroom

Presented by: [Andrea Lohman](#)

What is playful learning? In this workshop, participants will explore the pedagogy of play through the lens of Project Zero's research and framework. We will examine the importance of play as a powerful approach to teaching and learning and consider practical strategies for incorporating playful learning experiences into early childhood and elementary classrooms.

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G-07: Building a Positive Culture in the Middle Grades Classroom

Presented by: [Alexandria Newsome](#)

The middle grade years are fraught with social-emotional pressures and clearly characterized by emotional tumult, for both students and their teachers! However, these years are also a remarkable opportunity for educators: to come alongside our learners and practice the everyday social and communication skills they'll need both while in your classroom, and on into adulthood. In this sectional, you'll learn tips, tricks, games and routines to help build the foundation for a positive culture in your middle grades classroom! We'll review and practice norm setting, conflict resolution and the give-and-take of conversation, using strategies you can implement tomorrow and setting the stage for a successful school year!

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G-08: Ninja Camp: 15 Minutes That Matter

Presented by: [Sean Kelly](#), [Joanie Smith](#)

Ninja Camp is a 15-minute before-school movement program designed for selected Kindergarten and 1st grade students. Led by the physical education teacher, students participate in structured activities that develop balance, coordination, focus, self-control, perseverance, and confidence. Students are selected for the program because they would benefit from additional support in regulating their behavior, managing their energy, and improving their readiness for learning in the classroom. What began as a small pilot program has been nominated as a Powerful Practice due to its positive impact on student behavior, classroom readiness, self-regulation, and overall well-being.

This session will share the purpose, structure, and outcomes of Ninja Camp, including how students are identified and selected, how the program supports behavior regulation and classroom success, how success is measured through teacher and parent feedback, and how schools can implement a similar low-cost, high-impact program. Participants will leave with practical strategies for using purposeful movement to help students develop self-control, start the day focused and confident, and be ready to learn.

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4:10 – 5:00 p.m.**Sectional H (Educators)****Thursday, October 22**

Sectional	Title Target audience: (Administrators, EC, Elementary, HS, School Counselors)	Presenter
H-01	Leading with Emotional Intelligence: Strengthening Relationships Through Grace (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Angela Shirley
H-02	Technology: Something's Different, Part II (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Rev. Elden Kohn
H-03	Practice What You Teach...DAILY (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann
H-04	Dealing With Irate and Irrational Parents and Students (Admin, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Mark Ruark Missy Adams
H-05	Catechesis for the Littlest Lambs: What Does This Mean (and look like!?) (EC)	Kelly Rottmann
H-06	Building a Foundation for the Future (LCEF) (Admin)	Matthew Bergholt
H-07	Talking to Families About Play-Based Learning (EC)	Andrea Lohman
H-08	Navigating Jetpack: NLSA Training for Team Captains & Consultants (Admin)	Dr. Melissa Sandfort

H-01: Leading with Emotional Intelligence: Strengthening Relationships Through Grace*Presented by:* [Angela Shirley](#)

Drawing from the research and practical framework developed by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves in Emotional Intelligence 2.0, this session explores how emotional intelligence—our ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in ourselves and others—directly impacts leadership, communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and ministry effectiveness. Grounded in Scripture and framed through the lens of God's grace, this engaging and practical session helps pastors, teachers, administrators, and church staff develop the four core competencies of emotional intelligence: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management.

Through biblical reflection, real-world ministry examples, and actionable strategies, participants will learn how to navigate difficult conversations, respond wisely under pressure, strengthen relationships, build trust, and cultivate healthier church and school cultures. Attendees will leave equipped with practical tools and a personalized growth plan to serve others with greater wisdom, empathy, and Christ-centered leadership.

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H-02: Technology: Something's Different, Part II

Presented by: [Rev. Elden Kohn](#)

This two-part presentation will help participants pause, reflect, and sort through "technology" in the digital age. Part one will provide a framework for thinking about (and language for speaking about) technology. Part two will apply that framework and language in consideration of two specific digital tools: algorithms and AI. The goal: keeping watch over the flock, guarding the hearts and minds of those precious to Christ and redeemed by His blood.

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H-03: Practice What You Teach...DAILY

Presented by: [Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann](#)

Day in and day out, we spend our vocational time helping children, youth, and ALL families grow as disciples of Jesus. What happens when we don't practice this in our own homes? Jesus graciously supplies His gifts daily for you to enjoy and winsomely share with your people. It's as easy as giving Jesus a "Thumbs Up." What's that mean? CCF's Exec. Dir. will give you practical guidance and tools for new vibrancy. (conordiafamily.org)

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H-04: Dealing With Irrate and Irrational Parents and Students

Presented by: [Mark Ruark](#), [Missy Adams](#)

The presentation focuses on verbal tips to help prevent or diffuse difficult situations. Proactive communication and relationship building are among the strategies that will be discussed; additionally, creating a comfortable setting for student/parent meetings will be shown and discussed.

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H-05: Catechesis for the Littlest Lambs: What Does This Mean (and look like!?)

Presented by: [Kelly Rottmann](#)

For the Early Childhood Educator, what does it mean and look like to joyfully teach God's Word and maintain the school's distinctively Lutheran identity? Explore basic lesson components of one preschool classroom's catechesis and walk away with some teaching tips and resource ideas that can easily be implemented in your early childhood classroom.

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H-06: Building a Foundation for the Future

Presented by: [Matthew Bergholt](#)

Today's church and school ministries find themselves operating in a very different environment than has historically been the case. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, social and cultural changes which emerged after the COVID pandemic, and new expectations of constituents and staff have resulted in challenges at every turn. More importantly, this environment is projected to continue changing at a rapid pace for the coming years. As such, ministry leaders must be prepared to respond in such a way that best positions their ministries to thrive in a future centered around data, communication, and responsiveness to social and cultural expectations. Thus, we will explore what it will take to best prepare your ministry's operational foundation to weather what you are facing now and build a flexible and sustainable structure to respond to future challenges.

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H-07: Talking to Families About Play-Based Learning

Presented by: [Andrea Lohman](#)

Using one of the Interactive Learning Series videos, developed by CUNE's Initiative for Early Childhood Education, participants will explore effective strategies for communicating with families about the benefits and importance of play-based learning developed by Lauren Sommerer. Andrea Lohman will facilitate the discussion.

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H-08: Navigating Jetpack: NLSA Training for Team Captains & Consultants

Presented by: [Dr. Melissa Sandfort](#)

This focused session equips NLSA Team Captains and Consultants with the practical skills needed to navigate the Jetpack platform effectively throughout the accreditation process. Participants will develop a clear understanding of core functionalities, with particular emphasis on coaching schools in organizing evidence, monitoring progress, and guiding administrators and teams through the self-study and validation phases. The session highlights workflow efficiency, addresses common challenges, and shares best practices for leading school teams with clarity and confidence. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to streamline their use of Jetpack and enhance the overall effectiveness of the NLSA accreditation experience.

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Friday, October 23

9:00 – 9:50 a.m.

Sectional I (Educators)

Friday, October 23

Sectional	Title Target audience: (Administrators, EC, Elementary, HS, School Counselors)	Presenter
I-01	Learning that Sticks: Tools for the Middle School Classroom (All)	Jennifer Tanner
I-02	Approaching Difficult Conversations With Courage (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Angela Shirley
I-03	Family Ministry in a Lutheran School (Admin, EC, Elem, HS, Counselor)	Rev. Andy Becker
I-04	Lutheran Educator Academy: Professional Development for Your School (Admin, EC, Elem, HS)	Dr. Lisa Clark
I-05	What They Didn't Teach Us in College: Sitcom Solutions for Everyday Classroom Problems (Elem)	Allyson Bohlmann and Paige Bohlmann
I-06	Whole Brain Teaching: Only Connect (Admin, EC, Elem, Counselor)	Sara Scheller
I-07	Cleared for Takeoff: Living Our Calling Through Innovation and Faith (Elem., HS)	Dee Dawson
I-08	Learning Differences (EC, Elem., HS)	Mindy English

I-01: Learning that Sticks: Tools for the Middle School Classroom

Presented by: [Jennifer Tanner](#)

Discover low-tech, high-impact review strategies and assessment techniques designed to make learning stick. As an active participant, you'll experience activities designed specifically for middle school that build recall, spark creativity, and deepen understanding. Leave with ready-to-use tools to help you check learning and increase engagement without adding more grading or prep.

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I-02: Approaching Difficult Conversations With Courage

Presented by: [Angela Shirley](#)

Why do we avoid difficult conversations? Fear of conflict, fear of damaging relationships, fear of saying the wrong thing, and fear of how others may respond often keep us silent when courage and leadership require us to speak. In this session, we will explore the intricacies of communication and the many factors that influence the messages we send and receive, including language, body language, tone, assumptions, and emotional responses.

Participants will learn how assertive communication can strengthen relationships, improve teamwork, build trust, and foster healthier church and school cultures. We will then walk through a practical, step-by-step process for preparing difficult conversations before they happen. Whether leading a congregation, serving on a ministry team, teaching in a classroom, or supervising staff, attendees will leave equipped with tools and strategies to approach difficult conversations with greater confidence, clarity, and grace—strengthening relationships, building trust, and advancing the mission of their ministry.

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I-03: Family Ministry in a Lutheran School

Presented by: [Rev. Andy Becker](#)

Lutheran Schools partner with families for the education of children. Learn what can this partnership look like outside the classroom. Discuss how we can support and encourage these families toward family discipleship whether or not they are members of our church. Discover ways we can include all families in our church and school community.

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I-04: Lutheran Educator Academy: Professional Development for Your School

Presented by: [Dr. Lisa Clark](#)

This presentation will include a demonstration and Q&A segment on Lutheran Educator Academy, a new professional development resource from Concordia Publishing House.

Lutheran Educator Academy was created to equip teachers at Lutheran schools with knowledge and confidence in important faith topics. These expert-led video courses provide training that is accessible, affordable, and applicable to all who want to better understand what Lutherans believe and how to share these teachings with others.

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I-05: What They Didn't Teach Us in College: Sitcom Solutions for Everyday Classroom Problems

Presented by: [Allyson Bohlmann](#), [Paige Bohlmann](#)

Ever wish teaching came with a laugh track? This session pairs real classroom "What if..." problems with practical, ready-to-use solutions—plus iconic quotes from 90s and 00s TV shows that perfectly capture the chaos. Walk away with systems you can use in any classroom immediately for behavior, routines, organization, and sanity.

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I-06: Whole Brain Teaching: Only Connect

Presented by: [Sara Scheller](#)

Whole Brain Teaching (WBT) is an educational framework that can be used in all subjects and with all ages. The focus of WBT is to promote connection and teamwork while teaching the joy of living for others. The creator of WBT believes the formula for classroom management is "Only Connect." In this presentation, I will give a brief overview of WBT and introduce you to classroom connection 'games' that are readily adaptable to all grade levels and can be played as community building at the beginning of each day. These morning meeting activities will set the tone for the rest of your day and build a strong, joyful, and kind classroom.

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I-07: Cleared for Takeoff: Living Our Calling Through Innovation and Faith

Presented by: [Dee Dawson](#)

Rooted in Christ and grounded in our Lutheran identity, this session explores how drone education can inspire students to live as they are called. Through the vision of bringing the Aerial Drone Competition to the St. Louis area, participants will discover how innovation through drones builds teamwork, communication, problem solving, and perseverance while equipping students with future-ready skills to use their God-given gifts to make God's love known to others with confidence and purpose.

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I-08: Learning Differences

Presented by: [Mindy English](#)

In this presentation teachers engage in different simulations that enable them to understand what it is like to have different types of disabilities within their classroom. We will learn how we react to those simulations and therefore be able to apply that knowledge to behavior within our classrooms. We will also then learn how to make accommodations and modifications to help with multiple learning styles and disabilities that you may be facing within your classroom.

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10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Plenary

Friday, October 23

“Called to Joy: One Good Thing at a Time”

Presented by: [Jennifer Tanner](#)

In ministry, it's the direction, not the speed, that builds lasting impact. Yet in a world filled with constant demands and pressure to do more, it is easy to lose sight of the joy and purpose found in our calling. Together, we will explore how encouragement, gratitude, and small acts of faithfulness can shape healthy ministry cultures and strengthen our witness to those we serve. Through research, stories, and practical strategies, participants will discover how small actions create a ripple effect that builds resilience, nurtures positive culture, and helps us live out our callings with greater joy and purpose—one good thing at a time.

Plenary Speakers



Rev. Dr. Jason Lane is associate professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis since 2024. He taught theology at Concordia University Wisconsin (2013–24), and served as pastor at Celebration Lutheran Church in St. Johns, Fla. (2010–13).

He earned his doctorate in the History of Church and Dogma (Dr. Theol.) at the *Universität Hamburg* in Germany (2015), his S.T.M. and M.Div. from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (2007; 2010), and his B.A. in Psychology from Framingham State College in Framingham, Mass. (2001), where he played college basketball. He was also an exchange student at the LCMS's partner church's seminary (SELK), *Lutherische Theologische Hochschule* in Oberursel, Germany (2005–06).

He is the author of “Luther’s Epistle of Straw: The Voice of St. James in Reformation Preaching” (De Gruyter Publishing, 2018). Recently, he accepted the role as the general editor of the translation project, “The Reformation Writings: The Dogmatic-Polemical Writings of Reformation History from 1517–1546” for Concordia Publishing House, a proposed 19-volume companion to “Luther’s Works: American Edition.”

He grew up in the woods of central Massachusetts and married his pastor's youngest daughter. He and his wife, Marta, are blessed with ten children: six girls and four boys.



Dr. Bernard Bull serves as the 11th president of Concordia University, Nebraska. His work focuses on futures; the philosophy and praxis of Christian education; models of educational research and development; and the intersection of education and digital culture.

Before joining Concordia University, Nebraska, Bull served as president of Goddard College; associate professor of education and vice provost at Concordia University Wisconsin; and as a middle and high school teacher in Lutheran schools in Illinois and Wisconsin. Throughout his career, Bull has taught students from sixth grade through doctoral studies in Lutheran schools and universities.

Bull is author, co-author, and editor of a number of books including: *Faithful and Flourishing: Strategies for Leading Your Christian School with Excellence*; *The Pedagogy of Faith: Essays on Lutheran Education*; *Digitized: Spiritual Implications of Technology*; *Imagine the Possibilities: Conversations on the Future of Christian Education*; and *Prep Talks: Tales of Challenges & Opportunities in Christian Education*. He has served as a consultant and invited speaker for more than 200 groups and organizations during the past 30 years.



Jennifer Tanner is the executive director of school and youth ministry for the Florida-Georgia District. A former principal and middle school teacher, she has more than 25 years of experience in Lutheran education. Guided by her personal mission to lead with grace, serve with joy, and live with love, she is passionate about helping schools create healthy, Christ-centered cultures where teachers and leaders can faithfully live out their calling to make disciples.

Tanner is currently a doctoral candidate studying ways to strengthen teacher well-being through meaningful support. She believes ministry is serious work, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't laugh together, celebrate God's blessings, and build one another up - one good thing at a time.

Sectional Speakers

Missy Adams is a 25-year educator with 13 years as a public elementary teacher; 6 years as a prek-8th grade principal at Trinity Lutheran School and 6th year as the assistant principal at Saxony Lutheran High School. Dual credit teacher for Teaching as a Profession through Concordia Nebraska and Southeast Missouri State University

Elissa Beaver serves as the Early Childhood Director at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in St. Charles, Missouri. She is currently in her seventh year as director and her 27th year of ministry at Immanuel. Prior to her leadership role, Elissa taught three-year-old preschool for 20 years. She holds a degree in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University Wisconsin and an Early Childhood Administration Certificate from Concordia University Nebraska. Passionate about building strong partnerships between church, school, and families, Elissa is dedicated to creating Christ-centered environments where children, families, and educators can grow in faith and flourish together.

Rev. Andy Becker serves as the director of Family Ministry for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He was a DCE for 3 years before attending seminary. He then served as a parish pastor for 14 years in Missouri. Andy has an M.Div. from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; a master's degree in Family Life from Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska; and a B.A. in theology from Concordia University Chicago. He is married to Nikki, a Lutheran school teacher, and they have two children.

Matthew “Matt” Bergholt is the Director of Project Management and Continuous Improvement for the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in Saint Louis, MO. In this role he is responsible for managing the project management office, leading process innovation and continuous improvement initiatives, and being a “leader of change” for the organization. He was previously the Continuous Improvement Specialist at LCEF, Manager of Online Support and Services for the LCMS School Ministry Office in St. Louis, MO, the Classroom Technology Instructor at St. Luke's Lutheran School in Oviedo, FL, and the 6th grade homeroom teacher and Director of Technology at Trinity Lutheran School in Orlando, FL. Holding dual B.A. degrees in Secondary Education and History as well as an MBA in Leadership and Change Management from Concordia University Chicago, he is currently enrolled in the Ed.D. in Leadership in Innovation and Continuous Improvement program at Concordia University Wisconsin. Matt resides with his wife Melissa and two sons in Saint Louis, MO.

Jonathan “Jon” Bernhardt has served as the principal of Lutheran High School of St. Charles County since 2012. In his 32 years of service to Lutheran Education, Jon has served in various roles including assistant principal, science and math teacher, and coach. In 2022, Jon completed his Doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership from Missouri Baptist University. Jon resides in St. Charles, Missouri with his wife, Amy, who also serves as a Lutheran Educator. Amy and Jon have three adult children: Hannah, Grace, and Madelyn.

Rev. Dr. Todd Biermann is the Executive Director of the LCMS RSO Concordia Center for the Family (CCF). Having earned his MDiv at CSL and DMin at CTSFW, he served as a parish pastor for 33 years. Since 2023 he's been focused on helping disciples in EVERY home discover Jesus' way to balanced, joyful living that WILL flow from one generation to the next. Find out more at concordiafamily.org

Allyson Bohlmann is in her 10th year of teaching 3rd grade at Immanuel Lutheran School in St. Charles, MO. She was named LEA's New Outstanding Elementary Teacher in 2020. Allyson is in charge of Yearbook and Faith Families at her school. She is passionate about engaging students and fixing everyday problems in the elementary classroom.

Rev. Matthew “Pastor Matt” Bohlmann serves at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in St. Charles, Missouri. A graduate of Fontbonne University and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he previously served congregations in Florida and Kansas before joining Immanuel. In 2025, he married Paige Bohlmann. Pastor Matt enjoys sports, the outdoors, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. He is passionate about sharing the Gospel, connecting with young adults and families, and finding creative ways to engage God's people in the life of the church.

Paige Bohlmann has taught 4th grade for 10 years at Immanuel Lutheran St. Charles, MO. Along with teaching in an elementary classroom, she also coaches volleyball for both girls and boys middle school. She loves to build relationships, build confidence, and foster a love of lifetime learning.

Rev. Brandon Boos: I am a missions pastor at Faith in Oakville. As a Gen Z Lutheran pastor, I have invested in building young adult community in our church, but also with other Lutheran churches around us. I am the husband of a wonderful wife and we have 5 beautiful boys together.

Allison Brewster is Lead Administrative Specialist for Growth Solutions at LCEF, embedded in the Ministry Solutions Team where she supports LCMS congregations and schools through program development, consultant training, and ministry outreach. With over 15 years of experience supporting ministry organizations through change and growth, Allison brings a practitioner's perspective on what it takes to move from conversation to action. Together, Kellie and Allison work alongside LCEF's Real Estate & Ministry Solutions teams — connecting schools and congregations to the expertise, resources, and creative strategies that help ministry communities reimagine what their facilities can do for the Gospel.

Dr. Lisa Clark is a senior editor and leads the curriculum team at Concordia Publishing House. Her degrees focus on Lutheran doctrine, education, and writing. She has written and edited hundreds of resources, including lessons, devotions, books, hymns, and more. She's thankful for her church family at Ascension Lutheran Church in St. Louis, where her husband, Rev. Dr. Matt Clark, serves as senior pastor. Their eldest child just graduated from Concordia University Chicago and is teaching at Lutheran High School in St. Charles. Their youngest child is beginning this fall at Concordia University, Nebraska, for studio art and pre-deaconess studies.

Rev. Phil Cook: After twenty years in the parish, Rev. Phil Cook became the Executive Director of Lutheran Urban Mission Agency. LUMA seeks to walk with churches and communities in the greater Kansas City area, empowering and equipping them to meet physical, social, and spiritual needs. They work with both those trapped in the cycle of poverty in urban America, as well as with new Americans seeking to make a life here. Rev. Cook is married to Rebeka, and has three rapidly growing children.

Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine (BA '03, Bradley University, M.Div. '08, Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, Dr. theol. '17, Berlin, Germany) is Vice President of Publishing at Concordia Publishing House. He has previously served in campus ministry (Pretoria, South Africa) and as a theology professor at Concordia University Chicago. He and his wife, Tiia, have three children (6,4,3).

Dee Dawson is a middle school math educator for 18 years in ministry.

Honors and Awards received:

2025 LEA Distinguished Lutheran Middle School Teacher

PAEMST Missouri State Finalist 2020, 2021, 2024

Esri Teacher Award 2023

Appreciation Award from Air Force Reserves 2023

Youth Coding League Scholarship in Honor of Dee Leible 2023

Epic Educator Award from Youth Coding League 2022

Scott Dixon is currently serving in his 10th year as principal of Martin Luther Academy in Kansas City. Under his leadership, MLA has grown to capacity, and the community looks forward to the next steps the Lord has planned for the school. Having previously served in a school with vouchers during his administrative time in Wisconsin, Mr. Dixon brings an understanding of school choice. He feels truly blessed to navigate the MOScholars program through a dual lens: as an administrator and as a parent.

Rev. Jeff Dock: I've been serving a dual parish in rural Missouri for 15 years. I have an extraordinary wife, 4 pretty good kids, and one neurotic sheepdog. I question my sanity a lot of times. Every now and then, it even replies!

Keith Duesenberg joined Concordia Plan Services in 2002 and has served in several roles, including helping manage the investments of our pension trusts. Today, he serves as a Senior Financial Educator where he works with members to improve their financial well-being. Keith earned a degree in Finance from Valparaiso University and holds the designation of Certified Employee Benefits Specialist, awarded by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Rev. Dr. Gary Ellul is a retired LCMS pastor and a licensed professional counselor working mainly in the area of trauma, abuse, domestic violence, and addiction recovery. Dr. Ellul is a board-certified pastoral counselor, a board-certified Christian counselor, and is ecclesiastically endorsed through the LCMS Specialized Spiritual Care Ministry. Wounded Warriors of the Cross is a virtual based counseling service exclusively serving pastors and church workers dealing with unique needs that these professions deal with on a daily basis.

Mindy English is Director of Programs and Services for Lutheran Special Education. BS in Early Childhood Education from Purdue Elementary and MA of Special Education MI, SLD, MOMH from Indiana Wesleyan. Over 30 years teaching everything from developmental therapy from 0-3 years old, to severe and profound elementary classroom, k-8 Resource Room Teacher, Kindergarten teacher, and Orton Gillingham trained and tutor. 25 years teaching in Lutheran Schools.

Rev. Dr. Jon Furgeson is senior pastor of Peace Lutheran, St. Louis. He is a Guest Instructor and Lecturer at Concordia Seminary, a member of the Missouri District Board of Directors, and the author of "The Sword and the Mask: Building an Antifragile Approach to Spiritual Warfare." He lives in St. Louis with his wife, sons, and dogs. *Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. 1 Corinthians 7:17*

Rev. Kirk Griebel is a retired pastor who lives in Kansas City. His sermons have been published in Concordia Pulpit Resources and he is an experienced conference and symposia presenter. He currently serves as the vacancy pastor at Mount Calvary, Excelsior Springs, MO and Faith, Richmond, MO.

Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan has served as the president of the Missouri District since 2015. He is a 1992 graduate of Concordia College, Seward, Neb. He graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) in 1996 and a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) in 2011. He served as chairman of the Council of Presidents from 2022–25. He is the author of "Faithful, Hopeful, and Bold: Encouragement for the Church," published by CPH in 2025. He has served congregations in Indiana and Missouri and written articles for "Lutheran Witness," "Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly," "Concordia Pulpit Resources," and "Missio Apostolica." His wife, Jill, is a speech-language pathologist. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Rev. Dr. Nicholas Hagerman serves as Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Springfield, Missouri. He completed his M.Div. at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in May 2011, and earned his D.Min. from Concordia Seminary in December 2022. He currently serves as Secretary of the Missouri District and as a member of the Winkel Planning Committee of the Springfield Circuit.

Brandi Hallemeier, Principal of Child of God Lutheran School (COGLS), is certified in Character Education Leadership and completed three years of doctoral study in Educational Leadership, with an emphasis in Character Education, through the University of Missouri–St. Louis. She led COGLS to earn the designation as a State School of Character in 2023 after developing the school's Show Your Shield character development program, which fosters a Christ-centered culture and positive school climate.

Rev. Marty Hasz, LPC, serves the Missouri District as director of church worker support. In collaboration with other District staff, he provides resources, counsel and consultation to workers and congregational leaders. His areas of specialty include coaching, training, and facilitation of reconciliation, and mediation of conflict management. He is a licensed professional counselor with the State of Missouri, using a specialization of Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), through the biblical lens and practice of our LCMS theology. He received training and mentoring through Ambassadors of Reconciliation (AoR) and provides both informal and formal reconciliation and conflict management in the Missouri District since 2020. From 1993, he has served LCMS congregations as a parish pastor and Director of Christian Education.

Cheryl Haun focused on strengthening the ministry of early childhood education, she volunteers, consults, and provides professional development training. She serves as an Early Childhood Consultant for the Missouri District LCMS, an adjunct professor at Concordia University, Nebraska, and a member of the Early Childhood Initiative at CUNE. She finds great joy in assisting educators in their professional development journey.

Janelle Hendricks has been teaching two-year-olds at Immanuel in St. Charles, MO since 2010. She has a degree in elementary education and a masters in early childhood, both from Concordia Nebraska and continues to research in order to best serve in her role. Her passion is to nurture an environment where young children are free to grow in all areas of their development and to support the families who come through her classroom.

Chaplain Steven Hokana serves as the Assistant Director of Ministry to the Armed Forces for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). He brings more than 26 years of experience as an active-duty U.S. Army chaplain to the position. Hokana graduated with a Bachelor's degree in History from Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, N.Y., in 1982. He earned his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1987, and his Doctorate of Ministry degree from the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas, in 2006. His dissertation illustrates the redemptive love of God to heal those with anxiety disorder through confession and prayer. Hokana's military service took him to Southwest Asia, Cuba, Bosnia, Germany, Denmark, Alaska, and on multiple stateside assignments. Dr. Hokana holds "fellow" status in clinical care in the LCMS, as well as written and published on the topic of overcoming trauma. Steve is married to Mary, his wife of forty-two years. They are blessed with three children, and five grandchildren.

Scott Huster serves as the Head of School at Immanuel Lutheran School in St. Charles, Missouri. With more than 20 years of experience in Lutheran education, he has served as a teacher, assistant principal, associate principal, and principal. Scott holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education from Concordia University Wisconsin and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Concordia University St. Paul. He is passionate about Christian education, leadership development, and partnering with families to help students grow academically and spiritually. In his free time, Scott enjoys spending time with his family, fishing, grilling, and cheering on the St. Louis Cardinals.

Sean Kelly serves as the Physical Education Teacher at Messiah Lutheran School. He helped develop, write, and implement Ninja Camp, a before-school pilot program that has been nominated as a Powerful Practice for its positive impact on student focus, confidence, and school readiness. Sean is passionate about helping students grow through movement, perseverance, and Christ-centered encouragement.

Rev. Dr. Eric Kennaugh serves as Vice President of Ministry Solutions with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), where he helps congregations discover and fully live into their God-given purpose. Drawing on nearly two decades of parish ministry experience, Eric has guided churches through strategic planning, leadership development, capital campaigns, facility expansion, debt reduction, and ministry alignment initiatives. A graduate of Western Michigan University, Concordia Seminary—St. Louis, and Ashland Theological Seminary, Eric combines theological depth with practical ministry leadership. He is passionate about helping churches clarify their mission, align their ministries, and create actionable plans that position them for long-term Gospel impact.

Rev. Peter Kirby graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1994 with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and holds additional degrees in Sacred Theology and Organizational Leadership. He has served as a church planting missionary, parish pastor, and regional director for Europe with Lutheran Hour Ministries. He has served the past three years as executive director of congregational services for the Missouri District.

Rev. Elden D. Kohn: Child of God since March 8, 1981; husband to Molly since July 11, 2008; father of five (Matthias-15, Eleanor-13, Nehemiah-11, Micah-9, & Sylvi-4); and pastor to the saints of Zion Lutheran in Macon, MO, since July 2013. Elden is also a former elementary school teacher who enjoys learning about the Early Church, playing stringed instruments, and running.

Rev. Ken Krueger, JD, MBA, MPH, MDiv, founded MinistryFocus while in seminary and currently serves as President of the organization. Rev. Krueger also serves as a vacancy pastor at Family of Christ Lutheran Church in Ashland, MO. Previously, Rev. Krueger served as the Chief Customer Officer at Concordia Plans, as the CEO of the Lutheran Federal Credit Union, and in various other leadership roles, including as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nigeria and as a public health worker at Guantanamo Bay.

Andrea Lohman served as an early childhood teacher and leader for 30 years in Lutheran school ministry. She earned her bachelor's degree from Concordia, Chicago, her master's degree from Western Washington University, and her Education Specialist degree from Webster University in Webster Groves, Missouri. Following her retirement in June 2024, she began serving as a part-time adjunct professor for Concordia University, Nebraska and on the Initiative for Early Childhood Education Task Force for Concordia University, Nebraska. She is married to Jim, has two adult daughters, two sons-in-law, and one super cute grandson, who was born in February 2024.

Kellie Lohmeyer is Manager of Administrative Support for Growth Solutions at Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), where she leads operational strategy and cross-functional collaboration across District Solutions, Ministry Solutions, and Real Estate Solutions. Her work sits at the intersection of organizational growth, ministry partnership, and sustainable systems — giving her a front-row seat to the real estate and facility challenges Lutheran schools and congregations navigate daily. She holds a B.A. in Business Administration with emphasis in Leadership Development and with Distinction from Concordia University St. Paul, is a Certified Associate in Project Manager (CAPM), and is pursuing her MBA in Finance.

Rev. Craig Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN is a retired U.S. Navy captain, serves as the director of Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF). He has held that position since August 2014, after retiring as deputy chaplain of the U.S. Marine Corps. He was commissioned in the Navy in 1985 as a Chaplain Candidate and moved on to serve as a Navy Chaplain from 1988 to 2014. Muehler received his MDiv from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1988, and his Master of Theology from Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill., in 2001. While serving as a Chaplain at Navy Medical Center San Diego, he supervised the CPE program.

Alexandria Newsome got her start as a Writing Consultant and tutor at Florida Gulf Coast University, before beginning a career in the public school system of Southwest Florida. She began teaching 8th grade middle school ELA at Harns Marsh Middle School, a Title I magnet school for the arts, where she served as an 8th Grade ELA District Representative and Cambridge Coordinator. She later taught 9th-12th grade advanced and Cambridge ELA at Bonita Springs High School. After relocating with her family to St. Louis, Alexandria is now in her fifth year at St. Paul's Lutheran School, where she serves as the 8th Grade Homeroom Teacher and ELA instructor for 7th and 8th grade. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in both English and Philosophy from Florida Gulf Coast University.

Pam Nummela serves the Missouri District as the "family discipleship" person. As a wife, mom, and grandma, she loves reading and talking about God's Word in the Bible and with Luther's Small Catechism. As a teacher, DCE, and principal, she was blessed to partner with all families to live and walk with Christ, and to see God at work as their faith and witness grew.

Rev. Matt Peeples is the Founder and Director of The Kairos Network and Lead Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Oakville, Missouri. A church planter, pastor, speaker, and trainer, Matt is passionate about equipping pastors, church leaders, and everyday believers to engage an ever-changing culture with the Gospel. Through The Kairos Network, he has developed training pathways for church planters and disciple-makers, partnered with LCMS districts across the country, and helped launch The Missionary Pathway, a practical process that has equipped more than 1,300 participants across 12 countries to share the Gospel and make disciples where they live, work, learn, and play. Matt holds a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication from Truman State University.

Rev. Dr. Philip Penhallegon is Professor of Exegetical Theology and Chair of the Exegetical Department at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. In 2009, he authored "For Such a Time as This," a CPH Bible study on Esther. In 2020 he contributed to the Esther portion of the Lexham Context Commentary. Currently he is working on the Esther volume in the Concordia Commentary series.

Rev. John Perling grew up in a parsonage in West Los Angeles and attended both public and Lutheran schools. A high school exchange year in Germany deepened his appreciation for Lutheran heritage and the Lord's call to repentance and faith in every generation. He met his wife, Heidi, at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn., and they shared Seminary years in St. Louis, the U.K., and Colorado. He has served congregations in Minnesota, Connecticut, and Missouri, with work in evangelism training and mission development. Since returning to Missouri in 2014, his ministry at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church has focused on military families at Fort Leonard Wood and rural ministry planting along the Missouri 60 corridor. They raised and homeschooled three daughters, who taught them as much as they taught them.

Rev. Dr. Mark Rabe is the Director of Missionary Recruitment for LCMS International Mission. He is a 2001 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Rev. Rabe has served as a parish pastor in California and Georgia as well as a missionary in Kenya and Ethiopia. Since 2022 Rev. Rabe has served in his role with LCMS International Mission alongside his recruitment team recruiting and placing both lay people and church workers in the many positions that God can use them in their vocations. Rev. Mark Rabe and his wife Stefanie have four children and reside in St. Louis Missouri.

Rev. Erik Rottmann is pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Versailles, MO.

Kelly Rottmann: I am the lead Preschool Teacher at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Sedalia. I have experience in day care and preschool settings as well as in upper elementary grades in both public and private schools. In addition to this, I also spent several years working as the Children's Collection Librarian in my local public library. I received my Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Houghton College and my Master of Arts degree in Information Science and Learning Technologies from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Mark Ruark is a 44-year educator – 31 years in public education (history teacher, assistant principal, athlete director, principal); 13th year at Saxony Lutheran High School.

Dr. Melissa Sandfort serves as the NLSA Commissioner for the Missouri District and Program Director for SLED. She has extensive accreditation experience, having served as a captain, consultant, and team member for National Lutheran School Accreditation, Cognia, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges teams across the country. Dr. Sandfort previously served for 16 years as School Administrator at Child of God Lutheran Church and School in St. Peters, Missouri. She holds a B.F.A. from Truman State University, a Master's degree in Education from University of Kansas, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Loyola University Chicago. Prior to her work at Child of God, she spent 15 years serving in a variety of roles within higher education.

Sara Scheller has been teaching in Lutheran schools for 21 years and currently serves as a second grade teacher at Immanuel in St. Charles. She has taught all grades Preschool through 2nd grade across multiple states. In 2013, Sara wanted to find another way to manage her classroom and happened upon Whole Brain Teaching. Over the past two years, she has completed three different certifications in WBT, most recently completing Gold level certification in May 2026.

Rev. Joshua Schmidt serves as the senior pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church and School in Jackson, MO. He has been called as senior pastor for just one year and previously served as an associate for 15 years. He was part of the Wellspring team which designed and interpreted the surveys mentioned in breakout B-04.

Rev. Scott Schmieding serves as Senior Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in St. Charles, Missouri. Since arriving in 2010, he has faithfully led the congregation with a passion for sharing Christ's hope and Good News. A graduate of Concordia University Nebraska and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Pastor Schmieding is also the author of *Fighting Cancer with Faith*. After overcoming stage 3 tongue cancer in 1997, he continues to serve and preach by God's grace, offering a powerful witness to faith, perseverance, and the healing hope found in Jesus Christ.

Mary Schuldheisz: I knew that I wanted to be a Lutheran school teacher when I was in the 3rd grade. I didn't realize that I was learning apologetics (I even had to defend my choice of going to a Concordia) during my public high school years that gave me the opportunity to be friends with many people who were of different religions or had no religion, argue with some of my teachers but still respect each other's opinions and developed a love for research - so much information to explore. Over my career I have taught everything from Preschool to graduate students and been an administrator to Pre-K-12th grade students, ran the DCE training program at CU-Portland for a year and continue to carry on the ministry of the Lutheran Elementary School Tournament. Substitute teaching keeps me in the learning loop, interacting with students, teachers, administrators and observing systems.

Rev. James Sharp grew up in East Moline, Ill., where his home church is St. John's Lutheran Church. He graduated from Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. While in seminary, he was an exchange student at Seminario Concórdia in São Leopoldo, Brazil. He later taught at Lutheran high schools in Iowa, Illinois and Maryland; served as a parish pastor in Baltimore and Dundalk, Md.; and was a church planter in Uruguay. James now serves as a pastor and church planter in the San Juan area. He is part of a team serving a new church plant in Bayamón and looking to start another one in Carolina. He preaches, teaches and encourages men and women to be disciples of Jesus Christ. He also serves as an area facilitator in the region, helping to supervise and mentor other missionaries.

Angela Shirley has served in Lutheran school ministry for 30 years. She received both her Bachelor's degree in elementary education and Master's degree in Administration from Concordia University Chicago. She taught at the early childhood, elementary, and middle school levels until, in 2013, she accepted the Call to serve as the Director of Early Childhood Education at Christ Community Lutheran School in St. Louis. She oversees the multi-site program that serves almost 300 students, infants through pre-kindergarten, across four campuses. She has been a presenter and keynote speaker at multiple conferences including the National LEA Convocation, the National LEA Administrators Conference, BPM Conference, and several LCMS District Education Conferences. She also works as a consultant with schools and ministries throughout the country.

Joanie Smith serves as Principal of Messiah Lutheran School in Weldon Spring, Missouri. She also serves as a SLED Program Director and Mentor and supports NLSA in a variety of accreditation and leadership capacities throughout Lutheran education.

Rev. Ryan Taylor serves as Associate Pastor of Discipleship at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in St. Charles, Missouri. Prior to joining Immanuel, he served for five years as Associate Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Norfolk, Nebraska. A graduate of Concordia University Wisconsin with a degree in Lay Ministry, Pastor Taylor is passionate about helping children and families thrive as he points them to Jesus. He and his wife, Becky, have been married for seven years and are blessed with two children, Evelyn and Spencer.

Rev. Dr. W. Mart Thompson is Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and Director of its Family Discipleship Initiative in partnership with Concordia Center for the Family. He is currently addressing seminary curricular needs in pastoral formation to improve faith transmission to children in church worker homes. Mart and Cheryl are blessed with three children who are married and have children of their own, in whose homes the legacy of family discipleship continues.

Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe serves as Director of Discipleship Ministry for the Office of National Mission. Prior to this position, he served as a parish pastor in Indiana (Fort Wayne), Nebraska (York), and North Dakota (Minot). Heath has a B.A. from Concordia Nebraska, as well as an M.Div. and D.Min. from Concordia Theological Seminary. His project dissertation explores the concept of congregational involvement. From 2008-2009, Heath and his wife Andrea (Aunnee) served as G.E.O. Missionaries in Riga, Latvia. Heath and Aunnee have been married for 21 years and have two sons.

Rev. Dr. Gregory Truwe is blessed to be married to Jamie, his wife of 24 years. Together, they are blessed with six living children (Naomi 20; Micah 18; Hannah 16; Abi 14; Josiah 11; & Eden 6). He is Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Cole Camp, MO, which is active in planting richly the Word of Christ through her Word and Sacrament ministry, as well as through the work of Trinity Lutheran Preschool, Trinity School of Music, and the Lutheran School Association. He is a 2003 graduate of Concordia University Wisconsin (BA); a 2007 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (MDiv); and a 2022 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (DMin). He is the founding pastor of the annual Marriage & Family Conference (www.marriagefamilyconference.org), serves as President of David's Harp, the center for musical development (www.davidsharpmusic.org); and is the author of *Speaking with One Voice: Catechesis for the Home, Congregation, and School*, a devotional resource published by the LCMS for service to the faithful throughout our synod.

Rev. James Uglum is a pastor at Chapel of the Cross in St. Peters. He began his ministry journey in July 2006 when he and his wife moved to St. Louis to commence studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. James was ordained and began serving full-time at Chapel of the Cross in the summer of 2010. James and his wife are blessed with three children: Mackenzie (born 2008), Jonah (born 2011), and Gabby (born 2014).

Jennie Williamson is a Christian recording artist, speaker, and co-founder of Fields of Zephaniah at Saxon Lutheran Memorial in Perry County, Missouri. Through more than two decades of ministry with AriSon Records, she has encouraged children, families, educators, and church workers across the country. Jennie and her husband, Brian, serve as Mission Directors at Saxon Lutheran Memorial, where they help lead the vision for Fields of Zephaniah.

Rev. Kyle J. Wright II has served in the public ministry for twenty years, including work as a hospice and hospital resource chaplain. He has served as a presenter at the Theological Symposia at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Currently, he serves the saints of Faith Lutheran Church and School in Kirksville, MO, as Pastor. Rev. Wright received his S.T.M. from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (2024), his Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN (2006), and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Concordia University Texas (2002). Kyle and his wife, Keri, have four wonderful daughters.

Alan Wunderlich - Retired servant of Christ! As a retired teacher, Youth and family Minister, Principal, Assistant Principal (and all other duties as assigned) I have experienced both the highs and the lows of ministry, both personally and in helping others. After 42 years of professional service to our Lord, we moved to the other side of the state to retire and be close to family and grandchildren! God continues to use this servant in retirement as a spiritual leader for our current church staff, support team, and ministry to High School Youth. I feel a real calling to this topic and am praying the Holy Spirit will lead in this opportunity to support and guide me to help be a support for others.