

August 2026

The Voice



FEATURES

- 1 FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 2 STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION WITHIN SCHOOL MINISTRY
- 3 PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS CONFERENCE
- 4 SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN OUR ANNUAL CAMPAIGN
- 5 PARTNERS IN MINISTRY
- 6 DISTRICT PARTICIPATES IN SYNODICAL CONVENTION
- 7 NEW! PRAYER CALENDAR & UPCOMING EVENTS

The Missouri District's mission is to serve and encourage congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and to promote unity of the true faith.

Pictured above: Summer Administrators Conference participants July 16 at Campus Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo. Photo by: Leah Sieveking

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

The theme for the LCMS National Convention was “Christ Is Risen Indeed.” The resurrection of Christ changes everything. It is lived out each and every day as Christians live out their vocations in confident hope. It is lived out each week as the saints gather for worship to celebrate Christ’s victory over death. This is the confidence that we teach every child who enters our school and every older adult who waits in hope of the resurrection.

The resurrection is central to all the New Testament writings, but particularly to 1 Cor. 15:14. There, St. Paul writes, “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” He drives home this point throughout the chapter because Christ’s resurrection is central to our preaching, our faith, our life. It also gives purpose to our work.

Think about it for a minute. Relationships in the church are hard. Relationships across many churches are just as difficult. Then consider how we make decisions and how we establish priorities in the church, whether at the local level or even at the national level. From competing constituencies to the challenge of limited resources, it seems frustrating at times. Rather than feeling confident about the decisions that we make, perhaps we feel that our work is futile and our labor is in vain.

But Christ has been raised from the dead! The creeping doubts are part of the sinful flesh and the devil’s lies. We know that Christ has risen just as He has said. We can live each day confidently because we know that our preaching and our faith rest on his certain resurrection.

St. Paul has spent the entire chapter extolling the benefits of Christ’s resurrection and the hope of the resurrection of the body. Then, he concludes the chapter with a final verse that begins with “therefore.” If you mark your Bible with notes or underline important verses, this word means that everything preceding it gives meaning to what follows. He writes, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58 ESV).

This means that for the young pastor, the congregational treasurer who has served for 30 years and the veteran teacher preparing for her final school year can all know that their labor in the Lord is not in vain. What a joy it is to serve in Christ’s kingdom because Christ is risen indeed. That changes everything!



Peace in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Lee Hagan". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan
President

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION WITHIN SCHOOL MINISTRY

BY JOSH SWARTZ

Healthy communication is the heartbeat of thriving Lutheran schools across the Missouri District. When pastors, educators, and leaders intentionally connect and collaborate, they nurture unity of purpose and a shared sense of mission.

Across the Missouri District, schools are rediscovering that communication is more than exchanging information – it is a form of ministry. When pastors and educators work together with a clear understanding of joint ministry, they can joyfully serve a common goal: impacting lives for eternity. Simple intentional practices such as regular pastor-principal check-ins, shared calendars, and hallway conversations help ensure that both church and school remain aligned in their mission and responsive to one another's needs.

When teachers invite pastors into classrooms to read Bible stories, lead devotions, or share how faith shapes vocation—and when students give drawings, cards, or classroom prayers to their pastors—it creates meaningful encouragement and connection for everyone involved. These micro exchanges build a sense of belonging within the wider faith community.

Pastors who intentionally engage with the children and parents of the school model servant

"LET YOUR SPEECH ALWAYS BE GRACIOUS,
SEASONED WITH SALT..." (COL. 4:6, ESV).

One ministry, one mission – strengthening bonds between church and school.

Josh Swartz is director of schools at the LCMS Missouri District.

Pictured: Summer Administrators Conference participants July 16 at Campus Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo. Photos by: Leah Sieveking



leadership and demonstrate that every child, parent, and worker is valued. Likewise, educators who pray for their pastors and celebrate their ministry remind students that the church and school are one family in Christ.

When intentional collaboration and communication flow both ways with openness, presence, and prayer, the partnership between church and school becomes a visible expression of the Gospel: serving together in Christ's name.

As you focus on ministry this month, what intentional step could you take to strengthen the bonds between your church and school?

- Could a pastor visit a classroom for story time or a devotion?
- Could a class send notes, invitations, or prayers of encouragement to church staff?
- Could leaders set aside time for a joint devotion, coffee, or a walk through the school halls together?



Live



as you are called

1 COR. 7:17
OCT. 20-23, 2026

MISSOURI DISTRICT
PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS CONFERENCE

BY REV. PETER KIRBY

Missouri District will sponsor the Professional Church Workers Conference Oct. 20–23 at Margaritaville Lake Resort in Osage Beach, Mo., under the theme, “Live as You are Called.” The theme verse is 1 Cor. 7:17a (ESV), “Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.”

Plenaries:



Rev. Dr. Jason Lane, associate professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, since 2024, will lead plenaries for the pastors. Under the conference theme, he will examine God’s will for our Christian life in Christ based on Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and Luther’s writings. He will address the apparent and persistent problem with Lutheran theology: that our emphasis on faith alone leaves Lutherans lacking in sanctification and good works.



Dr. Bernard Bull will lead a plenary for the educators titled, “Features of Fidelity and Flourishing Lutheran Schools.” In this session, he draws from over 20 years of research to offer insights on the habits, practices, and features that we find in faithful and flourishing Lutheran schools and classrooms. 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.



Jennifer Tanner, executive director of schools and youth ministry for the Florida-Georgia District, will lead a final plenary for educators. In “Called to Joy: One Good Thing at a Time,” she will explore how encouragement, gratitude, and small acts of faithfulness can shape healthy ministry cultures and strengthen our witness to those we serve.

In addition to plenaries, sectionals for pastors, educators, and other workers will address the conference theme, District strategic priorities and topics of interest to church workers. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and other Lutheran organizations will have exhibit tables during the conference. The conference also provides opportunities for rest, reflection, and reunion with friends and fellow workers. [Registration and the schedule](#) are now online at the Missouri District website.

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

SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN

TOMORROW'S Teachers & Preachers

BY LEAH SIEVEKING

In the fall of 2021, the Missouri District launched *Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers*—what has now become our annual campaign to promote church work vocations and increase the size of the Missouri District Church Worker Student Aid Endowment to support those preparing for these roles. While congregations and individual households offer special petitions and give gifts and offerings towards the effort each year, there's another group that celebrates this initiative in their own unique way. Students attending Lutheran schools are also playing a key role!

Surrounded by LCMS educators and administrators, students regularly hear about ministry from those currently living it. As the endowment provides scholarships for men and women attending either seminary or schools within the Concordia University System, teachers easily share about their collegiate experience—everything from who encouraged them along the way to why they attended a specific school.

Chapel offerings for *Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers* from these schools over the years have played an important part in the growth of the endowment. Students are reminded that their generosity today will have a significant impact on the future—just as the generosity of previous generations continues to bless students today.

In March 1982, a group of forward-thinking donors to the Missouri District established this endowment to provide scholarships specifically for college students entering church work vocations—pastors, deaconesses, DCEs, and teachers.

These men and women were led by the Holy Spirit to make strategic decisions to help provide leaders who would care for the spiritual well-being of generations they would never know. The students of today are part of the legacy those donors envisioned! By giving their chapel offerings to this effort, our current students are making the same choice to show care and concern for those who will come after them. What a blessing!

"Current students are making the same choice to show care and concern for those who will come after them. What a blessing!"

— LEAH SIEVEKING

Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers is a celebration of all that we have seen and what we will see in years to come. Our God is faithful and will continue to build His kingdom through men and women serving the church. What a blessing to have Lutheran schools be a part of this effort. Thank you!

Leah Sieveking is director of mission advancement at the LCMS Missouri District.

Partners in Ministry

Better Together

BY: DCE DAN KREIENKAMP

Ministry leaders know that ministry was never meant to be done alone. Whether through local circuits, informal gatherings of neighboring churches, District events, or friendships built over years of ministry, leaders naturally seek opportunities to encourage one another, share ideas, and walk alongside each other. Partners in Ministry (PIM) is one way that we build community in the Missouri District. As DCE Larry Yochum shared, "Even just knowing that there are a group of supportive church workers invested in how I am doing and how to support me and my ministry is extremely comforting."

One of the greatest strengths of PIM is the way it brings congregations together. DCE Josh Eckstein shared that PIM allows leaders to "share ideas" and "partner up and have churches work together on an event or ministry." Those relationships have led to collaborative events that would not have happened otherwise, creating new opportunities in ministry and strengthening the witness of the church across congregations. Jarred Irby, a leader who does not serve in full-time parish ministry, participated in a collaborative event set up through PIM. He noted that "so much of the individual burden is relieved via connection."

That spirit of collaboration extends beyond individual events. Ministry leaders recognize that the work of making disciples is something the whole church shares. As Jarred put it, "I think it's important to look at all of



this ministry as a collaborative effort." The PIM group reminds us that as we work together for Christ's mission, we can learn from one another and serve together as the body of Christ.

If you are a ministry leader in need of support, we would love for you to connect with us on our [Facebook group](#) to share ideas, find out about events going on in Missouri, and even find a collaboration partner for a service project or gathering. For those who can make the trek, an in-person group meets on the second Thursday of the month from September through May at St. Louis area locations (announced in the Facebook group). Join us for a meeting at a special host site such as Concordia Publishing House, the District office Christmas party, LCMS Youth Ministry, or even a Cardinals baseball game!

MISSOURI DISTRICT PARTICIPATES IN SYNODICAL CONVENTION

BY REV. MARTY HASZ, LPC

More than 80 voting and advisory delegates from the Missouri District joined Lutherans from across the country July 18–23 for the 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Phoenix, Ariz. Centered on the theme, "Christ Is Risen Indeed" (1 Cor. 15:20–22), the convention brought delegates together for worship, fellowship and the important work of the Synod.

We praise God for the faithful service of those who represented the Missouri District's 286 congregations and 28 circuits throughout the convention. President Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan, Director of Church Worker Support Rev. Marty Hasz and delegates from across the District joined fellow church leaders in prayerful discussion and decision-making as they sought to faithfully serve Christ and His Church.

To help prepare delegates for the work ahead, the Missouri District hosted a breakfast on Sunday morning featuring Rev. Justin Panzer, president of the Kansas District, and Rev. Dr. Richard Serina Jr., associate executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of the LCMS. Along with members of convention floor committees, they provided helpful background on key resolutions and answered delegates' questions. Delegates also gathered Monday morning for a breakfast sponsored by Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF).

One encouraging takeaway was seeing how the Missouri District's Strategic Plan aligns with the Synod's ministry priorities, particularly in recruiting and supporting future church workers. Convention highlights included discussion of resolutions addressing the need for church workers, promotion of the Synod's Set Apart to Serve initiative by Rev. Dr. James Baneck, executive director for pastoral education of the LCMS, and fellowship among church leaders committed to strengthening Christ's Church.



We thank the Lord for His guidance throughout the convention and for all who served, supported and prayed for those representing the Missouri District.

Pictured: (top right, left to right) President Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan and Director of Church Worker Support Rev. Marty Hasz, LPC; (bottom left) Missouri District voting and advisory delegates; (bottom right) Executive Director of Pastoral Education for the LCMS Rev. Dr. James Baneck.

Rev. Marty Hasz, LPC, is director of church worker support at the LCMS Missouri District. Photos provided by: Rev. Marty Hasz.

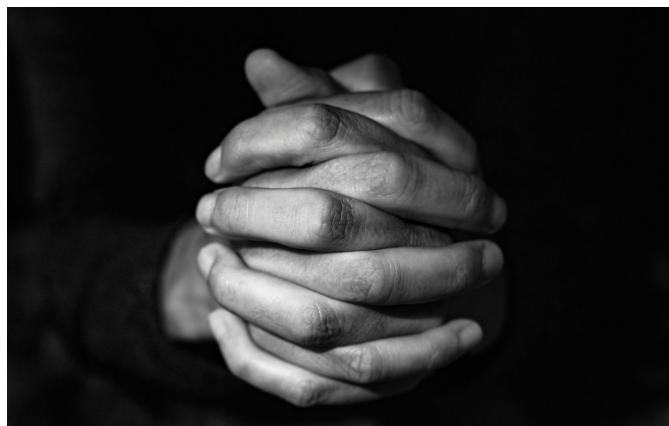
NEW! PRAYER CALENDAR

Pray with the Missouri District

Join congregations, schools, and individuals across the Missouri District in praying together each month. Our monthly prayer calendar follows the priorities of the Missouri District Strategic Plan, including prayers for God to send out laborers into the harvest field, as well as for congregations, schools, and seminaries.

Download or print a copy:

mo.lcms.org/prayer-calendar



UPCOMING EVENTS 2026–27

Learn more: mo.lcms.org/upcoming-events, 314-590-6200

Aug. 30

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS & PREACHERS CELEBRATION

Oct. 20–23

PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKERS CONFERENCE

April 9–18, 2027

SHINE!

April 16–18, 2027

DISTRICT YOUTH GATHERING

