Missouri District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD









ANNUAL REPORT 2026

ABOUT US

OUR MISSION: The Missouri District serves and encourages congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and promote unity of the true faith.

36
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS

53
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

11
HIGH SCHOOLS

286
CONGREGATIONS

1,695
ROSTERED WORKERS



ABOVE
Processional cross at the Missouri District Office, St. Louis, Mo.
Photo by: Christie Hampton

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ON THE COVER
Top left: During their *SHINE!* service April 19, members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Springfield, Mo., assist a neighbor with yard work, including the removal of an unused pergola. *Photo by: Noah Oloff*
Top right: Summer Administrators Conference participants July 16 at Campus Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo. *Photo by: Leah Sieveking*
Bottom left: Students enjoyed giveaways, $100 gift cards courtesy of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) and swag baskets donated by Concordia universities. *Photo by: Christie Hampton*
Bottom right: Students from Northwest Missouri State in Maryville, Mo., celebrating Thanksgiving. *Photo provided by: Seth Jenkins*

FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Walking Together in the Gospel

Dear friends in Christ,

After God created Adam, He said that it was not good for the man to be alone. And so God created a suitable helper for him. When Jesus sent out his disciples, He sent them out in pairs. God created us for community and support. The examples from Scripture and history are seemingly endless.

In 1861, a group of nearly 40 German immigrants were killed in Cole Camp by a group of Southern sympathizers. Pastor Franz Julius Biltz from Concordia made the 60-mile journey to visit with Pastor J. M. Johannes of Cole Camp and Pastor J. M. Hahn of Benton County. That was the nearest neighboring parish in those early years of the Western District, which would become the Missouri District. The purpose of the visit was to encourage his brother pastors following such a tragedy.

Though we live in a time of communication overload, the danger of isolation is real. Many of our pastors and commissioned ministers feel alone. Church leaders are in desperate need of encouragement and to be reminded that they are not alone. I have often described the role of the District by referencing a picture of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Many congregations have a copy of this painting. The role of the District is to come alongside disciples who may feel beaten down. We have the opportunity to do so with veteran pastors or new vicars, a first time principal, or an overwhelmed church treasurer.

The annual report is a record of ways in which the District can come alongside congregations and schools, pastors, teachers, and lay leaders in so many different ways. When a pastor takes a call, we are there to remind the congregation that they are not alone. When a congregation wants to reach out to its community, we can come alongside them and assist them. When a church worker is overwhelmed, we are able to remind them of the presence of the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus, who is with us always.

While the annual report may highlight the things that we have always done, MOScholars is an example of a new way that the Missouri District is able to assist congregations and schools through education about this important tax credit program. We hope that this is a helpful resource and a reminder of all the ways in which the Missouri District serves our congregations, schools, and church workers.

Thanks be to God that we are never alone. We are blessed through our partnership in the Gospel and our walking together.



Yours in Christ,

R. Lee Hagan

Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan
District President
Missouri District

The following articles highlight how the Missouri District serves and encourages congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and promote the unity of the true faith. Each offers a snapshot of the District's work to strengthen congregations through services, resources, and support.

CONGREGATIONAL AND SCHOOL SERVICES

THE CALL PROCESS: SUPPORTING ALL CALLED WORKERS

A primary function of the Missouri District is to support congregations, schools, and Recognized Service Organizations in the calling process for ordained or commissioned workers. When an LCMS ministry begins the steps for issuing a divine call, it is a deliberate, prayerful, and Spirit-led process through which God works through a calling body to place qualified workers into His ministry. This includes what we call ministers of religion ordained, that is, pastors, and ministers of religion commissioned, which includes educators, directors of Christian ministry, deaconesses, directors of parish music, and other workers recognized on the commissioned roster of Synod.



Rev. Lawton Thompson installation March 22, 2026 at Concordia, Frohna, Mo. *Photo by: Kati Q. Gaschler*

The process begins when a congregation or call committee identifies a vacancy or ministry need and contacts the District office. The District president or his appointed representative helps leaders understand the process for calling a minister of religion and their responsibilities under their governing documents. Leaders are asked to assess the ministry's needs and desired qualifications, develop or update the position description, and invite nominations and request that call-eligible candidates be submitted. The District walks alongside the congregation to support the process.

For an ordained minister, the process remains congregation centered. The District researches nominations and other eligible pastors, vets the call list, and provides pastoral profiles. The circuit visitor or remaining pastor then presents the candidates to the call committee. The committee reviews the profiles, may interview a short list, and recommends candidates to the voters. At the call meeting, the congregation receives the approved list, discusses the recommendations, and votes to extend a call. The pastor then prayerfully deliberates before announcing his decision. If the call is declined, the congregation may call again from the same list or request a new one. The District also assists congregations seeking a seminary graduate and helps arrange pastoral care and pulpit supply during the vacancy.

A commissioned minister call rests on the same theological foundation but may follow a different organizational path. The authorized calling entity may be a congregation, a Lutheran school association, or Recognized Service Organization. The District president or his designee guides and validates the process, provides appropriate candidate information and evaluations, and provides limited search rights access. The call committee then reviews the commissioned minister information, contacts references, conducts interviews, and recommends a candidate to the authorized calling body. A rostered worker who

is called from the field deliberates the call and, if accepting, requests a peaceful release and sends the District transfer paperwork if coming from another district. Those entering commissioned ministry through first placement follow a distinct process coordinated with a Concordia University System placement director and the Synod's Board of Assignments.

Once a pastor or commissioned minister accepts, the calling body completes the official call documents and works with the District to arrange installation. Timelines vary by position, candidate availability, and the calling body's procedures. Pastoral vacancies may take an average of 18 months to fill. District and circuit visitors then help congregations place vacancy pastors and provide pulpit supply in the interim. Commissioned minister searches, especially teacher calls, typically revolve around a school calendar for placement.

In every case, the District walks alongside the calling body, trusting the Lord of the Church to guide and provide for His ministry.

Welcoming New Church Workers Across the District

Aug. 21, 2026, new church workers—including pastors, vicars, directors of Christian education, deaconesses and interns—gathered for the New Church Worker Orientation at the Missouri District office. Each Lutheran congregation and ministry represented at the event is listed below:

Alive in Christ, Columbia
Ascension, Kansas City
Bethlehem, St. Louis
Campus, Columbia
Chapel of the Cross, St. Peters
Christ Memorial, St. Louis
EverTrue Mason Pointe
Faith, St. Robert
Good Shepherd, Arnold
Hanover, Cape Girardeau
Immanuel, Olivette
Immanuel, St. Charles
King of Kings, Chesterfield
Messiah, Weldon Spring
New Beginnings, Pacific
Our Savior, St. Charles
Peace, Lemay
Redeemer, Springfield/Nixa
Resurrection, Sunset Hills
St. Paul, St. Joseph
Trinity, Springfield
Village, Ladue

The energy, gifts, and dedication of those called to serve are a blessing to the Missouri District. God's continued work through these church workers will impact congregations and communities in the months and years ahead.





Pictured above, center: Aug. 21, 2026, orientation participants at the Missouri District office. *Photo by: Christie Hampton*



July 17, 2026, Summer Administrators Conference participants at Campus Lutheran, Columbia, Mo. *Photo by: Leah Sieveking*

NLSA ACCREDITATION

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



Sept. 25, 2026, Thirty-three educators and leaders gathered for NLSA training at the Missouri District office.
Photo by: Christie Hampton

The National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) encourages Lutheran schools to grow and continually improve, while staying true to their mission of sharing the life-saving message of Jesus Christ.

Accreditation isn't just a label, it's a way for schools to keep providing the best education and care for their students and community.

Accreditation operates on a five-year cycle. The process begins with a six-month self-study, where the school community—principal, teachers, pastors, board members, parents, students, and other stakeholders—work together to look honestly at how the school is doing. NLSA's standards are utilized to address the school's purpose, relationships, leadership, personnel, teaching and learning, student services, facilities, and financial stewardship. Together they gather evidence, celebrate strengths, identify concerns, and develop a preliminary action plan. This honest reflection is not simply about "passing" accreditation; it's about discovering new opportunities to fulfill its mission and serve students and families more faithfully and effectively.

After this self-study, a trained validation team from other Lutheran schools reviews the materials for 30 days before conducting a two-day or three-day onsite visit. Team members observe classrooms, tour the campus, and listen to administrators, faculty, pastors, board members, parents, and students. The team affirms the school's strengths, identifies concerns, verifies its findings, and offers recommendations for continued growth. The school uses this feedback to make a final action plan for improvement.

Next, the team's report is sent to the District office and then to the National Review Commission for review. Both the District and national level look over everything—the self-study, team's report, and action plan—before making a decision about accreditation. Altogether, the process takes approximately 12 months.

Accreditation does not end there! Each year, schools submit annual reports documenting progress on their improvement and continued compliance with NLSA expectations. This ongoing process helps Lutheran schools remain faithful, accountable, and committed to continuous improvement as they serve students and families for the sake of the Gospel.

YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS

DYG, FAMILY CAMP



District Youth Gathering participants April 17–18, 2026
Photo by: DCE Dan Kreienkamp

The Missouri District has a long history of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with junior and senior high students through our District Youth Gatherings. Over the years, these gatherings have taken place in a variety of settings, times, and formats—reaching different audiences in unique ways. Yet one thing has always remained constant: the Missouri District's deep love for our youth and for the dedicated church workers and volunteers who share God's love with them.

Our mission is to partner with Missouri congregations—whether a youth ministry is led by a volunteer, DCE, teacher, or pastor—to create Christ-centered experiences that help young people grow in faith, fellowship, and community. In April of 2026, Missouri youth gathered at Cross Pointe Camp & Retreat Center in Rocky Mount under the theme of "RAISED UP!" More than 460 attendees participated in mass sessions centered on God's Word, concerts, servant events, and breakouts pertaining to serving in the church, leadership, relationships—and had a lot of fun.

As participants reflected on what they hold up or what weighs them down, they heard a shared message: "Jesus says that I belong." Mark your calendars for the next Missouri District Youth Gathering April 16–18, 2027, back at Cross Pointe Retreat Center. Registration will open in the new year.



Family Camp participants June 15–19, 2026
Photo provided by: Heit's Point Lutheran Ministries

Family Camp celebrated its third year in 2026! The District is pleased to partner with Heit's Point Lutheran Ministries in Lincoln, Mo., to hold an annual week-long gathering each June for families. While parents have breakout sessions geared towards family discipleship with tips for strengthening these efforts at home and in communities, children have fun with the camp counselors. Evenings are spent together, as family units enjoy all that Heit's Point has to offer. Family Camp leaders in previous years included Rev. Dr. W. Mart and Cheryl Thompson and Rev. Dr. Todd and Heather Biermann. Participant evaluation forms leave little doubt that this type of ministry is beneficial, leaving comments like:

"It was so meaningful to be with other families who see the value of family discipleship and practicing it in their homes."

"My son loved the opportunity to be in nature and spend time with fellow believers."

"Invest the time for you and your family's benefit … forever!"

Check out heitspointlutheran.org, and make plans to attend Family Camp at Heit's Point in 2027!

MISSION GRANT FEATURES

Opportunities to share the Gospel throughout Missouri continue to grow. The Missouri District is blessed with faithful partners who help us strengthen ministry in key areas across the state. See page 15 for mission budget details. These pages provide a sampling of ministry being made for God's glory throughout the District. Thank you for your continued prayers and support in sharing the Gospel!

Campus Ministry

Campus Lutheran Church's college student ministry continues to provide a Christ-centered community for students at the University of Missouri in Columbia. This summer, the ministry welcomed incoming students and families through Mizzou's Summer Welcome events, while continuing weekly Bible study and fellowship at The Gathering for students remaining in Columbia. The ministry also supported a student mission team serving in Acuña, Mexico, and completed a home-building mission project with students and volunteers, providing opportunities to share Christ's love through service.



Campus Lutheran Church's college students with new homeowners in Acuña, Mexico.

Urban Ministry


Worshipers at Saint Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Mo.

Saint Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Louis has rededicated its historic 1872 sanctuary following restoration after tornado and fire damage in December 2021. Completed April 12, 2026, the renovation included movable chairs, hard-surface flooring and a catering kitchen, creating a flexible space for ministry, and community outreach. The congregation seeks to use the renewed space to share God's gifts and extend ministry beyond Sunday worship. Members and neighbors gathered to celebrate this milestone in faith together.

Shared Ministry


Family Ministry Team at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Mo.

Family ministry and fellowship continue to grow across the Rolla Circuit, which now includes congregations spanning a 100-mile-by-100-mile area. Trinity Lutheran Church in Lebanon, Mo., has formed a Family Ministry Team, developed a vision, and begun setting goals to strengthen family discipleship. Immanuel Lutheran Church in West Plains, Mo., is also exploring ways to grow family discipleship with the support of the Family Ministry Coach.

The circuit is also building relationships among its rural congregations through shared ministry. In April, members and pastors from four congregations gathered for a *SHINE!* service day at Camp Brim Shire in St. James, Mo., working together on projects throughout the camp. The event provided an opportunity to serve while strengthening relationships across the circuit.

Interest in family discipleship is growing beyond the circuit as well. Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rosebud, Mo., recently hosted a presentation by Family Ministry Coach Dan Hall, drawing about 20 leaders, parents and children interested in exploring family discipleship. While moving from a program-focused approach to a family discipleship focus takes time, these efforts are encouraging congregations to take steps toward strengthening faith in the home.

Multiethnic Ministry

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kansas City continues to serve its neighborhood through Bible studies, food assistance, community meals, and personal relationships. Each month, the congregation provides grocery vouchers and essential hygiene items to neighbors in need, hosts a hot meal where churches can gather for face-to-face ministry, and partners with Bessie's Mission to provide food, Bible study, and fellowship. But the congregation's goal goes beyond meeting physical needs. As one member shared, "Our goal is to let them know that we love them because Christ first loved us." We give thanks for the faithful witness of Our Redeemer members as they serve the people God has placed in their mission field and share the love of Christ through word and deed.


Our Redeemer member serves her neighbor in Kansas City, Mo.

** Photos generously provided by congregations.*



Volunteers from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Union, Mo., pulling weeds. *Photo by: Leah Sieveking*

Missouri Shines for Sixth Time

Thousands of men, women, and children headed out into their communities and shined God's light throughout the Missouri District last spring! Our annual statewide servant event—*SHINE!*—was held April 10–19, though groups were happily serving well before and after this timeframe. "Even now in our sixth year of hosting this initiative, it's clear the joy in loving others and being a witness for Jesus Christ remains strong in Missouri," shares Leah Sieveking, director of mission advancement for the District. Selected projects ranged from cleaning and repairing buildings, maintaining grounds, collecting and preparing food, visiting and singing with the homebound, caring for animals, and so much more.

"It's fun, and it's a great way to share God's light with people who need it," says Brenda, a six-time group leader from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Rolla, Mo. Her crew filled bags with fruit and added handwritten notes of encouragement inside. In preparation, the congregation was asked to spend weeks thinking about who they would give these to and then invite them to worship.

When asked if he had any words of encouragement for those wondering how to get started in serving their communities, John from St. Paul Lutheran in Union, Mo., got right to the point, "Just get out there and do it."

We thank God for all the groups that served this year and we look forward to shining again in April 2027. Shine on, Missouri District!


Members from Redeemer Lutheran Church, Rolla, Mo., assembled bags with fruit and added handwritten notes of encouragement inside. *Photo by: Leah Sieveking*



Members from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kansas City, meeting both physical and spiritual neighborhood needs. *Photo by: Leah Sieveking*



Middle school students shining from St. John School, Ellisville, Mo., took part in Feed The Need STL at Queeny Park, packing enough meals to feed 400 kids for a year. *Photo by: Leah Sieveking*



Volunteers from Our Savior and Zion Lutheran churches, Buffalo, Mo., at Community Outreach Ministries, sorting food to helping families receive essentials. *Photo provided by: Stephen Driscoll*



St. John's Lutheran Church, Arnold, Mo., assembled quilts and wraps for others. *Photo by: Christie Hampton*



Concordia Lutheran Church, Sikeston, Mo., members of all ages serve their neighbors through the Concordia Soup Kitchen.*Photo by: Leah Sieveking*



Students from Timothy Lutheran School, Blue Springs, Mo., making special cards. *Photo by: Timothy Lutheran School Ministries*

MOScholars Keeps Growing

The MOScholars tax credit program continues to be a blessing for students attending LCMS schools in Missouri. Throughout the 2025–26 academic year, the Missouri District distributed more than $3 million in scholarships. The first distribution from the District for the 2026–27 school year went out in August—and it totaled more than $6 million! These funds are a combination of state general revenue funds and tax credits. We thank God for the coordination of the Treasurer's Office in Jefferson City and the participation of many taxpayers. This level of growth is unexpected and a source of joy.

Demand for these scholarships is high, which shows the strong desire of parents throughout Missouri to have their children receive both a quality education and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Missouri District now maintains a waitlist of students who qualify for a MOScholars scholarship for the current school year, but for whom there currently are no available funds. There is a way to resolve all of this—and it takes just a matter of minutes!

Taxpayers to the state of Missouri, both individuals and businesses, have the opportunity to direct up to 50% of their state income tax liability each year towards this effort. It's as easy as:



Students at St. Paul's Lutheran School, Des Peres, Mo.
Photo provided by: Dawn Walker.

1. Visit mo.lcms.org/tax-credit and follow the prompts to reserve your tax credits in 2026. Select "The Missouri District" when asked which group can make use of your funds.
2. Mail in your check or submit payment electronically using the link on our website. Those taxpayers using required minimum distributions can easily coordinate the process with their financial institutions.
3. Receive the official paperwork from the Treasurer's Office and submit when filing 2026 taxes.

Note: *Tax credits for the 2027 tax year will be available in the new year. The same process applies.*

Please reach out to Director of Mission Advancement Leah Sieveking at leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org or 314–590–6211 with any questions. Thank you for your participation in MOScholars and partnership with the Missouri District!

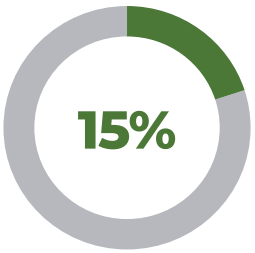
"Taxpayers to the state of Missouri … have the opportunity to direct up to 50% of their state income tax liability each year towards this effort. It's as easy as that!"

Leah Sieveking
Director of Mission Advancement, Missouri District

FINANCIAL REPORT

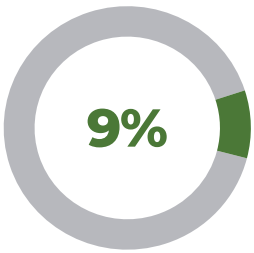
Total Fiscal Year 2027 Budget: **$3,909,313**

MISSION FIELD: MISSOURI
$584,581



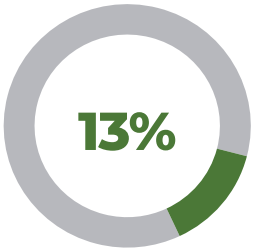
Outreach opportunities throughout the state: urban and rural settings, college campuses, military bases, church plants, and among neighbors of many ethnicities. The District also provides coaching for these efforts.

ECCLESIASTICAL SUPPORT SERVICES
$352,517



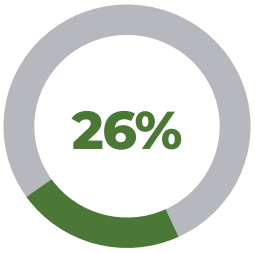
When situations require an extra measure of care, whether with a worker, congregation, or school, the Missouri District is there to walk alongside others and foster resolution and restoration.

SYNOD SUPPORT
$520,000



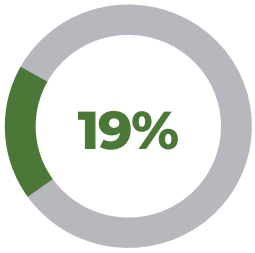
As a District of the LCMS, the Missouri District is committed to, and blessed to, support the national and international efforts of our church body.

SUPPORTING OUR CONGREGATIONS, CHURCH WORKERS, AND STUDENTS
$1,016,440



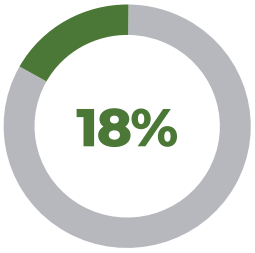
The Missouri District walks with churches, schools, and workers as they look to strengthen their skills in community engagement, family discipleship, church worker recruitment and retention, and more.

DISTRICT EVENTS: OFFICIAL CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS
$723,622



Gatherings for the workers and laity of the Missouri District are important for governance and educational opportunities.

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING
$712,153



Routine functions of the Missouri District that keep day-to-day activity in motion include administration, fundraising, legal services, audits, accounting, insurance, and costs associated with the Board of Directors.

ADVANCEMENT

After 25 years in real estate, my agent friend is one of the calmest people I know. Buying a new home is stressful—be it finances, legal requirements, market availability, or the long timeline. It's all too easy for buyers to get caught up in the many moving parts. My friend doesn't seem fazed by any of it, because she's seen too much over the years. She is so confident that "home" is out there for everyone. It's just a matter of staying focused on the end result and anticipating the joy that awaits once settled.

It was pointed out to me that this wait for "home" is the daily life of a Christian, too. Heaven awaits us with more joy than we can even comprehend. It sure is easy to get distracted while waiting, though! Broken people operating in a broken world leads to all sorts of strife, so it's important to have God's Word and other believers continually remind us to stay focused on the end result.

Our many thanks to you—partners of the Missouri District—for joining in on this "real estate agent" work. Through your prayers, financial support, and engagement in District events, you join in these efforts to encourage others to stay focused on the end result, our eventual home in Heaven because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"It truly is a joy to serve with you all!"

Always feel free to reach out with any questions—because hearing from you is a highlight of any day: Director of Mission Advancement Leah Sieveking, at **leah.sieveking@mo.lcms.org** or **314-590-6211**. God's blessings!

SUPPORT THE MISSOURI DISTRICT THROUGH A VARIETY OF GIVING OPTIONS.

MAILING A GIFT in the centerfold envelope or your own envelope to:
660 Mason Ridge Center Dr., Ste. 100
St. Louis, MO 63141

GIVING ONLINE
at mo.lcms.org/donate

CALLING 314-590-6200
to give by credit or debit card



Each year, the Missouri District celebrates *Tomorrow's Teachers & Preachers*—a campaign dedicated to building awareness of church work vocations and an effort to strengthen our scholarship endowment so that even more financial assistance can be provided to students on the path to ministry.

Congregations and schools throughout the state will be collecting offerings, and you can make your own gift here: **mo.lcms.org/donate** Thank you for your support!

2027 MISSION PROJECTS

Campus Ministry
- Campus Ministry Network, Columbia
- International Student Ministry, St. Louis
- Missouri State University, Springfield
- Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville
- University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg
- University of Missouri, Columbia

Military Ministry
- Faith Lutheran Church, Knob Noster
- Faith Lutheran Church, St. Robert

Multi-Ethnic Ministry
- All Nations Lutheran Church, St. Louis
- Amigos de Cristo Lutheran Church, Sedalia
- Christian Friends of New Americans, St. Louis
- Jesus el Buen Pastor Lutheran Church, Kansas City
- Light of Christ Chinese Mission, Olivette
- Nepalese Outreach, St. Louis
- Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Church, Platte Woods
- Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kansas City
- STL Immigrant Outreach, St. Louis
- The Bridge, St. Louis

Urban Ministry
- Al1gn, St. Louis
- Compass Community, St. Louis
- Lutheran Urban Mission Agency, Kansas City
- Northside Urban Ministry Coalition, St. Louis
- Saint Trinity, St. Louis

Shared Ministry
- Deaconess Intern, Arnold Circuit
- Family Ministry, Rolla Circuit

New Starts
- African Church Planting, St. Louis
- Concordia Community Outreach, Maplewood
- Hispanic Ministry, Overland
- New Mission Coaching
- Redeeming Life Outreach Ministry, St. Louis
- Spanish Lake Church Plant

DISTRICT STAFF

- **Rev. Dr. R. Lee Hagan**
  District President
- **Colleen Backer**
  Administrative Assistant to the President District and Synod Support
- **Cassie Behrmann**
  Project Coordinator
- **Natalie Cunningham**
  MOScholars Education Assistant
- **Christie Hampton**
  Communications Specialist
- **Sarah Irwin**
  Administrative Assistant to the President Congregational Support
- **Rev. Peter Kirby**
  Executive Director of Congregational Services
- **Peter Krege**
  Chief Financial Officer
- **Dan Kreienkamp, DCE**
  Director of Family Life & Youth
- **Pam Nummela, DCE**
  Family Discipleship Lead Facilitator
- **Rev. John Perling**
  Director of Mission Services
- **Martha Schellin**
  Rosters & Reporting Assistant
- **Leah Sieveking**
  Director of Mission Advancement
- **Josh Swartz**
  Director of Schools
- **Sue Thompson**
  Events Assistant & Receptionist

Missouri District LCMS
660 Mason Ridge Center Drive, Suite 100
St. Louis, MO 63141

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Judith Meyer, CFNA board chair, speaks at the new building dedication.
Photo by: Christie Hampton