

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD



THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

As an alliance of congregations and schools, the Mid-South District provides leadership, resources, and encouragement in reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom and in equipping the found for service in our churches, communities and the world.

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT VISION STATEMENT

We see every ministry reaching the lost and discipling the found.

Synodical Representatives: The Reverend Peter K. Lange
 First Vice-President
 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

11:55 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch – Southeast Ballroom
 Current Board of Directors’ Luncheon

Opening Service of Holy Communion:
 Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.
 Christ the King Lutheran Church
 Memphis, Tennessee
 The Reverend Peter K. Lange, Preacher

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025
THIRD CONVENTION SESSION

Pre-Convention Activities
Thursday, June 12, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Floor Committee Meetings
 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. REGISTRATION – Atrium
 12:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Open Hearings by Floor Committees
 Church and Missions – Promenade 1
 Church and Ministry – Promenade 2
 Church and Family Ministry – Promenade 3
 Church and Synod – Tennessee D
 Elections – Tennessee E
 11:00 a.m. Exhibits Open (Tennessee Grand Foyer)

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2025
FIRST CONVENTION SESSION
 Chaplain for the Day: The Reverend David Appold

Thursday, June 12, 2025

2:50 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 3:00 p.m. – 3:20 p.m. Opening Devotion –
 The Reverend David Appold
 3:20 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Welcome and Introductions
 The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola,
 President
 3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Greetings from Ministry Partners
 3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Greetings from District Presidents Emeriti
 4:00 p.m. – 4:55 p.m. District President’s Report
 The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola
 4:55 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Lutheran Church Extension Fund Greetings
 The Reverend Bart Day
 LCEF President
 5:15 p.m. – 5:20 p.m. Announcements – Mrs. Angela Fowler
 Closing Prayer –
 The Reverend David Appold
 5:45 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. Dinner at Christ the King, Memphis
 provided by LCEF
 7:30 p.m. Opening Service – Christ the King Lutheran
 Church
 5296 Park Avenue, Memphis, TN
 Sermon: The Reverend Peter K. Lange

Friday, June 13, 2025 (Continued)

1:00 p.m. – 1:10 p.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 1:10 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Bishop Yohana Nzelu
 Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese,
 Tanzania
 1:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Floor Committee Business
 3:15 p.m. – 3:35 p.m. Break
 3:35 p.m. – 3:40 p.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 3:40 p.m. – 4:10 p.m. Floor Committee Business
 4:10 p.m. – 4:20 p.m. Announcements – Mrs. Angela Fowler
 Closing Prayer –
 The Reverend Adam Woldt
 4:20 p.m. Orientation and Dismissal to Circuit
 Caucuses
 District President Roger Paavola
 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. President’s Reception
 (Southeast Ballroom)
 Dinner on your own

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025
FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION
 Chaplain for the Day: The Reverend Brandon Martin

6:30 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. Breakfast
 7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 8:00 a.m. – 8:20 a.m. Opening Devotion –
 The Reverend Brandon Martin
 8:20 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Elections Continue
 8:45 a.m. – 9:05 a.m. The Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo
 LIME Institute, Malagasy Lutheran Church,
 Madagascar
 9:05 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Floor Committee Business

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025
FIFTH CONVENTION SESSION

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025
SECOND CONVENTION SESSION
 Chaplain for the Day: The Reverend Adam Woldt

6:30 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. Breakfast (Southeast Ballroom)
 6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Registration Continues
 7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 8:00 a.m. – 8:20 a.m. Opening Devotion –
 The Reverend Adam Woldt
 8:20 a.m. – 8:40 a.m. Orientation
 Report of Credentials and Registration
 Reception of Ordained and Commissioned
 Ministers
 Voting Card Demo – Mr. Mark Lenz
 8:40 a.m. – 9:25 a.m. Candidates for District President
 Rev. Robert Herring, Chair
 Elections Committee
 9:25 a.m. – 9:35 a.m. Elections
 9:35 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Floor Committee Business
 10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Break
 10:15 a.m. – 10:20 a.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 10:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. LCMS President’s Report (and video)
 The Reverend Peter K. Lange
 11:20 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. Q&A with First Vice President Lange
 11:50 a.m. – 11:55 a.m. Announcements and Meal prayer
 Special Greetings

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Announcements – Mrs. Angela Fowler
 Lunch Prayer –
 The Reverend Brandon Martin
 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch
 1:00 p.m. - 1:10 p.m. Seating and Singing – Mr. Aaron Jackson
 1:10 p.m. - 2:10 p.m. Floor Committee Business
 2:10 p.m. – 2:40 p.m. Installation of Newly Elected Officers –
 LCMS First Vice President Peter K. Lange
 Closing Devotion –
 The Reverend Brandon Martin
 2:40 p.m. Adjournment
 2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Photos of Newly Elected Groups and
 Individuals
 3:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
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**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD**

1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, Tennessee 38016
901-373-1343
901-373-4826 (Fax)

THE OFFICERS AND STAFF OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT

District President *Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola*
Vice President – Region 3 First Vice President *Reverend Lane Reuter*
Vice President – Region 2 Second Vice President *Reverend Kevin Conger*
Vice President – Region 1 Third Vice President *Reverend Joshua Willadsen*
Vice President – Region 4 Fourth Vice President *Reverend Michael Miller*
District Secretary *Reverend Larry Peters*
Treasurer *Mr. John Hofman*

Executive Director for Business and Finance *Mrs. Angela Fowler*
Executive Director for Education, Youth and Family *Mrs. Michelle Fischer*
Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice President *Mr. Scott Roberts*
Communications and Marketing Specialist *Mrs. Renae McElwain*

Executive Administrative Assistant *Mrs. Missy Washburn*
Administrative Assistant *Mrs. Julie Tyler*
Finance Assistant *Mrs. Lisa Pennington*
Deaconess *Mrs. Robin Moyer*

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola
Reverend Lane Reuter
Reverend Kevin Conger
Reverend Michael Miller
Reverend Joshua Willadsen
Reverend Larry Peters
Mr. John Hofman
Dr. Fred Guengerich
Deaconess Connie SoSo-Goins
Mr. Jeff Pittman
Mrs. Karilyn Brown
Mr. Jack Ficken

THE CIRCUIT VISITORS

<i>Chattanooga Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Mark Rhoads</i>
<i>Fayetteville Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Brandon Martin</i>
<i>Fort Smith Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Thomas Bartzsch</i>
<i>Johnson City Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Steven Harmon</i>
<i>Jonesboro Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Joshua Leigeber</i>
<i>Knoxville Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend David Graves</i>
<i>Little Rock – North Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend David Vandercook</i>
<i>Little Rock – South Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Emil Woerner</i>
<i>Memphis Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Clayton Sellers</i>
<i>Middle Tennessee</i>	<i>Reverend David McMinn</i>
<i>Nashville</i>	<i>Reverend Kenneth Shaw</i>
<i>Paducah Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend David Appold</i>
<i>Stuttgart Circuit</i>	<i>Reverend Don White</i>

**2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT
CONVENTION FLOOR COMMITTEES**

Floor Committee 1 – Church and Missions

Reverend Eric Longman (Chairman)

Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR

Ministers of Religion – Ordained

Reverend Sawyer Meyers, Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olive Branch, MS

Reverend Gordon Smith, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Morristown, TN &
Cross of the Cumberlands Lutheran Church, Harrogate, TN

Minister of Religion – Commissioned

TBD

Lay Member

Dennis Davenport, Zion Lutheran Church, Ulm, AR

Richard Thiele, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR

Floor Committee 2 – Church and Ministry

Reverend Willie Grills (Chairman)

Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR

Ministers of Religion – Ordained

Reverend Michael Miller, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Harriman, TN

TBD

Minister of Religion – Commissioned

TBD

Lay Member

Keith D’Atrio, Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR

TBD

Floor Committee 3 – Church and Family Ministry

Reverend Kevin McReynolds (Chairman)

Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR

Ministers of Religion – Ordained

Reverend Timothy Henning, Trinity Lutheran Church, Mena, AR

Reverend Donald Welmer, First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN

Minister of Religion – Commissioned

Tessa Brasher, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lafa, AR

Lay Member

Dr. Fred Guengerich, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

Jeremiah Weaver, Christ Lutheran Church, Siloam Springs, AR

Floor Committee 4 – Church and Synod

Reverend Kevin Conger (Chairman)
Hope Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, AR

Ministers of Religion – Ordained

Reverend Nathan Jansen, St. John Lutheran Church, Burns, TN

Reverend David McMinn, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, McMinnville, TN

Minister of Religion – Commissioned

TBD

Lay Member

Keith Brummett, Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR

Matthew Pitsch, Bethel Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR

Floor Committee 5 – Elections

Reverend Robert Herring (Chairman)
Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island, AR

Minister of Religion – Ordained

Reverend Amos Gray, IV, Faith Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, AR

Reverend Larry Peters, (*Advisory*) Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN

Ministers of Religion – Commissioned

Matthew Fischer, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

Kris Pudwell, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN

Lay Members

Randy Bueckman, Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN

Paul Huffman, Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN

**2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT
NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Reverend Derek Roberts (Chairman)
Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN

Minister of Religion – Ordained

Reverend David Vandercook, Shepherd of Peace Lutheran Church, Maumelle, AR &
Trinity Lutheran Church, N. Little Rock, AR

Ministers of Religion – Commissioned

Mr. Samuel Fishburn, First Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR

Mrs. Jessica Irwin, First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN

Lay Members

Mrs. Heidi Davidson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN

Mr. Jeff Roper, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway, AR

**2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT
CONVENTION COMMITTEES**

Convention Planning Committee

Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola (Chairman)

District President

Reverend Larry Peters

District Secretary

Mrs. Angela Fowler
Mrs. Missy Washburn

Mrs. Nancy Lee
Mrs. Renae McElwain

Convention Publicity Committee

Mrs. Renae McElwain (Chairman)

Mrs. Judy Otto
Photographer - TBD

Mrs. Rhonda Anderson

Convention Staff

Mrs. Missy Washburn (Convention Office Manager)

Mrs. Angela Fowler
Mrs. Julie Tyler
Mrs. Nancy Lee
Mr. Paul Reaves

Mrs. Michelle Fischer
Mrs. Lisa Pennington
Deaconess Robin Moyer

Convention Musician

Mr. Aaron Jackson

Volunteers

Ms. Diane Reimold
Mr. Johnathon Fischer
Mrs. Sheri Petering
Ms. Emma Petering
Deaconess Jane Cole

Mr. Steve Tyler
Mrs. Gwen Wenck
Mrs. Sylvia Ruppel
Ms. Laqueta Ferguson
Mrs. Lynn MacDonald

Opening Service of Holy Communion

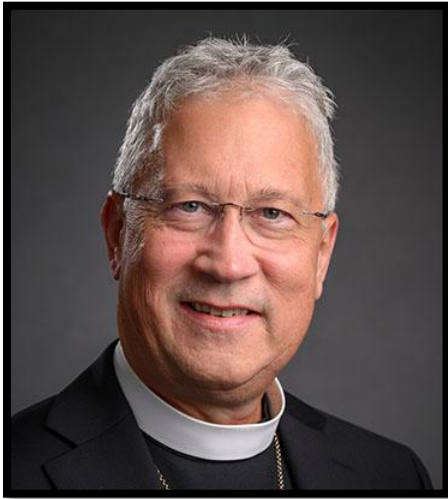
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, Tennessee

Reverend Peter Lange, Proclaimer

Reverend Mark Goble, Celebrant

**THE REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
TO THE 2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION**

MEET OUR FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT



*A Brief Biography of
Reverend Peter K. Lange*

As first vice-president and a member of the Praesidium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Rev. Peter K. Lange assists the president in carrying out his responsibilities and chairs the colloquy committees for both the pastoral ministry and commissioned ministry. Lange was elected to this position in 2019 and re-elected in 2023. He also serves as an *ex officio* member of the LCMS Board of Directors and the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations and is the Synod president’s representative on the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Board of Regents.

Previously, Lange served as president of the LCMS Kansas District (2015–2019). Prior to that, he served as senior pastor at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Topeka, KS. (1999–2015), and associate pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Concordia, MO. (1990–1999).

Born in Houston, Texas, Lange graduated from Concordia University, River Forest, IL., in 1984 and from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN., with a Master of Divinity in 1988. Lange also earned a Master of Sacred Theology degree in 1998 from Concordia Theological Seminary.

Lange has also served the church as Secretary of the Council of Presidents (2018–2019), a member of the 2016 Resolution 13-01A Task Force “To Extol and Equip the Blessed Partnership between the Royal Priesthood and the Office of the Public Ministry,” a chairman for Synod floor committees in 2016 and 2019, and a member of numerous boards and committees for the Missouri and Kansas districts from 1992–2015. Lange has also participated in short-term mission trips to England, Czech Republic, Germany and South Africa.

Lange and his wife, Marcia, live in St. Louis. They have four married daughters and 12 grandchildren.

**MINUTES OF THE 22nd REGULAR CONVENTION OF
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT
OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD**

JUNE 12-14, 2025

*“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”
FIRST CONVENTION SESSION
Thursday, June 12, 2025*

At 3:00 p.m. the Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President of the Mid-South District, gavelled to order the first session of the 22nd Regular Convention of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the Name of the + Father, and of the + Son, and of the + Holy Spirit. Amen.

President Paavola called upon the Chaplain of the Day, the Rev. David Appold, Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY, and Circuit Visitor for the Paducah Circuit, for the opening devotion. Reverend Appold spoke of the blessing of forgetfulness for some things but of the need to remember other things. Reading from Ephesians 2, Reverend Appold urged the assembled to remember that we were once outside of grace but now have been absolved and encouraged them not to presume upon God’s mercy. In the contrast of remembering what life would be apart from Christ, we are renewed by what it is that we now have in Christ. This memory of Christ as our foundation empowers us to build what is good, solid, and lasting as we commit ourselves anew for the work of the Kingdom.

President Paavola thanked Reverend Appold for his opening devotion.

President Paavola welcomed the delegates to the convention. He also introduced Mr. Ron Stinson, Parliamentarian for the Convention and the Synodical representative, the Rev. Peter Lange, 1st Vice President, LCMS. President Paavola expressed the thanks and appreciation of the District to President Bart Day (who was not available to be present at the Convention) and our LCEF Representative, Scott Roberts, for their generous sponsorship of the Convention, materials, USB drives, and delegate dinner at Christ the King Lutheran Church.

President Paavola introduced various Mid-South District ministry partners who were present and invited them to bring greetings to the District as they were recognized.

- MDS LWML President Sandie Harjala
- Trinity HOPE – Keith Logan
- Alliance for Defending Freedom – Gena McFarland
- Joint Seminary Representative – The Rev. Dr. Jon Bruss (President, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne)
- Concordia Publishing House – The Rev. Dr. Jacob Corzine
- Concordia University Nebraska – The Rev. Kris Morris
- Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Foundation – President Mark Cannon
- Concordia University System – The Rev. Mark Braden

OPENING OF CONVENTION BUSINESS

President Paavola called on the District Secretary, the Reverend Larry Peters, to present the credentials report of delegates and guests registered and present as of the opening of the convention. Secretary Peters cited LCMS Constitution Article XII B.14:

For the legal holding of the sessions of the districts a constitutional convocation of such sessions and the presence of at least one-third of the voting members represented by at least one of their respective representatives (pastor or lay delegate) are required.

- Pastoral Delegates - 75
- Lay Delegates - 72
- Congregations Represented - 76
- **Total voting Delegates - 147**
- Advisory - 32
- Guests/Exhibitors - 50
- Total - 229 delegates and guests

With 147 voting delegates present, a quorum has been established.

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENTS EMERITI

President Paavola then read letters of greeting from the two Presidents Emeriti and introduced a video honoring the sainted President Emeritus Norman Groteluschen who died shortly after the 2021 Convention. President Emeritus Kenneth Lampe wrote fondly of his own call to St. John in Ulm, Arkansas, where he began his ministry. He remembered with thanksgiving the focus of the MDS District on the proclamation of Christ who always was and will be the Church's one foundation even as we face changes around us in the world. Amid the challenges before us, President Emeritus Lampe reminded the delegates of the promise of God to meet the challenges ahead. President Emeritus David Callies send an audio message in which he pledged to be with the delegates in spirit as they consider where the District goes from here. He recounted the beginnings of the MDS District and of the technological and cultural changes from those first days of the District. He urged the delegates to remain steadfast in God's Word and promises in their peaching, teaching, and service and commended the delegates in their labors for the Lord in the work of His Kingdom. Having gone to be with the Lord soon after the 2021 District Convention, the District honored the leadership of Reverend President Emeritus Norman Groteluschen and recognized his service to the District with a video tribute of his life and work. In thanksgiving for the service of Reverend Groteluschen, the delegates responded to the video with gratitude and applause.

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Following the greetings of the Presidents Emeriti, President Paavola presented his report to the convention (a full copy of which is included in the Proceedings). The convention thanked President Paavola with applause at the conclusion of his convention report.

Following his report, the President called upon the LCEF Representative to the District, Scott Roberts for an LCEF report. Mr. Roberts began with a recognition of his predecessor, Paul Reaves, and his good work on behalf of the LCEF and the delegates responded with grateful applause. He then introduced a video with official greetings from LCEF President Bart Day and a review of the work of the LCEF as a partner in ministry to congregations and church workers of the LCMS.

Following the LCEF report, the President introduced the video tribute to those church workers of the Mid-South District who were called to glory since the last District Convention in 2021. After the video remembrance, President Paavola introduced his wife, Pat, and the delegates honored her with applause and gratitude for her sacrificial service in support of President Paavola and his work on behalf of the District.

President Paavola then called Mrs. Angela Fowler to the podium to provide final instructions and announcements to the delegates and convention guests regarding the close of business for the day. She provided information regarding busing to the dinner and worship service to be held that evening at Christ the King Lutheran Church.

The chair called the attention of the delegates to the Special Standing Rules for the convention which were printed and distributed in their packets and then called for a standing vote for adoption. Without objection, the Special Standing Rules were adopted by a unanimous standing vote.

The chair then called for the approval of the Convention Agenda. Upon a motion and second from the floor to adopt the agenda as printed and updated in the delegates' packets, the delegates approved the agenda with a voice vote.

The Chaplain of the Day, Reverend David Appold, was then called to the podium to provide a prayer for the closing of the day's business and for the upcoming meal. Following the prayer, the chair adjourned the business session for the evening's dinner and worship service, at which Synod First Vice-President, Reverend Peter Lange, served as preacher and Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, served as host congregation.

The meeting was called into recess at 5:10 p.m. by President Paavola. The convention will reconvene at 8:00 a.m. Friday morning.

“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”
SECOND CONVENTION SESSION
Friday, June 13, 2025

President Paavola called the convention to order at 8:00 a.m.

President Paavola welcomed Chaplain of the Day, the Rev. Adam Woldt, Pastor of The Point, Knoxville, Tennessee. Reading from 1 Peter 2, Pastor Woldt reminded the assembly that we seek the Lord with our mind, and He fills us and our hearts with His abundant grace, that forgiving one another, we may go forth in His name, united in faith and life in Christ. He urged us not simply to hear the story of God’s work of mercy and redemption but to enter into that story, Christ building us upon the foundation of Christ, His living stones built up into a holy house, a royal priesthood doing His bidding.

President Paavola called upon the Secretary, the Reverend Larry Peters, to present the credentials report. Pastor Peters reported that as of 8:00 a.m. today:

- Pastoral Delegates - 85
- Lay Delegates - 80
- Congregations Represented - 88
- **Total voting Delegates - 165**
- Advisory - 36
- Guests/Exhibitors - 60
- Total - 261 delegates and guests

With 165 voting delegates present, a quorum has been established.

President Paavola then called for a motion and second from the floor to adopt the credentials report. The motion was adopted by voice vote.

President Paavola reported that no new congregations had joined the Mid-South in this last quadrennium.

SIGNING OF THE CONSTITUTION BY NEW WORKERS

President Paavola then invited those who were newly ordained or commissioned in the Synod in the Mid-South District during the last triennium to come forward and sign the Synod’s Constitution as well. Those who were present did so and were welcomed and congratulated by the assembly. As the newly ordained and commissioned signed the Constitution, a video of the work of the District for Lutheran Disaster Relief and LERT played on the screen.

- *Ordained*
 - *The Rev. Jacob Childers*
 - *The Rev. Patrick Cox II*
 - *The Rev. Trae Fistler*
 - *The Rev. Anthony Johnson*
 - *The Rev. Chase Lefort*
 - *The Rev. Randall Lewis*
 - *The Rev. Matthew Lynch*
 - *The Rev. James Martin*
 - *The Rev. Addison Pope*
 - *The Rev. Joshua Schooping*
 - *The Rev. Charles Shemwell*
 - *The Rev. Koh Yamamoto*
- *Commissioned*
 - *Pamela Chatham*
 - *Christina Childers*
 - *Lauren Chumbley*
 - *Gracie Griffin*

- Aaron Jackson
- Jonah Kaufmann
- Linay Kolke
- Benjamin Kuefner
- Amy Kurtz
- Nathan Leborious
- Jacquelyn Magnuson
- Robin Moyer
- Amy Waltz
- Brittany Webb
- Teresa Young

At this point, the chair introduced Mrs. Angela Fowler to conduct an orientation for the voting fobs. A video tutorial from Interactive Church Resources instructed the delegates. After working to repair glitches, and upon the successful completion of the orientation and trial, President Paavola thanked Mrs. Angela Fowler and the ICR support for their work.

ELECTION OF THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

After a point of information and response from the Secretary of the District, a motion from the floor was made and seconded to change the orders of the day and remove the speeches by those nominated for District President from the agenda. By standing vote, the assembly cast their ballots on the motion to dispense with the speeches from the candidates. The required two thirds majority was not achieved; motion failed.

At this time, President Paavola turned the chair over to Second Vice President and Board of Directors Chair, the Rev. Kevin Conger to chair the session for the presentation of presidential candidates and the subsequent election.

Acting as chair, Reverend Conger announced the slate of candidates who accepted nomination through the bylaw process:

- The Rev. Dr. Roger C. Paavola* **incumbent*
- The Rev. Curt Hoover
- The Rev. Eric Longman
- The Rev. Lane Reuter
- The Rev. Clayton Sellers
- The Rev. Joshua Willadsen

With no nominations offered from the floor, the chair declared the nominations for the office of district president closed and welcomed the Rev. Robert Herring, chairman of the Elections Committee, to the podium to present the candidates to the convention. Reverend Herring invited the Chaplain of the Day to pray before the process began. Following the prayer for the Spirit's guidance, Reverend Herring introduced the candidates to address the convention with remarks not to exceed 3 minutes. Following completion of their remarks, Reverend Herring thanked those who accepted nomination for their words, and they departed the dais.

The chair requested Reverend Herring and the Elections Committee to proceed with the election of the District President, followed by the other elections as many as were able to be elected within the time frame available.

District President	Ballot 1 - 164 voting	Ballot 2 – 161 voting
The Rev. Dr. Roger C. Paavola (elected)	71 votes or 43.3%	82 votes or 50.9%
The Rev. Curt Hoover	13 votes or 7.9%	
The Rev. Eric Longman	19 votes or 11.5%	22 votes or 13.7%
The Rev. Lane Reuter	22 votes or 13.4%	25 votes or 15.5%
The Rev. Clayton Sellers	12 votes or 7.3%	
The Rev. Joshua Willadsen	27 votes 16.5%	32 votes or 19.8%

No candidate having received a majority, the second ballot was presented including only the top four candidates (the two candidates receiving the lowest number of votes having been removed). With 82 votes and 50.9%, the chair declared that the Rev. Dr. Roger C. Paavola had been elected to a fifth term as District President. The assembly expressed its approval with applause. President Paavola graciously thanked those who had stood for election for their service to the District and their friendship in Christ.

A point of order requested clarification on whether an election was declared as a majority of eligible voters or votes cast. The Secretary quoted Synod Bylaw 3.12.4.2(d) which requires that all elections and votes be a majority of those actually cast.

ELECTION OF THE REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS

Reverend Conger turned the chair over to President Paavola. President Paavola directed Reverend Herring to continue with the election process for the Regional Vice Presidents. The bylaws do not allow nomination from the floor and Reverend Herring called for the delegates to vote. The results were as follows:

Region 1 Vice President	Ballot 1 - 162 voting
The Rev. Joshua Willadsen (elected)	117 votes or 72.2%
The Rev. Gerald Heinecke	11 votes or 6.8%
The Rev. Kevin McReynolds	34 votes or 20.9%

The chair declared Reverend Joshua Willadsen elected.

Reverend Herring presented the candidate for Region 2 Vice President, the Rev. Kevin Conger. As no other candidates were nominated by congregations in the region, Reverend Conger was the only nominee. As no floor nominations were possible for regional vice-presidents, the chair called for the delegates to vote to elect by acclamation, according to Special Standing Rule #10.

Region 2 Vice President	Ballot 1
The Rev. Kevin Conger (elected)	By Acclamation

Reverend Kevin Conger was declared elected as Region 2 Vice President by President Paavola.

Reverend Herring presented the candidates for Region 3 Vice President. After the results of the first ballot and no candidate having received a majority, the election proceeded to a second ballot with the candidate with the lowest number of ballots removed. Reverend Philip Young was declared elected as Region 3 Vice President by President Paavola.

Region 3 Vice President	Ballot 1 - 154 voting	Ballot 2 - 154 voting
The Rev. Andrew Abraham	28 votes or 18.2%	
The Rev. Curt Hoover	40 votes or 25.9%	42 votes or 23.8%
The Rev. David McMinn	33 votes or 21.4%	32 votes or 20.8%
The Rev. Philip Young (elected)	53 votes or 34.4%	80 votes or 51.9%

The chair presented the candidates for Region 4 Vice President.

Region 4 Vice President	Ballot 1 - 149 voting
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The Rev. David Graves (elected)	87 votes or 58.4%
The Rev. Derek Roberts	33 votes or 22.1%
The Rev. Don Welmer	29 votes or 19.5%

Reverend David Graves was declared elected.

Reverend Herring then proceeded with the ballots for ranking the Vice Presidents in order of succession. The balloting would be initially for 1st Vice President, with the successive ranking ballots to be cast for the 2nd – 4th Vice-Presidents.

1st Vice-President	Ballot 1 - 159 voting	Ballot 2 - 157 voting	Ballot 3 - 153 voting
The Rev. Joshua Willadsen (elected)	61 votes or 38.4%	74 votes or 47.1%	90 votes or 58.8%
The Rev. Kevin Conger	52 votes or 32.7%	56 votes or 35.7%	63 votes or 41.2%
The Rev. Philip Young	25 votes or 15.7%	27 votes or 17.2%	
The Rev. David Graves	21 or 13.2%		

Reverend Willadsen having been elected 1st Vice-President on the third ballot, his name was removed for the ballot and the chair proceeded to the ranking vote for 2nd Vice-President.

The chair presented the ballot for Second Vice-President.

2nd Vice-President	Ballot 1 - 154 voting
The Rev. Kevin Conger (elected)	98 votes or 63.7%
The Rev. Philip Young	35 votes or 22.7%
The Rev. David Graves	21 votes or 13.6%

Following the vote, Reverend Kevin Conger was declared elected as 2nd Vice President.

The ballot was then presented to determine both Third and Fourth Vice-President positions. The chair called for the vote.

3rd Vice-President	Ballot 1 - 148 votes cast
The Rev. Philip Young (elected)	90 votes or 60.8%
The Rev. David Graves	58 votes or 39.2%

Reverend Philip Young was declared elected as 3rd Vice President, and Reverend David Graves was declared elected as 4th Vice President. The chair dismissed the Elections Committee until the Orders of the Day on Saturday.

FLOOR COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

The Rev. Paavola called Chairman the Rev. Eric Longman to the podium to present the resolutions for Committee One - Church & Doctrine.

Resolution 01-01-25 “To Revitalize Church Planting” (Committee One - Church & Mission Packet) was introduced. The Rev. Gordon Smith presented the resolution, and on behalf of the committee moved adoption.

Without any speaking to the motion from the floor, President Paavola called for a voice vote. **Resolution 01-01-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

SYNOD PRESIDENT'S TIME

President Paavola called upon the Secretary, the Reverend Peters, to address the assembly and explain the difference between votes cast, eligible votes, and how a majority is determined. Secretary Peters indicated that the quorum represents the total votes which cannot be exceeded but that according to Synod Bylaw 3.12.4.2(d), a majority for election and the passage of resolutions is defined as a simple majority of all votes actually cast.

The chair invited the Reverend Peter Lange, 1st Vice-President of the LCMS, to the podium in order to present the report of the Synod President. Reverend Lange congratulated President Paavola on his re-election, and the Vice-Presidents who were elected, and thanked all who let their names stand for office.

Reverend Lange introduced the video of President Matthew Harrison who reported the state of the Synod. Following the video, Reverend Lange spoke of the All Nations ministries and missions and the work of the Synod. New to the Synod is formal work of 18 areas of mission in the Office of National Mission. Included was a report of the work in 32 countries across the world with the Office of International Mission to spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran congregations, and show mercy. Half are ordained and half are lay. *Foros* is the Spanish language equivalent of forum and brings together those interested in missions in a particular country or area and collaborate in the mission work in that area. There are 12 of those *Foros* in the Latin America region and it has proven very successful and is being expanded to other areas. Short-term missions were also highlighted. Reverend Lange saw these as having a benefit not only to those on the mission field but also to those going but urged those considering such trips to coordinate with the Synod's Office of International Mission before taking the mission trip.

Next, Reverend Lange spoke of the five Concordia Universities and of the work of the CUS to support our universities in the mission and identity as Lutheran schools. With this focus on Lutheran identity, the fruits should also be seen in the numbers of church work students on those campuses. There are now 802 church work students on our five Concordia campuses, about half in teacher training programs. The improving situation for financial aid is one of the reasons for this increase now and in the future.

Upon hearing of the District statistics, Reverend Lange commended the District for the low vacancy rate and addressed the continuing concern for vacancies throughout the Synod. The Secretary of Synod is developing a clearer picture of what those numbers mean with 470 out of 5800 congregations now calling for sole pastor. Vacancies are never easy, but a certain level of vacancies is key to the movement of pastors. The number of seminary graduates is always a great concern in the Synod but there is also an increase in the number of congregations who can only afford a part-time pastor. The vacancy rate is not uniform but tends to be higher in urban and saltwater areas of our Synod. Some 3500 pastors are of retirement age, and many will continue to serve both full-time and part-time beyond the normal retirement age. The Set Apart to Serve program continues to grow in the hope of impacting not only vacancies but our ability to address the world around us with the Gospel, encouraging young men and women to church work.

Reverend Lange reported that in the combined pastoral formation tracks of the Synod, the total of students from both seminaries is 566 (not including graduate programs). This includes the many routes to ordination in addition to the residential track (which is the norm). Also not included are the colloquy program totals; this resides under the duties of the Office of the First Vice-President of Synod. Though 112 candidates were placed by the Council of Presidents in April, 170 congregations did not receive a candidate. At the last Synod convention, the Pastoral Formation Committee was tasked with reviewing and offering improvements to the current Specific Ministry Pastor program and will offer their report to the 2026 Convention.

Upon the conclusion of his remarks, Reverend Lange introduced the second video as part of the Synod President's report to the districts. Following President Harrison's video, Reverend Lange completed his report and welcomed questions from the delegates with President Paavola as moderator.

Various delegates asked questions and Reverend Lange addressed:

- the arise of "rogue" seminaries offering training outside the approved process of the LCMS and its seminaries,
- the colloquy process used with the graduates of Concordia Texas left in limbo since they began while it was an authorized school of the Synod but now has declared independence,
- the rising number of permanent vacancies in the Synod, and,

- the situation with Concordia Ann Arbor campus and Concordia University Wisconsin now and going forward.

President Paavola called Orders of the Day to recess for lunch. Announcements were given for the locations of the various small group luncheons and the general lunch arrangements. Chaplain of the Day, Reverend Woldt, closed the morning session with prayer, asking God’s blessings on the work of the convention and our lunch.

The chair announced that the convention was recessed until 1:00 p.m.

**“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”
THIRD CONVENTION SESSION
Friday, June 13, 2025**

After the lunch break, the Rev. Lane Reuter, 1st Vice-President of the MDS District chaired the Convention, welcoming Bishop Yohanna Nzelu of the Southeast of Lake Victoria Dioceses, the Lutheran Church of Tanzania to bring greetings to the Convention. Bishop Nzelu introduced a video presentation from the SELVD and at the conclusion of the video offered a verbal report to the Convention. Upon the completion of his remarks, Reverend Reuter thanked Bishop Nzelu and turned the gavel over to President Paavola who called Floor Committee 2 to come forward to present their resolutions to the floor.

FLOOR COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 02-01-25 “To Maintain Accountability and Transparency for Financial Gifts from God’s Stewards” (Committee Two - Church & Ministry Packet) was introduced. The Rev. Willie Grills presented the resolution, and, on behalf of the committee, moved adoption.

President Paavola asked if there was any speaking to the motion and without speakers, the chair called the question. **Resolution 02-01-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 02-02-25 “To Encourage Financial Support for Professional Church Workers” (Committee Two - Church & Ministry Packet) was introduced. The Reverend Willie Grills presented the resolution, and for the committee moved adoption. A delegate offered a friendly amendment to add Luther Classical College to the final resolved. This was accepted by the Committee but received objection from the floor and so the amendment became a formal amendment then offered to the assembly for a vote. After a second and discussion, the motion to amend the motion and add Luther Classical College to the final resolved failed.

Amendment to Resolution 02-02-25	Votes – 154 votes cast
For	55 votes or 35.7%
Against	99 votes or 64.3%

Without further speaking to the motion, President Paavola called for a vote. **Resolution 02-02-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

President Paavola thanked Floor Committee 2 for their work so far and welcomed Floor Committee 3 to the podium. Chairman, The Rev. Kevin McReynolds introduced the members of the committee who will introduce the resolutions. Resolution 03-04-25 “To Encourage Personal Evangelism” was brought before the assembly (Committee Three - Church & Family Ministry Packet). Without objection from the delegates, the chair directed the Floor Committees to omit the reading of the “Whereases” and only read the “Resolves.” Without speaking to the resolution, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 03-04-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 03-03-25 “To Evaluate, Study, and Use Biblically-based Stewardship Resources” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the resolution, the chair called for the vote. **Resolution 03-03-25 was adopted voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 03-02-25 “To Encourage Generational Ministry” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. Without speaking to the resolution, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 03-02-25 was adopted voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 03-01-25 “To Shape the Faith Formation Paradigm from Generation to Generation Ministry” was brought before the assembly. By friendly amendment, “grandparents” were added to the second to the last resolved prior to “guardians”. The committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the resolution, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 03-01-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

Floor Committee 3, having completed its business was dismissed with thanks. The chair called Floor Committee 4 to the podium to present their business. The Floor Committee Chair called upon the members to introduce themselves and participate in the reading of the resolutions. Resolution 04-08-25 “Participating in Building a Culture of Church Work Formation and Recruitment” (Committee Four – Church & Synod Packet) was brought before the assembly. By friendly amendment, the first resolved was changed from establish to “be encouraged to establish.” The committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the resolution, the chair called for the vote. **Resolution 04-08-25 was adopted by a majority voice vote.**

Resolution 04-06-25 “To Amend the District Bylaws so that the District President May Accept a Call to a Congregation as Assistant Pastor” was brought before the assembly. An amendment offered from the floor was withdrawn after clarification from the District Secretary. With all speaking to the resolution ended, the chair called the question. **Resolution 04-06-25 was adopted by majority voice vote.**

Resolution 04-05-25 “To Request that Concordia Plans Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for the Concordia Retirement Plan” was brought before the assembly. After discussion and with all speaking to the resolution ended, the chair called for a vote. A problem with several voting fobs was resolved. **Resolution 04-05-25 was declined.**

Resolution 04-05-25	Vote – 147 voting
For	61 votes or 41.5%
Against	86 votes or 58.5%

Motion to return to reading the “whereases” of each resolution was made and seconded. By standing vote, motion failed to reach the required two-thirds majority.

Resolution 04-07-25 “To Direct The Office of the National and International Mission to Decline Applications for Recognized Service Organization Status from Organizations Currently Supporting, Advocating, or Otherwise Promoting the LGBTQIA+ Agenda and Lifestyle and to direct The Office of National Missions and The Office of International Mission to Revoke RSO Status of the Same” was brought before the assembly and, after discussion on the floor, the resolution was withdrawn by the Floor Committee to be presented later.

The Floor Committee, having used up its time, was released and Floor Committee 1 was brought forward to complete its business. A point of order requested that the representatives from the Malagasy and Tanzanian churches step out during discussions of the resolutions that would impact their churches. The Chair, having taken this as a resolution duly made and seconded, called for a vote. **By voice vote, the motion to request representatives from the Malagasy and Tanzanian churches during the discussion failed.**

Resolution 01-02-25 “To Continue a Relationship with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. A motion to postpone was made and seconded and failed on voice vote. Hearing no more discussion on the main motion, the chair called for voice vote. **Resolution 01-02-25 motion passed by majority voice vote.**

Resolution 01-03-25 “To Continue a Relationship with the Confessional Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. Several points of information from the floor were answered by the chair. After discussion on the floor, a motion was made and seconded to postpone consideration of the motion until Saturday in order to obtain answers to questions raised. Vice-President Lange addressed the process used by Synod to develop relationships with church bodies that may lead to deeper ties and eventually church fellowship. A point of information over the difference between tabling and postponing a resolution was explained by the Parliamentarian. **Motion to postpone failed by voice vote. Resolution 01-03-25 passed.**

Resolution 01-03-25	Vote – 152 voting
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For	115 votes or 75.6%
Against	37 votes or 24.4%

Omnibus Resolution 01-04-25 “To Commend Trinity Hope” and refer the resolution to the Board of Directors for action was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. **Motion passed by voice vote without opposition.** Having completed its business, the chair thanked Floor Committee 1 and released them from their duties.

The chair welcomed Floor Committee 2 to the podium. The Reverend Willie Grills read Resolution 02-03-25 “To Propose LCMS Men’s Ministry” and the committee moved adoption. With no speaking to the motion, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 02-03-25 passed by voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 02-04-25A “To Establish Locum Tenens Ministry to the Mid-South District” and the committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the motion, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 02-04A-25 passed by majority voice vote.**

Resolution 02-05-25 “To Hold a Day of Fasting, Prayer, and Repentance for the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” and the committee moved adoption. An amendment was proposed to change the final resolved. Motion was made to amend the final resolved, motion was seconded, and amendment submitted in writing to the Secretary. During the discussion of the amendment, the Orders of the Day were called and discussion recessed for a break. As the delegates returned to their seats, a video on the Grow Grants program of the Mid-South District was shown.

Following the recess, Floor Committee 2 returned to the podium. Reverend Grills informed the assembly that the floor committee had accepted this as a friendly amendment, changed the title, and edited the final resolved to reflect this change. Resolution 02-05A-25 “To Address Theological Errors and Call Repentance for the Church’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” was before the assembly. Discussion on the revised resolution continued. A motion was made to read the whereases in order to give context to the resolved. **Motion was seconded but failed by standing vote.** An amendment was made and seconded to include another resolved after the first, requesting a report from the CTCR to the Synod Convention on practices during a pandemic. The amendment was seconded and discussed. The question was called and motion to call the question passed unanimously. The assembly voted on the amendment to add another resolved. Amendment failed. The assembly then voted on Resolution 2-05A-25. **Resolution 02-05A-25 failed.**

Resolution 02-05A-25	Amendment – 156 voting	Vote – 157 voting
For	59 votes or 37.8%	73 votes or 46.5%
Against	97 votes or 62.2%	84 votes or 53.5%

The chair called the orders of the day and requested Mrs. Fowler and Secretary Peters to give direction to the Circuits as they caucus in their Forums to elect their Circuit Visitor (Visitation Circuits) and to the Electoral Circuits who are prepared and Advisory Ordained and Commissioned, to elect pastoral and lay delegates and alternates for the 2026 Synod Convention in Phoenix. Informational packets describing both the process and with the reporting forms have been distributed to the Circuit Visitors.

The chair called for the Chaplain of the Day to pray as the Convention recessed for the day, and the Circuits convene in their Forums and the Advisory Delegate Caucuses and reminded the delegates of the President’s Reception.

“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”
FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION
Saturday, June 14, 2025

Vice-President Joshua Willadsen called the convention back to order at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 14. He then introduced the Chaplain of the Day, the Rev. Brandon Martin, Associate Pastor of Salem Lutheran Ministries, of Springdale, Arkansas, for the opening devotion.

Reverend Martin spoke of the difficulty of translating idioms from one language into another, something he must do often in the context of multi-cultural ministry. Translation requires accuracy in the written Word and interpretation in the spoken Word so that we convey the unchanging truth of God’s gift of salvation. The Word does not change but how we apply that

Word to the lives of the hearers does change. In Revelation we hear of the New Jerusalem and its promise. It communicates across cultures because the need is the same, the pain is in common, and the desire for peace and light universal. The hope within us and the future promised to us in Christ is nothing less than the perfect fulfillment now distant from us but then we will know it immediately and intimately. All are together in Christ, the Church's One Foundation. It begins and ends with Jesus; the Word made flesh and the clearest revelation of all that God wants us to know. Following the devotion, the chair thanked the Chaplain of the Day.

The chair then called upon the Secretary, the Reverend Larry Peters, to present the credentials report. Pastor Peters took a standing count and reported that as of 8:00 a.m. today:

- Pastoral Delegates - 70
- Lay Delegates - 77
- Congregations Represented - 77
- **Total voting Delegates - 147**
- Advisory - 27
- Guests/Exhibitors - 19
- Total - 184 delegates and guests

With 147 voting delegates present, a quorum has been established.

The chair called the delegates' attention to the slate of Circuit Visitors for the final elections to be held, the ratification of the slate of Circuit Visitors who had been selected by their respective visitation circuits.

RATIFICATION OF CIRCUIT VISITORS

Slate of Circuit Visitors

The slate of Circuit Visitors selected by the circuits was presented for ratification by the convention:

The Rev. Donald Welmer (Chattanooga)

- The Rev. Brandon Martin (Fayetteville)
- The Rev. Thomas Bartzsch (Ft. Smith)
- The Rev. Robert Herring (Jonesboro)
- The Rev. Chase LeFort (Knoxville)
- The Rev. David Vandercook (Little Rock-North)
- The Rev. Emil Woerner (Little Rock-South)
- The Rev. Clayton Sellers (Memphis)
- The Rev. Kenneth Shaw (Nashville)
- The Rev. David McMinn (Middle TN)
- The Rev. David Appold (Paducah)
- The Rev. Stewart Marshall (Stuttgart)
- The Rev. Charles Shemwell (Johnson City)

The slate of Circuit Visitors was ratified by majority voice vote of the delegates.

ELECTIONS OF THE SECRETARY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Paavola then called Reverend Herring to the podium to continue elections.

Reverend Herring then presented the candidates for District Secretary. There being no nominations from the floor, and nominations were declared closed by the chair.

District Secretary	Ballot 1 - 130 voting
The Rev. Larry Peters (elected)	78 votes or 60%
The Rev. Willie Grills	35 votes or 26.9%

The Rev. Jonathan Beyer	13 votes or 10%
The Rev. Eric Rudsenske	4 votes or 3.1%

Reverend Larry Peters was declared elected as District Secretary.

Reverend Herring then presented the candidates for Board of Directors – Commissioned for combined Regions 1 and 2.

Regions 1 & 2 Board of Directors - Commissioned	Ballot 1 - 128 voting
Jacquelyn Magnuson	40 votes or 31.3%
Aaron Jackson (elected)	88 votes or 68.7%

Aaron Jackson was declared elected to the Board of Directors -Regions 1 & 2 Commissioned.

Reverend Herring then presented the candidates for Board of Directors – Commissioned for combined Regions 3 and 4. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations were declared closed.

Regions 3 & 4 Board of Directors - Commissioned	Ballot 1 - 124 voting	Ballot 2 - 126 voting
Jessica Irwin	45 votes or 36.3%	57 votes or 45.2%
Matthew Fischer	21 votes or 16.9%	
David Topp (elected)	58 votes or 46.7%	69 votes or 54.8%

Following the first vote, Matthew Fischer was removed from the ballot and a second ballot was placed before the delegates. David Topp was declared elected.

Reverend Herring presented the candidates for election to the Board of Directors - Lay by region. There were no nominations from the floor for any of the positions, and nominations were declared closed. The chair then called for the votes for the following elections according to position.

Region 1 Board of Directors - Lay	Ballot 1 - 130 voting
Jeff Pittman (elected)	101 votes or 77.7%
Lou Martinelli	29 votes or 22.3%

The chair declared that Jeff Pittman was elected.

Region 2 Board of Directors - Lay	Ballot 1 - 130 voting
Karilyn Brown	75 votes or 57.7%
Keith DiAtrio	55 votes or 42.3%

The chair declared Karilyn Brown was elected.

Region 3 Board of Directors - Lay	Ballot 1 - 127 voting
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Amanda Cordray	35 votes or 27.6%
Tim Hanusa (elected)	68 votes or 53.5%
Greg Lynch	18 votes or 14.2%
Ken Priest	6 votes or 4.7%

The chair declared that Tim Hanusa was elected.

Nominated from the floor, Heidi Davidson of Johnson City, Tennessee. Her credentials and signed acceptance delivered to the Secretary, motion to approve her addition to the slate passed by voice vote.

Region 4 Board of Directors - Lay	Ballot 1 – 134 voting	Ballot 2 – 134 voting
Dustin Heidel	59 votes or 44%	66 votes or 49.3%
Levi Nunnink	21 votes or 15.7%	
Heidi Davidson (elected)	54 votes or 40.3%	68 votes or 50.7%

The chair announced that Heidi Davidson was elected.

ELECTIONS OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (DISTRICT & SYNOD)

Reverend Herring presented the candidates for the District Nominations Committee. No nominations were presented from the floor, and nominations were declared closed by the chair and the vote was taken. A technological glitch in the ballot for Regions 1 & 2, the chair proceeded to the voting for Regions 3 & 4 first.

Regions 3 & 4 Nominations Committee - Ordained	Ballot 1 – 141 voting	Ballot 2 – 138 voting
The Rev. Gregory Bauch	42 votes or 29.8%	58 votes or 42%
The Rev. Derek Roberts (elected)	66 votes or 46.8%	80 votes or 58%
The Rev. Terry Tieman	33 votes or 23.4%	

No candidate having received a majority, the candidate with the lowest total of votes was removed and the balloting continued. The chair declared Reverend Derek Roberts elected on the second ballot.

Region 1 & 2 Nominations Committee - Ordained	Ballot 1 – 141 voting
The Rev. Eric Longman	57 votes or 40.4%
The Rev. David Vandercook	84 votes or 59.6%

The chair declared Reverend David Vandercook elected.

Regions 1 & 2 Nominations Committee - Commissioned	Ballot 1 – 134 voting
Jacquelyn Magnuson (elected)	73 votes or 54.5%

Tessa Brasher	61 votes or 45.5%
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The chair declared Jacquelyn Magnuson elected.

Regions 3 & 4 Nominations Committee - Commissioned	Ballot 1 – 130 voting
Jessie Irwin	61 votes or 46.9%
Amy Kurtz (elected)	69 votes or 53.1%

The chair declared Amy Kurtz elected.

Regions 1 & 2 Nominations Committee -	Ballot 1 – 131 voting
Lou Martinelli	65 votes or 49.6%
Jeff Roper (elected)	66 votes or 50.4%

The chair declared Jeff Roper elected. A technical difficulty prevented the ballot Regions 3 & 4 Lay election from proceeding and the chair moved to the Synod Nominations Committee.

The Secretary addressed the Convention regarding the role of the Synod Nominations Committee, the time frame of service, and the alternation between electing lay and ordained/commissioned members. When voting totals did not come close to the instructions, the Secretary declared the first ballot null and void. With the confusion having occurred over the voting procedure of voting for two candidates, the Secretary directed the assembly to revote this time casting only one vote for the delegate and voting on a separate ballot for alternate.

Synod Nominations Committee – Commissioned or Ordained	Ballot 1 – 138 votes
The Rev. David McMinn	97 votes or 70.3%
The Rev. John David Zischke	27 votes or 19.6%
The Rev. Stewart Marshall	4 votes or 2.9%
The Rev. Derek Roberts	10 votes or 7.2%

The chair declared Reverend David McMinn elected.

Synod Nominations Committee – Commissioned or Ordained Alternate	Ballot 1 – 139 voting
The Rev. Stewart Marshall	7 votes or 5.9%
The Rev. Derek Roberts	77 votes or 62.6%
The Rev. John David Zischke	45 votes or 32.4%

The chair declared Reverend Derek Roberts elected. The technical difficulty having been resolved, the final remaining ballot was brought forward.

Regions 3 & 4 Nominations Committee - Lay	Ballot 1 – 131 voting	Ballot 2 – 138 voting
Tom Bath	22 votes or 16.8%	10 votes or 7.2%

Heidi Davidson (elected)	57 votes or 43.5%	72 votes or 52.2%
Ed Mell	14 votes or 10.7%	
James Mountjoy	38 votes or 29%	56 votes or 40.6%

No candidate having received a majority, voting proceeded to the second ballot and the candidate with the fewest votes removed. A point of information was answered by the Secretary indicating that the Synod Bylaws declare the Nominations Committee an ad hoc committee and therefore exempt from the requirement that no one can hold two elective offices in Synod or District. The chair declared Heidi Davidson was elected.

FLOOR COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

Having completed their business, the chair thanked his committee, and President Paavola released the Elections Committee and called to the podium Floor Committee 2.

Reverend Grills presented Resolution 02-06A-25 “Ten Commandments” to refer the overture to Omnibus Resolution C and the committee moved adoption. After discussion closed, the question was brought to a vote. **Resolution 02-06A-25 was adopted.**

Resolution 02-06A-25	Vote - 135 voting
Yes	124 votes or 91.9%
No	11 votes or 8.1%

Having completed their business, Reverend Grills expressed his thanks to the committee and asked to be released. President Paavola dismissed the members of the floor committee.

President Paavola exercised a privilege of the chair to recess for a break so that the next floor committee might assemble and the next speaker can be on deck. Motion to suspend the agenda received second and passed by voice vote. The assembly proceeded to break.

As the convention came back from recess, President Paavola announced those who received a prize from the drawing from Lutheran Heritage Foundation. He then turned the chair over to the Rev. Michael Miller, Vice-President, who introduced the Rev. Dr. Joseph Randrianasolo, Rector of the Lutheran Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME) Institute, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar. During his report, the assembly watched a loop of photos. A copy of his address will be included in the convention proceedings. At the conclusion of his address, Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo, accompanied by his wife, presented gifts to President and Pat Paavola, Vice-President Peter Lange, Missy Washburn and Angela Fowler of the District Staff, and Bob Allen.

Following the presentation by Reverend Randrianasolo, the chair called to the podium Floor Committee 4 to complete its work with the final resolutions to be acted upon by the delegates.

Resolution 04-01-25 “To Encourage Further Consideration of Successful Completion of SMP Coursework Before Ordination and Placement on Ordained” (Committee Four – Church & Synod Packet) was presented by its chair, the Rev. Conger, and the committee moved adoption.

After the completion of discussion, the resolution was brought to vote. **Resolution 04-01-25 was adopted as presented.**

Resolution 04-01-25	Vote - 125 voting
Yes	94 votes or 75.2%

No	31 votes or 24.7%
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Resolution 04-02-25 “Regularizing Specific Ministry Pastoral Classification” was offered by the Reverend Conger and moved adoption on behalf of the committee. The resolution received a friendly amendment to change the languages of the resolves to “memorialize the Synod in Convention.” Several points of information were answered by President Paavola and by Synod Vice-President Lange.

After discussion and the time having run out, the delegates declined to extend the time for discussion and voted upon the motion. **Resolution 04-02-25 was adopted as presented.**

Resolution 04-02-25	Vote - 129 voting
Yes	118 votes or 91.5%
No	11 votes or 8.5%

Resolution 04-03-25 “Extend an Overture to the 2026 LCMS Convention Concerning Specific Ministry Pastoral (SMP) Training” was presented by the Rev. Nathan Jansen on behalf of the committee and moved adoption.

Discussion on the original resolution ended with a motion and second to postpone the motion indefinitely, the assembly debated the motion to postpone. With no more delegates speaking to the resolution, the chair put the motion to postpone the 04-03-25 before the assembly. The Secretary requested a division of the house. **Motion to postpone passed by standing vote of the majority.**

The Rev. David McMinn came forward to present 04-07A-25, “To Direct the Office of the National and International Mission to Decline Applications for Recognized Service Organization Status from Organizations Currently Supporting, Advocating, or Otherwise Promoting the LGBTQIA+ Agenda and Lifestyle and to direct The Office of National Missions and The Office of International Mission to Revoke RSO Status of the Same.” The committee moved adoption.

After extensive discussion on the motion and a clarification from the Secretary reminding the assembly that this resolution would not change the Synod bylaws but simply calls upon the Synod to develop such bylaws in order to revoke RSO status before the time of renewal or to decline applications for such status on the basis of the criteria cited in the resolution, the motion carried.

Resolution 04-07A-25	Vote - 128 voting
Yes	102 votes or 79.7%
No	26 votes or 20.3%

Reverend McMinn came forward to present Omnibus Resolution 04-04A-25, “To Decline to Consider Consolidation of Southern and Mid-South Districts.” The committee moved adoption.

After discussion and clarification of the omnibus, the assembly voted, and the motion carried.

Resolution 04-04A-25	Vote – 128 voting
Yes	122 votes or 95.3%
No	6 votes or 4.7%

The chair dismissed Committee 4 at this time and thanked them for having completed their work.

Selection of Mission and Ministry Emphases for Synod Consideration

President Paavola called the delegates' attention to the handout with a list of 7 emphases proposed from the Circuits and from the Advisory Delegate Caucuses for the Synod to consider during the 2026-2029 Triennium.

Delegates were instructed to select one, and then the top three (3) vote receivers would be forwarded on to Synod.

Mission and Ministry Directives for Synod during the 2026-2029 Triennium From the Circuit & Advisory Forums

1. Work to resolve human trafficking and raise awareness to address the challenges of a world that does not respect the value God has given to male and female.
2. To encourage young families and encourage the health of marriage and the vitality of the devotional life in the home.
3. To train, encourage and support personal evangelism and church planting thru training programs like Each One-Reach One in the congregation and circuit.
4. To support and encourage the recruitment of and the service of church workers emotionally, spiritually, and financially, building on the progress of Set Apart to Serve on our parishes and schools.
5. To address the Church's response during a pandemic and the use of technology, social media, and digital resources to supplement or replace person- to-person relationships.
6. Formation and Spiritual Strengthening of Elders and other Lay Leaders in the congregation.
7. In support of the Set Apart to Serve initiative and in order to build relationships and to provide a positive example of pastoral leadership, we encourage continued education of pastors in how to support and engage with Lutheran schools and ECC communities.

In a vote, the three highest Mission and Ministry Directives to be sent to the Synod for consideration during the 2026-2029 Triennium are:

1. **To encourage young families and encourage the health of marriage and the vitality of the devotional life in the home.** (41 of 131 votes)
2. **Work to resolve human trafficking and raise awareness to address the challenges of a world that does not respect the value God has given to male and female.** (21 of 131 votes)
3. **Formation and Spiritual Strengthening of Elders and other Lay Leaders in the congregation** (21 of 131 votes)

Reverend Peter Lange, First Vice-President of the LCMS, was called forward and installed the Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola as President for his fifth term. President Paavola then installed: the Regional Vice Presidents; Circuit Visitors; Secretary, Board of Directors, and the Nominations Committee. According to District Bylaws, the newly elected may be installed at the end of the Convention but the term of their offices begins on September 1, 2025, and those currently in office continue to serve until then.

The Chair introduced Ray Musgrave, The Lutheran Hour Ministries District President, who thanked the delegates and guests for visiting the Lutheran Hour booth and held a drawing for prizes to be awarded to those who registered there.

The chair inquired of the body if there was any other business before the assembly. One delegate came forward with a resolution acknowledging the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's marriage to Katharina von Bora on 13 June 1525. Text of the resolution was read to the delegates, given in written form to the Secretary, and is printed in the Proceedings. **Motion was made and seconded and carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Thanks expressed to Missy Washburn, Renae McElwain, Michelle Fischer, Julie Tyler, Lisa Pennington, and Angela Fowler and to Dano Sauter from ICR, Nancy Lee, Robin Moyer, Rhonda Anderson, and all the Convention Volunteers: Diane Reimold, Gwen Wenck, Sheri Petering, Emma Petering, Jane Cole, Lynn MacDonald, Laqueta Ferguson, Dennis Barden, Sylvia Ruppel, Steve Tyler, Jonathan Fischer, Paul Fischer, Ryan Pudwell, Sheilia Adcock, and the AV Team: David Dugas and Jonah Weiss from Nolans AV.

The chair asked the delegates for their prayers and prayerful support of the District and pledged himself to fulfill the agenda of this Convention until the end of his term and retire at that time. The business of the convention concluded, the chair entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to adjourn. As the convention concluded, the delegates watched a video on the Grow Grant program and some of the recipients. The chair called forth the Chaplain of the Day, Reverend Martin, to close the Convention with prayer. Reading from Romans 8, Reverend Martin encouraged us to go forth with God's promise and blessing and with a grateful heart for the abundance of His mercies, gifts,

and blessings. God has bestowed upon us *grace* and so we respond “gracias.” President Paavola gave directions for photos and lunch and the assembly arose to sing the Common Doxology. At 11:45 a.m., President Paavola adjourned the 22nd Regular Convention of the LCMS Mid-South District in the Name of the + Father and of the + Son and of the + Holy Spirit. Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "The Rev. Larry A. Peters +". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Larry A. Peters
District Secretary
The Mid-South District LCMS

**THE 2025 CONVENTION ELECTION RESULTS
MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHRAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD**

The results of the 2025 Mid-South District Convention elections for the 2025-2028 triennium were as follows:

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola
Mid-South District

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT – REGION 1

The Reverend Joshua Willadsen
Bethel, Fort Smith, AR/Trinity, Sallisaw, OK

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT – REGION 2

The Reverend Kevin Conger
Hope, Jacksonville, AR

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT – REGION 3

The Reverend Philip Young
Redeemer, Nashville, TN

FOURTH VICE PRESIDENT – REGION 4

The Reverend David Graves
St. Paul, Wartburg, TN

SECRETARY

The Reverend Larry Peters
Clarksville, TN

LAYPERSONS

REGION 1

Mr. Jeff Pittman
Pilgrim, Jonesboro, AR

REGION 2

Mrs. Karilyn Brown
Hope, Jacksonville, AR

REGION 3

Dr. Tim Hanua
Ascension, Madison, TN

REGION 4

Mrs. Heidi Davidson
Bethlehem, Johnson City, TN

COMMISSIONED MINISTER – REGIONS 1 AND 2

MR. AARON JACKON
Redeemer, Mountain Home, AR

COMMISSIONED MINISTER – REGIONS 3 AND 4

Mr. David Topp
Belvoir, Chattanooga, TN

THE DISTRICT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

MINISTER OF RELIGION, ORDAINED

REGIONS 1 AND 2

The Reverend David Vandercook
Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, AR

REGIONS 3 and 4

The Reverend Derek Roberts
Praise, Maryville, TN

MINISTER OF RELIGION, COMMISSIONED

REGIONS 1 and 2

Ms. Jacquelyn Magnuson
Grace, Little Rock, AR

REGIONS 3 and 4

Mrs. Amy Kurtz
Immanuel, Memphis, TN

LAYPERSONS

REGIONS 1 and 2

Mr. Jeff Roper

REGIONS 3 and 4

Mrs. Heidi Davidson
Bethlehem, Johnson City, TN

**THE 2025 CONVENTION CIRCUIT VISITORS
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD**

**The results of the 2025 Mid-South District Convention Ratification of Circuit Visitors
for the 2025-2028 triennium were as follows:**

CHATTANOOGA CIRCUIT
The Reverend Donald Welmer
First, Chattanooga, TN

LITTLE ROCK SOUTH CIRCUIT
The Reverend Emil Woerner
Friends in Christ, Bryant, AR

FAYETTEVILLE CIRCUIT
The Reverend Brandon Martin
Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale,
AR

MEMPHIS CIRCUIT
The Reverend Clayton Sellers
Faith, Collierville, TN

FORT SMITH CIRCUIT
The Rev. Thomas Bartzch
River Valley Grace, Lamar, AR

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CIRCUIT
The Reverend David McMinn
Shepherd of the Hills, McMinnville, TN

JOHNSON CITY CIRCUIT
The Reverend Charles Shemwell
Bethlehem, Johnson City, TN

NASHVILLE CIRCUIT
The Reverend Kenneth Shaw
Trinity, Gallatin, TN

JONESBORO CIRCUIT
The Reverend Robert Herring
Holiday Island, AR

PADUCAH CIRCUIT
The Reverend David Appold
St. Paul, Paducah, KY

KNOXVILLE CIRCUIT
The Reverend Chase Lefort
Faith, Oak Ridge, TN

STUTTGART CIRCUIT
The Reverend Steward Marshall
Trinity, Pine Bluff, AR

LITTLE ROCK NORTH CIRCUIT
The Reverend David Vandercook
Shepherd of the Hills, Maumelle, AR
Trinity, North Little Rock, AR

**DELEGATES TO THE 2026 LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD CONVENTION
ELECTED BY THE CIRCUIT FORUMS AT THE DISTRICT CONVENTION OR LOCALLY**

DELEGATES

ALTERNATES

**CHATTANOOGA/ JOHNSON CITY
CIRCUIT**

The Reverend Patrick Cox, II
Pastor, Cross of Christ Lutheran Church
Chattanooga, TN

The Reverend Gordon Smith
Pastor, Christ of the Cumberland, Harrogate, TN
Our Savior, Morristown, TN

FAYETTEVILLE CIRCUIT

The Reverend JD Zischke
Pastor, Restoration Lutheran Church
Fayetteville, AR

The Reverend Christopher Gorshe
Associate Pastor, Bella Vista Lutheran Church
Bella Vista, AR

FORT SMITH/STUTTGART CIRCUIT

The Reverend Jonathan Holmes
Pastor, St. Luke, DeWitt, AR
St. Paul, Gillett, AR

The Reverend Timothy Henning
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Mena, AR

JONESBORO CIRCUIT

The Reverend Gerald Heinecke
Pastor, Hope, Batesville, AR
Sheperd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend

The Reverend Joshua Leigeber
Pastor, All Saints Lutheran Church
Jonesboro, AR

KNOXVILLE CIRCUIT

The Reverend Adam Woldt
Pastor, The Point Lutheran Church
Knoxville, TN

The Reverend Danny Anderson
Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church
Knoxville, TN

LITTLE ROCK – NORTH CIRCUIT

The Reverend Kory Janneke
Pastor, St. Matthew Lutheran Church
Conway, AR

The Reverend Addison Pope, V
Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church
Cabot, AR

LITTLE ROCK – SOUTH CIRCUIT

The Reverend Emil Woerner
Friends in Christ Lutheran Church
Bryant, AR

The Reverend Robert Benke
Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church
Hot Springs Village, AR

MEMPHIS CIRCUIT

The Reverend Sawyer Meyers
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
Olive Branch, MS

The Reverend Michael Croom
Trinity Lutheran Church
Memphis, TN

**DELEGATES TO THE 2026 LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD CONVENTION
ELECTED BY THE CIRCUIT FORUMS AT THE DISTRICT CONVENTION OR LOCALLY**

VOTING PASTORS

DELEGATES

ALTERNATES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE CIRCUIT

TBD

TBD

NASHVILLE CIRCUIT

The Reverend Greg Bauch

Pastor, Ascension Lutheran Church

Madison, TN

The Reverend Kenneth Shaw

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church

Gallatin, TN

PADUCAH CIRCUIT

The Reverend Sean Smith

Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church

Clarksville, TN

The Reverend Joshua Reifsteck

Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church

Murray, KY

**DELEGATES TO THE 2026 LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD CONVENTION
ELECTED BY THE CIRCUIT FORUMS AT THE DISTRICT CONVENTION OR
LOCALLY**

VOTING LAYPERSONS

DELEGATES

ALTERNATES

**CHATTANOOGA/ JOHNSON CITY
CIRCUIT**

Mr. Charles Holcomb
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Chattanooga, TN

None

FAYETTEVILLE CIRCUIT

Mr. Gary Thomas
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Rogers, AR

Mr. Keith Brummett
Faith Lutheran Church
Bentonville, AR

FORT SMITH/STUTTGART CIRCUIT

Mr. Richard Jackson, Jr.
St. John's Luthera Church
Russellville, AR

Mr. Karl Jacobs
St. John's Lutheran Church
Stuttgart, AR

JONESBORO CIRCUIT

Mr. Scott Stuewe
Redeemer Lutheran Church
Mountain Home, AR

Mr. Michael Kever
Our Shepherd Lutheran Church
Searcy, AR

KNOXVILLE CIRCUIT

Mr. Levi Nunnick
Praise Lutheran Church
Maryville, TN

Mr. Nathan Lively
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Wartburg, TN

LITTLE ROCK – NORTH CIRCUIT

Mr. Robert Morris
Peace Lutheran Church
Conway, AR

Mr. Rob Chatham
Christ Lutheran Church
Little Rock, AR

LITTLE ROCK – SOUTH CIRCUIT

Mr. Keith D'Atrio
Zion Lutheran Church
Alexander, AR

Mr. Michael Hill
First Lutheran Church
Benton, AR

MEMPHIS CIRCUIT

Mrs. Leona Stobaugh
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
Oakland, TN

Mrs. Katie Odom
GracePoint Lutheran Church
Atoka, TN

**DELEGATES TO THE 2026 LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD CONVENTION
ELECTED BY THE CIRCUIT FORUMS AT THE DISTRICT CONVENTION OR
LOCALLY**

VOTING LAYPERSONS

DELEGATES

NASHVILLE CIRCUIT

Mr. Robert Allen
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
White House, TN

PADUCAH CIRCUIT

Mr. Craig Stroh
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Paducah, KY

ALTERNATES

Mr. Gregg Lynch
Our Savior Lutheran Church
Nashville, TN

Ms. Marsha Holm
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Bowling Green, KY

**DELEGATES TO THE 2026 LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD CONVENTION
ELECTED BY THE ADVISORY DELEGATES AT THE DISTRICT CONVENTION**

ADVISORY – NON-VOTING

DELEGATES

ORDAINED MINISTER

The Reverend Darrell Kobs
St. John's Lutheran Church
Russellville, AR

COMMISSIONED MINISTER

Mr. David Topp
First Lutheran Church
Chattanooga, TN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPRESENTATIVE

TBD

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT STAFF

The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola
President

Mrs. Angela Fowler
Executive Director of Business &
Finance

ALTERNATES

The Reverend Andrew Toopes
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Bowling Green, KY

Mrs. Jessica Irwin
First Lutheran Church
Knoxville, TN

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025 CHATTANOOGA CIRCUIT-Region 4
--

The Reverend Mark Rhoads, Circuit Visitor

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Athens Athens Lutheran	Rev. Don Coulter	(D) Judy Coulter
Chattanooga Cross of Christ	Rev. Patrick Cox, II	(D) Michael Witherby
Chattanooga First	Rev. Donald Welmer	(D) Adam Weidman
Chattanooga Good Shepherd	Rev. H. Christopher Sheets	(D) Charles Holcomb
Cleveland First	Rev. Robert Seaton	(D) Raymond Spratlin
Chattanooga St. Philip	Not Attending	(D) Not Attending
Hixson Spirit of Joy	Rev. Clifford Herd	(D) Not Attending
Loudon Christ Our Savior	Rev. Mark Rhoads (A) Rev. Brian Truog	(D) William Lindholm (A) Glen Boehmer

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
FAYETTEVILLE CIRCUIT - Region 1

The Reverend Brandon Martin, Circuit Visitor

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Bella Vista Bella Vista	Rev. Paul Hass (A) Rev. Christopher Gorshe	(D) Garry Raymond (A) Rich Walker
Bentonville Faith	Rev. David Schmidt	(D) Keith Brummett
Fayetteville Restoration	Rev. John David Zischke	(D) Not Attending
Fayetteville St. John	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D) Melinda Schroeder (A) Dane Arbuckle
Lowell Living Savior	Rev. Roger Sterle	(D) Not Attending
Pea Ridge Messiah	Not Attending	(D) Not Attending
Rogers Holy Trinity	Rev. Eric Longman (A) Rev. Lynn Spencer	(D) Gary Thomas (A) Dave Lehenbauer
Siloam Springs Christ	Rev. Russell Shewmaker	(D) Jeremiah Weaver
Springdale Salem	Rev. Adam Gless (A) Rev. Brandon Martin	(D) Mike Wilson

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
FORT SMITH CIRCUIT- Region 1

The Reverend Thomas Bartzsch, Circuit Visitor

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Fort Smith Bethel	Rev. Joshua Willadsen	(D) Matthew Pitsch
Sallisaw, Oklahoma Trinity <i>(Dual Parish)</i>	Dual Parish	(D) Dual Parish
Fort Smith First	Rev. John Merrill	(D) Jim Parker
Fort Smith Our Redeemer	Rev. Richard Davenport	(D) Not Attending
Greenwood Grace	Rev. Jason Zirbel	(D) Wendell Zirbel (A) David Sheely
Lamar River Valley Grace	Rev. Thomas Bartzsch	(D) Daina Bartzsch
London (Augsburg) Zion	Rev. Joshua Ralston	(D) Rachel Ralston
Mena Trinity	Rev. Timothy Henning	(D) Jeremy Hill (A) Dan Barrios
Russellville St. John	Rev. Joshua Schooping	(D) Richard Jackson (A) Brooks Morton

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025 JOHNSON CITY CIRCUIT - Region 4

The Reverend Steven Harmon, Circuit Visitor

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Elizabethton Redeemer	Rev. Mark Kophamer	(D) Richmond Nunn (A) Philip Hyer
Johnson City Bethlehem	Rev. Vincent Shemwell	(D) Heidi Davidson
Kingsport Concordia	Rev. Paul F. Becker	(D) Philip Hoffman
Morristown Our Savior (Dual - Harrogate)	Rev. Gordon Smith	(D)

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
JONESBORO CIRCUIT - Region 1

The Reverend Joshua Leigeber, Circuit Visitor

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Batesville Hope	Rev. Gerald Heinecke	(D) Dual Parish
Horseshoe Bend Shepherd of the Hills (Dual Parish)	Dual Parish	(D) Darren Plaster (A) Lou Marinelli
Blytheville First	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D) Not Attending
Cherokee Village Peace	Not Attending	(D) David Carr (A) Mark Cave
Corning St. Matthew	Not Attending	(D) Not Attending
Forrest City Faith	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D) Not Attending
Harrison First	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D) Trevor Buchhout (A) Brent Nelson
Holiday Island Grace	Rev. Myles Shultz	(D) Barbara Herring (A) LaVerne Herman
Jonesboro All Saints	Rev. Andrew Lehman (A) Rev. Jerome Leckband	(D) Jakob Felts (A) Jeffrey Pittman
Lafe St. John	Rev. Aaron Neugebauer	(D) Ben Johnson
Mountain Home Redeemer	Rev. Kevin McReynolds	(D) Skip Shane
Paragould Redeemer	Rev. Kirk Neugebauer	(D) Shannon Freeman
Waldenburg Zion	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D)

**ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION – 2025
KNOXVILLE CIRCUIT - Region 4**

The Reverend David Graves, Circuit Visitor

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Harriman Redeemer	Rev. Michael Miller	(D) Steven Hallett
Harrogate Christ of the Cumberland <i>(Dual-Morristown)</i>	Dual Parish	(D) Dual Parish
Knoxville Christus Victor	Not Attending	(D) Not Attending
Knoxville First	Rev. Edward Maanum	(D) John Schulz, Jr. (A) Ronald Toomire
Knoxville Grace	Rev. Danny Anderson (A) Rev. Jacob Childers	(D) Randy Bueckman (A) Jim O’Hatnick
Knoxville The Point	Rev. Adam Woldt	(D) Micah Hausch
Maryville Praise	Rev. Derek Roberts	(D) Levi Nunnink (A) Paul Ruble
Oak Ridge Faith	Rev. Chase Lefort	(D) Logan Kearney (A) Ruben Popa
Sevierville St. Paul	Rev. Seth Korte	(D) Not Attending
Seymour Celebration		(D)
Sharps Chapel Chapel of the Good Shepherd	Not Attending	(D) Laurence Keim (A) John Freese
Wartburg St. Paul	Rev. David Graves	(D) Nathan Lively (A) Charles Heidel

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
LITTLE ROCK-NORTH CIRCUIT - Region 2

The Reverend David Vandercook, Circuit Visitor

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Cabot Our Savior	Rev. Addison Pope	(D) Richard Thiele
Conway Peace	Rev. Thomas Boeck	(D) Not Attending
Conway St. Matthew	Rev. Kory Janneke	(D) Jake Roper
Fairfield Bay Faith	Rev. Donald Hefta	(D) Barbara Hefta
Jacksonville Hope	Rev. Kevin Conger	(D) Timothy Strait
Little Rock Christ	Rev. Matthew Albright (A) Rev. John Mathis	(D) David Walter
Little Rock Community of Faith	Rev. Randall Lewis	(D) Not Attending
Little Rock First	Rev. Ronald Bacic	(D) Jeannie Worlund
Maumelle Shepherd of Peace	Rev. David Vandercook	(D) Dual Parish
North Little Rock Trinity (Dual Parish)	Dual Parish	(D) Paul Koehler (A) Kurt Bender, Jr.
Searcy Our Shepherd	Not Attending	(D) Michael Kever

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
LITTLE ROCK-SOUTH CIRCUIT - Region 2

The Reverend Emil Woerner, Circuit Visitor

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Alexander Immanuel	Not Attending	(D) Not Attending
Alexander Zion of Avilla	Rev. Willie Grills	(D) Keith D'Atrio (A) Walter Jones
Benton First	Rev. James Burns	(D) Michael Hill
Bryant Friends in Christ	Rev. Emil Woerner	(D) Andrew Queck
Hot Springs First	Rev. Jonathan Beyer (A) Rev. Anthony Johnson	(D) David Steele
Hot Springs Village Faith	Rev. Robert Benke	(D) David Knoernschild
Little Rock Grace	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D) Jon Lindemann
Malvern St. Luke	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D)

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025 MEMPHIS CIRCUIT - Region 3
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The Reverend Clayton Sellers, Circuit Visitor

<u>MISSISSIPPI</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Olive Branch Beautiful Savior	Rev. Sawyer Meyers	(D) Erik Puder (A) Steven Tyler
 <u>TENNESSEE</u>		
Atoka GracePoint	Rev. Daniel Hawkins	(D) Katie Odom (A) Amanda Cordray
Collierville Faith	Rev. Rob Harbin (A) Rev. Clayton Sellers	(D) Greg Madea (A) Mike Brugge
Cordova Grace Celebration	Rev. Terry Tieman	(D) Richard Ott (A) Tim Belles
Jackson Concordia	Rev. Eric Rudsenske	(D) Not Attending
Memphis Christ the King	Rev. Matthew Lynch (A) Rev. Mark Goble	(D) Genie Swan (A) David Swan
Memphis Cross of Calvary	Rev. Russell Belisle	(D) Barbara Sullivan
Memphis Immanuel	Rev. Jonathan Petering	(D) John Ruppel
Memphis Messiah	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D) Micah Lewter (A) Samuel Robinson
Memphis Trinity	Rev. Michael Croom	(D) John Sihvonen (A) Erin Dennis
Oakland Holy Spirit	Rev. Jerry Stobaugh	(D) Leona Stobaugh

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
MIDDLE TENNESSEE - Region 3

The Reverend David McMinn, Circuit Visitor

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Columbia Trinity		(D)
Cookeville Heavenly Host	Rev. Todd Bunge	(D) Paul Huffman
Crossville Shepherd of the Hills	Rev. John L. Beabout	(D) Douglas Aller (A) Stella Beabout
McMinnville Shepherd of the Hills	Rev. David McMinn	(D) Paul Cathcart (A) Adam Dotson
Murfreesboro Grace	Rev. Alan Thoe	(D) Mark Stolzer (A) Dale Miller
Smyrna Hope	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D)
Thompson's Station Faith	Rev. Curtis Hoover (A) Rev. Doug DeWitt	(D) Doug Hannah (A) Robert Rahe
Tullahoma Faith	Rev. Martin Nutter	(D) Donna Hermann (A) Ray Koon

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
NASHVILLE CIRCUIT - Region 3

The Reverend Ken Shaw, Circuit Visitor

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Burns St. John	Rev. Nathan Jansen	(D) Dan Falkenstein
Gallatin Trinity	Rev. Ken Shaw	(D) Doug Howard
Hermitage Emmanuel	Rev. Tim Hunze	(D) David Cox
Madison Ascension	Rev. Gregory Bauch	(D) Tim Hanusa
Nashville Concordia	Rev. Eric Phillips	(D) Artie Megibben
Nashville Our Savior	Rev. Lane Reuter (A) Rev. Mark Bushuiakovish	(D) Gregg Lynch (A) Keith Logan
Nashville Redeemer	Rev. Philip Young	(D) Matthew Zulch
White House Prince of Peace	Rev. Randy Sakach	(D) Robert Allen

ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
PADUCAH CIRCUIT - Region 3

The Reverend David Appold, Circuit Visitor

<u>KENTUCKY</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Bowling Green Holy Trinity	Rev. Dr. Mark Press	(D) Marsha Holm
Hopkinsville Faith	Rev. Trae Fistler	(D) Gracen Fistler (A) Duane Nickerson
Murray Immanuel	Rev. Joshua Reifsteck	(D) Paul Kluwe (A) Daniel Hepworth
Paducah St. Paul	Rev. David R. Appold	(D) Craig Stroh (A) Phil Justice
 <u>TENNESSEE</u>		
Clarksville Grace	Rev. Sean Smith (A) Rev. James Martin	(D) Frank Luppe (A) Kyle Shideler
Dyersburg Trinity	N/A	(D) Not Attending
Paris Christ	Rev. Koh Yamamoto	(D) Jeffrey Fontaine
Union City Faith	Rev. Paul Leigeber	(D) Not Attending

**ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025
STUTTGART CIRCUIT - Region 2**

The Reverend Don White, Circuit Visitor

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE & ALTERNATE</u>
Brinkley Our Savior	Dual Parish	(D) Dual Parish
Ulm Zion <i>(Dual Parish)</i>	Rev. Jeremy McDonald	(D) Dennis Davenport
DeWitt St. Luke	Dual Parish	(D) Dual Parish
Gillett St. Paul <i>(Dual Parish)</i>	Rev. Jonathan Holmes	(D) Not Attending
El Dorado Our Savior	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D)
Magnolia Faith	Pastoral Office Vacant	(D)
Pine Bluff Trinity	Rev. Stewart Marshall	(D) Donna Marshall (A) Robert Floyd
Stuttgart St. John's	Rev. Don White	(D) Karl Jacobs

**ATTENDANCE REGISTER OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY DELEGATES
REGISTERED TO ATTEND THE 2025 DISTRICT CONVENTION**

ORDAINED MINISTERS

Reverend James Belles, Memphis, TN
Reverend Gary Boye, Mountain Home, AR
Reverend Mark Bushuiakovish, Nashville, TN
Reverend Jacob Childers, Knoxville, TN
Reverend Michael Dixon, Hopkinsville, KY EM
Reverend Cullen Duke, Kingsport, TN EM
Reverend Mark Goble, Memphis, TN
Reverend Amos Gray, Hot Springs, AR
Reverend Steven Harmon, Marietta, GA EM
Reverend Kenneth Haydon,
Holiday Island, AR EM
Reverend Bradley Heinecke, Davenport, FL EM
Reverend Robert Herring, Holiday Island, AR EM
Reverend Darrell Kobs, Russellville, AR EM
Reverend David Lampman, Knoxville, TN EM
Reverend Brandon Martin, Springdale, AR
Reverend Clarence Martin, Bartlett, TN EM
Reverend James Martin, Clarksville, TN
Reverend Charles Neugebauer,
Germantown, TN EM
Reverend Larry Peters, Clarksville, TN EM
Reverend Wayne Schuett, Russellville, AR EM
Reverend J. Clayton Sellers, Collierville, TN
Reverend Andy Toopes,
Bowling Green, KY EM
Reverend James Watson, Ooltewah, TN EM
Reverend Carl Wenck, Murfreesboro, TN EM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mrs. Karilyn Brown, Jacksonville, AR
Dr. Fred Guengerich, Nashville, TN
Mr. John Hofman, Knoxville, TN
Mr. Jeffrey Pittman, Jonesboro, AR

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Mrs. Frances Bacic, Little Rock, AR
Mrs. Anne Barnard, Benton, AR
Mr. Richard Barnes, Memphis, TN EM
Mrs. Tessa Brasher, Lafe, AR
Ms. Jane Cole, Jackson, TN
Mr. Matthew Fischer, Nashville, TN
Mrs. Dina Foshee, Collierville, TN
Mrs. Jessie Irwin, Knoxville, TN
Mr. Aaron Jackson, Mountain Home, AR
Ms. Jacquelyn Magnuson, Little Rock, AR
Ms. Robin Moyer, Lafe, AR
Mrs. Kristin Pudwell, Memphis, TN EM
Ms. Toni Shane, Mountain Home, AR EM
Mrs. Heather Smith, Clarksville, TN
Ms. Karen Teal, Memphis, TN EM
Reverend Carl Wenck, Murfreesboro, TN EM

**THE ROSTER OF EMERITUS, CANDIDATE,
OTHER PASTORS AND OTHER WORKERS OF
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT
AS OF APRIL 15, 2025**

ORDAINED MINISTERS EMERITI

Reverend Robert Alexander, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend David Anderson, Newport, TN
 Reverend Dennis Bennett, New Market, TN
 Reverend Hubert Bernthal, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Brian Bibler, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Phil Bohlken, Knoxville, TN
 Reverend David Callies, Brentwood, TN
 Reverend Dean Clausing, Benton, AR
 Reverend David Cloeter, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Duncan Cox, Pea Ridge, AR
 Reverend Chris Deknatel, Monterey, TN
 Reverend Linsey Dettmer, Sevierville, TN
 Reverend Michael Dixon, Hopkinsville, KY
 Reverend Richard Dockery, Maryville, TN
 Reverend Paul Donner, Paducah, KY
 Reverend Cullen Duke, Kingsport, TN
 Reverend James Dunn, Kansas City, MO
 Reverend Albert Eichelberger, Knoxville, TN
 Reverend Dan Elkins, Olive Branch, MS
 Reverend Richard Elseroad, Knoxville, TN
 Reverend Keith Enko, Lebanon, TN
 Reverend James Evers, Oak Ridge, TN
 Reverend Edward Fehskens, Bristol, TN
 Reverend Shawn Found, Little Rock, AR
 Reverend John Freitag, Rogersville, TN*
 Reverend David Gadbow, Mountain Home, AR
 Reverend Johnny Graham, Herber Springs, AR
 Reverend Steven Harmon, Marietta, GA
 Reverend Mark Hass, Sallisaw, OK
 Reverend Luther Hasz, Jackson, TN
 Reverend Kenneth Haydon, Eureka Springs, AR
 Reverend Gary Heckmann, Cookeville, TN
 Reverend Steven Heilmann, Smyrna, TN
 Reverend Bradley Heinecke, Davenport, FL
 Reverend Gene Henke, Murfreesboro, TN*
 Reverend Clifford Herd, Chattanooga, TN*
 Reverend Robert Herring, Holiday Island, AR
 Reverend Barry Hildebrandt, Red Bank, TN
 Reverend Bryan Jones, Millington, TN
 Reverend Stanley Jones, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Michael Joynt, Crossville, TN
 Reverend Arthur Kaufmann, Bristol, TN
 Reverend Robert Kellerman, Casa Grande, AZ
 Reverend Keith Knupp, Sparta, TN
 Reverend Darrell Kobs, Russellville, AR
 Reverend Mark Krause, Springdale, AR
 Reverend Wayne Krohe, Lewisburg, TN
 Reverend Thom Lakso, Knoxville, TN*
 Reverend David Lampman, Crossville, TN
 Reverend Dr. LeRoy Leach, Conway, AR
 Reverend John Lindner, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Randy Loux, Clarksville, TN
 Reverend Robert Mader, Clarksville, TN
 Reverend Larry Marhenke, Hot Springs Village, AR
 Reverend Clarence Martin, Bartlett, TN
 Reverend Dan McDougall, Benton, AR
 Reverend Gerald Meyer, Crossville, TN
 Reverend Tom Moore, Cordova, TN

ORDAINED MINISTERS EMERITI

Reverend Paul Muench, Knoxville, TN
 Reverend Donald Neiswender, Paducah, KY
 Reverend Charles Neugebauer, Germantown, TN
 Reverend Hiram Nunez, Granbury, TX
 Reverend Ronnie Oldenettel, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Larry Peters, Clarksville, TN
 Reverend Robert Pfaff, Spring City, TN
 Reverend Gilbert Pingel, Chattanooga, TN
 Reverend Albert Quoss, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend Robert Reckling, Knoxville, TN
 Reverend Larry Rockemann, Kansas City, MO
 Reverend Thomas Sayre, St. John's, FL
 Reverend Wayne Schuett, Russellville, AR
 Reverend William Schutte, Mountain Home, AR
 Reverend Larry Seiferth, Clarkdale, AZ
 Reverend Steven Skov, Rockwood, TN
 Reverend Lynn Spencer, Bentonville, AR
 Reverend Herb Swanson, Russellville, AR
 Reverend Kenneth Taglauer, Brookline, MA
 Reverend David Tews, Horseshoe Bend, AR
 Reverend Henry Thompson, Rogers, AR
 Reverend Andrew Toopes, Bowling Green, KY
 Reverend Louis Trebus, Maryville, TN *
 Reverend John Treude, Fort Smith, AR
 Reverend Norman Wagner, Bella Vista, AR
 Reverend James Watson, Ooltewah, TN
 Reverend Carl Wenck, Murfreesboro, TN
 Reverend Mark Wenzelburger, Garfield, AR
 Reverend Frank Zirbel, Harrison, AR

ORDAINED MINISTERS – CANDIDATES

Reverend Michael Edwards, Nixa, MO
 Reverend Jonathan Meraz, Centerton, AR
 Reverend Gregory Prauner, Battle Creek, NE

**ORDAINED MINISTERS – SPECIAL
MINISTRIES**

Reverend Amos Gray, IV, Hot Springs, AR
 Currently serving as Director of Spiritual Life
 High Impact Movement, Inc. (RSO)

VICARS

2022-2023

Vicar Dakota Monday
 Faith Lutheran Church, Tullahoma, TN

2023-2024

Vicar Peter Duncanson**
 Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN
 Vicar Laurence Keim**
 Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Sharps Chapel, TN

**CERTIFIED PARISH ASSISTANT SERVING
IN MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONGREGATIONS**

Parish Nurse (Karen Barkley, St. Paul Lutheran
 Church, Wartburg, TN)

*Currently Serving a Congregation

**SMP Vicar

SYNODICALLY ROSTERED
DIRECTORS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, DIRECTORS OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH, AND OTHER
MINISTERS OF RELIGION – COMMISSIONED
OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT AS OF APRIL 15, 2025

Baumann, Katie

Director of Christian Education
 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ooltewah, TN

Brasher, Tessa

Director of Christian Education
 St. John's Lutheran Church, Lafa, AR

Brown, Logan

Director of Worship Arts & Music Education
 Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

Childers, Christina

Deaconess
 Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN

Fischer, Matthew

Director of Family Life Ministries
 Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

Gates, Andra

Deaconess
 Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR

Gerlach, Michelle

Director of EC & Family Life
 First Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR

Goines, Connie Soso

Deaconess-At-Large
 Fort Smith, AR Circuit

Haynes, Shelli Jolivette

Director of Christian Education
 Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN

Jackson, Aaron

Director of Parish Music
 Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR

Kolke, Linaya

Director of Christian Education
 Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

Magnuson, Jacquelyn

Director of Parish Music
 Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

Moyer, Robin

Deaconess
 Mid-South District, Cordova, TN

Stuckwisch, David

Director of Christian Education
 St. John's Lutheran Church, Stuttgart, AR

Thomack, Jo-Ann

Director of Christian Education (PT)
 Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN

Walkowicz, Celia

Director of Children & Youth Ministry
 Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

Weyhrich, Richard

Director of Music (PT)
 Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN

Whitely, Jennifer

Director of Parish Music
 Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN

**PROFESSIONAL WORKERS OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOL, PRESCHOOLS OF
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT AS OF April 15, 2025**

ARKANSAS

First Lutheran School

Benton, AR (K-3)

Burns, Rev. James* Headmaster
Bacic, Frances*
Barnard, Anne*
Chaloner, Maggie (Admin Asst)

First Lutheran School

Fort Smith, AR (PS, K-6)

Fishburn, Samuel* Principal
Anderson, Terann
Ballard, Kimberly Asst. Prin.
Brown, Jamie (PT)
Cowan, Casey (PT)
Dressler, Kelly*
Gerlach, Lucas*
Nix, Debra
Paulus, Heather
Von Tersch, Dawn
Guillory, Sonja (Adm. Asst.)

All Saints Lutheran School

Jonesboro, AR (PS, K-8)

Leckband, Rev. Jerome* Headmaster
Lehman, Rev. Andrew*
Leigeber, Rev. Joshua*
Leckband, Kristi (PT)
McDonald, Gail (PT)

Christ Lutheran School

Little Rock, AR (PS, K-8)

Steely, Cara Principal
Beckwith, Matison
Brown, Ashley
Brown, Logan (PT)*
Craig, Kathryn
Dahlem, Cindy
Dake, Lauren (PT)
Ellis, Nicole
Henderson, Stefanie
Hill, Ellen
Hutson, Hallie
Kilpatrick, Andrea*
Nortier, Gina
Olson, Shawn
Wierciak, Anna
Witte, Megan*
Coulter, Paige (Adm. Asst)
Polk, Carla (Admin Asst)

St. John's Lutheran School

Stuttgart, AR

Dabbs, Kristian Principal
Brown, Averie
Burns, Kim

Feilke, Sally
Hayes, Ashlee
Hillman, Karlyn
Hoskyn, Elizabeth
Hosman, Jessica
Jacobs, Lauren
McEntire, Katie
Prislovsky, Kathy
Prislovsky, Stephanie
Rodgers, April
Stovesand, Mary Brooks
White, Rev. Don*
George, Melissa (Sec.)

KENTUCKY

Holy Trinity Lutheran School

Bowling Green, KY (PS, K-6)

Hiskey, William R.* Principal
Bedo, Ben
Bedo, Cara
Bhatnagar, Chetna
Brumfield, Felicia
King, Marty
Linhardt, Juanita
Lopez, Kachina
Markel, Beth
McGanney, Bonny
Mitchell, Melissa
Moore, Katherine
Murphy, Caroline
Thurman, Pam
Vanderpool, Hannah
Willis, Jill
Whittamore, Jennifer (Off. Mgr)
Trudy, Regina (Off. Asst.)

TENNESSEE

Belvoir Christian Academy

Chattanooga, TN (PS, K-8)

Topp, David* Principal
Barber, Sarah*
Dollar, Mattie
Enloe, Joyce
Harr, Sarah
Knox, Kingston
McCall, Erin*
Randall, Lisa*
Gibbons, Liz
Sunderland, Jamie
Webb, Brittany*
Williams, Katie
Wright, Victoria
Morkert, Christine (Office Mgr.)

First Lutheran School

Knoxville, TN (PS, K-8)

Irwin, Jessica* Principal
Crumley, Wanda
Debord, Heather (PT)
DeSantis, Kristin
Eimmerman, Kara
Epley, Deysi (PT)
Heidel, Teresa
McCloskey, Christina
Osborn, Sally
Rodgers, Erin*
Rosener, Brooke
Wiberley, Lori
Wolfram, Tim (PT)*
Hillard, Amanda (Admin Asst)

Christ the King Lutheran School

Memphis, TN (PS, K-8)

Laury, Ann* Principal
Albertini, Debbie
Calhoun, Felicia
Conrad, Grace
Johnson, Charlotte
Kuefner, Ben *
Lafferty, Maggie
LeBorious, Nathan *
Lewis, Madi
Novy, Michella
Smith, Monica
Tidyman, Gracie*
VanCanneyt, Brooke
Jamison, Janice (Adm. Asst.)
Kosman, Kitty (Fin. Sec.)

Immanuel Lutheran School

Memphis, TN (PS, K-8)

Kurtz, Amy* Principal
Croom, Zach
Duncanson, Robert
Haller, Jenifer*
Harris, Lee Ann
Hence, Kashari
Hudson, Stephanie*
Jones, April (Adm./Mktg)*
McLellan, Jennifer
Moore, Amy
Pollan, Becki*
Young, Tracy*
Sandiford, Jennifer (Office Mgr/ECE Dir.)

*Roster of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

**PROFESSIONAL WORKERS OF THE PRESCHOOLS OF
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT AS OF April 15, 2025**

**PRESCHOOLS / DAY CARE CENTERS /
DIRECTORS**

ARKANSAS

Fayetteville, AR **

St. John Lutheran Child Care Center
Director: Layne, Michelle

Fort Smith, AR

First Lutheran Preschool
Director: Gerlach, Michelle

Little Rock, AR **

Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Development
Center
Director: Robb, Robyn

Little Rock, AR

Christ Lutheran Preschool
Director: Steely, Cara

Rogers, AR

Holy Trinity Parents' Day Out
Director: O'Ryan, Leah

Springdale, AR

Salem Lutheran Educational Center
Director: Meyer, Stacey

Stuttgart, AR

St. John's Lutheran Preschool (Eagle's Nest)
Director: Ellis, Laura

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green, KY

Holy Trinity Lutheran Preschool
Director: Yocum, Hannah

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga, TN

Belvoir Christian Academy Preschool
Director: Seay, JoAnn

Clarksville, TN **

Grace Lutheran Preschool
Director: Cribbs, Linda

TENNESSEE (continued)

Collierville, TN **

Faith Lutheran Preschool
Director: Foshee, Dina*

Columbia, TN **

TLC Childcare Ministry
Director: Stephens, Laurie

Cookeville, TN

Heavenly Host Lutheran Preschool
Director: Brock, Melissa

Crossville, TN **

Shepherd's Little Flock Lutheran Preschool
Director: Bowman, Angela

Knoxville, TN

First Lutheran Preschool
Director: Eimmerman, Shirley

Memphis, TN

Christ the King Early Childhood
Director: Denning, Ellen

Memphis, TN

Immanuel Lutheran Preschool
Director: Sandiford, Jennifer
Dir./Morning Care: Medlin, Heather

Nashville, TN

Our Savior Lutheran Academy
Director: Waltz, Amy*

Tullahoma, TN **

Faith Lutheran Childcare
Director: Brewer, Diania

Wartburg, TN **

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool
Director: Turner, Wanda
(BOD Liaison)

***Roster of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod**

****Free Standing**

**COMMISSIONED WORKERS – CANDIDATES, EMERITI,
SCHOOLS OPENED, SCHOOLS CLOSED
OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT AS OF APRIL 15, 2025**

CANDIDATES

Chatham, Pamela..... Little Rock, AR
 Chiles, Jill Hickory, NC
 Cole, Jane Jackson, TN
 Cooper, Jennifer Clinton, TN
 De La Vega, Maria Joelton, TN
 Duclos, Rebecca Nolensville, TN
 Flohra, Christine..... Knoxville, TN
 Freeberg, Lindsay..... Menomonee Falls, WI
 Fritz, Katie Russellville, KY
 Haynes, Travis Maryville, TN
 Klotz, Debra Rogers, AR
 Klotz, Lance Rogers, AR
 Korhase, Amanda..... Fort Smith, AR
 Lawrence, Kyle Memphis, TN
 Martin, Natalie Memphis, TN
 Meyer, Stacey..... Bella Vista, AR
 Olson, Tanner..... Nashville, TN
 Pelayo, Emilie Conway, AR
 Schaff, Martina..... Little Rock, AR
 Schlie, Rachel..... Hixson, TN
 Schroeder, Julie Seward, NE
 Smith, Heather Adams, TN
 Wilkerson, Jessica Nashville, TN
 Wilschetz, Susan Nolensville, TN
 Wudtke, Sarah..... Nashville, TN

EMERITI

Bailey, Bonnie..... Crossville, TN
 Barnes, Richard Lakeland, TN
 Behmer, Arlene Little Rock, AR
 Breite, Mary Little Rock, AR
 Choate, Carolyn North Little Rock, AR
 Cholcher, Norma Fort Smith, AR
 Cleland, Laura North Little Rock, AR
 Collet, Bruce Rockwood, TN
 Collins, Marianne Collierville, TN
 Duderstadt, Lorna J Chattanooga, TN
 Duke, Jacqueline Kingsport, TN
 Gable, Donna Bartlett, TN
 Haberhern, Dennis..... Crossville, TN
 Haberhern, Jean..... Crossville, TN
 Hasz, Barbara Jackson, TN
 Hauer, Raymond Spring Hill, TN
 Hook, Alta Ooltewah, TN
 Irwin, Kay Athens, TN
 Karvelius, Victor..... Hardy, AR
 Kogelmann, Gerald Ocheyedon, IA
 Krohe, Lois..... Monroe, MI
 Leibig, Rebecca Stuttgart, AR
 McKinney, Elaine Springdale, AR
 McNabb, Sally Little Rock, AR
 Mietzner, Rebecca Ooltewah, TN
 Merriman, Charles..... Bella Vista, AR
 Meyer, Susan..... Crossville, TN
 Moorman, Colleen..... Little Rock, AR

EMERITI (continued)

Nieting, Kathryn Fort Smith, AR
 Oldenettel, Dawn..... Bella Vista, AR
 Parscale, Brenda Little Rock, AR
 Piepenbrink, Allen..... Camdenton, MO
 Piepenbrink, Shirley Camdenton, MO
 Pudwell, Kristin..... Memphis, TN
 Rogalski, Sue..... Memphis, TN
 Schmand, Mary Ann Bartlett, TN
 Schmidt, James..... Mountain Home, AR
 Schroeder, Linda Chattanooga, TN
 Shane, Toni Bella Vista, AR
 Skov, Fredricka A. Rockwood, TN
 Stein, Mary Kathryn North Little Rock, AR
 Steinbach, Carol Mountain Home, AR
 Streufert, Frank Chattanooga, TN
 Teal, Karen Germantown, TN
 Thomack, JoAnn Clarksville, TN
 Timm, Eunice Chattanooga, TN
 Tull, Rhonda..... Hot Springs Village, AR
 Van Der Ahe, Jeanne..... Little Rock, AR
 Walter, Brenda Little Rock, AR
 Weidler, Peggy Fort Smith, AR
 Wendt, Susan..... Fort Smith, AR
 Winter, Catherine Memphis, TN
 Winter, Ellis Memphis, TN

SCHOOLS OPENED AND SCHOOLS CLOSED

OPENED

First Lutheran School
 (Opened: August 19, 2024)
 Benton, AR

Holy Trinity Parent’s Day Out
 (Opened: May 31, 2022)
 Rogers, AR

All Saints Lutheran School
 (Opened: April 18, 2021)
 Jonesboro, AR

CLOSED

Avilla Christian Academy
 (Closed: May 31, 2024)
 Alexander, AR

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool
 (Closed: August 15, 2023)
 Gillett, AR

Heavenly Host Lutheran School (Preschool still open)
 (Closed: May 31, 2022)
 Cookeville, TN

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

ENTERED THE DISTRICT - ORDAINED MINISTERS

From District:

ALBRIGHT, MATTHEW L.	Minnesota South	Transferred with a Call on March 6, 2023, and installed as Lead Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on April 2, 2023.
ALEXANDER, ROBERT	Kansas	Entered District as Emeritus, July 9, 2021
ANDERSON, DAVID PAUL	Minnesota North	Entered District as Emeritus, January 18, 2023
BENNETT, DENNIS H.	Southeastern	Entered District as Emeritus, January 19, 2021
BOECK, THOMAS R.	Florida-Georgia	Installed as Sole Pastor at Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on March 19, 2023.
BOYE, GARY	New England	Entered District as Emeritus, October 24, 2023.
BUNGE, TODD	Iowa West	Transferred with a Call on June 3, 2024, installed as Pastor at Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN by Rev. Lane Reuter on July 7, 2024.
BUSHUIAKOVISH, MARK R.	Michigan	Installed as Associate Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on February 6, 2022.
CHILDERS, JACOB L.	Grad: St. Louis	Ordained by Rev. Jason Cashmer & Installed by Rev. David Graves as Associate Pastor on July 9, 2023 at Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN.
CLOETER, DAVID	Oklahoma	Entered District as Emeritus, August 5, 2021.
COX, PATRICK MILES II	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained and Installed as Sole Pastor at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, on July 14, 2024.
DEKNAFEL, CHRIS D.	Pacific SW	Entered District as Emeritus, April 1, 2025.
DUKE, CULLEN	Texas	Entered District as Emeritus, March 18, 2024.
EDWARDS, MICHAEL A.	Missouri	Installed as Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on January 30, 2022.
ENKO, KEITH E.	Florida/Georgia	Entered District as Emeritus, January 1, 2025.
FISTLER, TRAE L.	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained by Rev. Dr. Steven Turner, on December 4, 2021, installed as Sole Pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Hopkinsville, KY by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on December 12, 2021.
GLESS, ADAM C.	Minnesota South	Transferred with a Call on October 1, 2023, installed as Senior Pastor at Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on October 22, 2023.
GRAF, HENRY J.	Indiana	Transferred with a Call on April 29, 2023, and installed as Pastor at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on April 30, 2023.
GRILLS, WILLIE T.	Central Illinois	Installed as Sole Pastor at Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on November 20, 2021.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

HAMILTON, MORGAN W.	Texas	Installed as Senior Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on August 1, 2021.
HEINECKE, GERALD D.	Wyoming	Installed as Sole Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR and Zion Lutheran Church, Waldenburg, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on June 12, 2022.
HOLMES, JONATHAN E.	Central Illinois	Entered District as a Candidate, August 25, 2022.
JONES, BRYAN D.	Southern	Entered District as an Emeritus, February 3, 2025.
JOYNT, MICHAEL	Pacific Southwest	Entered District as an Emeritus, November 16, 2023.
LEWIS, RANDALL C.	Coll, CCPM	Ordained and installed as SMP Pastor at Community of Faith Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on June 19, 2022.
JANNEKE, KORY A.	South Wisconsin	Transferred with a Call on May 9, 2022, and was installed as Pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on May 15, 2022.
JOHNSON, ANTHONY M.	Grad: St. Louis	Ordained and Installed as Associate Pastor at First Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, August 22, 2021.
KING, JEFFREY W.	Texas	Installed as Sole Pastor at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on August 22, 2021.
KNUPP, KEITH	Eastern	Entered District as Emeritus, September 16, 2024.
KORTE, SETH P.	Indiana	Entered District as Candidate, March 7, 2023. Installed as Sole Pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN on November 5, 2023, by Rev. Michael Miller.
KROHE, WAYNE	Missouri	Entered District as Emeritus, May 20, 2024.
LECKBAND, JEROME P.	Nebraska	Transferred with a Call on June 19, 2023, and was installed as Associate Pastor/Teacher at All Saints Lutheran Church, Jonesboro, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on July 2, 2023.
LEFORT, CHASE K.	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Raleigh, NC by Rev. Kevin Martin on July 17, 2022, and installed at Faith Evang. Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on August 7, 2022.
LEHAMN, ANDREW S.	Southern	Installed as Associate Pastor at Pilgrim Lutheran Church, in Jonesboro, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on June 6, 2021.
LYNCH, MATTHEW S.	Grad: CST	Ordained by Rev. Lane Reuter at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN on June 23, 2024; Installed as Associate Pastor by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN on June 30, 2024.
MARTIN, JAMES STEPHEN	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained by Rev. Michael Mohr at Christ Lutheran Church, Normal, IL on June 26, 2024; Installed as Associate Pastor by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola to Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN on July 28, 2024.
MERAZ, JONATHAN	Southeastern	Entered District as Candidate, January 25, 2024.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

MEYER, MICHAEL J.	Nebraska	Transferred with a Call on May 25, 2023, and was installed as Associate Pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR on June 11, 2023, by Regional Vice President, Rev. Joshua Willadsen.
OLDENETTEL, RONNIE L.	South Wisconsin	Entered District as Emeritus, June 9, 2021.
PETERING, JONATHAN	Texas	Transferred with a Call on May 27, 2024, installed as Senior Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on June 15, 2024.
POPE, ADDISON V.	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained and Installed as Sole Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on February 9, 2025.
REIFSTECK, JOSHUA P.	Indiana	Transferred with a Call on May 29, 2023, and was installed as Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Murray, KY on June 18, 2023, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola.
SCHOOPIG, JOSHUA	Coll, CCPM	Certified by CCPM on December 18, 2023; Installed as Sole Pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Russellville, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on April 14, 2024.
SCHUETT, WAYNE	Oklahoma	Entered District as Emeritus, April 16, 2024.
SCHULTZ, MYLES	Oklahoma	Entered District as Emeritus, July 20, 2022.
SHEMWELL, CHARLES VINCENT	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained by Rev. David Peterson at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, IN on June 11, 2023 & Installed as Sole Pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN on June 25, 2023 by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola.
SMITH, SEAN R.	Iowa East	Transferred with a Call on July 15, 2024, installed as Senior Pastor To Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on August 12, 2024.
SWANSON, HERBERT C.	Texas	Entered District as Emeritus, May 30, 2024.
WAGNER, NORMAN	Northwest	Entered District as Emeritus, June 15, 2024.
WENZELBURGER, MARK E.	Kansas	Entered District as Emeritus, June 3, 2022.
YAMAMOTO, KOH MICHAEL	Grad: CTSFW	Ordained and Installed as Sole Pastor by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola at Christ Lutheran Church, Paris, TN on June 23, 2024.

CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT - ORDAINED MINISTERS

ABRAHAM, ANDREW	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN, effective September 30, 2024.
ANDERSON, ROBERT (DANNY)	Installed as Senior Pastor (previously Associate Pastor) of Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN by Rev. Michael Miller on January 7, 2024.
BARTZSCH, THOMAS W.	Installed as Sole Pastor at River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on June 20, 2021.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

CONGER, KEVIN	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 2 ND Vice President, at 21 st MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
ENKO, KEITH	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN, effective May 26, 2018.
GIERKE, JOHN	Elected MDS Board of Directors' Secretary at 21 st MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
GOBLE, MARK D.	Installed as Senior Pastor (previously Associate Pastor) at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN by Rev. Clayton Sellers on December 8, 2024.
GRAY, AMOS IV	Reinstated to the LCMS Ordained Roster by the Council of Presidents on September 10, 2021.
GRAY, AMOS IV	Installed as Executive Director at High Impact Movement, Inc. (RSO), Hot Springs, AR by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on January 26, 2025.
HASS, MARK C.	Installed as Chaplain (Institutional), Office of National Mission Specialized Ministry at Mercy Hospital, Fort Smith, AR., by Rev. Paul Hass on June 13, 2021.
HASS, PAUL	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, AR, effective February 24, 2019. (Include for date correction)
HAWKINS, DANIEL	Installed as Sole Pastor (previously Missionary-at-Large to the Mid-South District) to Redeeming Grace Lutheran Church (GracePoint), Atoka, TN by Rev. Clayton Sellers on February 18, 2024.
HEFTA, DONALD	Installed as Sole Pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR by Rev. Kevin Conger on September 24, 2023.
HEINECKE, GERALD D.	Installed as Sole Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR and Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR (dual parish) by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on January 12, 2025.
HOLMES, JONATHAN E.	Installed as Sole Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Gillett, AR and St. Luke Lutheran Church, De Witt, AR (dual parish) by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on March 29, 2025.
LEIGEBER, JOSHUA	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church, Jonesboro, AR on September 30, 2024.
MARTIN, CLARENCE L.	Installed as Sole Pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN, on July 23, 2023, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola.
MCDONALD, JEREMY	Installed as Sole Pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Brinkley, AR & Zion Lutheran Church, Ulm, AR on July 8, 2023, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola.
MEYERS, SAWYER A.	Installed as Sole Pastor of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olive Branch, MS, effective May 1, 2022, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola.
MILLER, MICHAEL	MDS Board of Directors' appointed Rev. Michael Miller to replace Rev. Robert Portier (transferred to Southern District) as 4 th Vice President, effective April 4, 2022.
MILLER, MICHAEL	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 4 th Vice President, at 21 st MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
NEUGEBAUER, AARON	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Lafe, AR, effective November 10, 2019. (Include for date correction)

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
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NEUGEBAUER, KIRK	Installed as Sole Pastor (previously Associate Pastor) to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Paragould, AR by Rev. Joshua Leigeber on April 14, 2024.
PETERS, LARRY	Appointed MDS Board of Directors' Secretary, replacing Rev. John Gierke (transferred to Nebraska District) effective March 31, 2022.
PORTIER, ROBERT	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 3 RD Vice President, at 21 st MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
REUTER, LANE	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 1 st Vice President, at 21 st MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
SCHULTZ, MILES R.	Installed as Sole Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island, AR by Rev. Brandon Martin on January 8, 2023.
SHEWMAKER, RUSSELL L.	Installed as Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Siloam Springs, AR by Rev. Joshua Willadsen on September 11, 2022.
STERLE, ROGER	Installed as Sole Pastor to Living Savior Lutheran Church, Springdale, AR by Rev. Joshua Willadsen on February 11, 2024.
TESKE, STEVEN W.	Installed as Sole Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR by Rev. Emil Woerner on August 5, 2024.
THOE, ALAN M.	Installed as SMP Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN, effective May 1, 2022.
TIEMAN, TERRY	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN, effective November 27, 2019. (Include for date correction)
TOOPES, ANDY	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, KY, effective June 25, 2017. (Include for date correction)
VANDERBUSH, NEIL S.	Installed as Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on December 5, 2021.
WAGNER, WILLIAM B.	Installed as Sole Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on November 20, 2022.
WELMER, DONALD	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN effective October 4, 2020. (Include for date correction)
WILLADSEN, JOSHUA	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 4 th Vice President, at 21 st MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
WILLADSEN, JOSHUA	Changed from MDS Board of Directors' 4 th Vice President to 3 rd Vice President, effective April 4, 2022.
WILLADSEN, JOSHUA J.	Installed as Sole Pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR and Trinity Lutheran Church, Sallisaw, OK (Dual Parishes) by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on August 14, 2022.
ZISCHKE, JOHNSDAVID K.	Installed as Sole Pastor at Restoration Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR, by Rev. Joshua Willadsen on October 17, 2021.
ZWICK, WILLIAM F.	Installed as Executive Director for Missions & Ministry to the Mid-South District by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on February 8, 2022.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

INACTIVE, CANDIDATE OR EMERITUS - ORDAINED MINISTERS

COX, DUNCAN M.	From Candidate to Emeritus Status	Nov. 30, 2021
DUNN, JAMES A.	From Active to Emeritus Status	June 26, 2022
EDWARDS, MICHAEL A.	From Active to Candidate Status	Aug. 27, 2023
ELSEROAD, RICHARD	From Active to Emeritus Status	Dec. 31, 2023
ENKO, KEITH E.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Jan. 31, 2022
FOUND, SHAWN J.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Mar. 28, 2025
GIERKE, JOHN P.	From Active to Candidate Status	Sept. 19, 2021
GRAHAM, JOHNNY M.	From Active to Emeritus Status	July 31, 2022
GRAVES, RICHARD P.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Mar. 28, 2025
HAMILTON, MORGAN W.	From Active to Candidate Status	May 27, 2022
HANSON, BRUCE C.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Sept. 12, 2021
HARMON, STEVEN L.	From Active to Emeritus Status	April 09, 2023
HASS, MARK C.	From Active to Candidate Status	Oct. 25, 2022
HASS, MARK C.	From Candidate to Emeritus Status	Feb. 6, 2025
HASZ, LUTHER N.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Jan. 22, 2023
HEINECKE, BRADLEY D.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Oct. 31, 2022
HERRING, ROBERT G.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Dec. 25, 2022
HILDEBRANDT, BARRY	From Active to Emeritus Status	Jan. 07, 2024
KRAUSE, MARK E.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Dec. 31, 2022
MARTIN, CLARENCE	From Active to Emeritus Status	April 28, 2024
MATTHEW, TIMOTHY C.	From Active to Candidate Status	Jan. 08, 2023
MCDOUGLALL, DANIEL T.	From Active to Emeritus Status	June 20, 2021
MOORE, WILLIAM T.	From Active to Emeritus Status	June 26, 2022
NEUGEBAUER, CHARLES J.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Aug. 31, 2024
OWEN, RICHARD NEELY	From Active to Emeritus Status	June, 27, 2021
PETERS, LARRY	From Active to Emeritus Status	Jan. 19, 2025
SCHAAF, KENT R.	From Active to Candidate Status	Aug. 06, 2024
SCHUTTE, WILLIAM B.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Jan. 03, 2022
SMITH, ANDREW D.	From Active to Candidate Status	Sept. 30, 2022

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TAGLAUER, KENNETH C.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Nov. 04, 2021
TEWS, DAVID	From Active to Emeritus Status	Jan. 01, 2019
THOMPSON, JR. HENRY	From Active to Emeritus Status	Mar. 31, 2024
TOOLEY, MARK D.	From Active to Candidate Status	Sept. 19, 2021
TOOPES, ANDREW	From Active to Emeritus Status	Dec. 31, 2023
VANDERBUSH, NEIL S.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Mar. 10, 2023
WENCK, CARL R.	From Active to Emeritus Status	Feb. 02, 2022
ZWICK, WILLIAM F.	From Active to Candidate Status	June 06, 2023

TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS - ORDAINED MINISTERS

ABATELLI, KIRK W.	to Michigan	Jan. 01, 2022
BAUMANN, PAUL G.	to Texas	Aug. 02, 2021
BOYE, GARY P.	to Florida – Georgia	Mar. 25, 2025
EASTERLING, JOHN D.	to Rocky Mountain	Oct. 28, 2022
ENKO, KEITH	to Florida – Georgia	Jan. 01, 2024
GIERKE, JOHN P.	to Nebraska	Feb. 14, 2022
HAMILTON, MORGAN W.	to Florida/Georgia	Nov. 18, 2022
HANSON, BRUCE C.	to Northern Illinois	Sept. 15, 2021
HUDAK, DAVID P.	to Southeastern	Jan. 07, 2025
LIZARDO, JESUS RICHARDO GRANADO	to Michigan District	Sept. 21, 2022
MATTHEW, TIMOTHY	to Nebraska	Nov. 30, 2023
MOORE, DAVID R.	to California/Nevada/Hawaii	Feb. 25, 2022
OWEN, RICHARD N.	to North Wisconsin	Aug. 27, 2021
PORTIER, ROBERT M.	to Southern	April 17, 2022
RINGER, WILLIAM N.	to Eastern	Sept. 03, 2023
SMITH, ANDREW D.	to Southeastern	Mar. 31, 2023
SWANSON, HERBERT C.	to Texas	April 02, 2021
TOOLEY, MARK D.	to Southeastern	Aug. 19, 2022
ULRICH, DANIEL M.	to Central Illinois	July 04, 2022
VANDERBUSH, NEIL SPENCER	to Texas	May 20, 2024
WOODROW, JOSHUA M.	to CNH	Jan. 31, 2022

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
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ENTERED THE DISTRICT - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

From District:

BARBER, SARAH L.	Missouri	Entered with a Call as Teacher at Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN, July 1, 2021. Installed by Rev. Donald Welmer, August 8, 2021.
CHATHAM, PAMELA D.	Colloquy, CU Irvine	Commissioned & Installed as Teacher at Christ Lutheran Church & School, by Rev. Morgan Hamilton, September 19, 2021.
CHILDERS, CHRISTINA	Grad CST	Commissioned and Installed as Deaconess to Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN by Rev. Robert Anderson on August 4, 2024.
CHUMBLEY, LAUREN	Grad CU Seward	Commissioned & Installed as Teacher at Immanuel Lutheran Church & School by Rev. Mark Goble, August 1, 2021.
CLELAND, LAURA P.	Texas	Entered District as Emeritus, September 9, 2022.
COLE, JANE E.	English	Entered District as Candidate, June 26, 2023.
DE LA VEGA, MARIA	Northwest	Entered District as Candidate, June 28, 2024.
DRESSLER, KELLY L.	Michigan	Transferred to District with a Call on June 10, 2024; Installed as teacher to First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR by Rev. John Merrill on August 4, 2024.
DUKE, JACQUELINE	Texas	Entered District as Emeritus, March 18, 2024.
FLOHRA, CHRISTINE C.	Pacific Southwest	Entered District as Candidate on April 3, 2023.
GATES, ANDRA S.	South Dakota	Transferred to the District as Candidate with a Call; Installed as Deaconess to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR by Rev. Kevin McReynolds on September 1, 2024.
GERLACH, LUCAS	South Wisconsin	Entered with a call as Teacher at First Lutheran Church & School, Fort Smith, AR, installed by Rev. John Merrill on July 31, 2022.
GERLACH, MICHELLE	South Wisconsin	Entered with a call as DFLM & ECE Director at First Lutheran Church & School, Fort Smith, AR, installed by Rev. John Merrill on July 31, 2022.
GRIFFIN, GRACIE L.	Grad CU Seward	Commissioned & Installed as Teacher at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN by Rev. Chuck Neugebauer on July 31, 2022.
HALLER, JENIFER	CNH	Entered with a Call as Third Grade Teacher at Immanuel Lutheran School, Memphis, TN on 09/12/2022, installed by Rev. Rob Harbin on January 15, 2023.
HAYNES, SHELLI J.	Pacific Southwest	Entered with a Call as DCE at Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN on 03/01/2023, installed by Rev. Derek Roberts on March 12, 2023.
HAYNES, TRAVIS M.	Pacific Southwest	Entered District as Candidate on March 1, 2023.
HOOK, ALTA	Southeastern	Entered District as Emeritus on June 12, 2024.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
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JACKSON, AARON N.	Grad CU Seward	Commissioned & Installed as Director of Parish Music at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR by Rev. Kevin McReynolds on August 6, 2023.
KASSEBAUM, TINA M.	Missouri	Entered with a Call as Director of Education at Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR, July 6, 2021.
KAUFMANN, JONAH T.	Grad CU Irvine	Commissioned & Installed as DCE at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, KY by Rev. Andrew Toopes, June 27, 2021.
KAYSER, DORIS A.	Michigan	Entered District as Candidate, May 5, 2022.
KILPATRICK, ANDREA D.	Texas	Entered District as Candidate, April 6, 2022.
KOLKE, LINAYA	Grad CU Irvine	Commissioned & Installed as DCE at Christ Lutheran Church by Rev. John Mathis on September 25, 2022.
KUEFNER, BENJAMIN R.	Grad CU Seward	Commissioned & Installed as Teacher at Christ the King Lutheran Church and School Memphis, TN by Rev. Chuck Neugebauer on July 31, 2022.
KURTZ, AMY L.	Florida/Georgia	Entered the District with a Call as Principal at Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, Memphis, TN on January 1, 2025, installed by Rev. Jon Petering on January 12, 2025.
LEBORIOUS, NATHAN	Grad CU Chicago	Commissioned & Installed as Teacher at Christ the King Lutheran Church & School, Memphis, TN by Rev. Charles Neugebauer on August 4, 2024.
MAGNUSON, JACQUELYN	Grad CU Chicago	Commissioned & Installed as DPM at Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR by Rev. Kent Schaaf on November 20, 2022.
MOYER, ROBIN	Grad St. Louis	Commissioned & Installed as Deaconess at Mid-South District – LCMS, by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on April 15, 2025.
MEYER, STACEY L.	Nebraska	Entered District as Candidate, June 1, 2023.
OLDENETTEL, DAWN D.	South Wisconsin	Entered District as Emeritus, June 9, 2021.
PELAYO, EMILIE M.	Northwest	Entered District as Candidate, February 11, 2022.
RANDALL, LISA K.	New England	Entered with a Call as Teacher at Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN, installed by Rev. Donald Welmer on August 14, 2022.
SCHLIE, RACHEL C.	Texas	Entered District as Candidate, January 31, 2022.
SHAFFER, CHRISTINA	Conc. Seminary,	Placed as Deaconess Intern at Grace Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO Knoxville, TN on March 1, 2023, from Summer 2023 to Summer 2024.
SHUDY, AMY L.	Pacific Southwest	Installed as Teacher at Christ Lutheran Church and School in Little Rock, AR, by Rev. Daniel Hauser on August 12, 2018. (Date correction).
TULL, RHONDA L.	Missouri	Entered District as Emeritus, March 10, 2025.
WALTZ, AMY W.	Colloquy CU Irvine	Commissioned and Installed as Teacher to Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy, Nashville, TN by Rev. Lane Reuter on August 11, 2024.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
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WEBB, BRITTANY	Colloquy CU Chicago	Commissioned and Installed as Teacher to First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN by Rev. Donald Welmer, on August 11, 2024.
YOUNG, TERESA L.	Colloquy CU St. Paul	Commissioned and Installed as Teacher to Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, Memphis, TN by Rev. Jonathan Petering, on August 4, 2024.

CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

BARNARD, ANNE L.	Installed as Teacher at First Lutheran Church by Rev. James Burns on August 4, 2024.
BROWN, LOGAN	Installed as Director of Worship Arts & Music Education (DCE Certification) to Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock, AR by Rev. Matthew Albright on April 7, 2024.
FISCHER, MICHELLE D.	Installed as Executive Director of Education, Youth & Family for the Mid-South District by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola on August 23, 2024.
FRYMAN, SHARON M.	Installed as Teacher at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Memphis TN by Rev. Clayton Sellers on August 8, 2021.
KILPATRICK, ANDREA D.	Installed as Teacher at Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock, AR by Rev. John Mathis on August 7, 2022.

INACTIVE, CANDIDATE OR EMERITUS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

BROWN, LOGAN	Active to Candidate Status	May 05, 2022
BROWN, LOGAN	Candidate to Active Status	April 07, 2024
CHATHAM, PAMELA D.	Active to Emeritus Status	June 01, 2023
COOPER, JENNIFER L.	Active to Candidate Statuses	June 30, 2022
ESGET, EILEEN	Active to Emeritus Status	Aug. 01, 2022
IRWIN, KAY MARIE	Active to Emeritus	May 15, 2024
KAYSER, DORIS A.	Candidate to Emeritus Status	Feb. 27, 2023
KORTHASE, AMANDA M.	Active to Emeritus Status	June 19, 2024
LAWRENCE, KYLE R.	Active to Candidate Status	May 31, 2019
MARTIN, NATALIE C.	Active to Candidate Status	May 31, 2022
MERRIMAN, CHARLES E.	Active to Emeritus Status	Dec. 31, 2023
MOORMAN, COLLEEN	Active to Emeritus Status	July 31, 2023
MOUDY, LAUREN E.	Active to Candidate Status	May 27, 2022
NIETING, KATHRYN A.	Active to Emeritus Status	June 30, 2022

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PIEPENBRINK, ALLEN C.	Active to Emeritus Status	May 6, 2022
PUDWELL, KRISTIN S.	Active to Emeritus Status	May 31, 2023
STOOKSBURY, EMILIE	Active to Candidate Status	Jan. 01, 2022
STREUFERT, FRANK C.	Active to Emeritus Status	June 01, 2021
TEAL, KAREN	Active to Emeritus Status	May 31, 2024
THOMACK, JO-ANN A.	Active to Emeritus Status	Aug. 31, 2022

TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

BODEMANN, DANIEL E.	to Indiana District	Aug. 20, 2022
ESGET, EILEEN	to English District	Jan. 01, 2025
FREESE, SAMANTHA A.	to Southern District	April 24, 2023
HARBIN, KARA C.	to Northwest District	July 15, 2022
KASSEBAUM, TINA M.	to Southern Illinois District	Aug. 01, 2022
KAUFMANN, JONAH	to Northwest District	Aug. 12, 2024
KAYSER, DORIS	to Michigan District	Jan. 30, 2024
KLEIMOLA, DAVID A.	to Central Illinois District	Aug. 01, 2022
KNAPP, RONALD	to Texas District	Mar. 01, 2025
LEISING, EMILY	to English District	May 05, 2024
MOUDY, LAUREN E.	to Texas District	July 22, 2022
PULLMANN, CAMERON A.	to Pacific Southwest District	July 12, 2021
RUSSELL, CHARLES P.	to Michigan District	July 04, 2022
SCHROEDER, JULIE ANN	to Nebraska District	Oct. 02, 2024
TOOLEY, KATHERINE A.	to Southeastern District	June 01, 2023

DECEASED - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

GEHRS, PAULINE A.	Dec. 01, 2024
LEGGE, JEAN	June 04, 2022
NEEDLER, MELINDA M.	Mar. 21, 2020
STEINBACH, ARLON J.	Aug. 01, 2022

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
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REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

BAESSLER, WILLIAM L.	Nov. 23, 2021
EASTERDAY, PAUL R.	June. 05, 2021
FROILAND, AMY J.	April 28, 2023
FRYMAN, SHARON	April 11, 2022
GOOLSBY, HALLI M.	April 28, 2023
MILLER, CHRISTOPER J.	April 28, 2023
MYERS, ASHLEY P.	Jan. 01, 2025
STOOKSBURY, EMILIE	April 28, 2023
TILLA, KATHERINE A.	April 28, 2023

ACTIVITY AMONG CONGREGATIONS AND CIRCUITS

CONGREGATIONS:

ARKANSAS:

Bethel Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR and Trinity Lutheran Church, Sallisaw, OK entered into a dual parish agreement, effective June 26, 2022.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Jonesboro, AR changed its name to All Saints Lutheran Church and School, effective December 6, 2021.

Living Savior Lutheran Church, Springdale, AR (former location Lowell, AR), has a new church address of 1600 Butterfield Coach Road, Springdale, AR 72764, effective September 15, 2021.

St. John's Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR and Living Savior Lutheran Church, Lowell, AR dissolved their dual parish agreement, effective August 18, 2021.

St. John's Lutheran Church, Lafe, AR and Redeemer Lutheran Church, Paragould, AR dissolved their dual parish agreement, effective February 29, 2024.

Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR and Zion Lutheran Church, Waldenburg, AR have dissolved their dual parish agreement, effective February 6, 2025.

Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR and Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR entered into a dual parish agreement, effective January 26, 2025.

TENNESSEE:

Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN has a new church address of 315 Southdowne Dr., Maryville, TN 37801, effective March 31, 2024.

MISSISSIPPI:

None

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
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CIRCUITS:

- FAYETTEVILLE CIRCUIT: Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. Robert Herring replaced by Rev. Brandon Martin, effective July 2, 2021.
- FAYETTEVILLE TO JONESBORO: Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island, AR moved from the Fayetteville Electoral Circuit to the Jonesboro Electoral Circuit by the MDS a Board of Directors' effective June 29, 2022, Res #4.3.2 (I).
- FORT SMITH CIRCUIT: Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. Joshua Willadsen replaced by Rev. Thomas Bartzsch, effective July 2, 2021.
- JONESBORO CIRCUIT
Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. Bradley D. Heinecke replaced Rev. Joel Krogen (Called to Glory) effective August 5, 2021.
Rev. Joshua Leigeber, appointed by Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, as Circuit Visitor for the Jonesboro Circuit, effective December 1, 2022.
- KNOXVILLE CIRCUIT: Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. David Graves replaced Rev. Robert Portier, effective July 2, 2021.
- LITTLE ROCK SOUTH TO LITTLE ROCK NORTH Community of Faith Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR moved from the Little Rock South Electoral Circuit to the Little Rock North Electoral Circuit by the Board of Directors' effective June 29, 2022, Res #4.3.2 (I).
- LITTLE ROCK SOUTH
Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. Kent Schaaf replaced by Rev. Emil Woerner on March 25, 2024.
- MEMPHIS CIRCUIT: Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. Clayton Sellers replaced Rev. Mark Goble, effective July 2, 2021.
- MIDDLE TENNESSEE CIRCUIT: Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. David McMinn replaced Rev. Gerald Meyer, effective July 2, 2021.
- PADUCAH CIRCUIT: Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. Daniel Ulrich replaced Rev. Larry Peters, effective July 2, 2021.
Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. David Appold replaced Rev. Daniel Ulrich, effective June 8, 2022.
- STUTTGART CIRCUIT
Circuit Visitor Change: Rev. M. Chad Philipp replaced by Rev. Donald White on November 12, 2021.

NEW CHURCH START

CONGREGATIONS ACCEPTED INTO SYNODICAL MEMBERSHIP

FAYETTEVILLE, AR	Restoration Lutheran Church	June 30, 2021
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**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
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CONGREGATIONS – TRANSFERRED FROM OTHER DISTRICT

SALLISAW, OK Oklahoma Trinity Lutheran Church, Sallisaw, OK was transferred from the Oklahoma District to the Mid-South District on May 7, 2022.

CONGREGATIONS REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP

ABINGDON, VA	Grace Lutheran Church	Feb.	11,	2024
CHATTANOOGA, TN	Bridge City Community	June	09,	2022
CROSSETT, AR	St. John Lutheran Church	Mar.	19,	2024
DAYTON, TN	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Jan.	08,	2023
HOT SPRINGS, AR	LakePointe City Lutheran Church	Feb.	06,	2025
MOUNTAIN VIEW, AR	Grace Lutheran Church	Nov.	04,	2021
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR	Peace Lutheran Church	May	16,	2021
WEST MEMPHIS, AR	St. Paul Lutheran Church	Dec.	04,	2022

SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS - OPENED

BENTON, AR	First Lutheran School	Aug.	19,	2024
JONESBORO, AR	All Saints Lutheran School	Aug.	18,	2021
ROGERS, AR	Holy Trinity Parent’s Day Out	May	31,	2022

SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTERS - CLOSED

ALEXANDER, AR	Avilla Christian Academy	June	01,	2024
GILLETT, AR	St. Paul Lutheran Preschool	Aug.	15,	2023
JONESBORO, AR	All Saints Lutheran EC School	April	18,	2021

CONSTITUTION REVISIONS APPROVED

BATESVILLE, AR HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, January 26, 2024.

BENTONVILLE, AR FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective, August 23, 2024.

CHATTANOOGA, TN CROSS OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, February 8, 2022

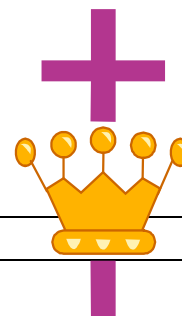
**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

CHATTANOOGA, TN	GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, May 13, 2022.
CLARKSVILLE, TN	GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, February 16, 2024.
COLUMBIA, TN	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective August 25, 2023.
COOKEVILLE, TN	HEAVENLY HOST LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting effective August 23, 2024.
CROSSVILLE, TN	SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 2, 2022.
FAIRFIELD BAY, AR	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective January 31, 2025.
FAYETTEVILLE, AR	RESTORATION LUTHERAN CHURCH – in a Board of Directors Meeting, effective June 30, 2021.
FORT SMITH, AR	FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective May 24, 2021.
HARRIMAN, TN	REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective August 25, 2023.
HARRISON, AR	FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective May 5, 2023.
HERMITAGE, TN	EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective May 24, 2021.
JOHNSON CITY, TN	BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting effective August 25, 2023
JONESBORO, AR	ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective August 23, 2021.
KNOXVILLE, TN	FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, February 16, 2024.
LONDON, AR	ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective January 27, 2023.
LONDON, AR	ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 13, 2024
MARYVILLE, TN	PRAISE LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective August 23, 2024.
MEMPHIS, TN	CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 5, 2021.
MEMPHIS, TN	MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, February 16, 2024.
MENA, AR	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective August 25, 2023.
MURFREESBORO, TN	GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective January 27, 2023.

**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD
OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021 to April 15, 2025**

NASHVILLE, TN	CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors Meeting, effective May 10, 2024.
NASHVILLE, TN	OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective May 13, 2022.
NASHVILLE, TN	OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 13, 2024.
NASHVILLE, TN	REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 13, 2024.
OAK RIDGE, TN	FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective May 5, 2023.
OLIVE BRANCH, MS	BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective August 23, 2024.
PARIS, TN	CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, Revised Bylaws, effective November 3, 2023.
ROGERS, AR	HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective May 24, 2021.
STUTTGART, AR	ST. JOHN’S LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective January 27, 2023.
ULM, AR	ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 2, 2022.
WARTBURG, TN	ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors’ Meeting, effective December 2, 2022.

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD



Ordained Ministers Celebrating Anniversaries in 2022

65 Years

- Rev. Paul Donner** (EM)
Paducah, KY
Rev. John Schulz (EM)
Knoxville, TN

55 Years

- Rev. James Evers** (EM)
Oak Ridge, TN

50 Years

- Rev. Peter Ave-Lallemant**
Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR
Rev. Philip Bohlken (EM)
Knoxville, TN
Rev. Gary Heckmann (EM)
Cookeville, TN
Rev. Paul Muench (EM)
Knoxville, TN

45 Years

- Rev. Jan Munch** (EM)
Athens, TN
Rev. Dr. Mark Press
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, KY

40 Years

- Rev. Keith Enko**
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN
Rev. Bradley Heinecke
Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, AR
Rev. Stewart Marshall
Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff, AR
Rev. Richard Mayer
Messiah Lutheran Church, Pea Ridge, AR

35 Years

- Rev. Steve Harmon**
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN
Rev. Paul Leigeber
Faith Lutheran Church, Union City, TN
Trinity Lutheran Church, Dyersburg, TN
Rev. H. Christopher Sheets
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN
Rev. Russell Shewmaker (EM)
Gravette, AR

30 Years

- Rev. Jon Bischof**
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Corning, AR

25 Years

- Rev. Mark Goble**
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN
Rev. Clarence Martin (EM)
Bartlett, TN
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
President, Mid-South District, Cordova, TN
Rev. Andrew Smith
Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN

20 Years

- Rev. Tracy Nelson**
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN
Rev. M. Chad Philipp
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Gillett, AR
St. Luke Lutheran Church, DeWitt, AR
Rev. Kent Schaaf
Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

15 Years

- Rev. Donald Coulter**
Athens Lutheran Church, Athens, TN
Rev. Christopher Gorshe
Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, AR
Rev. Jeffrey King
Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR
Rev. Robert Portier
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN
Rev. David Vandercook
Shepherd of Peace Lutheran, Maumelle, AR
Trinity Lutheran Church, North Little Rock, AR

10 Years

- Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport**
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR
Rev. Donald Welmer
First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN

5 Years

- Rev. Eric Rudsenske**
Concordia Lutheran Church, Jackson, TN
Rev. Adam Woldt
The Point Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN
Rev. JohnDavid Zischke
Restoration Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD



Ordained Ministers Celebrating Anniversaries in 2023

55 Years

- Rev. Kenneth Haydon** (Emeritus)
Eureka Springs, AR
- Rev. Arthur Kaufmann** (Emeritus)
Bristol, TN
- Rev. Stephen Skov** (Emeritus)
Rockwood, TN
- Rev. David Tews** (Emeritus)
Horseshoe Bend, AR

50 Years

- Rev. Barry Hildebrandt**
Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN
- Rev. Paul Kritsch**
Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Sharps Chapel, TN

45 Years

- Rev. Dan Elkins** (Emeritus)
Olive Branch, MS
- Rev. Johnny Graham** (Emeritus)
Heber Springs, AR
- Rev. Gene Henke** (Emeritus)
Nolensville, TN
- Rev. Robert Herring** (Emeritus)
Holiday Island, AR
- Rev. Larry Rockemann** (Emeritus)
Knoxville, TN

40 Years

- Rev. Andrew Toopes**
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, KY
- Rev. Thom Lakso** (Emeritus)
Knoxville, TN
- Rev. Charles Neugebauer**
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN
- Rev. Robert Pfaff** (Emeritus) *Wartburg, TN*
- Rev. Robert Seaton**
First Lutheran Church, Cleveland, TN
- Rev. Larry Seiferth** (Emeritus)
Peoria, AZ
- Rev. Terry Tieman**
Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN
- Rev. Brian Truog**
Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, Loudon, TN

35 Years

- Rev. Russell Belisle**
Cross of Calvary Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN
- Rev. Mark Krause**
Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, AR
- Rev. Randy Loux**
Chaplain, Clarksville, TN
- Rev. Steven Teske** (Candidate)
Little Rock, AR
- Rev. William Wagner**
Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN

25 Years

- Rev. Douglas DeWitt**
Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN
- Rev. Robert Harbin**
Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN

Rev. Mark Wenzelburger (Emeritus)
Garfield, AR

Rev. Philip Young
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

20 Years

Rev. Paul Hass
Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, AR

15 Years

- Rev. Andrew Abraham**
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN
- Rev. Robert (Danny) Anderson**
Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN
- Rev. Shawn Found**
Chaplain, Little Rock, AR
- Rev. Edward Maanum**
First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN
- Rev. Brandon Martin**
Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, AR
- Rev. Theodore McMinn**
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, McMinnville, TN
- Rev. Kevin McReynolds**
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR
- Rev. Aaron Neugebauer**
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Paragould, AR
St. John's Lutheran Church, Lefe, AR
- Rev. Gregory Prauner** (Candidate)
Battle Creek, NE
- Rev. Mark Rhoads**
Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church, Loudon, TN
- Rev. Gordon Smith**
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Morristown, TN
Christ of the Cumberlands, Harrogate, TN
- Rev. Jason Zirbel**
Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR

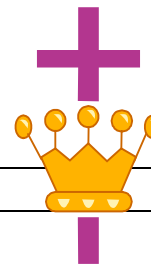
10 Years

- Rev. David Graves**
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wartburg, TN
- Rev. Joseph Jacks**
St. Philip Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN
- Rev. Clayton Sellers**
Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN
- Rev. Alan Thoe**
Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN

5 Years

- Rev. James Belles**
Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN
- Rev. Timothy Hunze**
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN
- Rev. Jeremy McDonald**
Fort Wayne, IN
- Rev. George Smith**
Faith Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN
- Rev. Gerald Stobaugh**
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD



Ordained Ministers Celebrating Anniversaries in 2024

65 Years

Rev. Stanley Jones (Emeritus)
Bella Vista, AR

55 Years

Rev. Clifford Herd (Emeritus)
Hixson, TN

Rev. Robert Mader (Emeritus)
Clarksville, TN

Rev. Louis Trebus (Emeritus)
Maryville, TN

50 Years

Rev. Albert Quoss (Emeritus)
Bella Vista, AR

45 Years

Rev. Richard Elseroad (Emeritus)
Knoxville, TN

Rev. Martin Nutter
Tullahoma, TN

40 Years

Rev. Dennis Bennett (Emeritus)
New Market, TN

Rev. Duncan Cox (Emeritus)
Pea Ridge, AR

Rev. James Dunn (Emeritus)
Kansas, MO

Rev. Donald Hefta
Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR

Rev. Robert Kellerman (Emeritus)
Topeka, KS

Rev. Andrew Toopes (Emeritus)
Bowling Green, KY

35 Years

Rev. Richard Graves
Navy Chaplain, Sigonella, Sicily

Rev. Mark Kophamer
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Elizabethton, TN

Rev. Dr. LeRoy Leach (Emeritus)
Conway, AR

Rev. Michael Miller
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Harriman, TN

Rev. Brian Pummill
Peace Lutheran Church, Cherokee Village, AR

30 Years

Rev. Daniel Hawkins
*Redeeming Grace/GracePoint Lutheran Church,
Atoka, TN*

Rev. Nathan Jensen
St. John Lutheran Church, Burns, TN

25 Years

Rev. Fasil Alemayehu
Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN

Rev. Timothy Henning
Trinity Lutheran Church, Mena, AR

Rev. Hiram Nunez (Emeritus)
Grandbury, TX

20 Years

Rev. Joshua Willadsen
*Bethel Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR
Trinity Lutheran Church, Sallisaw, OK*

15 Years

Rev. Ronald Bacic
First Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

Rev. Richard Dockery (Emeritus)
Maryville, TN

Rev. John Merrill
First Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR

Rev. Edward Rosser
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN

Rev. Emil Woerner
Friends in Christ Lutheran Church, Bryant, AR

10 Years

Rev. David Appold
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY

Rev. Thomas Boeck
Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, AR

Rev. Amos Gray (Candidate)
Hot Springs, AR

Rev. Andrew Lehman
All Saints Lutheran Church & School, Jonesboro, AR

Rev. Eric Phillips
*Concordia Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN
Hope Lutheran Church, Smyrna, TN*

5 Years

Rev. Matthew Albright
Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

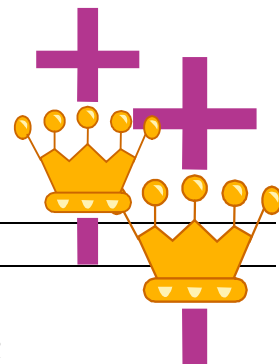
Rev. Craig Fiebiger
Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN

Rev. Raymond Krieg
Celebration Lutheran Church, Seymour, TN

Rev. John Mathis
Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

Rev. Joshua Ralston
*Zion Lutheran Church, Augsburg, AR
First Lutheran, Chattanooga, TN*

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD



Ordained Ministers Celebrating Anniversaries in 2025

65 Years

Rev. Albert Eichelberger (Emeritus)
Knoxville, TN
Rev. Frank Zirbel (Emeritus)
Harrison, AR

60 Years

Rev. David Callies (Emeritus)
Brentwood, TN
Rev. Larry Marhenke (Emeritus)
Hot Springs Village, AR
Rev. Donald Neiswender (Emeritus)
Paducah, KY
Rev. Gilbert Pingel (Emeritus)
Chattanooga, TN

55 Years

Rev. Linsey Dettmer (Emeritus)
Sevierville, TN
Rev. John Freitag (Emeritus)
Rogersville, TN
Rev. Roger Reckling (Emeritus)
Knoxville, TN
Rev. Kenneth Taglauer (Emeritus)
Brookline, MA

50 Years

Rev. Darrell Kobs (Emeritus)
Russellville, AR

45 Years

Rev. Dean Clausing (Emeritus)
Benton, AR
Rev. David Cloeter (Emeritus)
Bella Vista, AR
Rev. Larry Peters
Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN

40 Years

Rev. Robert Alexander (Emeritus)
Bella Vista, AR
Rev. Robert Benke
Faith Lutheran Church, Hot Springs Village, AR
Rev. Jonathan Beyer
First Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, AR
Rev. Wayne Schuett (Emeritus)
Russellville, AR
Rev. John Treude (Emeritus)
Fort Smith, AR

35 Years

Rev. James Burns
First Lutheran Church, Benton, AR
Rev. Myles Schultz
Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island, AR

30 Years

Rev. David Lampman (Emeritus)
Crossville, TN

25 Years

Rev. Andrew Abraham
*Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church,
Crossville, TN*
Rev. Jerome Leckband
All Saints Lutheran Church, Jonesboro, AR

20 Years

Rev. John Beabout
*Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church,
Crossville, TN*
Rev. David Schmidt
Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR

15 Years

Rev. Michael Croom
Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis
Rev. Michael Edwards
(Candidate) Nixa, MO
Rev. Gerald Heinecke
*Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR
Zion Lutheran Church, Waldenburg, AR*
Rev. David Witte
Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

10 Years

Rev. Eric Longman
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR

5 Years

Rev. Sawyer Meyers
*Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olive
Branch, MS*

Well done good and faithful servants!

REPORT OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT PRESIDENT

Christ, the Church's One Foundation for the Mid-South District 2025 to 2028

The Convention theme for this, the Twenty-second Regular Convention of the Mid-South District comes to us from I Corinthians 3:10-11, “*According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*”

It is from these verses that His banner became the inspiration for our Convention Theme: ***Christ, the Church's One Foundation***. Upon the beautiful words of St Paul's letter to the Corinthian congregation, Samuel J. Stone wrote those powerful words in his epic hymn of the Church Triumphant, “The Church's One Foundation.”

The Church's one foundation
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought Her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought Her,
And for Her life He died.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod had its membership “high-water” mark of 2.8 million members in 1971. Today, the membership of the Synod has dropped to 1.9 million (2024 data). While it may be accurate to point out that all other mainline Christian denominations have experienced larger declines in membership than the LCMS, we will lose over 1% of our membership – or approximately the equivalent size of the entire membership of the Mid-South District each year!

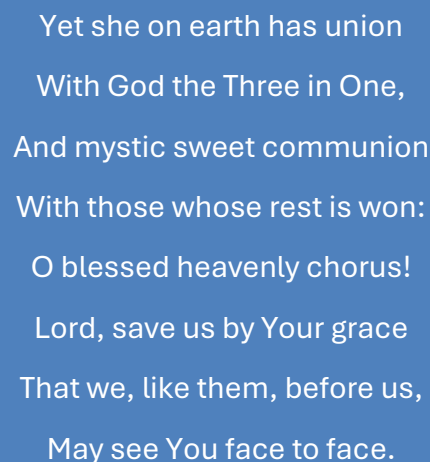
The COVID-19 Pandemic presented numerous difficulties to the economy of our country and brought several direct negative results to churches. While our Mid-South District congregations became creative in the ways to deal with governmentally mandated limitations and shut-downs in some cases, at that time confusion about our common responses was exasperated by having congregations in six different states – Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

Churches across the US were either forced to shut down their in-person worship or face gigantic penalties. Because the Mid-South District has congregations in six US states, the mandates were totally different from state to state. The Mid-South District distributed equipment that enabled those who did not have live streaming capabilities to broadcast worship services or telephonic connections, keeping worship prevalent across our District. Managing state, federal, and local mandates became

a gigantic nightmare. Christ's Great Commission appeared to have been put on hold as making disciples for His Kingdom did not work well in a world shut down by governmental mandates.

Our last District Convention was held in the summer of 2021. Only a handful of the Districts of Synod held conventions that year because of the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 and 2021. For four years, the Mid-South District has wandered through the maze of bureaucracies, government mandates, and innovations for worship unlike we American Lutherans have seldom or ever had to deal with before.

Americans were not the only ones affected by the pandemic. Many nations were completely shut down in hopes their isolation from the outside world would spare their citizens from the ravages of the COVID virus. Even though the pandemic has ebbed, many of our congregations have not fully experienced a return to pre-pandemic attendance numbers. We are left to wonder again about how God is to keep the solid foundation He left with us in regards to a worldly kingdom and Christ's Kingdom. We need to shake off the last four year's difficulties in order to continue with the work He has entrusted to us for the sake of His Kingdom.



Yet she on earth has union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O blessed heavenly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like them, before us,
May see You face to face.

But, as we emerged from the world-wide fear, many of our congregations continued experiencing major downturns in attendance. Gradually, most of our congregations returned to pre-pandemic levels; while others either lost members to the pandemic or saw those members never or seldom return who had become used to live streaming their worship times.

The Vision of the Mid-South District

"We see every ministry reaching the lost and discipling the found." As we approach our next triennium, every congregation and circuit will be challenged to find means to conduct "*Each 1 - Reach 1*" programs that engages, encourages, and equips our approximately 20,000 communicant members of Christ's disciples to share blessed our hope in God's grace and mercy. We will ask each person in the Mid-South District to find only one person to bring to our ministries. Of course, if someone brings more than one person, that will be perfectly wonderful.

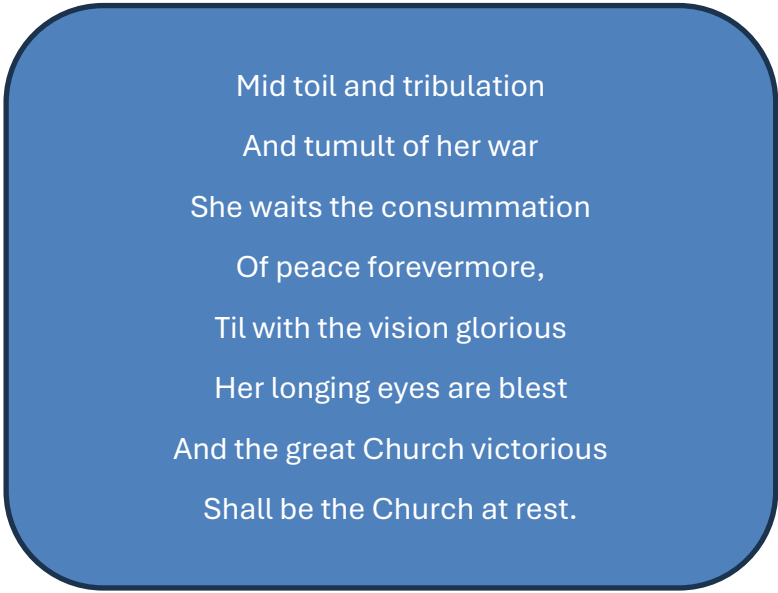
The Mission Statement of the Mid-South District

“As an alliance of congregations and schools, the Mid-South District provides leadership, resources, and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ’s Kingdom, and equipping the found for service in their congregations, their communities, and the world.” Consistent with the Resolutions of the past three Synodical Conventions, we will once again conduct Circuit-wide programs that will enable and encourage interested persons to engage in sharing of the Christian faith – beginning in our family’s homes, witnessing of the Lutheran Confessions, and explaining the Lutheran doctrine in a wide-spread and loving way.

The issues facing the Lutheran Churches in America are not only the huge matters from the past, but new challenges, larger concerns, and overwhelming complications joined in the arena of adversarial battles against our churches, District, and Synod. Despite the addition of an auxiliary campus for Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville and growing congregations in Olive Branch, Atoka, Knoxville, and Fayetteville, the District’s membership dropped from 21,443 at the end of 2019 to 19,946 at the end of 2023. There were no presentations of *Each-1 Reach-1* during the years following the pandemic 2020. Efforts to re-establish individual congregation workshops on outreach and evangelism will resume as travel and meeting restrictions have been lifted or modified.

The Mid-South District remains poised to answer the call of Christ to make disciples of all nations, tongues, and peoples. Our goal is to also bring the joy of the Gospel message through our schools, congregations, early childhood centers, and daycare services. Because we have the distinct privilege of being witnesses of the Good News, we can be assured that God is the only source that grants us the growth we work to attain. We can become stronger when we recognize our best allies in this battle against the world and Satan’s minions, is the Word of God, guided by His Spirit, and God’s continuous grace.

We recognize that even though our human frailties might have been exposed more than ever before, the Christian Church triumphant has its foundation on the eternal Word of God, our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Expanding international mission fields have experienced phenomenal increases in the disciples of Christ through the efforts of our support of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s mission work, and the mission work supported by the faithful member congregations of the Mid-South District by their commitments to our local, national, and international mission work. Thanks be to God!



Mid toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore,
Til with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

The operating state of the Mid-South District is strong. Its work is sustained by the generosity of our congregational commitments that covers 53% of our mission, ministry, and ecclesiastical work. The remaining 47% of our annual operating budget must be covered by fund development efforts and income from investments. This creates our work and walking together to be doing the work God has entrusted and blessed us to do for His Kingdom and the proper stewardship of all His benefits to our District.

It is, therefore, proper that this Twenty-Second Regular Convention of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod recognize, give thanks, and sing praises to our gracious and merciful God. Through His grace, mercy, guidance, and wisdom, Christ Jesus has enabled us to work together for His Kingdom for those precious souls He brings in as His Sheep – through this earthly journey and into His glorious Kingdom in life everlasting.

Yet, we still live in a world that is very little like the world God created. Since the pride of Adam and Eve yielded to the temptations of Satan, our world is occupied by children born in the state of that original sin. God's foreknowledge chose to reconcile to Himself everyone born of natural means. He sent His Son, the Christ to live among us in human flesh, live a perfect life, and offer His sinless sacrifice to redeem us and return us to be God's people.

Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we can live in this blessed promise that, *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (II Corinthians 5:21, ESV) This is the foundation of Christ's Church - the marvelous works of God for our salvation in Christ Jesus. We live as God's people of faith today in Christ – the Church's One Foundation.

St Matthew records this narrative, *"[Jesus] asked His disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'" He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matt 16:13b-18, ESV)

These verses from Matthew's Gospel show the power of the proclaimed Word of God and the foundation Jesus Christ laid down for His Bride, the Holy Christian Church. The confession of Peter, and for generations of saints who followed, remains the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God upon which He built His Church. There is no other name by which anyone can be saved, except the precious name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

Christ's promise is that not even the gates of Hell can prevail against the Church that is built on the foundation of Christ. Why did our churches struggle so mightily during the pandemic? For that matter, why is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, not unlike all the other mainline denominations in such decline over the past several decades? Even though Christians may find it difficult to see Christ within the rubble of what Satan's evil agenda has wracked on our world, we rest our hopes and faith on the foundation that God continues His presence and guidance for the sake of His people.

Through His Holy Christian Church, God's mercy has sustained His Holy Christian Church through Word and Sacrament. He offers us His true presence in our worship, where He serves us by His Word and blessed Sacraments. We are called to be His Church to this world. Our ministries are

founded on the same confession of Christ that meets the deepest need of all people – the Gospel of Christ. Our stewardship of all that we are and all we have is the founded on the Gospel of Christ. This is the meaning of Synod – “Walking Together” for missions, ministry, professional church workers, small and rural congregation support, and meeting the social and spiritual needs of those who look to the Church for aid.

The Mid-South District budgets 112% of the commitment dollars that come from our partner churches on missions and ministry! Our annual support of the national and international missions with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and specific international missions that receive support from the District is enabled by our supporting member congregations. These international missions include the South of Lake Victoria Diocese Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Africa, with Bishop Johanna Nzelu. Our support there has helped teach dozens of native Tanzanians to become Lutheran pastors and deaconesses, and train seminary professors at our Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne.

The Mid-South District continues to support the Malagasy Lutheran Church as it works toward Altar and Pulpit Fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Malagasy Lutherans are one of the fastest growing Lutheran bodies in the world despite the dangerous opposition by militant Moslem sects. They have opened a college (the Lutheran Institute of Managerial Entrepreneurship (LIME) to train young people in theology, basic business, and professional skills, who then can compete for limited jobs in Madagascar. We are also working with the Concordia University System to have LIME as a recognized auxiliary campus of one of our Concordia Universities. Rev. Dr. Jameson Hardy, President of CUS, is working through the Mid-South District to finalize these arrangements.

The Mid-South District has become a leader among the congregations of the LCMS. Our partnership has assisted other congregations with the programs the member congregations of the Mid-South District have supported. Our pool of dedicated professional church workers, our District staff, the supporting congregations, and dozens of volunteers across the District are resources for business, recruitment, finances, facilities, and operations.

We are dedicated through our staff, the Board of Directors, Regional Vice Presidents, the Circuit Visitors, and volunteers to build and sustain vibrant ministries, congregations, schools, early childhood centers, and community social ministries. For the last 13 years, the Mid-South District has grown stronger. This has enabled us to become this leader and resource for our District and for others across the Synod.

In the past four years, the Mid-South District has recognized our history of Lutheranism in the Mid-South owes much of its existence to the earliest history of the Tennessee Synod and the work of the Henkel brothers in the mid-1800's. Many of the congregations that pre-date the establishment of the LCMS began their ministries by the efforts of the Henkel brothers. In response to this origin of the Lutheran Church in the Mid-South, Ascension Lutheran Church in Madison, TN, has become the site of the Annual Henkel conference. Speakers from around the county have been invited to speak on the contemporary issues facing the ministries of our congregations.

Because of the growing complexity of church operations, we have developed a **“Blue Print for Ministry”** for the future that will enable us to continue our strong partnership with congregations, schools, and professional church workers; that by the Will of God, we can grow stronger in faith and

by God’s grace increase our number from those who still live in the darkness of sin, that they may be brought into the marvelous Light of Christ.

The broad objectives of the **Blue Print** for Ministry include:

- A. Planting New Church and School Ministries
- B. Recruiting and Retaining Professional Church Workers
- C. Strengthening Generational Faith Formation
- D. Providing Pastoral Coverage for Small and Rural Ministries
- E. Equipping Congregations for Ministry to People in Crisis.

A. Planting New Church and School Ministries

The Mid-South District was founded when the Western District was split into two separate Districts – the Missouri District and the Mid-South District. We began with 67 congregations and more than doubled in size by the time we entered the Twenty-First Century.

Since that time, the ebb and flow of congregational membership has seen several new church plants started. The reality of church planting is that it is a difficult and strenuous process. Between 2000 and 2012, there were 23 church plants that were attempted. By the time we reached the second decade of this century, only one of those remains viable and a part of the LCMS.

Our church planting work met the challenge of meaningful stewardship and brought a more accountable means by which church planting could lead to self-sustaining and viable congregations. The critical need to reach deeper into our communities with the Gospel of Christ and our Lutheran Confessions must never be overlooked. In order to focus on planting churches and good stewardship, the Mission and Ministry Committee adopted the Synod’s “Church Planting Simplified” (CPS) wherein the District partners with Synod and local leaders to identify the greatest potential sites for church planting.

In addition, the Mid-South District recognizes the means by which congregations were started when Lutherans from Europe came to America. They made their precious few resources work by starting education ministries – schools that eventually developed a congregation to support the families in faith formation and catechesis. By exploring this foundational concept, the existing physical plant resources available to most of our church facilities, the possibility of micro-schools, online schools, and Lutheran education to home-school coops has emerged as a low cost and high return possibility for many of our Mid-South congregations.

At the same time, the Mission and Ministry Subcommittee of the Mid-South District monitors and assists current and potential church plant locations throughout the Mid-South District. These include:

1. Restoration/St John’s Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR*
2. GracePoint Lutheran Church, Atoka, TN* (Re-plant)

3. Mekane Yesus Ethiopian Ministry, Nashville*
4. African American churches in Memphis and Little Rock*
5. Smith Grove, Kentucky, a preaching station out of Bowling Green
6. Hohenwald, an outreach of Faith Lutheran Church, Thompsons Station, TN
7. Beautiful Savior Lutheran, Olive Branch, MS*
8. Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville for its Spring Hill campus*

*Congregations received/receiving support from the Mid-South District

With the assistance of Synod’s “Church Planting Simplified” (CPS), their demographic studies have identified potential church planting “hotspots” in the state of Arkansas (including Northwest Arkansas) and Tennessee (including Nashville metro; Chattanooga metro; and Knoxville Metro). These are areas where there are a significant number of growing populations of unchurched people, new immigrants, and de-churched Lutherans.

Another area we have considered is in the Brownsville area of western Tennessee. Ford Motor Company has been developing an automotive plant in that area. The flurry of activity for electric vehicles ebbed meaning Ford’s progress has been on and off. But now it appears Ford is re-purposing the location for other automotive needs. Launching a new congregation in that area to reach new people with the Gospel is totally dependent on the demographic development of Ford Motor Company and the dollars congregations partnering with the District are able to commit for our work together.

In order to avoid the geographic difficulties of having a church planter coordinator located in Memphis, the Mid-South District will deploy regionally assigned church planting coordinators that cover the entire District. These coordinators will have a background in church planting methodologies and will be engaged to visit congregations, pastors, and small groups to assist in the development of potential church plants. They will work with the Missions and Ministries Committee to create plans that will improve the probability of a growing and sustainable, autonomous congregations in the District.

Although the congregation in Sallisaw, Oklahoma joined the Mid-South District, it is not a church plant but is a new congregation for the Mid-South District. The congregation at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Nashville has added an auxiliary site in the Spring Hill area south of the Nashville metro area. Church planting experiences tend to indicate church plants that become auxiliaries will have a higher possibility of becoming a successful church plant than independent and stand-alone plants. This works well with the “Hub-and-Spoke” concept developing in the Mid-South District.

Unfortunately, there are congregations that have opted to disband or move from their affiliation with the Mid-South District and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. One of the most difficult and saddening events in a District President’s role and for members of congregations that have a vibrant and faithful ministry is when the membership of those congregations are no longer a Missouri Synod congregation. Those congregations that are no longer members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod include:

Grace Lutheran Church, Abingdon, Virginia, Disbanded
 Bridge City Church, Chattanooga, TN
 St John, Crossett, AR, Disbanded
 Peace, Mountain Home, AR, Disbanded
 LakePointe City Church, Hot Springs, AR
 Grace, Mountain View, AR
 St Paul, West Memphis, Disbanded

Recruiting and Retaining Professional Church Workers

The last 15 years has placed a dramatic exclamation point for congregations, schools, ECC’s, and auxiliaries of the Church. The number of graduates in church worker tracks coming from our Concordia University System and seminaries has declined significantly. Some of our Concordia’s have graduated fewer than a handful of church workers in the past few years. The graduates from our two seminaries is nearly half of many as we have received into the Holy Ministry just a decade ago.

Seminary Resident Graduates – Concordia Seminary St Louis and Fort Wayne											
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2022	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
St. Louis	41	55	29	47	42	40	41	59	78	63	53
Ft Wayne	38	36	31	32	32	34	40	40	43	58	32
Total:	79	91	60	79	74	74	81	91	121	121	85

The bright spot in this issue is that the Mid-South District has the lowest or near the lowest percentage of vacancies in pastoral ministry in the Synod. It is a long and arduous process to keep our vacancies at a bare minimum. Yet, being able to place new teachers, principals, DCE’s, and Deaconesses remains a difficult and demanding task in our District.

In addition to the assistance given to Concordia University and Seminary students in professional Church Work tracks, the District has become active in seeking men and women who have an interest in becoming professional church workers. The Synod’s “Set Apart to Serve” (SAS) program has been adopted in the Mid-South District. An SAS Ad Hoc committee for the District has been assembled to include Rev. David Appold, Chairman; Rev. Sawyer Meyer, Rev. Don Welmer, Rev. Andrew Abraham, Dr. Jonathan Rudy, Michelle Fischer; Samuel Fishburn; Ben Kuefner, and Shirley Piepenbrink.

Jesus said, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”* (Matt 9:37b-38, ESV) During the period from the last Mid-South District Convention in 2021, there have been several men and women who have applied for and have been admitted to professional church work tracks at the Concordia University System and our two seminaries. The need for well trained, dedicated, and capable workers is critical. The Mid-South District, through the generous commitment of our member congregations and donors, have provided scholarships for all church work students in our Concordia University System and for those who attend our two seminaries.

We are grateful for the dedication and commitment these people have made to become professional church workers. Our continued support of their education is made necessary and available through the commitments of our member congregations toward assistance for educational expenses. Two of the Concordia Universities have reduced tuition expenses for church work students. In addition to the Mid-South District’s scholarship support of Concordia University System students and seminarians, both seminaries offer fully paid tuition for all MDiv (Master of Divinity) students.

New applicants’ interviews from the Mid-South District are an amazing accomplishment of the members of our congregations. Per capita, these men going into the residential track for pastoral education is one of the highest numbers in the Synod. Thanks be to God! Those who have applied for admission to the seminaries in the last four years include:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Track</u>	<u>Location</u>
Mason Westphal	MDiv	Fort Wayne
Timothy Benecke	MDiv	St Louis
Mark Cavender	MDiv	St Louis
Jason Hancock	SMP	St Louis
Pete Duncanson	SMP	Fort Wayne
Rev Joshua Schooping	Colloquy	
Rev. David Williams	Colloquy	
Randall Lewis	SMP-Colloquy	
Davin Albertson	MDiv	St Louis
Wesley Keene	SMP	Fort Wayne
Benjamin Kuefner	MDiv	Fort Wayne
Charles Miller	MDiv	St Louis
Matthew Laird	MDiv	St Louis
William Bales	MDiv	Fort Wayne
John Carpenter	MDiv	Fort Wayne
Timothy Rollins	MDiv	St Louis
Nathan Schlie	MDiv	Fort Wayne
Larry Kiem	SMP	Fort Wayne
Charles Hyde	MDiv	St Louis
Dane Arbuckle	MDiv	St Louis

At this time, the Mid-South District has three pastoral vacancies pending Calls into the pastoral ministry. That is a 3% vacancy rate, compared to the Synod average of 10.3%. The table below indicates another trend beyond vacant pastoral positions. The number of congregations seeking part-time pastors is increasing at a remarkable rate. Through comprehensive searches for the best qualified candidates to fill vacant pastorates, the Mid-South District has become a place for pastors seeking ministry opportunities.

<u>ANNUAL VACANCIES IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD</u>											
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Sole Pastors	430	406	406	395	410	355	380	352	302	329	359
Senior Pastors	54	56	51	62	66	56	56	71	44	37	47
<u>P-T Pastors</u>	<u>613</u>	<u>591</u>	<u>548</u>	<u>519</u>	<u>483</u>	<u>443</u>	<u>428</u>	<u>432</u>	<u>360</u>	<u>324</u>	<u>288</u>
Total	1097	1053	1005	976	959	854	854	855	706	690	694

The projected eligibility for retirements by the current roster of pastors and teachers exceeds 30% of our professional church workers - those who are eligible for retirement over the next 5 to 7 years. However, the Mid-South District continues to provide students for our undergraduate and graduate education of professional church workers. Through the last six years, the Mid-South District has sent an incredible number of students to our Concordia University system with 15 teachers, 4 Directors of Christian Education, and 34 resident and SMP seminary students.

We give thanks for the pastors and workers who serve in our congregations, schools, and agencies of the District. However, we must also recognize with humble appreciation those men and women who have served the ministries of the Mid-South District, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who have finished their course in this world and now rest from their labors in the presence of our gracious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In Memoriam

Ordained

*Rev. Donald Schmidt Rev. Wesley Toncre Rev. Chad Phillip
Rev. John Schultz Rev. Joel Krogen Rev. Norm Groteluschen
Rev. Fred Hagemeyer Rev. Peter Ave-LaLemant Rev. Dan Otto
Rev. David Krause Rev. Clarence Helmich Rev. Richard Ames
Rev. Ray Bingenheimer Rev. Erwin Lueker, Jr Rev. Marvin Otto
Rev. William Stevenson Rev. William Couch Rev. Danley Hesse
Rev. Jan Munch Rev. Arthur Avery*

Commissioned

*Pauline A. Gehrs
Jean Legge
Melinda Needler
Arfon Steinbach*

The Mid-South District continues to pledge every God-given resource to fill vacancies as quickly as possible. We will support traditional residential seminary tracks and SMP as incentives for young men and second career men to consider work toward ministry. We will continue to partner with our congregations with education ministries to assist teachers to become rostered church workers through the teacher colloquy option through the Synod.

In the four years since the last Mid-South District Convention, the congregations of our District received thirty-five (35) newly ordained or installed into our ministries including:

Rev. Matthew Albright	Rev. Michael Edwards	Rev. Jeremy McDonald
Rev. Korey Jannecke	Rev. Dan Hawkins	Rev. Andrew Lehman
Rev. Willie Grills	Rev. Randall Lewis	Rev. Trae Fistler
Rev. Mark Bushuiakovish	Rev. Vincent Shemwell	Rev. Joshua Reifsteck
Rev. Michael Meyer	Rev. Joshua Schooping	ev. Jerome Leckband
Rev. Jonathan Holmes	Rev. Sawyer Meyers	Rev. Todd Bunge
Rev. Koh Yamamoto	Rev. Matthew Lynch	Rev. Patrick Cox, II
Rev. James Martin	Rev. Sean Smith	Rev. Addison Pope
Rev. Gerald Heinecke	Rev. Jon Petering	Rev. Steve Teske
Rev. Tom Boeck	Rev. Jacob Childers	Rev. Jeffrey King
Rev. Seth Korte	Rev. Adam Gless	Rev. Myles Schultz
Rev. Chase LeFort	Rev. Anthony Johnson	

The Mid-South District, partnering with our member congregations and dedicated members, continues to provide significant financial support for men and women in ministry education tracks. The District’s Scholarship Committee annually awards \$81,000 in direct financial aid to students from the Mid-South District. This last year 15 students in the Concordia University system and our Seminaries have received their share of \$81,000 of scholarship support from the Mid-South District and its partners.

With the retirement of Rev. Barry Hildebrandt who faithfully served for decades at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, the PALS program of Synod was left without a coordinator. Rev. Hildebrandt served tirelessly and faithfully, bringing assistance to new graduates from our seminaries in the Post-Seminary Applied Learning. Our thanks to Pastor Hildebrandt for his many years of faithful service. In order to continue in this vital program for our new seminary graduates, the Mid-South District has asked for Synod to appoint regionally specific pastors to carry on the work for the PALS program. The new coordinators include:

<u>PALS Coordinator</u>	<u>Region</u>
<u>Rev. Michael Meyer</u>	<u>Region I</u>
<u>Rev. Gregory Bauch</u>	<u>Region III</u>
<u>Rev. Kory Janneke</u>	<u>Region II</u>
<u>Rev. Adam Woldt</u>	<u>Region IV</u>

I have served on the Board of Directors of *Ministry Focus* since its inception. *Ministry Focus* also assists professional church workers in reducing their educational debts. The Mid-South District focuses its resources to contribute to *Ministry Focus* for workers within the Mid-South District’s ministries. Unassigned dollars from the scholarship applications is applied to those applicants screened by *Ministry Focus* to receive educational loan funds.

Retaining professional church workers requires the creation of positive work environments, salaries and wages consistent with the community’s cost of living indices and providing benefit packages that remove inordinate expenses for the family. Each year the Mid-South District staff researches national, statewide, and local economic data to bring suggested baseline salaries and benefits for our church workers. Keeping competitive salary and benefit packages will assist our congregations, school, and ECC’s to place professional workers from a diminishing pool of certified and rostered workers.

We have initiated discussions with the Concordia University System to consider an auxiliary campus of one or more of our Concordia Universities within the boundaries of the Mid-South District. Bringing undergraduate education to a geographically closer arrangement could enhance the possibility of filling those vital church worker vacancies that all Districts will face in the not to distant future. We have been blessed with 35 new commissioned workers called and/or placed into the Mid-South District, including:

Robin Moyer	Christina Childress	Sarah Barber	Jane Cole
Pamela Chatham	Laura Cleland	Marie De La Vega	Kelly Dressler
Jacqueline Duke	Christine Flohra	Andra Gates	Lucas Gerlach
Michelle Gerlach	Gracie Tidyman	Jenifer Haller	Shelli Haynes
Travis Haynes	Alta Hook	Aaron Jackson	Teresa Young
Andrea Kilpatrick	Linaya Kolke	Benjamin Kuefner	Amy Kurtz
Nathan LeBorious	Amy Waltz	Lisa Randall	Rhonda Tull
Stacy Meyer	Dawn Oldenettel	Emilie Pelayo	Rachel Schlie
Brittany Webb	Amy Shudy	Jacquelyn Magnuson	

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention in 2023, approved resolutions having to do with Church Worker Wellness. The Mid-South District has responded by engaging in an arrangement with Lutheran Family Services (LFS) to provide professional worker wellness access for all of our church workers beginning in 2025. In addition, LFS will be providing marriage counseling, adoption assistance, mental health consultations, pastoral ministry assistance, grief counseling, and many others in order to provide a supplement to the work our professional staffs do in our communities across the District.

Since Lutheran Family Services (located in Iowa) has never taken any federal funding, their work in the Mid-South District will enable our workers, congregations, and members to receive consultation that is fully and totally based on the doctrines and teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and our Lutheran Confessions. Worker wellness will be emphasized as an offering of rostered church workers who, along with pastoral counselor, will provide confidential and in-person assistance to our valued church workers and from rostered Deaconesses, Pastors, and licensed social workers.

In addition to worker wellness and concern for our professional church workers, the Mid-South District continues to offer Pastor’s Wives retreat times for the wives of our pastoral staff. Each year, a well-known speaker is invited to the District for a few days where pastor’s wives can come to a restful location and join with other wives to hear how their lives can be enriched with helpful ways to strengthen them in their role within the congregation and ministries.

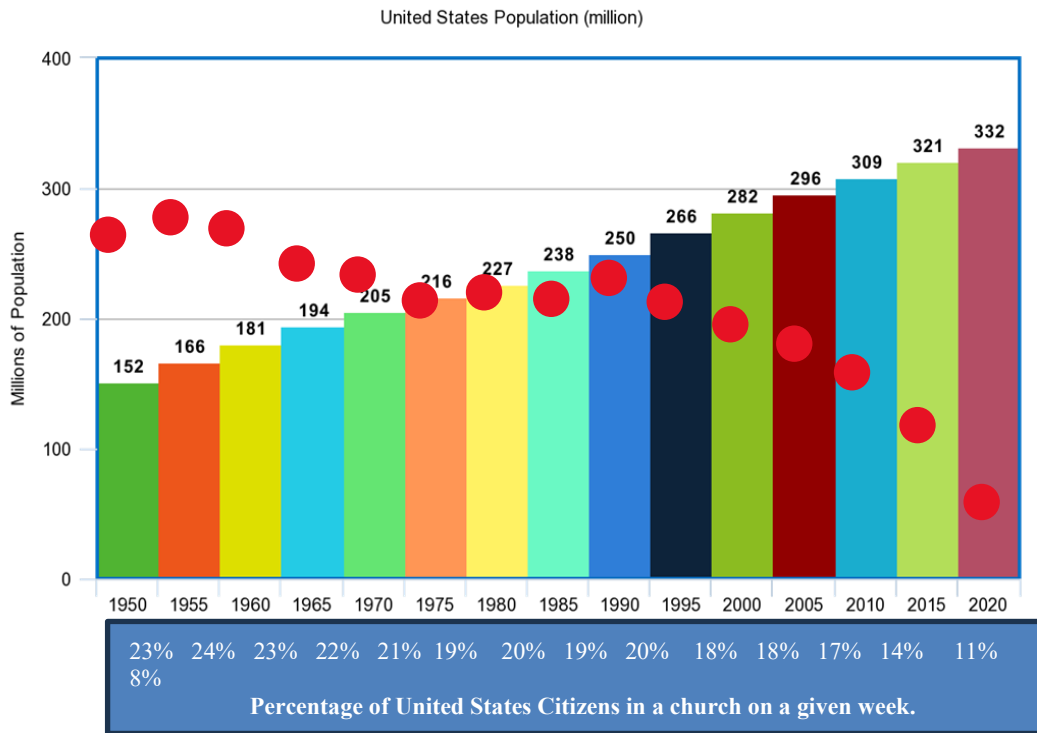
B. Strengthening Generational Faith Formation

The 2019 Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had three major Resolutions dealing with the matter of faith formation in the home and development of paths toward a stronger faith base for the next generations. The reality of declining church membership, reduced church attendance, younger generations avoiding any membership, and the predominance of alternatives to church membership has had significantly alarming results.

Bringing the next generations to become active church members is a challenge but also identifies the largest “mission field” in our country. For Christian families to live out their faith means being effective witnesses of the Gospel, beginning in the home. Bringing the Gospel to the rest of the community and the world will always grow from the foundation of family faith formation. But without this critical foundation of faith formation beginning in the home, the likelihood of the next generation of today’s children becoming active in the church of the future is significantly diminished.

The population of the United States has continued to grow at an accelerated rate. In the graph below, the population of the United States is plotted out that shows a growth that has nearly doubled the population from 1950 to 2020. Over that same period of time, the percentage of the population that

is connected to the Christian Church has not kept pace with the population growth. The graph below shows the population growth of the United States growing from 152 million in the 1950's to 332 million in 2020.



At the same time, the graph demonstrates the reported percentage of the population that is regularly part of the Christian Church. The historical retention of today's children becoming active members in the church for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been at or near 67% of our children remaining the church. As alarming that data seems to be, it is the highest of all mainline denominations as reported by the latest Pew Report on Church Membership.

Families are smaller, couples are being married later in life, and, in many cases, single-parent households have become commonplace. More concerning than this data, the makeup of the American public and their connection to any church or participation in a church has declined dramatically. Less than 25% of all households in the US are from the traditional nuclear family – father, mother, and children. Not surprisingly, over a third of children born in the US today are born out of wedlock.

The transition from the generation that has supported the church for decades is about to take a huge change. The Baby Boomer generation is transitioning from those who are active in the workplace toward retirement. They are being replaced by another generation that does not share the same views of Baby Boomers in their relationship to organized religion.

The transfer of over \$2 trillion of purchasing power is about to happen when the Millennial Generation receives the mantle of business, politics, and community. The size of families, the marital status, and composition of our church body will change. Furthermore, the total giving to religious organizations by the Baby Boomer generation exceeded \$98.6 billion which was 90% of the total giving by that generation. In comparison, giving to religious organizations by the upcoming generations has dropped dramatically. Total giving to churches by all generations is now estimated

to be 2.9% of total family income, the lowest percentage of giving since the Great Depression of 1929!

The emphasis of bringing the next generation into active participation in the Church for the next generation starts in the home. The Church needs to be a resource for the necessity of faith formation, it cannot effectively substitute the nuclear, traditional family. The difficulty discovered by the Pew Report is that Millennials are not only avoiding joining a church, but record numbers are leaving organized religion. The Pew Report estimates that only 15% of millennials have remained active in the church after reaching adulthood.

The challenge before the Church is clear: Bring the next generation into an understanding of our parental role in faith formation. St Paul wrote to Timothy, *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”* (II Timothy 3:14-16, ESV)

Generation to Generation (Gen2Gen) Data

- In 2012, Baby Boomers made 70% of all the income in the United States
- Baby Boomers supported churches at a rate of 90% or more of their giving
- By 2018, Baby Boomers were more than mid-way through their retirement eligibility
- Baby Boomers will earn no more than 20% of total earning power by decades end
- Millennial’s income will increase by over 50% of total earned US income
- \$60 trillion will be transferred from Baby Boomers to Millennials by 2030
- In America, people who are churchless will eclipse the church by 2030
- 45% of Millennials are post-Christian in their beliefs, thinking, and worldview

Furthermore, of those 15% of millennials who have maintained their membership in the church, only 3-5% of them attend church on a given Sunday. What is more, churches are now competing with over 500,000 new tax-exempt organizations in the United States that were given 501(c) 3 statuses during the Obama Administration. Animal Rights groups have increased their charitable income by over 18% in the last ten years while church charitable giving has declined by 3.8%. Social causes seem to resonate with the Millennial generation more than religion and religious organizations.

The Pew Research Group made the following startling observations after studying church groups over three decades:

- For a person who was principally taught faith formation through the church only, the retention to the next generation and when becoming an adult, was less than 20% remained in the church.
- However, a child who was reared in a family that taught and demonstrated a commitment to their faith, the retention of the person when they became an adult was over 65% of the time.

Further, the studies have consistently noted that a child reared in a family environment that promotes faith formation in the home are going to remain actively connected to the church as an adult in 81% of the cases. What is more startling is the role of the father in faith formation. The studies all conclude that if the father is *not* involved in the church; is not present in the home; or does not lead in faith formation, less than one-in-fifty (2%) young people will become active in a church when they reach adulthood.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the United States and around the world that basically confirm the standard conclusions on the importance of family in faith formation for the future generations. The value of a family foundation for faith formation, even when compared to faith formation through the church, finds the likelihood of a person becoming connected to a church as an adult is more than three times greater for a child reared in a God-fearing family, and principally when the father is present and active.

What has consistently been more dramatic relates to church attendance and the role of the father. When a father is present in the home and does not attend worship, even if the mother attends regularly, less than one in fifty children (2%) will be active in the church as adults. However, in contrast, if the father regularly attends worship – even if the mother never attends – between 1/2 to 3/4 of the children will be active church members as adults.

For this reason and for the importance of faith formation, the Mid-South District continues its relationship with the Concordia Center for the Family in an effort to bring a stronger awareness of faith formation and resources we can make available in its part in relationship to the traditional, nuclear family.

Moses wrote, *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”* (Deut 6:4-9, ESV)

Equipping, encouraging, and enabling our congregations to be aware of the opportunities and importance of faith formation for the next generations will be a part of the partnership we will continue supporting with offering **Each 1-Reach 1** workshops, work with our local LWML, bringing Best Practices conferences to our congregations in order to be good stewards of all that God has showered on our work in His Kingdom.

C. Providing Pastoral Coverage to Small and Rural Ministries

One of the most difficult part of being a District President is witnessing a congregation that has voted to disband or leave our Lutheran fellowship. The majority of congregations in the Mid-South District worship less than 100 souls per Sunday. The majority of congregations in the Mid-South District have less than 150 members. Their limitations of finances and the insufficient numbers of professional church workers available become a major challenge to our congregations.

Through the services provided by the Mid-South District with its Congregational Assessment Resource (**C.A.R.**) and its **COMPASS** services, many of the Mid-South District congregations that formerly faced membership, and financial challenges and used this service have seen positive results. Notably, rather than closing their doors, they have opened ministries and grown their congregations.

Of all the congregations that either disbanded or closed their ministries in the last 13 years, none of them ever engaged the Mid-South District to bring its **C.A.R.** and/or **COMPASS** services to their congregation. Even though there were some congregations who contemplated closure or combining with other congregations, the recommendations of the **COMPASS** reports have been at least partially implemented which has given them new strategic direction and vibrant ministries in those locations.

Small and Rural congregations that make up the majority of the Mid-South District are a vital part of the communities they serve and our District. The Mid-South District will continue to provide Small and Rural Congregation forums with the sharing of “Best Practices” and Circuit Convocations providing innovative ways to deepen their connection to the communities and bring unchurched citizens to become familiar with the Lutheran church in their area.

The Mid-South District is also working with the Missouri and Southern Districts to create ways to serve those congregations on the borders of our Districts. Grouping some of the smaller congregations into worshiping enclaves has begun in the Mid-South District. Even though Circuit Riders were used in the past generations to serve the Lutheran communities, a newer and more effective way to keep pastoral ministry in our small and rural congregations is the “Hub-and-Spoke” or Cathedral model of ministry.

Two such “Hub-and-Spoke” ministries have already begun, thus eliminating the inevitable closure of a congregation. One pastor or team of pastors will provide worship and pastoral coverage for the small and rural congregations, supported by one geographically central congregation that is large enough to support auxiliary pastoral leadership and service.

Northeastern Arkansas and North Central Arkansas are the areas where these ministries are being developed and operating. Other areas throughout the Mid-South District will be considered as the needs continue to arise. The focus is not merely to maintain a declining ministry, but to bring the Gospel message of Christ to the unchurched in those small and rural areas in the hope of revitalizing a self-sustaining and autonomous church.

The Board of Directors has approved a Resolution to provide *Locum Tenens* services to congregations with vacant pastoral positions. The *Locum Tenens* will be rostered pastor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod staff member of the Mid-South District. The pastor will be deployed to vacant congregations that experience an extended vacancy or are seeking new strategic positioning.

Unlike the Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) the LCMS shares with the AALC and ELCA bodies for training purposes, the *Locum Tenens* will be placed by a Call and eligible for a permanent Call to the congregation to which he is assigned. Because extended vacancies tend to experience downturns in attendance and vital ministry components, the *Locum Tenens* will work directly with the congregation leadership to keep vital mission and ministry an ongoing process.

D. Equipping Congregations for Ministry to People in Crisis.

Martin Luther wrote, “If anyone is bound to remain in peril of death in order to serve his neighbor, let him commit himself to God’s keeping and say: ‘Lord, I am in thy hands. Thou hast obligated me to serve here. Thy will be done, for I am thy poor creature. Thou canst slay or preserve me here as well as if I were duty bound to suffer fire, water, thirst, or some other danger.’ On the other hand, if anyone is not bound to serve his neighbor and is in a position to flee, let him also commit himself to God’s keeping and say: ‘Dear God, I am weak and afraid; I am therefore fleeing from this evil and am doing all that I can to defend myself against it. Nevertheless, I am in thy hands, whether in this or some other evil that may befall me. Thy will be done. My flight will not save me, for evils and misfortunes will assail me everywhere and the devil, who is a murderer from the beginning and tries to commit murder and cause misfortune everywhere, does not sleep or take a holiday.’”¹

God has given His Church – His elect – the resources to bring works of witness, mercy, compassion, and life together for the purpose of caring for those in need. The inhabitants of God’s creation that was fractured by sin will assuredly sometimes experience brokenness and peril. The Mid-South District has been blessed to offer acts of mercy and care to victims of natural disasters and victims of human assault.

In the past few years, the Mid-South District has offered a high-level view of the effects of the tragedy of human trafficking. Law enforcement and social service agencies have presented programs on the awareness of human trafficking in several locations throughout the Mid-South District. Because of the Interstate Highway system dissects our District, human trafficking incidents along Interstates 40, 65, and 75 are not uncommon. Therefore, providing an awareness of the effect on human lives has moved the District to provide in-kind comfort and assistance to the agencies who serve the victims and the personal assistance to the victims of human trafficking.

In addition, and on a much larger geographic nature, the Mid-South District has also created a large number of response teams to victims of natural disasters. The result of the hard work of the Mid-South District’s Disaster Relief Coordinator, Jan Simko, and the generous donations from our congregations, our members, and from mercy-minded citizens from across the country, the Mid-South District has been able to provide on-the-ground clean up and intervention for the victims, as well as monetary assistance for disaster victims who need help returning to their homes and jobs.

In the last four years, highly trained Disaster Response teams from across the District have not only provided chainsaw and cleanup crews, but because of the generosity of our members and willing donors throughout the country, the District has provided an incredible amount of \$936,300 for assistance to disaster victims and their families.

Rev. Trae Fistler, trained in chainsaw training, lift training, and disaster coordination heads the Mid-South District Disaster Response Team. Kurt Ludwig is the co-coordinator who is the “boots-on-the-ground” designee who meets with law enforcement, Civil Defense, and county/local social service agencies to identify and distribute needed funds to the victims. The national offices for Disaster Relief have deployed the Mid-South District teams to several other states where Disaster Relief resources are not as readily available or where the disaster response requires more teams.

These are just a small sample of what the coordinated effort of the congregations of the Mid-South District are doing to be the hands, feet, and eyes of Jesus to the communities we serve. Because of

¹ 1 Tappert, Theodore, ed., *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, nd, p. 239.

the dedicated commitments of the congregations of the Mid-South District, we are about the work of connecting ourselves to the communities we serve with the opportunity and encouragement to bring other from fear and darkness into the marvelous Light of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

F. Maintaining Financial Stability and Long-Range Fiscal Accountability

The Accountability Statement for Mid-South District is: The stronger the fiscal stewardship of the members of our congregations becomes, the stronger the congregation will be in stewardship, missions, and ministry. The stronger the congregations become, the stronger the District will be in its stewardship, ministry, and missions. The stronger the District becomes, the stronger The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will be. And the stronger the Missouri Synod becomes, the stronger the world-wide Lutheran Church will be in stewardship, missions and ministry.

Conducting our **C.A.R.** and **COMPASS** efforts in over 90 congregations and in 18 other Districts, we have discovered proper fiscal management to be a common difficulty. Congregations are faced with the need for balancing of maintenance, mortgage, mission, and ministry. However, to be consistent with biblical stewardship planning, the Mid-South District continues to sponsor a program in any congregation (and members or interested friends of the congregation) that may wish to have a field-tested program for their people in a “Lutheranized” biblical stewardship program. At the end of successfully completing the nationally recognized Financial Peace University (FPU) course, the participants will receive from the Mid-South District a full rebate of the entire cost of the program materials to participants who purchased and completed the FPU course.

The District is not exempt from fiscal concerns. Angela Fowler, Executive Director of Business and Finance, notes that the ability of the District to rely on congregational commitments for operations is down to 53% of our total operating budget. Last year, the Mid-South District spent 112% of congregational commitments from our partner churches for congregational services, world and national missions.

The services of the District’s operations, however, have continued to increase. Twelve years ago, we faced the same struggle to pay operating expenses and were forced to use reserves to cover operations. But, with the hard work of the staff and the Board of Directors, the District has increased our efficiency, expanded our effectiveness, and sought other sources of funding to supplement what would, otherwise, have been a deficit fiscal picture.

I am honored to state that the Mid-South District is in a fiscally sound position as we continue our mission and ministry. Focused on stewardship that is compliant with sound biblical and doctrinal principles of operational matters, the District has a strong fiscal position that is monitored on a constant regiment.

“Funding the Ministry” is a fund development effort that has raised over \$2 million for those participating congregations to expand their missions and ministries; or to make improvements to their existing ministries. More than 90% of those dollars raised remain with the congregations that have used the program. That program is available for any of our congregations, schools, agencies, ECC’s, or developing ministries.

“Leaving A Legacy” is a fund development program that earmarks future dollars from members who can benefit from a current donation designation, rather than delaying their financial advantage through or after their estate. At this time, over a dozen congregations have hosted the program highlights that could be of interest to willing and dedicated donors in their estate planning.

Paul Reaves was offered a full-time Fund Development officer's position after he left his position with LCEF. Paul opted to begin an independent fund-raising effort and contracted with the Mid-South District to continue the great work he has done for the District since 2013. We extend our sincere thanks to Paul for his years of work with the Mid-South District and look forward to many more years of work in his Fund Development efforts.

Upon Ralph Weiser's death in 2016, the Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry Award was established by the Mid-South District to honor his legacy. Ralph Weiser dedicated so much to the mission outreach of the Mid-South District and church planting efforts for the many decades of his work with the District and President Norm Groteluschen. Through their combined talents and hard work, Ralph and Rev. Groteluschen were leaders in church planting and developing ministries from the inception of the Mid-South District in 1967 and even to this day.

The District annually selects a recipient who represent the same commitment for missions and ministries of the District. Since the last District Convention, the Board of Directors have selected the recipients who exemplify this dedication. Each recipient receives \$5000 toward a LCMS ministry of their choice to receive the Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry grant. The recipients since our last Mid-South District Convention include:



G. Trends in American Lutheran Christianity

Dealing with the trends of American Christianity, the Mid-South District and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are not immune to the decline in membership affecting every mainline denomination in America. The decline can be identified as resulting from the major changes that reflect a changing demographic of cultures in the United States. Not only are fewer people identifying with church membership in the last 25 – 50 years, but traditional family units have become smaller and more concentrated away from the small family farm and shifting to be nearer to the cities.

Families are no longer the same core nuclear family of the 1950's and 1960's. There are more single-parent households in some of our cities than there are two-parent households. The Supreme Court of the United States has also made it possible for non-traditional families where two men, two women, or multiple parties are involved in parenting. Court enforced allowance of adoption into non-traditional family settings will present a greater challenge to the church bodies of the United States than ever before.

The Mid-South District has been required to change the ways in which we deliver support and resources to our congregations, schools, and professional church workers. The needs for support and services have increased while an understandable and declining commitment from congregations, create a larger demand for creative financial support.

Regionalization that captures the skills and resources of existing staff that are deployed throughout the District has enabled the District to respond positively to the congregations' needs and reduce the travel time required in our large geographic District. We have relied on the resources of the Synod in areas of Small and Rural Congregations, Outreach, and Evangelism. We will renew our efforts after the mandated pandemic shutdowns to bring vital and encouraging innovations that may be replicated in other locations.

The importance of the role of each congregation and each member of the congregations is stressed by the fact that, without individual and congregational support, the District could not operate as effectively in its role as an extension of the Synod in this place. The emergence of essential services and strategic development will require created structures and utilization of the skills and gifts of our entire workers' team throughout the entire District.

The marketing and public relations functions of the District have offered information about the essential services of the District that will respond to the needs of the people we serve. The Mid-South District website is designed to offer in-depth information and ease of access for anyone interested in, or in need of the services available through the District.

Our staff members have been selected to represent the Synod in vital services for other congregations and workers of other District, indicating that what the Mid-South District is doing in its work goes beyond our borders. Workers and services of the District have moved the District's capabilities to other Districts. The Mid-South District personnel serve at a Synodical level in international missions; business and financial leadership; worker pensions; disability and healthcare; and educational development areas.

A Beta-Study for Youth and Family Ministries has gone through the process to find the interested congregations for the Generation-to-Generation program (G2G). Leaders from our District have worked to bring about an assessment and re-evaluation of the committee's objectives to strengthen "Family Ministry and Faith Formation." As a result of the 2019 Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Mid-South District became the "test site" for a Synod-wide program to address the issues of faith formation and declining participation of whole generations who have been led away from active church membership.

Professor Ben Freudenberg from Concordia University-Ann Arbor helped formulate the studies that offer metrics to determine what elements of family-based biblical instruction and faith sharing are needed. Currently, nine congregations have agreed to be part of the Beta-Study. Their study participation will be used as an overture to the next convention of the Synod and help identify key factors that will "bring the young people back to church."

Our Generation-to-Generation project received overwhelming support as a study model for the rest of Synod. We have submitted a report to the Council of Presidents on the findings and methodologies we have developed to evaluate ways Synod and other Districts can work to keep our young adults active in the church, and ways to have families become more deeply involved in faith formation for future generations.

H. The Outlook for the Future of The Mid-South District

The membership trends of each circuit and the Mid-South District overall draws our attention to the needs of each community, and especially the places where we currently have a Lutheran “footprint.” The table below indicates the changes that have taken place in each circuit over the last few years.

Year	Number of Congregations	Confirmed Members	Baptized Members	Weekly Attendance*
2017	125	22,197	26,134	12,842
2018	125	21,889	25,342	11,612
2019	123	21,484	25,342	11,612
2020	122	21,164	24,874	8,826
2021	123	21,014	24,632	9,166
2022	121	20,837	24,624	10,126
2023	120	19,964	23,372	10,750
2024+				

*The data from 2020 is spurious due to the COVID mandatory shut-down

+Not all of the congregations have reported for the 2024 calendar year.

Prior to the Synodical Convention in 2026, the MDS will need to consider some modification to the current Circuit arrangements. Synod Bylaws require a minimum of 1,500 confirmed members, at least 7 congregations, and congregations geographically in a contiguous relationship. We currently have 12 electoral circuits and 1 (Johnson City) visitation circuit.

We have historically had 12 circuits represented at the Synod convention, giving us 24 voters. However, the MDS has been losing membership, as are all the other Districts of the LCMS. Our District and the others will be having fewer delegates at the Synod’s 2026 convention. The Mid-South District has dropped our confirmed membership below the 21,000 mark we had for the Synod’s 2023 convention.

Although Synod is considering changes in the overall circuit designations, representation at the next Synod convention will be based on the current requirements. The membership of Synod and its districts are dropping dramatically. The changes in minimum requirements for circuit designations would not be considered and approved until after the Synod 2026 Convention.

Based on incomplete data reported (75% of our congregations reported) to Synod, our confirmed membership and number of congregations has declined. Our Board of Directors is requesting an exemption to the Little Rock South and Jonesboro Circuits which will allow us to have two representatives from those circuit at the Synod’s 2026 Convention in Phoenix. We will be re-aligning circuit boundaries in order to keep our representation at an optimal level in the Synod.

Circuit	Member Congregations	Confirmed Members	Baptized Members	Over or Under
Chattanooga	8	1154	1901	-342
Fort Smith	9	886	992	-614
Jonesboro	13	1380	1703	-120
Knoxville	12	2808	3194	+1308
Fayetteville	9	1601	1790	+101
Little Rock North	11	1209	1401	-291
Little Rock South	8	2325	2895	+825

Memphis	11	2194	2697	+694
Nashville	8	1683	2246	+183
Middle Tennessee	8	1469	1739	-31
Circuit	Member Congregations	Confirmed Members	Baptized Members	Over or Under
Paducah	8	1551	2036	+51
Stuttgart	8	668	798	-832
Johnson City	5	406	443	-1057
Totals	118	20,270	21,459	-5

- A. By combining the Fort Smith visitation circuit with Stuttgart's visitation circuit, we can maintain 1554 confirmed members in 17 congregations for an electoral circuit.
- B. Keeping Knoxville Electoral Circuit at 2808 confirmed members.
- C. Keeping Paducah Electoral Circuit at 1551 confirmed members.
- D. Keeping Memphis Electoral Circuit at 2194 confirmed members.
- E. Keeping Nashville Electoral Circuit at 1683 confirmed members.
- F. Keeping Fayetteville Electoral Circuit at 1601 confirmed members.
- G. Chattanooga Circuit (1154 confirmed) can be joined with the Johnson City Visitation Circuit (443 confirmed) brings 1597 confirmed for an electoral circuit. In order to do so, we would need to bring the southeasternmost congregation in the Knoxville Circuit to the Chattanooga Circuit.
- H. The Middle Tennessee and Nashville Circuits will move one congregation from the Nashville Circuit to maintain the electoral circuit without exemption.
- I. The Jonesboro Circuit will request exemption from Synod at 1380 confirmed members.
- J. The Little Rock South will request exemption from Synod at 1326 confirmed members.

What this means to the Mid-South District is that we will have (pending approval of Synod of our application for exemption) only 10 electoral circuits compared to the 12 we have had in the past several conventions. Interestingly, what has happened to the Mid-South District since its inception is worthy of noting.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONGREGATIONS and CONTRIBUTIONS

Year	Communicant Membership	Number of Congregations	Total Congregation Commitments
1966	11,813	80	\$332,640
1967	18,103	84	\$337,354
1968	18,478	86	\$404,745
1969	19,089	89	\$429,314
1970	19,784	89	\$458,517
1971	20,321	90	\$467,870
1972	21,294	91	\$496,517
1973	21,892	95	\$526,258
1974	22,458	96	\$574,494
1975	22,953	95	\$624,695
Year	Communicant Membership	Number of Congregations	Total Congregation Commitments
1976	23,410	96	\$629,882
1977	24,043	97	\$663,448
1978	24,270	100	\$735,218
1979	25,153	99	\$797,536
1980	25,301	103	\$889,671
1981	25,857	102	\$955,436
1982	26,617	102	\$1,026,825
1983	27,122	105	\$1,074,009
1984	27,054	105	\$1,118,841
1985	27,550	109	\$1,216,500
1986	28,877	109	\$1,248,640
1987	28,447	111	\$1,297,348
1988	29,019	112	\$1,383,089
1989	29,343	114	\$1,497,768
1990	29,569	117	\$1,552,167
1991	29,751	115	\$1,565,729
1992	29,791	116	\$1,521,939
1993	29,700	115	\$1,509,514
1994	30,760	115	\$1,544,948
1995	34,035	118	\$1,601,208
1996	35,195	121	\$1,624,681
1997	34,702	123	\$1,668,866
1998	32,784	129	\$1,699,548
1999	33,318	130	\$1,705,900
2000	32,860	131	\$1,733,194
2001	30,887	129	\$1,779,485
2002	29,852	123	\$1,837,414
2003	29,971	124	\$1,864,168
2004	30,390	129	\$1,773,409
2005	30,912	131	\$1,759,495
2006	30,641	127	\$1,775,270
2007	30,388	128	\$1,817,584
2008	29,258	128	\$1,840,832
2009	28,505	131	\$1,644,018
2010	27,989	134	\$1,573,043
2011	23,934	135	\$1,671,704
2012	23,375	131	\$1,696,333

2013	22,449	130	\$1,618,707
2014	21,793	129	\$1,629,888
2015	21,663	125	\$1,676,926
2016	21,758	126	\$1,607,924
2017	22,197	125	\$1,558,963
2018	21,889	124	\$1,542,151
2019	21,443	123	\$1,532,274
2020	21,014	123	\$1,538,970
2021	20,903	121	\$1,475,215
2022	20,810	121	\$1,517,889
2023	19,964	121	\$1,564,770
2024	(Not yet available)	120	\$1,639,545

We must once again forge a team effort with the Mid-South District’s congregations, the LWML and other interested people to engage, equip, encourage, and enable each member of our District, approximately 20,000 communicant members, to become ambassadors of the Gospel of Christ. After the pandemic’s shut-down, we will re-establish a task force for Reaching the Lost by Arming the Saints in personal evangelism, consistent with the Synodical Resolution calling for us all as - “Everyone His Witness” and our own *Each-1 Reach-1*.

We will continue to expand Tuesday Sermon Studies to provide assistance and discussion for pastors and interested members to a deeper understanding of the God’s Word from the lessons appointed by the Lectionary. It will ideally include study of the original languages that demonstrate God’s overflowing, pure grace and love for His people.

We will continue every possible effort to move the dedicated men who are interested in Word and Sacrament ministry to become ordained pastors, consistent with Synodical Resolution 13-02A. Through the Residence options, SMP options (Specific Ministry Pastors), and continued financial assistance to the educational tracks in our seminaries, essential resources from the District will be made available.

We will continue to hold Town Hall Meetings in order offer information about the resources offered by the District, and, through Essential Services Surveys solicit questions, concerns, and advice from members on what the District needs to do and be to best serve our constituencies.

We will expand the resources and content of our small and rural ministry support by offering “Best Practices Forums” that highlight and offer helpful information on what other successful ministries in the Rural and Small Town Ministry (RSTM) can share with other congregations and schools.

We will continue to expand and promote the Mid-South District’s strategic planning instrument, **C.A.R.** (Congregational Assessment Resource) and **COMPASS**, that offers intricate detailed information on the current operations of every congregation’s ministry, missions and educational resources, compared to the other congregations in the **C.A.R.** pool. The **C.A.R.** and **COMPASS** tools offer observation of findings and recommendations acquired from current congregational activities, members, congregation leadership, demographics, and the community.

We will increase our activity to identify future church workers from within the congregations of the District – either from graduating high school students or second-career men and women who show interest, aptitude, and skills to serve in the Church. Providing additional student scholarships and assistance in education debt relief will help remove much of the financial deterrent facing potential servants of the church.

Because of the ever-changing demographics of our communities and cities, the Mid-South District will seek information and response to the multicultural ethnic groups moving into our District to identify additional opportunities to expand ethnic ministries in partnership with our local congregations. African American, Middle Eastern, African, Asian, and Hispanic opportunities will provide abundant ministry possibilities in most, if not all, of the areas within the Mid-South District.

We will refine and assess the matrix of Church Planting in order to optimize the potential for successful planting opportunities in accordance with God’s Will. The demographics of a changing geography will be stressed, along with means testing that will minimize the risk of extended plantings that do/will not result in a chartered congregation. Following the Synod’s Church Planting Simplified, the Mid-South District will include long-range efforts for the successful church plants to be “mothering” congregations to plant additional congregations, and auxiliary campus development stemming from the matrix of the church plant’s experience and demographics.

We will establish a special team of experienced church planters and administrative people to bring a more robust focus on potential church planting locations, the metrics of accountabilities, and operational expectations that will be presented to the overall administration of the Mid-South District and its governing body. Choosing pastors familiar with church planting will bring a more diverse interests in key areas of the District where church planting stands optimal opportunity for establishing a self-supporting congregation.

We will partner with congregations, schools, and ECC’s where there is unused capacity of their facilities to explore the possibilities of planting schools, micro-schools, home school co-ops, daycare, and ECC’s. Most of our congregations open their doors for only a few hours a week. Possible virtual schools (which could include virtual high schools) may exist as an alternative to the varied concerns that exist in the parent’s minds with children in large public.

A parochial school setting in an online format with social interaction can be accomplished as an alternative to homeschooling. Our congregations may consider either virtual schools or congregation-sponsored schools that will serve as an outreach link to the community and a safe environment with a ministry wrap-around. District designated and restricted funds can be deployed in significant ways to plant these educational ministries that could bring the Lutheran message to a larger community.

We will expand the offering of Biblical stewardship training for the members of our member congregations. Through Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University, the Mid-South District is finding ways to strengthen the local congregation in its stewardship education, thereby making the congregation, the District, and the Synod able to continue to provide essential services for our Church and the workers who serve Christ’s people.

We will continue to support Lutheran international missions and ministries for those developing Lutheran missions around the world. Our support for the SELVD (Tanzania), Trinity/Hope’s Haitian ministries, and Malagasy Evangelical Lutheran Church will continue with the generous and

dedicated support of the partnering members of our Mid-South District congregations. The support will include continued contributions to the ministry education of the workers in those countries, and seminary education in our LCMS Seminaries for future professorial workers that enables those ministries to gain local and indigenous support.

Conclusion

It is a great honor to have served as President of the Mid-South District since 2012. I pray that God will continue to lead and guide us together in a partnership where the God-given gifts of our members and leadership can joyfully be at work for the Great Commission. Because our tremendous work has yielded wonderful results, I give full credit to the outstanding leadership of the Board of Directors of the Mid-South District who have supported the efforts of our staff. Together, through the combined dedicated efforts of the Board and staff, we have created a working environment that is second-to-none! Every board member brings their special skills and talents that God has seen fit to provide for this great organization.

What is more, the dedicated and hard-working staff of the Mid-South District has made it possible for us to offer greater efficiencies and effectiveness for the good of our member congregations and the professional church workers of our District. By providing leadership in missions, ministry, and operations for our Synod and District, our staff is the finest ever!

When I hear about what is happening in other Districts, what concerns they have, and the many difficulties they face, I am humbled that I can serve with our great staff, the Board of Directors, and the supportive and dedicated people in our congregational memberships for the success of, what I believe, is the best District for this time, and in this place with which God has blessed us. It is truly an honor to serve with you all in our great Mid-South District!

Respectfully submitted,

**Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President
Mid-South District, LCMS**





Resolution 01-01-25

SUBJECT: To Reaffirm Church Planting

(Reference Overture(s) 01-01-25 printed on page 168 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** Jesus commands the church to go and make disciples by baptizing, teaching (*Matthew 28:18*) and seeking the lost as our foremost priority (*Luke 19:10*); and
- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod noted in 2019 Res. 1-02, that “*From its inception The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been a church planting body. Church planting arises out of God’s desire that ‘all people be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth’ (1 Tim. 2:4). It rests on the promise that God will accomplish His will through His people as He empowers and strengthens them through His gifts of Word and Sacrament.*” 2019 *Proceedings*, 116; and
- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod noted in 2019 Res. 4-03A, that one of the seven mission priorities previously affirmed at the 2016 Synod convention is to “plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches;” and
- WHEREAS,** 2019 Resolution 4-03A also established “*Making Disciples for Life* as its mission and ministry emphasis for the 2019-2022 triennium” and directed the Office of National Mission...to “resource congregations, schools, circuits and districts to do the following:
- evangelize and disciple the lost;
 - retain the faithful;
 - strengthen congregations and schools;
 - plant new congregations and schools wherever possible, especially in urban and multi-cultural communities; and
 - engage in international mission in partnership with the Office of International Mission; and be it finally
- Resolved*, That the Synod encourage all LCMS districts, congregations and schools to make use of the *Making Disciples for Life* resources and tools as these become available;” and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has a rich history of starting new ministries which focus on reaching the lost; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has started many ministries which boldly share the Good News of Jesus while maintaining doctrinal and theological integrity; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District Board of Directors has adopted the *Church and Ministry Covenant* that “sets the expectations for working with a church planter, alongside a mother church and other area churches, for future church plants;” and
- WHEREAS,** Recent church planting initiatives reached many people with the Gospel who previously had little or no connection to the church; and
- WHEREAS,** The most recent self-sustaining church plants have come as a result of circuit and/or “mother church” formats, therefore be it

- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District in convention affirms the initiatives of the District’s Church Planting effort, and the congregations and pastors actively involved in new church planting activities that focus on reaching the lost consistent with Synod policy for *Church Planting Simplified*; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District establish partnerships with circuits and congregations who are willing to initiate and support ongoing church planting efforts consistent with the policies and guidelines established by the Mid-South District Board of Directors in the Church and Ministry Covenant that will “stand firm and hold to the traditions that [we] were taught” (2 Thess. 2:15, cf. AC Art. XXIV, 1) in the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and our Lutheran identity and heritage, while affirming the “right, authority, and power [for each church plant] to change, reduce, or increase ceremonies according to its circumstances, as long as it does so without frivolity and offense but in an orderly and appropriate way” (SD Art. X, 9); and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That Mid-South District circuits, congregations and schools be encouraged to utilize resources from the Office of National Mission and *Making Disciples for Life* in their church planting and evangelism efforts, and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That we give thanks to God for the congregations, workers, and members involved in planting new congregations which boldly share the Gospel of Jesus in their respective communities.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 01-02-25

SUBJECT: To Continue a Relationship with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania

(Reference Overtures 01-02-25 and 01-03-25 printed on pages 170-172 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has had a long relationship with the Southeast of Lake Victoria diocese, working in consultation with and encouraged by the office of the Synod President and the Board for International Mission; and
- WHEREAS,** The Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) in convention has made a conscious effort to partner with a confessional Lutheran church body and has strengthened the relationship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS); and
- WHEREAS,** Mid-South District leaders, in consultation with the office of the Synod President and in conjunction with Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, have sought ways to provide solid confessional Lutheran education and training for pastors and leaders in the SELVD; and
- WHEREAS,** There continue to be great humanitarian needs in the country of Tanzania and in the regions of Shinyanga and Mwanza; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District continues working with the SELVD to encourage them to work diligently in their confessional Lutheran identity; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That in this relationship, the Mid-South District focus funding of \$12,500 on specific education and training held in Tanzania for pastors, deaconesses, and lay evangelists of the SELVD in which LCMS instructors provide theological instruction; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That in this relationship, the Mid-South District work with leaders of the LCMS and its seminaries in providing \$12,500 for scholarships for SELVD pastoral candidates to study for higher degrees at our LCMS seminaries; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That in the spirit of good Christian stewardship a report be published to the 2028 Mid-South District in convention detailing the allocation of these funds; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That congregations and schools in the Mid-South District be encouraged to continue supporting humanitarian efforts to assist the people living in Tanzania through short term mission trips in coordination with the Office of International Mission and the Mid-South District; and be it finally

RESOLVED,

That we thank God for the opportunity to participate in this partnership that has seen the Word of God shared with tens of thousands of Tanzanians.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 01-03-25

SUBJECT: **To Continue a Relationship with the Confessional Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar**

(Reference Overture(s) 01-04-25 printed on page 173 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, The Mid-South District has a growing relationship with the Malagasy Lutheran Church, working in consultation with and encouraged by the office of the Synod President and the Board for International Mission; and

WHEREAS, The Malagasy Lutheran Church in convention has made an overture to partner with a confessional Lutheran church body and will have its request formally considered for altar and pulpit fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) at its next Synodical Convention; and

WHEREAS, Mid-South District leaders, in consultation with the office of the Synod President, and in conjunction with Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, have provided solid confessional Lutheran education and training for pastors and leaders in the Malagasy Lutheran Church; and

WHEREAS, There continue to be great humanitarian needs in the country of Madagascar; and

WHEREAS, The Mid-South District has supported opportunities for students in Madagascar to attend the Malagasy Lutheran Church’s “Lutheran Institute of Managerial Enterprise (LIME University)”; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District continue to encourage the Malagasy Lutheran Church to work diligently in their confessional Lutheran identity as they seek official relations with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in this relationship, the Mid-South District focus funding of \$25,000 on support of ministries and missions of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, including LIME, and on specific education and training held in Madagascar for pastors and lay evangelists of the Malagasy Lutheran Church whereby LCMS instructors provide theological instruction; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in the spirit of good Christian stewardship a report be published to the 2028 Mid-South District in convention detailing the allocation of these funds; and be it finally

RESOLVED,

That congregations and schools in the Mid-South District be encouraged to continue supporting humanitarian efforts to assist the people living in Madagascar through fundraising and short term mission trips in coordination with the Office of International Mission and the Mid-South District.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by majority vote of 75.6%, 115-37
The Rev. Larry A. Peters**



Omnibus Resolution 01-04-25

SUBJECT: To Commend Trinity Hope

(Reference Overture(s) 01-05-25 printed on page 175 of Convention Workbook)

With full support of this overture, the floor committee recognizes that Resolution 02-01-21 passed by the 2021 Mid-South District Convention remains in effect commending Trinity Hope, and we refer this overture to the Mid-South District Board of Directors while we joyfully await a report on the good Christian stewardship of the allocated funds.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 02-01-25

SUBJECT: To Maintain Accountability and Transparency for Financial Gifts from God's Stewards

(Reference Overture(s) 02-06-25 printed on page 185 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District strives to provide full accountability and transparency to all members of the District and is continually seeking improvement to providing this information in a timely manner; and
- WHEREAS,** Donors and members of The Mid-South District are interested in the impact of funds raised and a fuller accounting of special appeals and appreciate improved financial accountability and transparency; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District recognizes the need to maintain accurate financial reporting and transparency in all areas, including special appeals; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District, meeting in convention, maintain financial transparency and accountability by establishing an Accountability and Transparency page on the District website ; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That The Mid-South District continue to recognize the desire of donors and members to maintain and expand processes of reporting and work to provide clear, timely, and transparent accounting for all funding and special appeals so that the Body of Christ may experience the joy of Gospel-centered mission and ministry beyond the local context or community; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District use all reasonable avenues to enhance such reporting through its varied communication channels, including the dissemination of an official District annual report.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 02-02-25

SUBJECT: To Encourage Financial Support for Professional Church Workers

(Reference Overture 02-05-25 printed on page 183 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The Synod in Convention in 2016 passed Res. 18-03A which stated
“Whereas, the Synod continues to pray that our Lord would send faithful laborers into the harvest fields (Luke 10:2); and
- WHEREAS,** Student indebtedness can be a deterrent for potential professional church workers; and
- WHEREAS,** The Synod takes seriously the Lord’s command that, ‘the worker is worthy of his wage,’ (1 Timothy 5:18); and
- WHEREAS,** The cost of higher education has increased at a substantially higher rate than anticipated potential income; and
- WHEREAS,** The typical salaries for professional church workers may make it difficult to sustain a household and also repay the incurred debt; and
- WHEREAS,** Student indebtedness can discourage healthy stewardship; and
- WHEREAS,** One of the Synod’s foundational objectives is, ‘to recruit and train pastors, teachers, and other professional church workers and provide opportunity for their continuing growth’ (Constitution, Article III 3); and
- WHEREAS,** Research done by the LCMS seminaries has shown that undergraduate debt and personal finance management contribute significantly to subsequent educational loan debt; and
- WHEREAS,** Student indebtedness is a well-documented burden; and
- WHEREAS,** In order to qualify for federal loan programs, our seminaries and universities are being forced to accommodate federal Department of Education policies that may be in conflict with our shared beliefs and practices in the Synod; and
- WHEREAS,** In order to become a certified professional church worker in the LCMS, students are required to attend a Concordia University System school or an LCMS seminary; and

- WHEREAS,** Attending a Concordia University System school also well equips men for subsequent seminary training; and
- WHEREAS,** The seminaries are pursuing making financial counseling available to all students; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the leadership of our Concordia seminaries and universities/colleges explore alternate funding sources apart from federal loans; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That schools in the Concordia University System provide financial counseling to church worker students throughout their academic careers; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the congregations and ministries of the Synod identify and raise up the next generation of leaders for the ministry of the church and support them financially in obtaining their training; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That districts of the Synod be encouraged to develop means by which they may financially assist students preparing for church work careers and current church workers.” (Resolution 18-03, Proceedings, 262-263); therefore, be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District evaluate and develop a financial assistance program to assist students attending Concordia University System schools in church work tracts and seminaries; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District continue to fund designated contributions to *Ministry* Focus for District professional church workers; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District establish additional funding, allocated from the 2025 District Sunday and Designated Convention Offerings for a Scholarship Fund for Pastors and Commissioned Church Workers burdened with significant educational debt.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by a majority vote of 64.3%, 99 – 55
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 02-03-25

SUBJECT: **To Propose *LCMS Men's Ministry***

(Reference Overture(s) 02-07-25 printed on page 186 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, Christ warns us that in the last days “Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold (Matthew 24:12) and “when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:8); and Saint Paul admonishes us “Watch you, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13 NASB); and

WHEREAS, Christian men face increasing hostility from a culture that speaks of “toxic masculinity” and mocks their faith in God; and

WHEREAS, Just as athletes and soldiers have a better chance of success when working together, Scripture teaches: “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) would reap inestimable benefits from a Christ-centered, Bible-based Men’s Ministry; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we encourage all congregations to become part of LCMS Men’s Ministry to provide opportunities for all Christian men to:

- Encourage their LCMS brothers in spiritual growth by regular Bible study, prayer, and gatherings on the Congregation, Circuit, District and Synod level;
- Build strong families as faithful sons, brothers, husbands, fathers and grandfathers;
- Confess the Faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3);
- Provide for and Protect the Church and her Pastors
- Visit orphans and widows in their affliction (James 1:27)

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 02-04A-25

SUBJECT: To Establish Locum Tenens Ministry for the Mid-South District

(Reference Overture(s) 02-01-25 printed on page 176 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The vacancy rate of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is over 10% of the calling congregations of Synod; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has experienced extended vacancies in some of its congregations over the last decade that have exceeded 2 or more years; and
- WHEREAS,** Congregations that have experienced long and extended vacancies have experienced a significant decline in attendance, contributions, and membership; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District works to keep its vacancy rate beneath the Synodical average; and
- WHEREAS,** The number of candidates graduating from the Synod's two seminaries continues to be at a rate of less than 100 MDiv. candidates per year, and
- WHEREAS,** The number of pastors eligible to retire from full-time ministry service is expected to increase to 25-30% of the currently rostered ordained pastors in the next five years, therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District Call at least one ordained, rostered pastor to perform *Locum Tenens* Services for vacant congregations in the District; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District place *Locum Tenens* pastors at the request of a vacated congregation on contract; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District may contract the *Locum Tenens* to other districts in the case that no congregations of the Mid-South District are in need or have submitted requests for Locum Tenens services; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the placement of the Locum Tenens be allowed to be Called to a vacant congregation pending the Call and Acceptance of a Call by the Locum Tenens pastor; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** The District President and Board of Directors provide an analysis and report of this program and its use to the next District Convention.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 02-05A-25

SUBJECT: To Address Theological Errors and Call Repentance for The Church's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Reference Overture(s) 02-02-25 and 02-03-25 printed on page 177-180 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** God commands, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8); and
- WHEREAS,** Our Lord and Savior proclaims, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4); and
- WHEREAS,** The apostle Peter declares, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29); and
- WHEREAS,** The Scriptures admonish Christians to “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25); and
- WHEREAS,** One’s Christian liberty should not be determined by someone else’s conscience (1 Corinthians 10:29); and
- WHEREAS,** Regarding the Sacrament of the Altar, the Large Catechism teaches “some allow themselves to be hindered and held up by the excuse that we have taught that no one should approach the Sacrament except those who feel hunger and thirst, which drive them to it. Some pretend that it is a matter of liberty and not necessary. They pretend it is enough to believe without it. For the most part, they go so far astray that they become quite brutish, and finally despise both the Sacrament and the God’s Word.” (Large Catechism V.41 [McCain]); and
- WHEREAS,** Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic by congregations, pastors, Synod leadership, and affiliated educational institutions included the cancellation of communal, in-person worship services, the erroneous administration of the Sacrament the Altar virtually or online, the urging of experimental and controversially-sourced vaccinations, and the submission to the governmental mandates; and
- WHEREAS,** These responses inculcated in God’s flock and the world at-large the ideas that communal, in-person worship is nonessential, that worship of God should give way to earthly fear, and that public opinion or government demand can supersede the command of God; and
- WHEREAS,** These responses undoubtedly led to a burdening of Christian consciences and false accusations of not loving one’s neighbor as oneself; and
- WHEREAS,** The alarming extent of closures were documented in the December 2020 issue of *Reporter*, stating, “Only 15% of LCMS congregations held in-person church services on Easter Sunday”; and
- WHEREAS,** The great societal distress over the COVID-19 pandemic ought to have compelled the Church to keep her doors open; and

- WHEREAS,** The examples of Daniel, Nehemiah, and the Ninevites (Daniel 9:3ff; Nehemiah 1:4ff; Jonah 3:6ff) show corporate repentance to be God-pleasing and salutary; therefore be it
- Resolved,** That we commend the desires of faithful pastors to care for their flocks in a time of pandemic, granting charity due to the nature of the situation confronting the Church because “the Blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us of all sins” (1 John 1:7b; and be it further
- Resolved,** That in such future crises, the Church with her pastors would neither prohibit nor suspend the opportunity for communal, in-person worship, but allow the sheep who desire the comfort and strength of the Gospel to accompany their pastors; and be it further
- Resolved,** That those who are hindered from receiving the Sacrament of the Altar be encouraged to reject online or virtual Communion and only accept in-person administration of the Sacrament and content themselves with the power of the Word of God and the exercise of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and be it finally
- Resolved,** That the 2025 Mid-South District convention submit to the 2026 LCMS Synod convention an overture with similar resolutions, also asking Synod to acknowledge the theological and ecclesial errors committed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic , to call those who authorized or promoted such errors to repentance, and to publicly encourage all Synod congregations, pastors, Synod leadership and affiliated educational institutions to reflect soberly on these failures and to reaffirm, with renewed conviction, their fidelity to Christ, His Word, and the public ministry of Word and Sacrament, especially in times of crisis.

CONVENTION ACTION

**Declined by majority vote of 53.5%, 84-73
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 02-06A-25

SUBJECT: Ten Commandments

(Reference Overture(s) 02-04-25 printed on page 181 of Convention Workbook)

- Whereas,** this resolution fails to bring the fundamental issues discussed to the convention in a positive light; and
- Whereas,** Exodus 20:5-6, "I the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments" is quoted in the text of the Small Catechism; and
- Whereas,** the resolution calls into question the text of the Small Catechism and thus the doctrinal fidelity of the Lutheran Confession and our subscription thereto; and
- Whereas,** a decision concerning doctrine and confessional documents are outside the purview of a district convention; therefore, be it
- Resolved,** the floor committee respectfully declines to present this overture to the Mid-South District Convention and commends its content to the Committee on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR); and be it finally
- Resolved,** we commend this overture to Omnibus Resolution C.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted as amended by majority vote of 91.9%, 124-11
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 03-01-25

SUBJECT: **To Shape the Faith Formation Paradigm from Generation to Generation Ministry**

(Reference Overture(s) 03-01-25 printed on page 187 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, in Convention in 2019 passed Resolution 12-04A3, “To Encourage Lifelong Catechesis in the Home and Church”; and

WHEREAS, The Mid-South District has partnered with Concordia Center for the Family for the Generation to Generation pilot initiative to empower and deliver family ministry training and support to district congregations, and to help Christian families in faith formation for the sake of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, That one fourth of the world's population is under age 15, and the parents are primarily millennials who believe that attending church once a month means they attend regularly; and

WHEREAS, Some children are being raised by others than their parents; and

WHEREAS, Many grandparents are raising their grandchildren while trying to help with adult children; and

WHEREAS, 25% of children whose primary faith influence is the church will remain faithful in the adult life, and 81% of children whose primary faith influence is the family will remain faithful into adulthood, which suggests that a home-centered paradigm is more effective for retention than one that is exclusively church-centered; and

WHEREAS, Christian Smith, the author of *Soul Searching*, says, “For better or worse, most parents in fact still do profoundly influence their adolescents often more than do their peers, their children's apparent resistance and lack of appreciation notwithstanding... most teenagers and their parents may not realize that, but a lot of research in sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence shaping young persons’ religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents.”; and

WHEREAS, We must recognize children and youth, not as the church future, but as the church now; and

WHEREAS, The Mid-South District in cooperation with Concordia Center for the Family and its pilot study was designed to offer a one-day Family Ministry Conference across the district, focusing on one specific area, beginning with faith formation; as this will affect the lives of everyone in the congregation from cradle to grave; and

WHEREAS, The Generation to Generation program was designed to enable congregations 1) to challenge our churches to stop the decline of young peoples' attendance at church, and 2) to be intentional, and create a system for families to learn to discipleship in the home; 3) to enable parents to become the primary faith influencers in their home so the families may thrive for the sake of the gospel; to equip the church to support those who are in non-nuclear families; therefore be it

RESOLVED, The congregations of the Mid-South District will be encouraged to participate in educational ministries and to evaluate and implement the Generation to Generation recommendations as applicable to their own unique settings; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the congregations of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod be urged to develop systems of study and preparation based on their context. With parents, grandparents, guardians, and members, congregations can help shape the spiritual lives of their children using the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the congregations of the Mid-South District share their successful strategies with the District Office on implementing lifelong catechesis in the home.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 03-02-25

SUBJECT: **To Encourage Generational Ministry**

(Reference Overture(s) 03-02-25 printed on page 189 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in Convention in 2019 passed Resolution 12-03, “To Encourage Lifelong Catechesis in the Home and Church”; and
- WHEREAS,** Pastors equip the saints to do the work of ministry; “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12); and
- WHEREAS,** It is the duty of parents to pass on the faith to their children, even as Paul says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4); and
- WHEREAS,** Moses writes in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk to them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise”; and
- WHEREAS,** The Large Catechism comments on the promises God makes to those who keep this commandment in reference to Exodus 20:12, and Ephesians 6:3 saying, “From this you can see for yourself how serious God is about the commandment. He not only declares that it is well pleasing to Him and that He has joy and delight in it, but he also declares that it shall prosper us and promote our highest good, so that we may have a pleasant and agreeable life, furnished with every good thing.” (LC I 132); and
- WHEREAS,** It is clear this commandment was not meant to be just for the next generation but for succeeding generations as Moses says, “Now this is the commandment – the statutes and the rules – that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you... That you may fear the Lord your God, you and your sons and your son’s sons.” (Deuteronomy 6: 1-2); and
- WHEREAS,** The life of a Christian involves ongoing catechesis; and
- WHEREAS,** Dr. Martin Luther, in his Small Catechism begins with, “As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household”; and
- WHEREAS,** We hold the doctrines expressed in the Lutheran confessions contained in the *Book of Concord* to truly represent the beliefs of the Christian faith and we avoid teachings and practices contrary to Lutheran doctrine; and

- WHEREAS,** Faith is given as a gift of grace through hearing the Word and in Baptism, and faith needs to be fed and nourished throughout the life of each disciple of Christ; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That congregations of the Mid-South District shall equip parents, guardians, and members of the congregations to be active teachers and lifelong learners of the faith (2 Timothy 3:14-15); and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That we encourage congregations and official youth ministers of the Mid-South District to provide resources for ongoing catechesis after confirmation, using scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod doctrinally-approved resources; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the congregations of the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod be urged to develop systems of study and preparation for parents, guardians, and members to help shape the spiritual lives of their children; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That the congregations of the Mid-South District share their successful strategies on implementing lifelong catechesis in the home with the District Office.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous majority
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 03-03-25

SUBJECT: To Evaluate, Study, and Use Biblically-based Stewardship Resources

(Reference Overture(s) 03-03-25 printed on page 191 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, Many congregations continue to struggle with a decline in attendance, lack of able or willing workers, and insufficient financial resources to meet the mission and ministry needs of the congregation; and

WHEREAS, One of the reasons for these and other challenges congregations face is a lack of ongoing, intentional, and systematic Biblical stewardship education; and

WHEREAS, Biblical stewardship education for all members throughout the Mid-South District is fundamental for addressing the challenges referenced above; and

WHEREAS, The LCMS Office of Stewardship Ministry has published Biblically-based resources; and

WHEREAS, Several other Biblically-based programs of stewardship are available designed to help steward leaders present principles of Christian Stewardship; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District Office would promote the evaluation, study, and use of Biblically-based education resources in the 2025-2028 triennium to raise awareness of stewardship; and be it further

RESOLVED, That each congregation of the Mid-South District be encouraged to conduct at least one program on stewardship during the next three years; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District congregations be encouraged to conduct stewardship events that reach the “people in the pews” and include all church leaders (ordained, commissioned, and lay).

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 03-04-25

SUBJECT: **To Encourage Personal Evangelism**

(Reference Overture(s) 03-04-25 printed on page 192 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, Jesus sent his disciples into the world to be his witnesses (Matthew 28:18ff); and

WHEREAS, Jesus declared to his followers “...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8); and

WHEREAS, St. Paul reminds us that we cannot believe in Christ of whom we have not heard. We cannot hear unless someone is sent out to proclaim. “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:14-17); and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention has repeatedly encouraged congregations to make witnessing and evangelism a top priority in their ministry efforts. (1995 Res. 1-08, “To Affirm That the Mission of the Church is Urgent and to Raise Mission Awareness” *Proceedings*, 107-8; 2001 Res. 1-01, “To ‘Tell The Good News About Jesus’”, Res. 1-02, “To Be Passionate for the Great Commission,” and Res. 1-03A, “To Intensify Mission Effort, *Proceedings*, 119-120; 2004 Res. 1-01A, “To Affirm Mission 21st Century Response To Great Commission,” and Res. 1-02, “To Promote ‘Mission Outpost’ Attitude,” *Proceedings*, 119-120; 2013 Res. 1-05A, “To Encourage the Congregations and People of the LCMS for the Joy of Evangelization and the Making of New Disciples,” *Proceedings*, 101);” 2019 Res. 1-01A, *Proceedings*, 115; and

WHEREAS, Our Synod in its 2019 Convention adopted language that encourages all congregation members and church workers to support witnessing of the Gospel, (Res. 1-01A); and

- WHEREAS,** Called workers set an example for personal witnessing; and
- WHEREAS,** Congregations often experience an increase in visitors to their worship services when the pastor, staff, and members consistently spend time each week cultivating relationships and sharing the faith in the community; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has conducted workshops throughout the District, using “*Everyone His Witness*” materials produced by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has partnered with the Mid-South District LWML to bring witnessing and outreach into each congregation of the District; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District in convention reaffirm the importance of personal witnessing for the salvation of the lost and the health of the local congregation; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District seek a continued partnership with the Mid-South District LWML to provide training and resources to assist called workers, lay leaders, and congregations in personal witnessing; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That congregations demonstrate personal witnessing as a priority of their church.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by unanimous voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 04-01-25

SUBJECT: *To Encourage Further Consideration of Successful Completion of SMP Coursework Before Ordination and Placement on Ordained Roster*

(Reference Overture(s) 04-01-25 printed on page 196 of Convention Workbook)

- WHEREAS,** The 2018 Mid-South District Convention memorialized the 2019 Synod Convention “To Request Synod to Move Ordination Upon Completion of SMP Four-Year Program” (2019 Ov. 6-07); and
- WHEREAS,** The 2019 Synod Convention considered this overture together with similar overtures from other districts and congregations; and
- WHEREAS,** The 2019 Synod Convention adopted Resolution 6-03A, referring this matter to the Pastoral Formation Committee to “work to enhance the curriculum and standards of the SMP program between the two seminaries...” and to “review the SMP program regarding the optimal timing for vicarage and ordination and report its recommendation to the joint boards of regents at its 2020 meeting, as well as to the Synod at large;” and
- WHEREAS,** Res. 6-03A further resolved “That the joint board(s) (sic) of regents prepare an overture to the Synod on the timing of vicarage and ordination for the SMP program for consideration in convention in 2022;” and
- WHEREAS,** The 2023 Synod Convention considered the recommendations of the Pastoral Formation Committee and the joint boards of regents of the seminaries which are forthcoming; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District in convention reaffirms the importance of the Pastoral Formation Committee, the joint boards of regents, and the Synod’s consideration of the issues regarding the timing of ordination in the SMP program; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District in convention encourage the Pastoral Formation Committee, the joint boards of regents of the seminaries, and the Synod in convention to consider moving ordination and placement on the minister of religion—ordained roster of the Synod from after the completion of the first two years of the SMP program to after the completion of all SMP education and academic requirements for applicants admitted after the 2026 academic year; and be it finally

RESOLVED,

That the Mid-South District in convention submit to the 2026 LCMS Convention an overture with the above stated WHEREAS and RESOLVED statements.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by a 75.2% vote; 94 to 31
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 04-02-25

SUBJECT: *To Regularize Specific Ministry Pastoral Classification*

(Reference Overture(s) 04-02-25 printed on page 195 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, Our Lutheran Confessions state “... that nobody should preach publicly in the church or administer the sacraments unless he is regularly called” (AC XIV) and that ordination is an essential component of a regular, ordered call (Treatise 67, 69-71); and

WHEREAS, Membership Status and Limitations noted in The Handbook of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (Handbook, 2.13) applies requirements and limitations on Specific Ministry Pastors [SMP] that include:

- a. Remaining in a specific ministry context
- b. Remain under supervision by a general pastor
- c. Limits his Call outside of the context of his Call.
- d. Is not eligible to serve as a voting delegate to the National Convention
- e. Is not eligible to be elected or appointed to offices at the District and Synod level
- f. May not supervise vicars
- g. May not serve as Circuit Visitor; and

WHEREAS, Other classifications of pastors (EIIT [Ethnic Immigrant Institute Theology], Hispanic, CMC [Cross Cultural Ministry Center] and others) who are not graduates from a residential program track (MDiv and AR [Alternate Route]) have been granted ordination without notation of how these non-residential tracks are to be managed in the context of Handbook 2.13.1.a, b, and c.; and

WHEREAS, Confusion on how to deal with ordained pastors who are not SMP or graduates from residential ministry tracks continues to exist; and

WHEREAS, Non-residential tracks toward ordination are not currently treated in a similar manner as Specific Ministry Pastors (SMP) and SMP Colloquy; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That Synod in Convention adopt language for all non-residential and ordained ministers of religion-ordained; and be it finally

RESOLVED,

That Handbook 2.13.1 be modified to include new language that states: “A ‘Specific Ministry Pastor’ is a minister of religion--ordained who has completed the requirements for service as a specific ministry pastor, EIIT, Hispanic ministry, CMC, or any other non-residential ministry track and has been examined by one of the Synod’s seminaries, has received a regular call, and has been placed by the Council of Presidents into a specific Word and Sacrament ministry context.”

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by a 91.5.2% vote; 118-11
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 04-03-25

SUBJECT: Extend an Overture to the 2026 LCMS Convention Concerning Specific Ministry Pastoral (SMP) Training

(Reference Overture 04-03-25 printed on page 196 of Convention Workbook)

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in Convention in 2001 passed Resolution 3-08B, “To Address Needs and Opportunities for Pastoral Ministry in Specialized Situations”; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 3-08B provided for Licensed Lay Deacons to continue to be trained under supervision (Resolution 3-05B, Wichita Convention, 1989); and

WHEREAS, Synodical Resolution 13-02A, (2016) “Regularized Licensed Lay Deacon” ministries toward ordination consistent with The Book of Concord (Augsburg Confession, XIV and Apology, XIV); and

WHEREAS, Resolution 13-02A provides several options toward ordination of existing Licensed Lay Deacons, including Regional SMP Colloquy, General Colloquy, SMP Seminary track, Alternate Route seminary training, and general ministry seminary track; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Convention in 2007, passed Resolution 5-01B “To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program”; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 5-01B, 2007, provided for SMP candidates to receive “preordination curriculum, and post-ordination curriculum, covering two two-year segments of the seminary education”; Ordination vows may be taken prior to the conclusion of a complete course of study provided that the ordained has received a preparation sufficient to preach and teach the Gospel rightly, administer the Sacraments correctly, and take his vows with integrity. (p. 134. LCMS 2007)

Step 2: Preordination Curriculum

Upon entrance into the Specific Ministry Pastor Program, the student will be assigned as a vicar in a specific locality but normally will not be authorized to administer the Sacraments. He will preach sermons prepared in collaboration with and approved by his supervisor. At this point, he will participate in courses and seminars comparable to those offered to residential seminary students designed to prepare him in the following areas:

- Catechism, hermeneutical principles, God and Christ, work of Christ, the Sacraments, worship, the Book of Concord, and preaching
- Possible residential seminars: intro to pastoral formation; issues in pastoral ministry

- Possible field seminars: basic mission planter training, etc.

Step 3: Certification/Call/Ordination

After demonstrating competence in the preordination areas, the student must apply for an examination hearing by the seminary in order to be certified for call and ordination. Each student will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The examination hearing shall include a review of the student’s portfolio, vicarage reports, an interview by the faculty, and recommendations by the district president and circuit counselor.

After certification, call, and ordination according to the usual order, the student is placed on the pastoral roster of the Synod as a “specific ministry pastor.” He now may preach and administer the Sacraments under supervision in a specific locality.

Step 4: Post-Call and Ordination Curriculum

Upon call and ordination, the student shall complete the remainder of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program. The following areas are intended to continue development of the foundational competencies necessary for serving as a specific ministry pastor:

- OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions
- Residential seminars, possibly including pastoral formation, issues in pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation
- Field seminars, possibly including basic mission planter training, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training and

WHEREAS, Steps 3 and 4, approved by Resolution, provided that a certification, Call and Ordination be allowed after completion of two years of successful preordination studies; and

WHEREAS, Step 5, approved by Resolution, provided that the post-ordination curriculum includes “OT content and theology, NT content and theology, gifts of Christ, body of Christ, Church history and the history of Lutheranism, Christian education, pastoral theology, and theology of missions, residential seminars, including pastoral formation, issues of pastoral ministry, team ministry, urban ministry, and spiritual formation. Field seminars included basic mission planting, edge gathering, and advanced mission planter training;” and

WHEREAS, Step 4 also included the caveat that “Refusal [or inability] to complete the Specific Ministry Program would result in the pastor’s removal from the Synod roster, at which point he is not eligible for a Call;” and

WHEREAS, The provision of ordination after two years, with the proviso that the rostered worker completes the two more years of formal, required education, has led to men being removed from the LCMS roster, and created confusion about the Office of Holy Ministry: therefore, be it

RESOLVED, Currently enrolled SMP students (preordination and post-ordination) continue in the SMP track of two years toward ordination and two years of required post-ordination requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod submit an overture to the LCMS 2026 Convention that would modify the program requirements of the SMP program, originally passed in Resolution 5-01B, 2007, which allowed a student to be certified for call and ordination prior to the completion of the SMP program, and to require students admitted to the SMP program after the 2026 academic year be required to finish all academic requirements of the SMP program before ordination and placement on the LCMS roster; and be it further

RESOLVED, That students who have completed the second academic year be designated as vicars, and may conduct specific and approved services under supervision of their local pastor, and approval of the respective seminary program director and District President; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the vicar may receive compensation under the vicarage agreement with the congregation and seminary program, but without admission to the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Postponed indefinitely by a standing majority
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Omnibus Resolution 04-04A-25

SUBJECT: **To Decline to Consider “To Establish a Task Force to Consider Consolidation of Southern and Mid-South Districts”**
(Reference Overture 04-04-25 printed on page 198-200)

WHEREAS. The Southern District did not act upon it in their convention, the Mid-South District would be acting alone, without the consent or support of the Southern District, and the only the Synod acting in Convention has the power to create, dissolve, or consolidate Districts of the LCMS, Therefore, be it

RESOLVED The Mid-South District in Convention decline to consider 04-04-25.

CONVENTION ACTION **Motion to decline was adopted by a 95.4% vote, 122 to 6**
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary

For Reference Only:

WHEREAS, Synod Bylaw 4.1.1.3 States:

4.1.1.3 The Synod decides when and whether a district shall be formed, divided, realigned, or merged with another or other districts, or dissolved; determines the boundaries of a district; and approves the name of a district.

(a) A proposal calling for the formation, division, realignment, merger, or dissolution of a district or districts may be initiated by a national convention of the Synod or the Board of Directors of the Synod.

(b) Such proposals shall

(1) be submitted to the President at least six months prior to a convention of the Synod;

(2) be produced in consultation with the Department of Rosters, Statistics, and Research Services;

(3) include a substantiated description of the nonviable aspects of the current district(s) on the basis of general principles of viability adopted from time to time by conventions of the Synod, and shall specify the problems or factors which make the adoption of the proposal advisable or necessary;

(4) provide evidence that the proposed change is the best of the options available;

(5) provide a specific and realistic development plan for the proposed district(s), including detailed proposals for staff personnel and financial operations;

(6) be the object of an evaluation prepared by the Board of Directors of the Synod and submitted to the convention; and

WHEREAS, The Synod in convention in 2013 passed a revised list of “General Principles for Judging the Viability of a District” in resolution 7-4a which states:

1. Provide resources for the district president to carry out ecclesiastical supervision as defined in the synod’s Constitution (Art. XII) and Bylaws (Bylaw 1.2.1 [g]) in a reasonable and timely manner.

2. Provide resources for the district president in carrying out the minimum requirements for official visits to each of the member congregations as outlined in Bylaws 4.4.4ff., including coming to the pastors and member congregations at least once every three years as a brotherly adviser, “reminding them of the joy of serving in the mission and ministry of the church.”

3. Provide appropriate guidance and support to member congregations for participating in the mission God has given to the Church, including how that is carried out in the various missions and ministries of the church.

4. Provide encouragement and needed congregational services (e.g., stewardship, conflict resolution, crisis counseling, financial counseling, calling process, collaborative efforts, networking, nourishment, and help with evangelistic outreach, etc.) to member congregations, and provide advice and counsel to member congregations struggling to carry out their core functions.

5. Adapt to new circumstances and meet changing needs related to the mission and ministry of the church.

6. Meet its financial responsibilities and obligations and receive sufficient financial resources from its membership to (i) support the mission and ministry of the church in the district, and (ii) financially assist the mission and ministry of the Synod.

7. Find itself to be of a size and configuration to be effective, efficient, and capable of serving all who make up its constituency?

8. Provide adequate assistance and support to allow the district president to carry out the functions and obligations of the office of district president as set forth in the Bylaws.; and

WHEREAS, The presidents and staff of the Mid-South District and the Southern District have served faithfully, with an increasing workload and reduced staff and resources; and

WHEREAS, A study conducted by a task force with the specific assignment of the board of directors of synod to examine the pros and cons of a possible merger of The Mid-South and Southern Districts of the LCMS would be beneficial in deciding how best to go forward in service to the congregation of both districts: and

WHEREAS. The economic condition of the congregations, Districts, and agencies in the

Southern and Mid-South District has been stressed over the past decades; and

WHEREAS, The number of churches that are able to continue to function as independently, self-supporting congregations is diminishing, and

WHEREAS, The commitment from congregations to support the work of the Mid-South and Southern Districts is less than the operating revenue needed to continue providing the required services to the Districts' workers, congregations, schools, and agencies need with minimal staffing. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That Board of Directors of the Mid-South District and Southern District appoint representatives from their respective districts, and along with necessary Synod personnel, determine the feasibility of, pros and cons, and changes that would be needed for a consolidation of the districts and report their finding to the respective Board of Directors at least one year prior to the 2028 District Conventions; and be it further

RESOLVED, That during the next triennium, each district evaluate itself through its officers, board of directors, and congregations of the district in light of the general principles, and provide that evaluation as part of the district president's report to the next 70th Regular Convention of the Missouri Synod; and be it finally

RESOLVED, To thank district presidents, past and present, for their faithful and diligent service as ecclesiastical supervisors, and to pray that their service may continue to flourish among us; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District and Southern District submit this memorial to the 2029 convention of the Synod.



Resolution 04-05-25

- SUBJECT:** *To Request that Concordia Plans Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for the Concordia Retirement Plan*
(Reference Overture(s) 04-05-25 and 04-06-25 printed on pages 201-204)
- WHEREAS,** God’s children serving as church workers in our congregations are the Synod’s most precious resources; and
- WHEREAS,** The inspired Apostle Paul writes, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and “The laborer deserves his wages” (1 Tim. 5:17-18); and
- WHEREAS,** The Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP) is a wonderful benefit that has been managed well; and
- WHEREAS,** The CRP is offered to congregations with the counsel, “By offering a pension plan, you are making an investment in your workers’ future. After years of service to the LCMS community, this benefit helps provide the retirement income they will need” (<https://www.concordiaplans.org/employers/our-solutions/retirementfinancial-benefits/pensions>); and
- WHEREAS,** The Concordia Plans website further states, “Having a pension can make it easier for you to recruit and retain your workers. Whether you are a church calling a pastor, a school hiring a teacher or a Registered Service Organization recruiting staff, offering the CRP allows you to be competitive and help attract high-quality employees” (<https://www.concordiaplans.org/employers/our-solutions/retirement-financialbenefits/pensions>); and
- WHEREAS,** The CRP does not currently give cost-of-living increases to the one-time calculated pension benefits of retired workers; and
- WHEREAS,** In recent years, inflation has been a big concern, especially for retired people on fixed incomes. The average inflation rate was 4.7% in 2021, 8.01% in 2022 (hitting a high of 9.06% in June), and 4.12% in 2023; and
- WHEREAS,** The cost of groceries in 2024 has been reported to be around 25% higher than in 2019/2020; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District memorialize the 2026 Synod in Convention to instruct the Concordia Plans leadership team to explore the feasibility of cost-of-living increases for CRP benefits (annually, biennially, or triennially), or a

congregational option (with increased contribution rates) for a pension with periodic cost-of-living increases; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the rationale and feasibility for either offering cost-of-living increases/options or staying with the current plan options be promulgated by Concordia Plans to Synod workers as soon as possible, with a report to be submitted to the next Synod in Convention. (i.e., the Mid-South District submit this memorial to the next convention of the Synod.)

CONVENTION ACTION

**Declined by a vote of 58.5%, 86-61
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 04-06-25

SUBJECT: To Amend the District Bylaws so that the District President may Accept a Call to a Congregation as Assistant Pastor

(Reference Overture(s) 04-07-25 and 04-08-25 printed on page 205-206)

WHEREAS, A common, desired qualification for District President is a candidate who will be “a pastor to pastors”; and

WHEREAS, The District President is required to supervise the doctrine and life of district pastors; and

WHEREAS, Constant serving in not only preaching, but also the administration of the Sacraments, is important for a pastor who still desires to do the work of a pastor; and

WHEREAS, Actively helping to lead a congregation in struggles and joys, such as church discipline, stewardship, planning, etc., proves valuable in oversight and offering counsel to other congregations; and

WHEREAS, The Central Illinois District has a provision in its bylaws whereby the District President may be called as an assistant pastor to a congregation provided, he can still conduct his official duties as District President; and

WHEREAS, The current Mid-South District Bylaws do not currently address the ability of the District President to receive or accept a call to a Mid-South congregation, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Bylaws of the Mid-South District be amended to include:
3.2.1.3 The President shall be the chief district executive. “He shall not be in charge of a congregation or hold a chair at any educational institution but may be called to a congregation in an assisting capacity, provided such services do not interfere with his official duties as President.” (Synod Handbook 2023, 3.3.1a).

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by a majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 04-07A-25

SUBJECT: To Direct The Office of the National and International Mission to Decline Applications for Recognized Service Organization Status from Organizations Currently Supporting, Advocating, or Otherwise Promoting the LGBTQIA+ Agenda and Lifestyle and to direct The Office of National Missions and The Office of International Mission to Revoke RSO Status of the Same

(Reference Overture(s) 04-09-25 and 04-10-25 printed on pages 207-214)

WHEREAS, Since before the fall into sin, God created human being's male and female, (Genesis 1:27); and

WHEREAS, Since before the fall into sin, God gave man and woman to be husband and wife, (Genesis 2:24); and

WHEREAS, After the fall into sin, God reiterates that he still gives man and woman to be husband and wife in marriage, (Mathew 19:5, Mark 10:7, Ephesians 5:31); and

WHEREAS, Sin is anything that goes contrary to God's purpose and design, (1 John 5:17); and

WHEREAS, Our country has adopted policies and practices that uphold, promote, and uplift LGBTQIA+ positions on gender, sexuality, and marriage that are contrary to God's design and are therefore sinful according to God's Word, (e.g. ruling that marriage is no longer exclusively the lifelong union of one man and one woman); and

WHEREAS, The LGBTQIA+ community is supported, uplifted, and celebrated at many times and places (e.g. Pride month, Pride parades, etc.); and

WHEREAS, The Christian is called to not follow in the deeds of darkness, but rather, is to lead a holy and God-pleasing life, (Ephesians 5:11; 1 Peter 2:9); and

WHEREAS, Such a God-pleasing life does not seek to remain in sin nor to celebrate it, but repents of it, receives forgiveness for it, and strives to sin no more, (Romans 6:1-2, Psalm 32:5, John 8:11); and

WHEREAS, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) published a report on marriage and sexuality entitled A Chaste and Decent Life: An Update to Human Sexuality (1981) which concludes that, "attitudes towards gender identity and dysphoria, homosexuality and homosexual marriage, and

societal pressures regarding sexuality, among others, have changed markedly in the last forty years,” yet still maintaining that “God’s intention for human sexuality does not change,” (A Chaste and Decent Life: An Update, 37); and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) has upheld and reaffirmed such positions regarding Marriage and Sexuality, as recently as the 2023 Synod Convention, (Resolution 5-11, “To Reaffirm Synod's Biblical Positions on Marriage and Sexuality”); and

WHEREAS, The granting of Recognized Service Organization (RSO) status by the Synod “signifies that a service organization fosters the mission and ministry of the church, engages in program activity that extends the mission and ministry of the Synod, is in harmony with the programs of the Synod, and respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod,” (Bylaw 6.2.1); and

WHEREAS, Many resources from the Synod and its partners (LCEF, Concordia Plans, etc.) are made available to the RSOs of the Synod to support their work; and

WHEREAS, The Office of National Mission (ONM) and the Office of International Mission (OIM) are tasked with the granting of RSO status, (Bylaw 6.2.4); and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) and Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (LSSNorCA) have both been granted RSO status; and

WHEREAS, LCSNW, as recently as June of 2024, participated in an annual Pride Parade in Spokane, WA “as they do every year” in an effort to make their communities “more healthy, just, hopeful and [sic] Prideful for all,” (“Pride is more than a month at LCSNW; it’s a mindset to serve LGBTQ clients”, accessed October 1, 2024, <https://www.lcsnw.org/2024/06/pride-is-more-than-a-month>), and

WHEREAS, LSSNorCA stands with the LGBTQIA+ community and proudly supports them, as stated in a 2023 letter from the President and CEO of the LSSNorCA, (“Statement on LGBTQIA+ Pride”, accessed October 1, 2024, <https://www.lssnorcal.org/filedownload/b8699925-8345-437f-8cda-dad7d95d3d77>), therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District memorialize the Synod in Convention to immediately remove LCSNW and LSSNorCA of their RSO status; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the members of Synod support and encourage their respective District Presidents as they go about their task given them in Bylaw 6.2.1.c of overseeing the RSOs under their ecclesiastical supervision; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the Mid-South District memorialize the Synod in Convention to direct the Office of National Mission and the Office of International Mission to decline any applications for RSO status received from any organization supporting, uplifting, celebrating, or otherwise promoting LGBTQIA+ groups, agendas, thoughts, ideas, ideals, etc., including organizations seeking RSO status that are partnered with an organization supporting, advocating, or otherwise promoting the same; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the Mid-South District memorialize the Synod in Convention to direct the ONM and OIM to not grant or renew RSO status to any organization supporting, uplifting, celebrating, or otherwise promoting LGBTQIA+ groups, agendas, thoughts, ideas, ideals, etc., including organizations seeking RSO status that are partnered with an organization supporting, uplifting, celebrating, or otherwise promoting LGBTQIA+ groups, agendas, thoughts, ideas, ideals, etc.; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the Mid-South District memorialize the Synod in Convention to amend Bylaw 6.2.3 as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

6.2.3 Program administration shall be carried out by the Offices of National and International Mission according to these bylaws, and according to policies and criteria developed by the Synod Board of Directors, mission boards, and mission offices. (a) The Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod shall adopt common policies and criteria for granting of recognized service organization status by Synod's mission offices, such polices relating to expectations for the corporate structure and governance of the organizations, statements regarding their legal and corporate independence from the Synod, and the necessary relation of their work to the mission and ministry of the Synod as generally expressed in its Constitution and Bylaws. These policies shall include an agreement with the recognized service organization stating that they adopt and will uphold the biblical definition of manhood, womanhood, and marriage, as adopted by the Synod and that they will not endorse, support the work of, nor enter into partnerships with other organizations who either undermine or do not uphold the same. The Board of Directors shall approve the standard form of agreement to be entered into by the Synod and each recognized service organization; and be it further

RESOLVED,

That the Mid-South District memorialize the Synod in Convention to amend Bylaw 6.2.4 as follows:

PRESENT/PROPOSED WORDING

6.2.4 Subject to policies adopted by the Synod's Board of Directors and the respective mission board, recognized service organization status may be granted and revoked by the Office of National Mission or the Office of International Mission to a service organization (other than an auxiliary) that extends the mission and ministry of the Synod but is not part of the Synod as defined by its Constitution and Bylaws.

(a) To decline applications for recognized service organization from organizations currently supporting, uplifting, celebrating, or otherwise promoting groups, agendas, thoughts, ideas, ideals, etc. contrary to God's design for man and woman as well as declining applications from organizations seeking RSO status that are partnered with the same.

(b) Within the area of its responsibility and in accordance with policies and criteria developed by the Synod Board of Directors, the respective mission board and office, each mission office shall determine to which organizations recognized service organization status will be granted and revoked.

Note: There didn't seem to be any readily and speedily available mechanism in the Handbook for removal of RSOs who do not continue to live up to the RSO status. This overture would specifically empower ONM and OIM to revoke RSO status. In addition, it would allow the Office of National and International Mission to vet out most of the problematic RSO applications at the front end. Since the granting of RSO status involves application and reapplication every 5 years, the proposed bylaw changes should cover any removals that need to happen within 5 years.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted as amended by a vote of 79.7%, 102-26
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution 04-08-25

SUBJECT: *To Participate in Building a Culture of Church Work Formation and Recruitment*

(Reference Overture(s) 04-11-25 printed on page 215-217)

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matt. 9:37-38); and

WHEREAS, Since 1847, the LCMS adopted resolutions in nearly every convention to the present to form and recruit pastors, teachers, and other commissioned church workers to preach, teach, and share the Gospel of Jesus for eternal salvation in these full-time vocations; and

WHEREAS, These convention resolutions urged church worker formation and recruitment intentionally take place in every LCMS congregation and school by pastors, teachers, commissioned church workers, and laity; and

WHEREAS, These convention resolutions urged districts and congregations to have an active committee focused on forming and recruiting our youth and adults to consider full-time church work; and

WHEREAS, The pastoral office is the one divinely mandated office by our Lord (John 20:19–23; Rom. 10:14–15; Eph. 4:11–16) and the seven LCMS commissioned church work vocations have been established in love to support the Office of the Holy Ministry (Lutheran teachers, directors of Christian education, director of family life ministry, deaconesses, directors of parish music, directors of church ministries, director of Christian outreach) (LSB Agenda, p. 210 and 218); and

WHEREAS, In the last several years, approximately twice as many LCMS congregation pastors are exiting the pastoral office (retirement or death) compared to new called and ordained pastors in the last five years; and

WHEREAS, In April 2024, there were 51 unfilled calls of congregations calling a seminary candidate, 406 congregations calling sole pastors, 56 congregation calling a senior pastor, 67 congregations calling an associate pastor, and 529 non-calling congregations for various reasons; and

WHEREAS, In 2023 there was a request to our Concordia universities for 455 new teachers by our LCMS schools but only 84 graduated from LCMS Concordia universities; and there was a request for 79 other LCMS commissioned

workers to be placed but only 64 graduated from LCMS Concordia universities; and

WHEREAS, Set Apart to Serve began with the 2019 LCMS Convention with the overarching goal to develop a culture of church work formation and recruitment in every LCMS congregation, school, and entity; and

WHEREAS, Set Apart to Serve is in full partnership and collaboration in this church work initiative with our two seminaries (including Christ Academy and Vocation), all the Concordia universities, all 35 districts, Concordia Publishing House, Lutheran Church-Extension Fund, LCMS Youth Ministry, LCMS School Ministry, LCMS Colloquy, LCMS Worker wellness, LWML, Higher Things, Lutheran Educator’s Association (LEA), National Association of DCEs, Black Clergy Caucus, Hispanic Missionary League, Chinese Lutherans in Mission Building (CLIMB), Concordia Plan Services, LCMS Foundation, and more; and

WHEREAS, Through comprehensive research, Set Apart to Serve has identified pastors, Lutheran school teachers, DCEs, all other commissioned workers, parents, and laity as the primary influential adults who form, recruit, and encourage youth (early childhood through grade 12) to consider full-time church work; and

WHEREAS, Set Apart to Serve, especially through the partnership with our pilot congregations representing all 35 LCMS districts, has developed quality and quantity resources for pastors, commissioned church workers, laity, and districts as they form, recruit, and encourage our youth to consider full-time church work (<https://resources.lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve>); and

WHEREAS, The most essential experiences of youth that have an impact and influence youth to consider church work are in regular attendance in the Divine Service to receive Christ’s Word and Sacraments (Rom. 10:17, “faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ”), authentic relationships with influential adults, opportunities for age-appropriate service in the church, participating in like-minded communities (youth group, LCMS Youth Gathering, Higher Things, Christ Academy at Concordia Theological Seminary Ft. Wayne, Vocatio at Concordia Seminary St. Louis, LCMS camps), and engaged in conversations about godly vocations and church work vocations; and

WHEREAS, Set Apart to Serve, in partnership with Concordia Publishing House, has made a church work formation and recruitment curriculum (early childhood – adult) available at no cost to LCMS schools and congregations (compliment to LCEF and the Concordia universities); therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District establish a Set Apart to Serve church work recruitment committee (working group, task force), to lead and assist LCMS congregations, schools, and church workers in their efforts of church work formation and recruitment; and be it further

- RESOLVED,** That all congregations establish a Set Apart to Serve committee
- RESOLVED,** That all congregations be encouraged to establish a Set Apart to Serve committee (working group, task force) to form, recruit, and encourage their youth (from early childhood to grade 12) and adults to consider a full-time church work vocation; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That all pastors, Lutheran teachers, commissioned church workers, and laity intentionally form, recruit, and encourage youth to consider a full-time church work vocation; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That LCMS congregations, schools, and entities make use of the tested quality and quantity SAS resources at <https://www.lcms.org/set-apart-to-serve> and the CPH SAS curriculum (church work recruitment curriculum); and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That both district and congregation leaders and committees enhance their financial support of individuals who are enrolled in LCMS church work programs at our Concordia universities and seminaries; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That both district and congregation leaders intentionally address the compensation and over-all wellness, love, and appreciation of all ordained and commissioned church workers in the district congregations, schools, and entities.

CONVENTION ACTION:

**Adopted by majority voice vote
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary**



Resolution From the Floor

SUBJECT: To Give Thanks to God for the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther's Marriage to Katharina von Bora on June 13, 1525

WHEREAS, On this day, June 13, 1525, Dr. Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora were joined in holy marriage, giving glory to God for the gift and institution of marriage; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District meeting in convention now 500 years later give thanks to God for the example of Martin and Katie Luther entering the estate of Holy Matrimony; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District meeting in convention commend the estate of marriage between one man and one woman as God's design and plan for all people as recorded in the Holy Bible and revealed in natural law; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Mid-South District meeting in convention pray God's blessings upon all married couples that they may reflect the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His Church as they live together in forgiveness and peace.

CONVENTION ACTION **Made, Seconded, and Adopted by unanimous voice vote**
The Rev. Larry A. Peters, Secretary

The Bylaws

The Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Cordova, Tennessee

Approved: (By the Mid-South District in Convention)

A Formative Plan was enacted at the beginning of the Mid-South District in 1966; the 1968 Convention voted to continue with the Formative Plan until Bylaws could be adopted.

**Adopted: (By the Mid-South District in Convention)
June 7-10, 1970**

Amended: (By the Mid-South District Conventions)

June 12-15, 1991

June 12-15, 1994

June 13-16, 1997

June 02-05, 2000

July 11-14, 2003

June 09-12, 2006

June 22-24, 2012

**June 26-28, 2015, finalized with the Board of Directors’
formal adoption of 1.1.3 (a)-(b) November 2, 2015
per convention resolution**

**December 23, 2017, amended by the Board of Directors to
harmonize with 2016 LCMS Convention resolutions**

June 28-30, 2018

**August 24, 2020, amended by the Board of Directors to
harmonize with 2019 LCMS Convention resolutions**

July 1-3, 2021

June 12-14, 2025, amended per convention resolution

***THE BYLAWS OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT
OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD***

1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Constitution and Bylaws

- 1.1.1 The Constitution and Bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, including the confessional position and the mission objectives as stated therein, shall be the constitution and bylaws of the Mid-South District. They shall be supplemented by the bylaws of the Mid-South District as needed for the district's administration and the work of the Synod.
- 1.1.2 Changes and amendments to the bylaws of the Mid-South District may be made by a majority vote of any properly called convention of the Mid-South District, provided that the proposed changes were submitted in writing to the district president, who shall submit them to the Commission on Constitutional Matters of the Synod in advance of the convention for review and approval. Any subsequent changes by the convention shall become effective only after approval by the commission. [Synod Bylaws 3.9.2.2.3 (a-b), 4.1.1.2 (b)]
- 1.1.3 In exceptional circumstances and upon the express direction of a convention of the district or Synod, or in response to resolutions adopted by a convention of the Synod, amendments may be made by a two-thirds majority of the board of directors of the Mid-South District.
- (a) Such amendments to the bylaws shall be necessary to implement resolutions or bylaw amendments adopted by a convention of the Synod or the district before the next district convention.
- (b) Such amendments shall be drafted by the secretary of the district, to be examined and approved by the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters before their adoption. No amendment shall take effect until it has been approved by the commission.
- (c) The board of directors shall notify the district of the adopted amendment(s) in a way deemed most expedient, in addition to its report to the next district convention.

1.2 Basic Principles of District Administration

- 1.2.1 The district president shall be the chief executive of the district.
- 1.2.2 The district president shall be assisted in the administration of his office, including the visitation of congregations of the district, by the circuit visitors and the regional vice-presidents, individually or collectively.
- 1.2.3 The district president, together with the board of directors, shall supervise and administer the financial mission and ministry program of the district.
- 1.2.4 Within the framework of their regular operating procedures, the district president and board of directors shall be governed and bound by the principles and respective duties and prohibitions expressed in the board of directors' policy manual.
- 1.2.5 The district board of directors, ministry teams, task forces, committees, and other entities of the district organization shall make reports and, if needed, recommendations to each convention of the district.
- 1.2.6 All district officers and organizational entities shall be ultimately responsible to the district convention.

1.3 Officers and Board of Directors

1.3.1 The officers of the district shall be a president, four regional vice-presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, and the circuit visitors.

1.3.2 The board of directors shall be composed of the following voting members:

1. The president of the district
2. Four (4) vice-presidents of the district, one (1) elected by the convention from each electoral region
3. The secretary of the district
4. The treasurer of the district, who shall be a layperson (appointed)
5. Two (2) ministers of religion—commissioned: one (1) elected by the convention from regions 1 and 2; and one (1) elected by the convention from regions 3 and 4
6. Four (4) laypersons, one (1) elected by the convention from each electoral region
7. Up to three (3) at-large laypersons appointed by the elected members of the board of directors to obtain needed additional skill sets (legal, finance, investment, administration, etc.) [Synod Bylaw 4.5.1]

With the exception of the district president, secretary, and treasurer, no more than two voting members of the board shall be members of the same congregation.

1.3.3 The executive directors under the district president shall be advisory members of the board.

2. DISTRICT CONVENTIONS AND CONFERENCES

2.1 General Provisions

2.1.1 District conventions, conferences for professional church workers, circuit forums, and convocations shall regularly take place according to the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod, insofar as these may be applicable. [Synod Bylaws 3.1.3 – 3.1.3.1, 4.2, 4.8, 4.9, 5.3, 5.4]

2.2 District Conventions

2.2.1 The district president shall be responsible for the organization of the district convention.

2.2.2 Reports and overtures shall be submitted in writing to the district president not later than twelve (12) weeks prior to the opening date of the convention. The convention workbook shall be published and distributed by a means of electronic communication not later than six (6) weeks prior to the opening date of the convention to each district congregation, delegate and alternate, all officers of the district, ministry teams, task forces, committees, and other entities of the district. A printed copy shall be provided to any designated recipient upon request.

2.2.3 The district president shall appoint convention floor committees and name the chairpersons, and shall assign overtures to the appropriate convention floor committees with their designated meeting times and places.

2.2.4 One of the floor committees appointed by the district president shall be the elections committee. This committee shall be composed of at least two (2) ministers of religion—ordained, one (1) minister of religion—commissioned and two (2) laypersons to conduct and supervise all elections.

2.2.4.1 The committee shall be empowered to adopt procedures and methods that will insure efficiency and accuracy, including the use of mechanical, electronic, or other methods of casting, recording, or tabulating votes.

2.2.5 The chairperson of each convention floor committee shall appoint a secretary, consult with the chairperson of the appropriate ministry team, task force, committee, or district organizational

entity, including district executive directors, and shall report the recommendations of the floor committee to the convention.

- 2.2.6 Floor committees shall consult with the finance office of the district as guided generally in the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaw 3.1.7(g)]
- 2.2.7 Convention proceedings shall be published and distributed by a means of electronic communication to each district congregation, delegate and alternate, all officers of the district, ministry teams, task forces, committees, and other entities of the district. A printed copy shall be provided to any designated recipient upon request.

3. DIRECTIVES FOR OFFICERS

3.1 General Directives

- 3.1.1 All officers shall be elected or appointed as provided in the *Handbook* of the Synod and the district bylaws.
- 3.1.2 All officers shall fulfill the duties assigned to them in the *Handbook* of the Synod, the district bylaws, and by the board of directors.
- 3.1.3 All officers shall be governed and bound by the principles and respective duties and prohibitions expressed in the board of directors' policy manual.
- 3.1.4 Any officer, with the exception of the district president, may be removed from office for cause following the provisions and procedures set forth in the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaws 1.5.8-1.5.8.1]

3.2 Officers

3.2.1 *The President*

- 3.2.1.1 The president shall be an ex-officio member without vote of all ministry teams, task forces, committees, and organizational entities of the district.
- 3.2.1.2 He shall serve as a voting member of the board of directors and shall serve as chairman of the circuit visitors' conference.
- 3.2.1.3 He shall be the chief district executive. He shall not be in charge of a congregation or hold a chair at any educational institution but may be called to a congregation in an assisting capacity, provided such services do not interfere with his official duties as president.

3.2.2 *The Vice-Presidents*

- 3.2.2.1 The vice-presidents shall be advisors to the district president, and shall function as his representatives or assistants in service to the district.
- 3.2.2.2 They may serve as designated representatives of the board of directors, on ministry teams, task forces, and committees, and as advisors on other organizational entities of the district.

3.2.3 *The Secretary*

- 3.2.3.1 The secretary shall be an advisory member of the constitution committee.
- 3.2.3.2 He shall carry out responsibilities for the nomination and election of the district president, vice-presidents, circuit visitors, and the board of directors according to the provisions set forth in the *Handbook* of the Synod and the bylaws of the district.
- 3.2.3.3 He shall carry out responsibilities for the certification of delegates attending district conventions. [Synod Bylaw 4.2.2. (a)]
- 3.2.3.4 He shall carry out the following responsibilities regarding delegates and representatives from the district attending the conventions of the Synod, according to the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod and in directives from the Secretary of the Synod:

- (a) Administer the certification of the circuit voting pastoral and lay delegates and alternates elected by the circuit forums. [Synod Bylaw 3.1.2.1 (i)]
 - (b) Administer the selection process and certification of advisory delegates and alternates for the commissioned ministers and those ordained ministers not eligible to be elected by congregations as voting representatives, who are members of the Synod within the district. [Synod Bylaw 3.1.3.1 – 3.1.3.1 (c)]
 - (c) Administer the certification of all other district representatives. [Synod Bylaw 3.1.3.2-3.1.3.2 (b)]
- 3.2.3.5 He shall carry out responsibilities for conflict resolution within the district according to the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaws 1.10.10.2 and 1.10.11.2]
- 3.2.4 ***The Treasurer***
- 3.2.4.1 The treasurer shall have oversight of all funds and securities of the district and shall provide regular reports of financial status to the board of directors.
- 3.2.4.2 He/she shall evaluate the financial implications of all reports, recommendations, and proposals made to the board of directors.
- 3.2.4.3 He/she shall guide the board of directors in its responsibility in the selection of external auditors and ensure that the board of directors is represented in the annual audit closing conference with the external auditors.
- 3.2.4.4 He/she shall guide the board of directors in its review and approval of the annual operating and capital budgets.
- 3.2.4.5 He/she shall chair the finance committee of the board of directors.
- 3.2.5 ***The Circuit Visitors***
- 3.2.5.1 The circuit visitors and the district president shall constitute the circuit visitors’ conference, which shall meet at the call of the district president in the interest of the work and welfare of the district and the Synod, as provided in the *Handbook* of the Synod. The vice-presidents may be requested to attend.
- 3.2.5.2 Within their respective circuits, the circuit visitors shall: foster evangelical and edifying communication and relationships among the congregations, schools, specialized ministries and the professional church workers; assist the district president, as requested, in promoting and obtaining unanimous participation by congregations in the submission of annual statistical reports; and positively encourage mission outreach through visits, circuit forums, circuit convocations, and circuit pastors’ conferences as provided in the *Handbook* of the Synod and the district bylaws.

4. DIRECTIVES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4.1 General Provisions

- 4.1.1 The board of directors shall be responsible for setting policies and managing the business and legal affairs of the district. It shall have the full legal status and responsibility ascribed to it by and implied in the Articles of Incorporation of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- 4.1.2 The board shall be governed and bound by the principles and respective duties and prohibitions expressed in Synod Bylaw 4.5.1 and the board of directors’ policy manual.
- 4.1.3 Any member of the board, who is not an officer of the district, may be removed from office for cause following the process outlined in the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaws 1.5.7-1.5.7.1]

4.2 Administration

- 4.2.1 By the end of the first meeting of the board following the district convention, the board of directors shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among the board of directors' members to serve a three-year term. The district president is not eligible to serve as chairman or vice-chairman.
- 4.2.2 The board of directors may appoint a recording secretary (nonvoting) who may assist the secretary in order to record the official minutes of the meetings of the board of directors.
- 4.2.3 The board of directors shall appoint the district treasurer, who shall be a layperson, after each regular convention of the district.
- 4.2.4 The board of directors shall meet at least quarterly within each year.
- 4.2.5 Special meetings may be called by the chairman or upon the request of three (3) board members.
- 4.2.6 A majority of the voting members of the board of directors shall constitute a quorum.
- 4.2.7 The chairman shall conduct the meetings and be responsible for the agenda of each meeting.
- 4.2.8 Task forces or committees may be appointed within the board at its discretion.

4.3 Duties

- 4.3.1 On behalf of and in service to the congregations of the district, the board of directors shall be responsible for establishing and overseeing policies by which it governs itself, the district officers, executive directors under the district president, staff, and the overall organization, consistent with the district mission in fulfilling the Lord's work. The board of directors shall be accountable to the district convention, and the executive directors, staff, and all organizational entities of the district shall be accountable to the board of directors through the office of the district president.
- 4.3.2 The board of directors shall:
 - (a) have authority to acquire, lease, mortgage, pledge, sell, convey, or otherwise dispose of property, real or personal, tangible and intangible on behalf of the district;
 - (b) have power to borrow money and to issue, sell or pledge district obligations and evidence of indebtedness, and to mortgage and pledge district property to secure payment thereof, whosoever situate;
 - (c) establish the annual income and spending budget of the district;
 - (d) administer the functions of the Mid-South District, as a Participating District of Lutheran Church Extension Fund-Missouri Synod (LCEF), as described in LCEF's bylaws and in accordance with its policies and procedures;**
 - (e) supervise the administration of all endowment and special funds of the district;
 - (f) fill all executive positions, except that of district president, created by the convention of the district;
 - (g) be the legal representative and custodian of all properties and documents of the district and keep on file an accurate inventory of all district properties, legacies and valuable records and documents;
 - (h) engage a certified public accountant to audit the financial records of the district at least annually or as often and at any time as it deems advisable;
 - (i) provide the bonding of all persons handling district monies;
 - (j) in the name of the district, rent and regulate access to the necessary safe deposit space for the safekeeping of all valuable district records and documents;
 - (k) provide for implementation within the district of the resolutions of the Synod and district conventions, and assign responsibilities and duties in harmony with the district's fiscal policy;

- (l) establish, or realign, visitation circuits according to geographical criteria [Synod Bylaw 5.1.2], after consultation and mutual concurrence with the congregations of the respective circuit(s);
- (m) determine the composition of its electoral circuits prior to each Synod convention [Synod Bylaw section 3.1.2 (a)];
- (n) establish policies by which all organizational entities of the district and officers shall function according to the spirit of the bylaws;
- (o) ratify and/or fill all appointed district positions of service after each regular district convention;
- (p) ratify all appointments to fill vacancies occurring in any ministry team, task force, committee, or district organizational entity;
- (q) conduct, supervise, and manage all affairs of the district not otherwise assigned;
- (r) report regularly to the convention of the Mid-South District.

5. DIRECTIVES FOR MINISTRY TEAMS, TASK FORCES, AND COMMITTEES

5.1 General Directives

- 5.1.1 Ministry teams, task forces, and committees are appointed persons of the district for advising and assisting the district president and the executive directors under the president in providing leadership, resources and encouragement for district mission and ministry.
- 5.1.2 Ministry teams, task forces, and committees shall be responsible to the board of directors through the office of the district president.

5.2 Administration

- 5.2.1 Ministry teams, task forces, and committees may be formed as needs and opportunities arise in the district.
- 5.2.2 The president of the district shall appoint the members of the ministry teams, task forces, and committees, in consultation with the appropriate executive director(s) under the president, regional vice-presidents, and circuit visitors. These appointments shall be ratified by the district board of directors.
- 5.2.3 The ministry teams, task forces, and committees shall determine frequency of meetings.
- 5.2.4 A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
- 5.2.5 The chairman shall conduct the meetings and be responsible for the agenda at each meeting.
- 5.2.6 Each ministry team, task force, and committee shall keep the board of directors informed about its mission and ministry through the office of the district president or one of the executive directors under the president.
- 5.2.7 Each ministry team, task force, and committee shall annually prepare requests for funds for its mission and ministry, and shall submit the requests to the responsible executive director under the president.
- 5.2.8 Each ministry team, task force, and committee shall regularly report to the district convention.

6. ELECTED AND APPOINTED POSITIONS

6.1 Elected by the District Convention

- 6.1.1 *The Nominations Committee*

Membership

6.1.1.1 The nominations committee shall consist of a total of six (6) members, as follows:

1. Two (2) ministers of religion—ordained
2. Two (2) ministers of religion—commissioned
3. Two (2) laypersons

One of each category shall be from electoral regions 1 and 2 combined, and one of each category shall be from electoral regions 3 and 4 combined.

Duties

6.1.1.2 The nominations committee shall:

- (a) solicit names from the rostered congregations and individual members of the Synod in the district;
- (b) prepare, according to provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod and the bylaws of the district, slates of candidates and alternates for the offices or positions to be voted upon by the district convention, except for the offices of district president, regional vice-presidents, and circuit visitors;
- (c) obtain the consent of the persons it proposes to select as candidates; and
- (d) publish the names and qualifications of the nominees in the convention workbook.

6.2 Appointed by the Board of Directors upon Recommendation of the District President

6.2.1 *The Constitution Committee*

Membership

6.2.1.1 The constitution committee shall consist of at least two (2) ministers of religion—ordained and one (1) layperson. The secretary of the district shall be an advisory member.

Duties

6.2.1.2 The constitution committee shall review new and revised constitutions and bylaws of member and applicant congregations according to the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaws 2.2.1-2.4.2]

6.3 *The District Reconcilers*

Membership

6.3.1 District reconcilers shall be appointed according to the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaws 1.10.10-1.10.10.1]

Informal Efforts toward Reconciliation; Consultation

6.3.2 The district reconcilers may assist in informal efforts (not formally requested by a member of the Synod) according to the procedures of Bylaw 1.10.5 in the *Handbook* of the Synod toward reconciliation before disputes reach the formal level. He/she may also be called upon by the district president to serve in efforts at the informal level toward reconciliation.

Formal Efforts toward Reconciliation

6.3.3 At the formal level (formally requested by a member of the Synod) according to the procedures of Bylaw 1.10 in the *Handbook* of the Synod, the reconciler shall serve in the following situations arising in the district:

- (a) Procedural questions involved in excommunication cases
- (b) Cases in which a member of the Synod shall have been removed from the position that such member holds in a congregation that is a member of the Synod

- (c) Cases in which a person, whether or not a member of the Synod, is removed from the position which the person holds in the district
- (d) Cases involving differences between congregations within the same district or between a congregation and its district [Synod Bylaw 1.10.10.2(a)-(d)]

6.3.4 District reconcilers may also be called upon to serve in the various capacities of a reconciler at the Synod level according to the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaw 1.10]

6.4 Stewardship Promotion

- 6.4.1 The district shall have an appointed ministry team, ad hoc committee, or individual dedicated to, and responsible for, the promotion of stewardship in the district.
- 6.4.2 After each district convention, the board of directors shall determine what structure and format of a stewardship promotion ministry, with the resources available, will best serve the district and its strategic plan to foster cheerful stewardship of God’s gifts and resources in and among the congregations of the district.
- 6.4.3 The board of directors will then formalize the process and appoint an appropriate ministry team, committee, or individual for the promotion of stewardship in the district.
- 6.4.4 This ministry team, committee, or individual shall operate according to the provisions of Synod Bylaw section 4.6 and district bylaw chapter 5.

7. THE FINANCIAL MISSION AND MINISTRY PROGRAM

7.1 Preparation and Appropriation

- 7.1.1 The preparation of the financial mission and ministry program of the district shall be coordinated by the finance office in consultation with the district president and executive directors. The program shall take into account district responsibilities toward the financial mission and ministry program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The financial mission and ministry program shall be submitted to the board of directors for its evaluation and approval.
- 7.1.2 Simultaneous to the preparation of the mission and ministry program of the district, the finance office shall inform, inspire, and challenge the congregations of the district to assume responsibility for their fair share of this program by way of their projected mission commitments. The congregations, in a timely manner, shall inform the finance office of their intended mission commitments. The total of these commitments shall be reported to the board of directors.
- 7.1.3 The finance office shall then establish the district spending budget for final approval by the board of directors. This spending budget shall be commensurate with the intended mission commitments of the congregation and other anticipated receipts. Expenditures authorized by the district convention shall be subject to scheduling and appropriation by the board of directors.

8. ELECTION AND VACANCY PROCEDURES

8.1 General Provisions

- 8.1.1 Procedures for the election of all officers, board, and committee members shall follow the provisions of the *Handbook* of the Synod and the bylaws of the district.
- 8.1.2 The following officers and members shall be elected by the convention at each regular convention of the district:
 1. The president
 2. The vice-presidents in line of succession, one (1) from each electoral region
 3. The secretary
 4. Two (2) ministers of religion—commissioned to the board of directors, one (1) from regions 1 and 2; and one (1) from regions 3 and 4
 5. Four (4) laypersons to the board of directors, one (1) from each electoral region

- 6. The circuit visitors
 - 7. The nominations committee [District Bylaw 6.1.1.1]
- 8.1.3 Except for the offices of district president, the regional vice-presidents, and the circuit visitors, the nominations committee shall place in nomination at least two (2) candidates, and select at least one alternate, for each elective office or committee position in the district prescribed by the Synod and district bylaws. These include, but may not be limited to:
- 1. The secretary [Synod Bylaw 4.3.1, District Bylaw 3.2.3]
 - 2. The regional positions for the board of directors (commissioned and lay) [Synod Bylaw 3.12.3, District Bylaw 1.3.2 - 5,6]
 - 3. The nominations committee [Synod Bylaw 3.12.3; District Bylaw 6.1.1.1]
 - 4. Synod Committee for Convention Nominations [Synod Bylaws 3.12.3-3.12.3.3]
- 8.1.4 The district, assembled in convention, shall have the right to alter the slates of nominees, and voting delegates may make additional nominations from the floor with the prior consent of the nominee(s) and pertinent information about the nominee(s) provided in writing.
- 8.1.5 Except for the office of circuit visitor, the election of all offices shall be by individuals and not by slate.
- 8.1.6 The board of directors shall fill all appointive offices after each regular convention of the district.
- 8.1.7 The electoral regions of the district shall be four (4):
- Region 1:* The congregations in the Fayetteville, Fort Smith, and Jonesboro visitation circuits
 - Region 2:* The congregations in the Little Rock-North, Little Rock-South, and Stuttgart visitation circuits
 - Region 3:* The congregations in the Memphis, Nashville, Middle Tennessee, and Paducah visitation circuits
 - Region 4:* The congregations in the Chattanooga, Johnson City, and Knoxville visitation circuits

8.2 Convention Elections

- 8.2.1 The elections committee shall have the privilege of the floor at the discretion of the convention chairman.
- 8.2.1.1 The order of elections following that of district president shall be:
- 1) regional vice-presidents, in line of succession
 - 2) secretary of the district
 - 3) regional board members (commissioned & layperson)
 - 4) members of all elective boards and committees
 - 5) Circuit visitors (ratification of the slate, constituting election) [Synod Bylaw 5.2.2 (h)]
- 8.2.2 Initial and succeeding ballots shall be collected during the session in which they are distributed or conducted electronically.
- 8.2.3 A majority of all votes cast shall be required for election to all elective offices and elective board positions.
- 8.2.4 Except in the election of the president, regional vice-presidents, and circuit visitors, the following regulations shall apply: candidates receiving a majority on the first ballot shall be declared elected. When a second or succeeding ballot is required for a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes and all candidates receiving less than fifteen (15) percent of the votes cast shall be dropped

from the ballot, unless fewer than two candidates receive fifteen (15) percent or more of the votes cast, in which case the three highest candidates shall constitute the ballot. In every election balloting shall continue until every position has been filled by majority vote.

- 8.2.5 The tally of the votes cast for each candidate shall be announced after each ballot in all elections.
- 8.2.6 The committee on elections shall report the official results of each election to the convention and shall file a written report of the tabulation of votes of each election, certified by the chairman and at least one other member of the committee, with the convention chairman and the secretary of the district.

8.3 Procedures for the Nomination and the Election of the District President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Board of Directors, Nominations Committee, Synod Committee for Convention Nominations, and Circuit Visitors

8.3.1 *District President – Nomination and Election*

The procedure for the nomination of the district president shall be as follows:

- (a) Each member congregation shall be entitled to nominate from the clergy roster of the Synod two ministers of religion—ordained as candidates for president of the district.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district, ballots to be received by the congregation six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall tabulate the nominations and shall report to the convention in the convention workbook the names of all ministers of religion—ordained who have been nominated, in addition to those who appear on the slate of candidates.
- (d) Candidates for the office of president of the district shall be the five (5) ministers of religion—ordained receiving the highest number of votes on the nominating ballots of the congregations. The secretary of the district shall notify each of their nomination.
- (e) The secretary of the district shall receive written approval, within ten (10) days of notification, from each candidate for inclusion of his name on the convention ballot.
- (f) In the event of death, declination, or unavailability of any candidate, the nominee having the next highest number of votes shall be a candidate, upon his approval in writing.
- (g) In the event of a tie for the fifth (5th) position among the candidates, all names involved in the tie shall be included as candidates.
- (h) The secretary of the district shall publish in the convention workbook brief biographies of the five (5) candidates for president of the district, giving adequate information for each candidate.
- (i) The convention shall have the right to alter the slate as provided in these bylaws.

8.3.1.1 The procedure for the election of the district president shall be as follows:

- (a) The candidate receiving the majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.
- (b) If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the four (4) candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be retained on the ballot, and another vote taken. Thereafter the candidate receiving the smallest number of votes shall be eliminated on each subsequent ballot until one candidate receives a majority of the votes cast.

8.3.2 *Vice-Presidents in Line of Succession – Nomination, Selection, Election, and Ranking*

- 8.3.2.1 After the results of the district presidential election have been announced, the convention shall elect four regional vice-presidents according to the nominations and elections process.

- (a) Each member congregation of a region shall have been given opportunity to nominate two ministers of religion—ordained from the clergy roster of the district with membership in a congregation in its designated region as candidates for regional vice-president.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district, ballots to be received by the congregation six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation).
- (d) The names of the five ministers of religion—ordained with membership in a congregation within the boundaries of each geographic region who receive the most nominating votes, and who give their consent to serve if elected, shall form the slate from which the district convention shall select by majority vote each regional vice-president.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall be entitled to vote for one of the candidates from each region. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be retained on the ballot.
- (f) No opportunity shall be provided for additional nominations from the floor of the convention.
- (g) Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least number of votes eliminated until one candidate from each region has received a majority of the votes cast.
- (h) Upon the election of the regional vice-presidents, a final election will take place ranking the vice-presidents by separate ballots with a simple majority of voting delegates determining the first, second, third, and fourth vice-presidents in line of succession.

8.3.3 District Secretary – Nomination

8.3.3.1 After the results of the district vice-presidential election and ranking have been announced, the convention shall elect the district secretary. The procedure for the nomination and selection of the district secretary shall be as follows:

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the Synod in the district shall be entitled to nominate from the clergy roster of the district two ministers of religion—ordained as candidates for secretary of the district.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the nominations committee shall tabulate the nominations.
- (d) At least two candidates and at least one alternate shall be selected by the nominations committee (District Bylaw 6.1.1.2). The secretary of the nominations committee shall notify each candidate of their nomination.
- (e) The secretary of the nominations committee shall receive written approval, within ten (10) days of notification, from each candidate for inclusion of his name on the convention ballot.
- (f) The secretary of the nominations committee shall publish in the convention workbook brief biographies of the candidates for secretary of the district.
- (g) The nominations committee shall have the right to provide additional nominations.

8.3.4 Regional Board of Directors Members: (Ministers of Religion—Commissioned and Layperson)

8.3.4.1 After the results of the district secretary election have been announced, the convention shall elect two commissioned ministers for the combined electoral regions (regions 1 and 2 combined; and regions 3 and 4 combined) according to the nominations and elections process.

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the district shall have been given opportunity to nominate two ministers of religion—commissioned from the roster of the Synod with membership in a congregation in the designated combined electoral regions as candidates for regional commissioned member of the board of directors.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations and individual members shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, or by the nominating individual member).
- (d) All nominations received shall be forwarded to the nominations committee, who shall select candidates according to the process outlined in the Synod and district bylaws.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall elect the members of all elective regional positions following the process outlined in the bylaws.

8.3.4.2 After the results of the district board of directors' commissioned minister election have been announced, the convention shall elect four regional board of director layperson members for the electoral regions according to the nominations and elections process.

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the district shall have been given opportunity to nominate two laypersons, with membership in a congregation in the designated electoral region, as candidates for regional layperson member of the board of directors.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations and individual members shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, or by the nominating individual member).
- (d) All nominations received shall be forwarded to the nominations committee, who shall select candidates according to the process outlined in the Synod and district bylaws.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall elect the members of all elective regional positions following the process outlined in the bylaws.

Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least number of votes eliminated until one candidate from each region has received a majority of the votes cast.

8.3.5 ***Nominations Committee Members (Ministers of Religion—Ordained and Commissioned, and Layperson)***

8.3.5.1 The Nominations Committee is to be regarded as an *ad hoc* convention committee, to which limitations on holding multiple offices do not apply.

8.3.5.2 After the results of the regional district board of directors' elections have been announced, the convention shall elect the ordained members of the Nominations Committee. The convention shall elect two ordained ministers for the combined electoral regions (regions 1 and 2 combined; and regions 3 and 4 combined) according to the nominations and elections process.

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the Synod in the district shall be entitled to nominate, from the clergy roster of the Synod, two (2) ministers of religion—ordained for each of the two combined electoral regions (regions 1 & 2 combined; and regions 3 & 4 combined) as candidates for the Nominations Committee. Those nominated must hold membership in a congregation in the designated combined electoral region.

- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations and individual members shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district on behalf of the nominations committee, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, or by the nominating individual member).
- (d) All nominations received shall be forwarded to the nominations committee, who shall select candidates according to the process outlined in the Synod and district bylaws.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall elect the members of all elective regional positions following the process outlined in the bylaws.

Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least number of votes eliminated until one candidate from each region has received a majority of the votes cast.

8.3.5.3 After the results of the ordained Nominations Committee elections have been announced, the convention shall elect two commissioned ministers for the combined electoral regions (regions 1 and 2 combined; and regions 3 and 4 combined) according to the nominations and elections process.

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the district shall have been given opportunity to nominate, two (2) ministers of religion—commissioned from the roster of the Synod with membership in a congregation in the designated combined electoral regions, for each of the two combined electoral regions as candidates for the Nominations Committee.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations and individual members shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district on behalf of the nominations committee, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, or by the nominating individual member).
- (d) All nominations received shall be forwarded to the nominations committee, who shall select candidates according to the process outlined in the Synod and district bylaws.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall elect the members of all elective regional positions following the process outlined in the bylaws.

Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least number of votes eliminated until one candidate from each region has received a majority of the votes cast.

8.3.5.4 After the results of the commissioned nominations committee elections have been announced, the convention shall elect two laypersons for the combined electoral regions (regions 1 and 2 combined; and regions 3 and 4 combined) according to the nominations and elections process.

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the district shall have been given opportunity to nominate, two (2) laypersons, with membership in a congregation in the designated combined electoral regions, for each of the two combined electoral regions as candidates for the Nominations Committee.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations and individual members shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district on behalf of the nominations committee, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.

- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, or by the nominating individual member).
- (d) All nominations received shall be forwarded to the nominations committee, who shall select candidates according to the process outlined in the Synod and district bylaws.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall elect the members of all elective regional positions following the process outlined in the bylaws.

Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least number of votes eliminated until one candidate from each region has received a majority of the votes cast.

8.3.6 ***LCMS Committee for Convention Nominations***

8.3.6.1 When called upon by the Secretary of Synod to do so according to the process outlined in the *Handbook* of Synod [Bylaws 3.12.3 – 3.12.3.3], the Mid-South District shall elect through the regular election procedures at the district convention one member to the Synod’s Committee for Convention Nominations and an alternate.

- (a) Each member congregation and individual members of the district shall have been given opportunity to nominate two (2) individuals, (a professional church worker or a layperson, depending on the classification noted by the Synod Secretary for that convention cycle), with membership in a congregation in the district, for the Synod’s Committee for Convention Nominations.
- (b) Nominating ballots and receiving of ballots from the congregations and individual members shall be the responsibility of the secretary of the district on behalf of the nominations committee, ballots to be received by the congregation and individual members six (6) months prior to the opening date of the convention, and from the congregations and individual members four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.
- (c) The secretary of the district shall receive such nominations (signed by the president and secretary of the nominating congregation, or by the nominating individual member).
- (d) All nominations received shall be forwarded to the nominations committee, who shall select candidates according to the process outlined in the Synod and district bylaws.
- (e) Voting delegates to the district convention shall elect one member to the Synod’s Committee for Convention Nominations, and then elect an alternate on a new ballot, following the process outlined in the bylaws.

Balloting shall continue with the candidate receiving the least number of votes eliminated until one candidate has received a majority of the votes cast.

8.3.7 ***Circuit Visitors***

8.3.7.1 The procedures for the nomination, selection, and the election of the circuit visitors shall be those specified in the *Handbook* of the Synod. [Synod Bylaw 5.2.2]

8.3.7.2 The nominations for circuit visitor from the congregations shall be received by each circuit’s respective circuit visitor no later than the day prior to the circuit forum.

8.3.7.3 Each visitation circuit will determine no later than one (1) month prior to the circuit forum if it will meet face-to-face or by utilizing e-meeting technologies, as allowed by Synod Bylaw 5.2.2.

8.3.7.4 The circuit visitors shall then report in writing the results of the selection process to the district secretary.

8.3.7.5 In the event that a circuit visitor has not been selected by a circuit forum or has been selected but is no longer available to serve, thus resulting in no circuit visitor selection being included on the convention slate of circuit visitors for a circuit, the district president shall make the selection, which selection shall then be included on the convention slate of circuit visitors. [Synod Bylaw 5.2.2(f)]

8.4 Terms and Tenure of Office

- 8.4.1 The offices of the district president, district secretary, district treasurer, and of the circuit visitors shall be three (3)-year terms, without limitation as to reelection.
- 8.4.2 The term of service for district reconcilers shall be six (6) years, renewable without limit. [Synod Bylaw 1.10.10.1]
- 8.4.3 All other elected or appointed officers and members of other district organizational entities may serve a total of no more than three (3) successive full three (3)-year terms in the same office. They may be elected or appointed to the same office after an interval of three (3) or more years. [Synod Bylaw 3.2.4.2]
- 8.4.3.1 One-half or more of a term shall be regarded as a full term under limited tenure rules.
- 8.4.4 The newly elected district president, vice presidents, and members of the board of directors shall assume office on September 1 following the district convention, and shall be installed into their respective offices subsequent to that date at a service to be held in conjunction with the first meeting of the newly elected board of directors.
- 8.4.4.1 In the interim, the district's transition policy, which shall be reviewed and revised as needed by the board of directors prior to the district convention, shall be followed.
- 8.4.5 Circuit visitors and all other members of the committees elected at the convention shall be installed into office before the close of the convention and begin their term of service immediately thereafter.

8.5 Vacancies

- 8.5.1 The office of district president shall be assumed by the first vice-president if the office becomes permanently vacated by death, retirement, resignation, or removal for cause according to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod. He shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term until the next regular district convention elects a district president.
- 8.5.1.1 The duties and responsibilities of the office of district president shall be assumed by the first vice-president whenever a temporary vacancy appears in this office or the board of directors determines that the district president is unable to serve in that capacity because of his prolonged illness or disability. The first vice-president shall remain as the acting district president until the board of directors determines that such illness or disability has been removed or until the next regular district convention elects a district president.
- 8.5.2 If for any reason the office of any vice-president becomes vacant, the other vice-presidents shall move up in rank accordingly. The board of directors shall then fill the remaining vacancy in the office of a vice-president by electing a successor in consultation with and with the mutual concurrence of the district president.
- 8.5.3 In the event of a vacancy on the board of directors, with the exception of the district president and the vice-presidents, the remaining members of the board shall elect an appropriate successor to fill the unexpired term.
- 8.5.4 A vacancy in the office of circuit visitor shall be filled by appointment by the district president.
- 8.5.5 A vacancy in any other office shall be filled by appointment by the district president in consultation with the appropriate executive director and any appropriate representative of a district organizational entity, and ratified by the board of directors.

Summary of Action on Resolutions
LCMS Mid-South District Convention, June 12-14, 2025

Resolution 02-01-25 “To Maintain Accountability and Transparency for Financial Gifts from God’s Stewards” (Committee Two - Church & Ministry Packet) was introduced. The Rev. Willie Grills presented the resolution, and, on behalf of the committee, moved adoption.

President Paavola asked if there was any speaking to the motion and without speakers, the chair called the question. **Resolution 02-01-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 02-02-25 “To Encourage Financial Support for Professional Church Workers” (Committee Two - Church & Ministry Packet) was introduced. The Reverend Willie Grills presented the resolution, and for the committee moved adoption. A delegate offered a friendly amendment to add Luther Classical College to the final resolved. This was accepted by the Committee but received objection from the floor and so the amendment became a formal amendment then offered to the assembly for a vote. After a second and discussion, the motion to amend the motion and add Luther Classical College to the final resolved failed.

Amendment to Resolution 02-02-25	Votes – 154 votes cast
For	55 votes or 35.7%
Against	99 votes or 64.3%

Without further speaking to the motion, President Paavola called for a vote. **Resolution 02-02-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

President Paavola thanked Floor Committee 2 for their work so far and welcomed Floor Committee 3 to the podium. Chairman, The Rev. Kevin McReynolds introduced the members of the committee who will introduce the resolutions. Resolution 03-04-25 “To Encourage Personal Evangelism” was brought before the assembly (Committee Three - Church & Family Ministry Packet). Without objection from the delegates, the chair directed the Floor Committees to omit the reading of the “Whereases” and only read the “Resolveds.” Without speaking to the resolution, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 03-04-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 03-03-25 “To Evaluate, Study, and Use Biblically-based Stewardship Resources” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the resolution, the chair called for the vote. **Resolution 03-03-25 was adopted voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 03-02-25 “To Encourage Generational Ministry” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. Without speaking to the resolution, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 03-02-25 was adopted voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 03-01-25 “To Shape the Faith Formation Paradigm from Generation to Generation Ministry” was brought before the assembly. By friendly amendment, “grandparents” were added to the second to the last resolved prior to “guardians”. The committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the resolution, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 03-01-25 was adopted by voice vote without opposition.**

Floor Committee 3, having completed its business was dismissed with thanks. The chair called Floor Committee 4 to the podium to present their business. The Floor Committee Chair called upon the members to introduce themselves and participate in the reading of the resolutions. Resolution 04-08-25 “Participating in Building a Culture of Church Work Formation and Recruitment” (Committee Four – Church & Synod

Packet) was brought before the assembly. By friendly amendment, the first resolved was changed from establish to “be encouraged to establish.” The committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the resolution, the chair called for the vote. **Resolution 04-08-25 was adopted by a majority voice vote.**

Resolution 04-06-25 “To Amend the District Bylaws so that the District President May Accept a Call to a Congregation as Assistant Pastor” was brought before the assembly. An amendment offered from the floor was withdrawn after clarification from the District Secretary. With all speaking to the resolution ended, the chair called the question. **Resolution 04-06-25 was adopted by majority voice vote.**

Resolution 04-05-25 “To Request that Concordia Plans Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for the Concordia Retirement Plan” was brought before the assembly. After discussion and with all speaking to the resolution ended, the chair called for a vote. A problem with several voting fobs was resolved. **Resolution 04-05-25 was declined.**

Resolution 04-05-25	Vote – 147 voting
For	61 votes or 41.5%
Against	86 votes or 58.5%

Motion to return to reading the “whereases” of each resolution was made and seconded. By standing vote, motion failed to reach the required two-thirds majority.

Resolution 04-07-25 “To Direct The Office of the National and International Mission to Decline Applications for Recognized Service Organization Status from Organizations Currently Supporting, Advocating, or Otherwise Promoting the LGBTQIA+ Agenda and Lifestyle and to direct The Office of National Missions and The Office of International Mission to Revoke RSO Status of the Same” was brought before the assembly and, after discussion on the floor, the resolution was withdrawn by the Floor Committee to be presented later.

The Floor Committee, having used up its time, was released and Floor Committee 1 was brought forward to complete its business. A point of order requested that the representatives from the Malagasy and Tanzanian churches step out during discussions of the resolutions that would impact their churches. The Chair, having taken this as a resolution duly made and seconded, called for a vote. **By voice vote, the motion to request representatives from the Malagasy and Tanzanian churches during the discussion failed.**

Resolution 01-02-25 “To Continue a Relationship with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. A motion to postpone was made and seconded and failed on voice vote. Hearing no more discussion on the main motion, the chair called for voice vote. **Resolution 01-02-25 motion passed by majority voice vote.**

Resolution 01-03-25 “To Continue a Relationship with the Confessional Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar” was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. Several points of information from the floor were answered by the chair. After discussion on the floor, a motion was made and seconded to postpone consideration of the motion until Saturday in order to obtain answers to questions raised. Vice-President Lange addressed the process used by Synod to develop relationships with church bodies that may lead to deeper ties and eventually church fellowship. A point of information over the difference between tabling and postponing a resolution was explained by the Parliamentarian. **Motion to postpone failed by voice vote. Resolution 01-03-25 passed.**

Resolution 01-03-25	Vote – 152 voting
For	115 votes or 75.6%
Against	37 votes or 24.4%

Omnibus Resolution 01-04-25 “To Commend Trinity Hope” and refer the resolution to the Board of Directors for action was brought before the assembly. The committee moved adoption. **Motion passed by voice vote without opposition.** Having completed its business, the chair thanked Floor Committee 1 and released them from their duties.

The chair welcomed Floor Committee 2 to the podium. The Reverend Willie Grills read Resolution 02-03-25 “To Propose LCMS Men’s Ministry” and the committee moved adoption. With no speaking to the motion, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 02-03-25 passed by voice vote without opposition.**

Resolution 02-04-25A “To Establish Locum Tenens Ministry to the Mid-South District” and the committee moved adoption. Without any speaking to the motion, the chair called for a vote. **Resolution 02-04A-25 passed by majority voice vote.**

Resolution 02-05-25 “To Hold a Day of Fasting, Prayer, and Repentance for the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” and the committee moved adoption. An amendment was proposed to change the final resolved. Motion was made to amend the final resolved, motion was seconded, and amendment submitted in writing to the Secretary. During the discussion of the amendment, the Orders of the Day were called and discussion recessed for a break. As the delegates returned to their seats, a video on the Grow Grants program of the Mid-South District was shown.

Following the recess, Floor Committee 2 returned to the podium. Reverend Grills informed the assembly that the floor committee had accepted this as a friendly amendment, changed the title, and edited the final resolved to reflect this change. Resolution 02-05A-25 “To Address Theological Errors and Call Repentance for the Church’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” was before the assembly. Discussion on the revised resolution continued. A motion was made to read the whereases in order to give context to the resolveds. **Motion was seconded but failed by standing vote.** An amendment was made and seconded to include another resolved after the first, requesting a report from the CTCR to the Synod Convention on practices during a pandemic. The amendment was seconded and discussed. The question was called and motion to call the question passed unanimously. The assembly voted on the amendment to add another resolved. Amendment failed. The assembly then voted on Resolution 2-05A-25. **Resolution 02-05A-25 failed.**

Resolution 02-05A-25	Amendment – 156 voting	Vote – 157 voting
For	59 votes or 37.8%	73 votes or 46.5%
Against	97 votes or 62.2%	84 votes or 53.5%

**Mission and Ministry Directives for Synod during the 2026-2029 Triennium
From the Circuit & Advisory Forums**

1. Work to resolve human trafficking and raise awareness to address the challenges of a world that does not respect the value God has given to male and female.
2. To encourage young families and encourage the health of marriage and the vitality of the devotional life in the home.
3. To train, encourage and support personal evangelism and church planting thru training programs like Each One-Reach One in the congregation and circuit.
4. To support and encourage the recruitment of and the service of church workers emotionally, spiritually, and financially, building on the progress of Set Apart to Serve on our parishes and schools.
5. To address the Church's response during a pandemic and the use of technology, social media, and digital resources to supplement or replace person- to-person relationships.
6. Formation and Spiritual Strengthening of Elders and other Lay Leaders in the congregation.
7. In support of the Set Apart to Serve initiative and in order to build relationships and to provide a positive example of pastoral leadership, we encourage continued education of pastors in how to support and engage with Lutheran schools and ECC communities.

Honored Guest Presentations
LCMS Mid-South District Convention, July 12-14, 2025

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA
SOUTHEAST OF LAKE VICTORIA DIOCESE**



**THE REPORT TO THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION ON
12-14TH MAY 2025**

**SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN
TANZANIA -SOUTHEAST OF LAKE VICTORIA DIOCESE**

ELCT-South of Lake Victoria Diocese has the Scriptural foundation that is based on Mark 16:15, which says;

“And He said unto them, go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all creature”. (Mark 16:15)

Dear President Dr. Roger Paavola, District management and all brothers and sisters, It is with great honor to present warm greetings from South East of Lake Victoria Diocese.

The South East of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) is one of the current 28 Dioceses that comprise the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The Diocese encompasses the administrative regions of Shinyanga and Simiyu. It was

established after the East of Lake Victoria Diocese (ELVD) split on December 12th, 2012 due church growth. Right from her establishment, the South East of Lake Victoria Diocese has collaborated with the Mid-South District in proclaiming the Gospel in different ways. The Diocese came into contact with the Mid-South District through the late Bishop Nehemiah Bomani of East of Lake Victoria Diocese (ELVD) in early 2000s. The Mid-South district worked with the East of Lake Victoria Diocese before SELVD was established. After the establishment of the SELVD in 2012, Mid-South District decided to work with the SELVD

The ELCT –South East of Lake Victoria Diocese covers a total land area of 44.1(000 sq.km), equivalent to 5% of the total land area of 883.3(000 sq.km) for mainland Tanzania. Based on the 2022 population and housing census, the two regions command a total population of 4,381,796 (2,241,299 in Shinyanga and 2,140.497 in Simiyu) people altogether.

In 2012, the diocese had around **14,000** members, and now there are **48,412** members by March 2025.

By then, there were 17 Pastors; now, we have 118 Pastors. Three of them got a Doctor of Ministry, two of them got an MA and STM, one got an MA, and 78 got their Certificates through support from the Mid-South District.

There were **32** congregations; now there are **108** Congregations.

We had no Deaconesses in 2012; now we have **30**.

Currently, we have **268** Preaching stations that is more than 200% of the number of Pastors we have.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT TO THE GROWTH AND STRENGTH OF THE SOUTH EAST OF LAKE VICTORIA DIOCESE.

1. Pastoral and Diaconal formation

The Mid-South District has funded the training of pastors and deaconesses in Negezi, Tanzania, and Fort Wayne, Indiana. ^ Pastors have been trained

through CTSFW and 78 have been trained through Bishop Makala training Centre in Negezi. 30 Deaconesses are also the beneficiaries of Mid-South District support.

2. Preaching The Gospel and reaching the unreached

Through the Mission teams that have visited, more than 15,000 people were baptized and became members of our church. Every year since 2013, we have had a Mission week with mission teams from Mid-South District to reach the unreached areas to plant Churches.

3. Church Planting and roofing;

In every mission team visit, Mid-South plants 2-3 new churches. In most areas, land was bought, and the support of the Mid-South District roofed churches. The baptized people got places of worship. Mission teams provided food for children with albinism and vulnerable children. Bibles, Hymn books, and school supplies are also offered.

4. Naomi Project

The Naomi project has brought a bright future and hope for widows in the SELVD. The mission team established the project in 2016, providing capital to support women in starting or strengthening their small income-generating activities. 133 widowed women have received funds since the project began, and their projects are doing well.

5. Provision of transport

The Diocese has received bicycles and motorcycles to help our pastors reach remote areas. It is a pleasure to express our appreciation to you all for joining hands with us in the mission work. I am indebted to President Dr. Roger Paavola for inviting me to participate in this Convention. Your district

is a blessing to the people of Tanzania. I am humbly requesting you on behalf of the SELVD to continue supporting us in reaching the unreached, Church roofing, motorcycles, and to train Pastors and Deaconesses indifferent levels. I wish you all the best as you continue partnering with us in the ministry. May God bless you all.

I humbly submit.



REPORT OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES OF LIME 2021 – 2025

Introduction

We thank our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church and the Good Teacher, for His dynamic vision about The Lutheran Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME). In His caring hands, LIME exists and is alive. We also are very grateful to Him for the fruitful partnership between LIME and the LCMS Mid-South District, under the leadership of the Reverend Dr Roger Paavola. This fruitful partnership is a spiritual and powerful gift from Him. We believe in Jesus Christ Who died for us and Who is risen for us. Life overcame death and defeat. Therefore, despite the COVID-19, LIME exists and is alive.

First, we will narrate our fight against death and burial of LIME because of COVID-19. Next, we will say about the way how LIME stands as witness of its faith in Jesus Christ from Nazareth. Afterwards, we will present the academic life of LIME. Finally, we will enumerate our wishes to improve LIME inside its partnership with the LCMS Mid-South District.

1- *Belief in Jesus Christ from Nazareth, the Risen One, Overcomes Death and Burial*

We confess that life after the COVID-19 was not easy for LIME. Many private schools died and disappeared because of it. We refused to capitulate. We had to use media such as radios and televisions to spread the good news that LIME was alive and still working. But everybody does not own a telephone with a radio or FB facilities. So, from then on up to now, we visit villages, small cities and go to church meetings to do advertisements while still using mass media. We want to be sure that anybody interested in pursuing graduate studies knows and is aware that LIME exists and is alive. We do these advertisements during the break between the end of the past school year and the beginning of the new school year. Death has no power on LIME who belongs to a church who believes in Jesus Christ from Nazareth, the Risen One.

2- *The Spiritual Life of LIME*

The partnership between the LCMS Mid-South District has « mission through education » as motto. We catch education to be a field for mission. Our dream is to hold students already christian to stay as good branches grafted to the Vine and to convert non-christian students to become christian. Every Tuesday morning at 10AM, on class day, we organize a devotion for all classes (Professors and administration staff members included) in one large room of LIME. One christian student leads the devotion and the Rector preaches. Each christian student takes turn to lead the devotion on that appointed Tuesday.

The administration staff members also have their own daily hour devotion, except Tuesday. They gather together in the office of the Rector every morning at 9AM. They take turn to lead the devotion.

Everybody, one after one, prays for LIME and for its partnership with the LCMS Mid-South District to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, to produce good fruits for the benefit of the church and of the country via the successes of the students in their lives.

The productive outcomes of such mission through education are many. We can cite some of them among others. Students who have left church came back to Sunday morning worship. We saw them when we were asked to preach at their church, if they are Lutheran. Others have become choir members of Lutheran churches in Fianarantsoa, if they live in Fianarantsoa which is the city where LIME is located. One daughter of a former Muslim family has chosen LIME to learn more about how to live in a Christian institution. One student decided to go to a Lutheran seminary after his study at LIME. He is now at the graduate school of the Malagasy Lutheran Church at SALT, Fianarantsoa. His name is Pastor Rakotoheriniaina Léon Odilon. Another student did the same thing by going to study at a Reformed seminary. He is now at the Reformed University of Ravelojaona, Ambatonakanga, Antananarivo. His name is Pastor Lazasoa Andrianirina.

3- The Academic Life of LIME

In this section, we will deal with studies in general and with the German language. We will start with the studies in general. By studies in general, we mean LIME as Institution of Management and Entrepreneurship and of Tourism.

3.1- LIME as Institution of Management and Entrepreneurship and of Tourism

The name of LIME summarizes its academic life which can be read from its activities. LIME is the abbreviation of « Lutheran Institution of Management and Entrepreneurship ». It holds three gates : Management, Entrepreneurship and Tourism. All three of them require a mastering of finances. The three of them aim at one target : job. Either the students at the end of their studies find a job or create a job of their own. Up to now, according to our records, 70 per cent of students who have finished their studies at LIME have a job. They start their studies at the first year with a general teaching about the three gates. In the second year, they begin to choose courses related to the job they like to do after their studies with emphasis on finances. Job training or internship at the end of the second year and at the end of the third year reinforces their choice. Internship or job training consists in training students for specific job.

LIME has academic partners in Fianarantsoa. The first one is one school in the State University of Andrainjato, which is located in Fianarantsoa. It carries the name of « Ecole de Management and d'Innovation Technologique » (EMIT). It teaches Management like LIME but it also introduces students to new technologies in computer sciences. It cooperates with LIME in these matters. The second one is the Lutheran Hospital of the Malagasy Lutheran Church (SALFA) in Fianarantsoa. It receives LIME's students for internship about finances. The third one is the well-known Hotel Tombontsoa which is located in Fianarantsoa. It receives LIME's students for internship about Tourism. However, our students are not limited to these official partners for their training. LIME teaches them how to find and to choose a factory or a business work in Madagascar that can train them for their future job.

A training can last from one month to two months. They have to write a report after their training. A report contains a description of the training, a critical analysis of the training and a proposition of solutions to the negative critics. For the students of the second year who go to the training, they write a book between 60 and 75 pages under the guidance of an advisor. They present their book to a jury of three members, his advisor included in oral defense. They get the diploma of DTS or Diploma of Higher Technician if they succeed in defending their book. For the students of the third year, they write a book between 60 and 100 pages for a specific project, under the guidance of an advisor. They present it to a jury of three members, their advisor included. They get the diploma of Licentiate if they succeed in defending their book in oral defense. We must notice that students have to choose their advisor among the Professors from their first

year of study to guide them throughout their studies at LIME. We must also notice that books to be presented at oral defense must be written in an academic French language. Some of the best books written by students at LIME were chosen to be in the national library books for national use.

These trainings are completed by study trips. LIME organizes one study trip each year. The aim is to bring the students at a place of businesses (factories or tourism) to see how they work and how they are managed for benefit purpose. Each day of visit is ended with discussions and exchange of ideas. The theories in class combined with the practical sides on the field are to empower the students for their future jobs.

Let us cite some results among many :

- 1- Mr Tibaka Randrianantenaina Nicolas, Director of ECOLOPEN at Est Fenerive, Coordinator of JAD Association (Jeunes Acteurs pour le Developpement) in the program of RINDRA, financed by PNUD and USAID.
- 2- Ramasindroavola Toky Parfait, Responsible of finances in the office of the President of the Malagasy Republic at Iavoloha .
- 3- Rahajanirina Zanatiana, Professor at HighSchool of Isorana ;
- 4- Mbiniharisata Larissa Frankline, Responsible of the Environnement Tandavanala.
- 5- Noaharitsalama Fanilo Fiderana , State Finances in Antananarivo.
- 6- Randriamiandrisoa Anjatiana Ginola, Director of a Tourism Agency in Toliary

Let us cite some students among many who work abroad :

- 1- Rafalihieriarisoa Antsatiana Alida, in Germany.
- 2- Rakotovao Miharisoa, in Italy.
- 3- Harimanana Belle Cathycia, further studies in France.

We would like to end this section about the general studies of LIME with a special attention from the State Ministry of Education. Recognizing the success and the participation of LIME in job production, the State Ministry of Education gave 50 tables and chairs to LIME to encourage LIME to go in the same stream of job production for the young Malagasy people.

3.2 German Language Teaching

LIME nurtures strong link with Goethe Institute in Madagascar (CGM), located in Antananarivo. We teach German language crowned by an international diploma from Germany after succeeding to fulfill all requirements for such diploma. It has been about ten years that we have worked with CGM. We had 45 students who got that diploma last year. Some of them are now in contact with agencies who deal with going to Germany. Many of our previous students in German language are now either working or studying in Germany.

Our target for these past few years is to make LIME visible in order to prove that we exist and that we are alive. Our next move is to grow. We have a few dreams to make that happen.

4- *Dreams for Growth*

Our first dream is to find ways for the growth of the students in number. The Province of Fianarantsoa and that of Toliary are qualified as the poorest Provinces in Madagascar. If we only depend on monthly tuitions of the students, we will have hard time for our students to grow in number. Therefore, we propose to the LCMS Mid-South District to provide scholarships for LIME's students. Obviously, there will be conditions or criteria for students to get scholarships.

Our second dream is to enter into cooperation with LCMS Concordia Universities. It will promote and enrich LIME very quickly for receiving guest Professors from LCMS Concordia Universities, even for one week or two weeks. Indeed, there will be translators from English to Malagasy or to French language.

Our last dream is to do a renovation of LIME building. The weather has changed the color and the look of the building both outside and inside. A good building reflects a good teaching.

Conclusion

We deeply and strongly thank our Lord Jesus Christ from Nazareth, the Head of the Church and our Good Teacher for His care for LIME. This care is made flesh by the partnership between the LCMS Mid-South District and LIME. Consequently, we are very grateful to the LCMS Mid-South District for this partnership. We exist and we are alive because the LCMS Mid-South District is our faithful partner. We will stay alive and we will grow because Jesus Christ from Nazareth has given us the LCMS Mid-South District to walk together with us.

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