

# **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.*

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## **SECTION A**

# **CONVENTION INFORMATION AND AGENDA**

## INFORMATION TO ASSIST CONVENTION DELEGATES

### SERVANTS OF CHRIST

Your election as a voting Convention delegate indicates the high regard your fellow members have for you as their representative. We pray for God's blessing on you and all delegates so your leadership glorifies Him, serves His Church and gives you joy. Officially your delegate role from your congregation continues for three years until the next Convention in 2028! Our 2025 Mid-South District Convention will have a strong mission tone for bold witness in our world to Christ's death and resurrection. ***"Christ: The Church's One Foundation"*** based on 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 will serve as our theme throughout the Convention.

### CONVENTION PURPOSE

The thirty-five Districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod hold Conventions every three years according to bylaws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This 22<sup>nd</sup> Convention in our Mid-South District's history of 59 years will bring together delegates from Arkansas, Tennessee and southern Kentucky and guests from our District and beyond. Convention sessions provide opportunities for member congregations, through their delegates, to receive important information, conduct District business and provide direction on behalf of and in service to the congregations. You will return to your congregation with an expanded picture of how we serve as partners in the Gospel in the Mid-South District and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We are grateful for all who used their gifts and invested significant time and energy in planning this gathering!

### Convention Goals

- > Rejoice in and praise God for the gift of our salvation through Jesus Christ
- > Tell the stories of Jesus and His love, of God at work in and through us
- > Conduct elections and business to move the Mid-South District forward
- > Establish and grow in Christian fellowship with Convention delegates and guests
- > Hear from our Synodical First Vice President about Mid-South District/LCMS partnership in the Gospel
- > Give and receive encouragement for bold witness in reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom
- > Provide delegates with information and helpful resources for their congregations

### LOCATION AND DETAILS

Our Convention site is the **Hilton Hotel** (Ridge Lake Blvd). **Registration will be Thursday, June 12, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Late registration will also take place from 6:30-8:00 a.m. Friday. Floor Committees' open hearings will occur from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in designated rooms. Delegates are invited to the open hearings to express views on various Convention overtures. When you register, look for the meeting places for the Floor Committees.

In the presence and with the blessing of the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the first session will begin at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoon. The Convention Communion Service will be held Thursday, 7:30 p.m., at **Christ the King Lutheran Church in Memphis, Tennessee**. Transportation

arrangements and a map will be provided when you register. **Reverend Peter K. Lange, Synodical Representative**, First Vice President of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, will be the preacher for the opening service. The offerings, including those from District Sunday that will be brought on behalf of all congregations by their lay delegate have been designated by the Board of Directors for the Scholarship Fund for Pastors and Commissioned Church Workers burdened with significant educational debt.

## **DELEGATES, CIRCUIT CAUCUSES, AND CONVENTION SESSIONS**

**Voting Delegates:** A member congregation is entitled to two voting delegates, one pastoral and one lay, unless there is more than one congregation being served by one called pastor. In that case, together they will elect one lay delegate to represent them, with the alternate lay delegate often coming from the congregation other than the one providing the voting lay delegate. Throughout the Convention, voting delegates wear identifying badges issued to them when they present their credentials to the Convention Registration Committee. Seating for voting delegates will be in a particular area to facilitate voting in elections and on resolutions. During sessions, only voting delegates should be in the seating area designated for them.

**Advisory Delegates:** Advisory delegates will also have a special seating area. Advisory delegates may participate in floor debate but are not permitted to vote or to introduce motions.

**Circuit Forums:** At 4:20 p.m. Friday, June 13, 2025, all electoral circuits (who have not previously held their circuit forum) will be choosing their pastoral and lay delegates to the 2026 Synodical Convention in Phoenix, AZ. According to the LCMS Handbook – 2023 Edition; 5.3 Circuit Forms; 5.3.2, “Congregations of a multi-congregation parish not contributing a lay voter may send an advisory lay representative, with voice but no vote.” Your Circuit Visitor is prepared to lead the elections, with directions from the District President. Please contact him if you have questions about the election procedures.

In all visitation Circuits, the selection to determine the Circuit Visitor for the next triennium will take place. In addition, each Circuit, in compliance with LCMS Bylaw (Handbook 2023) 4.2.1(d) “...*shall, through delegate vote, forward to the national convention a list of two or three triennial mission and ministry emphases for consideration by the national convention.*”

**Sessions:** A proposed agenda is included with this workbook to give delegates an overview of how the sessions will be arranged and when different individuals will be making presentations.

## **Reports and Overtures**

Your Workbook pages provide reports from a variety of servant-leaders who are accountable to the District as they fulfill their responsibilities. The reports represent service to our Lord and His Church for which we are grateful! To facilitate the best use of our Convention time, most reports are provided in written form. By reading the material before sessions, you are preparing to be an informed delegate who will participate with greater confidence and knowledge.

Overtures to the Convention are also included in the Workbook. Overtures express an action desired on the part of the Convention. Each Overture has been assigned to the appropriate Floor Committee, with representation from Convention delegates, appointed by the District President. After consideration of the overtures, the Floor Committee may bring the overture as a resolution in original form to the Convention, modify or amend it, or decline to offer it for proper reasons.

## **ELECTIONS**

During the Convention, delegates elect the District President, four Regional Vice Presidents, the District Secretary, the Board of Directors, a Nominations Committee, a lay member to the Synod’s Committee

for Convention Nominations, and ratify the slate of Circuit Visitors, which shall constitute their election. Nominations for District President and Vice Presidents were generated from congregations through a process guided by the District Secretary. The Nominations Committee will provide nominees for all other elected positions. Voting delegates may nominate from the floor with the prior written consent of and written pertinent information about the nominees, with the exception of the election of Vice Presidents. Included in this workbook is a slate of candidates developed by the District Secretary and the Nominations Committee and biographical data.

## **HAVE A PRODUCTIVE, ENJOYABLE CONVENTION!**

Approximately 300 people, including delegates, advisors, officers and guests are anticipated. Often, a number of guests and family members will also be in attendance on a part-time basis. Convention sessions are open to guests who are seated in a designated section on the Convention floor. Guest badges will be available at the registration table.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE AS A DELEGATE**

1. Pray that the Lord's will be done among us and through us!
2. Be faithful in attendance at all sessions.
3. Observe the agenda schedule and be prompt at your seat for beginning times.
4. Print out a copy of the Convention Workbook from the flash drive and bring it to all sessions. Keep summary handouts and good notes for reporting to your home congregation.
5. Wear your badge at all times as a voting or advisory delegate.
6. Use the floor microphone closest to your seat when addressing the chair or the Convention.
7. Be attentive, courteous and prepared to contribute to and receive from your brothers and sisters in Christ.
8. Make the Chairman, a District officer or staff member, the Convention Committee, or a page, aware of any special concerns or needs (transportation, personal, etc.) that you may have while serving at the Convention.
9. Browse through the display areas and speak with representatives. Pick up available materials that interest you.
10. Take the initiative to establish new acquaintances and renew existing ones with fellow delegates and guests. You will be moved to thank God for the gifts, trust and spirit of Gospel partnership represented among those present.
11. When the Convention is in session, please turn off cell phones and all other communication devices. Please do not use them inside the convention hall.
12. If voting or advisory delegates are unable to be present at all or a portion of the Convention due to unusual circumstances, please submit a written excuse to:

**Convention Registration Committee  
Mid-South District Convention  
1675 Wynne Road  
Cordova, Tennessee 38016  
Email: [rpaavola@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:rpaavola@mid-southlcms.com)**



## CONVENTION SPECIAL STANDING RULES

1. Each member of the Convention, when recognized by the Chair, shall state his/her name. He/she shall also state the name and location of the congregation he/she represents.
2. The two-minute rule shall apply for all who speak from the floor.
3. While any voting delegate may call the question at any time, after every 15 minutes of debate on any one motion, there shall be an automatic call of the question by the Chair.
4. All main motions, substitute motions, and amendments made from the floor must be submitted to the Chair of the Convention and Secretary in writing and signed by the Delegate making the motion, including the name and location of the congregation he/she represents.
5. Only substantive amendments (those impacting its purpose or effect) or substitute resolutions shall be offered from the floor and be submitted to the convention office for publication. Editorial corrections and non-substantive changes to resolutions already introduced must be shared in writing with the Secretary and the Chair of the Convention. Until a resolution is presented to the delegates, any such editorial or non-substantive changes must be given directly to the floor committee chair before or during Open Hearings.
6. If a substitute resolution is offered, the Convention shall first decide by majority vote whether to consider the substitute. If the decision is in the affirmative and the substitute resolution is adopted, the original resolution fails. If the substitute resolution does not receive favorable action either to consider or to adopt, the original resolution is again before the house. (This is the so-called "Behnken Rule" for dealing with substitute resolutions.)
7. Questions of privilege shall be addressed in writing to the Chair, or his appointee, instead of consuming Convention time.
8. Resolutions prepared by the Floor Committees, which have not been acted upon by the Convention before adjournment shall die. The subject matter may be reintroduced at the next Convention by means of an Overture.
9. The preface, preambles, and whereas section shall be considered an integral part of the Resolution, Overture, and/or Memorial, and as such, subject to the same serious consideration and adoption in all its parts as the main motion itself.
10. Before the convention has adopted the final slate for an office, if there is only one nominee on the ballot due to no other nominations made or those nominated have previously declined, the chair shall, where allowed by the bylaws, call for nominations from the floor. If no nominations are made from the floor, the election will be declared by acclamation.
11. LCMS Bylaw 1.5.1.2 limits an individual to serve, at any one time, in no more than one elective position and no more than two positions, whether elective or appointive, or in one position directly responsible to another, counting both district and Synod positions. The Synod and

district nominating committees are considered ad hoc committees. Individuals may be nominated for additional positions, but if elected, must determine in which position(s) to serve, subject to the limit. Upon election to each position, individuals with names on subsequent ballots will be asked whether they should be removed. When individuals are elected to offices that cannot be served simultaneously, the district elections committee shall immediately attempt to contact them, to decide in which office(s) they choose to serve. Should a district election be vacated as a result, if the convention remains open, the convention shall conduct a new election from the position, using the remaining slate of candidates; otherwise, the vacancy shall be filled after the installation of elected officers and board members, according to the applicable bylaw.

12. Cellular phones shall be off. No communication devices shall be used in the convention hall during voting.
13. Unless covered by these standing rules of the Convention, parliamentary procedure shall normally be governed by **Robert's Rules of Order**.

**THE 22<sup>nd</sup> REGULAR CONVENTION OF  
THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD  
JUNE 12-14, 2025**

**THE CONVENTION THEME**

**“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”**



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**1 Corinthians 3: 10-11**

**THE CONVENTION  
PROGRAM**

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

**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

**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 – Tennessee D
- Church and Synod – Tennessee E
- Elections – Directors 5

11:00 a.m.                      Exhibits Open (Tennessee Grand Foyer)

***“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”***  
***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  
(Bus Transportation to Christ the King will be provided)

7:30 p.m.                      Opening Service – ***Christ the King Lutheran Church***  
***5296 Park Avenue, Memphis, TN***  
Sermon: ***The Reverend Peter K. Lange***

***“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”***  
***FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025***  
***SECOND CONVENTION SESSION***

**Chaplain for the Day: *The Reverend Adam Woldt***

**Friday, June 13, 2025**

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 – <b><i>Mr. Aaron Jackson</i></b>
8:00 a.m. – 8:20 a.m.	Opening Devotion – <b><i>The Reverend Adam Woldt</i></b>
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 <b><i>Rev. Robert Herring, Chair</i></b> <b><i>Elections Committee</i></b>
9:25 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.	<b>Elections</b>
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 – <b><i>Mr. Aaron Jackson</i></b>
10:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.	LCMS President’s Report (and video) <b><i>The Reverend Peter K. Lange</i></b>
11:20 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	<b>Q&amp;A with <i>First Vice President Lange</i></b>
11:50 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.	Announcements Special Greetings Meal Prayer
11:55 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch – Southeast Ballroom Current Board of Directors’ Luncheon – Directors 6 Pastor’s Wives Luncheon – Directors 3

***“Christ: The Church’s On Foundation”***  
***FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2025***  
***THIRD CONVENTION SESSION***

**Friday, June 13, 2025** *(Continued)*

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

***“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”***  
***SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025***  
***FOURTH CONVENTION SESSION***

**Chaplain for the Day: *The Reverend Brandon Martin***

**Saturday, June 14, 2025**

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

***“Christ: The Church’s One Foundation”***  
***SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025***  
***FIFTH CONVENTION SESSION***

**Saturday, June 14, 2025** *(Continued)*

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Announcements – <b><i>Mrs. Angela Fowler</i></b> Lunch Prayer – <b><i>The Reverend Brandon Martin</i></b>
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.	Seating and Singing – <b><i>Mr. Aaron Jackson</i></b>
1:10 p.m. - 2:10 p.m.	Floor Committee Business
2:10 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.	Installation of Newly Elected Officers – <b><i>LCMS First Vice President Peter K. Lange</i></b> Closing Devotion – <b><i>The Reverend Brandon Martin</i></b>
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 (Incoming Members)

**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 Exalt 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.



# 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>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION FLOOR COMMITTEES</b></p>
---

**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 Cumberland Lutheran Church, Harrogate, TN

***Minister of Religion – Commissioned***

***Amy Waltz***, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

***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 Don Hefta***, Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR

***Reverend Michael Miller***, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Harriman, TN

***Minister of Religion – Commissioned***

***TBD***

***Lay Member***

***Keith D'Atrio***, Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR

***Barbara Herring***, Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island, AR

***John Ruppel***, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN

**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

***Reverend Addison Pope***, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR

##### ***Minister of Religion – Commissioned***

***TBD***

##### ***Lay Member***

***Keith Brummett***, Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR

***Mathew 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

<b>2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE</b>
--

***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

<p><b>2025 MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION COMMITTEES</b></p>
---

**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*

## **SECTION B**

### **ATTENDANCE ROSTERS, OFFICIAL ACTS ANNIVERSARIES**

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>CHATTANOOGA CIRCUIT-Region 4</b></p>
--

*The Reverend Mark Rhoads, Circuit Visitor*

<u><b>TENNESSEE</b></u>	<u><b>PASTOR</b></u>	<u><b>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</b></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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>FAYETTEVILLE CIRCUIT - Region 1</b></p>
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*The Reverend Brandon Martin, Circuit Visitor*

<u><b>ARKANSAS</b></u>	<u><b>PASTOR</b></u>	<u><b>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</b></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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>FORT SMITH CIRCUIT- Region 1</b></p>
--

*The Reverend Thomas Bartzsch, Circuit Visitor*

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</u>
Fort Smith Bethel	Rev. Joshua Willadsen	(D) Matthew Pitsch
Sallisaw, Oklahoma Trinity (Dual Parish)	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



<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>JOHNSON CITY CIRCUIT - Region 4</b></p>
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*The Reverend Steven Harmon, Circuit Visitor*

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; 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) Laurie Smith

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>JONESBORO CIRCUIT - Region 1</b></p>
--

*The Reverend Joshua Leigeber, Circuit Visitor*

<u><b>ARKANSAS</b></u>	<u><b>PASTOR</b></u>	<u><b>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</b></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	Not Attending	(D) Barbara Herring (A) LaVerne
Jonesboro All Saints	Rev. Andrew Lehman	(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) Not Attending

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION – 2025</b>  <b>KNOXVILLE CIRCUIT - Region 4</b></p>
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*The Reverend David Graves, Circuit Visitor*

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</u>
Harriman Redeemer	Rev. Michael Miller	(D) Steven Hallett
Harrogate Christ of the Cumberlands (Dual-Morristown)	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	Not Attending	(D) Not Attending
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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>LITTLE ROCK-NORTH CIRCUIT - Region 2</b></p>
--

*The Reverend David Vandercook, Circuit Visitor*

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; 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	Dual Parish	(D) Dual Parish
North Little Rock Trinity (Dual Parish)	Rev. David Vandercook	(D) Paul Koehler (A) Kurt Bender, Jr.
Searcy Our Shepherd	Not Attending	(D) Michael Kever

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>LITTLE ROCK-SOUTH CIRCUIT - Region 2</b></p>
--

*The Reverend Emil Woerner, Circuit Visitor*

<u>ARKANSAS</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; 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) Not Attending

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>MEMPHIS CIRCUIT - Region 3</b></p>
--

*The Reverend Clayton Sellers, Circuit Visitor*

<b><u>MISSISSIPPI</u></b>	<b><u>PASTOR</u></b>	<b><u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</u></b>
Olive Branch Beautiful Savior	Rev. Sawyer Meyers	(D) Erik Puder (A) Steven Tyler
<b><u>TENNESSEE</u></b>		
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 Rudenske	(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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>MIDDLE TENNESSEE - Region 3</b></p>
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*The Reverend David McMinn, Circuit Visitor*

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</u>
Columbia Trinity	Rev. William Wagner	(D) Not Attending
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) Not Attending
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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>NASHVILLE CIRCUIT - Region 3</b></p>
--

*The Reverend Ken Shaw, Circuit Visitor*

<u>TENNESSEE</u>	<u>PASTOR</u>	<u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; 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



<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>PADUCAH CIRCUIT - Region 3</b></p>
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*The Reverend David Appold, Circuit Visitor*

<b><u>KENTUCKY</u></b>	<b><u>PASTOR</u></b>	<b><u>LAY DELEGATE &amp; ALTERNATE</u></b>
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
<b><u>TENNESSEE</u></b>		
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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND CONGREGATIONAL ROSTER</b>  <b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CONVENTION - 2025</b>  <b>STUTTGART CIRCUIT - Region 2</b></p>
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*The Reverend Don White, Circuit Visitor*

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

<p align="center"><b>ATTENDANCE REGISTER OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT ADVISORY DELEGATES REGISTERED TO ATTEND THE 2025 DISTRICT CONVENTION</b></p>
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**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

**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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

**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, Lapeer, MI

**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 Jolivet**

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  
LeBoriosis, 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, Jennifer\*  
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**

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**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

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**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

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**TENNESSEE (continued)**

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**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  
Korthase, 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.
SCHOOPING, 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 <sup>ND</sup> Vice President, at 21 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Vice President, effective April 4, 2022.
MILLER, MICHAEL	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 4 <sup>th</sup> Vice President, at 21 <sup>st</sup> MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
NEUGEBAUER, AARON	Change from Sole Pastor to Senior Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Lapeer, MI, effective November 10, 2019. (Include for date correction)

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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 <sup>RD</sup> Vice President, at 21 <sup>st</sup> MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
REUTER, LANE	Elected MDS Board of Directors' 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, at 21 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> Vice President, at 21 <sup>st</sup> MDS Convention, effective July 2, 2022.
WILLADSEN, JOSHUA	Changed from MDS Board of Directors' 4 <sup>th</sup> Vice President to 3 <sup>rd</sup> 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, JOHNDANVID 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.

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**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
MCDUGLALL, 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

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ZWICK, WILLIAM F. to Nebraska Aug. 26, 2023

**DECEASED - ORDAINED MINISTERS**

AMES, RICHARD W.	Dec. 17, 2022
AVE-LALLEMANT, M. PETER	Aug. 15, 2023
AVERY, ARTHUR	Dec. 04, 2020
BEHLING, HENRY W.	Sept. 04, 2021
BINGENHEIMER, ROY W.	Jan. 17, 2023
COUCH, WILLIAM L.	June 22, 2022
GROTELUSCHEN, NORMAN L.	July 23, 2021
HAGEMEIER, FRED W.	Nov. 21, 2021
HELMICH, CLARENCE W.	Mar. 27, 2022
HESSE, DONLEY D.	May 21, 2022
KRAUSE, DAVID W.	Mar. 12, 2022
KROGEN, JOEL	July 26, 2021
LEUKER, JR., ERWIN L.	May 14, 2023
MUNCH, JAN T.	Oct. 11, 2022
OTTO, DANIEL D.	Oct. 15, 2023
OTTO, MARVIN D.	Jan 01, 2024
PHILIPP, MONTE CHAD	July 12, 2023
SCHMIDT, DONALD L.	Jan. 01, 2022
SCHULZ, JOHN P.	Mar. 12, 2025
STEVENSON, WILLIAM	Jan. 10, 2023
TONCRE, WESLEY M.	Jan. 13, 2022

**REMOVED FROM ROSTER - ORDAINED MINISTERS**

BEARSS, GREG	Sept. 18, 2024
GRAF, IV. HENRY	Mar. 01, 2024
LOUDERBACH, MARK Q.L.	April 04, 2022



**THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF  
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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.

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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.

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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

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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

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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.
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**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**

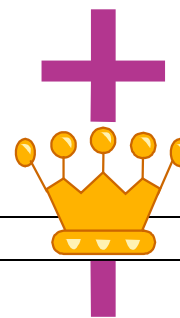
CHATTANOOGA, TN	GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors' Meeting, May 13, 2022.
CLARKSVILLE, TN	GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors' Meeting, February 16, 2024.
COLUMBIA, TN	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH – In a Board of Directors' Meeting, effective August 25, 2023.
COOKEVILLE, 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.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD OFFICIAL ACTS FOR April 15, 2021, to April 15, 2025</b></p>
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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



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## Ordained Ministers Celebrating Anniversaries in 2022

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### 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*

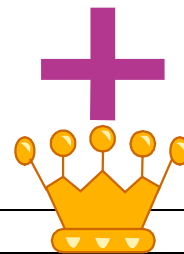
**Rev. Adam Woldt**

*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, Lafe, 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*

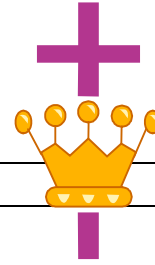
**Rev. George Smith**

*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



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## Ordained Ministers Celebrating Anniversaries in 2024

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### 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*

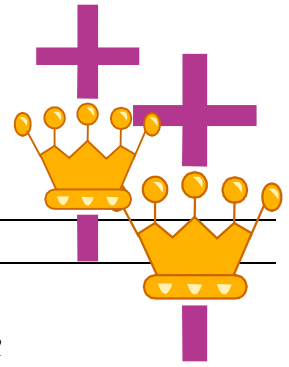
**Rev. Craig Fiebiger**  
*Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN*

**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!**

# **SECTION C**

## **REPORTS**

## REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Districts are not constitutive units but Synod in this place. Unlike congregations and rostered church workers, Districts are not *members* of Synod but the Synod here. The constitution and bylaws of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod are the primary governing documents for Districts though Districts can and do have bylaws to supplement the bylaws of Synod or to speak where the Synod's bylaws are silent. These bylaws must be approved by the Commission on Constitutional Matters of Synod prior to adoption and before they have any force or status for the District.

Each District is governed by the Convention of the District and, between Conventions, by the elected Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is “invested with the general management and supervision of the district’s business and legal affairs and shall adopt policies and require procedures which assure that said management and supervision is effected.” In addition, “Between conventions [the Board of Directors] shall provide for implementation within the district of the decisions of the national and district conventions and allocate necessary funds for the support of the national and district budgets.” [LCMS Bylaw 4.5.1 ff]

The bylaws of the Mid-South District of the LCMS provide that the Board of Directors is accountable to the Convention and the staff and agencies of the District accountable to the Board of Directors. Though this works through the office of the District President, the District President is not an employee of the Board and his administrative responsibility must not impinge upon his primary responsibility of ecclesiastical supervision of the doctrine life, and administration of the workers and congregations of the District, his visitation of those congregations and rostered workers, and his supervision of the roster (including calls, commissioning, ordinations, and installations). [MDS Bylaw 4.4 ff]

The Board of Directors consists of thirteen elected members: the District President, four (4) Regional Vice-Presidents (one Minister of Religion--Ordained from each of the four regions of the District), the District Secretary (a Minister of Religion--Ordained), the Treasurer (a layman appointed by the Board), two Ministers of Religion—Commissioned (from the combined Regions 1 and 2 and also from combined Regions 3 and 4), and four lay representatives (one from each region). In accordance with Bylaw 1.3.2.7, the Board may appoint up to three (3) at-large laypersons in order to “obtain needed additional skill sets” (mirroring Synod Bylaw 4.5.1). The Board appointed Jack Ficken as an at-large member to provide the Board with a particular finance and investment skill set. The Board meets in four regularly scheduled meetings and at other times as deemed necessary by in person or electronic means. The Board is divided into four committees: Business and Finance, Mission and Ministry, Governance, Youth and Family. In addition to the meetings of the Board, its committees also meet to prepare for consideration the reports and actions of the Board. In the past four years 2021-2025 (extended by one year due to the change in Synod's convention schedule following the pandemic), this has included the following actions:

- the review of regular reports of the District President and other District Staff,
- the preparation, adoption, and administration of the District's annual budget (for budget years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025),
- the management of the finances, investments, property, and other resources of the District,

- the reports of District missions, including revisions to the Church Planting Covenant,
- the consideration, review, and approval of the annual audit of the District finances and investments by the LCMS Internal Audit Department,
- the nomination of individuals from the District to elected and appointed positions in Synod,
- the review and approval of LCEF loan applications from within the District (\$1,000,000 and below) and the consideration of LCEF loan applications (over \$1,000,000), including:
  - Grace, Little Rock, AR
  - Christ Our Savior, Loudon, TN
  - Bethel, Ft. Smith, AR
  - Peace, Conway, AR
  - First, Benton, AR
  - Praise, Maryville, TN
- the review and approval of an annual base salary for commissioned and ordained church workers (for years 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025) for the MDS District Compensation Guidelines,
- the review and approval of all salaries and benefits of the District staff,
- the care and support of all District workers,
- the extension of calls to rostered staff and to mission planters in the District,
- the extension of employment contracts to District staff (not called),
- the adoption of the minutes and proceedings of the 2021 District Convention,
- the designation of the 2021 and 2025 District Sunday offerings for the scholarship Fund for Pastors and Commissioned Church Workers burdened with significant educational debt.
- approve the realignment of electoral circuits (combining the Fort Smith and Stuttgart circuits into one electoral circuit; moving Our Shepherd, Searcy and Fairfield Bay from the North Little Rock Circuit to the Jonesboro Circuit; moving Grace, Little Rock to the North Little Rock Circuit; and moving Concordia from the Nashville Circuit to the Middle Tennessee Circuit in order to satisfy the requirements for electoral circuits
- petition the President of Synod for an exception in preparation for the 2026 LCMS Convention for the Little Rock South Electoral Circuit and Little Rock North Electoral Circuit.
- provide for the administration and disposal of property given to the District and declared surplus to the mission and ministry of the District, including:
  - SW Little Rock, AR (Chicot Road)
  - Prairie Grove, AR
  - Dayton, TN
  - West Memphis, AR
  - Crossett, AR
  - Abingdon, VA
- the investment and dispersal of funds from the sale of said property in accordance with the mission and ministry of the District and according to the investment policies of the Board,
- give ratification to the following nominations and appointments to the Board: Marc Higgins as Treasurer and, upon his resignation, John Hofman as Treasurer; Jack Ficken as Board Member with special skill sets in the areas of finance and investment; Reverend Michael Miller upon the resignation of Reverend Robert Portier, Martina Schaff upon the



resignation of Charles Russell, Connie Soso-Goines upon the resignation of Martina Schaaf and the Rev. Larry Peters as Secretary upon the resignation of the Rev. John Gierke.

- the approval of the nomination of individuals within the MDS District to Synod boards, commissions, and agencies,
- propose overtures to the 2025 District Convention and to the 2026 Synod Convention,
- approve the *Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry Awards* (2021-2024)
  - 2021 - Larry Vickers (Awarded in 2022)
  - 2022 - Robert Allen (Awarded in 2024)
  - 2023 - Diane Reimold (Awarded in 2024)
  - 2024 – Jan Simko (Awarded in 2024)
- encourage the refinement and use of CAR and COMPASS both within the District and outside the District to others interested in these resources,
- receive funds from estates and bequests naming the District (with investment and disbursement of those gifts in accordance with the provisions of the donors),
- gave thanks to God for the mission and ministries of the following congregations which disbanded since 2021: Prince of Peace, Dayton, TN; St. Paul, West Memphis, AR; St. John's, Crossett, AR and Grace, Abingdon, VA.
- supervised the Generation 2 Generation program and encouraged its wider use throughout the Synod,
- approved a partnership with the Southern District to provide educational services to that District as requested,
- approved and encouraged Human Trafficking Awareness workshops throughout the District,
- approved the transfer of Trinity, Sallisaw, OK, from the Oklahoma District of the LCMS to the Mid-South District,
- approved grants for missions and schools of the District, including to All Saints, Jonesboro, AR, and Our Savior, Nashville, TN
- approved Disaster Relief funds for distribution and for the purchase of Disaster Relief Equipment,
- approved delegates to represent the District at the LCEF annual meeting,
- held a retreat to consider, review, and adopt new Strategic Initiatives for the District,
- reviewed and approved the constitutions and bylaws of the following congregations of the District:
 

○ All Saints, Jonesboro, AR	○ First, Harrison, AR
○ Christ the King, Memphis, TN	○ Grace, Murfreesboro, TN
○ Holy Trinity, Rogers, AR	○ Faith, Oak Ridge, TN
○ Our Savior, Nashville, TN	○ Grace, Clarksville, TN
○ Good Shepherd. Chattanooga, TN	○ First, Knoxville, TN
○ Trinity, Columbia, TN	○ Messiah, Memphis, TN
○ Bethlehem, Johnson City, TN	○ Concordia, Nashville, TN
○ Redeemer, Harriman, TN	○ Beautiful Savior, Olive Branch, MS
○ Trinity, Mena, AR	○ Heavenly Host, Cookeville, TN
○ Christ, Paris, TN	○ Praise, Maryville, TN
○ Hope, Batesville, AR	○ Zion, London, AR
○ St. John Stuttgart, AR	○ Faith, Bentonville, AR

- Faith, Fairfield Bay, AR
  - St. Paul, Wartburg, TN
  - Emmanuel, Hermitage, TN
  - Restoration, Fayetteville, AR
  - Cross of Christ, Chattanooga, TN
  - Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, TN
  - Redeemer, Nashville, TN
  - First, Fort Smith, AR
  - Zion, Ulm, AR
- review the status of and encourage every congregation of the District to have a current, signed, and approved constitution and bylaws on file with the District Office,
  - submit and act upon direction from the Commission on Constitutional Matters for the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policy manuals of the District so that all operating documents are in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of Synod,
  - approve the appointment of Rev. Eric Longman and Ms. Rachel Boyer as District Reconcilers

I am so thankful to President Paavola, Reverend Conger (Chairman of the Board of Directors), the members of the Board and the District Staff for their patience and understanding after my appointment as District Secretary. Every month I am given cause for thanksgiving to God for the dedication and commitment of those who serve the MDS District and work so hard to extend the work of the kingdom among us.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Reverend Larry A. Peters**  
**Mid-South District Secretary**

Members of the Mid-South District Board of Directors 2021-2025:

*The Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President, Bartlett, TN*

*The Rev. Lane Reuter, First VP, Region 3*

*Senior Pastor, Our Savior, Nashville, TN*

*The Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman and Second VP, Region 2*

*Pastor, Hope, Jacksonville, AR*

*The Rev. Joshua Willadsen, Third VP, Region 1*

*Pastor, Bethel, Ft. Smith, AR*

*The Rev. Michael Miller, Fourth VP, Region 4*

*Pastor, Redeemer, Harriman, TN*

*The Rev. John Gierke, Secretary (through February 2022)*

*Pastor, Peace, Conway, AR*

*The Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary (since March 2022)*

*Pastor, Grace, Clarksville, TN*

*Mr. Marc Higgins, Treasurer (Peace, Maumelle, AR) Through July 2024*

*Mr. Larry Vickers, Interim Treasurer (Our Savior, Nashville) Through June 2024*

*Mr. John Hofman, Treasurer (First, Knoxville) from June 2024 – August 2025*

*Mrs. Martina Schaaf, Commissioned, Regions 1&2 (Grace, Little Rock) December 2022 Through October 2024*

*Ms. Connie Soso – Goines. Commissioned, Regions 1&2 (Grace, Greenwood, AR) December 2024 Through August 2025*

*Mrs. Shirley Piepenbrink, Commissioned, Regions 3&4, Immanuel, Memphis ,TN  
Through January 2025*  
*Ms. Karilyn Brown, Lay, Region 1 (Hope, Jacksonville, AR)*  
*Mr. Jeff Pittman, Lay, Region 2, (All Saints, Pilgrim, AR)*  
*Dr. Fred Guengerich, Lay, Region 3, (Redeemer, Nashville, TN)*  
*Mr. Robert Nerger, Lay, Region 4, (St. Paul, Wartburg, TN) Through December 2024*  
*Mr. Jack Ficken, Lay, Region 4, Member-at-Large (St. John, Burns, TN) Through August 2025*

Committees of the Board of Directors:

**Finance Committee:**

Mr. John Hofman, *Chair*  
 Rev. Kevin Conger  
 Mr. Jack Ficken  
 Mr. Larry Vickers  
 Rev. D. Roger Paavola, *Advisory*  
 Mrs. Angela Fowler, *Advisory*

**Missions & Ministries:**

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, *Chair*  
 Rev. Joshua Willadsen  
 Rev. Adam Woldt  
 Rev. Kevin Conger  
 Rev. Dr. LeRoy Leach  
 Mr. Jeff Pittman

**Governance:**

Rev. Larry Peters, *Chair*  
 Rev. Michael Miller  
 Dr. Fred Guengerich  
 Mr. Jeff Pittman  
 Mrs. Karilyn Brown  
 Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, *Advisory*

**Constitution Committee:** (under the oversight of the Governance Committee)

Rev. Kenneth Haydon, *Chair*  
 Rev. Lerry Peters  
 Dr. Fred Guengerich  
 Mr. Andy Grams  
 Mr. Jeff Pittman  
 Mrs. Karilyn Brown

**Youth & Family:**

Rev. Michael Miller, *Chair*  
 Rev. Lane Reuter  
 Deaconess Connie Soso-Goines  
 Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, *Advisory*  
 Mrs. Michelle Fischer, *Advisory*

**Strategic Initiatives:**

Rev. Kevin Conger, *Chair*  
 Rev. Lane Reuter  
 Rev. Larry Peters  
 Dr. Fred Guengerich  
 Mr. Jack Ficken  
 Mr. Jeff Pittman  
 Mrs. Karilyn Brown  
 Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, *Advisory*  
 Mrs. Michelle Fischer, *Advisory*  
 Mrs. Angela Fowler, *Advisory*



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## 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.

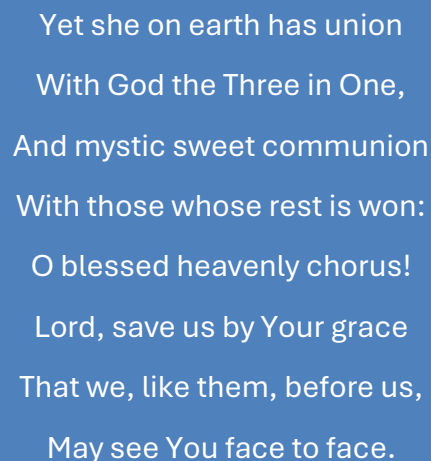
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod had its membership “high-water” mark of 2.8 million members in 1971. Today, the membership of the Synod has dropped to 1.9 million (2024 data). While it may be accurate to point out that all other mainline Christian denominations have experienced larger declines in 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**

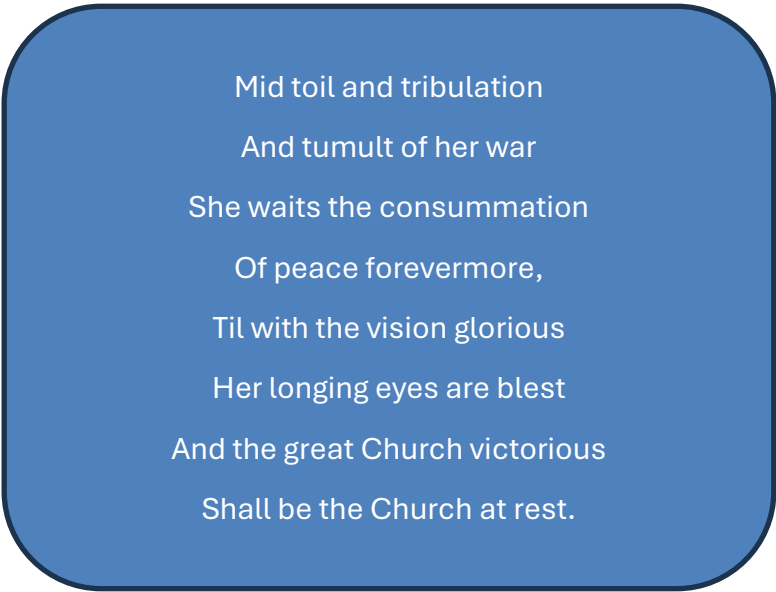
***“As an alliance of congregations and schools, the Mid-South District provides leadership, resources, and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom, and equipping the found for service in their congregations, their communities, and the world.”*** Consistent with the Resolutions of the 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 *Teach-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

## **B. 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	2020	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
P-T Pastors	613	591	548	519	483	443	428	432	360	324	288
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-LaLlemant   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  
Arlon 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	Rev. 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. Kory Janneke</u>	<u>Region II</u>
<u>Rev. Gregory Bauch</u>	<u>Region III</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.

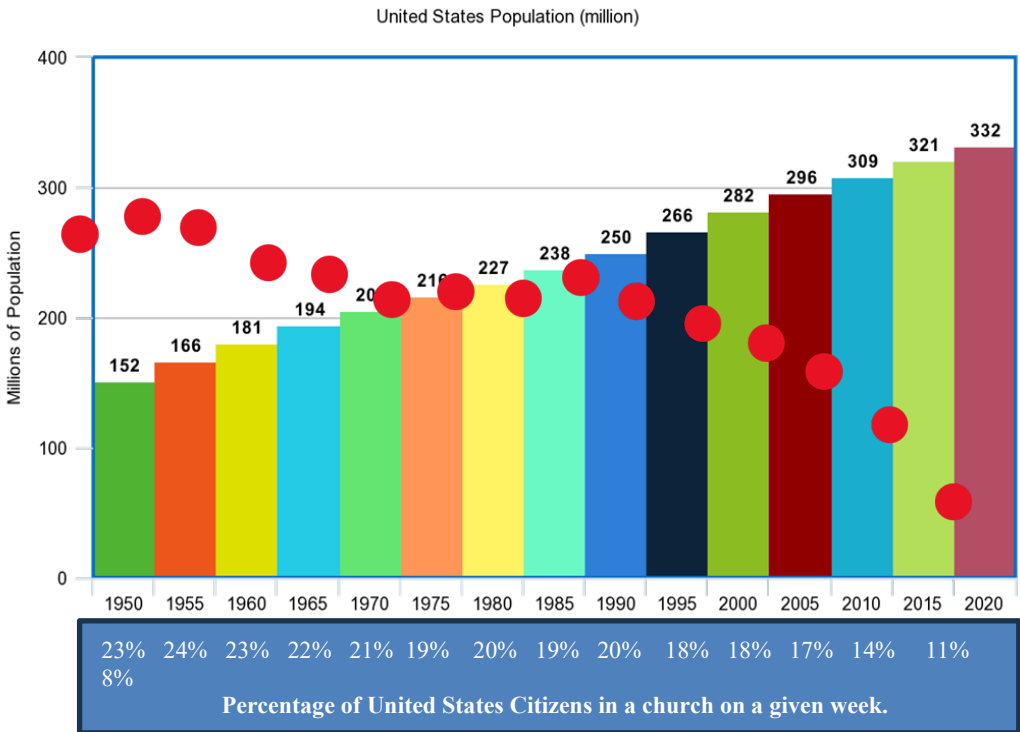
In addition to worker wellness and concern for our professional church workers, the Mid-South District continues to offer Pastor’s Wives retreat times for the wives of our pastoral staff. Each year, a well-known speaker is invited to the District for a few days where pastor’s wives can come to a restful 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.

**C. 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.

#### **D. 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 worshipping 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 Tenen* 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.

#### **E. 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.’”<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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 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:

Ralph Weiser – Excellence in Ministry Awards

Larry Vickers

Diane Reimold

Robert Allen

Jan Simko

**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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Congregations</b>	<b>Confirmed Members</b>	<b>Baptized Members</b>	<b>Weekly Attendance*</b>
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.

<b>Circuit</b>	<b>Member Congregations</b>	<b>Confirmed Members</b>	<b>Baptized Members</b>	<b>Over or Under</b>
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

<b>Circuit</b>	<b>Member Congregations</b>	<b>Confirmed Members</b>	<b>Baptized Members</b>	<b>Over or Under</b>
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**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Communicant Membership</b>	<b>Number of Congregations</b>	<b>Total Congregation Commitments</b>
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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Communicant Membership</b>	<b>Number of Congregations</b>	<b>Total Congregation Commitments</b>
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**



## REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGION ONE

Region One of the Mid-South District consists of the following three Circuits: Jonesboro; Fayetteville; and Fort Smith. This region covers the entire northern half of Arkansas and one congregation in eastern Oklahoma. The Lord has blessed Region One with three faithful and dedicated Circuit Visitors:

**Rev. Joshua Leigeber, Jonesboro Circuit**

**Rev. Brandon Martin, Fayetteville Circuit**

**Rev. Tom Bartzch, Ft. Smith Circuit**

### **Jonesboro Circuit:**

There are twelve congregations in the Jonesboro Circuit (five of them are in a dual parish or cathedral parish arrangement) confessing Christ Jesus through the ministry of Word and Sacrament to their members and to their communities. The Jonesboro Circuit has a combined communicant membership of approximately 1,445. This circuit covers an extensive geographic area (most of Northwest Arkansas extending toward the Northeast as far as Holiday Island). Each congregation is engaged in a variety of service events and outreach opportunities.

**All Saints Lutheran Church, Jonesboro**—Launched a classical Lutheran school in Fall 2021, including a concentration on the fine arts (violin, piano, choir, and visual arts). In late 2024, the school received full accreditation for 1st-12th grades from the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education. Fr. Jerome Leckband was called as Associate Pastor and teacher in mid-2023 and took over as Headmaster in Summer 2024. Fr. Andrew Lehman continues as Associate Pastor and teacher, with Fr. Joshua Leigeber serving as head pastor. Frs. Leckband and Lehman both teach in the school full time. Attendance at Divine Service and Catechesis continues to increase by God's grace. All Saints has adopted a Cathedral Parish model which now oversees the congregations across Craighead, Poinsett, and Mississippi counties. in order to serve the Word and Sacraments to these congregations. As of February 2025, All Saints is seeking an additional associate pastor to assist in ministry to the parish's three congregations.

**First Lutheran Church, Blytheville**— As of December 2024 the people of Faith have come under the pastoral care and authority of All Saints Cathedral Parish. Part of the focus of the cathedral parish arrangement is revitalization of First Lutheran. Wide-spread visitation and a more intentional community presence are part of the revitalization focus. After having Divine Service only once a month (and no Bible class) for a number a years, First has returned to weekly Divine Service and Bible class as part of the arrangement with All Saints.

**Zion Lutheran Church, Waldenburg**— After the Rev. Joel Krogen departed to be with the Lord, the congregation called Rev. Gerald Heinecke to serve as Pastor of Hope and Zion. In January 2025, Hope and Zion dissolved their dual-parish relationship. Zion agreed to come under the authority and care of All Saints Cathedral Parish. Zion sustained considerable damage to their steeple during a storm in mid-2024 and are still awaiting repairs. They are also working to address multiple challenges with ADA accessibility.

**Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville**— After the Rev. Joel Krogen departed to be with the Lord, the congregation called Rev. Gerald Heinecke to serve as the Pastor of Hope and Zion. In January 2025, Hope and Zion dissolved their dual-parish relationship. Hope formed a new partnership with Shepherd of the Hills (Horseshoe Bend), and Rev. Gerald Heinecke was installed as their shared pastor. Hope's

building suffered major damages but completed the renovations and a rededication took place in October 2024. Hope restarted its board of education and is exploring starting a classical microschool or homeschool co-op.

**Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend**— After a long vacancy, Shepherd of the Hills formed a dual-parish with Hope Lutheran (Batesville) in January 2025, with Rev. Gerald Heinecke installed as Pastor. During the vacancy, the congregation engaged in a number of improvements to their building, including the installation of a new roof.

**Redeemer Lutheran Church, Paragould**— St. John's (Lafe) and Redeemer dissolved their dual-parish relationship, with Rev. Kirk Neugebauer installed as Pastor of Redeemer in April 2024. The congregation has been blessed with increasing attendance, particularly among young families. The Wednesday School program continues with about 25 kids weekly. The congregation plans to start a young adults Bible in addition to the continuing men's and women's Bible studies. Redeemer is supporting a seminarian at Concordia in St. Louis.

**St. John's Lutheran Church, Lafe**— Rev. Aaron Neugebauer continues to serve as Pastor. The Lord has blessed the congregation with numerous adult baptisms and increasing membership so that there are now two worship services each Lord's Day to accommodate those gathering to receive the Lord's gifts. The congregation hosted a record-breaking fish fry, serving 1,269 people.

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Corning**— Rev. Jon Bischof continues to serve as Pastor. The congregation is holding steady, but aging. The congregation thankfully receives the Lord's gifts of Word and Sacrament and is seeking opportunities to share the Gospel to those around them.

**Peace Lutheran Church, Cherokee Village**—Rev. Brian Pummill continues to serve as Pastor. The congregation continues to receive the Lord's gifts of Word and Sacrament and engage the community through a variety of events and activities. Some of these include: Grief Share Seminar in November 2024, focused on helping people cope with loss during the holiday season; Car Show to raise funds to purchase car seats for the local pregnancy center; Spring Fling Dinner & Dance; Ladies' Tea Party, and Annual Rummage Sale.

**Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home**— Rev. Kevin McReynolds serves as Pastor. Aaron Jackson was called as Director of Parish Music in Summer 2023 and Deaconess Andra Gates was called in Fall 2024. The congregation expanded Bible class offerings from 2 to 7 weekly. More adult catechesis than youth, with multiple adult converts joining through confession of faith after catechism classes. The congregation supports a radio ministry, a food pantry, and a foot care clinic.

**First Lutheran Church, Harrison**—The congregation is in vacancy having been served by Rev. Bob Herring and now Rev. Jerry Hemmingson. The congregation received a sizable estate donation, enabling full mortgage repayment.

**Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island**— Rev. Myles Schultz serves as Pastor. He was called after Rev. Bob Herring retired. The congregation gathers every Lord's Day at 9:30 am for the Divine Service and Bible Class at 11:15 am. They have a 2 pm Thursday Bible Class as well as Wednesday services during Advent and Lent at 5 pm.

**Peace Lutheran Church, Mountain Home** closed and **Grace Lutheran Church, Mountain View** is no longer a congregation of the LCMS.



### **Fayetteville Circuit:**

There are nine congregations in the Fayetteville Circuit confessing Christ Jesus through the ministry of Word and Sacrament to their members and to their communities. Each congregation is engaged in a variety of service events and outreach opportunities. The Fayetteville Circuit has an approximate combined communicant membership of 1,621.

**Restoration Lutheran Church & St John Lutheran Church, Fayetteville** [Rev. JD Zischke] Four years ago, Restoration chartered as a congregation, and St. John's faced an uncertain future after Pastor Cox announced his retirement. Rather than go separate ways, we united—merging St. John's Childcare, St. John's Lutheran Church, and Restoration Lutheran Church into one ministry. What started as a small, uncertain gathering has grown into a vibrant, Christ-centered community. Today, around 90 people gather for worship each Sunday, with about two dozen in Bible Study and Sunday School. To God be the glory!

**Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale** [Rev. Adam Gless & Rev. Brandon Martin] Salem is a vibrant multiethnic church with ministry in both English and Spanish. Rev. Mark Krause retired at the end of 2022 and our Preschool Director, Kris Busch of 42 years, retired in 2024. Rev. Adam Gless was installed as Senior Pastor in 2023, and Stacey Meyer now serves as our new Preschool Director. The pastors are training new elders and leaders. The congregation is creating a new constitution and bylaws, undertaking a technology overhaul, and with the blessing of a district GROW grant, revising and expanding our faith formation in order to develop life-long, multiethnic disciples.

**Living Savior Lutheran Church, Springdale** [Rev. Roger Sterle] Rev. Roger D. Sterle served as vacancy pastor starting in 2021 and after receiving a call was installed as Pastor on February 11, 2024. The congregation sold their previous worship facilities and purchased a historical building on Butterfield Coach Road in Springdale. After two years of remodeling the congregation moved into their new home with a dedication service. They have received a few new members, baptizing a couple of babies, and just recently started Bible Study on Sunday mornings after worship.

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers** [Rev. Eric Longman & Rev. Mike Meyer] Holy Trinity in Rogers came through COVID well. Giving was strong throughout the pandemic, and the congregation offered various worship opportunities to meet our members and respect their personal concerns and risk tolerance (in-person, distanced, and online). Our DCE took a call to Las Vegas, which led the congregation to re-assess the position. Ultimately, we were led to call an Associate Pastor for the first time in our history. Rev. Mike Meyer joined us in 2023 as our Associate Pastor of Youth and Families. We started a Parents' Day Out program that has grown and thrived and is now serving upwards of 30 kids four days a week. The congregation is considering a major renovation of the building to modernize and prepare for the next 20-30 years of ministry.

**Bella Vista Lutheran Church** [Rev. Paul Hass & Rev. Chris Gorshe] Bella Vista Lutheran continues to see their ministries change as their community grows as a bedroom community of the Bentonville and Rogers metro area. The days of Bella Vista Lutheran Church being considered a retirement resort are past, and the community is constituted by a multi-generational demographic. The congregation of Bella Vista Lutheran Church (BVLC) continues to grow as a place where the love of Jesus is shared in many vibrant ways. Rev. Dr. Paul Hass serves as Senior Pastor and Rev. Christopher Gorshe serves as Associate Pastor. This congregation has also been served by Mr. Charles (Chuck) Merriman, BVLC's first Family Life Minister. Chuck retired in December of 2023 and the congregation is in the Calling process to fill this vacancy.

**Christ Lutheran Church, Siloam Springs** [Rev. Russell Shewmaker] The saints of Christ Lutheran said goodbye to long time Pastor David Hudak in 2022 and then welcomed Rev. Russell Shewmaker as their called Pastor also in 2022. Currently around 20 people gather weekly on the Lord's Day for the Service of the Word and Divine Service on the second and fourth Sundays. Midweek Bible class meets on Wednesday evenings. 2025 brought the start of a women's group and the congregation is seeking a new space (currently in a storefront) that would provide a place for Sunday School. Christ Lutheran also is blessed with the service of Pastors Emeriti Albert Quoss and Mark Wenzelburger. We rejoice to hear our Savior say, "Come unto me who are weary and weighed down and I will give you rest."

**Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville** [Rev. David Schmidt] 2021 brought many helpful changes to Faith: the sanctuary was remodeled; a new community event, "A Night in Bethlehem," was started; and the congregation embarked on a strategic planning process. April 2023 saw the start of an Easter egg hunt outreach which grew from 200 participants to over 600 the following year. In 2024, the congregation revised the constitution and bylaws, incorporating elders into positions of authority within the church structure. As Bentonville continues to grow and welcome new residents, God has continued to bless us with a steady stream of visitors and a continuous influx of new members, enriching our church family.

**Messiah Lutheran Church, Pea Ridge** [Rev. Richard Mayer] Messiah Lutheran Church is blessed. After adding a new fellowship hall, a few years ago we purchased the adjoining five-acre house and property. In May of 2024 we burned the last mortgage. Our congregation has subsidized two seminarians at Concordia Seminary. Over the last few years, we have established a very active LWML group, a senior ministry, and a very successful VBS.

**Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island**—is now part of the Jonesboro Circuit.

### **Fort Smith Circuit:**

There are nine congregations in the Fort Smith Circuit (two are in a dual parish arrangement) confessing Christ Jesus through the ministry of Word and Sacrament to their members and to their communities. The Fort Smith Circuit has a combined communicant membership of approximately 1,004 in western Arkansas. Among the parishes in the circuit there is one elementary school and one early childhood program. Each congregation is engaged in a variety of service events and outreach opportunities. The Fort Smith Circuit meets monthly (except in the summer) at one of the congregations in the circuit.

**Bethel Lutheran Church, Fort Smith** – a dual parish with Trinity, Sallisaw, is served by the Rev. Joshua Willadsen. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day at 10:15 am. Wednesday services are held at 10:45 am year-round and 6pm during Advent and Lent. Bible Study meets at 9 am on the Lord's Day and 9:30 am on Wednesday. Bethel celebrated 85 years as a congregation in 2024.

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Sallisaw, OK** – a dual parish with Bethel, Fort Smith, is served by the Rev. Joshua Willadsen. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day at 8 am. The people of Trinity and Bethel gather together throughout the year for shared Worship services, Bible Studies, and various fellowship opportunities.

**First Lutheran Church & School, Fort Smith** – is served by Rev. John Merrill, Pastor, and Mr. Samuel Fishburn, Principal. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day at 10:15 am. Wednesday evening services are held at First Lutheran School every Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm. Bible class and Sunday School are held every Lord's Day, with additional times during the week for Bible Study, including a Wednesday morning Bible study at the school at 8:45 am.

**Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood** – is served by the Rev. Jason Zirbel. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day. Wednesday evening services are held during Advent and Lent. Bible class and Sunday School are held every Lord's Day, with additional times during the week for Bible Study.

**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Smith** – is served by the Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day. Bible class and Sunday School are held every Lord's Day. Bible Study is also offered Wednesday mornings. Wednesday evening services are offered during Advent and Lent.

**River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar** – is served by the Rev. Tom Bartzsch, who was installed on June 20, 2021 (just prior to the previous convention). The Divine Service is celebrated the

first and third Lord's Days of the month (the Service of the Word conducted on the other Lord's Days). Wednesday evening services are held during Advent and Lent. Bible class and Sunday School are held every Lord's Day, along with Wednesday Bible Study when not in the Advent or Lenten seasons. The congregation recently paid off their building loan to LCEF; thanks be to God!

**Saint John's Lutheran Church, Russellville** – is served by the Rev. Joshua Schooping. Pastor Schooping was installed on April 14, 2024. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day. Wednesday evening services are held during Advent and Lent. Bible class and Sunday School are held every Lord's Day, with additional times during the week for Bible Study.

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Mena** – is served by the Rev. Timothy Henning. The Divine Service is celebrated every Sunday. Sunday School, confirmation class, and Bible Class are held on Sunday mornings prior to worship. Trinity is celebrating her 125th Anniversary in 2025. Trinity has received three GROW Grants from the Mid-South District: 1) Welcome Bags given out to newcomers to the Mena community; 2) BACK to Back (an after school Christian Club at a local elementary school; and 3) Trinity Lutheran Gospel Connection & Engagement Program (various mid-week Bible Study Discussions, a Youth group "The Trinity Wayseekers", small life groups and neighborhood canvas servant events.

**Zion Lutheran Church, Augsburg** – is served by the Rev. Joshua Ralston. The Divine Service is celebrated every Lord's Day. Wednesday evening services are held during Advent and Lent. Bible class and Sunday School are held every Lord's Day, with additional times during the week for Bible Study. Our food pantry serves the surrounding community with monthly food distributions.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rev. Joshua Willadsen**  
**Mid-South District Vice President, Region One**



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGION TWO</b></p>
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The congregations of Region Two of the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, have been blessed by the Lord in many ways. Some of those blessings come by way of expanding ministries, while other blessings come through the rich worship life of all congregations through Word and Sacrament ministry.

Region Two of the Mid-South District is located in central and southeast Arkansas. It is composed of the Stuttgart Circuit, the Little Rock-South Circuit and the Little Rock-North Circuit. This numbers approximately 27 congregations which vary in size, age and location.

**The Stuttgart - Circuit**

**St. John's Lutheran Church, Stuttgart** (1882) The Reverend Don White, who serves St. John, Stuttgart, has been the Circuit Visitor for the Stuttgart Circuit since July 2023. St. John's continues its strong influence in the area as its elementary school and ECE bring the Gospel of Christ crucified to the children in their care. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, Reverend White will officially retire after 34 years in the ministry. The congregation has already begun the calling process as they are seeking the Lord's guidance and direction during this time of transition.

**St. Paul Lutheran Church – Gillett** (1893) and **St. Luke Lutheran – Dewitt** (1945) were served by the Reverend Chad Philipp until he was called home to be with our Lord in 2023. Since then, they have been served by Reverend White and others over the last two years. However, these two congregations now have a new pastor, The Reverend Jonathan Holmes was installed on March 29, 2025. The Lord continues to bless these congregations as they serve their communities.

**Faith Lutheran Church, Magnolia** (1960) has been served by Reverend White as they are currently vacant. However, their outreach to the community is strong and ongoing. Their regular contact with Southeast Arkansas College brings them many opportunities to share the Gospel and touch the lives of students in the area.

**Our Savior Lutheran Church, El Dorado** (1931) is currently vacant. However, they are being served by retired Pastor Sig Kunz (Bossier City, LA). Pastor Kunz is leading them in worship and Bible studies monthly.

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff** (1894) has been served by The Reverend Stewart Marshall since August 2016. Over the last few years, Trinity has grown in membership while seeing great gains in their Sunday School. They continue to bring a strong witness of faith to the Pine Bluff community.

**Zion Lutheran Church, Ulm** (1881) and **Our Savior Lutheran Church, Brinkley** (1951) since the last District Convention, Zion Lutheran Church and Our Savior Lutheran called The Reverend Jeremy McDonald, to be their Pastor. Reverend McDonald is a 2023 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Both congregations offer Divine Service on Sunday morning. Pastor McDonald also offers studies on The Lutheran Confessions, classes on the Catechism and Confirmation for both youth and adults. Zion continues to support the mission work in Tanzania and provide students at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, with gift cards for Christmas. Both congregations work together to play a key role in sharing the Gospel through God's Word and Sacraments on the Grand Prairie.

### **The Little Rock – North Circuit**

The Reverend David Vandercook, **Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle**, (1991) and **Trinity**, North Little Rock, (1943) serves as Circuit Visitor for the Little Rock – North Circuit. Trinity celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 with a special service and meal where memories were shared and celebrated. Shepherd of Peace continues to explore opportunities to reach the Maumelle community with the Gospel. Both congregations are small, but faithful in their desire to receive the gifts of the cross of Jesus Christ week in and week out as well as to share the love of Christ with their neighbors at home and abroad.

**Hope Lutheran Church, Jacksonville** (1969) has been served by The Reverend Kevin Conger since July 22, 2001. Over the last few years, the congregation has taken on new families and has seen Sunday morning Bible Class grow as worship has also increased over the same period. In addition, Hope offers a midweek study of the Lutheran Confessions as well as a monthly men's breakfast with a Bible study, currently the Book of Revelation. Hope has a very active LWML which meets monthly and continues to support mission work throughout the District and throughout the Synod. At the end of each month the congregation gathers after service for a month end luncheon which always brings good food and fellowship. In August of 2023 Hope paid off its mortgage and had a celebration of thanksgiving to God for his many blessings that allowed the congregation to be debt free. Hope continues to serve the area in and around the Little Rock Air Force Base as it reaches out to the men and women who are stationed within the community. Reverend Conger is currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the District and Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Mid-South District.

**First Lutheran Church, Little Rock** (1868) The Reverend Ron Bacic has served First since 2009. The congregation is located at the corner of Eighth and Rock in the historical Quapaw Quarter District of Little Rock. Over the years First has continued their outreach to the blind and visually impaired along with monthly meals and Bible studies. They reach out to the community with Blessing Bags to help those in special need or those who are homeless. They offer Sunday Fellowship Meals on the first Sunday of the month where there is good food and fellowship. First has an active Lutheran Business Women's Club as well as a Men's Club which meets at regular times throughout the month. There is also a bookstore for those looking for some excellent and free books to expand their theological knowledge.

**Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot** (2003) on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Our Savior, Cabot, welcomed its newest Pastor, The Reverend Addison Pope, with a service of Ordination and installation. This was a great day for the saints in Cabot. Additionally, Our Savior, has continued to fundraise for the Tanzanian mission, along with hosting various community events. On October 13, 2024, Our Savior celebrated their twentieth anniversary with a special service and congregational picnic.

**Peace Lutheran Church, Conway** (1964) in March 2023, Peace welcomed The Reverend Tom Boeck as their new Pastor. Over the years Peace has developed a new logo to aid in outreach to the community. Additionally, Peace has distributed Thanksgiving Blessing Bags to those in need. The congregation continues its mission efforts by connecting with local non-profits to serve those in the Conway area. On October 5, 2024, Peace celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This special day was highlighted with the participation of local LC-MS clergy along with the District President, The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola. The Keynote speaker for the evening was The Reverend Dr. Dale Meyer. Peace is also in the process of moving as they have purchased a new campus three doors down from their current location and hope to move in by the summer or fall of 2026. As the new facility will offer more room, Peace is also considering the viability of an Early Childhood Education Center. To support these plans, Peace has placed its current 4 acres campus up for sale. This sale will not only fund the missions and ministry of Peace, but it will also retire the current mortgage that exists.

**Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock**, (1980) in the last 3 years Christ Lutheran has seen significant changes. In March of 2023, Christ installed their new Pastor, The Reverend Matthew Albright. In addition, Christ welcomed a new DCE in August of 2022. The school has grown and has now developed a generational ministry by connecting grandparents with preschool-aged children, especially with those who don't have grandparents. As the school continues to grow, it also celebrated its latest accreditation in May of 2024. This last year also saw the launch of Friday Fellowship for Moms and a new Garden Club.

**St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway** (1998) in 2022 St. Matthew received its new Pastor, The Reverend Kory Janneke. That same year, St. Matthew began a weekly Sunday school for the children of the congregation. In 2023, St. Matthew observed its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special celebration on May 21, 2023. Throughout 2023 and 2024 St. Matthew has seen significant growth in membership, worship attendance, and Bible studies. In 2025, St. Matthew has a goal of paying off its current mortgage.

**Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay** (1972) in August 2023 their good and faithful Pastor, The Reverend Peter Ave-Lallemant went home to be with the Lord. Pastor "Pete" was dearly loved and is missed greatly. On September 24, 2023, The Reverend Donald Hefta was installed as the newly called Pastor. In December 2023 Faith received 11 new souls into membership, three by baptism. Then in January 2024, Pastor Hefta underwent a 5-bypass surgery. During his recovery, the pulpit was filled by the Circuit Visitor, other LC-MS Pastor's and the elders who were all working together to serve the congregation. The Lord continues to bless His saints in Fairfield Bay.

**Community of Faith Lutheran Church**, Little Rock (1997) is being served by The Reverend Randall Lewis. Since the last triennium Community of Faith moved from their Chicot Rd address to renting space from First Lutheran on 8<sup>th</sup> street in Little Rock. They are still looking for a more permanent location. They have received new members through baptism and continue to receive the gifts of God through Word and Sacrament ministry.

**Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy** (1981) is being served by The Reverend Jeffery King. Over the years Our Shepherd has been "recovering" from the lean covid years. As with many congregations, attendance, participation in activities, and giving was down dramatically during that time. Since then, they have been growing steadily in all these areas. Their attendance is up almost four-fold on Sundays. They are doing more to connect with the Harding University students, and now regularly have some of the Lutheran students bringing their friends. They also have been having "Super Saturday" activities monthly for their children and their friends, leading to fun and fellowship and a greater understanding of Christ in their lives. Their LWML has held numerous community garage sales with proceeds going to fund missions. They have taken in numerous new members, host a weekly men's Bible study, and continue with their Sunday Morning Bible Class which has grown tremendously and has a large online following. Due to the growth, the congregation is exploring the option of extending a call to Reverend King to serve as their full-time Pastor. This summer, Our Shepherd is looking forward to celebrating their 40th anniversary as they reconnect with friends from past years.

### **Little Rock - South Circuit**

The Reverend Emil Woerner, **Friends in Christ, Bryant**, (1999) has served as Circuit Visitor for South Circuit since replacing the Reverend Kent Schaaf. Friends in Christ, has a primary mission project, The Kids Closet, which continues to grow. The congregation partners with the Bryant Rotary Club to maintain and operate this mission. Over the years the facility has undergone three expansions and now exceeds 2760 sq. ft. The Kids Closet offers clothing, household items along with beds and mattresses to children in need. All is given freely at no charge to anyone. In addition to the Kids Closet, Friends in

Christ has begun a Ladies quilting ministry called, Squares with Prayers. This group meets weekly on Fridays as they sew quilts and blankets to give away to needy families in the area as well as to nursing home residents and hospital and hospice patients. Friends in Christ also hosts Toy Troopers which is a Christmas toy giveaway during the Christmas season. This outreach touched the lives of over 600 families last year. In addition, the congregation hosts their annual Oktoberfest and Independence Day celebrations. While these events continue, Friends in Christ also offers worship at Fox Ridge Assisted Living every Sunday, and Mt. Carmel once a month. Bible studies are continuing to grow along with a weekly instruction class which centers on the study of the Book of Concord.

**Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock** (1941) 2024 and the beginning of 2025 saw years of challenges, responses, opportunities and growth. The Reverend LeRoy Leach (Ret), The Reverend Shawn Found and the Reverend David Witte provided preaching, teaching, liturgy, and other rites and ceremonies, while the congregation endured a full-time vacancy. These men worked closely together with the Board of Elders, the Kantor, and other staff to ensure the full range of Word and Sacrament Ministry did not go unfulfilled. The Call process was initiated last fall and is still moving forward. The congregation earnestly prays that God will provide a new, full-time shepherd very soon.

**Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander** (1881) is served by The Reverend Willie Grills. In the last triennium, Zion has experienced much as a congregation. After many years of faithful service to the community, the school, Avilla Christian Academy, was shuttered. Even so, the average attendance in worship at Zion has doubled since the last convention as Zion has welcomed many new families to their membership. These families have gone through new member classes as some have come from several different faith backgrounds.

**St. Luke Lutheran Church, Malvern** (1965) hosted a weekly night watch party and Bible study of “The Chosen,” as they invited local teenagers to come for discussion and fellowship. Many unchurched youths came to enjoy the fellowship that St. Luke offered. In addition, St. Luke reaches out to the community by partnering with the Malvern back to school event, which offers backpacks to the area children. The congregation continues to seek out new ways to minister to the needs of the community.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Alexander** (1880) is the fifth oldest Lutheran congregation in Arkansas, and the second oldest in central Arkansas. Immanuel celebrated the installation of The Reverend Steven Teske on August 11, 2024. Reverend Teske is the thirteenth Pastor to be called to Immanuel. Reverend Teske is a bi-vocational Pastor who is also employed as an archivist at the public library. While the congregation is small, they regularly gather for worship and Bible studies as well as for special services such as Good Friday and Christmas Day. Currently, the congregation is working on a church history to mark its celebration of 145 years.

**Faith Lutheran Church, Hot Springs Village** (1986) is served by the Reverend Robert Benke. The congregation gathers around Word and Sacrament ministry with a strong music program. In the last triennium, Faith has continued as a vital congregation in the community. Their endowment fund has given grants of money to area projects like backpacks of food for school children to take home over the weekend, while also providing them with coats and shoes. Additionally, they also support the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Huddle and other organizations. Their mission work and commitment to the Gospel continues as they send support for seminary students at Fort Wayne and St. Louis. Beyond our Borders Faith sends gifts to a mission in Mexico, translation work in Guatemala, and has become the home for the Lutheran Braille Workers.

**First Lutheran Church, Benton** (1960) has seen some substantial changes over the last several years. First of all, The Reverend Jim Burns has ceased the practice of law and is now no longer splitting his

time between litigation and preaching but serves as Pastor of the congregation only. This has been a wonderful blessing for Reverend Burns and the congregation. Over the years, First has seen steady growth in numbers, in activities, and in contributions. They stream all of their services and most of their Bible studies and have a considerable following on YouTube. From this, Reverend Burns has received new members who found them online and have joined the church. The greatest change came in August of 2024 when First opened its elementary school which currently runs from kindergarten to third grade. The school opened with 15 students and quickly rose to 22. Next year the school will add an additional grade which has already prompted much interest as applications are looking very strong going forward. Much has been accomplished at First as the Lord continues to shower his blessing upon the saints in Benton.

**First Lutheran Church, Hot Springs** (1917) is served by The Reverend Jonathan Beyer. The congregation in Hot Springs continues to be very active within their community. Over the years they have helped to sponsor a community resource fair each August and wash feet while giving out 500 new tennis shoes to school-aged children and adults. They also provide food and encouragement at the warming / cooling center which houses the homeless during the extreme hot and cold weather. First continues to run an after-school youth program on Wednesdays and serves in various other ways in the Hot Springs public district. Additionally, members of the congregation volunteer to help serve meals at the Jackson house. The Next Level sports ministry shares Jesus with youth while teaching them basketball skills. First is currently hosting All Children's Academy and the Hot Springs YMCA summer camp in their family life center. First Lutheran continues to offer four services and several Bible studies weekly throughout the year.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Reverend Kevin Conger**  
**Mid-South District Vice President, Region Two**





<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGION THREE</b></p>
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It has been a joy and a privilege to serve as the Regional Vice President for Region Three! God has blessed our region with wonderful pastors, church workers, and lay people-all together on mission to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ Crucified and Risen! Many thanks to the congregations that submitted the reports you see below. Where God leads us, may we continue to follow Him with great faith and joy!

**Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN**

- Continued to proclaim Christ crucified, rightly administer the Sacraments, and teach the pure doctrine. Divine Services are held on Sundays and the high feasts of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Epiphany, the Vigil of Easter, and Ascension Day. Midweek Evening Prayer/Vespers services held in Advent and Lent. Holy Thursday Divine Service and the Good Friday Chief Service observed.
- Celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the congregation with a special Divine Service in 2022.
- Added a weekly Matins Service on Wednesdays at 9:45 a.m.
- Completed the selection and purchase of new, custom-made paraments for all seasons of the Church Year, along with stoles and chasubles.
- Purchased and blessed for use an antique processional crucifix from a vendor in Paris, France. It is a 17<sup>th</sup> century piece from Tyrol. The corpus is carved from walnut, and the cross is made from poplar.
- Received donations and designed a new, large, eight-sided baptismal font. Constructed jointly by New Holland Church Furniture and Henninger's. The base was crafted out of rift-sawn red oak, and the marble top was carved by artisans from Carrara, Italy. Placed at the entrance to the nave and blessed for use on the Last Sunday of the Church Year in 2024. S.D.G.

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN**

Since Pastor Enko retired, though challenged with the absence of a Senior Pastor and the full-time care that brings, our congregation has continued to be blessed. Pastor Tim, though working a full-time secular job, has stepped up and worked very hard to ensure our services go on well. We have had a steady stream of visitors and on March 30 we should have over 25 new members recognized.

Just before COVID hit, we started live streaming services and have a regular viewing audience.

Our adult Sunday Bible study and Wednesday night numbers are strong and increasing.

We are not in debt and have a strong financial position.

### Missions the church supports

- Trinity Hope - A ministry that feeds thousands of hungry children, teachers and cooks each day in Christian schools teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Haiti. We exceeded our funding raising goals last year to support the school we sponsor.
- Quilters Guild
- Room in the Inn - The program provides safe shelter, warm meals, and fellowship for men struggling with homelessness during the coldest months of the year. We serve 2 nights per year at St Stephen's Church in Mt Juliet.
- Love Packages - new this year - collecting unused Bibles and Bible study material that will be shipped to missionaries who teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ overseas.
- Souls in Need - formed a committee to review requests for assistance from the church

### Missions the Ladies Guild's Supports

- Pregnancy Care Center - participates in baby bottle drive and Walk for Life fundraiser.
- Rest Stop Ministry – Annual collections and donation of needed items
- Drug and Rehab Ministry – New this year and in planning stages

Thank you boxes for Community Helpers (police, fireman and nurses)

Despite lack of a Sr Pastor, membership is growing. The lack of a Sr. Pastor has led the congregation to lean on each other and support one another without relying solely on the pastor to administer to our needs.

### **Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN**

Grace Celebration is a disciple-making church that visibly demonstrates the Heart of God in the church and in the community. We train and multiply leaders and collaborate with partners until the whole world knows our Savior.

In addition to the regular and sustained Word and Sacrament ministry, some highlights include:

- 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration with founding pastor, Rev. Roger Theimer as the guest speaker
- Capital Campaign to improve our building and grounds, as well as enhance communication within the congregation and in the community
- Provided a Food Pantry and Meals of Love for hundreds of families

- Holy Smokers has served over 5,000 meals in the community, including tornado victims, Firefighters, U of M Football team, Cordova High School, Life Choices, Trunk or Treaters, Raleigh Love Festival, Visible School, Youth concerts, etc.
- Partnered with the YMCA to conduct an Early Learning Center for appx. 100 students and Summer Camps for another 50 each year.
- Started LifeWise Academy which teaches the Bible to nearly 100 students from 4 public schools each week.
- Provided spiritual and physical food each week to the Cordova High School football team.
- Blessed with 19 baptisms in 2024.

### **Trinity Lutheran Church, Gallatin, TN**

Trinity, Gallatin continues to faithfully serve the Lord and His people with God's unchanging Word and Sacraments. We rejoice and give thanks that the Lord of the Harvest continues to enlarge His flock each year as He calls, gathers, and enlightens those who were formerly living in darkness.

### **St. John Lutheran Church, Burns, TN**

2025 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> year of St. John serving Dickson and surrounding counties. The past four years for St. John has been an emphasis to mature in our faith and to be more active in our community. It has been exciting to see our members grow in faith and service to others. We have developed great relationships with the homeless ministry of Kinsmen Redeemer. We have volunteers who help in making meals, manning the Warming Station on very cold nights. In the future we are looking to provide space for their counseling sessions. We serve the community with a huge Mobile Food Pantry twice a year serving hundreds of people. Beginning this year, we will be the site of the Burns Harvest Market which will be on Fridays from May through September. Our relationship with American Red Cross grows as they used our church as their headquarters during the 2021 Waverly flood recovery. They continue to use our church in other areas. Also, for a couple of years a local community home school group uses our church.

### **Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN**

Pastor Andrew Smith left Heavenly Host in September of 2022. Pastor Todd Bunge was installed in July of 2024. Ten adult confirmands were added to the membership since the last district convention, nine of them since the vacancy ended. A large fellowship addition to the church was completed in June of 2024.

### **Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, TN**

Since last District Convention, Ascension Lutheran Church in Madison, TN has received 16 new members-five by Profession of Faith from outside Lutheranism-as care for the saints in Word and Sacrament remains paramount. We recently extended our facility lease with The Edison School through 2028, which advances a wonderful partnership in educating children with autism and learning differences. In addition to Mid-South tithes, we became a supporting congregation of Luther Classical College, and continue our assistance to Hope Clinic for Women, Nashville Rescue Mission, Christian Cooperative Ministry, and Trinity Hope. We also began the annual Henkel Conference, which hosts

over 130 guests from all across the country to hear some of the best Christian speakers in the world address the most pressing theological and cultural issues of our day ([www.ascensionmadison.com/henkel](http://www.ascensionmadison.com/henkel)). Our summer women's Bible study and seasonal men's club are community offerings that meet ecumenically led by confessional Lutherans, also serving as an opportunity for outreach.

### **Christ the King Lutheran Church & School, Memphis, TN**

In 2024, Christ The King experienced a transition in pastoral leadership as Rev. Mark Goble was installed as Senior Pastor, Rev. Matthew Lynch was installed as our new Associate Pastor, and Rev. Chuck Neugebauer was named Pastor Emeritus.

In 2022 and 2024, Christ The King's Tanzania Mission Team traveled to East Africa to witness to, train, and baptize the people of Tanzania within the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. In 2024 alone, the team of 14 were privileged to baptize over 1,000 souls.

CTK entered our 10<sup>th</sup> year with Room In The Inn, a ministry to provide for the unsheltered, hosting over 300 men, women, and children per year, showing Christian hospitality with breakfast, lunch, and dinner, laundry facilities, and a safe place to sleep.

We assumed full occupancy of a 7.5M major addition/enhancement to facilities, including a state-of-the-art Fellowship Hall and dedicated space for Bible Study classrooms.

### **Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN**

End of 2021:

As 2021 came to a close, Grace Lutheran Church experienced a continued return to normal, with services uninterrupted throughout the pandemic. By God's grace, the congregation celebrated 8 baptisms, 10 youth confirmations, and the reception of 45 new members. Nearly 13,000 individuals attended worship throughout the year.

2022:

The year 2022 marked a return to stability, though changes continued to take place. Two senior staff members, each with over 20 years of service at Grace, fulfilled their planned retirements. A third senior staff member, with 30 years of service, transitioned into an unplanned medical retirement. The Associate Pastor, Rev. Dan Ulrich, who had served for 7 years, accepted a call to another congregation (St. Paul's Mattoon, IL). Pastor Larry Peters began his 30th year of ministry at Grace, now with fewer staff members. A new staff member was hired, and a call process was initiated to fill the remaining roles. This year also saw 40 new members received, 8 baptisms, 8 youth confirmations, and an increase in worship attendance with nearly 14,000 people participating. Additionally, 2022 saw the highest number of funerals in decades, with 19 members commended to the Lord's mercy. The congregation also celebrated the 20th year of its Music at Grace Concert Series, which brought local talent and thousands of attendees to 6-7 concerts annually, under the direction of Cantor Jonathan Rudy.

2023:

The Call process continued in 2023 after two calls were declined. Despite these challenges, Grace welcomed 64 new members, baptized 16, and confirmed 15 youth. The congregation's worship attendance grew, reaching nearly 15,000 throughout the year. Another new staff member was hired, and the congregation began work on revising its governance structure and updating its constitution and bylaws. The year also saw the completion of the CAR and COMPASS programs through the District.

2024:

The year 2024 was a time of significant transition. In February, the congregation voted to request a candidate for the Associate Pastor position. In April, Candidate James Martin was placed at Grace. In June, the congregation purchased a parsonage to accommodate the Associate Pastor. In July, Rev. Sean Smith accepted the Call to be Senior Pastor to follow upon the retirement of Rev. Larry Peters. Despite these transitions, the congregation rejoiced over 24 baptisms, 8 youth confirmations, 65 new members, and more than 15,000 worship attendees. March 29 also marked the 66th Anniversary of Grace Lutheran Church in faithfully carrying out Word and Sacrament ministry by God's grace here in Clarksville.

2025 (So Far):

As of early 2025, Grace continues to undergo changes. In January, the congregation honored Pastor Larry Peters with the title of Pastor Emeritus after 32 years of service at Grace and 45 years of ministry within the LCMS. The congregation remains active in its mission, welcoming new members each week and continuing to extend the gifts of God to the people of God through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments and giving faithful and bold witness to Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

### **Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, Memphis TN**

Immanuel has been blessed by our Lord! Here are a few highlights:

- Immanuel celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in November of 2024 with a celebration worship service and banquet with a number of former pastors and members present.
- The school celebrated 75 years of ministry serving the Memphis area.
- After a long vacancy, Immanuel has a new senior pastor – Rev. Jonathan Petering, installed in June of 2024.
- After a relatively short vacancy, our school has been blessed with a new principal, Mrs. Amy Kurtz.
- After nearly seven years of work and deliberation, the voters' assembly approved a new constitution and bylaws at the beginning of 2025.

### **Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy, Nashville, TN**

Since the last Convention, God has blessed us abundantly with His Grace and provision! We have seen the following growth and impact as we stand on God's Word, our Lutheran Confessions and a missional focus in our community and beyond:

- 170 new members
- 47 new adult confirmands
- 31 new junior confirmands
- 39 Baptisms

Our Early Childhood Center is at capacity with around 100 students, and a long wait list.

We also recently planted a second campus for worship in the Spring Hill area. Current worship is around 90, and 26 new people have recently joined Our Savior, Spring Hill.

### **St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY**

Some highlights at St. Paul:

- An organ renovation project is nearing completion that will see our current 13 rank pipe organ expand into a hybrid organ with roughly 35 ranks.
- We have moved and renovated our office spaces, which will allow us to utilize the facility in more multi-purpose ways.
- Two different homeschool coops, one primarily of non-member families and one primarily of member families, meet in our building on a weekly basis. In both cases there is a weekly chapel service for the students and parents that takes them through the major stories of the Bible, the catechism, and introduces the daily prayer services and hymnody of the Lutheran Church to children at a formative age.

### **Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN**

Since the last convention, Trinity has experienced a lot of joys, and challenges. This year the congregation turns 170 years old! Last year the building marked 150 years standing as a house of the Lord in downtown Memphis, and the organ marked 100 years of service to Christ! Last year also marked 5 years of service at Trinity for Pastor Michael Croom. Since 2022, we have had 13 baptisms and 21 adult confirmations. It may not sound like a lot in 3 years, but each is a blessing from God!

In August 2022, Pastor Ricardo Granado, our associate pastor who had been instrumental in starting a vibrant Hispanic ministry at Trinity, accepted a Divine Call to serve elsewhere. By the grace of God, Spanish services and ministry to our Hispanic members, along with outreach, have continued. We have also developed a community connection team (TFACT - Trinity Faith Alive Community Team) that has made meaningful connections with people of Memphis and the surrounding communities and has big plans in store for the coming months.

With the joys have also been struggles. Like many churches since Covid, attendance is significantly lower than pre-Covid. Not all due to Covid, of course, with people moving, moving on, or transferring to the Church Triumphant, but every loss felt. Tithes and offerings versus expenses have been an ongoing struggle for a number of years with 5-figure deficits reaching 6 figures last year.

We discovered at the end of 2024 that we have mold throughout the building that comes with a hefty price tag to remediate, along with major expenses to fix the contributing problems on the exterior of the building. This all creates fear among members about our future. The future of Memphis' first LCMS church started in 1855, the Mother Church to the churches around us is unclear to us. But not to God! Our Lord has been and always be our Rock and our Hope! Please pray with us and for us as we move forward led by the One who promises that He works out all things for the good of those who love Him.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rev. Lane Reuter**



**Mid-south District Vice President, Region Three**

## REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGION FOUR

Since Rev. Robert Portier took a Call to another district, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as Vice President for Region Four of the Mid-South District. Region Four is blessed to have Rev. David Graves as Circuit Visitor of the Knoxville Circuit; Rev. Mark Rhoads as Circuit Visitor of the Chattanooga Circuit; and Rev. Steve Harmon as Circuit Visitor of the Johnson City Circuit.

**Redeemer Lutheran Church** in Harriman is served by Pastor Michael M. Miller. After struggling a bit due to losing several key members to death and a few others who moved away, by the grace of our saving God, Redeemer is experiencing growth in membership, worship attendance, and contributions. There has also been an increase in activity within the congregation and in the community. A group of approximately 10 youth and adults will be attending the Higher Things Youth Gathering at Concordia University, Nebraska, in the summer of 2025. Redeemer looks forward to celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2027.

**Our Savior Lutheran Church** in Morristown and Christ of the Cumberland in Harrogate are served by Pastor Gordon Smith.

**Christus Victor Lutheran Church** in Knoxville is served by Pastor Bill Ondracka and continues to strive to bring the love of Christ into its community by loving them, serving them, and sharing with them in ministry. Christus Victor is continuing to slowly grow as God blesses it in abundance.

**First Lutheran Church** in Knoxville is served by Pastor Ed Maanum and continues to serve God's people in its community through both the church and First Lutheran School. The school had 142 students between 1 year and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the 24/25 school year. In 2022, teacher Tim Wolfram came out of retirement to teach math. In May 2024, the school bid farewell to teacher Kay Irwin as she entered retirement. In August of the same year, the school welcomed three new full-time teachers, Teresa Heidle, Brooke Rosner, and Sue Osborn. First's Germanfest celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024 and was enjoyed by 8,000 individuals in the community.

**Grace Lutheran Church** in Knoxville continues to Connect people to Jesus, Grow in faith in Jesus, and Serve in the name of Jesus! There have been many transitions in the recent past: Pastor Emeritus Rich Elseroad retired as Senior Pastor in 2023 after 30 years at Grace; Pastor Danny Anderson is in his second year as Senior Pastor. Pastor Jake Childers has been serving as Associate Pastor since July of 2023 and Deaconess Christina Childers has been serving as Deaconess since July of 2023. Grace will be planting a church in 2025 and is in the process of calling a church planter to accomplish this goal. Grace looks forward to seeing how Jesus will continue to work in and through them in Knoxville and beyond!

**The Point Lutheran Church** in Knoxville is served by Pastor Adam Woldt and is continuing to thrive. A lease extension was negotiated in 2024, permitting them to remain their downtown Knoxville location until the end of 2028. They are actively working with a realtor to find a long-term home in or near the heart of downtown Knoxville. With 6 babies born to congregation members in 2024, and several more on the way for 2025, The Point has seen its nursery nearly triple, with more than two thirds of its youth under first grade. In August of 2025, The Point will celebrate 15 years since its first worship service.



**Praise Lutheran Church** in Maryville partnered with LCEF Ministry Solutions for a Capital Campaign leading to an expanded ministry with a new beautiful and liturgical Sanctuary, Narthex, and offices, plus parking and the conversion of the former building into a spacious Social Hall and Sunday School facility. President Paavola and Circuit Pastors blessed the new Sanctuary and the expanded facilities in May of 2024. In 2023, Praise welcomed DCE Shelli Haynes to help direct Christian Education (part time). Pastor Derek Roberts continues service in the Office of Holy ministry (nearing 20 years in the district, and in his 13<sup>th</sup> year at Praise). Tina Pierce was brought on staff to assist part time in church administration. In 2023, Praise helped coordinate seven area LCMS congregations to raise \$58,817 for the Pregnancy Resource Center via LCMS Life Ministry's 1 John 3 million Dollar Life Match grant initiative. In 2024 and 2025, Praise Lutheran sent crews to storm-ravaged Camp Linn Haven in North Carolina in hopes for uninterrupted summertime catechesis for many at the annual Campfirmation week (held in July).

**Faith Lutheran Church** in Oak Ridge called Rev. Chase Lefort from the seminary as Senior Pastor in 2022. He is joined in ministry by Rev. George Smith. In 2023, the congregation instituted an annual Fall Festival and resumed the Faith Thanksgiving Dinner as community-building events. Faith has worked on cultivating relationships within the Knoxville Circuit through participation in a Circuit Convocation at Praise Lutheran in Maryville, as well as joint ventures with St. Paul, Wartburg, and Redeemer, Harriman, through Theology on Tap and Lutheran Confessions study groups.

**St. Paul Lutheran Church** in Sevierville welcomed new Pastor Seth Korte in November of 2023. The congregation has developed a new vision which fosters discipleship opportunities and creative ministries focused on engaging the surrounding community (e.g. The Screen on the Green – an outdoor dinner and movie night available to all ages and stages of life). The Lord has blessed the congregation with several new households, some of which have joined from the surrounding community. Graced with unforeseen but warmly welcomed resources, the congregation has also moved in step with the new vision by transforming key areas within the facility and property to accommodate Christian education (particularly for youth), fellowship events, and community engagement ministries.

**Celebration Lutheran Church** in Seymour is served by Pastor Ray Krieg.

**Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** in Sharps Chapel is served by Pastor Paul Kritsch and continues to be blessed by the Lord with steady growth and an excellent reputation among their neighbors. In recent months the Lord has sent a new member, Christine Berger, who plays the keyboard for each service and planned special music for Christmas and Easter. Congregation member Larry Keim continues his studies through the SMP program. This fall he will be eligible to be Called and Ordained as the congregation's Associate Pastor. On Pentecost Sunday, 2025, Chapel of the Good Shepherd will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first worship service.

**St. Paul Lutheran Church** in Wartburg is served by Pastor David Graves. The congregation has grown steadily and has become even more a pillar of the Morgan County, Tennessee community. More and more local people are converting to Lutheranism and becoming solid members of the congregation and adding even more life and vibrancy to the church. St. Paul celebrated its 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2022, and the Rev. Will Weedon was present to celebrate and mark the occasion. The preschool has had record years of enrollment and is thriving, even adding another teacher in 24/25 to help handle the amount of students. The congregation continues to house the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Forensic Unit for helping victims of child abuse. Since finding their Morgan County home at St. Paul, reporting has gone up 100% and more innocent children have gotten justice.

**Athens Lutheran Church** in Athens is served by Pastor Don Coulter.

**Cross of Christ Lutheran Church** in Chattanooga: The beginning of 2023 until the early part of 2024 proved to be an interesting year at Cross of Christ as Pastor Barry Hildebrandt announced his plan to retire after almost 30 years in Chattanooga and more than 50 years in Word and Sacrament ministry. Therefore, with the congregation moving toward the reality of this vacancy, there were obviously many things to be done by the various boards and committees – some major and others less so. However, in the midst of the final preparations to be vacant, Rev. Clifford Herd, Emeritus, stepped forward to cover the interim period. President Roger Paavola then mentioned the possibility of receiving a second-career graduate from Concordia Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. Praise be to God, that “possibility” became a reality when Rev. Patrick Cox was placed at Cross of Christ and installed on July 14, 2024, as the congregation’s new Pastor. What a blessing Patrick and his wife Heather have been these past months, as the congregation gets to know them, and they care for the congregation! Truly God is good and gracious!

**First Lutheran Church** in Chattanooga is served by Pastor Don Welmer. First Lutheran has called and commissioned 4 more teachers at Belvoir Christian Academy (Sarah Barber, Lisa Randall, Brittney Webb, and Claire Hall). Recently, a new Chancel floor was installed. Many renovations are taking place on church and school grounds. First Lutheran and Belvoir Christian Academy continue to increase in membership and enrollment.

**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** in Chattanooga is served by Pastor H. Christopher Sheets. In 2022, the congregation sent 14 youth to the NYG in Houston, TX. They had a blast. In 2023, the congregation celebrated Pastor Sheets’ 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Good Shepherd! 2025 has been a busy year already. The congregation celebrated the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its DCE, Miss Katie Baumann. At Belvoir Christian Academy, which Good Shepherd shares with First Lutheran, Mrs. Brittney Webb, a teacher at Belvoir Christian Academy and a member of Good Shepherd, went through the schooling program to become a fully called teacher. Good Shepherd has also begun the process of Calling a new Pastor. Pastor Sheets will be retiring in November of 2025.

**St. Philip Lutheran Church** in Chattanooga is served by Pastor Joe Jacks. Following their 2024 VBS, St. Philip was blessed with a couple Baptisms and a few youth in Junior Confirmation. St. Philip is comprised of a group of faithful Christians being led by a faithful Pastor. The Word is taught, and the Sacraments are administered. The Lord is at work.

**First Lutheran Church** in Cleveland is served by Pastor Robert Seaton.

**Prince of Peace Lutheran Church** in Evensville/Dayton held a Closing Service and closed its doors on December 31, 2022.

**Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church** in Loudon is served by Pastor Brian Truog and Pastor Mark Rhoads. Christ Our Savior continues to provide a place to Worship, Learn, and Serve its members and community. In October of 2022, Christ Our Savior celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a congregation of the Mid-South District. In 2023, Candace Sutter joined the staff as Worship Director. She has enhanced both the traditional and modern worship services in a variety of ways. Through these past years, by God’s grace, the congregation has continued to grow both in numbers and in scope of ministry.

**Grace Lutheran Church** in Abingdon, Virginia closed its doors in 2024.

**Redeemer Lutheran Church** in Elizabethton is served by Pastor Mark Kophamer.

**Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church** in Johnson City welcomed Rev. Vincent Shemwell in June of 2023. This followed the retirement of Rev. Steve Harmon following over 20 years of service to Bethlehem. The congregation has seen significant growth in the past few years. Attendance was up 57% between 2022 and 2024, with membership up over 30%. Since September of 2024, Bethlehem has been celebrating its centenary, with a year's worth of events and projects.

**Concordia Lutheran Church** in Kingsport is served by Pastor Paul Becker. Concordia completed an extensive vision and planning process in 2024, resulting in goals for each of our ministry teams. The congregation has welcomed many new members, expanded its parking lot, and is blessed with increased attendance and a strong financial position. Pastor Becker, after serving Concordia since 1994, will retire on June 29, 2025. The Call process began last year and the congregation prays for its new Pastor to be identified and welcomed in God's perfect time.

**Rogersville Lutheran Church** in Rogersville, though not an official congregation, continues to do Word and Sacrament ministry at 4:00 p.m. each week at St. Henry Roman Catholic Church. The arrangement with St. Henry has continued for about 18 years. Local area Pastors share the preaching duties and Emeritus Pastor John Freitag usually does the liturgy and preaches once a month.

There are a number of retired Pastors in these Circuits who gladly serve as they are able. We are thankful to the Lord for their continuing service to Him and His Church.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rev. Michael M. Miller**  
**Mid-South District Vice President, Region Four**



**REPORT OF  
THE DISTRICT SECRETARY ON NOMINATIONS  
FOR THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT PRESIDENT**

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, member congregations of the District received the official notices and ballots for nominations for the Office of District President before January 1, 2025, “six months prior to the opening date of the convention.” [Bylaw 8.3.2.1 (b)]. Each member congregation was given opportunity to nominate two ministers of religion—ordained from the clergy roster of the Synod for District President. [Bylaw 8.3.1 (a)].

Fifty (50) nominations were received from thirty-seven (37) congregations of the District by the published postmark deadline of February 11, 2025, “four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.” [Bylaw 8.3.1 (b)]. One was disqualified because it was post-marked and dated after the required deadline. Of the fourteen (14) ministers of religion-ordained who were nominated, eight (8) declined nomination.

The Bylaws require that the five (5) candidates with the highest number of nominations and who have accepted nomination shall appear on the ballot. Because of a tie, six (6) candidates shall appear. [8.3.1 (d) and (g)] The convention shall have the right to alter the slate by adding nominations from the floor that meet the required criteria of office.

Thus, the official tally [Bylaw 8.3.1 (c)] is reported alphabetically as:

***The Reverend David Appold (2)***  
***The Reverend Kevin Conger (2)***  
***The Reverend David Graves (3)***  
***The Reverend Paul Hass (2)***  
***The Reverend Curt Hoover (1)***  
***The Reverend Eric Longman (1)***  
***The Reverend Charles Neugebauer (1)***  
***The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola (22)***  
***The Reverend Lane Reuter (3)***  
***The Reverend Derek Roberts (1)***  
***The Reverend Clayton Sellers (1)***  
***The Reverend Terry Tieman (1)***  
***The Reverend David Vandercook (1)***  
***The Reverend Joshua Willadsen (9)***

The names and brief biographies of the candidates are in order of the number of nominations received (the number of nominations in parenthesis after their names).

According to District Bylaw 8.3.1 (d), the candidates for the Office of District President “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.” Also, “In the event of a tie for the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) position among the candidates, all names involved in the tie shall be included as candidates.” [Bylaw 8.3.1 (g)]

Written response was received from all of the nominees within the required notification period. Of these six nominees, ***Reverend Hoover, Reverend Longman, Reverend Paavola, Reverend Reuter,***

***Reverend Sellers***, and ***Reverend Willadsen*** consented to have their names on the convention ballot as candidates for the Office of District President for the 2025-2028 term of office. ***Reverend Appold, Reverend Conger, Reverend Graves, Reverend Hass, Reverend Neugebauer, Reverend Roberts, Reverend Tieman, and Reverend Vandercook*** respectfully declined nomination for the Office of District President for the 2025-2028 term of office.

As a result of a tie from the fifth and sixth position of the top nominees, the top six (6) nominees who have accepted nomination and have consented to nomination shall have their name included on the convention ballot. [Bylaw 8.3.1 (e)]

Therefore, at the Mid-South District Convention scheduled for June 12-14, 2025, in Memphis, TN, there will be six ordained candidates listed on the ballot for election for the Office of District President. The official candidates for the Office of District President of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during the four-year term of 2021-2025 are:

***The Reverend Curt Hoover, Columbia, TN***  
***The Reverend Eric Longman, Rogers, AR***  
***The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola, Bartlett, TN***  
***The Reverend Lane Reuter, Thompson's Station, TN***  
***The Reverend Clayton Sellers, Collierville, TN***  
***The Reverend Joshua Willadsen, Ft. Smith, AR***

A brief biographical synopsis follows for each of the six candidates with the greatest number of votes in nomination and who have given their consent to serve if elected to the Office of District President of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. [Bylaw 8.3.1 (h)]

Finally, Bylaw 8.3.1 (i) states: “The convention shall have the right to alter the slate with floor nominations as provided in the bylaws.” (*referring to Bylaw 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.”*)

**Respectfully submitted,**

**The Reverend Larry A. Peters**  
**District Secretary**



## BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT PRESIDENT

### **THE REVEREND DR. ROGER C. PAAVOLA (22)**

**Address:** 6062 Daybreak Drive  
Bartlett, TN 38135

**Educational Background:** BA, Public Administration, University of Minnesota—Duluth (1969); MBA, Healthcare Administration, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis (1977); MDIV, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada (1997); DMIN, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana (2009)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 77 years

**Home Congregation:** Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN

**Synod Experience:** Council of Presidents (COP)/District President (2012-present); Concordia Plan Services Board (2010-present); Board of Regents, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (Vice-Chair & Finance & Audit, 2016-present); Synod Convention Floor Committee (conventions, 4; chair, 3)

**District Experience:** District President (2012-present); Secretary/2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President (2009-2012); Small and Rural Congregation Committee & Mission Action Council—chairs

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN (2000-2012); Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Beausejour, Manitoba, Canada (1997-2000).

**Community and Other Experience:** Hospital CEO (1971-1992); Adjunct Faculty, Bemidji State University; served on numerous civic boards and councils: Regional Health Agency, hospital association legislative council, board for the Communications Services to the Deaf, chairman for a state safety council; Habitat for Humanity; American Cancer Society; American Red Cross; lecturer on business, management, and Small Church Forums; Boy Scouts (1969-1983); published six books and several articles. He established C.A.R, COMPASS and *IMPACT* and Instructor International Lutheran Council (2016-present), member BOD, Ministry Focus.

**Brief Personal Statement:** The mission priorities I see going forward are:

- Plant churches, auxiliary church campuses, K-8 schools, ECC's and Micro-schools
- Develop Generational Faith Formation for every congregation, keeping our youth active
- Recruit, retain highly skilled church workers in all church-work professions
- Staff professional assistance to church workers' wellness using Lutheran Family and CPS resources
- Implement Best Practices for congregations/schools/ECC's, including our rural

and small-town ministries to share successful advances in mission/ministries

- Encourage CAR/COMPASS service to avoid stress on ministries in MDS
- Establish on-site pastoral services provided to long-term vacant congregations
- Present witness seminars in all circuits
- Prevent closures by hub-and-spoke, merger, or re-planting methods.

### **THE REVEREND JOSHUA J. WILLADSEN (9)**

**Address:** 8012 Williamsburg Road  
Ft. Smith, AR 72903

**Educational Background:** BA, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, WI; MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (2004)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 48 years

**Home Congregation:** Bethel Lutheran Church, Ft. Smith, AR

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2010, 2016); Floor Committee 11 Member – Structure & Administration (2016)

**District Experience:** Region 1 VP, MDS (2021-present), Circuit Visitor, Ft. Smith Circuit (2018-2021); Pastoral Counselor for Mid-South LWML District (2014-2016)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Bethel Lutheran Church, Ft. Smith, AR (2013-present); Pastor/Founding Pastor, Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Oakland, TN (2004-2013)

**Community and Other Experience:** Volunteer, Western Arkansas Ballet (2021-present), Volunteer, Reynolds Cancer Support House (2014-2021); President, Oakland Regional Chamber of Commerce (2010); Board of Directors, Oakland Regional Chamber of Commerce (2009-2011)

**Brief Personal Statement:** The priorities I see for the future of our District are:

1. Teaching, admonishing, and encouraging pastors and congregations to hear, trust, and obey the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which alone are powerful to make one wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus and are the only true norm by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged.
2. Admonishing pastors and congregations to hold fast our confession and practice of the Faith as stated in 1580 Book of Concord as a true and faithful exposition of Holy Scripture.
3. Providing faithful pastors to congregations to conduct the Holy Ministry (AC V).

**THE REVEREND LANE B. REUTER (3)**

**Address:** 2810 Kaye Drive

Thompson's Station, TN 37179

**Educational Background:** BA, History, University of Alabama—Birmingham, (1991); MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (1996)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 56 years

**Home Congregation:** Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy, Nashville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2013)

**District Experience:** Region 3 VP, MDS (2021-present), First VP MDS (2021-present), Vice-Chair, MDS BOD (2021-present), District Secretary, MDS Board of Directors (2012-2015); Elections Committee, Southern District (1996)

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy (2014-present); Senior Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN (2007-2014); Associate Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN (2000-2007); Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS (1998-2000); Assistant Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Destin, FL (1996-1998)

**Community and Other Experience:** Police & Fire Outreach; Room In the Inn Homeless Ministry; Trinity/HOPE Outreach; Mission trips to Columbia, Mexico, Peru, Haiti, Guatemala, Bangladesh.

**Brief Personal Statement:** The five main commitments for our District are:

1. A commitment to unchanging Biblical and Confessional Truth in a changing world.
2. A commitment to all of our congregations to focus on reaching unchurched and de-churched people.
3. A commitment to recruiting the best possible pastors and church workers from our seminaries, colleges, and the field.
4. A commitment to being a Pastor, not a church politician. I want to lead with humility and to admit when I'm wrong.
5. A commitment to utilize our District Vice Presidents and Circuit Visitors with great frequency.

**THE REVEREND CURT HOOVER (1)**

**Address:** 2879 Carters Creek Station Rd  
Columbia, TN 38401

**Educational Background:** BA, Concordia College, River Forest, IL (1982), MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2006)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 65 years

**Home Congregation:** Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2010), Church Planter (2004-2006)

**District Experience:** Regional Colloquy Interview Committee (2018-2019) Pre-Seminary and Colloquy Interview Team (2016-present), COMPASS Visitation Team (2017-2022), Convention Subcommittee Member (2018), Circuit Visitor (2012-2018), Reconciliation Team (2012)

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor (2008-present), SMP Pastor Supervisor (2019-present), Lay Deacon Supervisor (2008-2019), Church relocation and building (2011), Associate Pastor (2006-2008), Church Planting Convertible Vicar (2005-2006)

**Community and Other Experience:** Host to local symphony, musical groups, etc., Right to Life Groups, neighborhood associations, senior living chaplaincy, mayor's office chaplaincy, musician to senior living centers and community venues

**Brief Personal Statement:** My priorities (if elected) and what I desire of whoever is elected:

- Confessional to the letters of its articles and their loving intentions.
- Be known first and foremost as Pastor. I'd encourage being part-time called to a congregation, connecting me to pulpit and altar.
- Regular and champion of Winkels and continuing education programs ... attending each to listen, learn, and participate.
- Accountable and transparent in the stewardship of entrusted funds and duties.
- Encourage mission and ministry creative brainstorming, prudent decisions, appropriate funding, and accountability to be administered through Circuit Forums or Mission Action Councils.
- Be readily available.
- Tap into the skills of our people.

**THE REVEREND ERIC A. LONGMAN (1)**

**Address:** 6508 W. Coat Brg  
Rogers, AR 72758

**Educational Background:** BA, Political Science, Georgia State University (1992); MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (2015). DMIN, in process, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 25 years

**Home Congregation:** Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR

**Synod Experience:** Alternate Convention Delegate (2023)

**District Experience:** District Reconciler (2023-present), Convention Delegate (2021), Floor Committee Missouri District (2018), Convention Delegate Missouri District (2018), Convention Delegate Florida-Georgia District (2009)

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR (2019 – present); Associate Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jackson, MO (2015-2019); Vicar, Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Charles, MO (2013-2014); Field Worker, Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO (2011-2013); Elder/Head Elder, Rivercliff Lutheran Church, Sandy Springs, GA (2004-2011); Elder, Loving Shepherd Lutheran Church, Dallas, GA (1999-2003)

**Community and Other Experience:** Founding Member, MinistryFocus (a charity that helps called workers with debt) (2012-present), Rogers Ministerial Alliance (2019-2025), Jackson Community Outreach Board, Jackson, MO (2015-2019); Jackson Ministerial Alliance (2016-2019), Jackson Chamber of Commerce (2015-2019)

**Brief Personal Statement:** I rejoice in the faithful confession of the congregations of the Mid-South District and the LCMS and I pray for leadership that continues to emphasize the centrality of the crucified, risen, and ascended Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father and

the only means of salvation. The Mid-South District is filled with healthy and faithful congregations. I see the role of District President as one of support and encouragement, furthering our work together in support of the Gospel. I would emphasize outreach and faithful proclamation of the Gospel and recruit church workers to join in the task.

**THE REVEREND CLAYTON SELLERS (1)**

**Address:** 191 Glen Echo Rd  
Collierville, TN 38017

**Educational Background:** BA, Texas A&M (2006), MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (2013)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 35 years

**Home Congregation:** Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Seminary Interview Committee MDS (2016-present), Generation 2 Generation, 2019-2022; Floor Committee Chair, MDS District Convention (2021); Circuit Visitor (2021-present)

**Congregational Experience:** Associate Pastor, Faith, Collierville, TN (2013-present), LWML Zone Counselor (2018-2022),

**Community and Other Experience:**

**Brief Personal Statement:** Jesus promises that the gates of hell will not prevail against his Church and her true confession of Jesus as the Christ, the son of the Living God. It is our great privilege to proclaim this message to souls entrusted to our care and those moving into our district. The challenge for our district is to shepherd the areas that are growing and those that are seeing decline. Wherever the Lord gives growth and where we see decline, we know He is forever victorious. It is our privilege to sew and water as Paul and Apollos and watch the Spirit give the growth.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REPORT OF THE DISTRICT SECRETARY ON NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICES OF REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT</b></p>
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In accordance with the Bylaws of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, member congregations of the District received the official notices and ballots for nominations for the Office of Regional Vice-President before January 1, 2025, “six months prior to the opening date of the convention.” [Bylaw 8.3.2.1 (b)]. Each member congregation was “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.” [Bylaw 8.3.2.1 (a)].

Thirty-three (33) nominations from twenty-eight (28) congregations from the four electoral regions submitted nominations of at least one candidate and mailed them by or on the published postmark deadline of February 11, 2025, “four (4) months prior to the opening date of the convention.” [Bylaw 8.3.2.1 (b)]

The nominees by electoral region are listed below. Those fulfilling the requirements for nomination and accepting nomination will appear on the initial ballot for each region and are in bold type. (\*Incumbent)

**Region 1 - Fayetteville, Ft. Smith and Jonesboro Circuits**

Total Number of Nominating Ballots Submitted: 6

<u>Nominee:</u>	<u>Number of Nominations</u>	<u>Acceptance/Declination</u>
<b>The Reverend Gerald Heinecke</b>	2	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>The Reverend Kevin McReynolds</b>	1	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>The Reverend Joshua J. Willadsen</b>	4	<b>Accepted</b>

**Region 2 – Little Rock-North, Little Rock-South, and Stuttgart Circuits**

Total Number of Nominating Ballots Submitted: 7

<u>Nominee:</u>	<u>Number of Nominations</u>	<u>Acceptance/Declination</u>
<b>* The Reverend Kevin R. Conger</b>	7	<b>Accepted</b>

**Region 3 – Memphis, Mid-Tennessee, Nashville, and Paducah Circuits**

Total Number of Nominating Ballots Submitted: 8

<u>Nominee:</u>	<u>Number of Nominations</u>	<u>Acceptance/Declination</u>
<i>The Reverend David Appold</i>	2	<i>(declined)</i>
<b>The Reverend Andrew Abraham</b>	1	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>The Reverend Douglas DeWitt</i>	1	<i>(declined)</i>
<i>The Reverend Mark Goble</i>	1	<i>(declined)</i>
<i>The Reverend Rob Harbin</i>	1	<i>(declined)</i>
<b>The Reverend Curt Hoover</b>	1	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>The Reverend David McMinn</b>	1	<b>Accepted</b>

<i>The Reverend Bill Wagner</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>(declined)</i>
<b>The Reverend Philip Young</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

#### **Region 4 – Chattanooga, Johnson City, and Knoxville Circuits**

Total Number of Nominating Ballots Submitted: 7

*(One nominating ballot was disqualified because it was dated and submitted after the deadline of February 11, 2025; one nomination was disqualified because the nominee was ineligible to serve since he is an SMP Pastor [Synod Bylaw 2.13.1.b.2].)*

<u><i>Nominee:</i></u>	<u><i>Number of Nominations</i></u>	<u><i>Acceptance/Declination</i></u>
<b>The Reverend David Graves</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>The Reverend Derek Roberts</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>The Reverend Don Welmer</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

According to Bylaw 8.3.2.1(d), the names of the five ministers of religion—ordained residing 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. In the event of a tie for the final candidate position, all names involved in the tie shall be included as candidates. For the regional vice-presidential ballots, according to Bylaw 8.3.2.1(f), “*no opportunity shall be provided for additional nominations from the floor of the convention.*”

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. [Bylaw 8.3.2.1(h)]

The Elections Committee will present these final ballots at the convention.

The biographical synopsis submitted by each candidate accepting nomination is on the following pages by region and in alphabetical order.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**The Reverend Larry A. Peters**  
**District Secretary**



## BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF CANDIDATES FOR THE OFFICES OF REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

### REGION 1

#### THE REVEREND GERALD HEINECKE (2)

**Address:** 45 Chism Trail  
Batesville, AR 72501

**Educational Background:** BS, Education, Concordia University-Nebraska (2002); MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2010)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 45 years

**Home Congregation:** Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Commission on Mission Services, Wyoming District (2018-2022); Retreat Coordinator, Wyoming District (2017-2019)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Hope, Batesville, AR and Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, AR (2022-present); Pastor, Prince of Peace, Buffalo, WY (2016-2022); Pastor, St. Paul, Thorpe, WI, and Epiphany, Stanley, WI (2013-2014); Pastor, Our Redeemer, Webster, WI and Trinity, Danbury, WI (2010-2013)

**Community and Other Experience:** Homeschool Co-op Headmaster (2022-present); Chaplain, Arkansas Army National Guard (2020-present); Soccer Referee (2017-present); Johnson County Search and Rescue (2017-2022)

**Brief Personal Statement:** One important thing a pastor does, outside of caring for his congregation in Word and Sacrament, is District and Synod. Pastors in the Mid-South District need to be exhorted and encouraged to come together to study and strengthen the brotherhood. The District Praesidium needs to engage in official congregation visits to show support for the local congregation and pastor, observe her pastors preach and teach, encouraging a life of confessional unity around Word and Sacrament. In this unity, the people of the Church embrace the priesthood of all believers, encouraging one another and confessing the faith in their community.

#### THE REVEREND KEVIN MCREYNOLDS (1)

**Address:** 46 Georgia Lane  
Gassville, AR 72635

**Educational Background:** BA, Economics, University of Nebraska (1991); MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (2008)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 55 years

**Home Congregation:** Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2019)

**District Experience:** Circuit Visitor, NE District (2013-2020); District Disaster Relief Coordinator, NE District (2014-2020); District Reconciler, NE District (2007-2020); LWML District Pastoral Counselor (2012-2016); Heartland Lutheran HS Pastoral Delegate (2008-2012); NE District RSO Review Board (2011)

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Redeemer, Mountain Home, AR (2020-present); Pastor, St. Paul's, Central City, NE (2008-2020); Vacancy Pastor, St. John's, Palmer, NE (2019-2020); Mission Planter/Vacancy Pastor, Cross of Christ, Aurora, NE (2008-2016); Vicarage Supervisor, Cross of Christ, Aurora, NE (2015-2016)

**Community and Other Experience:** Guest Instructor, NE Law Enforcement Training Ctr, Grand Island, NE 92016-2019); Chaplain and Deputy Command Chaplain, NE State Patrol (2016-2019); Haiti Lutheran Mission Society BOD (1996-200)

**Brief Personal Statement:** I am a life-long LCMS member and second career pastor after working in the medical field and building materials industry. Prior to taking a call to serve my congregation in the Mid-South District, I was actively involved in the Nebraska District at both the Circuit and District Levels. I recognize the need for servants in addition to the importance and responsibility of this position. I believe my experience and skill set lend themselves toward the role while still allowing me to serve my congregation as its full-time parish pastor.

**THE REVEREND JOSHUA J. WILLADSEN (4)**

**Address:** 8012 Williamsburg Road  
Ft. Smith, AR 72903

**Educational Background:** BA, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, WI; MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (2004)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 48 years

**Home Congregation:** Bethel Lutheran Church, Ft. Smith, AR

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2010, 2016); Floor Committee 11 Member – Structure & Administration (2016)

**District Experience:** Pastoral Counselor for Mid-South LWML District (2014-2016); Region 1 VP, MDS (2021-present), Circuit Visitor, Ft. Smith Circuit (2018-2021)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Bethel Lutheran Church, Ft. Smith, AR (2013-present); Pastor/Founding Pastor, Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Oakland, TN (2004-2013)

**Community and Other Experience:** Volunteer, Western Arkansas Ballet (2021-present), Volunteer, Reynolds Cancer Support House (2014-2021); President, Oakland Regional Chamber of Commerce (2010); Board of Directors, Oakland Regional Chamber of Commerce (2009-2011)

**Brief Personal Statement:** *I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek.* Romans 1:16

**REGION 2**

**THE REVEREND KEVIN R. CONGER (7)**

**Address:** 1204 Hill Street  
Jacksonville, AR 72076

**Educational Background:** MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2001)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 67 years

**Home Congregation:** Hope Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, AR

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2013)

**District Experience:** Region 2 Vice-President (January 2021-present); Chairman of the MDS BOD (2021-present); Circuit Visitor (2012-January 2021); Rural & Small-Town Ministry Committee (RSTM) Chairman (2015-present); Mission Floor Committee Chair (2018)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, AR (2001-present)

**Community and Other Experience:** Walk for Life, Washington, DC (2025); Community Action Board (C.A.B); Working with Veterans - Member of Mental Health Clinician Community Clergy Collaboration Intervention Pilot Study (2018 and 2021); Pilot Study, VA Community Clergy Intervention (2018)

**Brief Personal Statement:** It is humbling to be asked to serve, and I will do so to the best of my ability as God grants me wisdom to serve the District.

**REGION 3**

**THE REVEREND ANDREW ABRAHAM (1)**

**Address:** 7227 Kanapolis Dr.  
Crossville, TN 38572

**Educational Background:** MDIV; Colloquy (2008)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 20 years

**Home Congregation:** Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2019)

**District Experience:** Set Apart to Serve Committee, Disaster Relief Coordinator

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, TN (2016-present); Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Tonawanda, NY (2011-2016); Cross of Life, Antioch, TN (2009-2011); Spirit of Joy, Murfreesboro, TN (2008-2009)

**Community and Other Experience:** Various Veteran's Organizations

**Brief Personal Statement:** Serving our Lord in the holy ministry is a tremendous joy for me. I never get tired of it. I

thoroughly enjoy working on the parish level, also embrace opportunities to serve Christ's Church on the district level. I care deeply about my brother pastors and I believe strongly in offering pastors and church workers as much help and support as possible. I believe the Lord is actively calling young people to lead lives of total service to the Church, and that we have a duty to identify them and cultivate within them a desire to work for Christ.

**THE REVEREND CURT HOOVER (1)**

**Address:** 2879 Carters Creek Station Rd  
Columbia, TN 48401

**Educational Background:** BA, Concordia College, River Forest, IL (1982), MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2006)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 65 years

**Home Congregation:** Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2010), Church Planter (2004-2006)

**District Experience:** Pre-Seminary and Colloquy Interview Team (2016-present), COMPASS Visitation Team (2017-2022), Convention Subcommittee Member (2018), Circuit Visitor (2012-2018), Reconciliation Team (2012); Regional Colloquy Interview Committee (2018-2019)

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor (2008-present), SMP Pastor Supervisor (2019-present), Lay Deacon Supervisor (2008-2019), Church relocation and building (2011), Associate Pastor (2006-2008), Church Planting Convertible Vicar (2005-2006)

**Community and Other Experience:** Host to local symphony, musical groups, etc., Right to Life Groups, neighborhood associations, senior living chaplaincy, mayor's office chaplaincy, musician to senior living centers and community venues

**Brief Personal Statement:** My desire is to be pastor first, called to a particular altar and pulpit, then that extended to the District's pastors and people. I am a champion and regular attendee to Winkels and value the chance to be with pastors and people where they are gathered. My goal is to be a good steward of District funds, resources, and people, with a particular goal to bring mission and its decisions, support, encouragement and oversight to those most local to its need, placing funding most always under the local or area authority of Circuit Forum or dedicated Mission Action Councils.

**THE REVEREND DAVID MCMINN (1)**

**Address:** 1891 Horton Rd  
Quebeck, TN 38579

**Educational Background:** MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2008)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 58 years

**Home Congregation:** Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, McMinnville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2013, 2016)

**District Experience:** Circuit Visitor (2021-Present); Floor Committee District Convention (2018, 2021)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Shepherd of the Hills, McMinnville, TN (2010-present); Associate Pastor, Heavenly Host, Cookeville and Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, TN (2008-2010); School Chaplain, Heavenly Host, Cookeville, TN (2008-2012); Vice President, Congregational Trinity Lutheran, Hanceville, AL (2005-2007)

**Community and Other Experience:** Habitat for Humanity (annually since 2008)

**Brief Personal Statement:** None submitted

**THE REVEREND PHILIP YOUNG (1)**

**Address:** 7080 Asberry Dr  
Nashville, TN 37221

**Educational Background:** BS, US Naval Academy (1989); MDIV, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (1998)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 44 years

**Home Congregation:** Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2001); Floor Committee (2001)

**District Experience:** MDS Disaster Relief Coordinator (Waverly, 2021); MDS Sanctity of Life Ministry Coordinator (2013-2021)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Redeemer, Nashville, TN (2002-present); Pastor, Holy Trinity, Kingland, GA (1998-2002)

**Community and Other Experience:** Lutheran Heritage Foundation BOD (2016-2021)

**Brief Personal Statement:** I have written and helped pass many overtures for district conventions. I have spoken to floor committees and to the delegates from the floor, all in an effort to help our district uphold a bold Lutheran identity. In what I believe is the most important qualification for a VP, I faithfully attend monthly circuit pastors' meetings. I stay engaged, do theology, discuss best practices, listen, and support the brothers along with the beloved people of their congregations. It remains a privilege to encourage younger and newer pastors, to offer my counsel on district initiatives, and to preach Christ crucified.

#### REGION 4

##### THE REVEREND DAVID GRAVES (7)

**Address:** 205 Spring St  
Wartburg, TN 37887

**Educational Background:** BA, Westminster College, MDIV Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (2013)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 19 years

**Home Congregation:** St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wartburg, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2019)

**District Experience:** Circuit Visitor, Knoxville Circuit (2021-present)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, St. Paul, Wartburg, TN (2013-present)

**Community and Other Experience:** Local Community Outreach Board; Morgan County Correctional Facility (2013-2021)

**Brief Personal Statement:** Over the past four years we have witnessed a great transformation in the Knoxville Circuit. Trust and comradery has been built amongst our pastors and our congregations to a closeness we have never had before. Our confession is firm, and our communities by and large are growing. I would love to bring this same spirit to the region of East Tennessee and to share what has made Knoxville so great. Our mission can only spread by not only trusting one another, but by being united in our confession of faith and practice.

##### THE REVEREND DEREK ROBERTS (1)

**Address:** 1813 Oxford Dr  
Maryville, TN 37803

**Educational Background:** BS in Kinesiology, University of Minnesota (1998); MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2005)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 50 years

**Home Congregation:** Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Author, The Lutheran Witness, Strength for the Day, God's Word for Today, Luke (a Bible study); Convention delegate (2016); Floor Committee (2016); Katrina Relief; Instructor, Siberian Lutheran Mission

**District Experience:** MDS Nominations Committee (2021-2025); MDS Convention Floor Committee (2015); Pastoral Advisor to East Region Youth Board (2009); Campus Ministry Committee (2007)

**Congregational Experience:** Associate, First Lutheran, Knoxville, TN (and Campus Ministry at UT), 2006-2012; Praise, Maryville, TN (2012-present)

**Community and Other Experience:** UT Knoxville Campus Ministries Board (2006-2012), Secretary (2010-2012); Campfirmation Directors at Camp Linn Haven, NC (2019-present); Foster Parent, TN

**Brief Personal Statement:** none submitted

##### THE REVEREND DONALD WELMER (1)

**Address:** 328 Cherokee Blvd #421  
Chattanooga, TN 37405

**Educational Background:** BA, Texas Lutheran University (2008); MDIV, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN (2012)

**Member of Synod Congregations:** 12 years

**Home Congregation:** First, Chattanooga, TN

**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2016, 2023)

**District Experience:** District Convention Floor Committee (2021)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, First, Chattanooga, TN (2020-present); Associate, Messiah, Plano, TX (2012-2020)

**Community and Other Experience:** Kiwanis Club (2017-2020), Lions Club (2017-2020)

**Brief Personal Statement:** The Mid-South District is a solid district with excellent pastors. I look forward to any such way I can be of help and service to my brothers.



# REPORT OF THE DISTRICT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE – BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF CANDIDATES FOR VARIOUS OFFICES

The Nominations committee held one meeting on March 17, 2025. The following slate was adopted for election at the 2025 Mid-South District Convention by the Nominations Committee, subject to change by nominations from the floor. (\* denotes incumbent)

## Nominees for Secretary of the District

### Rev. Jonathan Beyer

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** BA - Concordia St. Paul (1981); M.Div. - CSL (1985)

**Years as LCMS Member:** 66

**Home Congregation:** First Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, AR

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Circuit Counselor, District VP

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor

**Community Experience:** Board Chair and Board Member, Hot Springs YMCA (2000-2012); Board Chair and Board Member, OBHAW Community Mental Health Center (2001-2024)

**Personal Statement:** "I have been a pastor in our Mid-South District for 31 years. I love our District. I believe the goal of the District is to support and encourage each congregation and worker to grow spiritually and missionally. The two go together and are vitally important for all of us in these days."

### Rev. Willie Grills

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** M.Div. (CTS 2017); B.A., B.S. (Kentucky Christian University)

**Years as LCMS Member:** 18

**Home Congregation:** Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** None submitted

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church (2021-present), Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Mattoon, IL (2019-2021), Pastor, Amigos en Cristo, Denison, IA (2017-2019).

**Community Experience:** ESL instructor, Denison, IA (2017-2019), Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels (2020-present)

**Personal Statement:** "It is an honor to be nominated for the position of District Secretary. It is an important role within the district. In my employment before seminary, many of my duties were focused on areas relevant to the nature of this position (e.g. DOT logs, FCC compliance, FFL paperwork). I understand

the importance of details, records, diligence, and confidence. I sincerely appreciate the dutiful work of all members currently on the various boards and will do my utmost, with the help of God, if elected to this position."

### Rev. Larry Peters\*

**Occupation:** Pastor of the LCMS for 45 years.

**Educational Background:** St. John's College, Winfield, KS, AA; Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne, IN, BA; Concordia Theological Seminary Ft. Wayne, IN, MDiv.

**Years as LCMS Member:** 64

**Home Congregation:** Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN

**Synod Experience:** CCM (2013-present), Chair (2023-present), Rep to COH (2023-present), Task Force for Circuit Realignment, Chair (2024-present), Planning Committee for Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music (2011-present)

**District Experience:** Circuit Counselor, Atlantic District (1986-1992), Circuit Visitor, MDS (2016-2021), Secretary, MDS (2022-present)

**Congregational Experience:** Vicar, St. John, Sayville, NY (1978-1979), Pastor, Resurrection, Cairo, NY (1980-1992), Senior Pastor, Grace, Clarksville, TN (1993-2025), Pastor Emeritus, Grace, Clarksville, TN (2025-present)

**Community Experience:** Member, Pastoral Counseling Center BOD (1994-2019), Chair (2004-2019), Chaplain, Tennova Hospital (1993-2025)

**Personal Statement:** "It has been my distinct privilege to have served as MDS District Secretary and to have enjoyed the participation in the Board of Directors, the work on congregational constitutions, and to have served with Pres. Paavola. The MDS District is in a very strong position as congregations and church workers bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to those within our borders and even throughout the world. We have much for which to be thankful to God and great responsibility going forward as we work in partnership toward the larger goal of knowing Christ and His mercy and making Him and His mercy known through us. It is a joy to have been and continue to be a part of this District for over 32 years."



### **Rev. Eric Rudsenske**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** M.Div. - CTSFW

**Years as LCMS Member:** 18

**Home Congregation:** Concordia Lutheran Church, Jackson, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** LWML Zone Pastoral Counselor (October 2022-present)

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church (July 2017-present)

**Personal Statement:** I'm truly honored to be nominated to the position of District Secretary. Should I be elected, I pledge to serve to the best of my ability for the sake of God's people in the Mid-South District. Thank you for considering me for this office!"

### **Nominees for Board of Directors – Commissioned (Regions 1 & 2)**

#### **Jacquelyn Magnuson**

**Occupation:** Kantor, Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock

**Educational Background:** BA Theology (Concordia University Chicago, 2010); MPhil Theology (University of Cambridge, 2011); Master of Church Music (Concordia University Wisconsin, 2019)

**Years as LCMS Member:** 36

**Home Congregation:** Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

**Synod Experience:** Placement Director (Concordia University St. Paul, 2013-2017)

**District Experience:** Conference Musician (Mid-South West Pastors' Conference, 2023, 2024, 2025)

**Congregational Experience:** Kantor (GLCLR, 2022-present), Director of Parish Music (Trinity Lutheran Church & School, Davenport, IA, 2021-2022), Organist & Music Director (University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, MN, 2014-2020), Chair of Christian Service (ULC, Minneapolis, MN, 2016-2019)

**Personal Statement:** "The Divine Service is the foundation for our Christian life together, where we receive the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Word and Sacrament and are strengthened for service in our vocations. We are called to be faithful and confess the truth of God's Word even in an increasingly hostile society. If elected, I would, by the grace of God and to the best of my abilities, work diligently for the congregations, schools, and workers in our district for the spread of the Gospel in our communities and faithfulness to Lutheran doctrine and practice."

### **Aaron Jackson**

**Occupation:** Director of Parish Music

**Educational Background:** B. Mus. in Church Music; DPM Diploma (Concordia Nebraska)

**Years as LCMS Member:** 26

**Home Congregation:** Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR

**Synod Experience:** Organ Technician for Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music (July 9-12, 2024)

**District Experience:** Musician for Fall Pastor's Conference (October 14-18, 2024, October 1-4, 2023)

**Congregational Experience:** Director of Parish Music (Redeemer LCMS, Mountain Home, AR, August 1, 2023-present), Organist/Music Director (Messiah LCMS, Houston, TX, October 1, 2021-July 16, 2023), Organist (Bethlehem LCMS, Palestine, TX, 2012-2021)

**Community Experience:** Mountain Home Symphony - Percussion Section Leader & Board Member (January 2024-present); Volunteer Musician at Barter Health Hospital (May 2024-current); Organist/Music Director (St. Andrews Episcopal Church, Seward, NE, 2018-2021)

**Personal Statement:** "First and foremost, I am honored to be nominated for this position. Although I am a young called worker in the field, I believe that my experiences will give me consistent guidance to represent members of the Mid-South District. I highly value service to the church, and would not take this privilege lightly. If God chooses to use me in this role, I pray that He would lead me to support His people faithfully."

### **Nominees for Board of Directors – Commissioned (Regions 3 & 4)**

#### **Matthew Fischer**

**Occupation:** Director of Family Life Ministries

**Educational Background:** BA in Liberal Studies; MA in Educational Leadership

**Years as LCMS Member:** 33 years

**Home Congregation:** Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy, Nashville, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Director of Family Life Ministries (2020-present) Our Savior Lutheran Church & Academy, Nashville, TN.

**Congregational Experience:** Director of Family Life Ministries (2020-present) Nashville, TN; Director of Family Ministries (2017-2020) Las Vegas, NV; Principal (2012-2017) Las Vegas, NV; Athletic Director & Assistant Principal (2006-2012)

Scottsdale, AZ; 5th Grade Teacher (2002-2006)  
Orange, CA.

**Personal Statement:** "I believe the mission of the church is to invite people to become lifelong followers of Jesus. It starts by helping others discover who Jesus is, develop a personal relationship with Him as their Lord and Savior, and empower them to live out their faith by serving others."

### **Jessica Irwin**

**Occupation:** Principal

**Educational Background:** Master's in Education  
ESOL; Bachelor's in English Literature & Women's  
Studies

**Years as LCMS Member:** 36 (since birth)

**Home Congregation:** First Lutheran Church,  
Knoxville, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Nominations Committee -  
Commissioned (2022)

**Congregational Experience:** Principal (2018-2025),  
Middle School Teacher (2013-2024), School  
Secretary (2012-2023)

**Community Experience:** Parkridge Community  
Organization (2021-present)

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

### **David Topp**

**Occupation:** Principal

**Educational Background:** Certified in Automotive  
Repair from Arizona Automotive Institute, Glendale,  
AZ; Bachelor of Arts with a middle school math  
endorsement; Master of Education in Curriculum and  
Instruction from Doane College, Crete, NE; Colloquy  
from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod through  
Concordia College, Seward, NE; Master's in  
Curriculum and Development from Doane College,  
Crete, NE; Master's in Educational Administration  
from Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ

**Years as LCMS Member:** 40

**Home Congregation:** First Lutheran Church,  
Chattanooga, TN

**Synod Experience:** Served as delegate from  
Montana District (dates and locations not specified)

**District Experience:** Montana District Board of  
Directors (2013-2015); Montana District Rural  
Ministry Committee (2010-2013).

**Congregational Experience:** Usher, Board of Elders  
(Kalispell 1985-1990, Utah 1997-1999); Church  
Council (1984-1990), Property Board Chairman  
(1984-1985); led Confirmation Instruction (1989-  
1994, 2008-2015); Multiple service on sub-  
committees.

**Community Experience:** Chairman of Grounds and  
Maintenance for Waconda Bay Association; led

parenting program for school parents in Kalispell,  
Nebraska, and Utah

**Personal Statement:** "I have been in Lutheran  
Education for 30 years, servicing at schools in Utah,  
Montana, Texas, and Tennessee. I have taught grades  
3 through 8, served as athletic director, coached  
multiple sports, and led Bible studies. I worked at a  
summer camp for 12 years and my duties included  
coaching, counselor, Dean of Men, Bible Study  
leader, handyman, and lifeguard. My personal  
mission statement is to: 'Be Bold, Be Brave, Be  
Courageous' in sharing Jesus."

## Nominees for Board of Directors – Lay (Region 1)

### Jeffrey Pittman

**Occupation:** Attorney / College Professor (Retired)  
**Educational Background:** Juris Doctor & Master of Business Administration, University of Iowa  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 42 years  
**Home Congregation:** All Saints Lutheran Church & School, Jonesboro, AR  
**Synod Experience:** Voting delegate, Annual Meeting, LCEF, St. Louis 2024  
**District Experience:** Lay representative, Board of Directors (2018 to present)  
**Congregational Experience:** Various positions since 1983, currently head deacon on leadership council  
**Community Experience:** Professor at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro for 38 years, served on various university and community committees and boards  
**Personal Statement:** "I have worked with Dr. Paavola and the Mid-South staff for 7 years as a Board of Directors lay member. I support the mission of the board and the leadership of Rev. Paavola. I hope to continue service on the board, working for our district."

### Lou Marinelli

**Occupation:** Retired  
**Educational Background:** Some college, self-study in Lutheran doctrine  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 11 years  
**Home Congregation:** The Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR  
**Synod Experience:** None submitted  
**District Experience:** None submitted  
**Congregational Experience:** Elder, Trustee (2019-2013), Elder, Ministry Leader, Stephen Minister (2013-2022), Elder (2020-2024), Congregation President (2024-2025), Sunday School Leader  
**Community Experience:** Volunteer at Pregnancy Center, Public Devotion Leader, Homeless Center Devotion Leader and Server, Ministry Organizer and Leader  
**Personal Statement:** "After being redeemed from the Roman heresy, and upon my joining of the LCMS, I was for a time skeptical of the Lutheran Confessions for several years and so tested them against the Scriptures regularly if only to grow in confidence that the unaltered Augsburg and Lutheran Confessions are the very best exposition of the Scriptures available to us. I seek to help keep the Synod on this path of righteousness, holding firm and being not swayed by the snares of the devil such as were the temperance movement that did harm to the

Supper, and the age of enlightenment that elevated human reason above Scripture."

## Nominees for Board of Directors – Lay (Region 2)

### Karilyn Brown

**Occupation:** Arkansas State Representative  
**Educational Background:** Professional & Technical Writing  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 27 years  
**Home Congregation:** Hope Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, AR  
**Synod Experience:** None submitted  
**District Experience:** Lay Member, Board of Directors (2021-2025), Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Strategic Initiatives Advisory Committee  
**Congregational Experience:** Chair of the Building Committee, revised Constitution and Bylaws for Hope Lutheran Church, 3rd Grade Sunday School Teacher at Trinity Lutheran Church, Treasurer at First Lutheran Church  
**Community Experience:** Arkansas State Legislator (2015-present), Justice of the Peace, Pulaski County Quorum Court (2013-2014), Member of Chambers of Commerce for Sherwood and Jacksonville, Director of Arkansas Veterans Cemetery Foundation (2010-present)  
**Personal Statement:** "As a lifelong LCMS Lutheran, I look forward to working to help our church grow throughout the Mid-South District. I will apply my professional experience as a technical writer and editor, a financial advisor with Thrivent, a volunteer coordinator for the fraternal side of Thrivent, and my involvement with the Arkansas Legislature to assist me in supporting the mission and ministry of the District."

### Keith D'Atrio

**Occupation:** Senior Solutions Engineer  
**Educational Background:** Industry Certifications - Cisco DevNet Associate, AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 12 years  
**Home Congregation:** Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR  
**Synod Experience:** 2023 National Convention Lay Delegate for the Mid-South District  
**District Experience:** 2022 Mid-South District Convention Lay Delegate for Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla  
**Congregational:** Head Elder (2018 - Current), School Board for Avilla Christian Academy (2023 - 2024)

**Community Experience:** USPSA Certified Range Officer (2017 - Current); Amateur Radio Licensed - Tech (2020 - Current)

**Personal Statement:** "I am honored to be nominated for this position. I have had the opportunity to serve at both the district and Synod levels. I relished these opportunities and would work diligently if elected to this board. As head elder of my congregation, I look forward to furthering Biblical and Confessional Lutheranism in the Mid-South District."

### **Nominees for Board of Directors – Lay (Region 3)**

#### **Amanda Cordray**

**Occupation:** Retired (Federal Government, 2013)

**Educational Background:** Some college

**Years as LCMS Member:** 52 years

**Home Congregation:** GracePoint Church, Atoka, TN

**Congregational Experience:** Admin Assistant (June 2019 to present), Treasurer (Sept 2022 to present), Secretary (March 2014 - June 2017)

**Community Experience:** Life member of VFW and DAVA

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

#### **Tim Hanusa**

**Occupation:** Professor of Chemistry, Vanderbilt University

**Educational Background:** A.B. Cornell College (Mt. Vernon, IA); Ph.D. Indiana University - Bloomington

**Years as a member of LCMS Congregation:** 68

**Home Congregation:** Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, TN

**Synod Experience:** Floor Committee #3, Theology + Church Relations, Synodical Convention, 2019; Floor Committee #10, Ecclesiastical Supervision + Dispute Resolution, Synodical Convention, 2019

**District Experience:** Delegate to District Convention, June 2-5, 2000

**Congregational Experience:** Elder (2015-present, 2007-2012, 2000-2002, plus earlier terms); Adult Bible class leader (1988-present, on occasion); Cantor, choir member (1988-present)

**Personal Statement:** "I have been interested in the natural world since childhood, but I have also struggled to reconcile the Scriptures with the conclusions of modern science. In the end, however, we are reminded that 'By faith we understand the worlds were prepared by the word of God (Heb. 11:3); that is, faith must inform our understanding of nature. Therefore, I have tried to live as the best

'Christian scientist' (small s!) I can, grateful to our Lord and Creator for the opportunities He has given me to serve."

#### **Gregg Lynch**

**Occupation:** Commercial Construction - Sr Vice President

**Educational Background:** BS Construction Engineering, Kansas State University

**Years as LCMS Member:** 31 years

**Home Congregation:** Our Savior Lutheran Church and Academy, Nashville, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** First District Experience will be June 12-14, 2025, at the Mid-South Convention as a Lay Voting Delegate representing Our Savior Lutheran Church and Academy

**Congregational Experience:** Head Elder, Our Savior Lutheran Church and Academy (OSLC) (July 1, 2024, to current); Board of Directors (OSLC) (July 1, 2024, to current); Elder (March 4, 2021, to current); Second Site Committee OSLC Spring Hill Campus committee (September 9, 2022, to current); Bible Study Leader Red Letter Challenge series (Feb 3, 2020, to Mar 29, 2020) and Red Letter Forgiving Challenge (Sept 12 to Oct 17, 2021); Epiphany Lutheran Church (ELC) Second Site Steering Committee (2008 to 2014); ELC Praise Band musician both campuses (2008 to 2016)

**Community Experience:** Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) - Houston, TX Chapter Board of Directors (BOD) (2010 to 2018) - positions held: Secretary, Membership Committee Chairman, Dues Committee; SEARCH For the Homeless BOD and Building Committee (Sept 2012 to 2016), Chairman/Host of major annual fundraiser luncheon; Petroleum Club of Houston BOD - Chairman, Membership Committee, Events Committee, Club Relocations Committee (2010 to Jan 2019), Annual Club Golf Tournament Chairman (2011 and 2012); Young Presidents Organization (YPO) (2009 to 2013); Boy Scouts of America BOD Topeka, KS (1990 to 1992)

**Personal Statement:** "I am very interested in exploring options of how we can strategically grow and expand God's Kingdom throughout our district. Specifically, by seeking and promoting new Pastors for our congregations, assessing existing facility efficiencies while developing expansion of our faith into growing communities across our district."

### **Ken Priest**

**Occupation:** Retired Healthcare Architect  
**Educational Background:** B.A. University of Tennessee, 1978  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 45 years  
**Home Congregation:** Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN  
**Synod Experience:** None submitted  
**District Experience:** None submitted  
**Congregational Experience:** Our Savior Board Chairman (2022-Present); Our Savior Board Director (2020-2022); Redeemer Lutheran Church President (1988-2001)  
**Personal Statement:** "I would be honored to serve and would to the best of my abilities."

### **Nominees for Board of Directors – Lay (Region 4)**

#### **Dustin Heidel**

**Occupation:** Engineering Technician  
**Educational Background:** Manufacturing Engineering  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 32 years  
**Home Congregation:** St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wartburg, TN  
**Synod Experience:** None submitted  
**District Experience:** None submitted  
**Congregational Experience:** Liturgical Server (2018-Present), Choir Director (2021-2022)  
**Personal Statement:** "Only a humble servant of the Lord, here to help where I can."

#### **Levi Nunnink**

**Occupation:** Product Manager / Entrepreneur  
**Educational Background:** Junior College  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 12 years  
**Home Congregation:** Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN  
**Synod Experience:** None submitted  
**District Experience:** None submitted  
**Congregational Experience:** Congregational President (July 2018 - March 2021); Board of Elders (August 2024 - Present)  
**Personal Statement:** None submitted

### **Nominees for District Nominations Committee - Ordained (Regions 1 & 2)**

#### **Rev. Eric Longman**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Educational Background:** B.S. Georgia State University (1992); M.Div. Concordia Seminary, St.

Louis (2015); D.Min. (in progress, candidacy status) Concordia Seminary, St. Louis  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 25 years  
**Home Congregation:** Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR  
**Synod Experience:** Alternate Pastoral Delegate to Synod Convention, Fayetteville Circuit, Mid-South District (2023)  
**District Experience:** District Reconciler - Ordained (2023-Present); Pastoral Delegate to District Convention, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR, Mid-South District (2022); Floor Committee on Structure and Administration, Missouri District (2018); Pastoral Delegate to District Convention, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jackson, MO, Missouri District (2018); Lay Delegate to District Convention, Rivercliff Lutheran Church, Sandy Springs, GA, EL-GA District (2009)  
**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR (2019-Present); Associate Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jackson, MO (2015-2019); Head Elder, Rivercliff Lutheran Church, Sandy Springs, GA (2005-2009); Elder, Rivercliff Lutheran Church, Sandy Springs, GA (2003-2005); Head Elder, Loving Shepherd Lutheran Church, Dallas, GA (2001-2003); Bible Study Leader (2001-2009); Assistant Minister (Lay), First United Lutheran Church (ELCA), Kennesaw, GA (1998-2001); Financial Secretary, Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA), Snellville, GA (1994-1997)  
**Community Experience:** Rogers Ministerial Alliance, Rogers, AR (2019-2025); City of Jackson Outreach Board, Jackson, MO (2016-2019); Jackson Ministerial Alliance, Jackson, MO (2016-2019); Jackson Chamber of Commerce, Jackson,  
**Personal Statement:** None submitted

#### **Rev. David Vandercook\***

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Educational Background:** M.Div. Concordia, St. Louis; B.A. Concordia, Austin, TX  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 44 years  
**Home Congregation:** Shepherd of Peace Lutheran Church, Maumelle, AR  
**Synod:** CCM (2023-present)  
**District:** District Nominations Committee (2021-present), Circuit Visitor (2021-present)  
**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle/Trinity, N. Little Rock (2016-present); Assistant Pastor, Our Savior, Houston, TX (2013-2014); Pastor, Trinity, Sealy, TX (2009-2013); Pastor, Mt. Calvary, Raymondville, TX (2007-2009)  
**Community Experience:** President, Sealy Lions Club (2008)  
**Personal Statement:** None submitted



## Nominees for District Nominations Committee - Ordained (Regions 3 & 4)

### Rev. Gregory Bauch

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** BA/BS - Grove City College (2000); MBA - University of Rochester (2006); CPA (2009, expired); MDiv - Concordia Theological Seminary (2016)

**Years as LCMS Member:** 47 years

**Home Congregation:** Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, TN

**Synod Experience:** Synod Convention Circuit Representative (2023)

**District Experience:** None submitted

**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Ascension Lutheran Church (2016- ); PALS Facilitator (2025-Present); Elder, Stewardship Chair, St. Peter's Lutheran Church (2009-2012); Elder, Pinnacle Lutheran Church (2005-2006)

**Community Experience:** Men's Counselor, First Coast Women's Services (2011-2012)

**Personal Statement:** "It's an honor to be considered."

### Rev. Derek Roberts\*

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** M.Div., B.S. Kinesiology; Technology (PCs) and Networking

**Years as LCMS Member:** 50 years

**Home Congregation:** Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Author for Synodical publications including The Lutheran Witness, Strength for the Day, God's Word for Today: Luke (Bible Study); 2016 Synodical Convention Floor Committee on Stewardship and Finance; Hurricane Katrina Relief (sent by CTSFW); Taught Summer Seminars in Siberia on behalf of CTSFW in 2009.

**District Experience:** District Campus Ministry Committee (2007); Pastoral Advisor to E. Region Youth Board (2009); District Convention Floor Committee for Finance (2015); District Nominations Committee for 2025 Convention.

**Congregational Experience:** First Lutheran Church and School Knoxville (and Campus Ministry at UT): 2006-2012; Praise Lutheran Church Maryville: 2012 to Present.

**Community Experience:** University of Tennessee Knoxville Campus Ministries Board (2006-2012, Secretary '10-'12); Campfirmation (Youth Catechesis week) Director at Camp Linn Haven, N.C. (2019 to Present); Recovery work for the camp in 2024-2025; Foster Parent for State of TN.

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

### Rev. Terry Tieman

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** D.Min.; M.Div.; B.S. Ed.

**Years as LCMS Member:** 66 years

**Home Congregation:** Grace Celebration, Cordova, TN

**Synod Experience:** African Immigrant Ministry Task Force, Secretary; African Immigrant Lutheran Mission Society, Secretary; Church Planting Task Force; Developing Leaders for Ministry Steering Committee; Director of Mission Revitalization; Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology Advisory Council; Multiplying Churches Task Force; North American Advisory Group for Missions; Revitalization Task Force, Chairman

**District Experience:** Executive Assistant to the President for Missions and Outreach, Mid-South District (1995-2008); Board of Evangelism, North Wisconsin District (1995-2000); Circuit Counselor, Mid-South District (1984-1980); Board of Evangelism, Chairman, Mid-South District (1991-1995); Deacon Program Committee, Mid-South District (1992-1995)

**Congregational Experience:** Senior Pastor, Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN (2018-Present); Interim Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN (2017-2018); Church Planter, Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN (2000-2002); Pastor, Bethel Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR (1986-1995); Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Iron River, MI (1963-1965); Pastor, Sion Lutheran Church, Amasa, MI (1983-1988); Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, Land O' Lakes, WI (1983-1984)

**Community Experience:** Led numerous workshops on outreach and church planting in North America; trained leaders in Strategic Growth for Small Group Ministry (SG2), also known as Groups Ablaze! in North America, Cuba, and Africa; formulated 20/20 Vision strategy for Mid-South District, resulting in the formation of over 100 new ministries, including over 25 new churches; involved in researching Church Planting Movement (CPM) strategies for Mid-South District; developed Discipleship Training system for Pastors & Churches (Various years from 1995 - Present)

**Personal Statement:** "With decades of effective ministry as a Lutheran pastor and leader with a wide network of parish, district/synod, regional, and national connections, I am well-positioned to be able to offer names of qualified and experienced people for nomination to serve in our District."

## **Nominees for District Nominations Committee - Commissioned (Regions 1 & 2)**

### **Jacquelyn Magnuson**

**Occupation:** Kantor, Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock

**Educational Background:** BA Theology (Concordia University Chicago, 2010); MPhil Theology (University of Cambridge, 2011); Master of Church Music (Concordia University Wisconsin, 2019)

**Years as LCMS Member:** 36 years

**Home Congregation:** Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR

**Synod Experience:** Placement Director (Concordia University St. Paul, 2013-2017)

**District Experience:** Conference Musician (Mid-South West Pastors' Conference, 2023, 2024, 2025)

**Congregational Experience:** Kantor (GLCLR, 2022-present); Director of Parish Music (Trinity Lutheran Church & School, Davenport, IA, 2021-2022); Organist & Music Director (University Lutheran Chapel, Minneapolis, MN, 2014-2020); Chair of Christian Service (ULC, Minneapolis, MN, 2016-2019)

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

## **Nominees for District Nominations Committee - Commissioned (Regions 3 & 4)**

### **Jessica Irwin\***

**Occupation:** Principal

**Educational Background:** Master's in Education ESOL; Bachelor's in English Literature & Women's Studies

**Years as LCMS Member:** 36 (since birth)

**Home Congregation:** First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN

**District Experience:** Nominations Committee - Commissioned (2022)

**Congregational Experience:** Principal (2018-2025), Middle School Teacher (2013-2024), School Secretary (2012-2023)

**Community Experience:** Parkridge Community Organization (2021-present)

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

### **Amy Kurtz**

**Occupation:** Principal

**Educational Background:** Bachelor's Degree in Education from Concordia University, Nebraska (CUNE), 2000; Master's Degree in Education Administration from CUNE, 2004

**Years as a Member of LCMS Congregation:** 47 years

**Home Congregation:** Immanuel Lutheran Church, La Grange, Memphis, TN, 38134

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** District Accreditation Board, 2018 to 2023; Led NLSA team for Trinity Edwardsville, 2023; Served on various NLSA teams, SID, 2018-2023; SID District Accreditation Team, 2018-2023.

**Personal Statement:** I am blessed to have been raised in the LCMS and honored to get to teach the truth of the Bible and share the love of Jesus with families.

## **Nominees for District Nominations Committee - Lay (Regions 1 & 2)**

### **Lou Marinelli**

**Occupation:** Retired

**Educational Background:** Some college, self-study in Lutheran doctrine

**Years as LCMS Member:** 11 years

**Home Congregation:** The Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** None submitted

**Congregational Experience:** Elder, Trustee (2019-2013), Elder, Ministry Leader, Stephen Minister (2013-2022), Elder (2020-2024), Congregation President (2024-2025), Sunday School Leader

**Community Experience:** Volunteer at Pregnancy Center, Public Devotion Leader, Homeless Center Devotion Leader and Server, Ministry Organizer and Leader

**Personal Statement:** "After being redeemed from the Roman heresy, and upon my joining of the LCMS, I was for a time skeptical of the Lutheran Confessions for several years and so tested them against the Scriptures regularly if only to grow in confidence that the unaltered Augsburg and Lutheran Confessions are the very best exposition of the Scriptures available to us. I seek to help keep the Synod on this path of righteousness, holding firm and being not swayed by the snares of the devil such as were the temperance movement that did harm to the Supper, and the age of enlightenment that elevated human reason above Scripture."

### **Jeff Roper\***

**Occupation:** CPA (inactive), Owner of Medical Billing Co.

**Educational Background:** Bachelor's degree in business administration - Major in Accounting

**Years as LCMS Member:** 42 years

**Home Congregation:** St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway, AR

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Nominating Committee (2022 to present)

**Congregational Experience:** President (2019-2023, 2007-2011); Treasurer; Vice President (dates uncertain, in the 1980's & 1990's)

**Community:** Youth and American Legion baseball coach for 14 years

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

## Nominees for District Nominations Committee - Lay (Regions 3 & 4)

### Tom Bathe

**Occupation:** Program Manager, Aristocrat Technology Inc.

**Educational Background:** Associate's in Human Resources Management, Construction Technology from The Community College of the Air Force; 28 Years of leadership/management courses in the USAF

**Years as LCMS Member:** Since 1991 to present (when available at a USAF Base)

**Home Congregation:** Faith Lutheran Church, Thompson's Station, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** None submitted

**Congregational Experience:** Education Chairperson (August 2023 to present); Lay Minister, Lamb of God Lutheran Church and School, Las Vegas (Jan 2013 - Jan 2022); Board President, Lamb of God Lutheran Church and School, Las Vegas (Jun 2019 - Jun 2021); Lay Minister/Elder, Aviano AFB, Italy (2009-2012); Lay Minister, Kunsan AFB, Korea (2008-2009); Lay Minister, Calvary Lutheran Church, Medford Park, NJ (2006-2008); Lay Minister, Spangdahlem AFB, Germany (2002-2006); Lay Minister/Youth Education Board member, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Yorktown, VA (1998-2002); Lay Minister/Choir member, Osan AFB, Korea (1997-1998); Youth Director, Grace Lutheran Church, Summerville, SC (1995-1997); Vacation Bible School Assistant, American Lutheran Church, Rantoul, IL (1990-1993)

**Community Experience:** Lion's Club International (Chapel Hill, TN) (2023-present); American Legion Vice President (2002-2006, Spangdahlem, Germany); Boy Scouts of America Assistant Scout Master (2013-2018, Las Vegas, NV); VFW member (Las Vegas, 2018-2019)

**Personal Statement:** "I have served my Lord and Savior whenever I feel called to step up; with 28 years in the USAF and every church I have been blessed to be a part of. I have felt the calling to get involved at a District/Synod level at this time. My desire is to use my skills to help be as efficient and effective as I can. If you feel my service can assist with the Nominations committee this year, it would be an honor to serve."

### Heidi Davidson\*

**Occupation:** Director of Engineering & Plant Maintenance

**Educational Background:** MBA, Indiana University; BS Chemical Engineering, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

**Years as LCMS Member:** 42 years

**Home Congregation:** Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN

**Synod Experience:** None submitted

**District Experience:** Mid-South District Nominations Committee Member (Current)

**Congregational Experience:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church Endowment Chair (2024-present); Bethlehem Lutheran Call Committee Chair (2021-2023); Bethlehem Lutheran Board of Directors (2020-2024)

**Community Experience:** Soccer Coach - Youth Boys (2024); Johnson City Brewing Co. Board of Directors (2018-2020)

**Personal Statement:** "I've been blessed to serve and grow in several leadership roles at Bethlehem these past five years. I'm excited for the opportunity to continue to serve our community and the Mid-South district."

### Ed Mell

**Occupation:** Community Partnership Liaison

**Educational Background:** MBA, St. Louis University; BSBA, University of Missouri-Columbia

**Years as LCMS Member:** 70 years

**Home Congregation:** Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN

**Synod Experience:** Lay Delegate, LCMS Convention (2004, 2019)

**District Experience:** Lay Delegate, Mid-South District Convention (2003, 2009, 2012, 2018); Central Arkansas Disaster Response Coordinator, Mid-South District (2014-2015)

**Congregational Experience:** Outreach (2016-Present); Volunteer Coordinator (2014-Present); Guatemala Mission Team Leader (2014-Present); Connection Group Leader (2023-2024, 2010-2018); Disaster Response Team Leader (2011-2018); Radical Men of God Leader (2011-2015); Board of



Directors Chairman (2009-2014); Capital Campaign Chairman (2010-2013, 2008)  
**Community:** Boy Scouts of America District Member-at-Large (2017-2020); District Finance Committee Chairman (2016-2018); Troop Committee Member (2013-2016); Eagle Scout Board of Review Member (2007-2016); Chartered Organization Representative (2007-2012)  
**Personal Statement:** None submitted

### **James Mountjoy**

**Occupation:** Office Assistant  
**Educational Background:** BS  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 18 years  
**Home Congregation:** Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN  
**Synod Experience:** Lay Delegate, 2013 Synodical Convention  
**District Experience:** Lay Delegate, 2012 District Convention  
**Congregational Experience:** Board of Properties (Trustees) (2022-Present); Board of Education (2013-2014); Board of Outreach (2008-2013, 2021-2022)  
**Community:** Various small volunteer positions such as assisting with youth sports teams and aiding in the cleanup efforts following the 2010 flood in Middle TN  
**Personal Statement:** None submitted

## **Nominees for Synod Nominations Committee - Ordained/Commissioned**

### **Rev. David McMinn**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Educational Background:** M.Div., CTSFW (2008)  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 58 years  
**Home Congregation:** Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, McMinnville, TN  
**Synod Experience:** Convention Delegate (2013, 2016)  
**District Experience:** Circuit Visitor (2021-Present); Floor Committee District Convention (2018, 2021)  
**Congregational Experience:** Pastor (2010-Present); Associate Pastor, Heavenly Host, Cookeville, TN; Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, TN (2008-2010); School Chaplain (2008-2012); Vice President, Congregational Trinity Lutheran, Hanceville, AL (2005-2007)  
**Community Experience:** Habitat for Humanity (annually since 2008)  
**Personal Statement:** None submitted

### **Rev. John David Zischke**

**Occupation:** Pastor, Restoration Lutheran Church, Fayetteville  
**Educational Background:** BA, Concordia University - Nebraska (2013); M.Div., Concordia Seminary - St. Louis (2017)  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 15 years  
**Home Congregation:** Restoration Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR  
**Synod Experience:** Advisory Delegate, Mid-South District (2019 Convention); Pastoral Delegate, Fayetteville Circuit (2023 Convention)  
**District Experience:** Advisory Delegate (2021 Convention, 2018 Convention); Floor Committee 2 - Ministry (2018 Convention, Secretary); Missionary-at-Large (2017-2021, Mid-South District)  
**Congregational Experience:** Pastor, Restoration Lutheran Church (2021-Present); Vacancy Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church (2021-Present); Vacancy Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church (2017-2018); Missionary-at-Large (2017-2021)  
**Community Experience:** Campus Ministry, LCMS U, University of Arkansas (2017-Present); Advisor, St. John's Whitman Childcare Center (2021-Present); Fayetteville Parks & Recreation Coach (2017-2019)  
**Personal Statement:** "I am honored to be considered for service on the Synod Nominations Committee. Since my ordination, I have been privileged to serve in a variety of roles in the LCMS, from mission planting to campus ministry. My experience in local connection and broader church governance has given me a deep appreciation for the importance of faithful leadership at every level of the Synod. If elected, I will work diligently to uphold our confessional Lutheran identity and to ensure that nominees for Synod offices are well equipped for service."

### **Rev. Stewart Marshall**

**Occupation:** Pastor  
**Educational Background:** M.Div., Concordia Seminary (1982); Century College of LA (1978); B.A., Concordia College Austin (1976); A.A.  
**Years as LCMS Member:** 54 years  
**Home Congregation:** Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff, AR  
**Synod Experience:** None submitted  
**District Experience:** 3rd Vice President of the Southern District (2015-2016); Circuit Visitor, Montgomery Southern District (2012-2013); Southern District Pastors' Conference Planning Committee (2006-2013)  
**Congregational Experience:** Pastor (1982-present)  
**Community Experience:** Member of Grant Photons Group (2005-2006); Mentor & RMAIS (2003-

Present); Club President & Time Lieutenant Governor (3 times)

**Personal Statement:** "The Synodical Nominations Committee needs to pick strong candidates who will help the Board not only serve but also support the mission of Synod."

### **Rev. Derek Roberts**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Educational Background:** M.Div., B.S. Kinesiology; Technology (PCs) and Networking

**Years as LCMS Member:** 50 years

**Home Congregation:** Praise Lutheran Church, Maryville, TN

**Synod Experience:** Author for Synodical publications including The Lutheran Witness, Strength for the Day, God's Word for Today: Luke (Bible Study); 2016 Synodical Convention Floor Committee on Stewardship and Finance; Hurricane Katrina Relief (sent by CTSFW); Taught Summer Seminars in Siberia on behalf of CTSFW in 2009.

**District Experience:** District Campus Ministry Committee (2007); Pastoral Advisor to E. Region Youth Board (2009); District Convention Floor Committee for Finance (2015); District Nominations Committee for 2025 Convention.

**Congregational Experience:** First Lutheran Church and School Knoxville (and Campus Ministry at UT): 2006-2012; Praise Lutheran Church Maryville: 2012 to Present.

**Community Experience:** University of Tennessee Knoxville Campus Ministries Board (2006-2012, Secretary '10-'12); Campfirmation (Youth Catechesis week) Director at Camp Linn Haven, N.C. (2019 to Present); Recovery work for the camp in 2024-2025; Foster Parent for State of TN.

**Personal Statement:** None submitted

*NOTE: Where there is only one candidate on the ballot, it is due either to the limited number of nominations, the limited number of people available for that particular position, or the number of people who declined nomination. The Nominations Committee reminds delegates that floor nominations are appropriate for all positions with the exception of Regional Vice-Presidents and Circuit Visitors (which are restricted by bylaw from floor nominations). In order to nominate from the floor, delegates will need to obtain permission from the candidate and a brief biography of the candidate. Forms for floor nominations will be available at the registration desk for the Convention.*



## **REPORT OF THE DISTRICT TREASURER**

The District Treasurer is appointed triennially by the Board of Directors and is responsible for overseeing the finances of the District and assisting the Board of Directors in its responsibility for managing the business affairs of the District.

### **Financial Position**

God has continued to bless the Mid-South District during the past four years and our financial position has remained strong. Assets of the District have increased from \$7.4 million at the end of 2020 to \$10.9 million at the end of 2024. Individuals and families faithful to our mission have continued to provide significant gifts to support the District. These gifts are generally restricted and designated for specific local and world missions and are additionally restricted as to the amount that can be used in any given year. Restricted assets have increased from \$5.0 million at the end of 2020 to \$8.8 million at the end of 2024. As restricted funds are utilized, it is necessary that these be replenished through congregational support, direct gifts, and other programs through contracted financial development services. The major unrestricted asset category, property of \$1.1 million, reflects the investment in District Office, land, building, equipment, and other properties. The remaining \$972 thousand in unrestricted assets represents the operating funds for the District and a few miscellaneous assets such as prepaids, receivables, etc. Current liabilities of approximately \$218 thousand includes current accounts payable, grants payable and various accrued expenses. Unrestricted net assets at 12/31/24 were approximately \$1.8 million.

The District President and staff have continued to strengthen the financial position of the District through controlled spending and implementation of development programs such as IMPACT and Funding the Ministry. During the past four years, the Board has continued to maintain the operating and depreciation reserves to avoid future cash flow issues in unrestricted funds. These reserves have been funded through the controls addressed above and are included in the total restricted fund balance. Additionally, the Board of Directors has implemented policies and practices to project availability of reserves and restricted funds to ensure the District can operate effectively for a reasonable period should circumstances temporarily reduce cash flow. These actions taken by the board were very helpful as we experienced the lingering effects of the pandemic. The Board has also implemented an investment policy to maximize earnings on restricted funds without placing assets at unreasonable risk. During the past four years portions of the restricted funds have been invested with the LCMS Foundation and Thrivent. These investments have substantially increased the earnings on investments with little increased restrictions on availability of funds if needed.

The current financial position of the District remains strong. By working together with our congregations, and with prudent management, the District can continue to address mission opportunities that God may put before us.

### **Annual Funding and Spending Budget**

The charts shown on the following pages display the funding sources as well as the allocation of funds to the various ministries of the District for the year ended 12/31/24. As displayed on the sources chart, congregational support remains the largest source of revenue for funding the vision, goals, and missions of the Mid-South District. For 2024, congregational support funded 46.4% of total District receipts. Approximately 45.5% of the Mid-South District budget of \$3.5 million for 2025 is projected to be funded

through congregational support. Another 30.5% to be funded through investment earnings and release of restricted funds, 11.5% from efforts of the *IMPACT*, and the remaining 12.5% is projected to be funded through conference fees, tuitions, subscriptions, and other pass-through expenses.

The District's Business Manager has worked along with our auditors from the Synod Office to organize and recategorize expenses in a manner that more accurately reflects areas of the budget being affected by the expense. Both the Ministry Allocations chart, on the following pages, and the Statement of Functional Expenses which is included in the audit report (Appendix C) display these categories. These displays reveal that in the year ended 12/31/2024, 54% of fund allocations were used towards World & National Missions and Mid-South Congregational Services. This allocation to World & National Missions and Mid-South Congregational Services was 78% of congregational support receipts for 2024.

The long-term trend has been that the budget relies more and more on the District's *IMPACT* program and locating those individuals and families that God has raised up who are supportive of and faithful to the mission of the District. To date, individual donors who have made direct gifts to the District, long-time Lutherans who name the District in their wills, and funding through other development programs have filled the gap. By utilizing available funds from these restricted gifts and the revenue projected from development programs, the District 2025 Work Program is fully funded. The need for effective church planting and assistance in restoring health to many of our congregations in the Mid-South District is great. Please pray for our church plants, for revitalization of our churches, for continued success of the District's development programs and that God will continue to raise up those individual donors who support the work of the District. We have a very capable and dedicated President and Executive Staff in the District Office. With God's help we will continue to fund the visions, goals, and strategies developed and adopted by the District President and Board of Directors.

### **Annual Audit**

The financial statements are audited annually, and the District continues to receive an unqualified opinion as to the fair presentation of its financial statements. All recommendations made by the auditors are addressed by management in the District Office. A copy of the audited financial statements for the year ending 12/31/2024 is included in Appendix C.

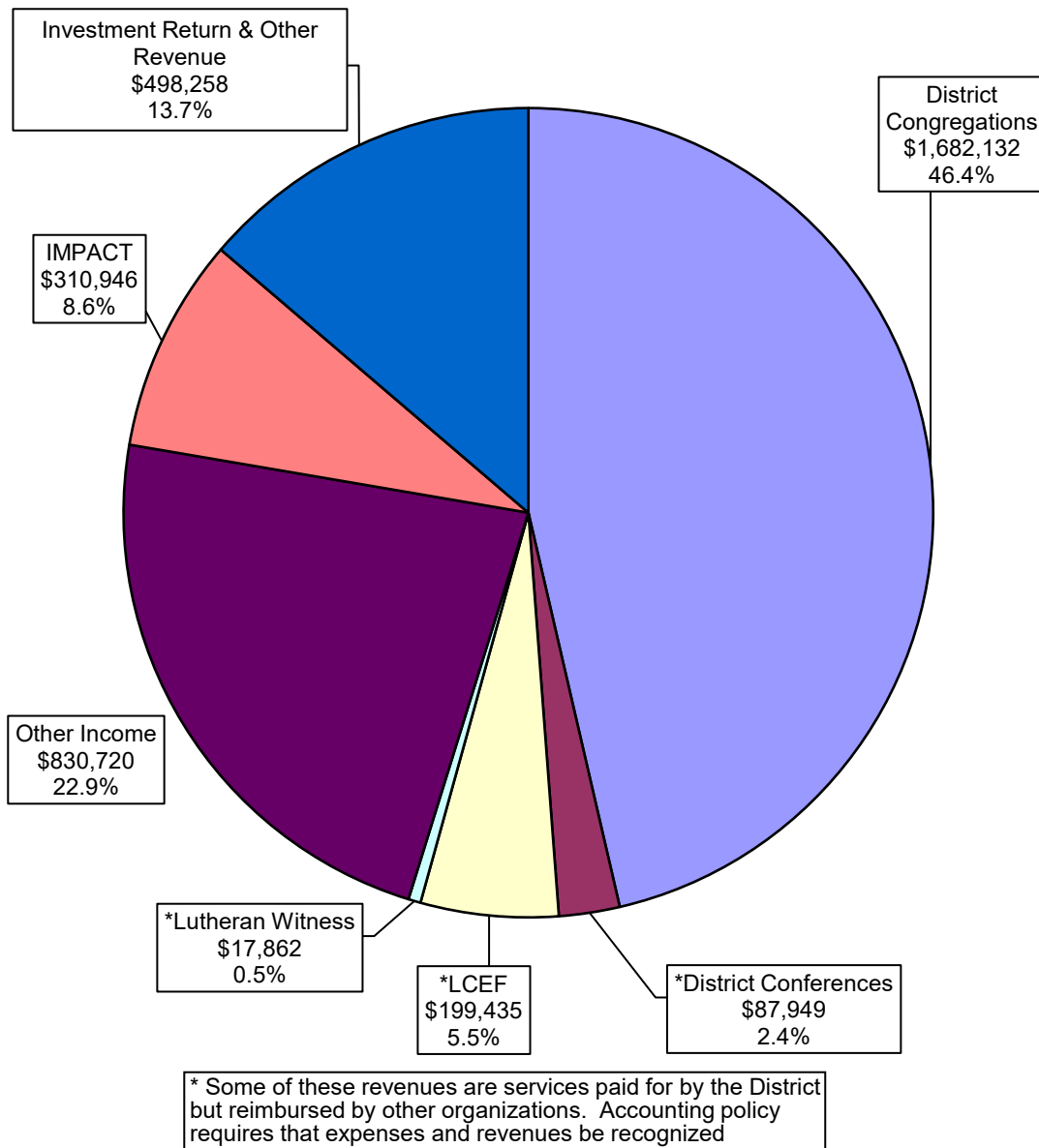
**Respectfully submitted,**

**John H. Hofman**  
**District Treasurer**



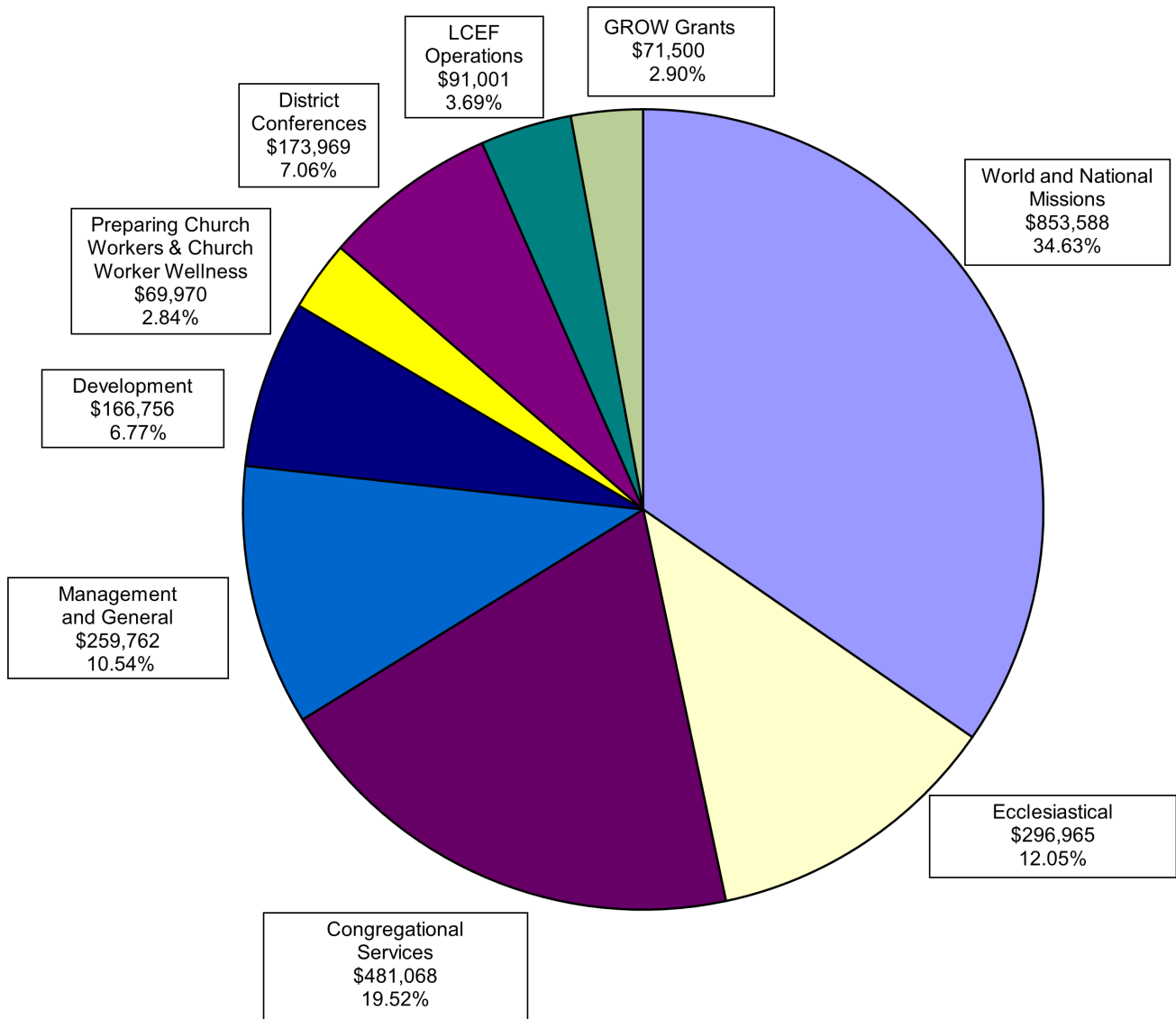
## 2024 Mid-South District LCMS Funding Sources

**\$3,627,302**



## 2024 Mid-South District LCMS Ministry Allocations

**\$2,464,579**



**REPORT OF  
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

The Mid-South District continues to be blessed by the faithful congregations throughout Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Olive Branch, MS and Sallisaw, OK. The Gospel continues to be proclaimed boldly not only in our region, but throughout the world. This is possible because of you and your generous participation in evangelism, prayers, volunteer efforts and financial commitments for our beloved Synod. As evidenced by the Convention theme, our focus remains **Christ: The Church's One Foundation**. God continues to grant the Mid-South District opportunities to grow His kingdom throughout this region. We are so very blessed to be able to share what He has accomplished, throughout our District, over the last four years.

Congregational mission dollars received for District and Synod over the last four years:

2021	\$1,575,617
2022	\$1,571,411
2023	\$1,605,837
2024	\$1,682,132

This demonstrates that our Mid-South District congregations remain committed to supporting world and national missions at the District level. **30%** of all congregational mission dollars received is promptly forwarded to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to support World and National Missions at the synodical level. Our steadfast parishioners graciously continue to support the mission and ministry of their congregations as well as the District and LCMS at large. Thanks be to God!

The District continues to be a strong supporter of World Missions not only through mission dollars sent to Synod in the amount of \$1,826,795 for the last quadrennium, but also through budgeted dollars of \$190,000 for our Mission partners in Tanzania, Madagascar and the Haitian feeding program through Trinity HOPE. In addition, with the assistance of our World Missions Executive, Mr. Bob Allen, the Mid-South District has raised over \$181,000 for Tanzania and \$12,100 for Madagascar. What a tremendous blessing we receive when we witness the loving kindness of our congregations through their demonstration of sharing God's gifts to them with others.

Going on our 10<sup>th</sup> year, we continue to offer financial stewardship education in the form of rebates for Financial Peace University. To date, more than 10 million people have been impacted by FPU, nationwide, with the average family paying off \$5,300 in debt and saving \$2,700 in the first 90 days. We believe that FPU provides practical tools that allow individuals and families to take control of their money and put them on the road to long-term financial success. We pray that more congregations will take advantage of this opportunity to help their members as well as reach out to those in their communities that are interested in financial planning.

The Mid-South District remains committed to providing financial support to students from our congregations who attend Synodical universities and seminaries. Over the past four years, financial aid in the amount of \$324,000 has been provided to fifty-eight students; this averages out to \$5,586 per student per year. Special thanks to the Mid-South District LWML for their faithful support of this program through significant annual grants.



Over the last four years, many in The Mid-South District experienced the catastrophic impact of tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters. It has been truly amazing to see how God uses us to accomplish His mission. Individuals throughout the United States responded overwhelming to the needs of those who suffered so much loss. Close to one million dollars was received and distributed for disaster relief efforts, in our District, during the last four years. Due to the number of disasters that have occurred in our District, the need for an organized Disaster Response program was great. Under the leadership of Mrs. Jan Simko, Disaster Response Coordinator, a Disaster Relief Program was initiated in 2021 to prepare for and organize relief efforts when disasters occur. Jan worked tirelessly to assist people in Kentucky, Arkansas and Tennessee by setting up deployments and overseeing grant relief for a great many families. She truly has been a blessing for us at the District level as well as those who suffered loss and were not familiar with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Jan retired in August, 2024 and relocated to Michigan to be closer to family. We thank her for her tremendous efforts.

As stated in Ephesians 2:10, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* The Lord provided two wonderful people to serve as Disaster Relief Coordinators. Rev. Trae Fistler of Faith Lutheran Church, Hopkinsville, KY maintains, uses and oversees the District's disaster relief equipment and teams that deploy for debris and tree removal immediately after disasters occur. Mr. Kurt Ludwig handles logistics by doing reconnaissance in the affected areas with local law enforcement and community leaders to determine where teams should deploy. Both Kurt and Pastor Trae assist in distributing and receiving grant application forms as well as vetting those in need. For a District the size of The Mid-South with limited staff, this is invaluable. We are so very grateful for their service!

With the assistance of LCMS Disaster Relief, the Mid-South District was able to purchase two skid steers, an Arbor pro lift, a truck and trailers to haul chainsaws, tools and generators enabling deployment without strictly relying on the assistance of other agencies. Our teams have also had the privilege of assisting with disasters in other Districts as we all work together in a time of need.

In 2022, the District launched a new initiative titled "GROW Grants". A GROW Grant is a financial contribution from the Mid-South District that supports an innovative ministry program or initiative to reach new hearts with the Gospel. It is available to all congregations in the District for innovative ministry programs that emphasize the Gospel Reaching Our World so that knowledge of God's love, grace and mercy may grow. To date, \$156,000 in grants have been awarded. Several of these ministries will be featured in videos during the convention.

The District continues to be audited annually and receive unqualified audit opinions. A copy of the Audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024 is included in the appendix. Contained in the report is the Statement of Functional Expenses which breaks down support services and program services. We continue to operate well below the non-profit industry benchmark for all support services. Program services consist of World and National Missions, Congregational Services, along with providing resources, conferences, and programs specifically for church workers and congregations. As you can see, we strive to operate at maximum efficiency and efficacy while providing accountability and transparency as God's Stewards in the area of Business and Finance.

We understand and appreciate the trust and confidence that you have in the Mid-South District staff and strive to practice continued good stewardship by investing your mission dollars wisely so that church planting and revitalization will continue long into the future. We pray that as the Lord presents new opportunities to share His saving message; we stand ready and willing to proclaim the love of Christ to



those who need a personal relationship with Him so that we can continue to preserve **Christ: The Church's One Foundation** throughout the Mid-South District and beyond.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Angela Fowler**

**Executive Director for Business and Finance**



**REPORT OF  
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
FOR SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD**

**Mid-South District LCMS**

1 High School, 10 Elementary Schools and 20 Early Childhood Centers  
(The current number of students in parentheses)

**Circuits:**

Chattanooga

- Belvoir Christian Academy and Preschool, Chattanooga, TN – Infants - 8<sup>th</sup> grade (196)

Fayetteville

- Holy Trinity Parents' Day Out, Rogers, AR – Toddlers – Age 1-2 (10)
- Salem Lutheran School, Springdale, AR – PK 3-5 (46)
- St. John Lutheran Child Care Center, Fayetteville, AR – Toddlers - Age 1-5 (41)

Fort Smith

- First Lutheran School and Preschool, Fort Smith, AR – Age 2 - 5<sup>th</sup> grade (109)

Jonesboro

- All Saints Lutheran School, Jonesboro, AR – 3<sup>rd</sup> –12<sup>th</sup> Grade (13)

Knoxville

- First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN – PK 1 - 8<sup>th</sup> grade (144)
- St. Paul Lutheran Preschool, Wartburg, TN – PK 3-4 (18)

Little Rock – North

- Christ Lutheran School and Preschool, Little Rock, AR – Infant - 8<sup>th</sup> grade (208)

Little Rock – South

- Grace Lutheran Early Childhood Dev. Center, Little Rock, AR – Infant - PK4 (65)
- First Lutheran School, Benton, AR – K-3 (22)
- Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR – Closed (6/1/24)

Memphis

- Faith Lutheran Preschool, Collierville, TN – Toddlers - Jr. K 5 (242)
- Christ the King Lutheran School and Early Childhood Center, Memphis, TN – Toddler - 8<sup>th</sup> grade (182)
- Immanuel Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – Age 3 - 8<sup>th</sup> grade (164)

Middle Tennessee

- Faith Lutheran Preschool, Tullahoma, TN – Age 2 -PK 5 (20)
- Shepherd's Little Flock Preschool, Crossville, TN – Infant - PK 4 (48)
- TLC Childcare Ministry, Columbia, TN – PK 3 - 5yrs. (47)
- Heavenly Host Lutheran Early Childhood Center, Cookeville, TN – Infant – PK 5 (121)
- Heavenly Host Lutheran School, Cookeville, TN – Closed (5/31/22)

### Nashville

- Our Savior Academy Preschool, Nashville, TN – MDO2's - Age 5 (101)
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church Learning Center, Hermitage, TN – Closed (3/31/20)

### Paducah

- Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Bowling Green, KY – Age 2 - Grade 6 (201)
- Grace Lutheran Church Preschool, Clarksville, TN – Age 2 – PK 3-4 (72)

### Stuttgart

- St. John's Lutheran School, Stuttgart, AR – 6 weeks - 6<sup>th</sup> grade (192)
- St. Paul Lutheran Preschool, Gillett, AR – Closed (8/15/23)

## **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT LUTHERAN SCHOOL STATISTICS**

Commissioned Teachers/Principals – 35

Preschool/Daycare – 1,350 students

Elementary – 881 students

High School – 0 students

### **All schools**

Average - 13.5% Congregation support, 78.5% Tuition and fees, 8% other income

There were 51 baptisms reported on Annual School Statistical Report during the 2021-2025 school years.

## **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT COMMISSIONED MINSTER COLLOQUY**

Between 2021 and 2025 there have been 3 workers that have completed Colloquy and received calls within the District; 1 worker that is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the program, and 4 workers set to begin the program summer of 2025.

## **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT EARLY CHILDHOOD CABINET**

Our Early Childhood Centers continue to be served by the Mid-South District Early Childhood Cabinet consisting of the following consultants:

- Dina Foshee-Director, Faith Lutheran Preschool, Collierville, TN
- Ann Laury-Principal, Christ the King, Memphis, TN
- Hannah Yocum-Director, Holy Trinity Bowling Green, KY

These consultants are responsible for assisting the Executive Director for Schools and Early Childhood. They serve as resource people and assist in planning the annual District Early Childhood Conference.

## **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOL ACCREDITATION**

<b><u>Elementary Schools</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Year of Accreditation</u></b>	<b><u>Year of Re-Accreditation</u></b>
Christ Lutheran School	Little Rock, AR	2024	2029
All Saints Lutheran School	Jonesboro, AR		
First Lutheran School	Fort Smith, AR	2021	2026
Holy Trinity Lutheran School & Preschool	Bowling Green, KY	2025	2030
Belvoir Christian Academy	Chattanooga, TN	2024	2029
Christ the King Lutheran School	Memphis, TN	2021	2026
First Lutheran School and Preschool	Knoxville, TN	2023	2028
Immanuel Lutheran School	Memphis, TN	2022	2027

<b><u>Early Childhood Centers</u></b>			
Faith Lutheran Preschool	Collierville, TN	2023	2028
Belvoir Christian Academy Preschool	Chattanooga, TN	2025	2030
Christ The King Lutheran Early Childhood Center	Memphis, TN	2021	2026
First Lutheran Preschool	Fort Smith, AR	2021	2026

### **NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOL ACCREDITATION**

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) serves as the accrediting body for Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod schools across the United States and the world. NLSA has been accrediting schools in the LCMS since 1987, and accreditation decisions have always been based upon a school’s compliance with national standards for Lutheran schools that reflect the essential qualities that are expected of Lutheran schools. National Lutheran School Accreditation encourages, assists, and recognizes schools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous improvement.

### **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT NLSA COMMISSION**

NLSA District Commission meets yearly to review Cumulative Annual Reports from all accredited institutions and complete the District Report to National Accreditation Commission. The commission consists of the following members:

- Jessie Irwin – Principal, First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN
- Samuel Fishburn- Principal, First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR
- David Topp- Principal, Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN

### **DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES AND TRAINING**

- 2021 Teachers Conference, November 22-24, 2021, Pickwick, TN – *In All Things*
- 2022 Administrators Conference, July 22-23, 2022, Memphis, TN – *Relating to Each Other Through Our Schools*
- 2022 Lutheran School Administrator Conference, March 27-29, 2022, Orlando, FL -
- 2022 LEA Convocation, October 6-8, 2022, Milwaukee, WI - *Together*
- 2023 Administration Gathering, NLSA Training, Memphis, TN, June 12, 2023
- 2023 Early Childhood Conference, July 17-18, 2023, Memphis, TN – *Making Learners for Life*
- 2024 Early Childhood Conference, June 17-18, 2024, Memphis, TN – *Connected*
- 2023 Mid-South/Southern District Teachers Conference, November 19-21, 2023, Huntsville, AL – *Because He Cares*
- 2023 LEA Administrators Conference, February 15, 2023, Phoenix, AZ – *Mordecai Moments*
- 2024 Education Youth and Family Conference, October 10-11, 2024, Memphis, TN – *Rally Together, Nehemiah 4:20*
- 2024 Lutheran School Administrators Conference, March 10-12, 2024, Grapevine, TX – *Leading Together*

### **SET APART TO SERVE**

Set Apart to Serve (SAS) is an initiative of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod that has been operating since 2014 to increase recruitment of church workers. The goal of SAS is to create an intentional culture of church worker formation in every LCMS congregation, Lutheran school and entity. SAS encourages young people and second career people to consider church work vocations primarily through their continued and faithful involvement with their congregation. In 2024 SAS began researching and encouraging the recruitment of second career church workers, as well as partnering with synod initiative around worker wellness. The Synod is developing resources and tools to help congregations foster this culture.

The future looks brighter, in the last two years Concordia Universities have reported a significant increase in freshman enrollment into Church work programs. For 2025-26 academic year the Concordia University System is projecting an increase in the number of graduates in churchwork vocations for the first time in many years.

### **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT YOUTH**

Currently serving in congregations of the Mid-South District there are 4 Deaconesses, 7 Directors of Christian Education (DCE), 4 Directors of Parish Music (DPM) and 2 Directors of Family Life Ministry (DFLM).

The Mid-South District's expansive geography has historically made regular in-person gatherings difficult for our workers. Many Commissioned workers have primarily connected through Zoom meetings. Throughout 2024, the District has prioritized strengthening connections and relationships across our region. This year, we enhanced the fall conference by incorporating sectional topics focused on youth and family ministry, providing valuable continuing education opportunities while fostering relationship-building among all commissioned workers in the district.

In March the Mid-South District held a gathering in Nashville, TN at Our Savior Lutheran Church. This event was designed to get youth from across the district together and prepare for the Synod Youth Gathering in July. The hope of all involved is that this is a springboard to future district youth events in the coming years.

#### **Mid-South District attends National Youth Gathering**

23 Congregations across the Mid-South District are sending more than 280 participants to the National Gathering, July 19-23, 2025, in New Orleans, LA. The theme for this gathering is *Endure* based on *Hebrews 12:1-3*.

### **MID-SOUTH DISTRICT FAMILY MINISTRY**

The Mid-South District is continuing to place emphasis on the importance of the family and reinvigorating the work of Generation to Generation.

Generation to Generation addresses declining church attendance and the decline of youth remaining in the church. The program focuses on empowering congregations to take intentional action to connect with the next generation of church membership. Generation to generation encourages a structured system that teaches families how to practice discipleship at home, positioning parents as the primary spiritual influences of faith formation in their children's lives. By equipping parents with the tools and confidence to lead faith discussions, biblical teachings, and spiritual practices within their households, the program helps families strengthen their spiritual foundations. This approach recognizes that when parents actively shape their children's faith journey, families develop deeper connections to both God and the church community, ultimately thriving together in service of the Gospel message.

Children's faith journey begins at home through everyday moments like illustrated Bible stories and mealtime prayers. Though parental influence naturally diminishes over time, opportunities to shape their children's spiritual foundation must continue as they seek life's deeper answers. Parents universally worry about their children's future, desiring to ground them in God's Word amid modern challenges like peer pressure, bullying, and social media influences. The local church serves as a vital partner in this faith formation process, supporting diverse families as they navigate their unique spiritual paths together. When families participate in church, each member contributes their personal perspective to the collective Christian journey and lifelong catechesis.

A father's presence profoundly shapes child development in multiple dimensions. Research confirms that fathers significantly influence cognitive, emotional, and social growth while enhancing academic outcomes. In Christian households, a father's influence extends through church participation, home life, and work ethic. As God's designated instruments for discipline and instruction, fathers carry a divinely appointed responsibility to teach their children about faith (Proverbs 22). This spiritual leadership aligns with research findings that highlight the family's crucial role in faith formation, underscoring how a father's engagement creates lasting impacts across all aspects of a child's development and spiritual journey.

In April and May Concordia Center for the Family offered "Family Discipleship Facilitator Training" The District provided scholarships to churches that sent individuals to attend this intensive training.

There are two overtures that were submitted that speak to this critical topic.

1. Extend and overture to the 2026 LCMS Convention Concerning Generation to Generation Ministry- Encouraging congregation to put intentional effort toward lifelong learning of the faith. Focusing on quality catechesis instruction throughout the entire life of a Christian based on Holy Scripture, Small Catechism and Lutheran Confessions.
2. To Shape the Faith Formation Paradigm from Generation to Generation Ministry- Focusing on the importance of Generation to Generation and encouraging Ministries to participate as applicable to their unique setting. This overture also encouraged the development of resources to support this initiative.

Built on Christ as the rock and firm foundation, LCMS school ministries, youth ministries, and family ministries in the Mid-South District stand poised for vibrant growth and spiritual impact. As we build carefully upon this cornerstone established by God's grace, our educational and ministry initiatives will nurture faithful disciples across our expansive District. Our Mid-South congregations, connecting through shared mission rather than separated by distance, are cultivating innovative approaches to strengthen families and engage young people in authentic faith formation and lifelong catechesis. With Jesus Christ as our unshakable foundation, we can confidently invest in the next generation, knowing that our work in the Mid-South District contributes to God's eternal kingdom. May God continue to bless the Mid-South District and the mission work of those who serve.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Michelle Fischer**

**Mid-South District Executive Director for Education, Youth and Family**



## **REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND**

### **Mission**

The mission of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is to support The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) by ensuring that financial resources and related services are available now and, in the future, empowering ministry and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Organization Overview**

Since 1847, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has steadfastly pursued its mission to "make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world."

Established in 1978, LCEF plays a crucial role in this mission.

- Purpose: To empower ministry by providing loans, investments and support services designed to serve the financial needs of congregations, schools and other ministry organizations within the LCMS.
- Growth: From humble beginnings with \$100 million in assets to a current portfolio exceeding \$2.0 billion—demonstrating our commitment to financial stability, trustworthiness and advancing Christ's kingdom.

### **Historical Context**

LCEF's primary function has been to provide loans funded by investments and gifts from dedicated church members and supporters. Over the years, our services have broadened to include strategic advisory services, such as:

- Ministry Solutions: Offering mission clarity and guidance through ministry clarity processes and capital campaigns.
- Real Estate Solutions: Providing expert consultation and execution in property development, repurposing and expansion.

### **Financial Strength**

LCEF's strong financial foundation plays a crucial role in supporting the LCMS today and securing its future. Our investment programs empower LCMS individuals and organizations, funding projects such as home loans, sanctuary renovations, senior living communities and Lutheran schools.

### **Leadership**

Our leadership is committed to guiding the organization with vision, expertise and a dedication to our mission. Here's a snapshot of our leadership team and workforce:

- President and CEO: Bart Day, MBA MDiv., reports to a 12-member Board of Directors.
- Workforce: LCEF employs over 150 people across the United States, including our headquarters in St. Louis and representatives in 31 LCMS districts.

## **Connection to Ministries**

LCMS ministries connect with LCEF through their district vice presidents (DVPs), who act as vital links to ensure our services meet each district's unique needs.

For over 45 years, LCEF has been committed to providing the financial resources and services that support the church's mission. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to serving the LCMS and strengthening ministries through trusted financial and strategic partnerships.

## **Economic Overview**

### **A period of complex and evolving economic challenges:**

#### **2022:**

- Continued recovery from the initial shock of the pandemic.
- Significant inflation, with the Consumer Price Index peaking at 9.1% in June.
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 2.1%.
- Unemployment was around 3.6% by year's end.
- The Federal Reserve initiated a series of interest rate hikes to control inflation.

#### **2023:**

- Ongoing efforts by the Federal Reserve to combat inflation.
- Interest rates reached levels not seen since before the Great Recession.
- Inflation cooled to 3% by December.
- Tepid GDP growth of 1.8%.
- The housing market experienced a significant slowdown due to higher borrowing costs.
- Unemployment remained low at 3.5%.

#### **2024:**

- Continued economic challenges but signs of stabilization.
- Inflation moderated to 2.5% year-over-year.
- GDP growth is projected to remain sluggish at 1.5%.
- Unemployment slightly increased to 3.8%.
- The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) paused rate hikes to monitor economic data closely.

## **LCEF's Response**

LCEF navigated volatile markets with prudence, strengthening our capital and positioning for sustained growth. Despite economic challenges, we ended FY 2024 with over \$17.5M in gains, reinforcing our commitment to financial stability and ministry support.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Scott Roberts**  
**LCEF Vice President,**  
**Mid-South & Southern Illinois Districts**





## REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR

In 2013, the Mid-South District launched IMPACT, a strategic plan focused on several critical initiatives formulated to advance the mission of the District, which is to provide leadership, resources and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom and equipping the found for service in our churches, communities and the world. Through the awareness and funding efforts of IMPACT, the Mid-South District has engaged hundreds of individuals whose prayers and financial gifts have made incredible ministry possible. To date, more than \$3,000,000 has been raised to support District ministry and another \$3,000,000 has been given through campaigns conducted in congregations to support their Gospel-sharing initiatives and outreach. Praise be to God!

In the spring of 2024, the Mid-South District Board of Directors reviewed the strategic plans of the District and approved the following five critical initiatives, which will be the focus of work through 2027:

- Planting New Church and School Ministries
- Recruiting and Retaining Professional Church Workers
- Strengthening Generational Faith
- Providing Pastoral Coverage for Rural Ministries
- Equipping Congregations for Ministry to People in Crisis

These are bold and challenging initiatives and worthy of support. To successfully fulfill these initiatives, we will once again seek partnership with the wonderful people throughout our District—people who are passionate about sharing the Good News of the one, true Savior, Jesus Christ.

As the Mid-South District pursues its critical initiatives for ministry, I look forward to continued connections and meaningful conversations with my fellow partners in the Gospel. It is a blessing and a privilege to know that we are working together to encourage and equip ministries, workers, and members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to share Christ's love throughout the Mid-South District, and beyond.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Paul Reaves**  
**Development Advisor, Mid-South District**



## REPORT OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT ARCHIVES

*“Remember the former things, those of long ago.”* Isaiah 46:9

The District Archivist, appointed by the District President and approved by the Board of Directors, is responsible for collecting and managing records of the Mid-South District Office and its member congregations.

The Archives are *unique* for each congregation. The information received from churches is a vital part of their milestones. Dedications, celebrations, pastor and teacher installations and transfers, photographs, church closings and new mission plants are all a part of the District archives. From these files and with careful preservation, churches can easily gather helpful information when planning special events or anniversaries in the future,

Some records are forwarded to Concordia College Archives in St. Louis for permanent preservation. Photography and other documents, including former members' birth dates, death and marriage certificates, are accessible to the public when needed at Concordia.

We are most grateful for the opportunity to serve the District in this very rewarding position.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pat Boysen**

**Nancy Lee**

**Mid-South District Co-Archivists**



## REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

The Constitution Committee is tasked with the review of new or amended constitutions and/or bylaws of congregations of the Mid-South District. The committee looks for items which may not conform with doctrine or policy of the Synod or be contrary to civil laws. However, what we mostly find is items which may be stated poorly, incompletely or confusingly. We will look at spellings and grammar and will make suggestions which may improve the piece. This committee was Rev. Kenneth Haydon (chairman), Rev. Larry Peters, Board Liaison, Ms. Connie Soso-Goines, Mr. Andy Grams, Rev. Larry Peters, Mr. Jeff Pittman, Ms. Karilyn Brown, Dr. Fred Guengerich, Mr. Robert Nerger and Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola

At this writing we have received and reviewed constitutions and/or bylaws for:

First Lutheran, Fort Smith, AR  
Emmanuel Lutheran, Hermitage, TN  
Restoration Lutheran, Fayetteville, AR  
Holy Trinity, Rogers, AR  
All Saints, Jonesboro, AR  
Christ the King, Memphis, TN  
Cross of Christ, Chattanooga, TN  
Our Savior, Nashville, TN  
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, TN  
St. Paul, Wartburg, TN  
Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, TN  
Zion, Ulm, AR  
Messiah Lutheran, Memphis, TN  
St. John's, Stuttgart, AR  
Grace, Murfreesboro, TN  
Zion, Augsburg/London, AR  
Faith Lutheran, Oak Ridge, TN  
Messiah Lutheran, Memphis, TN

Trinity, Columbia TN  
First Lutheran, Harrison, AR  
Bethlehem Lutheran, Johnson City, TN  
Redeemer, Harriman, TN  
Trinity, Mena, AR  
Christ, Paris, TN  
Messiah, Memphis, TN  
Grace, Clarksville, TN  
First Lutheran, Knoxville, TN  
Hope Lutheran, Batesville, AR  
Heavenly Host, Cookeville, TN  
Beautiful Savior, Olive Branch, MS  
Faith Lutheran, Bentonville, AR  
Praise Lutheran, Maryville, TN  
Zion Lutheran, London, AR  
Redeemer Lutheran, Nashville, TN  
Faith Lutheran, Fairfield Bay, AR  
Concordia Lutheran, Nashville, TN

When reviews are completed, approval with changes – as may be needed – is recommended to the Board of Directors which gives final approval and may ask for further clarifications. For best results, electronic copies of material should be submitted – preferably in WORD format – for easier marking and reporting as needed. The committee requests that if you are amending or changing parts of an existing document, deletions and additions be indicated (such as: cross out deletions and put additions in color). We pray God's blessings for all our District's congregations.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rev. Kenneth C, Haydon, Chair  
Mid-South District Constitution Committee**



## REPORT OF THE DISTRICT RECONCILERS

From the Lord's Prayer: *"forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."*

These words are prayed almost every Sunday by Christians. Do we really mean to ask God to treat us as we treat others who have wronged us? It is easier for us to ask God for forgiveness than for us to turn around and ask our neighbor to forgive us or to say to our neighbor "I forgive you." The results are that a) conflicts within our congregations go unresolved; b) members continue to be angry or hurt; c) the mission of our congregations continues to be hindered because conflict prevents people working together as a team. Some people leave and seek another fellowship. Others become inactive and separate themselves from any Christian fellowship.

Unresolved conflict, as well as unrepentance, harms God's people and therefore harms God's Church on earth. The Reconcilers of the Mid-South District are willing to help the congregations put the words of The Lord's Prayer into action. Each team member has received training in the following:

- Coaching people who are in the midst of conflict
- Informal Mediation
- Formal Mediation
- Christian Arbitration, serving on a Dispute Resolution Panel within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Some of the team members have continued their education and training so that they are equipped to:

- Lead a Bible study on reconciliation and forgiveness
- Present a workshop or seminar on peacemaking
- Assist congregations experiencing conflict on how to identify issues, positions, and interest so that, by the grace of God, they may find a path toward resolution and reconciliation. If you are interested in learning about this, please speak to our District President so that he may connect you with a district reconciler. We encourage you to look at the resources made available through *Ambassadors of Reconciliation*, Billings, Montana. Their website is [www.aorhope.org](http://www.aorhope.org)

Currently serving as reconcilers:

- Rev. Eric Longman, Holy Trinity, Rogers, AR
- Rev. Carl Wenck, retired, Murfreesboro, TN
- Ms. Rachel Boyer, Atoka, TN
- Mr. Keith Brummett, Bentonville, AR

Since the last convention of our District, the activities of the District Reconcilers have included:

- Dispute Resolution Panel: 1
- Formal Mediation: 0
- Informal Mediation: 2
- Conflict Coaching: 4

- Lead a Bible Study: 1

As we walk together by faith, may we continue to live reconciled to one another through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**The Reverend Carl Wenck  
Mid-South District Reconciler Team (TN)**

I was appointed as a District Reconciler – Ordained in 2023 and completed the necessary training through Ambassadors of Reconciliation in January of 2024. I was deployed to assist a congregation in Arkansas in late 2024. The conflict was complex and involved a significant number of people in the congregation (and some who had left). I made several trips and met with various parties over the course of approximately two months.

While I am not at liberty to disclose the specifics of the conflict, I can report that while we were not able to arrive at complete reconciliation, there has been resolution to many outstanding issues and the situation has improved markedly.

There are some lessons that can be taken from this conflict, however, and I share these with the District for consideration and in the hopes that it may reveal areas where congregations can make adjustments to avoid conflict in the future. To be clear: this particular conflict didn't necessarily impact all of these areas, but it did give occasion to at least consider them as it unfolded.

- Avoid having one person fill multiple positions of leadership, particularly when the positions exist to ensure accountability and separation of powers. For example, it is unwise to have one person serve as both president and treasurer. Similarly, think twice before allowing a husband and wife team to serve in positions that are intended to provide for accountability.
- Take advantage of the excellent resources provided by the District for training officers, particularly treasurers. The role of treasurer is extremely sensitive, and proper procedures should be followed to protect all parties.
- Review your Constitution and By-Laws to ensure they are clear about membership status and procedures for adding and removing members. The District President can assist if you have questions about current “best practices.”
- Have clear policies in place for addressing conflict. These should be based on Matthew 18. The policies should be easily accessible to the congregation so that members understand how to address things individually, then with the help of another brother or sister, then through the Council or Board of Elders, and finally through the congregation as a whole.
- Remember that the Office of the Keys is granted to the entire congregation first and is entrusted then to the called pastor to exercise publicly. Issues rising to the level of excommunication (which are, thankfully, exceedingly rare) require involvement of the Voters' Assembly. Be extremely cautious about addressing such issues “behind closed doors” in a way that could provide opportunities for misinterpretation.

- When conflict arises, be intentional in prayer and seeking God’s direction. We have been entrusted with a “message of reconciliation” and called upon to be “ambassadors of Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

When conflict does arise (and it will, thanks to the sinful nature that we all carry with us), our goal is always restoration and reconciliation, “forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). May the Lord God incline our hearts to His will, that all of our conflicts would find their way forward according to his love and grace.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Rev. Eric Longman**

**Senior Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR**

**District Reconciler – Ordained, Mid-South District LCMS (AR)**



## **REPORT OF THE RURAL AND SMALL TOWN MINISTRY (RSTM)**

In 2020 the Covid pandemic prowled around like a roaring lion and was seeking out many to devour. In several ways this pandemic hit its mark as it disrupted many congregations and ministries throughout the district and the synod. One of those ministries that was disrupted was, The Rural and Small Town Ministry, (RSTM). Many congregations took advantage of this ministry, and over the years RSTM worked with many small-town congregations throughout the district. Its design was to encourage, out of the box thinking when it came to connecting with each unique community that the congregations of our district served. Much of this work was funded by the individual congregations, some of which could have been expensive. For this reason, there were ideas and initiatives that either didn't last long or never got started.

So it was when the pandemic hit in 2020 and disrupted congregations it also affected the work of RSTM. Ultimately, RSTM would come to an end. However, while this particular offering of the district is no longer available, what has come after it, not only serves the rural and small town communities and congregations of the Mid-South, but now all congregations of the Mid-South District can benefit from this new offering.

In order to aid and partner with churches of all sizes, the district has developed GROW Grants that are available and accessible for all congregations. While RSTM gave ideas and encouragement to start new missions and ministries, many of those ideas would still need special funding, something a small congregation might struggle with and something even a larger congregation may not be able to budget from year to year. So, while RSTM is no longer available as it once was, the district, encouragement and funding are there to support new initiatives in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

With these grants, what may have been a wonderful idea, but unable to launch because of the expense, is now possible. Even now, congregations across the district have already been using and applying for these special funds. If your congregation has a new ministry that it has desired to start but has been unable to do so due to lack of funding, consider these grants as a resource for reaching out to your community. Through these GROW Grants, ideas that were only talked about in meetings can now become functioning ministries that place the crucified Jesus before individuals in small towns and larger cities across the district.

While the pandemic did great damage across the country and while it affected many churches, it could not stop the Gospel. While one resource from the district ended another has taken its place. So, in the end, that roaring lion that was seeking to damage congregations and ministries has been muzzled even as the preaching of Christ crucified for the sins of the world continues to touch hearts and minds for now and for eternity.

**Respectfully submitted**

**Reverend Kevin R. Conger**  
**Chairman, RSTM, Mid-South District**



## **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF WORLD MISSIONS**

The Mid-South District has been a partner and supporter of the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania since its establishment in 2013. The goal of the partnership formed was to assist the SELVD train evangelists and pastors in their own region of the Sukuma tribe and spread the gospel and plant churches. This partnership has been instrumental in members of the Mid-South district becoming involved in the Witness and Mercy ministry.

Mission teams from the Mid-South District have been going to the area near Lake Victoria in Tanzania since 2002. We have worked in partnership first with the East of Lake Victoria Diocese, the mother district of the SELVD. This ministry has taken us into many areas that never heard the gospel.

The SELVD is in an arid region, which is approximately half the size of the state of Tennessee and has a population of 2,805,000. The SELVD has continued to outreach into remote areas and areas under served that have continued to experience tremendous growth. In 2013, the diocese had 3 districts with 34 parishes (Mother Churches) and 113 worship centers with 49,000 members served by 17 pastors. Today, the diocese has 13 districts with 108 parishes and 267 preaching stations served by 107 pastors.

The primary focus of the partnership of the Mid-South District and the SELVD has been the training of pastors and deaconesses. This training has been in partnership with the LCMS and with Concordia Theological Seminary at Fort Wayne whose faculty comes to Tanzania and teaching. The two-year training program consists of 16 quarterly courses in two-week residential sessions in the Negezi Training center located in a rural area outside the city of Shinyanga.

Since its establishment in 2013, 75 pastors have been ordained after completing the pastoral training program that was supported by the Mid-south district. The second focus of the district support has been advanced training of SELVD Pastors in one of our LCMS seminaries. Since its establishment, three pastors have received their Doctor of Ministry and three have received their MA and STM from CTSFW. Funding for these training programs has been possible by the support of the Mid-South District and CTSFW.

The District has been faithful in sending mission teams from the Mid-South District to the SELVD since 2004. These yearly mission trips have allowed those team members the opportunity to share the gospel, and witness the baptism of thousands of men, women and children. They have gone into homes, churches, villages, schools, hospitals, orphanages and government offices to share the Word of the Lord. These mission teams have gone into areas where no church existed prior to their visit; this has resulted in new congregations formed, and churches built. During the District mission trips over 25,000 have been baptized.

Humanitarian efforts supported by the Mid-South District members and LWML have resulted in lasting friendships, Food has been supplied to orphanages and eyeglass clinics have been held in remote areas. Water wells have been dug. Hundreds of water purification kits have been installed in churches, schools and orphanages. We have learned of the plight of albino children and have provided funding for secure, humane housing that will allow them to live in more of a family setting rather than overcrowded orphanages. We provided training for young albino men and women who are aging out of care and need to enter society with skills to support themselves. We provided



motorbikes and bicycles to pastors and evangelists as they travel many miles between their churches; thousands of hymnals and Bibles and catechisms distributed.

A ministry to help widows receive loans to start micro business opportunities was established by a widow who went on a mission trip and saw the need. When someone becomes widowed, they have no insurance or social security to assist them and their children from falling into poverty. These loans help them establish a business such as raising chickens, selling fruit at bus stops, and becoming tailors.

Come join us on a mission trip and see for yourselves.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Mr. Robert Allen**  
**Director of World Missions**



## REPORT OF THE YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE

**Our Charter:** Promote and support family and youth ministries throughout the district.

The Mid-South District Youth and Family Committee focuses on ministry development in the areas of families, youth, and children. In August 2023, the Mid-South District Board of Directors held a Strategic Planning Retreat at Pickwick Landing State Park. From that retreat came the following priorities for the Youth and Family Ministry Committee:

1. Place more emphasis on schools within the Mid-South District.
2. Increase awareness about Human Trafficking.
3. Continue work of the Generation to Generation Initiative.
4. Support faith formation in the home.

Our goal is to equip the district, congregations, and families with the tools to help minister to this generation and the next.

**Human Trafficking Awareness:** The 2021 Mid-South District Convention passed Resolution 03-02-21 *To Increase the Awareness of Human Trafficking to the Congregations of the Mid-South District and The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*. In 2023, information sessions about Human Trafficking, which were open to the public, were held at six different sites across the district. Attendance at each site was approximately 30-40 people.

The greatest response to the initiative, however, came from the Mid-South District offering free movie tickets to congregations that would get their members to watch the movie, *“Sound of Freedom”*—a movie devoted to explaining a real-life story of human trafficking. Nearly 500 members coming from 22 congregations across the district have watched the movie and have gained a deeper understanding of the problem and what is being done in our communities to address the problem. Special thanks to a generous and anonymous donor who made the widespread viewing of this movie possible.

**Generation to Generation:** The Mid-South District began a partnership with Concordia Center for the Family in 2017. Under the direction of Dr. Ben Freudenberg, the goal was to create a district-wide pilot family ministry initiative known as *Generation to Generation* (G2G). Initially, seven Mid-South District congregations completed the seven module requirements. Modules include 1) Orientation, 2) Paradigm Shift, 3) Survey, 4) Survey Reveal, 5) Marriage, 6) Parenting, and 7) Faith Formation.

Moving forward, the goal is to expand this initiative throughout the Mid-South District. Toward that end, the Youth and Family Ministry Committee is working with Rev. Mark Bushuiakovish and Commissioned Minister Celia Walkowicz, both of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Nashville.

Additionally, four people from the Mid-South District attended *Family Discipleship Facilitator Training* in April/May of 2025. This training event was sponsored by the Concordia Center for the Family. Building on our Lutheran heritage, Concordia Center for the Family is training pastors, other church workers, and qualified lay leaders to help ignite new zeal for Family Discipleship in the LCMS. As homes and congregations work together to disciple the next generations, our LCMS and Christ’s kingdom will flourish.

**The Huddle:** Prior to the 2025 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, the Mid-South District held a **Pre-NYG District Huddle** March 28-29, 2025, at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Nashville. The goal of the **Huddle** was to help the youth groups of Mid-South District congregations make the very most of the NYG 2025 experience. The **Huddle** included NYG Bible studies with Dave Reuter (Director of Discipleship, Our Savior Lutheran Ministries in Livermore, CA), a group Servant Event, and time for fellowship and fun. At the time of this writing, the Mid-South District will be sending more than 280 participants from 23 congregations to the 2025 NYG.

**LCMS Grant from the Lilly Foundation:** On January 10, 2025, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod issued a press release announcing reception of a \$750,000 grant from the Lilly Foundation to support the efforts of LCMS congregations to nurture the faith of children through worship. According to the press release, “the goal of this grant program is to equip and empower LCMS congregations to think intentionally about nurturing the faith of children through their direct, active participation in corporate worship and to grow in their appreciation of this powerful, inclusive and rich Christian context.” The Youth and Family Ministry Committee has been in communication with Rev. Sean Daenzer (Director, LCMS Worship) and looks forward to working with LCMS Worship in the future.

**Additional highlights** include a Child Discipleship Conference held in 2022, an informal DCE Conference held in 2023, and a Commissioned Minister Conference held in 2024. The committee is also most pleased that Michelle Fischer has been added to the Mid-South District staff as Executive for Education – Youth and Family. She will be a tremendous blessing to this committee and to the entirety of the Mid-South District.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rev. Michael M. Miller**  
**Mid-South District Vice-President, Region Four**  
**Chairman, Youth and Family Ministry Committee**



## **REPORT OF THE DISASTER RESPONSE COORDINATORS**

On the evening of December 10, 2021, one of the deadliest and longest-tracked tornadoes made its way across northeastern Arkansas, southwestern Missouri, Northwest Tennessee, and Western Kentucky. The tornado tracked 165 miles with 519 reported injuries and 57 fatalities. This was also the night before my installation at Faith Lutheran Church Hopkinsville, Kentucky. We knew there was damage when a separate storm system tracked over our home at the time, Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Later reports came in that a tornado touched down in Pembroke and Bowling Green Kentucky. In Bowling Green additional injuries and deaths were reported.

The Mid-South District quickly jumped into action bringing in volunteers and donations to assist those affected under the direction of our District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC), Janet Simko. At the time we had very few LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) trained volunteers in the Mid-South District. We relied heavily on teams from Kansas and Illinois to help these communities where they needed it the most. Janet set up a deployment at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Paducah, Kentucky to train new volunteers and to house and feed LERT volunteers from outside our district. My congregation wanted to help but we didn't know how.

Many people want to help after disasters but very few know how to provide the right kind of aid. My congregation chose to receive LERT training to become a recognized and trained LCMS volunteer team. Soon after, our local congregations received chainsaw instruction to become credentialed LERT chainsaw team. My understanding is Faith Lutheran Church in Hopkinsville, Kentucky and Grace Lutheran Church in Clarksville, TN were the first teams in the Mid-South District to become LERT trained chainsaw teams. This was the beginning of what is now called "Faith In Action Disaster Response."

In previous years the Mid-South District had to wait to set up a response to disasters until we knew teams from outside our district were available to assist. Now that we have over 150 trained volunteers in our district, we can respond as quickly as we are needed. Especially now that we are well equipped with two Bobcat mini skid steers, a tracked man lift, and disaster response truck.

In addition to dozens of local wind and tornado events I have responded to in the last three years in my county alone, I have also assisted and led larger deployments. In 2023 I led chainsaw teams in the Little Rock, AR to help them recover after a tornado. I attended LCMS Disaster Response's Advanced Chainsaw and Storm Clearing training later that year to be considered as a chainsaw trainer. I received approval to become a trainer and then taught classes side by side with a senior chainsaw instructor for one year.

At the end of 2023 into the next year, I led chainsaws teams across southern Kentucky, Clarksville, TN, and Madison, TN, responding to tornado destruction. In May of 2024, I led chainsaw teams in Columbia, TN to assist the community after a deadly tornado. A few weeks later, the greater Rogers, AR area was hit by a tornado. I led chainsaw teams there to assist with somewhere between one and two million dollars' worth of tree work.

In August, I was approved to become a chainsaw instructor for LCMS Disaster Response and soon after took on the responsibilities of DDRC Chainsaw and Heavy Equipment. Soon after, Hurricane Helene caused havoc across multiple states and towns affecting our LCMS congregations in our

southern districts. I was asked to lead a multi-week deployment in Valdosta, Georgia to help clean up trees for over a dozen LCMS families.

Along with other district staff, I helped in the approval and distribution of grants to help assist those affected by deadly flooding from Hurricane Helene in East Tennessee and West North Carolina. In February of 2025, I led two chainsaw teams in Morgan County, TN to assist after a deadly EF-2 tornado swept through the community. During my time with the district, I have kept record of 500 + hours running a chainsaw in addition to my duties of coordinating and teaching. It is evident that God has blessed our district in many ways as well help those who have not the means or skills to do so safely. All glory be to God alone.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**The Rev. Trae Fistler, Pastor,  
Faith Lutheran Church Hopkinsville, Kentucky,  
Mid-South District Disaster Response Coordinator- Chainsaw and Heavy Equipment**

Dec 2021, Paducah, Kentucky; Cleanup after tornadoes in/near Mayfield, KY: An extended deployment brought in assets, volunteers and equipment from several other districts to help with the work, most of which was over 40 miles from the host church, Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Paducah, KY. There was an extended long term recovery support activity which disbursed over \$586,000 in Disaster Relief Grants to victims of the storms.

Dec 2023, Madison, TN; Tornadoes. Volunteers working from the host church Ascension Lutheran Church in Madison, TN cleaned up downed and damaged trees from tornadoes that swept areas north of Nashville on Dec. 9-10. Work crews were again made up of local volunteers such as Fatih In Action Disaster Response and persons and equipment from other districts. Working in a heavily populated suburban area presented many challenges in removing trees and debris from closed in yards and closely spaced homes.

May 14-18, 2024, Columbia/Spring Hill, Tennessee; Tornadoes: The host church for this deployment was Holy Trinity Lutheran in Columbia, TN. Tornadoes struck parts of Columbia and Spring Hill. Crews went to work on one church member's home and while assessing the first property, word of our presence spread through the neighborhood, and several more properties were added to the list of work orders. We suspended work on May 18 with intentions to return the first week of June. That plan changed when we were called to respond to major tornado damage in areas of Benton County, AR on May 26.

May 31, 2024 – July 12, 2024, Rogers /Benton County, Arkansas; Tornadoes: The extensive damage in and around Rogers and Bentonville, AR was such that our crews were on site from the end of May into mid-July. The host church, Holy Trinity Lutheran, in Rogers, provided housing and meals for volunteers from 9 states and equipment from the Mid-South District as well as equipment support from Northern IL, Southern IL, and Florida/Georgia districts. Over the course of this deployment, we cut and removed 315 trees at no cost to the property owners. During that timeframe, professional tree companies were quoting residents from \$2,000 to \$6,000 per tree. Based on that information, our sawyers provided about \$1M worth of service. Local authorities reported collecting over 687,000 cubic yards of debris.

Sep. 2-3, 2024, Revisit Columbia, TN to finish work started in May 2024: We were finally able to return to Columbia/Spring Hill to complete the unfinished work from May. Two days' work completed that tasking.

Oct. 2-15, 2024, Valdosta, GA (Supporting FL-GA District) response to Hurricane Helene: Our crew set up and operated a deployment site at Messiah Lutheran in Valdosta, GA at the request of Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson to help cover a part of GA for the Florida/Georgia District which was overwhelmed just within Florida following the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Helene, and just two weeks later by Hurricane Milton. Messiah provided housing and meals for our crews as we cut damaged and downed trees at the homes of church members and at the church property itself.

Oct. 13-15, 2024, Johnson City, TN evaluate in East TN after flooding caused by Hurricane Helene: The Mid-South District DDRC received a call from Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Johnson City, TN asking that we come there to assess whether we could provide some assistance to victims of the devastating flooding and wind damage in the tri-cities area of TN and western North Carolina, also caused by Hurricane Helene. Upon visiting the worst hit areas of Washington County, TN and venturing into NC, and seeing sites where entire homes were simply washed away leaving no trace, the DDRC noted sadly the damage was so severe that it was beyond the capability of our equipment and outside of our expertise which is primarily chainsaw related.

Jan. 12-18, 2025, DDRC Return to East TN to distribute Emergency Funds gift cards and solicit Relief Grant Applications. DDRC traveled to Johnson City, TN revisiting many of the sites seen during the trip in Oct 2024 and meet with local Long Term Recovery Groups and other relief agencies to distribute relief aid gift cards and solicit Relief Grant Applications from victims of flooding caused by Hurricane Helene. He distributed \$5,600 in gift cards for immediate needs and secured 38 Grant Applications. The President, Financial Executive, and DDRCs met once again by conference call on Feb. 4, 2025, and approved 38 Grants to distribute \$236,600 of donated funds to Hurricane Helene victims.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Kurt Ludwig,  
District Disaster Relief Team Coordinator**



**SECTION D**  
**OVERTURES**

**SUBJECT:** To Reaffirm Church Planting

**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,** Recent church planting initiatives have had many people reached 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 “mothering congregation” 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 that will “stand firm and hold to the traditions that [we] were taught” (2 Thess. 2:15) 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), that the Mid-South District establish church and education ministry plants consistent with the church and ministry covenant of the Board of Directors; 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.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**The Mid-South Board of Directors**  
**Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman**  
**Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**

- SUBJECT:** **To Continue a Relationship with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania**
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has had a long relationship with the East of Lake Victoria and Southeast of Lake Victoria diocese, working in consultation with and encouraged by the office of the Synod President, Synod Board for Mission Services/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 President’s office of the LCMS 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 its funding of \$12,500 on specific education and training held in Tanzania for pastors and lay evangelists of the SELVD in which LCMS instructors provide theological instruction in the area of Pastoral Ministry; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That in this relationship, the Mid-South District work with leaders of the LCMS Synod and its seminaries in providing \$12,500 for scholarships for SELVD pastoral candidates to study for higher degrees in our LCMS seminaries; and be finally
- 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 Missions.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**The Mid-South Board of Directors**  
**Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman**  
**Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



- SUBJECT:** **To continue a relationship with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania**
- WHEREAS,** The Mid-South District has had a long relationship with the East of Lake Victoria and Southeast of Lake Victoria diocese, working in consultation and encouraged by the Office of the Synod President, the Synod's office of International Missions and the Board for International Mission and Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne; 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 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 continues to be great humanitarian needs in the country of Tanzania and in Shinyanga and Simiyu regions; 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 continues funding \$12,500 to support the specific education and training held in Tanzania for Pastors, Lay Evangelist and Deaconess in which LCMS and qualified instructor from the SELVD provide theological instruction in the area of Pastoral Ministry; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That in this relationship, the Mid-South District work with leaders of the LCMS and its seminaries in also providing \$12,500 for scholarships for SELVD Pastoral candidates to study for higher degrees in our LCMS seminaries; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** that the Mid-South District continue sending mission teams which operate in accordance with Scripture, the Lutheran confessions, and in coordination with the Office of International Mission to support the humanitarian and witnessing needs of the SELVD; 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 members of the Sukuma tribe.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Oakland, TN  
Todd Maybon, Congregational President  
Leona Stobaugh, Congregational Secretary**



- SUBJECT:** To Continue a Relationship with the Confessional Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar
- 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, Synod Board for Mission Services/Board for International Missions; 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 be formally considered for altar and pulpit relationship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) at its next Synodical Convention; and
- WHEREAS,** Mid-South District leaders, in consultation with the President’s Office of the LCMS, 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 continues working with the Malagasy Lutheran Church to encourage them to work diligently in their Confessional Lutheran identity; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District encourage and support the Malagasy Lutheran Church to seek official relations with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That in this relationship, the Mid-South District focus its funding of \$25,000 on specific education and training held in Madagascar for pastors and lay evangelists of the Malagasy Lutheran Church whereby LCMS instructors provide theological instruction in the area of Pastoral Ministry; and be it further

- RESOLVED,** That a portion of the \$25,000 funding be used for support of ministries and mission of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, including LIME; 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 short term mission trips in coordination with the Office of International Mission, and the Mid-South District Missions.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**The Mid-South Board of Directors**  
**Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman**  
**Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



- SUBJECT:** **To Commend Trinity HOPE and its Supporters for Their Work and to Encourage the District's Members and Others in Support of This Work**
- WHEREAS,** Christ instructed us in Matthew 28: 19 to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” and God will tell His sheep who have fed the hungry “For I was hungry and you gave me food...’Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”; and
- WHEREAS,** Trinity HOPE has identified the island of Haiti as fertile ground for sharing the Gospel and nurturing the bodies, minds, and souls of young children. By providing a noon meal for hungry children in our Lutheran and other Christian schools in Haiti, a powerful witness is provided by the Holy Spirit to discredit the Voodoo teaching that God is unapproachable and unresponsive to Haitians; and
- WHEREAS,** There are huge and effective efforts by Lutheran Churches of the Missouri Synod and other Christian denominations to build the body of Christ in Haiti and bring the Good News of Jesus to those who do not know Him; and
- WHEREAS,** Starving children are unable to retain learning of academia or the Gospel, and the Lutheran schools in Haiti are unable to fully finance food for the children and the staff that share the Gospel with the children; and
- WHEREAS,** Through donors, Trinity HOPE provides the funds to ensure these needs are met for over 63,000 children each school day, economically, effectively, and efficiently providing over 1.1 million meals in 265 schools throughout Haiti, essentially affecting the whole family with the love of Jesus Christ through word and deed; and
- WHEREAS,** Trinity HOPE is committed to reaching the children in all Lutheran and other Christian schools in Haiti with the Word of the Lord. By providing a hot lunch to fill their empty stomachs, we help nourish them, improve their attention span, and enhance their ability to learn. This meal serves as a powerful witness of Christ’s love, showing His provision in a tangible way; and
- WHEREAS,** The Lutheran and other Christian Churches of Haiti see the work of Trinity HOPE as one of their most effective outreach tools; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District in Convention commends Trinity HOPE and its supporters for their work and encourages the District’s members and others in support of this work, which blesses children by supplying an opportunity for them to be fed both physically and spiritually.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Our Savior Lutheran Church**  
**Nashville, TN**  
**Rev. Lane Reuter, Senior Pastor**



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>To Establish Locum Tenens Ministry for the Mid-South District</b>
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The vacancy rate of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is nearly 10% of the calling congregations of Synod; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The Mid-South District has experienced extended vacancies in some of its congregations over the last decade that have lasted beyond 2 or more years; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	Congregations that have experienced long and extended vacancies have experienced a significant decline in attendance, contributions, and membership; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The Mid-South District wishes to keep its vacancy rate beneath the Synodical average; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The number of candidates graduating from the Synod's two seminaries continues to be at a rate of less than 100 M.Div. candidates per year, and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The number of pastors retiring 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
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That the Mid-South District Call at least one ordained, rostered pastor to perform <i>Locum Tenes</i> Services for vacant congregation in the District; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That the Mid-South District place <i>Locum Tenens</i> pastors at the request of a vacated congregation on contract; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That the Mid-South District may contract the <i>Locum Tenens</i> 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 finally
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	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.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary



- SUBJECT:**           **To Hold a Day of Fasting, Prayer and Repentance for the Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic during the Years 2020, 2021 and 2022**
- WHEREAS,**       God commands, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 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” (Mt 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” (Heb 10:24-25); and
- WHEREAS,**       One’s Christian liberty should not be determined by someone else’s conscience (1 Cor 10:29); and
- WHEREAS,**       The Sacrament of the Altar ought not be regarded as “a matter of liberty, not of necessity, and that it is enough if they simply believe” (Large Catechism V.41); and
- WHEREAS,**       During the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, responses to the Coronavirus pandemic by congregations, pastors, Synod leadership, and affiliated educational institutions included the cancellation of communal, in-person worship services, the “online” administration of the Sacrament, the urging of experimental and controversially-sourced vaccinations, and the submission to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s vaccine mandate; and
- WHEREAS,**       These responses inculcated in God’s flock and the world at-large the ideas that communal, in-person worship is non-essential, 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 great societal distress over the Coronavirus pandemic ought to have finally compelled the church to keep her doors open; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That all LCMS congregations, pastors, Synod leadership, and affiliated educational institutions hold a Sunday determined by Synod as a day of fasting, prayer and repentance for the response to the Coronavirus pandemic during the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nashville Circuit Forum  
Rev. Kenneth Shaw, CV**



- SUBJECT:** To Hold a Day of Fasting, Prayer and Repentance for the Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic during the Years 2020, 2021 and 2022
- WHEREAS,** God commands, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 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” (Mt 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” (Heb 10:24-25); and
- WHEREAS,** One’s Christian liberty should not be determined by someone else’s conscience (1 Cor 10:29); and
- WHEREAS,** The Sacrament of the Altar ought not be regarded as “a matter of liberty, not of necessity, and that it is enough if they simply believe” (Large Catechism V.41); and
- WHEREAS,** During the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, responses to the Coronavirus pandemic by congregations, pastors, Synod leadership, and affiliated educational institutions included the cancellation of communal, in-person worship services, the “online” administration of the Sacrament, the urging of experimental and controversially-sourced vaccinations, and the submission to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s vaccine mandate; and
- WHEREAS,** These responses inculcated in God’s flock and the world at-large the ideas that communal, in-person worship is non-essential, 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 great societal distress over the Coronavirus pandemic ought to have finally compelled the church to keep her doors open; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,**

That all LCMS congregations, pastors, Synod leadership, and affiliated educational institutions hold a Sunday determined by Synod as a day of fasting, prayer and repentance for the response to the Coronavirus pandemic during the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Middle Tennessee Circuit  
Ascension Lutheran Church  
Madison, TN  
Rev. David McMinn, CV**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Ten Commandments Overture</b>
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	the first Word that God says in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 is “I am YaHWeH your God”; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	God identifies Himself in that Word/Command as the one true God by name leaving no doubt as to who the true God is; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	the current first Commandment, when taken out of its context in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, is deistic in nature in essence saying “Be faithful to whatever god you believe in” since no god is designated as true; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	the current Christian numberings of the Commandments divide one Command into two by splitting off a supporting point of a Word/Command, even though the context in God’s Word shows that the supporting point is about the one Word/Command; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	the highest principle in our Lutheran Confessions is that the Bible is the only rule and norm for Faith and doctrine; therefore be it
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	that the first Word “I am YaHWeH your God.” be put in its Biblical place as the First Commandment; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	that the “What does this mean? We should fear, love and trust in YaHWeH as the one true God.” be added; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	that the Lutheran numbering of the other Commandments be adjusted to reflect this change; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	that our current 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> Commandments be combined into one 10 <sup>th</sup> Commandment of “You shall not covet”; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	that the “What does this mean?” for the current 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> Commandments be combined as follows: We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor’s inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it; nor entice or force away our neighbor’s wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against Him, but urge them to stay and do their duty; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	that this overture be placed before the Synod in Convention to be ratified as doctrine; and be it finally

**RESOLVED,** that, upon ratification, the two seminaries in conjunction with Concordia Publishing House begin work on a revision of “An Explanation of the Small Catechism” to reflect these changes.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Elizabethton, TN  
Rev. Mark A. Kophamer, Pastor  
Mr. Phil E. Hyer, President**

#### Proposed Ten Commandments

1. I am YaHWeH your God.
2. You shall have no other gods.
3. You shall not misuse the name of YaHWeH your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.



**SUBJECT: To Encourage Financial Support for Professional Church Workers**

**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 Tim. 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, Art. 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. ''' (Res. 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 and seminaries; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District continue to fund designated contributions to *MinistryFocus* 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 Scholarship Fund for Pastors and Commissioned Church Workers burdened with significant educational debt.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**





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

**WHEREAS,**                    The Mid-South District strives to provide full accountability and transparency to all members of the District and is continually seeking improvement to provide 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 finally

**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.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



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

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

**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

**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 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)

Respectfully submitted,

The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary



## **Overture 03-01-25**

## **Floor Committee 3 – Church and Family Ministry**

- SUBJECT:** **To Shape the Faith Formation Paradigm from Generation to Generation Ministry**
- 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 not raised by 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 in 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 adolescent 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 pilot program designed to enable congregations to challenge our churches to stop the decline of young people attendance at church, and be intentional, and create a system for families to learn to disciple in the home; enable parents to become the primary faith influencers in their home so the families may thrive for the sake of the gospel; equips the church to support those who are in non-nuclear families; therefore be it

**RESOLVED,** That congregations of the Mid-South District will be encouraged to participate in education ministries, 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 that with parents, guardians, and members help to 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 on implementing lifelong catechesis in the home.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



**SUBJECT:**                   **Concerning Generation to Generation Ministry**

**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,**               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 you 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 promise 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 131-32); 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 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Convention in 2007, passed the Resolution 5-01B “To Establish Specific Ministry Pastor Program; and

**WHEREAS,**               The life of a Christian involves ongoing catechesis; and

**WHEREAS,**               Dr. Martin Luther at his Small Catechism begins with, as 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 resources contrary to Lutheran doctrine; and

**WHEREAS,**               Faith is given as a gift of grace and 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 should encourage and train parents, guardians, and members of the congregations to be active teachers and lifelong learners of the faith 2 Timothy 3:15; 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 the Bible and the Small Catechism, with generous references to the Lutheran confessions and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 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 that with parents, guardians, and members to help shape the spiritual lives of their children using the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That those who serve in locations as parents, guardians, and congregation members are encouraged to make use of the teaching of the faith, including the Small Catechism and the Lutheran confessions; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That the congregations of the Mid-South District share their successful strategies on implementing lifelong catechesis in the home.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



- SUBJECT:** To Encourage the Evaluation, Study, and Use of Biblically-based Stewardship Resources
- WHEREAS,** Many congregations continue to struggle with a decline in attendance, the lack of 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 the aspect of Christian Stewardship; and
- WHEREAS,** Every Mid-South congregation should offer an encouragement to their members; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District promote the study and use of stewardship education resources in the 2025-2028 triennium to raise awareness of the Biblical stewardship lifestyle in all District congregations; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That each congregation of the Mid-South District be encouraged to complete at least one additional program on Stewardship during the next three years; and be it finally
- RESOLVED,** That the Mid-South District be encouraged to use appropriate avenues to conduct stewardship education conferences or events that reach the “people in the pews” and include all church leaders (ordained, commissioned, and lay).

Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary

**SUBJECT:** To Encourage Workers in Personal Evangelism

**WHEREAS,** Jesus sent his disciples into the world to be his witnesses; and

**WHEREAS,** Jesus declared to his followers “But 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* (ESV); 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. <sup>14</sup> 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? <sup>15</sup> 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!” <sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. *Romans 10:14-17* (ESV); 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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, *Resolved, That because of the hope that fills God’s people (1 Peter 1:3-9, 3:15), they be prepared to share this life-giving message of the Gospel with others; and Resolved, That congregations and workers be encouraged to bear witness to Christ in their daily vocations in their communities (Res. 1-01A); and*



<b>WHEREAS,</b>	<p>The 2019 Synod convention adopted a Resolution, stating,  <i>Resolved, That the Synod in convention establish Making Disciples for Life as its mission and ministry emphasis for the 2019-2022 triennium...to do the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>evangelize and disciple the lost;</i></li> <li>• <i>retain the faithful;</i>  <i>strengthen congregations and schools;</i></li> <li>• <i>plant new congregations and schools wherever possible, especially in urban and multi-cultural communities; and</i></li> <li>• <i>engage in international mission in partnership with the Office of International Mission; and</i></li> </ul>
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	Called workers set an example for personal witnessing; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	Congregations often experience an increase in guests 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
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	Pastors and called workers are often limited in their opportunity for personal witnessing by finances and time constraints due to expectations of their ministry; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The Mid-South District has conducted workshops throughout the District, using “ <i>Everyone His Witness</i> ” materials produced by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The 2016 Convention of Synod stated, <i>Resolved, That districts be directed and congregations be encouraged to develop specific outreach plans to share the Gospel with their Muslim neighbors;</i> and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	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
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That the Mid-South District in convention reaffirms the importance of personal witnessing for the salvation of the Lost and the health of the local congregation; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That the Mid-South District seek a continued partnership with the Mid-South District LWML to provide training and resources to assist called workers and lay leaders in personal witnessing and the promotion of personal witnessing among the members of each of our District’s congregations; and be it further
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That congregations demonstrate personal witnessing as a priority of their church by encouraging their workers to spend time on a weekly basis in the community, and by assisting the workers in their current responsibilities so as to not add further to their work load; and be it finally

**RESOLVED,**

That congregations be encouraged to include funds to be used at the discretion of the pastor, and when possible, all called workers to support their efforts for personal witnessing in the community.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



## **Overture 04-01-25**

## **Floor Committee 4 – Church and Synod**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>To Encourage Further Consideration of Successful Completion of SMP Coursework Before Ordination and Placement on Ordained Roster</b>
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	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
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The 2019 Synod Convention considered this overture together with similar overtures from other districts and congregations; and
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	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
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	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
<b>WHEREAS,</b>	The 2023 Synod Convention consider the recommendations of the Pastoral Formation Committee and the joint boards of regents of the seminaries which are forthcoming; therefore be it
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	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
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	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; and be it finally
<b>RESOLVED,</b>	That the Mid-South District in convention submit to the 2026 LCMS Convention an overture with the above stated WHEREAS and RESOLVED statements.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**

- SUBJECT:** Regularizing Specific Ministry Pastoral Classification
- 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 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, Hispanic, CMC, and others) who are not graduates from a residential program track (MDiv and AR) 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 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 tracks...”

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**The Mid-South Board of Directors**  
**Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman**  
**Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**

- SUBJECT:**                    **Extend and Overture to the 2026 LCMS Convention Concerning Specific Ministry Pastoral Training**
- 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”; 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 include “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 complete 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 and overture to the LCMS 2026 Convention that would modify Resolution 5-01B, 2007, to require students enrolling in 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.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**



**SUBJECT:** To Establish a Task Force to Consider Consolidation of Southern and Mid-South Districts

**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 have become lessened 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 70<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention of the Missouri Synod; and be it further
- 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 next convention of the Synod.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**

- SUBJECT:** To Request that Concordia Plans Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for the Concordia Retirement Plan
- 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/retirement-financial-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 an RSO recruiting staff, offering the CRP allows you to be competitive and help attract high-quality employees”(<https://www.concordiaplans.org/employers/our-solutions/retirement-financial-benefits/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.)

**Respectfully submitted,  
Middle Tennessee Circuit Forum  
Ascension Lutheran Church  
Madison, TN  
Rev. David McMinn, CV**

- SUBJECT:** To Request that Concordia Plans Explore Cost-of-Living Increase Options for the Concordia Retirement Plan
- 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/retirement-financial-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 an RSO recruiting staff, offering the CRP allows you to be competitive and help attract high-quality employees” (<https://www.concordiaplans.org/employers/our-solutions/retirement-financial-benefits/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.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nashville Circuit Forum  
Rev. Kenneth Shaw, CV**



- SUBJECT:** To Amend the District Bylaws so that the District President may Accept a Call to a Congregation as Assistant Pastor
- 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; 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 may receive and is encouraged to prayerfully consider a call to a congregation as assistant pastor provided such services do not interfere with his official duties as President.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Middle Tennessee Circuit Forum  
Rev. David McMinn, CV**



- SUBJECT:** To Amend the District Bylaws so that the District President may Accept a Call to a Congregation as Assistant Pastor
- 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 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 joys and challenges, such as stewardship, church discipline, outreach, Christian education, 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; therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the Bylaws of the Mid-South District be amended to include:
- 3.2.1.3 The President shall be a full-time, district executive. He may receive and is encouraged to accept a call to a congregation as assistant pastor provided such services do not interfere with his official duties as President.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nashville Circuit Forum  
Rev. Kenneth Shaw, CV**

- SUBJECT:** To Direct The Office of the Secretary of the Synod 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
- WHEREAS,** Since before the fall into sin, God created human beings 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 the Secretary of the Synod is tasked with receiving and facilitating applications for RSO status, (Bylaw 6.2.4.a); 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/file\\_download/b8699925-8345-437f-8cda-dad7d95d3d77](https://www.lssnorcal.org/file_download/b8699925-8345-437f-8cda-dad7d95d3d77)), therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That LCSNW and LSSNorCA be immediately removed by the Synod in Convention 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 Office of the Secretary of Synod 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 ONM and OIM do 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 Bylaw 6.2.3 be amended 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 policies 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 Bylaw 6.2.4 be amended 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) Applications for recognized service organization status shall be made to the Office of the Secretary of the Synod, which will facilitate the application as follows:

(4) Decline applications for RSO status 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 the Secretary of the Synod 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.*

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nashville Circuit Forum  
Rev. Kenneth Shaw, CV**

- SUBJECT:** To Direct The Office of the Secretary of the Synod 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
- WHEREAS,** Since before the fall into sin, God created human beings 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 the Secretary of the Synod is tasked with receiving and facilitating applications for RSO status, (Bylaw 6.2.4.a); 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/file/download/b8699925-8345-437f-8cda-dad7d95d3d77>), therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That LCSNW and LSSNorCA be immediately removed by the Synod in Convention 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 Office of the Secretary of Synod 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 ONM and OIM do 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 Bylaw 6.2.3 be amended 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 policies 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 Bylaw 6.2.4 be amended 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) Applications for recognized service organization status shall be made to the Office of the Secretary of the Synod, which will facilitate the application as follows:

(4) Decline applications for RSO status 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 the Secretary of the Synod 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.*

**Respectfully submitted,  
Middle Tennessee Circuit Forum  
Rev. David McMinn, CV**



*Participating in Building a Culture of Church Work Formation and Recruitment*

- 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 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 pastor, 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 Vocatio), 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 (conception 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 (working group, task force) to form, recruit, and encourage their youth (from conception 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.

**Respectfully submitted,  
The Mid-South Board of Directors  
Rev. Kevin Conger, Chairman  
Rev. Larry Peters, Secretary**

**SECTION E**  
**APPENDICES**

**FINAL MID-SOUTH DISTRICT AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**



Audited Financial Statements

**MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod**

For the Years Ended December 31, 2024 and 2023

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## INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

Board of Directors  
Mid-South District of  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
Cordova, Tennessee

### **Opinion**

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2024 and 2023, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Mid-South District as of December 31, 2024 and 2023, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Mid-South District and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### **Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Mid-South District's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

## **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements, including omissions, are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Mid-South District's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Mid-South District's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control related matters that we identified during the audit.

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
Internal Audit Department



St. Louis, Missouri  
March 10, 2025



MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
DECEMBER 31, 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,698,315	\$ 1,334,129
Operating Investments (Note 4)	7,197,294	6,728,299
Accounts Receivable	2,084	5,976
Prepaid Expenses	6,096	5,126
Contributions Receivable (Note 5)	68,230	61,876
Property Held for Sale	186,200	-
Finance Lease Right-of-Use Assets - Net (Note 9)	5,079	11,174
Property and Equipment - Net (Note 6)	861,301	881,761
Cash Value of Life Insurance Policies	157,612	142,942
Beneficial Interests in Charitable Trusts (Note 4)	191,098	-
Endowment Investments (Note 4)	592,813	591,055
Beneficial Interests in Perpetual Trusts (Note 4)	<u>141,397</u>	<u>132,280</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 11,107,519</u>	<u>\$ 9,894,618</u>
Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 78,058	\$ 89,970
Deferred Revenue	5,926	2,184
Grants Payable (Note 7)	166,890	101,085
Finance Lease Liability (Note 9)	<u>6,459</u>	<u>13,916</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>257,333</u>	<u>207,155</u>
Net Assets:		
Without Donor Restrictions (Note 10)	7,676,213	7,101,280
With Donor Restrictions (Note 11)	<u>3,173,973</u>	<u>2,586,183</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>10,850,186</u>	<u>9,687,463</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 11,107,519</u>	<u>\$ 9,894,618</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

	<u>WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS</u>	<u>WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b><u>SUPPORT, REVENUES, &amp; OTHER ADDITIONS:</u></b>			
Support -			
District Congregations (Note 1)	\$ 1,682,132	\$	\$ 1,682,132
IMPACT Campaign	310,946		310,946
Assets from Disbanded Congregations	186,200		186,200
Distribution of LCEF Operating Results and Grants		98,005	98,005
Synod		27,846	27,846
Other	20,124	587,433	607,557
Revenues -			
Subscriptions	17,862		17,862
Conventions, Conferences, and Workshops	87,949		87,949
Net Investment Return (Loss)	359,555	101,381	460,936
Agreements with LCEF (Note 13)	101,430		101,430
Other	37,322		37,322
Change in Value of Perpetual Trusts		9,117	9,117
Net Assets Released from Restrictions (Note 11)	<u>235,992</u>	<u>(235,992)</u>	<u>-</u>
 Total Support, Revenues, & Other Additions	 <u>3,039,512</u>	 <u>587,790</u>	 <u>3,627,302</u>
 <b><u>EXPENSES:</u></b>			
Program Services -			
World and National Missions	373,948		373,948
Preparing Church Workers	69,970		69,970
Congregational Health and Services	726,480		726,480
Ecclesiastical Services	296,965		296,965
District and Synodical Conventions	57		57
Support Services -			
Synodical Budget	479,640		479,640
LCEF	91,001		91,001
Management and General	259,762		259,762
Fund-Raising	<u>166,756</u>		<u>166,756</u>
 Total Expenses	 <u>2,464,579</u>	 <u>-</u>	 <u>2,464,579</u>
 CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	 574,933	 587,790	 1,162,723
 NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year	 <u>7,101,280</u>	 <u>2,586,183</u>	 <u>9,687,463</u>
 NET ASSETS - End of Year	 <u>\$ 7,676,213</u>	 <u>\$ 3,173,973</u>	 <u>\$ 10,850,186</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
<b><u>SUPPORT, REVENUES, &amp; OTHER ADDITIONS:</u></b>			
Support -			
District Congregations (Note 1)	\$ 1,605,838	\$	\$ 1,605,838
IMPACT Campaign	347,104		347,104
Assets from Disbanded Congregations	289,916		289,916
Other	3,000	259,915	262,915
Revenues -			
Subscriptions	25,635		25,635
Conventions, Conferences, and Workshops	159,210		159,210
Net Investment Return (Loss)	346,184	99,778	445,962
Agreements with LCEF (Note 13)	207,897		207,897
Other	25,741		25,741
Gain on Sale of Property/Fixed Assets	12,912		12,912
Change in Value of Perpetual Trusts		13,662	13,662
Net Assets Released from Restrictions (Note 11)	474,352	(474,352)	-
	<u>3,497,789</u>	<u>(100,997)</u>	<u>3,396,792</u>
Total Support, Revenues, & Other Additions			
	<u>3,497,789</u>	<u>(100,997)</u>	<u>3,396,792</u>
<b><u>EXPENSES:</u></b>			
Program Services -			
World and National Missions	443,301		443,301
Preparing Church Workers	81,340		81,340
Congregational Health and Services	663,588		663,588
Ecclesiastical Services	397,642		397,642
District and Synodical Conventions	80,662		80,662
Support Services -			
Synodical Budget	456,751		456,751
LCEF	193,772		193,772
Management and General	194,937		194,937
Fund-Raising	81,741		81,741
	<u>2,593,734</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,593,734</u>
Total Expenses			
	<u>2,593,734</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,593,734</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	904,055	(100,997)	803,058
NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year	6,197,225	2,687,180	8,884,405
NET ASSETS - End of Year	\$ <u>7,101,280</u>	\$ <u>2,586,183</u>	\$ <u>9,687,463</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

	PROGRAM SERVICES					SUPPORT SERVICES					TOTAL
	World and National Missions	Preparing Church Workers	Congregational		District and Synodical Conventions	Synodical Budget	LCEF	Management and General	Fund-Raising		
			Health and Services	Ecclesiastical Services							
Salaries and Wages	\$ 3,811	\$	\$ 206,700	\$ 100,264	\$	\$	\$ 49,500	\$ 114,370	\$ 75,442	\$ 546,276	
Employee Benefits			54,959	46,324			21,285	58,355	11,785	196,519	
Payroll Taxes			6,736	2,578			3,952	8,610	5,820	27,696	
Subsidies, Grants, and Other Assistance	351,030	69,916	40,041	1,500		479,640				942,127	
Auto Maintenance			3,958	1,950						5,908	
Building and Office Expenses	54		35,586	22,505	33		4,287	22,903	15,926	101,294	
Communications, Publications, and Promotion			43,813	1,105	4			536	1,055	46,513	
Conventions, Conferences, Workshops, and Meetings	5,214		188,331	28,486			10,318	1,150	383	223,564	
Depreciation and Amortization			32,616	17,938				4,055	7,028	71,955	
Equipment Purchases (non-capital) and Maintenance			26,522	5,236			100	10,035	1,991	43,884	
Fees	230		1,465					7,464	120	9,279	
Information Technology		54	2,423	14,969				1,410	2,912	21,768	
Insurance			13,736	8,306			855	7,281	3,615	33,793	
Interest								445		445	
Professional Services	10,500		49,502	2,375			704	18,416	39,535	121,032	
Staff Training and Development			6,600	156				1,253	60	8,069	
Travel	3,109		13,337	42,763	20			2,519	421	62,169	
Other			155	510				960	663	2,288	
Total Expenses by Function	\$ 373,948	\$ 69,970	\$ 726,480	\$ 296,965	\$ 57	\$ 479,640	\$ 91,001	\$ 259,762	\$ 166,756	\$ 2,464,579	

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

	PROGRAM SERVICES				SUPPORT SERVICES					
	World and National Missions	Preparing Church Workers	Congregational Health and Services	Ecclesiastical Services	District and Synodical Conventions	Synodical Budget	LCEF	Management and General	Fund-Raising	TOTAL
Salaries and Wages	\$ 84,750	\$	\$ 155,318	\$ 178,924	\$	\$	\$ 119,876	\$ 76,050	\$ 46,903	\$ 661,821
Employee Benefits	45,197		42,957	80,649			45,130	35,655	9,533	259,121
Payroll Taxes			5,130	4,425			8,355	5,752	4,801	28,463
Subsidies, Grants, and Other Assistance	276,080	81,000	134,965	4,000		456,751				952,796
Auto Maintenance			3,973	2,846						6,819
Building and Office Expenses	3,090		30,809	21,673			7,657	28,683	9,077	100,989
Communications, Publications, and Promotion			42,480	1,331	1,483			283	3,228	48,805
Conventions, Conferences, Workshops, and Meetings	19,643		120,423	47,225	46,163			1,290	204	234,948
Depreciation and Amortization			25,992	12,539			9,265	3,188	3,612	54,596
Equipment Purchases (non-capital) and Maintenance			14,866	2,936				6,205	821	24,828
Fees	388		799					6,380	43	7,610
Information Technology		340	1,939	6,644				875	1,284	11,082
Insurance			11,803	7,572			2,173	7,778	1,198	30,524
Interest										
Professional Services	7,400		49,306	4,386			1,316	17,044	973	753
Staff Training and Development			1,081	180				1,030	35	80,425
Travel	6,753		21,555	22,085	33,016			1,774	29	2,326
Other			192	227				2,197		85,212
Total Expenses by Function	\$ 443,301	\$ 81,340	\$ 663,588	\$ 397,642	\$ 80,662	\$ 456,751	\$ 193,772	\$ 194,937	\$ 81,741	\$ 2,593,734

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities:</b>		
Change in Net Assets	\$ 1,162,723	\$ 803,058
Adjustments to Reconcile Change in Net Assets to Net Cash Provided (Used) by Operating Activities:		
Depreciation and Amortization Expense	71,955	54,596
Property from Disbanded Congregation	(186,200)	(250,000)
Change in Value of Beneficial Interests in Perpetual Trusts	(9,117)	(13,662)
Net (Gain) Loss on Sale of Property/Fixed Assets	-	(12,912)
Net (Gain) Loss on Investments	(116,935)	(200,298)
(Increase) Decrease in Operating Assets:		
Accounts Receivable	3,892	578
Prepaid Expenses	(970)	24,043
Contributions Receivable	(6,354)	3,765
Beneficial Interests in Charitable Trusts	(191,098)	-
Cash Value of Life Insurance Policies	(14,670)	(6,913)
Increase (Decrease) in Operating Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	(11,912)	31,196
Deferred Revenue	3,742	(2,795)
Grants Payable	65,805	1,799
Net Cash Provided (Used) by Operating Activities	<u>770,861</u>	<u>432,455</u>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities:</b>		
Proceeds from Sale of Property/Fixed Assets	-	682,389
Purchases of Fixed Assets	(45,400)	(110,536)
Proceeds from Sale of Investments	90,679	198,297
Purchases of Investments	(444,497)	(1,140,174)
Net Cash Provided (Used) by Investing Activities	<u>(399,218)</u>	<u>(370,024)</u>
<b>Cash Flows from Financing Activities:</b>		
Principal Repayments on Financing Lease	(7,457)	(7,149)
Net Cash Provided (Used) by Financing Activities	<u>(7,457)</u>	<u>(7,149)</u>
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	364,186	55,282
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Beginning of Year	<u>1,334,129</u>	<u>1,278,847</u>
Cash and Cash Equivalents - End of Year	<u>\$ 1,698,315</u>	<u>\$ 1,334,129</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**1. NATURE OF ORGANIZATION**

The Mid-South District (the District), a religious not-for-profit organization, is one of 35 districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (the Synod), encompassing 117 congregations in the states of Tennessee, Arkansas and parts of Kentucky. The Synod established its district offices to more effectively achieve its objectives and assist its congregations and their members in conserving and promoting the unity of the faith and in carrying out their mission and ministry.

The District relies on donations from its member congregations for a significant portion of its support. As shown in the Statement of Activities, support from District congregations totaled \$1,682,132 and \$1,605,838 for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively. These donations are subject to fluctuations in the economic status of the areas in which the congregations are located. No provisions have been made for changes in the economic environment. Any significant reduction in the level of this support, however, could have an effect on the District's program and supporting activities.

The costs of providing various programs and other supporting services have been summarized on a functional basis in the Statement of Activities as follows:

- *World and National Missions* – World missions includes the District's personalized world ministry support remitted to the Synod. National missions includes but is not limited to North American new mission work, campus ministries, deaf ministries, ethnic ministries, urban ministries, congregational subsidy, evangelism efforts, and related conferences and events.
- *Preparing Church Workers* – Includes financial aid provided to students normally attending one of the universities or seminaries of the Synod.
- *Congregational Health and Services* – Supports District congregational service efforts and includes but is not limited to activities such as Sunday School, confirmation, family life, day care, adult education, outdoor ministry, singles ministry, elementary and secondary education, youth services, worship, human care ministries, stewardship education, and related conferences and events.
- *Ecclesiastical Services* – Includes activities of the president's office, vice-presidents, circuit visitors, reconcilers, and related conferences and events, as well as support of the District Board of Directors and its related committees.
- *District and Synodical Conventions* – Includes all activities and expenses incurred for conducting District and synodical conventions, which are each held every three years. The accompanying financial statements include synodical convention expenses in fiscal 2023.
- *Synodical Budget* – Includes remittances to the Synod for synodical budget support.
- *LCEF* – Includes the District's support of the national Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) efforts as discussed in Note 13 (Agreements with LCEF).
- *Management and General* – Includes various mission/ministry support services such as the District's financial and general office operating activities.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH–MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**1. NATURE OF ORGANIZATION (Continued)**

- *Fund-Raising* – Includes gift planning support and development activities of the District.

All of these program and support services include the related program and administration expense associated with that particular function.

The Mid-South District of the Synod is an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) and, by virtue of a group tax-exempt ruling to the Synod and its component parts, is exempt from federal income taxes. However, any unrelated business income may be subject to taxation. In addition, the District qualifies for the charitable contribution deduction under IRC Section 170(b)(1)(A) and has been classified by the Internal Revenue Service as an organization other than a private foundation.

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The significant accounting policies followed by the District are described below:

**Basis of Accounting**

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

**Use of Estimates**

We use estimates and assumptions in preparing financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Those estimates and assumptions affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses. Actual results could differ from those estimates, and those differences could be material.

**Principles of Consolidation**

The accompanying financial statements include all administrative and program offices or departments of the Mid-South District. They do not include the assets, liabilities, and operations of the congregations, schools, and other separately administered operations of the Synod within the District's geographic area.

**Cash, Cash Equivalents, and Restricted Cash**

For financial statement purposes, we consider all cash and highly liquid financial instruments with original maturities of three months or less, which are not held for or restricted by donors for long-term purposes (e.g., for building projects, perpetual endowments), to be cash and cash equivalents. Cash restricted by donors for long-term purposes is shown separately in the Statement of Financial Position.



MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

**Investments and Net Investment Return/(Loss)**

We record investment purchases at cost, or if donated, at fair value on the date of receipt. Thereafter, investments are reported at their fair values in the Statement of Financial Position. Net investment return/(loss) consists of interest and dividend income, realized and unrealized capital gains and losses, less external investment expenses; it is reported in the Statement of Activities based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions.

**Contributions Receivable**

Unconditional promises to give that are expected to be collected within one year are recorded at net realizable value. Unconditional promises to give expected to be collected after one year are initially recorded at fair value using present value techniques, incorporating risk-adjusted discount rates designed to reflect the assumptions market participants would use in pricing the asset. In subsequent years, amortization of the discounts is included in contributions/support in the Statement of Activities. We determine the allowance for uncollectible promises to give based on historical experience, an assessment of current economic conditions, and a review of subsequent collections. Contributions receivable are written off when deemed uncollectible.

**Property and Equipment**

Property and equipment purchases of \$2,500 or more with an estimated useful life greater than one year are capitalized and recorded at cost, or if donated, at fair value on the date of receipt. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets ranging from 3 to 40 years, or in the case of capitalized leased assets or leasehold improvements, the lesser of the useful life of the asset or the lease term. A salvage value of up to 25% is used on certain assets. When assets are sold or otherwise disposed of, the cost and related depreciation are removed from the accounts, and any resulting gain or loss is included in the Statement of Activities. Costs of maintenance and repairs that do not improve or extend the useful lives of the respective assets are expensed when incurred. Property held for sale is recorded at the lower of cost or estimated fair value.

We review the carrying values of property and equipment for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the carrying value of an asset may not be recoverable from its use and eventual disposition. When considered impaired, an impairment loss is recognized in the Statement of Activities to the extent carrying value exceeds the fair value of the asset.

**Beneficial Interests in Charitable Trusts Held by Others**

We have been named as an irrevocable beneficiary of several charitable trusts. These trusts were created independently by donors and are administered by outside agents designated by the donors. Therefore, we have neither possession nor control over the assets of the trusts; the assets are being held by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation (LCMS Foundation). At the date we receive notice of a beneficial interest, a contribution with donor restrictions is recorded in the Statement of Activities and a beneficial interest in charitable trusts held by others is recorded in the Statement of Financial Position at fair value, as determined/calculated by the LCMS Foundation. The trust agreements are re-valued annually by the LCMS Foundation and any resulting actuarial gain or

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH–MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

**Beneficial Interests in Charitable Trusts Held by Others (Continued)**

loss is reflected in the Statement of Activities as a change in value of beneficial interests in charitable trusts.

Upon receipt of trust distributions, and when any purpose restrictions have been met, net assets with donor-imposed time or purpose restrictions are released to net assets without donor restrictions. Trust distributions with donor-imposed restrictions that are perpetual in nature are transferred to a specific endowment, in which case, net assets with donor restrictions are not released.

**Beneficial Interests in Perpetual Trusts**

We have been named as an irrevocable beneficiary of perpetual trusts held and administered by the LCMS Foundation. Perpetual trusts provide for the distribution of the net income of the trusts to the District; however, we will never receive the assets of the trusts. At the date we receive notice of a beneficial interest, a contribution with donor restrictions of a perpetual nature is recorded in the Statement of Activities and a beneficial interest in perpetual trust is recorded in the Statement of Financial Position at the fair value of the underlying trust assets, as determined/calculated by the LCMS Foundation. Thereafter, our beneficial interests in the trusts are reported at the fair value of the trust assets in the Statement of Financial Position, with trust distributions and changes in fair value recognized in the Statement of Activities.

**Grants Payable**

Unconditional promises to give which have been authorized and communicated to the recipient are reported as liabilities and expenses in the period in which the notification to the recipient occurs. If at the time the promise is made, the District expects to make payment in one year or less, the payable is recorded at net settlement value. Unconditional promises that the District expects to pay in more than one year are reported at fair value, which is measured as the present value of the amounts to be paid.

**Net Assets**

Net assets, revenues, gains and losses are classified based on the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Accordingly, net assets and changes therein are classified and reported as follows:

*Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions* – Net assets available for use in general operations and not subject to donor restrictions. These net assets may be subject to self-imposed limits by action of the governing board. These board-designated net assets may be earmarked for future programs, contingencies, purchase/construction of fixed assets, or for other uses.

*Net Assets With Donor Restrictions* – Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions. Some donor-imposed restrictions are temporary in nature, such as those that will be met by the passage of time or other events specified by the donor. Other donor-imposed restrictions are perpetual in nature, where the donor stipulates that resources be maintained in perpetuity. Donor-imposed restrictions that are temporary in nature are released when a restriction expires, that is, when the stipulated time has elapsed, when the stipulated purpose for which the resource was restricted has been fulfilled, or both.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH–MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

**Contributions and Revenue Recognition**

Contributions are recognized as support in the Statement of Activities when cash, securities or other assets, an unconditional promise to give, or notification of a beneficial interest is received. Gifts of long-lived assets with explicit restrictions that specify how the assets are to be used and gifts of cash that must be used to acquire long-lived assets are reported as support in net assets with donor restrictions. Absent explicit donor restrictions about how long those long-lived assets must be maintained, we report expirations of donor restrictions when the donated or acquired long-lived assets are placed in service. Conditional promises to give are not included as support until the conditions on which they depend have been substantially met and the promises become unconditional. Donated services are reported as support in the Statement of Activities at fair value when those services (1) create or enhance nonfinancial assets or (2) require specialized skills, are provided by individuals possessing those skills, and would typically need to be purchased if not provided by donation.

Revenue is recognized when earned. Program and supporting activity fees and payments received in advance are deferred to the applicable period in which the related services are performed or expenditures are incurred.

**Functional Allocation of Expenses**

The costs of program and supporting service activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the Statement of Activities. The Statement of Functional Expenses presents the natural classification detail of expenses by function. The financial statements include certain categories of expenses that are attributable to more than one program and supporting function. Therefore, these expenses require allocation to the programs and supporting services benefited on a basis that is reasonable and consistently applied. The expenses that are allocated include compensation and benefits, which are allocated based on estimates of time and effort, and District office building operations/maintenance expenses, depreciation, equipment purchases and maintenance, and insurance, which are all allocated based on the percentage of overall time and effort spent by the employees in each functional area to the total.

**Taxes**

We follow the accounting standards for contingencies in evaluating uncertain tax positions. This guidance requires financial statement recognition of the impact of a tax position if a position is more likely than not of being sustained on audit by the applicable regulatory authority, based on the technical merits of the position. These rules also provide guidance on measurement, recognition, classification, interest and penalties, transition, and disclosure requirements for uncertain tax positions. No liability has been recognized by the District for uncertain tax positions as of December 31, 2024 and 2023.

**Financial Instruments and Credit Risk**

We manage deposit concentration risk by placing cash and financial instruments with financial institutions believed by us to be creditworthy. At times, amounts on deposit may exceed insured limits or include uninsured investments in LCEF notes, money market mutual funds, etc. To date, we have not experienced losses in any of these accounts. Credit risk associated with accounts and contributions receivable is limited due to high historical collection rates and because substantial portions of the outstanding amounts are due from our member congregations or other agencies of the

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

**Financial Instruments and Credit Risk (Continued)**

Synod who are supportive of our mission. Investment performance is monitored by the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. Although the fair values of investments are subject to fluctuation from year-to-year, we believe the investment policies and guidelines are prudent for the long-term welfare of the organization.

**Subsequent Events**

The District has evaluated subsequent events through March 10, 2025, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

**Reclassifications**

Certain amounts in the prior year financial statements have been reclassified for comparative purposes to conform to the 2024 financial statement presentation. These reclassifications, however, had no effect on the previously reported total net assets or total change in net assets.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**3. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS**

The following represents the District's financial assets at December 31, 2024 and 2023, that are available for general expenditure, that is, without donor or other restrictions limiting their use, within one year of the Statement of Financial Position date:

	December 31	
	2024	2023
Financial Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,663,315	\$ 1,334,129
Operating Investments	7,197,294	6,728,299
Account Receivable	2,084	5,976
Contributions Receivable	68,230	61,876
Cash Value of Life Insurance Policies	157,612	142,942
Beneficial Interests in Charitable Trusts	191,098	-
Endowment Investments	592,813	591,055
Beneficial Interests in Perpetual Trusts	141,397	132,280
Total Financial Assets at Year-End	10,013,843	8,996,557
Less Those Unavailable for General Expenditures		
Within One Year Due to:		
Donor-Imposed or Contractual Restrictions	(3,173,973)	(2,586,183)
Board Designations:		
Amounts Set Aside for Operating Reserve	(890,376)	(818,158)
Quasi-Endowment Funds for Long-Term Investing	(366,798)	(381,318)
Financial Assets Available to Meet Cash Needs		
for General Expenditures Within One Year	\$ <u>5,582,696</u>	\$ <u>5,210,898</u>

The Operating Reserve Fund is a designated fund set aside by action of the Board of Directors. Occasionally, the Board designates a portion of any operating surplus to this operating reserve, which was \$890,376 and \$818,158 at December 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively. The minimum amount to be designated as operating reserves will be established in an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programs for a set period of time, measured in months. The operating reserve serves a dynamic role and will be reviewed and adjusted in response to internal and external changes. The targeted minimum operating reserve is an amount sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programs for a period of twelve months. Actual calculation of this amount will be based on the cash flow analysis which is completed as a result of the budget each year. This cash flow analysis displays the projected impact each month's operation has on the cash balance available throughout the budget year.

Although the amount set aside for operating reserves is shown in the above table as unavailable for general expenditures within one year, the funds could be drawn upon if necessary in the event of financial distress or an immediate liquidity need. In addition, our board-designated endowments of \$366,798 and \$381,318 at December 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively, could be made available if necessary, although we do not intend to spend from these board-designated endowments.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH–MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**3. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS (Continued)**

The District maintains a 5-year financial projection model based on various assumptions concerning future revenue and expense expectations. These assumptions are based on historical data, analysis of congregational support, and church planting demographics; factoring in a 3% annual inflation factor. As part of its liquidity plan, excess cash is invested in short-term investments, including LCEF certificates. As disclosed in Note 8, the District also has an unsecured line of credit with LCEF which is available to meet cash flow needs.

**4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS**

We report certain assets and liabilities at fair value in the accompanying financial statements. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Inputs used to determine fair value refer broadly to the assumptions that market participants would use in pricing the asset or liability, including assumptions about risk. Inputs may be observable or unobservable. We consider observable data to be market data that is readily available, regularly distributed or updated, reliable and verifiable, not proprietary, and provided by independent sources that are actively involved in the relevant market.

A fair value hierarchy is used to disclose the measurement of fair value based on the levels of observable or unobservable inputs as follows:

Level 1 Inputs – Quoted prices are available in active markets for identical assets or liabilities as of the measurement date. A quoted price for an identical asset or liability in an active market provides the most reliable fair value measurement because it is directly observable to the market.

Level 2 Inputs – Pricing inputs are other than quoted prices in active markets, which are either directly or indirectly observable as of the report date. Level 2 inputs include assets or liabilities for which quoted prices are available but traded less frequently and assets or liabilities that are fair valued using similar assets or liabilities, the parameters of which can be directly observed.

Level 3 Inputs – Assets or liabilities have little to no pricing observability as of the measurement date. These items are measured using management's best estimate of fair value, where the inputs into the determination of fair value are not observable and require significant management judgment or estimation.

In some cases, the inputs used to measure the fair value of an asset or liability might be categorized within different levels of the fair value hierarchy. In those cases, the fair value measurement is categorized in its entirety in the same level of the fair value hierarchy as the lowest level input that is significant to the entire measurement. Assessing the significance of a particular input to entire measurement requires judgment, taking into account factors specific to the asset or liability. The categorization of a financial instrument within the hierarchy is based upon the pricing transparency of the instrument and does not necessarily correspond to our assessment of the quality, perceived risk, or liquidity profile of the asset or liability.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

The following table presents financial instruments that are measured at fair value on a recurring basis and the level within the fair value hierarchy in which the fair value measurements fall, as well as the non-leveled instruments at December 31, 2024:

	Total	Fair Value Measurements Using			Investments Measured at Cost or NAV
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Operating Investments -					
LCEF Notes	\$ 4,347,603	\$	\$	\$	\$ 4,347,603
LCMS Foundation:					
Moderate Balanced	1,364,562				1,364,562
Core Bond	173,995				173,995
Domestic Equity	176,602				176,602
International Equity	103,464				103,464
High Yield Bond	48,348				48,348
Cash	19				19
Mutual Fund	982,701	982,701			
	<u>\$ 7,197,294</u>	<u>\$ 982,701</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 6,214,593</u>
Beneficial Interests in					
Charitable Trusts	\$ 191,098	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 191,098	\$ -
Perpetual Trusts	\$ 141,397	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 141,397	\$ -
Endowment Investments -					
LCEF Notes	\$ 366,798	\$	\$	\$	\$ 366,798
LCMS Foundation:					
Moderate Balanced	93,363				93,363
Cash	1,758				1,758
Mutual Fund	130,894	130,894			
	<u>\$ 592,813</u>	<u>\$ 130,894</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 461,919</u>

The following is a reconciliation of beginning and ending balances of assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) for the year ended December 31, 2024:

	Balance 12/31/2023	Net New or (Matured) Gifts	Change in Value	Balance 12/31/2024
Charitable Trusts	\$ -	\$ 191,098	\$ -	\$ 191,098
Perpetual Trusts	\$ 132,280	\$ -	\$ 9,117	\$ 141,397

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

The following table presents financial instruments that are measured at fair value on a recurring basis and the level within the fair value hierarchy in which the fair value measurements fall, as well as the non-leveled instruments at December 31, 2023:

	Total	Fair Value Measurements Using			Investments Measured at Cost or NAV
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Operating Investments -					
LCEF Notes	\$ 4,106,203	\$	\$	\$	\$ 4,106,203
LCMS Foundation:					
Moderate Balanced	1,250,363				1,250,363
Core Bond	177,393				177,393
Domestic Equity	148,593				148,593
International Equity	102,376				102,376
High Yield Bond	48,119				48,119
Cash	22				22
Mutual Fund	895,230	895,230			
	<u>\$ 6,728,299</u>	<u>\$ 895,230</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 5,833,069</u>
Beneficial Interests in					
Perpetual Trusts	<u>\$ 132,280</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 132,280</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Endowment Investments -					
LCEF Notes	\$ 381,318	\$	\$	\$	\$ 381,318
LCMS Foundation:					
Moderate Balanced	88,797				88,797
Cash	1,668				1,668
Mutual Fund	119,272	119,272			
	<u>\$ 591,055</u>	<u>\$ 119,272</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 471,783</u>

The following is a reconciliation of beginning and ending balances of assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis using significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) for the year ended December 31, 2023:

	Balance 12/31/2022	Net New or (Matured) Gifts	Change in Value	Balance 12/31/2023
Perpetual Trusts	<u>\$ 118,618</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 13,662</u>	<u>\$ 132,280</u>



MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

A portion of our operating and endowment investments is classified within Level 1 because they comprise marketable securities with readily determinable fair values based on daily redemption values. The fair value of our beneficial interests in charitable and perpetual trusts is based on the fair values of the trust investments as reported by the trustee, the LCMS Foundation. This is considered a Level 3 measurement.

The District uses the net asset value (NAV) per share as a practical expedient to estimate the fair values of investments in the LCMS Foundation common funds, which do not have readily determinable fair values. These investments are not classified within the fair value hierarchy as shown in the above tables. All investments measured at fair value based on NAV per share as of December 31, 2024 and 2023, are summarized below:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
LCMS Foundation Common Funds:		
Fair Value	\$ 1,962,111	\$ 1,817,331
Unfunded Commitments	\$ -	\$ -
Redemption Frequency	Daily	Daily
Redemption Notice Period	Daily	Daily

The LCMS Foundation carries out its investment management services through various common funds to invest the assets entrusted to it. A common fund pools the assets of numerous smaller accounts to provide for greater diversification and ease of investment management. Holders of a common fund are called participants; the District is such a participant. Participants buy and sell units of the common fund asset. In order to determine the price per unit of a common fund, all assets held by the common fund (which can include individual securities or units of other common funds) are valued as of the end of the month (the valuation date). This value is divided by the total number of units held by the participants in the common fund to determine the per-unit value. Transactions in the common fund (either purchases or redemptions) are calculated based on the per-unit value on the valuation date.

During the valuation process, the common funds accrue income and expenses for the valuation period. The net income to the funds is divided by the total number of units held by participants for the valuation period to establish the income per unit factor. Each participant receives an allocation of the net income determined by multiplying the income per unit factor times the number of units held by the participant of the common fund. Net realized and termination gains in LCMS Foundation common funds are also calculated and distributed annually to the participants.

The LCMS Foundation's Moderate Balanced Fund is a moderate risk investment focused on providing modest income generation with a potential for growth; the portfolio holds both fixed income bonds (50%) and domestic and international securities (50%). The Core Bond Fund is a low risk investment focused on fixed income; the portfolio holds government issues, mortgage-backed securities, and investment grade corporate bonds with a wide range of maturities. The Domestic Equity Fund is a higher risk investment designed to provide exposure to the entire United States equity market; the portfolio holds common stock issued by domestic corporations and traded on domestic exchanges. The International Equity Fund is a higher risk investment designed to invest in

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

securities of both developed and emerging markets; the portfolio holds common stock issued by foreign corporations and traded on foreign exchanges. The High Yield Bond Fund is a low to moderate risk investment focused on fixed income; the portfolio holds short-term bank loans and bonds that are lower in quality and pay interest rates that are higher than investment grade bonds.

**5. CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVABLE**

At December 31, 2024 and 2023, we had unconditional promises to give to the District from our member congregations totaling \$68,230 and \$61,876, respectively. All amounts were received by the District shortly after the respective fiscal year-end.

**6. PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT**

Property and equipment consists of:

	December 31	
	2024	2023
Land	\$ 235,505	\$ 235,505
Office Building	965,278	962,877
Office Furnishings and Equipment	208,622	208,622
Disaster Relief Equipment	97,481	54,482
Vehicles	109,019	109,019
	<u>1,615,905</u>	<u>1,570,505</u>
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(754,604)</u>	<u>(688,744)</u>
Net Property and Equipment	<u>\$ 861,301</u>	<u>\$ 881,761</u>

**7. GRANTS PAYABLE**

The District has unconditionally promised to give to the Synod and various unrelated entities \$131,890 and \$101,085 at December 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively. These amounts are expected to be paid within one year of the respective fiscal year-end.

**8. LINE OF CREDIT**

LCEF establishes a line of credit for each participating district based on the district's program performance; this line of credit is evaluated and adjusted by LCEF annually in July. As of and for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, we had an unsecured line of credit with LCEF in the amount of \$181,928 and \$143,521, respectively. Borrowings under this line would bear interest at the current rate of 5.375%. As of and during the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, there were no borrowings against this line of credit.

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**9. FINANCE LEASE RIGHT-OF-USE ASSETS AND LEASE LIABILITY**

We lease certain office equipment under a long-term, non-cancellable finance lease agreement, which expires in October 2025 with no renewal options. As shown in the Statement of Financial Position, these right-of-use assets totaled \$5,079 (cost of \$30,474 less accumulated amortization of \$25,395) and \$11,174 (cost of \$30,474 less accumulated amortization of \$19,300) at December 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively. The related finance lease liability totaled \$6,459 and \$13,916, respectively, as of those dates.

**10. NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS**

Net assets without donor restrictions consist of the following:

	December 31	
	2024	2023
Undesignated	\$ 1,926,130	\$ 1,794,280
Designated by Board for:		
World and National Missions	4,058,316	3,793,529
Congregational Health and Services	33,942	13,839
District and Synodical Conventions	12,077	12,077
Management and General	388,574	288,079
Operating Reserve	890,376	818,158
Quasi-Endowments - Preparing Church Workers	366,798	381,318
Total Board-Designated	<u>5,750,083</u>	<u>5,307,000</u>
	<u>\$ 7,676,213</u>	<u>\$ 7,101,280</u>

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**11. NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS**

Net assets with donor restrictions are restricted for the following purposes or periods:

	December 31	
	2024	2023
Purpose Restrictions:		
World and National Missions	\$ 1,375,124	1,351,594
Preparing Church Workers	5,100	5,100
Congregational Health and Services	453,153	93,643
Management and General	1,130	930
	<u>1,834,507</u>	<u>1,451,267</u>
Time Restrictions:		
Cash Value of Life Insurance Policies	157,612	142,942
Beneficial Interests in Charitable Trusts	191,098	-
	<u>348,710</u>	<u>142,942</u>
Endowments:		
Corpus (Perpetual) -		
Preparing Church Workers	102,352	102,352
Congregational Health and Services	91,331	91,331
Underwater Endowments	-	-
	<u>193,683</u>	<u>193,683</u>
Term Endowments -		
World and National Missions	629,928	655,458
Congregational Health and Services	3,416	4,499
	<u>633,344</u>	<u>659,957</u>
Net Investment Return Subject to Appropriation and Expenditure; Restricted by Donors for:		
Preparing Church Workers	18,541	6,920
Congregational Health and Services	3,791	(866)
	<u>22,332</u>	<u>6,054</u>
Total Endowments	<u>849,359</u>	<u>859,694</u>
Beneficial Interests in Perpetual Trusts	<u>141,397</u>	<u>132,280</u>
	<u>\$ 3,173,973</u>	<u>\$ 2,586,183</u>

(Continued)

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
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**11. NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS (Continued)**

Net assets were released from donor restrictions when expenses were incurred to satisfy the restricted purpose, or by occurrence of the passage of time or other events specified by the donors as follows:

	December 31	
	2024	2023
Satisfaction of Purpose Restrictions:		
World and National Missions	\$ 111,343	\$ 290,160
Preparing Church Workers	34,706	63,767
Congregational Health and Services	89,943	94,684
Fixed Assets Acquired and Placed in Service	-	25,741
	<u>\$ 235,992</u>	<u>\$ 474,352</u>

**12. ENDOWMENT FUNDS**

Our endowment (the Endowment) consists of five individual funds established by donors to provide annual funding for specific activities and general operations. The Endowment also includes certain net assets without donor restrictions that have been designated for endowment by the Board of Directors.

The District classifies amounts in its donor-restricted endowment fund as net assets with donor restrictions until the Board of Directors appropriates amounts for expenditure and any purpose restrictions have been met. Our Board has interpreted the Tennessee enacted version of the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift of the donor-restricted endowment funds, as of the gift date, unless there are explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, we retain in perpetuity (a) the original value of initial and subsequent gifts donated to the endowment and (b) any accumulations to the endowment that are required to be maintained in perpetuity in accordance with the applicable donor gift instrument. Donor-restricted amounts not retained in perpetuity are subject to appropriation and expenditure by us in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by UPMIFA. We consider the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds:

- The duration and preservation of the endowment fund
- The purposes of the organization and the donor-restricted endowment fund
- General economic conditions
- The possible effect of inflation and deflation
- The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments
- Other resources of the District
- The investment policies of the District

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
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**12. ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)**

From time to time, certain donor-restricted endowment funds may have fair values less than the amount required to be maintained by donors or by law (underwater endowments). We have interpreted UPMIFA to permit spending from underwater endowments in accordance with prudent measures required under law. There were no underwater endowments as of December 31, 2024 and 2023.

*Investment and Spending Policies* – Endowment assets are currently being managed and invested by the Executive Director for Business and Finance in consultation with the District President. Endowment assets include those assets of donor-restricted endowment funds the District must hold in perpetuity or for donor-specified periods, as well as those of board-designated endowment funds. The District has adopted investment and spending policies for endowment assets that attempt to provide a predictable stream of funding to programs supported by its endowment. In order to accomplish the District's endowment investment objectives, funds are invested in a mix of LCEF term notes, fixed income securities, and equity securities. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors if the donor specifies an alternate financial institution. The Finance Committee reviews the endowment investments and their performance on an annual basis.

As of December 31, 2024 and 2023, we had the following endowment net asset composition by fund type:

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<u>December 31, 2024</u>			
Board-Designated Endowment Funds	\$ 366,797	\$	\$ 366,797
Donor-Restricted Endowment Funds:			
Amounts Required to be Maintained in Perpetuity		193,682	193,682
Term Endowments		633,344	633,344
Accumulated Investment Return (Loss)		22,332	22,332
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Total Endowment	\$ <u>366,797</u>	\$ <u>849,358</u>	\$ <u>1,216,155</u>
 <u>December 31, 2023</u>			
Board-Designated Endowment Funds	\$ 381,318	\$	\$ 381,318
Donor-Restricted Endowment Funds:			
Amounts Required to be Maintained in Perpetuity		193,683	193,683
Term Endowments		659,957	659,957
Accumulated Investment Return		6,054	6,054
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Total Endowment	\$ <u>381,318</u>	\$ <u>859,694</u>	\$ <u>1,241,012</u>

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT of  
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**12. ENDOWMENT FUNDS (Continued)**

Changes in the endowment net assets for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, are as follows:

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
<u>Year Ended December 31, 2024</u>			
Endowment Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$ 381,318	\$ 859,694	\$ 1,241,012
Net Investment Return	22,551	43,272	65,823
Contributions			-
Appropriation of Endowment			
Assets for Expenditure		(53,608)	(53,608)
Distributions from Board-Designated Endowment	(37,072)		(37,072)
Additions to Board-Designated Endowment			-
Endowment Net Assets - End of Year	<u>\$ 366,797</u>	<u>\$ 849,358</u>	<u>\$ 1,216,155</u>
<u>Year Ended December 31, 2023</u>			
Endowment Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$ 122,761	\$ 946,963	\$ 1,069,724
Net Investment Return	4,042	41,107	45,149
Contributions			-
Appropriation of Endowment			
Assets for Expenditure		(128,376)	(128,376)
Distributions from Board-Designated Endowment	(9,296)		(9,296)
Additions to Board-Designated Endowment	263,811		263,811
Endowment Net Assets - End of Year	<u>\$ 381,318</u>	<u>\$ 859,694</u>	<u>\$ 1,241,012</u>

**13. SUPPORT AND REVENUE FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND**

*Distribution of LCEF Operating Results* – Based on LCEF’s annual operating performance, earnings distributions are made available to its partner districts. LCEF operating results are generally restricted for specific mission and ministry programs of the respective district and are distributed upon request. During the year ended December 31, 2024, the District requested and received distributions of LCEF operating results totaling \$78,005. These distributions are reflected in the Statement of Activities as support from LCEF in net assets with donor restrictions.

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**13. SUPPORT AND REVENUE FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND**  
(Continued)

*Grants from LCEF* - In addition, during the year ended December 31, 2024, the District received a special grant from LCEF in the amount of \$20,000, which was restricted for supporting district church worker wellness.

*Agreements with LCEF* – In accordance with certain agreements, which are subject to renegotiation each July, LCEF agreed to compensate and reimburse the District for certain expenses incurred by us in connection with LCEF's functions taking place at or through the District Office, through personnel employed by the District. The agreements require LCEF to pay the District a fixed amount on a monthly basis. The amounts received by the District in connection with these agreements during the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, totaled \$101,430 and \$207,897, respectively, which is reported in the Statement of Activities as revenue in net assets without donor restrictions.

**14. DEFINED BENEFIT PLAN**

The District participates in the worker benefit plans of the Synod, including the Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP). The CRP provides individuals with post-retirement benefits. Substantially all full-time employees (those employed more than 20 hours per week and at least five months per year) are covered by the CRP. Employees are vested after five years of creditable service. We contribute a fixed percentage of each participant's salary to the CRP. Retirement plan expenses for the years ended December 31, 2024 and 2023, totaled \$43,403 and \$55,486, respectively.

There were no significant changes in the District's relationship to the CRP during fiscal 2024 or 2023. There were also no contingent liabilities associated with the CRP at December 31, 2024 or 2023. Currently, the District has no intention to withdraw from the CRP.