



[ MID-SOUTH DISTRICT ]

OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

# BLUEPRINT

## for Ministry

THROUGH 2027



POWERFUL PLANS FOR AFFIRMING  
THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Friends in Christ,

Have you ever experienced the enjoyment and awe of gazing upon an architectural wonder? It can be a moving experience, especially if the structure is from long ago and has withstood the effects of time. Regardless of age or style, for any structure to fulfill its function and endure the years ahead, it must be constructed according to a solid plan and, more importantly, built upon a firm foundation.

Could we not say the same for FAITH? For faith to be effective, a firm foundation is essential. A person whose faith holds firm through various storms in life must have a strong foundation. And a congregation that remains faithful to biblical truths amidst shifting cultural tides is one built upon an unshakable foundation. Proverbs 22:6 illustrates this truth so well:

*“Train up a child in the way he should go;  
even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

PROVERBS 22:6

This simple yet powerful verse speaks to the importance of establishing a firm faith foundation. Here at the Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), we have adopted Proverbs 22:6 as our guiding verse through 2027. This means that as we go about doing work that supports ministries and workers across our District and beyond, **we will be focused on efforts that affirm the foundations of faith**—to equip workers for effective ministry, to help congregations inspire passionate disciples, and to bring more people into the fold of Christ’s flock.

So what will this look like? Over the next several years, you will see district ministry designed to deliver these results:

- *New ministries*
- *More people answering the call to serve*
- *Faith as a foundation in families*
- *Spiritual care of remote congregations*
- *Churches boldly serving broken people*

These results are building blocks of a strong and effective faith community—the community of LCMS Christians across the Mid-South District. To achieve these results, the District is following a “ministry blueprint” incorporating five critical initiatives that are foundational to sharing the Gospel in today’s world.

You will get a closer look at this blueprint in the pages that follow, as well as a brief look at the scope of District ministry and its funding. As you review the initiatives and the strategies being employed to execute them, I encourage you to reflect on the wisdom and truth of Proverbs 22:6. The Mid-South District’s ministry blueprint is designed to affirm the foundations of faith laid out in scripture. This solid plan is also intended to bolster the faith foundations of individuals and ministries across our District, so that, like a well-constructed building, their spiritual integrity will not diminish through time or worldly trials.

I hope you share in my excitement for this ministry blueprint, and I ask for your frequent prayers as we go about this important work.

In Christ,



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President



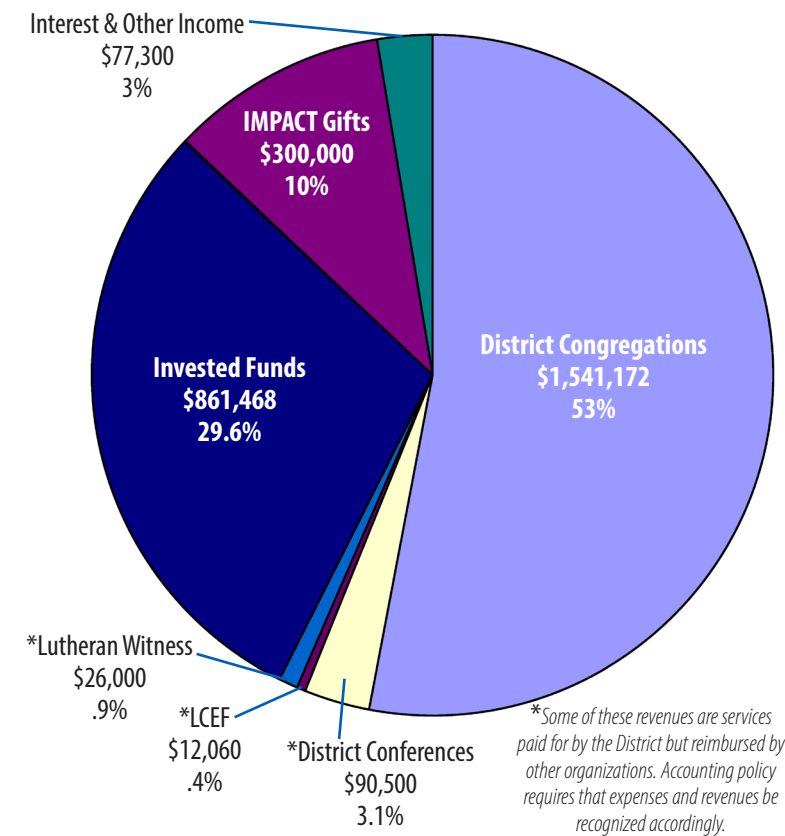
# DISTRICT MINISTRY AT A GLANCE

Since 1966, the Mid-South District has served and encouraged workers, ministries and members of the LCMS across Arkansas, Tennessee and southwestern Kentucky. Today's Mid-South District includes:

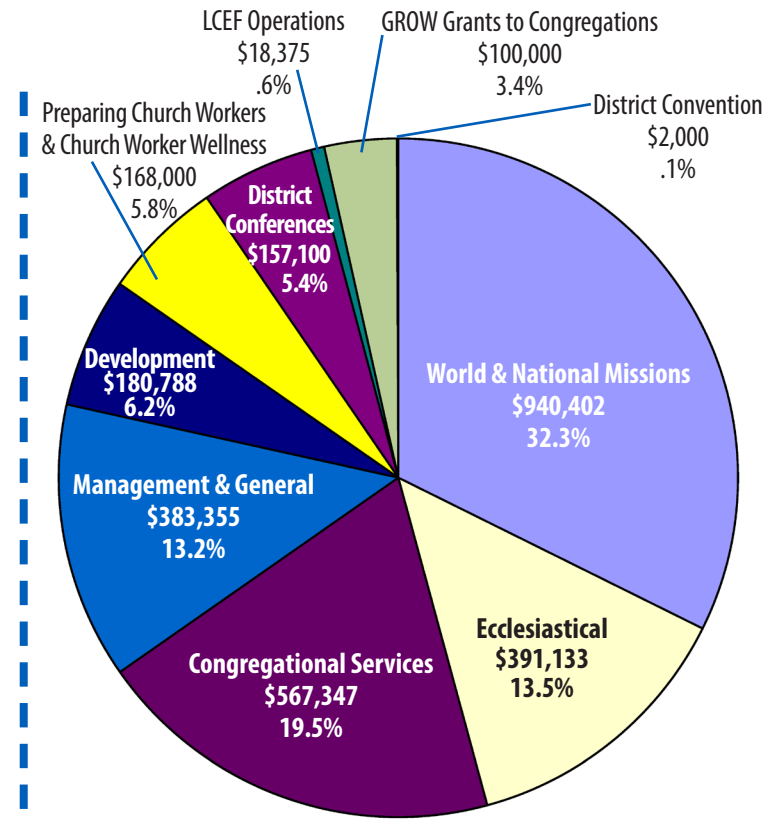
- 120 Congregations
- 10 Lutheran Schools
- 20 Early Childhood Centers
- 200+ Professional Church Workers
- 23,300+ Baptized Members (as of 2023)

The Mid-South District serves these ministries, workers and members in a variety of powerful ways. As they share Christ's love and message of hope, the Mid-South District is their ally, supporting them through resources, services and even opportunities for financial grants. This work is made possible by both mission commitments from District congregations and support from generous donors. The "Funding Sources" and "Ministry Allocations" charts shown to the right illustrate the true partnership in ministry that is required to pursue the Mid-South District's mission of **"providing 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."**

## FUNDING SOURCES 2024 - \$2,908,500



## MINISTRY ALLOCATIONS 2024 - \$2,908,500





# SPECIFICATIONS OF THE MINISTRY BLUEPRINT

With Proverbs 22:6 as our guiding verse, the Mid-South District has developed a “ministry blueprint” focused on efforts that affirm the foundations of faith. Five ministry initiatives are emphasized in this plan.

## THE 5 INITIATIVES –

1. Planting New Church & School Ministries
2. Recruiting & Retaining Professional Church Workers
3. Strengthening Generational Faith
4. Providing Pastoral Coverage for Rural Ministries
5. Equipping Congregations for Ministry to People in Crisis

Through 2027, these initiatives will comprise the core of the Mid-South District’s ministry focus. The pages that follow share details about how the Mid-South District is pursuing these initiatives.





## NEW MINISTRIES...



### INITIATIVE #1 –

#### Planting New Church & School Ministries

Since its founding in 1966 with 77 congregations, the Mid-South District has sought creative and effective ways to connect people to the Gospel through ministries of the LCMS. With more people being disconnected from the Church—and God—than ever before, there remains a critical need to establish new church and school ministries.

We are pursuing this initiative by:

- Partnering with congregations and circuits to plant new churches
- Utilizing Synod grant opportunities in church planting
- Increasing utilization of the Micro School model across the District
- Expanding the reach of Lutheran education through home-school co-ops



**MORE PEOPLE ANSWERING  
THE CALL TO SERVE...**

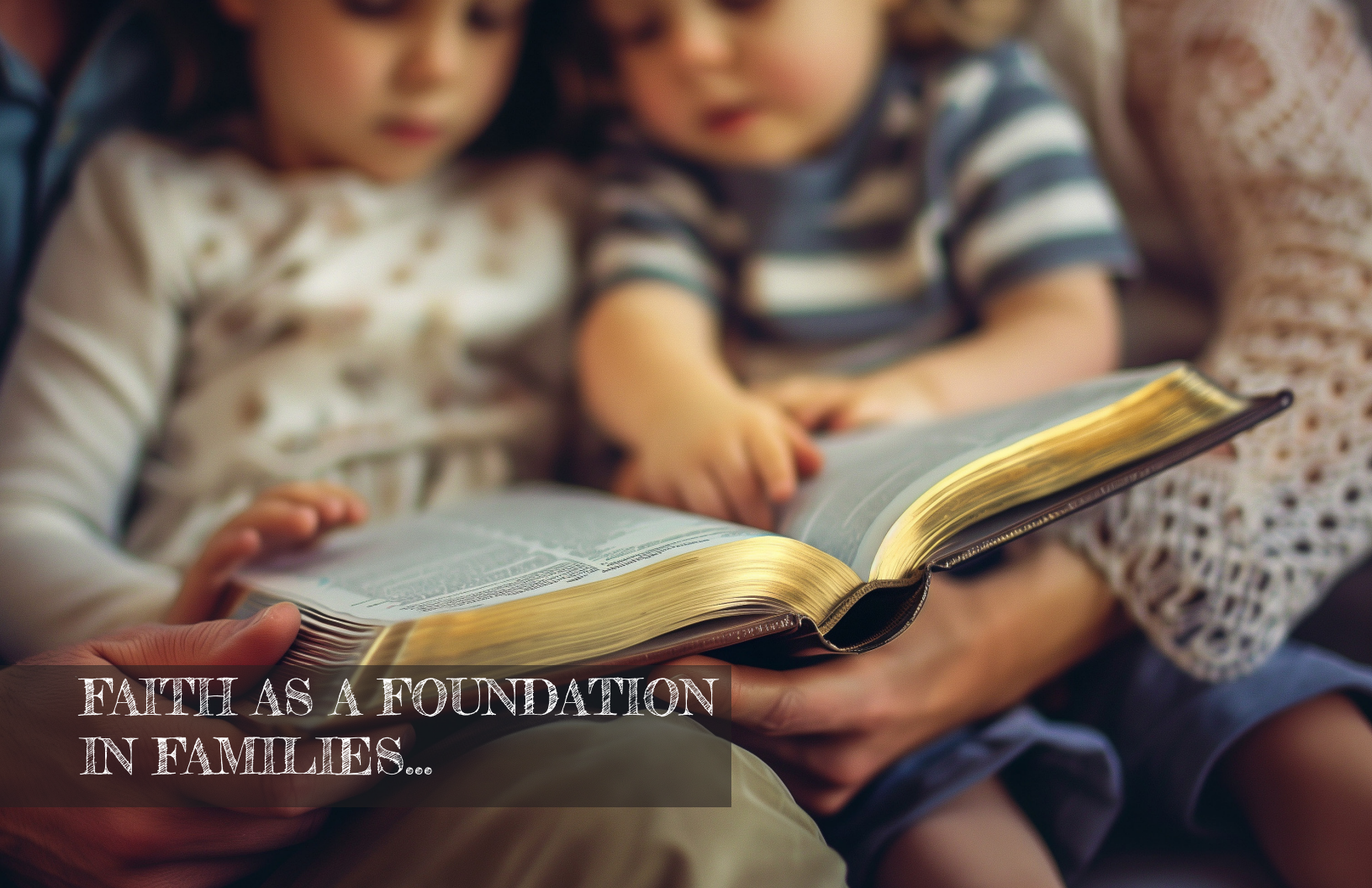
## INITIATIVE #2 –

### Recruiting & Retaining Professional Church Workers

The critical shortage of new church workers across the LCMS continues. Fewer and fewer people are pursuing careers as pastors, Lutheran school teachers, Directors of Christian Education (DCEs), Directors of Parish Music, Deaconesses and other critical areas of professional church work. As Jesus observes in Matthew 9:37, "... The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few..." there persists a need for people to discern and answer the call to serve in our Lutheran churches and schools. As an essential element of its ministry blueprint, the Mid-South District is focused on addressing this need by:

- Financially supporting education of future workers
- Extending undergraduate education opportunities by establishing a Concordia auxiliary campus in the Mid-South District
- Emphasizing and promoting worker wellness
- Assisting in education debt relief for church workers
- Promoting competitive salaries and benefits for church workers





**FAITH AS A FOUNDATION  
IN FAMILIES...**

## INITIATIVE #3 –

### Strengthening Generational Faith

As people become more influenced by messages of the world than the message of The Word, many families have lost their foundation of faith. Even Christian families can compartmentalize their lives in such a way that Jesus is given priority on Sunday, but somehow forgotten the other six days of the week. For Christians to have full faith lives, and be effective witnesses in the world, prayer and Holy Scripture must have a prominent place in the home—especially for growing families. To help families establish a strong faith that is passed from generation to generation, the Mid-South District is:

- Providing resources to establish faith practices in the home
- Empowering families to adopt an eternal mindset
- Emphasizing parental responsibility for bringing the next generation into Church membership
- Encouraging evangelism readiness through Each 1, Reach 1 workshops



## SPIRITUAL CARE OF REMOTE CONGREGATIONS...



### INITIATIVE #4 –

#### *Providing Pastoral Coverage for Rural Ministries*

All across the Mid-South District, there are small congregations in need of a full-time, ordained pastor. Many of these churches are in rural areas and have limited financial resources because they are small in size—but their love for God is anything but small. These faith families continue to worship, share fellowship, and serve their communities in the name of Jesus. The Mid-South District is focused on providing these congregations with a dependable means of receiving Word and Sacrament ministry by:

- Establishing dedicated Circuit Riders to minister to small, remote congregations
- Grouping rural congregations into small clusters for coverage by a shared pastor
- Introducing the Circuit Rider concept to faith communities in northwest Arkansas, northeast Arkansas and north Mississippi



## CHURCHES BOLDLY SERVING BROKEN PEOPLE...



### INITIATIVE #5 –

#### Equipping Congregations for Ministry to People in Crisis

God has given His people a great capacity for compassion and mercy. As “the church,” it is an honor to reach out and serve those who are experiencing brokenness. In the Mid-South District, we have been particularly blessed in our efforts to serve those in crisis—especially people impacted by natural disasters and victims of human trafficking. To ensure that these critical ministries grow and that our congregations are equipped to reach and serve people in crisis, the District is:

- Continuing to build and resource the Mid-South Disaster Response ministry and network
- Continuing to raise awareness about the realities of human trafficking
- Helping congregations find effective ways to minister to victims of human trafficking

# BRINGING THE MINISTRY BLUEPRINT TO LIFE

A solid plan, or blueprint, is only meaningful once it is brought to life. The Mid-South District's ministry blueprint is a powerful vision built on:

- *The planting of new churches and school ministries*
- *Expanded resources to recruit and retain pastors and other professional church workers*
- *Programs that strengthen generational faith in families and congregations*
- *Systems to provide pastors to LCMS ministries in rural communities*
- *Congregations equipped to be the hands and feet of Jesus*

We pray that you will be inspired by this bold plan—and that you will be a part of bringing it to life! The Mid-South District is actively pursuing the initiatives of its blueprint for ministry. As with any significant endeavor, faithful partners and support are needed along the way. The Mid-South District trusts that you will join us in this pursuit and that, together, we can marvel over what God builds in our midst.

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**ENCOURAGER** - The Mid-South District's monthly e-newsletter. Subscribe at [mid-southlcms.org/publications](http://mid-southlcms.org/publications).



**SUPPORT** - Share a gift with Mid-South District online any time at [mid-southlcms.org](http://mid-southlcms.org) and select "Give Now." Designate "IMPACT Fund" and your gift will be applied where needed most.





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

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