



# DISTRICT NEWS

## KANSAS

### OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

#### DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Last August, I wrote in this publication about several overarching aims that would guide our life together in the Kansas District in the 2018-21 triennium.

At the time, those aims were “wet cement” — solid ideas, but not fixed in final form. They’ve since been revised and incorporated into a “Strategic Direction” document (now available at [kslcms.org/about-us/missionoverview](http://kslcms.org/about-us/missionoverview)), which will drive our common work in the Kansas District.

Our three central aims, as they now stand, are:

- ▶ Witnessing faithfully
- ▶ Fostering unity
- ▶ Helping ministries thrive

The full document also includes associated convention resolutions and related priorities, providing a useful roadmap for the work of our district staff, Board of Directors, service boards and committees. I’ve been sharing the document, as well, with pastors at their monthly meetings.

But it’s not just for district workers! I hope that the plan influences the work that **all** of us share — congregations, workers and laypeople — as we, with the help of God, “strive to excel in building up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12).

Your servant in Christ,  
Rev. Peter Lange  
Kansas District  
President



#### WITNESSING FAITHFULLY



- All LCMS Kansans — laypeople and called workers alike — grow in **ability** to witness and **zeal** for the faith.
- Congregations become more outreach-minded.
- All grow in knowledge of Scripture and the Confessions.
- We strengthen our sense of Lutheran identity.

#### FOSTERING UNITY



- We recognize and reinforce the **unity** given to all Christians in their Baptism.
- We work to strengthen the **concord** we voluntarily agree to as members of LCMS congregations.
- We strive for kindness and the common good — i.e., **harmony** — in our interactions with one another.

#### HELPING MINISTRIES THRIVE



- We provide strong support to the ministers serving the ministries.
- We retain what’s working well and improve elsewhere.
- We carry out our mission with **excellence**.



**SEE THE FULL PLAN:**  
[kslcms.org/about-us/missionoverview](http://kslcms.org/about-us/missionoverview)



*“Let us never weary of doing good.”*

Gal. 6:9-10

# Q&A

on

## DISASTER RESPONSE

When disaster strikes, Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) are there to help. But their service extends beyond disaster zones. We recently checked in with **Mark Trivilino**, LERT – Northeast Kansas, and **Donna Williams**, Kansas District Disaster Response coordinator, to find out more about disaster response activities in Kansas.

### How did the LERT – Northeast Kansas Team get started?

**MT:** Several members are involved in the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program. It’s a wonderful program, but we quickly realized that it was missing a major factor in responding to emergencies — the MERCY aspect. We searched online to see if the LCMS had such a program and eventually connected with the Kansas District disaster coordinator (DDRC) at the time (Chaplain Rocky Mease), who was very open to helping us start a LERT program.

After we learned more about the program and prayed about it, we ap-

proached our pastor at King of Kings in Gardner about this new opportunity to serve. He was supportive, as was our local church council.

At our first training, over 20 parishioners participated. We’ve since trained over 85 people at events in Gardner, Paola and Overland Park. Members of the King of Kings team now hail from congregations in Leavenworth, Lansing, Shawnee, Overland Park, Louisburg and Olathe. As we’ve grown, we’re transitioning from the “King of Kings Team” to the “Northeast Kansas Team.”

### How does a team get called on to serve?

**MT:** There are three kinds of deployment: 1) local/soft — e.g., the pastor reaches out to the team and shares local needs, such as a fallen tree at a parishioner’s home; 2) local/state disaster — we’re called out by the DDRC; and 3) major/nationally declared disaster — we could be deployed by the DDRC in partnership with LCMS Disaster Response and could work in-state or travel out of state under the umbrella of Kansas District Disaster Response.

**DW:** With a declared national disaster, communication begins between district presidents and includes LCMS Disaster Response. Once needs are determined in the affected area(s), the DDRC may travel to help with assessments or to observe and assist the DDRC in the affected district.

In the case of a disaster in the Kansas

District, the DDRC will contact designated team leaders in the affected region to gather information and travel to the affected area within 24 hours. Coordinating with the local congregation, we’ll assess needs, establish communications and arrange volunteer accommodations. Individual LERT teams will then be asked to respond in stages related to the type of disaster and the timetable set by local emergency response personnel.

### Where have you been able to help?

**MT:** As a team we’ve been to Eureka, Kan., twice (in different years) to help with tornado recovery. We’ve been to Mulvane to help with flood recovery. We’ve traveled to Eureka, Mo., to help in the rehabilitation of flooded mobile homes. Three of our members have been to Texas to help in Harvey recovery. We also have a member who has been to Panama City, Fla., twice to help with chainsaw recovery. We’ve done several small deployments locally to help church members as needed with fallen trees.

We’ve provided meals for a homeless shelter in Paola, and we’re regularly scheduled to serve breakfast to the underserved population in Kansas City several times a year, in partnership with a Lutheran social service agency. We’ve also coordinated with our local Lutheran Laymen’s League group to collect bandages for Noah’s Bandage Project.

### How is LERT disaster response activity funded?

# Good news!



Above: Volunteers at a Lutheran Early Response Team training event in Overland Park.

Opposite page: Clockwise from top left, LERT leaders (from left) Brian Mead, Rev. Rick Lovick, Donna Williams, Rev. Rocco Mallardi, Mark Trivilino, Rev. Andy Keltner and Rev. Dan Ramsey gather at a LERT retreat; the Rev. Eric C. Johnson, LCMS Southern District president, and the Rev. Michael Meyer, LCMS Disaster Response manager, survey the damage from Hurricane Michael to Redemption, Panama City, Fla. on Oct. 15.; the King of Kings, Gardner, disaster response trailer, waiting to be loaded for a trip to Panama City; a LERT volunteer at the Kansas District convention.

**MT:** There are numerous ways locally. Our church members have been extremely generous and supportive of our team. On one deployment we were asked to cook and provide meals for numerous volunteers. The call went out, and the next thing we knew we had over 300 hot dogs, buns, burgers and “the fixins” to take with us.

People have dropped off gas cards, cash, cases of water or sports drinks at the church to support those who are being deployed. We partner with Thrivent Financial. We were blessed to receive a grant from LWML in order to receive a trailer with supplies, and the church funded modifying a garage so we can keep our trailer in a safe and secured area. Our team has been truly blessed with support from not only our congregation, but partner congregations and the community.

**We hear a lot about LERT teams. If my church has no team, can I still participate?**

**MT:** Depending on the disaster, there are many ways to become involved. It’s important to note that to be allowed into some disaster areas, you’ll need to show your LCMS LERT ID as well as documentation that you’ve been trained in chainsaw operation.

But there’s so much more to LERT than chainsaws and drywall. We have people prepared to put on a mini-VBS if needed while the parents are “taking care of business.” We have team members who bake cookies or brownies that we can

hand out onsite. We have individuals prepared to grill hot dogs, brats and burgers in a disaster area, as well as volunteers who are working to assist those in need. If you have a skill set, we’ll find a way to use you.

**What’s one thing you’d like people to know about LERT that they might not know?**

**DW:** During “quiet” times when teams aren’t responding to a disaster, they can engage with their congregations and communities to serve in myriad ways. By identifying a team’s passions and gifts, outreach and service in a community setting can be a powerful blessing right at home, allowing team members to exercise their service “muscles” and become better prepared to respond to a major disaster.

Our primary mission is to touch the lives of those in need — the lost, the hurting and the marginalized in our midst. Broadening our vision allows us to be effective in ministry, even at home. Be alert, and be creative!

- The next chainsaw training in Kansas is May 4 in the Winfield area.
- For the latest details on LERT activities and training events, visit the LERT Kansas District and Lutheran Early Response Team – Northeast Kansas Facebook pages.
- For more information about district Disaster Response activities, contact Donna Williams at [ksddrc@gmail.com](mailto:ksddrc@gmail.com).



**LCMS Kansas congregations raised more than \$15,000 in the 2018 Pentecost Offering**, which supports students at the Center for Lutheran Theological Studies (CLET) in Togo, West Africa. Rev. Dr. Brent Smith (center), mission development counselor at Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa, received the check from Rev. Peter Lange (left), Kansas District president, and Rev. Dan Galchutt, assistant to the president for Missions and Stewardship.

“With this gift, the Lord through people in His Church has fully funded the CLET seminary project for this fiscal year,” said Smith.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2018 Pentecost Offering!



**Rev. David Herald was installed as pastor of Redeemer, Arkansas City**, on Nov. 25. Participants in the service included (from left) Rev. Rick Hathaway, John Einem, Scott Snow, Herald (front), Thomas Johnson, Dan Metzger and William Wingfield.

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## Share Your News

Send photos and announcements to:

- ▶ [kbruss@kslcms.org](mailto:kbruss@kslcms.org)
- ▶ Lutheran Witness Editor  
LCMS Kansas District  
1000 SW 10th Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66604

The deadline for the April issue is Feb. 15.

Photos should be in high-resolution with a minimum 300 dpi.

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## Lutheran Church Extension Fund

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