



Our mission is to support and encourage the members of the District in carrying out the mission Christ has given His Church.

LCMS Kansas District Board Report Summaries April 2021

DISTRICT STAFF REPORTS

President's Office

Rev. Justin Panzer

District Convention Delay. After our last Board of Directors meeting, we learned that LCMS congregations voted to delay the Synod convention a year. As a result of that delay, we have moved the Kansas District convention to June 9-10, 2022.

Seminary Call Days. We pray for congregations receiving seminary candidates, including Bethany, Overland Park (Candidate Sean Baker); the Northeast Kansas Partnership (Candidate Ian Kinney); First, Paola (Candidate Christian Schultz); and Immanuel, Hepler and Good Shepherd, Erie (Candidate Caleb Stoeber). We pray also for Beautiful Savior, Olathe, which received a vicar (Zachary Roll). Between both seminaries, there were 65 vicars assigned this year. There are 110 students in the combined first-year class, which should increase the pool of vicars and candidates in the future.

District Activity. We give thanks to God for those pastors who have accepted calls to Kansas congregations and have been installed this past quarter. Three call lists were completed during the quarter. Filling congregational vacancies in a timely manner continues to be a priority. Several congregations are engaged in partnership discussions.

Senate Bill 40. [Senate Bill 40](#), signed by the governor of Kansas in late March, has raised questions about the impact on private entities (e.g., churches, schools, and early education centers). The bill modifies the governor's emergency powers and allows "any party aggrieved" by an emergency order to file a grievance within 72 hours of the order. President Panzer has obtained a document detailing the procedure for filing a grievance.

Ethnic Ministries. God continues to bring the nations to our door. In addition to ongoing work related to the future of Hispanic ministry in the Kansas City area (see the Missions report below), President Panzer has also been learning about Oromo ministry and the open doors that God might grant to us as we reach out to the vast Ethiopian population residing in the Kansas City area.

Missions and Stewardship

Rev. Dan Galchutt

Kansas City Hispanic Ministry. Plans are moving forward to provide pastoral support for Hispanic Ministry in the Kansas City area. Priorities include working with the Missouri District to identify a called

pastor to serve Jesus El Buen and Immanuel, KCK, as well as the larger metro area, as these ministries are experiencing transitions in leadership. In related news, a new mercy ministry is being created for the mercy work being done at Immanuel, KCK. The new ministry is organizing as a sub-corporation of Lutheran Urban Mission Agency (LUMA).

Soldiers of the Cross. As of April 30, the Kansas District has distributed \$20,547 from the Soldiers of the Cross Amplified program, which was launched last year to provide grants to workers and other eligible parties who suffered a financial setback due to the pandemic. The program is expected to close at some point. Remaining funds will then need to be redirected (e.g., returned; reallocated).

Discipleship. Discipleship is a priority for the Synod, as reflected in the current triennial emphasis on “Making Disciples for Life.” Discipleship is also likely to become more of a priority in the District’s work. Discipleship has recently been equated with stewardship, and it has implications for missions, as well.

Church Consultant Training. Rev. Dan Galchutt is now a certified church consultant after completing training with Thom Rainer’s Church Consultation University. Several congregations have already expressed interest in the consultation services and tools now available in the areas of demographics, outreach, connecting with visitors, communications, and general consultation.

Congregational Partnerships. The Partnership Project continues to bear fruit as we talk with congregations about the need to partner together. In the past quarter, we began working on a new “best practices” resource, which involved brainstorming with members of the Partnership Advisory Group and meeting with the pastors of the new T.I.G. partnership in southwest Kansas.

Education and Youth / Caring Ministry

James Bradshaw

Schools Update. Our District schools have retained in-person education throughout the year; they plan to finish the school year following the same safety protocols they’ve followed all year. Nine congregations/schools are currently seeking commissioned ministers (teachers/DCEs). Concordia Academy in Wichita, a 9-12 classical school aiming to open in the fall of 2023, held a kickoff banquet for its fundraising campaign April 16. The event was attended by about 150 people.

LCMS Pandemic Resiliency Grant. We have been approved for an LCMS District Pandemic Resiliency Grant. The grant will assist in covering honorariums for keynote wellness presentations at the April DCE Retreat, the September Principals Conference, and the October 3-5 Educators Conference.

Youth Ministry News: Registration is underway for the Lutheran Valley Retreat (**LVR**) summer camp, which will be held on two dates this summer: June 13-18 and July 18-23. The theme for the Kansas District Youth Gathering (**KDYG**), being held in Topeka November 19-21, is “Faithful.” Jim Bradshaw and Donna Williams are co-chairing the event. **Middle school ministry** is moving in a new direction, with a new focus on area confirmation retreats and a District Middle School Retreat. **Higher Things** is hosting four conferences this summer, with many Kansas congregations planning to attend the event in Fort Collins, Colorado. The next **LCMS Youth Gathering** will be held next summer in Houston. District coordinators are DCE Amanda Adams (Christ, Topeka) and youth leader Debbie Dennett (Trinity, Winfield).

Church Worker Care Committee. The committee is now fine-tuning the Church Worker Care Team Guide that was pilot tested in several congregations (St. Paul, Clay Center; St. John's, Topeka; Christ, Overland Park and Trinity, Garden City). The guide will be posted as a digital document on a new Church Worker Care Team webpage, which will also include links to a variety of resources. A small run of print copies will also be made. The guide and webpage will be available by September 1.

LERT. A LERT Basic Training event was held at Messiah, Hays, with 17 in attendance. A LERT workday and mock deployment has been scheduled at the Retreat Center October 15-16.

Older Adult Ministry. The Older Adult Ministry Committee produced the first issue of the new "Senior Moments" newsletter, a project supported by a Kansas District Mission Grant. Additional newsletters are planned for July, October, and next January. The purpose of the newsletter is to create greater awareness and support for senior ministry. The committee is still seeking names of congregational senior adult representatives as communication liaisons. In other Older Adult Ministry news, the Saints Alive gathering has been postponed until further notice.

LCEF

Jeff Maltz

Expanded Role of the District Vice-President (DVP). DVP Jeffrey Maltz has been asked to lead a peer group of district vice-presidents for an LCEF "micro-region" that includes the following districts: Oklahoma/Kansas, Rocky Mountain, Montana/Wyoming.

LCEF Fall Leadership Conference. The LCEF conference in November will be a Zoom business meeting rather than an in-person conference.

District Activity. A loan was approved for Ascension Lutheran Church, Pratt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Topeka, paid off its LCEF loan on February 1, 2021.

Business Summary

- Through March 2021, the LCEF Kansas District has **30** LCEF loans outstanding with a balance of **\$14,509,937**.
- The LCEF Kansas District has **1887** investors.
- Total amount invested: **\$58,719,999**

Business Office

Heather Williams

Human Resources/Personnel. The Business Office reviewed financial compensation for 12 call documents this quarter.

District Properties. The roof of the District Office is scheduled to be replaced the first week of May. On the technology front, we switched to a VoIP (Voice-Over Internet Phone) system, and all extensions have changed. At the Retreat Center, we installed a wooden fence around the HVAC units, as required by our insurance company to deter copper theft, and we ordered a new window to replace one damaged by a break-in attempt.

Finance. Congregational receipts are slightly ahead of budget for the first quarter, with expenses under budget. We continue to receive convention assessments; the deadline has been extended to May 2022,

due to the one-year delay of the convention. The District's audit fieldwork has been completed, and we are awaiting the final report. We anticipate no management comments on internal control.

Estates. During the past quarter, the District received an estate gift designated for church planting. We are also expecting (or in the process of receiving) several additional estate gifts. In September 2020, we received notice that the District is the beneficiary of an estate gift with funds designated for missions in Kansas, scholarships for pastoral ministry, and a planned giving endowment fund. In April 2020, the District received notice of an estate that will benefit the District and Grace, Ulysses, in the areas of ethnic ministries, seminary scholarships, and new ministries. In February 2021, the District learned of another estate gift, half of which will benefit missions in Africa, and half of which is designated for District general needs.

Consulting. Heather Williams and Rev. Galchutt are working with Immanuel Community Outreach Association, LUMA and Trinity, Mission and Shawnee on how they can best continue Hispanic ministry utilizing their current resources through partnership arrangements.

Communications

Kris Bruss

LW Series. Over the next few months, we will be addressing the theme of "Equipping the Baptized" in the Kansas insert of *The Lutheran Witness*, with members of the President's Council contributing lead articles on topics related to the theme. The tentative topic list includes mentorship, Bible study, Christian education/training, service to neighbor, home devotions, and mercy work/human care.

Together We Pray: The 50-day "Together We Pray" campaign for Lent and Easter, launched in conjunction with the Kansas District Day of Repentance, ran from February 17–April 7, with verses and prayers posted daily on Facebook.

Convention Communication. As noted in the President's report, the District convention has been rescheduled for June 2022. Convention communication tasks in the past quarter included updating the convention website, preparing news items for our publications, and reworking the documents included in the updated mailing to congregations and rostered workers, scheduled to be sent in May.

Pentecost Offering. The annual Kansas District Pentecost Offering, which supports theological education in West and Central Africa, will be held May 23. Materials produced in support of the offering include a bulletin insert, announcements and a collect, a video guide (to accompany a one-hour recorded presentation by Rev. Gary and Stephanie Schulte), and a new webpage dedicated to the offering.

Coming Out of COVID. Last spring, we posted a document called "Coming Out of the COVID Shutdown" on our website, in conjunction with the phased reopening plan for Kansas after the initial pandemic shutdown. Now that "Coming Out of COVID" actually looks more promising, we have issued a revised version of the document called "Moving Forward After COVID." The new document contains some of the original material but also includes new sections on repairing divisions in the body of Christ and worker wellness, issues that have become more prominent over the past year.

BOARD REPORTS

Special note: Service board meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom, with board chairs providing brief verbal highlights at the full Board of Directors meeting.

Board of Missions

Marvin Schulteis, Chair

Church Planting. Exploratory work continues on a possible church plant in the De Soto/K-10 corridor.

Quarterly Mission Grant Reports. The board noted highlights from the quarterly Mission Grant reports, including the recent launch of the new Older Adult Ministry newsletter, "Senior Moments." Chair Schulteis shared a copy of the newsletter with the Board of Directors.

Campus Ministry. Rev. Galchutt attended a college Bible study in Salina in March. About 25 students from Kansas Wesleyan have attended the study at Pastor Mark Boxman's house. There's talk now about holding a campus ministry meeting in the fall, possibly at the Fall Pastors Conference.

Board of Education

Bruce Schultz, Chair

Committee Updates: Jim Bradshaw highlighted the work of various committees, including Children's and Family Life, Adult Education, and District Youth Ministry.

ACTION ITEMS

- The board approved a Legacy Fund request from teacher Debra Doesken of Faith Lutheran School in Derby in the amount of \$500 to help with the expenses of attending an Introduction to Literacy Intervention Specialist training course.
- The board reviewed and approved the ministry description for the Assistant to the District President for Education and Youth.
- The board approved the following motion regarding the Legacy Fund:
 - Resolved, that the Kansas District Board of Directors designate \$10,000 from unrestricted funds to replenish the Legacy Fund.

Board of Caring Ministry

Rick Hanebutt, Chair

Pastors' Wives Retreat. The Pastors' Wives Retreat Committee hosted a virtual retreat March 13 at multiple sites. The speaker for the event was Deaconess Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry. The board discussed ways to support and encourage the Pastor's Wives Committee.

Disaster Response. Immanuel, Ellsworth has acquired a comfort dog, Keren, who is expected to complete training in May. LERT member Brian Mead (First, Paola) has been assisting with tornado clean-up in Alabama. Board members expressed gratitude for the work of our dedicated Kansas LERT members.

Actions

- The board approved a resolution requesting the Board of Directors to approve up to \$6160 to be expensed from the Disaster Response Fund in 2021 for the following (in priority order):

Chainsaw training (two people); 2021 Disaster Response Conference attendance (four people); low-kickback chains (four chainsaws); LERT t-shirts.

Board of Stewardship

Dan Thalmann, Chair

Hybrid Meetings of the Board. The District staff has received much feedback in favor of the hybrid meeting model (Zoom meetings for service boards; in-person meetings for the full Board of Directors). This hybrid model will now be the standard for conducting quarterly meetings.

2021 Budget. Heather Williams reviewed the Budget-to-Actual report for the first quarter (through April 15, 2021). First-quarter congregational receipts and expenses were in line with expectations. Total income exceeded expenses, resulting in an increase in net assets in the first quarter.

2021 Congregation Mission Receipts. Heather Williams reviewed a Congregational Giving Report. A comparison of monthly averages for the last three years shows a strong February and March and an average April for 2021.

2022 Budget. Rev. Galchutt reviewed a letter to be sent to all committees of the service boards requesting that they hold the line on expenses for the 2022 budget. Lead staff will communicate with the committees. The deadline for submission of budgets is June 15, 2021.

Planned Giving. Planned Giving advocates are available to serve congregations. The District is using various means to let pastors and congregations know that this new service is available.

Budget Planning Tool for Congregations. Rev. Galchutt presented a document entitled “Financial Stewardship and the Local Congregation,” designed to help congregations enhance their financial planning. The District would like to have a resource like this available on the website and for President Panzer and Rev. Galchutt to use in their service to District congregations.

Board of Administration

Dave Bruns, Chair

Financial Report. Business Manager Heather Williams reported on the financial status of the district, reviewing balance sheets, statement of activities, and budget-to-actual and income-to-expenses spreadsheets.

ACTION ITEMS

The board approved the following for consideration by the Board of Directors:

- Resolved, that the Kansas District Board of Directors acknowledge gifts received from January 16, 2021 to April 15, 2021 in the amount of \$56,324.73.

Salary Review

Bruce Schultz, Chair

Presentation on Compensation Tools. Business Manager Heather Williams presented an overview of the District Salary Guidelines and the Compensation Tool from Concordia Plan Services. The committee then heard from a District pastor who discovered several issues with the guidelines during a recent deliberation of a call.

ACTION ITEMS

In the interest of providing the best guidance for District congregations and workers, the committee approved the following resolution:

Resolution 21B-07-01 – Task Force for Revising Salary Scales

Resolved, to ask District staff to distill the information presented at the Salary Review Committee meeting, to present information to the Board of Directors, and to ask the District President to appoint a task force for revising salary scales.