



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

May 2024

DISTRICT STAFF REPORTS

President's Office

Rev. Justin Panzer, District President

First Quarter Meetings and Events. Events over the first quarter include but are not limited to: multiple meetings, both in-person and virtual, with District staff, President's Council, service boards, and various committees; Constitution & Bylaws Committee meetings; De Soto church plant meeting; Council of Presidents; Church Ambassador Network – Kansas House of Representatives Prayer; Kansas Legislature Prayer Breakfast Devotion/Kansas Senate Opening Prayer; Lutheran Schools Committee in Topeka; Kansans for Life Banquet in Overland Park; KS District LWML Biennial Convention in Wichita; LCMS Audit meetings; and multiple Circuit Winkel visits.

Ordinations and Installations. There were two pastoral installations in the first quarter (Rev. Sean Baker, Overland Park – Region 1; Rev. Timothy Wilcoxon, Trinity, Burlington – Region 1).

Visits/Travel. In the first quarter President Panzer drove 10,553 miles as he traveled to installations, meetings, Circuit Winkels, conferences, and preaching engagements.

Congregational Activity. In the first quarter there were eight calling congregations in the Kansas District, with four churches seeking a sole pastor and four an associate/assistant. 14 call lists were completed in the past quarter.

Congregational & School Services

Rev. Daniel Grams, Executive Assistant to the President for Congregational & School Services

Lutheran Schools & Youth. Rev. Grams attended multiple meetings in the first quarter, including but not limited to: meetings with Youth Ministry Coordinator Miriam Wehling and School Ministry Coordinator Dr. Patti Hoffman; Educator's Conference Planning meeting; KSDE officials concerning state board accreditation; KAIRS Conference; Lutheran Schools Committee; Principals and school leaders; Alliance Defending Freedom and Early Childhood Cabinet. Pastor Grams has also visited a number of Lutheran schools in the Kansas District.

Missions and Stewardship. Rev. Grams reported on the March 7 Hispanic Ministry Convocation; 20+ were in attendance, representing about a dozen congregations/ministries. Pastor Grams gave his first Stewardship Sunday presentation on April 21, at Immanuel, Junction City. He also spoke about other granting sources being available for congregations, including LCMS National Grants and the Kansas District LWML.

Education & Youth

James Bradshaw, Executive Assistant to the President for Education and Youth

Lutheran Schools. Eight congregations/schools are currently involved in the call process for a Commissioned Minister of Religion: Emporia, Messiah (CUI DCE intern); Overland Park, Bethany (Teacher); Garden City, Trinity (DCS intern); Leavenworth, St. Paul (Teacher); Linn (Teacher); Holy Cross, Wichita (Teacher); and Fairmount Ministries, Wichita (Commissioned Minister). The LCMS *Genesis Project* feasibility study work continues at Faith, Ottawa; First, Sabetha; Christ the King and Trinity, Salina, and Ascension, Wichita.

Worker Conferences. The 2024 church worker conferences will be held as follows: Pastors Conference, Oct. 7-8 at St. John's, Topeka. Educators Conference, Oct. 13-15 at Beautiful Savior, Olathe.

Parish Education. The Parish Education Committee proposed for Marriage Enrichment seminars to be held around the Kansas District. Update: Four congregations have confirmed dates with presenters to be held within the next six months.

Youth Ministry. 2024 Lutheran Valley Retreat (LVR) will be June 2-7, 2024. 120 youth and adults attended the 2024 Middle School Huddle April 19-20 at Rock Springs 4H Center, south of Junction City. The 2024 Fall Confirmation Retreat for 5th-8th grade youth will be Oct. 4-5 at Rock Springs 4-H Center. The LCMS Youth Gathering will be held July 19-23, 2025, in New Orleans. Debbie Dennett (Winfield) will be the lead District Coordinator and Karen Thurnau (Wichita) will assist.

Older Adult Ministry. The 2024 Saints Alive After 55 (SAA55) event will be held July 21-22 at Christ the King, Salina.

2024 Faith at Work: District-wide Service Projects. A post-event evaluation meeting is scheduled for May 9. Rick Hanebutt has agreed to serve as the *Faith at Work* Task Force Chair in 2025.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)

Jeffrey Maltz, LCEF District Vice President

Financial Update

- Through March 2024, LCEF Kansas District has **27** LCEF loans outstanding with a balance of **\$15,939,040**.
- LCEF Kansas District has **1,556** investors.
- Total amount invested: **\$62,080,190**.
- **4.5%** of LCMS Kansas District members are investors.

LCEF Business Notes. LCEF Operating Revenue for Fiscal Year 2023 paid to District is \$70,263. LCEF loan rates are increasing slightly, with the last quarter mirroring the increase in investment rates.

Church Worker Loan Pool. Generate a pool of funds to offer below-market interest rates for all loan products that LCEF offers exclusively to rostered church workers (commissioned and ordained) which presently includes residential mortgage, home equity, debt consolidation and education consolidation loans. LCEF intends to raise a total of \$250 million. Investment rates: 5 years – 0.500%; 8 years – 1.000%; 10 years – 1.250%.

Business Office

Heather Williams, Business Manager

Human Resources. The Business Office reviewed financial compensation for 19 call documents and planning scenarios this quarter, including every congregation calling from the seminaries.

Property. District Office – Maintenance and repairs expenses are significantly over budget for the year-to-date, with significant repairs for the fire systems and elevator, many repairs due to code changes in the industry and between city and state.

Retreat Center – Kansas DCEs had a retreat and a workday at the Herington Retreat Center. They cleaned out and organized the kitchen, worked on landscaping, and fixed the fire pit, among other projects.

Accounting/Finances. Congregational giving is beyond year-to-date commitments and came in at 26.49% of budget. Expenses are reported at 26.34% of budget. We continue to work through our investment plan passed at the 23B Board of Directors meeting. We received a draft of our 01/15/24 audited financial statements. They include an unqualified or “clean” opinion. We also received our management letter that communicated no deficiencies and no management comments. The 2023 audited financial statements are on the District website, under the Business Office, District Resources section:

<https://kslcms.org/district-resources>

Congregational Treasurers Workshops. Heather will be conducting four regional Congregational Treasurers Workshops this fall (dates to be determined). At the workshops, we will review the Congregational Treasurers Manual and hear about the Kansas District and how we steward congregational support dollars. We will discuss topics including narrative budgets, salary guidelines, board governance, internal control, planned giving, clergy taxes, document retention, employer resources, and employees vs. contractors. Please let your congregational treasurers know that this will be offered. Pastors and other congregational lay leaders are also welcome to attend.

2025 District Convention. We are now under contract with the Tony’s Pizza Event Center. Heather has developed the Convention budget, and we will be considering the assessment at this Board of Directors meeting. The initial informational mailing will be going out in May. In order to save substantially on postage, we will be combining the informational letter and assessment invoices, but all forms and other documents will be referred to and accessed on our website.

Communications

Jackie Schaefer, Communications Specialist

Kansas District Website. Website projects this quarter included updating the Guinea/West Africa webpage with the downloadable 2024 Pentecost Offering bulletin insert and announcements, along with updates and photos from the mission field; updating the *Faith at Work* main webpage with updated instructions, and the *Faith at Work* Communication Resources page with more resources sent from the *Faith at Work* task force; updating the Middle School Huddle webpage with the registration link, fillable participation form, schedule, and brochure, along with instructions; updating the Calls and Vacancies webpage with new photos and names of the candidates, vicars and interns assigned to Kansas, from 2024 Call Day; updating the Lutheran Valley Retreat (LVR) webpage with the registration link and instructions; updating the LCMS Youth Gathering webpage on the District website with a new video resource “Why the Gathering?” and continuing to add to the *Congregation at Prayer (CAP)* webpage the one-year and three-year CAP prayers as Jackie receives them from Trinity Lutheran, Wichita, and the Parish Education Committee.

Social Media. Special Facebook postings include *Faith at Work* posts with photos and highlights from congregations, schools, and RSOs around Kansas; 2024 Call Day Kansas candidates, vicars, and intern photos and information; Pentecost Offering posts and upcoming events in the Kansas District.

Workers Together. Jackie created a new layout for the *Workers Together* newsletter, which will be sent out early May. Highlights from *Workers Together* (WT) publications this past quarter include ongoing worker installations, events/conferences around the District, highlights from the January 24 District Life Conference, Faith at Work articles and updates, March 7 Hispanic Ministry Convocation highlights, 2024 Call Day Kansas candidates, vicars, and intern photos and information, announcements and friendly reminders, and District and Synod available resources.

2025 Kansas District Convention Graphic and Webpage. Jackie completed the main graphic to be used for the Kansas District Convention, June 5-6, 2025. The theme is “Abiding in the Word” based on John 8:31-32. The main graphic is public on the 2025 District Convention webpage. Jackie completed the main webpage to be used for the 2025 Kansas District Convention. The needed forms and materials are on the webpage, and she will continue to update with necessary items.

2024 Pentecost Offering Materials. This year’s Pentecost Offering will continue to support the ongoing operational costs of the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies (CLET) Guinea seminary, as well as Lutheran education and resources for the CLET-Guinea students. Jackie prepared materials which included the Pentecost Offering bulletin insert and announcements for congregations and updated the Guinea/West Africa page on the District website with the new information and photos. The bulletin insert was printed and has been mailed to congregations who requested copies of the inserts. An electronic version of the insert was emailed to congregations who agreed to print their own, and the insert and announcements are included on the Guinea/West Africa webpage. Pentecost Sunday is May 19.

BOARD REPORTS

Board of Missions

Marvin Schulteis, Chair

Quarterly Mission Grant Reports. The Board of Missions reviewed the first quarter mission grant reports. Some highlights included campus ministry activities at Redeemer, Lawrence; Trinity, Wichita continues to provide a monthly Spanish meal and the Word and Sacraments in the Spanish language; the Older Adult Ministry will be holding the Saints Alive After 55 Conference July 21-22 at Christ the King, Salina.

West Africa Partnership. Construction began in April 2023 on the two main seminary buildings in Guinea, and progress continues. For the 2023-2024 academic year, the current group of students and supervisors remains in the existing church facility while construction is completed. Rev. Daniel Grams connected with Rev. Mark Rabe, who is temporarily serving as the Africa Regional Director while Rev. Shauen Trump is on study leave. Pastor Grams inquired about missionary personnel for West Africa. There is an alliance missionary involved and Phillip Magness, Director of Parish Music, is also involved in Francophone West Africa by introducing the French LSB to French-speaking Africa. These missionaries could possibly be supported by the Kansas District in their West Africa partnership. Pastor Grams would like to take a survey of KSD congregations supporting international missionaries.

Hispanic Ministry Convocation, March 7. Rev. Grams received positive feedback from the Hispanic Ministry Convocation, with 20+ people in attendance representing about a dozen congregations/ministries.

Board of Education & Youth

Dan Thalmann, Chair

Reports. Rev. Daniel Grams and Jim Bradshaw presented their Executive reports to the Board of Education and Youth. Rev. Daniel Grams is beginning to take more of a lead in responsibilities and Jim is taking a consulting/coaching/debriefing role. Reports were also received from the Parish Education Committee, Lutheran Schools Committee, Accreditation, KAIRS, the Early Childhood Consultant, the Professional Development Committee, and the Youth Ministry Committee.

Business. A tax credit scholarship for low-income students and the potential development of a Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) continues to be discussed. The offering for the fall professional church worker conferences is to be designated to the Church Worker Care Fund. This was supported by consensus of the board.

Board of Caring Ministry

Rick Hanebutt, Chair

Reports. The Saints Alive After 55 Conference will be held July 21-22 at Christ the King, Salina. Two other Older Adult Ministry events are being planned. One of three 2024 Lutherans for Life regional conferences will be held in Kansas on Oct. 12, at Hope, Shawnee.

Faith at Work. It was noted that LCEF funding for the *Faith at Work* program is a portion of the annual LCEF operating surplus donated to the District (not a separate grant). The committee has done outstanding work in organizing the Kansas District inaugural implementation of the servant event. Over 50 servant events were registered with at least an estimated 2,000 participants! The *Faith at Work* task force will provide a report after the May committee meeting. The committee considered several topics concerning *Faith at Work* 2025; process and publicity improvements, committee membership, funding sources, and district staff support next year. Rick Hanebutt has agreed to chair the committee next year.

Board of Stewardship

Mark Wolters, Chair

2024 Budget Review. Heather Williams presented the first quarter budget-to-actual report, noting that at the end of the first quarter, 25% is the operative number to consider. Congregational giving is at 26.49% through the quarter, a strong start to the year. Investment income is off to a strong start, but it is always volatile. LCEF income and expenses are minimized in the budget for future purposes as payroll has been moved to LCEF. Total income for the first quarter is at 24.1%, with the LCEF payroll support being the primary reason. On the expense side of the budget several items have been frontloaded for the year (auto insurance, and many mission grants have been paid in full). Heather indicated no real concerns on budget expenses, other than the fact that insurance in general is significantly up. While the first quarter shows a deficit, it is understandable in light of the frontloading of some expenses.

2024 Congregation Mission Receipts Review. The first quarter was strong for congregational giving. While “ahead” through April, it is likely to balance out. Thank-you notes to congregations were sent for 2024 pledges received.

2025 Budget Discussion. Heather will be working on the 2025 budget over the next quarter so an initial budget may be presented at the next quarterly meeting. Requests to District committees should go out soon so that it can be used in planning the initial budget as Heather is looking to have information from committees by early June. In the future we may need to send this letter prior to the spring meeting.

Board of Administration

Dave Bruns, Chair

The Board of Administration moved, seconded, and passed the following resolution to go before the Kansas District Board of Directors:

Resolution 24B-01-01 - Acknowledgement of Quarterly Gifts

Resolved, that the Kansas District Board of Directors acknowledge gifts received from January 16, 2024, to April 15, 2024, in the amount of **\$2,340.68**.

Reports. Heather Williams presented her quarterly report, providing information on maintenance and repairs for the District Office building. These include repairs to the fire sprinkler system and elevator due to code changes; the building is now under state codes rather than city codes. Due to this, expenses are slightly above budget. Giving is also above annual commitments. We have received a “clean” opinion from the audited financial statements.

The next District Convention will be held in Salina at the Tony’s Pizza Event Center (TPEC) on June 5–6, 2025. We are under contract with TPEC, and assessments will be going out to congregations along with the May mailing.

Resolution 24B-01-02 – Authorization of 2025 District Convention Assessment

Whereas, the 2022 congregation statistics indicate that the Kansas District has approximately 34,997 communicant members; and
Whereas, 3-year inflation has impacted costs; and
Whereas, there are no rollover funds from the 2022 Kansas District convention, and
Whereas, in order to meet \$52,495.50 of the proposed budget for the Kansas District Convention in 2025, a budgeted assessment is needed to cover costs, and
Whereas, the District will cover an anticipated deficit of \$15,000 from the Doris Meyer Fund; therefore be it
Resolved, that the Board of Directors authorizes the 2025 District Convention congregational assessment at \$1.50 per communicant member.

The De Soto Light of the World church plant continues in conjunction with Beautiful Savior, Olathe. Candidate John Kastner was called to Olathe to serve the mission plant when he is ordained and installed. The search continues for land for a church building.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee proposed, seconded, and approved the following resolutions to go before the Kansas District Board of Directors:

Resolution 24B-06-01 – Grace, Ulysses

Resolved, that the LCMS Kansas District Board of Directors approve the Grace, Ulysses Constitution and Bylaws.

Resolution 24B-06-02 – District Operations Manual: Revision to Position Description

- Board of Administration

Resolution 24B-06-03 – Approval of Sabbatical for Mr. Jim Bradshaw

Whereas, following the guidelines of the Kansas District, Mr. Jim Bradshaw has requested a sabbatical for the dates of September 1 – November 30, 2024; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Executive Committee recommend to the Kansas District Board of Directors the approval of Mr. Bradshaw’s sabbatical as planned and supervised in coordination with his sabbatical accountability team.

Resolution 24B-06-04 – Designation of the October 2024 Pastors & Educators Church Worker Conference offering for the Worker Care Fund

Resolved, that the LCMS Kansas District Board of Directors approve the designation of the October 2024 Pastors and Educators Church Worker Conference offering for the Worker Care Fund.

Resolution 24B-06-05 – 2025 District Convention Offering to Support Theological Education

Whereas, the 2025 Kansas District Convention theme is “Abiding in the Word” (John 8:31-32); and
Whereas, there are 15 Lutheran Schools (Elementary and High School) in the Kansas District and the Kansas District will be celebrating its 28th year of partnership with the West Africa mission in 2025; and
Whereas, the Board of Directors is setting a goal of \$24,000 for the Convention Offering or \$1500 per the 16 receiving entities; therefore be it

Resolved, that the LCMS Kansas District Board of Directors designate the 2025 District Convention Offering to go towards the support of “Theological Education Books for our Kansas District Lutheran Schools” and “Theological Education – Books, Materials, Visiting Professors” in West Africa.