



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

MONTHLY KANSAS DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

WORKERS TOGETHER

JANUARY 2026

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ABOVE LEFT: Principal Kelsey Hatesohl presents Bibles to students at Linn Lutheran School in Linn. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Third graders work on a project in Science class at Hope Lutheran School in Shawnee. **BELOW:** The Athletics Teams from Bethany Lutheran School in Overland Park competed at St. Paul Lutheran School in St. Joseph, Mo., on Oct. 23.



National Lutheran Schools Week

National Lutheran Schools Week will be held **January 25-31**. The theme for 2026 is "Let's Make a Joyful Noise," based on Psalm 98:4. This special week provides an opportunity to celebrate educators,

students and their families as together we share the love of Christ with our communities.

Visit **Page 8** for more photos and highlights of Kansas District Lutheran schools!

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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Monthly Devotion

Zion Lutheran Church, Concordia
Chartering Service

2026 Congregation and
School Anniversaries

2026 Pre-Lent Conference



Rev. Justin Panzer | District President



After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:9-11

Epiphany comes from two Greek words that can be translated as “to shine upon,” “to reveal,” or “to appear, manifest.” What makes Epiphany so special is this: it is the time when God chose to reveal Himself, not just to a chosen few, but to all nations.

God is revealing Himself as One, who will not only judge all in the end, but who also has a plan for our lives. Because He loves us, and because He knew that we needed forgiveness and salvation, this one God sent His only Son to save us.

Do we grasp what's happening at the Epiphany? God will get His way with you or without you. In many ways, we're not always so different from the first Epiphany people. You've had incredible spiritual blessings here, years of Bible teaching and preaching in our church family. But we have the old sinful nature working down inside us. We're not better than

the Jerusalem folks who didn't care much when the Wise Men arrived all excited about the newborn king. We've just crossed into a new year. That fact should fill us with two thoughts especially: First, to thank God for all His kindness in the past. Second, each new year can remind you that time is ticking away. You're coming that much closer to the end of all things, or to the end of your personal life, whichever comes first.

How do you plan to spend 2026 in your life as God's child? The Wise Men had to travel hundreds of miles to get to Christ. You don't have to do anything like that. You've got cars. You've got alarm clocks to wake you up plenty in time for church. You see, you've got Bethlehem right here in your church, whenever the saving news of Jesus is sounded. He is your Lord and Savior—crucified on the cross for your sins and bodily raised on the third day for your forgiveness, life and salvation. Whenever the Holy Sacraments are offered as Jesus gave them to us, be at your congregation

to receive His good gifts. In Word and Sacrament, you have the Christ Child—giving Himself to you for the free pardon of your sins.

Set before you this year the attitude of the Wise Men: what a privilege it is to worship the newborn King! What joy that He wipes your slate clean by His pardoning and forgiving blood. What wonder that He makes you to be His child through the redeeming waters of your Baptism.

What grace He sets before you at His table so that you might be fed now and eternally. What a privilege to give back to Him a percentage of what He first blesses you with in life. What a privilege you have to share in word and deed this light of Christ with others that surround in life. Respond to the “star of wonder, star of night” with this joyful attitude!



Peace
Lutheran
Church,
Beaver,
Okla.



Bethlehem
Lutheran
Church,
Bremen



Immanuel
Lutheran
Church,
Bremen



Trinity Lutheran Church
& Preschool, Burlington

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Out and About in Kansas

President Panzer's January Travel Schedule

January 4

Preaching at Zion
chartering service
at 3 p.m. (*Concor-
dia*)

January 11

Preaching at St.
Paul (installation
of Rev. Christopher
Craig) (*Ellsworth*)

Preaching at Bethle-
hem (*Sylvan Grove*)

Preaching at Mes-
siah (installation of
Rev. Reed Shoaff at
3 p.m.) (*Hays*)

January 13

Circuits 1 & 6
Winkel at Calvary
(*Topeka*)

January 20

Circuits 2 / 3N /
3S Winkel at Hope
(*Shawnee*)

January 21

Lutheran Social
Service meeting
(*Wichita*)

January 28

Kansas District Life
Conference at St.
John's (*Topeka*)

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Kansas District congregations and schools estab-
lished in years ending in "6" and "11" will mark
five-year milestone anniversaries in 2026. Praise
God for His blessings!

Congregations Congregations (Cont.)

25 years (2001)

Trinity, Shawnee campus

30 years (1996)

Christ, Manhattan

40 years (1986)

King of Kings, Gardner

50 years (1976)

Our Saviour, Great Bend
Redeemer, Lawrence

55 years (1971)

St. Andrews, Wichita

65 years (1961)

Grace, Hill City
Bethany, Overland Park
Christ, Topeka

75 years (1951)

Trinity, Burlington

80 years (1946)

First, Sabetha

90 years (1936)

Trinity, Parsons

100 years (1926)

Trinity, Holton
Our Saviour, Kansas City,
Kan.
Immanuel, Junction City

105 years (1921)

First, Paola

110 years (1916)

Immanuel, Ellsworth

115 years (1911)

Holy Cross, Dodge City
St. Paul's, Lincoln
St. Luke's, Manhattan

120 years (1906)

Immanuel, Lakin
Trinity, Ramona

125 years (1901)

Bethlehem, Bremen

140 years (1886)

Trinity, Hunter
Zion, Newton
St. John's, Oberlin
Trinity, Waterville

145 years (1881)

St. John, Lincoln
Bethlehem, Sylvan Grove

150 years (1876)

Zion, Pittsburg

160 years (1866)

Trinity, Atchison

165 years (1861)

St. John, Alma
St. John's, Herington
St. Paul's, Junction City

Schools

Preschool (PS) and K-8 (EL)

20 years (2006)

Trinity Family of Faith,
Basehor (PS)
Calvary, Topeka (PS)

25 years (2001)

Beautiful Savior, Olathe (PS)
Christ, Overland Park (EL)

45 years (1981)

St. Luke's, Manhattan (PS)

60 years (1966)

Bethany, Overland Park (PS)

95 years (1931)

Our Saviour, Kansas City,
Kan. (PS)



Zion Lutheran Church, Concordia: Congratulations!

On Sunday, January 4, 2026, **Zion Lutheran Church in Concordia** was officially Chartered under the LCMS. A chartering service was held with worship, and over 75 participants attended. The sermon was given by Rev. Justin Panzer, Kansas District President. There was a reception following the service. Worship at Zion is held on Sundays at 8 a.m. ***May God abundantly bless this newest church plant in the Kansas District!***



The Kansas District Pre-Lent Conference for pastors will be held **Feb. 2-3, 2026**, at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lawrence (2700 Lawrence Ave., Lawrence, KS 66047). The theme is "How the Church's Divine Pedagogy Invites Conversation with Those Who Disagree with Us." The keynote speaker is **Rev. Dr. Chad Kendall**, Assistant Vice President of Mission and Identity and Associate Professor of Theology at Concordia University Chicago. Participants can arrive Sunday evening, February 1. There will be a Circuit Visitors and Region Vice-Presidents meeting on Sunday at 6 p.m. Visit the homepage of the Kansas District website <https://kslcms.org> to register and find a schedule.

CALLS & VACANCIES

PASTORAL CALLS

Rev. Robert Hoffman, St. Stephen, Waterford, MI to Holy Cross, Dodge City – **declined**

Rev. Jonathan Olson, Hope, Aurora, CO to Trinity, Garden City – **pending**

PENDING ORDINATIONS / INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Reed Shoaff, Salem, Taylorsville, NC to Messiah, Hays – **installation Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, at 3 p.m.**

Rev. Richard Bridgman, Faith, Appleton, WI to Messiah, Emporia – **accepted, installation Sunday, February 15, 2026**

SMP Candidate Andrew Gunzelman, Associate Pastor, Lord of Life, Leawood – **ordination and installation Sunday, February 22, 2026**

COMMISSIONED MINISTER CALLS — from the field

DCE Hannah Elsey, Fairmount Ministries, Wichita to Zion, Palmyra, MO – **declined**

CONGREGATIONS CALLING or PREPARING TO CALL A FULL-TIME PASTOR

Dodge City, Holy Cross
(sole)

Leavenworth, St. Paul
(sole)

Ellinwood, St. John
(senior)

Medicine Lodge, Trinity & St. John, Nashville (sole)

Ellsworth, Immanuel
(sole)

Paola, First (sole)

Garden City, Trinity
(senior)

Wichita, St. Andrews
(sole) (seminary)

Hoisington, Concordia
(sole)

CONGREGATIONS CALLING A COMMISSIONED MINISTER

Alma, St. John (Teacher)

Leavenworth, St. Paul (Principal) (Teacher)

Shawnee, Hope (5th Grade Teacher)

Wichita, Ascension (Teacher)

JANUARY PRAYER REQUESTS

Those grieving the loss of loved ones

- **Family and friends of Rev. Mark Mozeik**, pastor of St. John, Meade. Rev. Mozeik entered his heavenly rest November 22.
- **Family and friends of Dean Landman**, former archivist of the LCMS Kansas District. Dean entered his heavenly rest November 7.
- **Rev. Jaron and Liz Melin**, as they grieve the loss of their child Doxa Theodotus Melin by miscarriage. Doxa passed away Dec. 5 and a miscarriage funeral service was held Dec. 23.

Those experiencing recent / ongoing health issues

- **Rev. Richard Andrus**
- **Rev. Dean Christ**
- **Carrie Meyers**
- **Simon Begley**
- **Rev. David Gruoner**
- **Rev. Kevin Peterson**
- **Rev. Dr. Michael Bin-genheimer**
- **Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan**
- **Rev. David McCloskey**

Those celebrating the gift of new life

- **Rev. Joseph and Olivia Goodroad** (son Olaf Martin, Dec. 24).

Congregations / Schools Facebook Prayer List

- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Duluth, and St. John Lutheran Church, Easton – **Jan. 5**
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church & Preschool, and St. John Lutheran Church, Herington – **Jan. 12**
- Ascension Lutheran Church & Preschool, and Open Arms Development Center, Wichita – **Jan. 19**
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School, and In His Hands Preschool, Cheney – **Jan. 26**

MISSIONS & STEWARDSHIP

LCMS U Campus Ministry

Jesus Door-2-Door

Out and About in Kansas

Rev. Daniel Grams'

January Travel Schedule

January 7

Hope Lutheran School
visit (Shawnee)

January 11

Our Saviour Lutheran
Church (Kansas City,
Kan.)

January 13

Circuit 8 Winkel at St.
John (Alma)

January 14

Bethany Lutheran
School visit (Overland
Park)

January 14-17

LCMS CCN meetings
(St. Louis, Mo.)

January 28

Christ Lutheran School
visit (Overland Park)



St. Luke's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

On Monday, December 8,
**LCMS U at Kansas State
University (KSU)** enjoyed a
Christmas Party at the Beta
Sigma Psi (BΣΨ) House.

After a Christmas devotion
focusing on the words of the angel, "Do not be afraid," there was a Wacky Gift Exchange. Snacks
and laughter were enjoyed by all. The group is made up mostly of students who attend both
St. Luke's Lutheran Church (located on the west side of Manhattan) and Christ Lutheran Church
(located on the east side of Manhattan). **Pastors and church workers:** please help us connect
your students to this ministry at this very important time in their life. We want to encourage you
to visit your KSU student on a Monday, and bring them to a Bible Study.



DCE William Prann

(St. Luke's, Manhattan)

wprann@stlukesmanhattan.org

phone: 602-930-7870

Rev. Michael Schmidt

(St. Luke's, Manhattan)

srpastor@stlukesmanhattan.org

phone: 785-370-9790

Rev. Jim Woelmer

(Christ, Manhattan)

jwoelmer@verizon.net

phone: 972-704-6722

Jesus Door-2-Door

On December 13, eight people
gathered at Zion Lutheran Church in
Concordia for a **Jesus Door-2-Door
(JD2D) event**. The group divided
into four canvassing teams and
drove to the nearby town of Glasco
to canvass.

The groups knocked on a total of
79 homes. 26 people answered the
door, with 15 of those individuals
agreeing to take the survey. Four

individuals (26%) were unchurched. Through the group's canvassing efforts, two individuals desired a follow-up visit.
The next JD2D event will take place on January 24 at Hope Lutheran Church and School in Shawnee, Kansas.

On December 14, Zion Lutheran Church in Linn had special guest **Rev. Dr. Leopoldo Sánchez**, professor of systematic
theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, preach at their Spanish language worship service. Zion, Linn has held
weekly Spanish language worship services since Sept. 23, 2023. Dr. Sánchez preached on 1 John 3:16-24 and focused
on the Holy Spirit's permanent residence in our hearts. There was a total of 29 people in attendance, and 23 of those
attendees were Spanish-speakers.



(Jesus Door-2-Door 2025 statistics on Page 6)



Messiah Lutheran Church, Emporia



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Erie

MISSIONS & STEWARDSHIP



JD2D resources are free to download and use at jd2d.org. You can also find a schedule of 2026 JD2D events.

Jesus Door-2-Door 2025 Kansas Statistics

In 2025, Jesus Door-2-Door (JD2D) canvassed in the following places in Kansas:

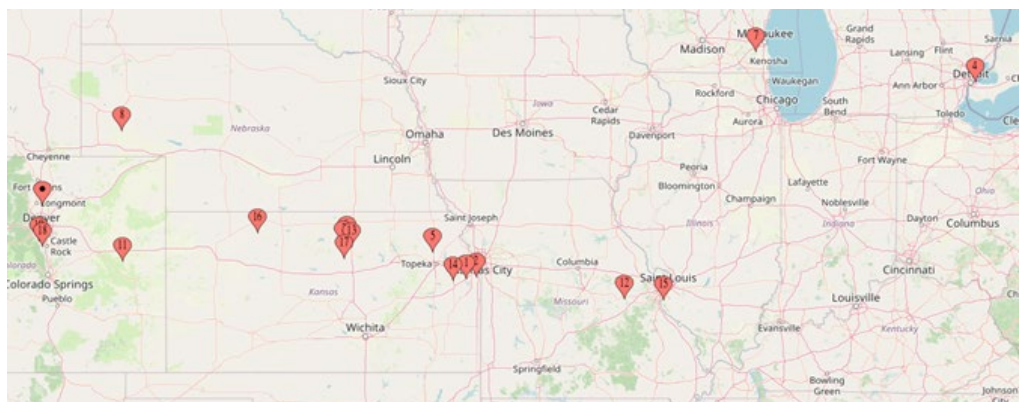
- **De Soto, KS** (on behalf of Light of the World Lutheran Church)
- **Shawnee, KS** (on behalf of Hope Lutheran Church)
- **Jamestown, KS** (on behalf of Zion Lutheran Church, Concordia)
- **Holton, KS** (on behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church)
- **Norway, KS** (on behalf of Zion Lutheran Church, Concordia)
- **Concordia, KS** (on behalf of Zion Lutheran Church, Concordia)
- **Lawrence, KS** (on behalf of Redeemer Lutheran Church)
- **Norton, KS** (on behalf of Immanuel Lutheran Church)
- **Glasco, KS** (on behalf of Zion Lutheran Church, Concordia)

The Jesus Door-2-Door canvassing groups knocked on a total of **1,186 homes**. **410 (34.5%)** people answered the door. Of those 410 people, **258 (63%)** agreed to take the survey.

Of those who agreed to take the survey, the following information was obtained:

- **85 (33%)** were unchurched.
- **37 (14%)** when asked "Where do you believe you will go when you die?" responded with an answer other than heaven.
- Of the 221 people who thought they were going to heaven, only **106 (48%)** were confident of this because of what Jesus did for them.
- **34 (13%)** were not baptized.
- **13 (5%)** desired a follow-up visit from the hosting congregation.

2025 Jesus Door-2-Door canvassing events were also held in other states including Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, Michigan, and Wisconsin.



EDUCATION & YOUTH

Youth Ministry

2026 KAIRS Administrators Conference

National Lutheran Schools
Week

Kansas Lutheran Schools Scholar-
ship Foundation (KLSSF)

2026 Higher Things Dates & Locations

June 23-26, 2026

Washington University
St. Louis, MO

June 30-July 3, 2026

Washington University
St. Louis, MO

July 14-17, 2026

Colorado State
University
Fort Collins, CO

Visit the *Higher
Things* website at
[https://higherthings.
org/dcrh](https://higherthings.org/dcrh).

Pricing

February 1 - April 30, 2026:

WashU - \$605

CSU - \$625

On or after May 1, 2026:

WashU - \$655

CSU - \$675

A nonrefundable deposit of \$150 is required to secure every attendee's spot at their desired conference, especially if said site reaches capacity and the wait-list policy is implemented.

2026 KAIRS Administrators Conference

The KAIRS Annual 2026 Administrators Conference registration is now live on the kairs.org website! Please note the deadline for this conference will be February 2.

The Conference will be **February 9-10, 2026**, and held at the Ramada by Wyndham (420 SE 6th Street, Topeka, KS 66607). When completing this registration form, please make sure to list every attendee's dietary restrictions to better help the catering process.

Click on [This Link](#) to register.

For questions, please contact Dr. Jamie Finkeldei, KAIRS President, finkeldej@catholicdioceseofwichita.org or Nichole Karungu, Communications Director, kansas.kairs@gmail.com



Kansas District Youth Ministry Events 2025-2026



kslcms.org/education-youth/youth-ministry



Youth Lead Training
March 19-22, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)



Middle School Huddle
April 17-18, 2026
Rock Springs Ranch (Junction City, KS)



Lutheran Valley Retreat (LVR) Camp
May 31-June 5, 2026 (Woodland Park, CO)



Higher Things 2026 Dates
higherthings.org/dcrh/



LCMS Youth Gathering 2028
July 3-7, 2028



**Join the Kansas District
[Youth Ministry](#)
Facebook page!**



Trinity Lutheran Church, Cañey



Immanuel Lutheran Church, Canton



Zion Lutheran Church & SONShine Preschool, Chanute

EDUCATION & YOUTH

National Lutheran Schools Week

National Lutheran Schools Week will be held **January 25-31**. The theme for 2026 is “Let’s Make a Joyful Noise,” based on Psalm 98:4. The Kansas District is blessed to have 14 elementary schools (K-8), which includes two classical schools; one classical high school and 40 preschools.

Visit <https://resources.lcms.org/reading-study/national-lutheran-schools-week-resources> to find resources to celebrate our Lutheran schools.



ABOVE LEFT: First and second graders at Zion Lutheran School in Independence dressed as astronauts for “Out of This World Day.” **ABOVE RIGHT:** Seventh and eighth graders at Zion Lutheran School in Independence dressed as aliens for “Out of This World Day.” **BELOW:** Students and faculty at Trinity Lutheran School in Atchison attended an event featuring Dr. Ben Carson at the Amelia Earhart Museum on Nov. 10.



LEFT: Early Learning Center students at Good Shepherd Lutheran School in Marysville have a lesson about apples.

RIGHT: Trinity Lutheran School in Winfield had an all-school field trip to Camp Horizon on Oct. 30.





St. Paul's Lutheran Church
& School, Cheney



Zion Lutheran Church,
Clafin



St. Paul Lutheran
Church & Preschool,
Clay Center

EDUCATION & YOUTH

Empowering Futures
Formed by Faith



Do you want to transform lives through Lutheran education? Support the Kansas Lutheran Schools Scholarship Foundation and empower students with Christ-centered scholarships!

Why Donate?



- 75% State Tax Credit
- 90% of your donation provides up to \$8,000 in scholarships per student
- Scholarships serve low-income students
- Strengthen Lutheran schools and support KLSSF in expanding their mission & impact.

REV. DANIEL GRAMS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

📞 (785) 357-4441

🌐 www.klssf.org

✉ dgrams@klssf.org

(Continued on Page 10)



St. Paul's Lutheran
Church, Coffeyville



Trinity Lutheran
Church, Colby



Zion Lutheran Church,
Concordia



Calvary Lutheran
Church, Council Grove

EDUCATION & YOUTH

Empowering Futures
Formed by Faith



Do you want to transform lives through Lutheran education? Support the Kansas Lutheran Schools Scholarship Foundation and empower students with Christ-centered scholarships!

Support the Mission: Share!

Help spread KLSSF's mission through our downloadable PR Kit, including a bulletin insert, social media graphics, email template, and more!

[Download the PR Kit](#)

KLSSF, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID# 993778196. All donations are tax deductible.

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CARING MINISTRY

LERT / Disaster Response

Parish Nurse Ministry



Lutheran Early Response Team

Generation Alpha have a heart to serve. They want to help make the world around them a better place; to reach out and help those around them.

The caveat is, they want their contributions to be relevant and somewhat measurable. Who will benefit? What is the purpose of your project? What are the short and long-term goals?

I call it the “Why”—and find that young people are more likely to answer a call to serve when they have a clear understanding of what the expected outcome might be. Do your homework, come prepared to tell them why your project is important and to whom. Young participants want to feel included, valued and relevant to the project they are contributing to. And let’s be honest, this group of volunteers

brings valuable gifts to the table — energy, passion, imagination and resources, not to mention an innate ability to navigate social media and technology. And they are so much fun to work with!

When we partner with young people and give them opportunity to take some ownership in a project, they can move forward with creativity and energy to see it through. As team players, they recognize that a collaborative effort benefits the outcome. Don’t be afraid to ask; just be ready for the “Why.”

And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” - Matt. 25:40

Blessings,

Donna Williams

ksddrc@gmail.com

What is Mercy?

“Mercy is an act of love that enters into misery and brings consolation, relief and help. Mercy is love responding to need.”

- Wilhelm Loehe

Engaging Youth in Response Work (Part 2)

Be Prepared for the “Why?”

In my experience and in asking youth and young adults to share their stories of responding to needs of others, I find that for the most part young people in Generation Y through

Walk Your Pet Month: Promoting Health for You and Your Pet

January is “Walk Your Pet Month,” a timely encouragement to begin the new year with healthy habits for both you and your animal companions. We remember that pets are part of God’s good creation, entrusted to our care. Taking regular walks is not only beneficial for their physical and mental well-being, but also a way for us to practice faithful stewardship.

Daily walks help pets maintain a healthy weight, improve cardiovascular fitness, and reduce be-

havioral issues caused by boredom or excess energy. For owners, walking provides increased physical activity, stress relief, and the blessing of time outdoors to reflect, pray, or simply enjoy God’s handiwork.

During the colder months, we care for our neighbors—and our animals—by dressing appropriately, using reflective gear, and keeping walks brief in harsh weather.

Celebrate Walk Your Pet Month by making daily walks a routine, nurturing a healthier and joy-filled life for you and your pet.

Mary Hume, Parish Nurse and Kansas District Representative for Parish Nurses

BUSINESS OFFICE

Kansas District Resources

Announcements and Reminders

Automatically Created GoFundMe Non-Profit Accounts

Recently, GoFundMe has begun automatically creating donation pages for nonprofits using publicly available IRS data—without the organizations' direct consent. This development directly affects many non profit organizations, including congregations, schools, and other ministries.

If your congregation or school appears on Go-FundMe, please note:

- No action is required unless you wish to manage the page directly.
- Claiming a page allows your organization to link a bank account, control the content, view donor information, and ensure proper handling of gifts—but it also brings responsibilities for oversight, donor acknowledgment, and recordkeeping.
- Not claiming the page avoids these responsibilities, but it's wise to check the site occasionally to make sure your organization's name and information are used appropriately.
- GoFundMe's terms allow nonprofits to request removal of an automatically created page if they do not wish to be listed.

You can search to see whether your church or school has a GoFundMe page by visiting: <https://www.gofundme.com/s?nonprofits=1>. Many LCMS Kansas District ministries are listed here.

While these pages may provide another way for supporters to give, the automatic setup can cause confusion or reputational risk if left unmanaged. We encourage you to check whether your ministry has a GoFundMe page and take action as appropriate.

For more information, see GoFundMe's non-profit terms: <https://www.gofundme.com/gofundme-pro-terms>

Congregational Commitments

Every fall, congregations are given the opportunity to make a commitment to support our joint work in the Kansas District and the Synod for the upcoming year. We appreciate your prayerful consideration for your 2026 commitment!

Congregational commitment forms were mailed to congregations in September, along with an updated "Mission and Ministry" document and a 2025 Kansas District budget summary. Please submit your 2026 form by **January 15** at the latest in any of the following ways:

- Email / scan your form to **Shannon Fender** at shannon@kslcms.org or call 785-357-4441, ext. 1001. You can also fax your form to 785-357-5071.
- Mail your form to the LCMS Kansas District, 1000 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66604-1104.

2025 Year-End Checklist

The **2025 Year-End Checklist** is available for congregational treasurers. Click on the provided link to access the checklist: [2025 Year-End Checklist](https://kslcms.org/business-office/district-resources). You can also find it on the District Resources page of the District website, <https://kslcms.org/business-office/district-resources>.

Please note that the end of the 2025 fiscal year is **Thursday, January 15**. Anything received in the District office after January 15 will be posted to the 2026 fiscal year.

2026 IRS Mileage Rate

Effective January 1, 2026: The IRS new mileage rates are 72.5¢ per mile for business and 20.5¢ per mile for medical. The Kansas District mileage rate, set by the Board of Directors, is 15 cents below the IRS rate, or 57.5¢ per mile. These new rates apply to mileage reimbursements paid to an employee on or after January 1, 2026, with respect to transportation expenses paid or incurred by the employee on or after January 1, 2026. The rate used for charitable deduction purposes remains at 14¢ per mile.

A Note from Communications: Microsoft Publisher

The desktop publishing software Microsoft Publisher will be discontinued in October 2026. Microsoft suggests a few different alternatives to transition Publisher documents before October, including saving documents as PDFs and converting documents that need to be edited into Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Click on this link to learn more: <https://support.microsoft.com/>

There are also other publishing and design program options, including Canva, Adobe products, and Affinity. If you have any questions, please email **Jackie Schaefer** at jackie@kslcms.org.

LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND (LCEF)

Kansas District Resources

Announcements and Reminders

LCEF offers fixedrate term notes for 1 year and 18 months at 4%. A term note at LCEF allows you to grow your funds while making a real difference. Choose the term that fits your goals and enjoy peace of mind knowing your investment is supporting LCMS ministries and churches.

Please visit the LCEF website <https://lcef.org/term-notes> to see all current rates.



Dear Kansas District members,

LCEF's goal is to meet your congregations where they are at and to meet their needs, both immediate and long-term. LCEF offers [large construction and renovation loans](#), but did you know we offer smaller loans designed specifically for immediate needs?

Have a leaky roof? Broken organ? Need new carpet? LCEF's [Ministry Improvement Loan](#) may be just what your church needs.

The Ministry Improvement Loan is ideal for repairs, upgrades and enhancements that create a welcoming and functional space for your congregation and visitors. Enjoy features like:

- Interestonly payments for the first two years
- Funding up to \$150,000
- Quick approval process for most unsecured loans

If you find yourself needing a quick fix with a trusted partner, please reach out. I would love to see if a LCEF [Ministry Improvement Loan](#) is what your congregation needs.

Blessings,

Jeffrey Maltz

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Let's discover your financial path together.

Meet your LCEF representative

Your LCEF District Vice President (DVP) is

Jeffrey Maltz

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jeffrey.maltz@lcef.org



Learn more about how we can
work together at lcef.org/KanOK.



I am here to help **start, sustain and strengthen** LCMS ministries through financial and strategic partnerships.



"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." -MATTHEW 6:33



Light of the World Lutheran Church, De Soto



Faith Lutheran Church, Derby



Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dodge City

DISTRICT MEETINGS & EVENTS

DISTRICT CALENDAR

<https://kslcms.org/calendar>

JANUARY

Jan. 12 Board of Education and Youth, 4:30 p.m. (Zoom)
Jan. 13 Board of Missions, 4:00 p.m. (Zoom)
Jan. 15-17 LCMS CCN meetings (St. Louis, Mo.)
Jan. 15 Board of Caring Ministry, 1 p.m. (Zoom)
Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Day (District office closed)
Jan. 20 Older Adult Committee, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (Zoom)
Jan. 21 Lutheran Social Service BOD meeting, 10 a.m. (Wichita)

JAN. - FEB.

Jan. 21 Church Worker Care Team meeting, 1-2:30 p.m. (Zoom)
Jan. 23-24 LERT Leadership Retreat
Jan. 25-31 National Lutheran Schools Week
Jan. 27 Pastors' Conference planning meeting, 10 a.m. (Zoom)
Jan. 28 Kansas District Life Conference, 8 a.m.-12 p.m. (St. John's, Topeka)
Jan. 28 March for Life, 12-1:30 p.m. (Kansas State Capitol, downtown Topeka)
Jan. 30 Executive Committee, 1-2 p.m. (Zoom)
Feb. 1 Circuit Visitors / Vice-Presidents meeting, 6-8

FEBRUARY / MARCH / APRIL

p.m. (Redeemer, Lawrence)
Feb. 2-3 Pre-Lent Conference (Redeemer, Lawrence)
Feb. 4 Board of Administration and Stewardship, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (Zoom)
Feb. 5 President's Council, 1-4 p.m. (Zoom)
Feb. 6 Board of Directors, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (Zoom)
Feb. 9-10 KAIRS Administrators Conference
Feb. 9-12 Council of Presidents (St. Louis, Mo.)
Feb. 18 Ash Wednesday
March 19-22 YouthLead training (St. Louis, Mo.)
March 29 Palm Sunday
April 2 Maundy Thursday (District office closes at 2 p.m.)
April 3 Good Friday (District office closed)

April 5 Easter
April 6 Easter Monday (District office closed)
April 12-14 DCE Retreat
April 17-18 Middle School Huddle (Rock Springs Ranch, Junction City)
April 17-19 Kansas District LWML Convention (Manhattan)
April 21 Older Adult Committee, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (Zoom)
April 22 Administrative Professionals Day
April 24-30 Council of Presidents (St. Louis, Mo.; Fort Wayne, Ind.)
April 28 Call Day (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis)
April 29 Call Day (Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.)

2026 Life Conference

The Kansas District Life Conference will be held **Wednesday, January 28, 2026**, at St. John's in Topeka (901 SW Fillmore St., Topeka, KS 66606). The 2026 Kansas District Life Conference will once again be in conjunction with the 2026 Kansas March for Life.

Visit the District website at <https://kslcms.org/2026-life-conference> to register and find more information.

The keynote speaker will be **Rev. Mark Preus**, pastor of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Laramie, Wyoming. The topic of this year's life conference will be "Why Pro-Natalism is Not Pro-Life."

2026 Lutherans for Life Essay Contest

The Council of Federation Presidents of the National Lutherans for Life and Lutherans for Life of Kansas (LFL of KS) are sponsoring an essay contest using the theme "That They May Have Life" based on John 10:10. This essay contest is open to all students of Lutheran schools or members of Lutheran churches in Kansas in grades 6-12.

Visit the Lutherans for Life website <https://lflfokansas.org/essay-contest> for more information. Submit your essay to secretary@lflfokansas.org on or before March 15, 2026.

2026 Ash Wednesday Offering

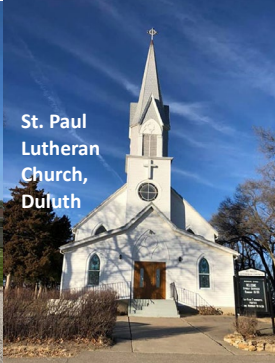
Ash Wednesday will take place February 18, 2026. The 2026 Kansas District Ash Wednesday Offering supports grants for future church worker recruitment visits to Concordia University System (CUS) schools and seminaries, and education loan repayment grants for active church workers. Last year, we were able to award over \$88,000 in scholarships and \$49,500 in education loan repayment grants. Of that amount, over \$32,000 was raised in last year's Ash Wednesday Offering. On behalf of our grateful recipients, THANK YOU!

You can contribute online at <https://kslcms.org/donate> or send a check to the LCMS Kansas District (1000 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66604-1104) with the designation, "Ash Wednesday Offering."

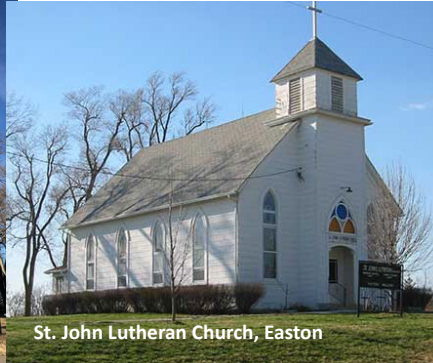
Ash Wednesday also marks a **Districtwide Day of Repentance**. We encourage you to pray the Litany (found in *Lutheran Service Book*, pp. 288-289), worship, consider fasting, and give to someone in need. Thank you in advance for your support of current and future church workers in the LCMS!



Zion Lutheran Church,
Downs



St. Paul
Lutheran
Church,
Duluth



St. John Lutheran Church, Easton



Grace Lutheran Church,
El Dorado

SYNOD & PARTNERS



Concordia Center for the Family, a Registered Service Organization of the LCMS, is uniting homes and congregations in making lifelong disciples of Jesus.

Through foundational training events, Family Discipleship Facilitators are being equipped

and inspired to strengthen the marriages and families served by our LCMS congregations and schools. CCF wants YOU as a Family Discipleship Facilitator! This training opportunity is for called and commissioned leaders of LCMS congregations and schools, along with lay family ministry leaders.

Find out more about the 2026 trainings at <https://fd-training.concordiafamily.org>. **There are discounted training rates now available to members of LCMS Kansas District congregations!** These discounted rates are provided through mission grant funds. Email the Concordia Center for the Family office to receive the discounted training rate at office.ccfamily@gmail.com. Also consider CCF's Faith & Life Survey tool to assess how well you are serving families. Visit <https://concordiacenterforthefamily.org/faith-life-survey>.

2026 Lightwell Ministry Safety Summit

There will be a Lightwell Ministry Safety Summit held **8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2026**, at Legacy Christian Church (Blue Valley Campus, 14301 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66223).

All ministries are welcome to attend! The cost is \$25, plus tax (lunch is included). Online registration opens January 12. Lightwell Insurance is an agency for Brotherhood Mutual. Visit <https://www.lightwell.com>.

This training event will equip your staff and volunteers with best practices to help keep your ministry safe, including:

- Situational awareness - seeing a potential issue before it becomes a problem.
- Exploring trends in active shooter violence.
- Best practices to stay vigilant and keep yourself and others safe.
- Having the mindset and abilities to respond to potential threats.
- Abuse prevention and child safety, including case studies on ministry sexual abuse, identifying grooming behaviors, and reporting claims of sexual abuse.

The security presenter will be **Craig Cable**, Director of Ministry Safety and Strategic Partnerships.

Studia Vitae: Concordia University, Nebraska

Michael Fischer, LCMS senior mission advocate, will serve as an instructor for Concordia University, Nebraska's new non-cred-

iting continuing education and lifelong learning program called Studia Vitae. He will teach a course titled "Biblical Foundations of Fundraising and Philanthropy." Studia Vitae offers Christ-centered continuing education opportunities in a variety of focused areas through an online scheduled and self-paced learning platform.

Studia Vitae's Biblical Foundation of Fundraising and Philanthropy course will be held on Mondays from January 12 to February 20, 2026, at 7 p.m. CST.

Designed to support leaders whose responsibilities includes fundraising, Fischer's course offers a biblical foundation for thinking about and approaching fundraising and advancement work. We explore the topic through biblical themes of the generosity of God, stewardship, generosity, wealth, partnership in the Gospel and legacy.

Registration is now open for this course and addition offerings in Concordia University, Nebraska's Studia Vitae program. Each CEU course is \$150 and is delivered in six one-hour sessions. Discounts are available for program participants who are members of preferred partner organizations. The short, focused sessions are available as scheduled webinars that will also be recorded for future viewing. Enrollment is flexible and open to anyone with no prerequisites required, and no commitment is needed to take additional classes.

Registration is available at <https://ceu.cune.edu/>. For more information about Studia Vitae, please visit <https://www.cune.edu/continuing-education> and <https://cune.edu/partners> for more information about preferred partnerships.

Life Ministry Matching Grants

The people of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) love children and families, and they demonstrate this love through many acts of mercy in their communities. To support these local prolife efforts — both big and small — the LCMS offers matching grants to LCMS districts and congregations. The online application for congregations will be open from **January 1-February 15, 2026**.

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Visit the Life Ministry Matching Grants webpage for more information, <https://www.lcms.org/serve/grants/life-grant>.

For questions on projects or the application process, email Kris Freeman, manager of LCMS Life Ministry, at lifeministry@lcms.org



St. John Lutheran Church & Child Development Center, Ellinwood



Immanuel Lutheran Church, Ellsworth



St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ellsworth



Faith Lutheran Church & Lord's Lambs Preschool, Emporia

AROUND THE DISTRICT



On Saturday, December 6, **Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Louisburg** participated in the "Holiday Magic on Broadway" Light Up Parade, a local community event featuring photo ops, activities, snacks, and a tree lighting. This is the third year Christ Our Savior has participated in the parade, and are the only congregation in town to be actively involved! *Praise God for Christ Our Savior sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in the city of Louisburg!*



On Wednesday, December 10, **Immanuel Lutheran Church in Lawrence** held a Lessons and Carols Advent Service. The service included readings, soloists, and the Immanuel choir, handbells, and congregation celebrating the joy of the Christ Child through singing and playing Christmas hymns. *Special thanks to Dr. Sharon Hettinger, the guest organist for the service!*



On Sunday, December 14, **Trinity Lutheran Church in Holton** welcomed three new members through Adult Confirmation. Pictured from left to right are Ryan Lemon, Felicia Honig, Hailey Whitley and Rev. Jerry Brownlee. *Praise God for these new Trinity members!*

DISTRICT STAFF / COORDINATORS

STAFF DIRECTORY

Rev. Justin Panzer

District President

Rev. Daniel Grams

Executive Assistant to the President for Congregational & School Services

Jeffrey Maltz

DVP, LCEF Kansas and Oklahoma

Heather Williams

Business Manager

Jackie Schaefer

Communications Specialist

Tami Lierz

Administrative Assistant
President's Office / Missions / LCEF

Shannon Fender

Administrative Assistant Business Office / Stewardship

COORDINATORS

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Campus Ministry Coordinator

Lottie Lee

Professional Development Coordinator

Jane Limback

Accreditation

Amy Schultz

Early Childhood Consultant

Rev. Caleb Stoever

Life Coordinator

Donna Williams

Disaster Response Coordinator



LCMS Kansas District Office

1000 SW 10th Ave.

Topeka, KS 66604-1104



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<https://kslcms.org>



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