MONTHLY KANSAS DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

WORKERS TOGETHER

NOVEMBER 2026

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



Rev. Dr. Mark Woodruff was one of two keynote speakers at the Kansas District Pastor's Conference that was held in early October in Newton.

Pastors come together from across Kansas for learning, fellowship

Pastors from across the Kansas District come together every year for a unique opportunity to learn more about Scripture and ministry, but also to engage in fellowship with other Lutheran ministers during the Kansas District Pastor's Conference.

This year's event was held on Oct. 5-6 at Zion Lutheran Church in Newton. The fall conference is one of two workers conferences held each year. While the fall conference is established in the bylaws, a winter conference is also offered before the beginning of lent.

Both offer a time of fellowship and worship together with brothers from around the District, according to Kansas District President Justin Panzer.

A planning committee, made up of pastors from the different geographic regions across the state, organize the conference. According to Panzer, the planning committee makes the decisions on the theme and speakers, which this year was built off the 2025 District Convention theme of "Abiding in the Word." The pastor's conference theme this year was "Truth: Abiding in the Word in Cases of Conscience."

Continued on page 17



Featured speakers and breakout sessions offer pastors a chance to dive into the Word at the conference.

LLL recognized by State Fair for 40 years of participation

The Kansas District LLL/LHM hosts a booth every year at the Kansas State Fair, and this year, the Kansas State Fair Board awarded the organization with a 40-year certificate for continuous participation in the fair. This has been a longtime and important ministry of the organization.

The LLL/LHM presence at the Kansas State Fair provides an opportunity to share religious material, including children's booklets and other religious themed items and Bibles, de-votionals, etc. for adults, as well as to engage in conversation with fairgoers.

"Almost every day, a booth visitor thanks us for our presence and the ability to provide free religious material," said Mike Tonn, who serves as the state fair booth coordinator for the Kansas District LLL/LHM. "Some of the people comment that they are using the children's books that they had picked up in previous years. Many times, conversation centers around our faith and the impact on our daily lives."

The group also leads a worship service at the state fair. This year, Pastor Shawn Fenske and the choir from Holy Cross-Wichita, led the service on Sept. 13.

Continued on page 3

Living Not By Bread Alone



Rev. Daniel Grams
District Executive for Congregational & School Services

NOVEMBER DEVOTION

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like. (Small Catechism: 4th Petition of the Lord's Prayer)

This is a rich list, and one we take for granted until some part of it goes missing. Scripture is blunt: man does not live by bread alone (Mt. 4:4)…not even by the fullest table of blessings God provides. And sometimes God teaches us this truth by taking something away.

Why would a good God do that? First, to test us — to reveal what is in our hearts. Where does the fear, love, and trust of your heart truly rest? In the gifts themselves, or in the One who gives them? Our hearts are idol factories. We take good things — health, family, a steady job, a full Thanksgiving table — and quietly build our happiness around them instead of around the Giver. We rarely notice this until the gift is gone.

So ask yourself honestly: Is God still good when there is an empty chair at your Thanksgiving table this year? Is He still good when your child's marriage is falling apart, or a you face a frightening diagnosis, or a job disappears through no fault of your own? That is the test. Its purpose is not to make us fail, but to make us see clearly enough to repent — and to teach us to recognize something greater than the gift itself.

That something greater is the Word of God. Israel learned this in the wilderness: hungry, with nothing to eat, until God sent manna fresh every morning for forty years. They could not hoard it or store it up for tomorrow. They had to look to God, daily, as the sole source of what they needed. That is exactly what we pray when we say, "Give us this day our daily bread" — it's not merely a request for food, but a lesson in trusting God for everything.

This Word of God is not distant or abstract. It became flesh and dwelt among us. It knew our hunger, our poverty, our sin and shame, and bore it all to the cross, suffering, dying, and rising, so that the forgiving Word might reach us. In Baptism, that Word set us free from the sin that enslaves the heart.

In that Word, we are declared God's own children, fed not only with bread but with the Bread of Life itself.

So when God disciplines those He loves — when He gives, and when He takes away — He is teaching us to look past what we have or do not have, to Him who gave it. Having God, and nothing else, we have everything we need.

That is true thanksgiving: not gratitude merely for our stuff, but gratitude for the God who gives Himself to us. To this good God, we give thanks — even for all we have lost, even for all we do not have.

Parish Pros gather for connection opportunities

The Kansas District Parish Pros gathered in Topeka recently to strengthen connections and support each other in their various church parish-based callings. The group is composed of DCE, DCM, DCO, DECN, DPM, parish workers, a couple pastors, encouraging retirees and those taking a break from full-time professional ministry. There are three regional clusters that meet around Kansas on a monthly basis, and they meet as a full group twice per year. Through the next year, the group will meet monthly as one cluster.



"Coming together as professionals is an important part of our growth, both professionally and spiritually," said DCE Andrea Roettger. "These gatherings provide an opportunity to connect, share experiences, learn from one another, and be mentored and encouraged as we continue to walk together."

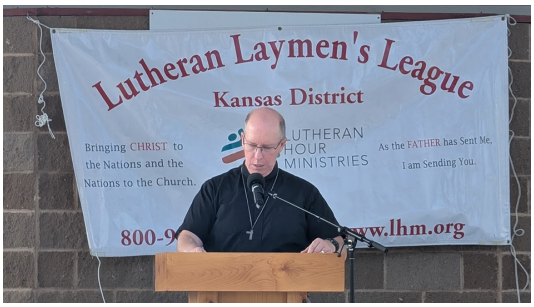
Starting in November, they are going to work through the book "Ten Lies Satan Loves to Tell" by Andrew R. Jones.

STATE FAIR

Continued from page 1

Twelve congregations were represented as booth volunteers and many more congregations supported the booth with donations of various religious materi-al. Another big addition to the booth was Keren, a comfort dog, with handlers from Immanuel-Ellsworth, on three days.

"The presence at the Kansas State Fair has been a truly blessed opportunity and highly successful," said Tonn. "Booth visitors were amazed that we are able to offer all of our children and adult religious material for free. A huge thank you is extended to everyone that volunteered in the booth or provided religious material that was shared."





Members of several congregations served during the state fair by helping at the LLL/LHM booth.



Pastor Shawn Fenske, left, and members of the Holy Cross-Wichita choir, above, helped lead the worship service.



The Kansas LLL was recognized for 40 years of fair booth participation.



Karen, a comfort dog, was a state fair attraction for the LLL/LHM booth.

Kansas District

Kansas District hosts back-to-back educational events

The Kansas District hosted two important days of learning for Kansas pastors and congregational treasurers in late October.

A pre-retirement lunch & learn session was held on Oct. 23 and a congregational treasurers workshop was on Oct. 24, both at Christ Lutheran Church, Manhattan.

The pre-retirement session was to help prepare individuals considering retirement. The treasurers workshop provided help related to clergy tax and church treasurer issues.



Amy Klein, a financial educator with Concordia Plans, takes a picture with the attendees at a recent pre-retirement workshop.

Time Running Out to Claim 2026 Tax Credits for Lutheran School Scholarships

Time is running out for Kansans to support Lutheran education while receiving a 75% state income tax credit through the Kansas Lutheran Schools Scholarship Foundation (KLSSF).

Under $1.8 million of the $10 million in statewide scholarship tax credits remains available for 2026. Nearly $1 million in credits was claimed during the final week of October alone, meaning the remaining credits could be exhausted very soon.

The urgency comes as KLSSF continues expanding its support for students attending Lutheran schools across Kansas. During the 2025-26 school year, the foundation awarded 63 scholarships totaling $100,000 at nine schools. This school year, that number has grown to 106 students at 11 schools.

Although students are eligible for scholarships of up to $8,000, current funding provides an average award of approximately $2,200.

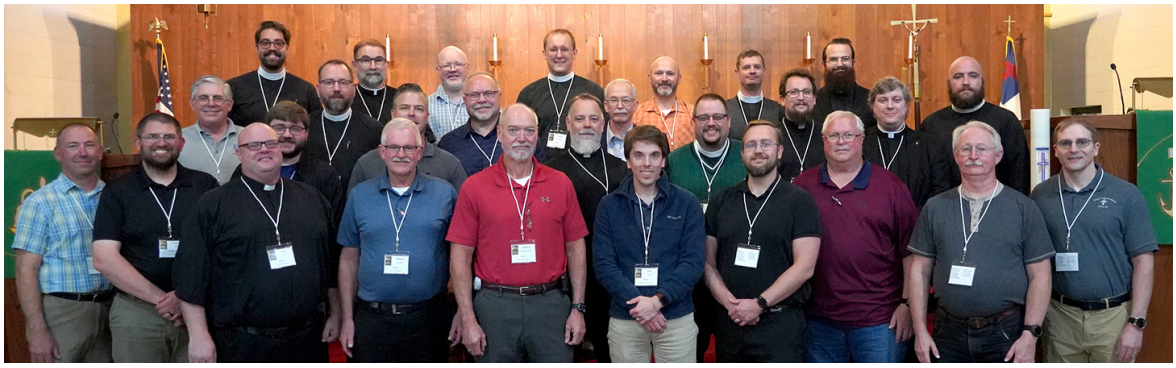
The foundation hopes to raise an additional $500,000 by Dec. 1 to fully fund scholarships for 106 students.

Donors receive a Kansas income tax credit equal to 75% of their qualifying contribution, subject to available credits and program requirements.

Those considering a gift are encouraged to act now rather than wait until year-end.

To make a donation, visit https://klssf.org/donate.

Pastors, teachers celebrate benchmark anniversaries during recent conferences



Pastors celebrating ordination anniversaries, were, front row from left, Scott Holder (25), Timothy Roth (10), John Werner (10), Michael Schotte (35), Michael Bingenheimer (40), Sean Baker (5), Aaron Wagner (15), Dave Hutson (45), Tim Booth (35), Dennis Kootz (15); middle, Michael Schmidt (30), Chris Craig (10), Aaron Filipek (20), Matthew Schultz (20), Jim Bender (35), Mark Lovett (20), Martin Albrecht (10), Jon Franson (10), Caleb Stoever (5), Timothy Schmeisser (5), Zachariah Burgdorf (5); back, Reed Shoaf (10), Quentin Nuttmann (20), Dan Harders (15), Joshua Woelmer (10), Michael Ada (20), Sean Kilgo (10), Ian Kinney (5).



Teachers celebrating commissioning anniversaries, were, front row from left, Miranda Mondary (10), Nancy Jankowski (25), Jana Grimm (20), Brent Howard (30), Beth Counts (10), Laurie Reed (40), Melissa Wolf (40), Jill Lowe (30); back, Kyle Erickson (20), Dr. Patricia Hoffman (50), Morgan Dunst (5), Amy Duever (25), Rev. Dan Grams.

NOT PICTURED Ordained: Gilbert Holstein (65), Richard Pingel (55), Allen Woelzlein (50), David Hutson (45), William Postel (45), Stephen Eckert (40), Dr. Mark Schulz (40), Philip Wolf (40), Jeffrey Kunze (35), Thomas Brewer (25), Terry De Giovanni (20), Jacob Heine (20), Mark Wood (15), Jay Williamson (5). Commissioned: Mildred Beikmann (75), Pauline Jedele (70), Betty Goetz (60), Orville Altevogt (55), Pamela Floetke (55), Sheryl Kruse (55), Kent Stephens (45), Elaine Whiteneck (45), Carol Garrett (40), Joanna Hadle (40), Denise Lawrenz (30), Sherry Moentmann (25), Katie Olson (25), Angela Erickson (20), Jamie Kootz (20), Katie Nelson (20), Lisa Ochs (20), Jennifer Curley (15), Gretyl Bader (10), Amber Goeglein (5), Olivia Johnson (5).

Empowering Futures

Formed by Faith

KANSAS LUTHERAN SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

It's not too late to help children access a Christ-centered education at a Lutheran school in Kansas. Help us raise an additional $500,000 for scholarships by December 1st!

Why Donate Now?

- Scholarships are supporting **106 students** at 11 schools!
- Students are eligible to receive $8,000 scholarships, but the **average award is only $2,200.**
- Your gift can make a direct impact this school year!
- Dont't wait until year-end: **receive a 75% Kansas State income tax credit** when you donate to the KLSSF.
- **Less than $2** million in tax credits remain unclaimed for 2026. In 2025, the tax credits were gone by December 15th.

DONATE

REV. DANIEL GRAMS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
(785) 357-4441
www.klssf.org
dgrams@klssf.org

Empowering Futures
Formed by Faith

Step by Step Donor Instructions

1 Determine your Kansas tax liability

- Consult your tax professional.
- Review your prior year state tax return to see what you paid in state tax last year.

2 Make a donation that takes full advantage of the 75% tax credit

- Send a check in the mail.
- Give electronically via our secure **Online Donation Portal**.
- Contact us to gift appreciated securities or grain.

3 Complete the Donor Information Form

- **Download and Print** the form to mail it with your check.
- Or complete and submit the form online:
  Online Donor Information Form.

4 Claim the Credit

- KLSSF staff processes your donation with the state of Kansas.
- The Kansas Department of Revenue issues a certificate, which we will mail to you with the acknowledgment of your gift.
- Provide the certificate to your tax preparer to claim the credit, or use it when you file your Kansas tax return.

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CALLS & VACANCIES

PASTORAL CALLS

Rev. Ian Kinney, First, Sabetha, to Prince of Peace, Buffalo, Wyo. – **pending**

Rev. Justin Laughridge, St. Luke, North York, Ontario, to Christ, Overland Park – **pending**

Rev. Richard Schneider, Redeemer, Atwood, to Concordia Lutheran Ministries, Cabot, Penn. – **accepted**

Rev. Jacob Sipes, Immanuel, Washington, Mo., to St. Paul, Leavenworth – **declined**

PENDING ORDINATIONS / INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Scott Goltl, Ascension, Wichita, associate to senior pastor – **installation Sunday, Jan. 3, 2027**

COMMISSIONED MINISTER CALLS – from the field

DCM Andrea Simianer, to Bethany, Overland Park – **accepted, commissioning and installation on Nov. 22**

CONGREGATIONS CALLING or PREPARING TO CALL A FULL-TIME PASTOR

Leavenworth, St. Paul (sole)
Mission & Shawnee, Trinity (associate)
Overland Park, Christ (senior)
Redeemer, Atwood (sole)
Vassar, Zion (sole)

CONGREGATIONS CALLING A COMMISSIONED MINISTER

Leavenworth, St. Paul (Teacher)
Manhattan, Christ (Teacher)
Wichita, Holy Cross (Director of Christian Education)
Wichita, Holy Cross (Principal)
Winfield, Trinity (Principal/Teacher)

NOVEMBER PRAYER REQUESTS

Those grieving the loss of loved ones

- **Family and friends of Rev. Ken Haskell,** who entered his heavenly rest on Oct. 9.
- **Family and friends of Rev. Don Copley,** who entered his heavenly rest on Sept. 16.

Those experiencing recent or ongoing health issues

- **Rev. Richard Andrus**
- **Rev. Dr. Michael Bingenheimer**
- **Rev. Dean Christ**
- **Rev. King Crawford**
- **Rev. Rodney Fritz**
- **Rev. David Gruoner**
- **Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan**
- **Rev. David McCloskey**
- **Carrie Meyers**
- **Rev. Gerald Radtke**
- **Rev. Dr. Mark Schulz**
- **Tracy Snyder**

Those celebrating the gift of new life

- **Rev. Jacob and Emily Harding** (daughter Lily Joan, Oct. 20)
- **Rev. Tim and Lydia Wilcoxen** (daughter Abigail Grace, Sept. 7)
- **Rev. Matthew and Sulena Koterba** (son Micah, Sept. 8)
- **Kenny and Kara Titus (KSD board member)** (daughter Abigail Helen, Sept. 18)
- **Rev. Matthew and Meghan Goehring** (son Micah David, Sept. 23)

Congregations & Schools Facebook Prayer List

- Trinity Lutheran Church, Ramona, & St. John Lutheran Church, Tampa – **Nov. 2**
- Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Wichita – **Nov. 9**
- Bethany Lutheran Church & Bethany Early Childhood Center, Wichita – **Nov. 16**
- Christ the King Lutheran Church, Salina – **Nov. 23**
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Sylvan Grove – **Nov. 30**

Youth leaders can connect for Life in DC

Registration is open for the FREE Y4Life and YA For Life Conference and March for Life in Washington, D.C., happening January 21st-23rd, 2027! Meet other students and life leaders from across the nation at this mountain-top event! Not only will participants learn more about life issues and take part in the March, but by registering through Lutherans For Life, leaders also receive a discount on hotel rooms and guided opportunities at the March. To learn more and register, visit https://y4life.org/events/ or https://yaforlife.org/events/. Have questions? Email Interim Y4Life and YA For Life Director, Cori Meier, at cori@y4life.org.

Immanuel-Lawrence to celebrate 60th anniversary, invites past KU students to attend

Immanuel Lutheran Church and University Student Center in Lawrence is planning a Rededication Worship Service as part of their 60th anniversary celebration on Sunday, Nov. 8.

The worship service will begin at 9 a.m. Dr. Sharon Hettinger will be the guest organist for this service, using the original 1966 Dedication Service. A reception will be held immediately following the service in the church's Activity Center.

For the past 60 years, the University Lutheran Church offered a place for students of the University of Kansas to gather and worship during their years of study at the university. KU alumni are invited to attend the rededication service to celebrate and share memories of their time at University Lutheran Church during the reception or by sending stories and/or pictures to officemanager@immanuellawrence.org. These will be compiled into a booklet to share and preserve for years to come.

For more information, please visit www.immanuellawrence.org.

The church is located next to KU's campus at 2104 Bob Billings Parkway.

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LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

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Out and About in Kansas

President Panzer's November Travel Schedule

Nov. 1
Preach @ Our Saviour, Great Bend, closing service
Nov. 3
Circuit 7 Winkel @ Mt Calvary, Marysville
Nov. 5-6
BOD @ Topeka
Nov. 8-11
COP @ Concordia, Wisconsin
Nov. 15
Preach @ Trinity, Atchison, 160th anniversary
Nov. 17
KS and MO Joint Winkel Meeting @ Lutheran High School, Kansas City
Nov. 19
2027 Joint Workers Conference Planning Meeting @ Topeka

2027 Kansas District Salary and Benefit Guidelines

The 2027 Kansas District Salary and Benefit Guidelines are available on the District Resources page of the website. The guidelines provide congregations with an objective approach to developing a suitable comprehension plan for church workers.
Visit **https://kslcms.org/business-office/district-resources** to access the 2027 Salary Guidelines. If you have any questions, please call the Business Office at 785-357-4441, ext. 1002 or email **Heather Williams** at heather@kslcms.org.



Seminary students and staff joined supporters of Good Shepherd Lutheran, Spring Hill, to canvass the Spring Hill neighborhood.

Spring Hill serves as setting for seminary student training

The outreach efforts of the newest church plant in the Kansas District served as a learning opportunity for a group of seminary students and professors who visited Kansas recently. The seminary students and staff from Concordia Seminary St. Louis, along with representa-tives from the LCMS Office of National Mission, were in the Spring Hill community on Oct. 10 and 11 to learn about the church planting process.

The seminary students and a group of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church supporters joined together to canvass the neighborhood near the church. Nearly 300 homes were visited in one afternoon.

The students supported Good Shepherd's efforts to create connections with people living in Spring Hill by conducting community interviews.

The students' visit also included a series of educational sessions during the weekend, LCMS church planting leaders educated these future pastors on the church planting pro-cess being utilized at Good Shepherd. The sessions included reviews of tools for concept development and feasibility studies for church planting, along with evangelism and out-reach strategies.

The ongoing outreach has been part of the buildup to the first Sunday worship services for Good Shepherd, which were set for November and will lead to a more public launch in early January 2027.

Learn more at lutheranspringhill.church.

That Sunday morning, the group attended a worship service at Light of the World Lutheran Church in De Soto, which is another recent church plant effort by the KSD.



Seminary students from Concordia Seminary St. Louis participated in a two-day educational trip about church planting.

Promotional media kits available for Advent/Christmas

As you begin planning your outreach efforts for Advent and Christmas, be aware of the "Media Kits for Congregations" that are available from The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

The kits include social media graphics and ads, newspaper ads, postcard designs and more.
Check out the available resources at: resources.lcms.org/media-kits/

CURRENT GRANT APPLICATION WINDOWS

LCMS Campus Ministry Mini-Grants

Michael.Meyer@lcms.org
Amount: Up to $2,500
Application period: Aug. 1, 2026–Jan. 1, 2027

Schiebel Project grants

To support black inner-urban residents
https://www.lcms.org/who-we-are/national-mission/grantmaking/schiebel
Amount: Between $1,000-2,000
Application period: Anytime

Thrivent Community Action Grants

https://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-action-teams
$250 gift cards may be used for many ministry-related items, including food and candy.

Schedule of Events

- **November 14 - Immanuel Lutheran Church in Norton, KS**
- **December 12 - Zion Lutheran Church in Linn, KS**
- **Jan. 16 - Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Marysville, KS**
- **February 20 - Faith Lutheran Church, in Abilene, KS**
- **March 15–18 - St. Paul in San Antonio, TX ($150/person)**
- **April 24 – TBD**

For all ages
6th grade and up!
RSVP
@ 785-747-7633

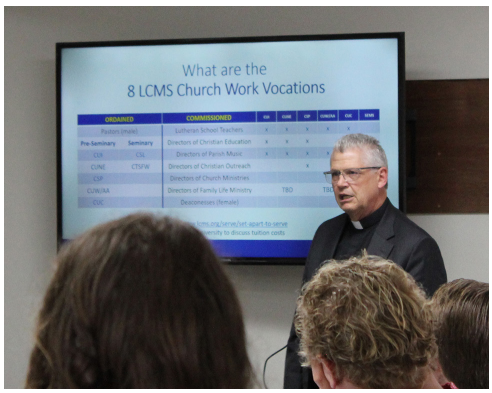
"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."
~2 Corinthians 9:6~





A **Circuit Reformation** worship service and forum were held on Oct. 25 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Junction City. Between 45-50 people were in attendance for the worship service with the message by Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck, Executive Director of Pastoral Education for the LCMS. Baneck also presented at the forum, which was focused on Set Apart to Serve, which is a Synod-wide church work recruitment and formation initiative.







Out and About in Kansas

Rev. Daniel Grams' November Travel Schedule

- **Nov. 1** - *Ascension Pratt & Our Savior Great Bend*
- **Nov. 3** - *Circuit Winkel at Holy Cross Wichita*
- **Nov. 4** - *School Visit Holy Cross Wichita*
- **Nov. 5** - *KLSSF Board Meeting*
- **Nov. 8** - *Redeemer Olathe*
- **Nov. 10** - *Winkel TBD*
- **Nov. 15** - *Good Shepherd Spring Hill*
- **Nov. 16** - *Lead A Child Board Meeting*
- **Nov. 17** - *Joint Winkel KCK - KCMO at Lutheran High of KC*
- **Nov. 20** - *Trinity Winfield School Visit*
- **Nov. 20-22** *KDYG Wichita*
- **Nov. 22** - *Simianer Commissioning - Bethany Overland Park*

HOSPICE CARE

Compassionate Support at Life's End

November is recognized as Hospice care month. It is a special type of healthcare focused on providing comfort, dignity, and support to individuals facing a life-limiting illness. Unlike treatments aimed at curing disease, hospice care prioritizes quality of life, managing pain, and addressing emotional, spiritual, and physical needs. Families also receive guidance and support, helping them navigate difficult decisions and providing respite from caregiving responsibilities.

Hospice teams include doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and trained volunteers who work together to ensure patients live their final days with respect and peace. Care can be provided at home, in hospice centers, or in nursing facilities, tailored to the wishes of the patient and of the family.

Hospice care honors the sacredness of life while embracing God's presence in times of vulnerability. It encourages compassionate service, reflecting Christ's love, and reminds us that even in life's final chapter, we are never alone.

– Mary Hume, District Representative for Parish Nurses in Kansas

Help get the word out on Workers Together

Does your congregation send out a newsletter? Please consider including a link or mention of Workers Together, the monthly newsletter of the LCMS Kansas District.

You can find the updated edition each month on our website at kslcms.org, under the "About us" tab, then clicking on "Communications." The monthly devotional is also posted on that page as its own document, among many other resources for Kansas Lutherans.

Please help us spread the word about the ministry and mission of Lutherans in the Kansas District by sharing Workers Together!

Reach out to Kansas Lutherans

Want to spread the word of your news and activities to other Lutherans across the Kansas District? Reach out to the Kansas District communications specialist by emailing Dan at comms@kslcms.org.

Caring Ministry

After you train as a Lutheran Early Response Team volunteer

I am a trained and credentialed LERT Volunteer…….Now what?

Mercy in Action during the off-season.

Think outside of the disaster/critical incident:

- Organize your local team or join an established team in your area
- Identify your or your teams gifts, interests & passions.
- Identify the needs within your own congregation
- Identify the needs within your community
- Make a list of resources both from inside your congregation and the community.
- Consider LERT Youth track (14-17) Do your current teams include youth?
- Make a Plan:
- Define what "active" means
- Meet Regularly
- Organize and implement projects

LERT Training Event & Community Calendar:

- (Postponed) Nov. 14, 2026: LERT Basic Training @ St. John's, Alma *(To be rescheduled)*

For more detailed information including contact information and registration for LERT training events, please go to LCMS-LERT.org

If you wish to host a LERT Training or Community Awareness event, please reach out to us!

Donna Williams – DDRC
ksddrc@gmail.com

Thanksgiving and First Article gifts

Every year, our calendars remind us to set aside time in late November for a day of Thanksgiving. For many, it is a one-day ritual filled with food, friends and family, and maybe some football.

For the people of God, though, it is much richer, deeper and more meaningful. "Thanksgiving" is a habit of the heart and soul. More than just a ritual, it is a routine. It is, in fact, part of the fabric of who we are as redeemed people of God. We have been given everything truly needful — eternal life and salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the very righteousness of God. We have much to be thankful for indeed.

In addition to this, we also thank God for what we call "First Article gifts." As detailed in Luther's Small Catechism, these are the gifts of our body and soul, friends and neighbors, food, shelter and personal possessions that we are given to steward.

The First Article of the Apostles' Creed urges us to rightly confess that every good gift is from the hand of God. On behalf of the Office of National Mission — Mercy, we give thanks for your partnership in the Gospel and for joining us in mercy work across our Synod.

Let us together give thanks and praise for the God who is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4-8) and from whom flows all human acts of mercy. Visit lcms.org/mercy for information on the mercy work happening among congregations and organizations across the world.

LSM LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY & FESTIVAL

Nominate students for Lutheran Summer Music

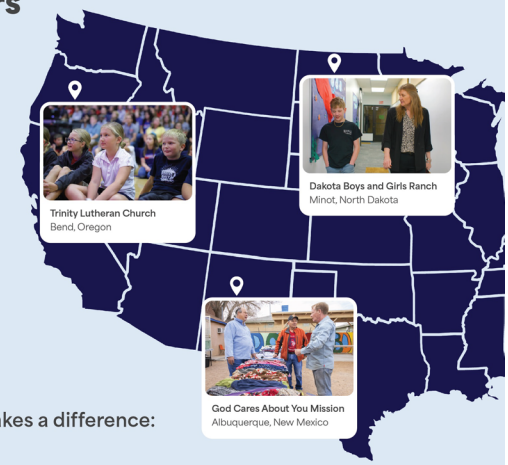
You're invited to nominate a student for LSM 2027! Lutheran Summer Music (LSM) is a faith-based residential music academy for high school students in grades 8-12. Students come together from across the country to pursue musical excellence and build an intentional, supportive, and fun community.

LSM 2027 takes place at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, from June 27-July 25. Priority Enrollment is open through December 1, offering a $100 tuition discount and first access to financial aid. Nominate students at LSMacademy.org/nominate, and watch and share the LSM Experience Video to learn more!

The Kingdom is thriving

Ministry missions are fueled by LCEF investors

LCMS churches, schools and organizations grow more each day, extending the news of Christ's love and mercy further into their communities. LCEF solutions drive ministry empowerment through investor support. Explore real partnership impact stories by visiting the LCEF Ministry Stories Map.



See where your support makes a difference:
lcef.org/SeeTheStories

LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

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Education & Youth

Webinar Series focuses on protecting children

There is a MinistrySafe Webinar Series being offered titled ***The Journey to a Safer Ministry.*** This free webinar is a monthly, one-hour series designed to help ministry leaders take meaningful steps toward stronger child protection.

Through practical teaching from MinistrySafe experts, you'll learn what it means to move toward a safer ministry. Topics include understanding risk, identifying vulnerabilities, implementing safeguards, and building a culture of protection for children and volunteers.

November 17, 2026 - 10:00 a.m. CT
Creating Background Check Strategy – Part 2
REGISTER HERE



Visit the **MinistrySafe page** on the District website **https://kslcms.org/presidents-office/congregation-resources/ministrysafe** to learn more about how your congregation and school can protect your children and ministries.

Lutherans for Life announces 2027 Kansas essay contest

Lutherans For Life invites Kansas students in grades 6–12 to participate in its 2027 essay contest, themed ***"Be Bold For Life."*** Essays should reflect Psalm 31:24: "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!"

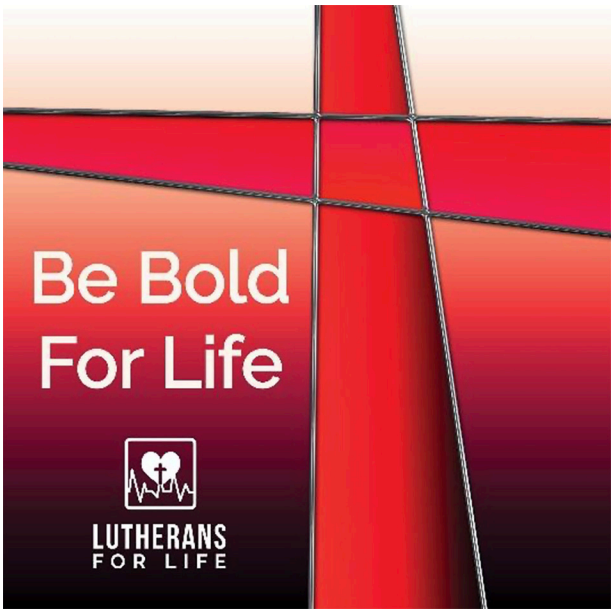
Students attending Lutheran schools or participating in Lutheran congregations, youth groups, confirmation classes or homeschools are eligible.

Students in grades 6–8 may submit essays of up to 400 words, while students in grades 9–12 may submit up to 750 words. Essays must incorporate the contest theme and Scripture verse and include a bibliography.

First-place winners in each division receive $150 and advance to the national competition, where top prizes include $500 and conference benefits. Kansas second-place winners receive $100.

Entries must be submitted electronically by a teacher, homeschool parent-teacher or pastor by March 15, 2027, to secretary@lflofkansas.org.

For more information, contest guidelines and resources, visit *lutheransforlife.org](https://lutheransforlife.org/*.



DISTRICT CALENDAR

https://kslcms.org/calendar

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Nov. 2 Board of Admin. and Stewardship, *10 a.m.-noon (Zoom)*

Nov. 2 Executive Committee, *1-2pm (Zoom)*

Nov. 5 Presidents Council, *1-5 p.m.*

Nov. 5 Kansas Lutheran Schools Scholarship Foundation Board, *4-5 p.m.*

Nov. 6 KSLCMS Board of Directors, *9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (District office, Topeka)*

Nov. 6-7 LCEF Annual Meeting *(St. Louis, Mo.)*

Nov. 8-12 Council of Presidents *(Concordia University, Wisc.)*

Nov. 20-22 Kansas District Youth Gathering *(Wichita)*

Nov. 25-29 Thanksgiving *(District office closed from 2 pm Nov. 25 through Nov. 29.)*

Dec. 24-Jan. 3 Christmas *(District office closed from Dec. 24 through Jan. 3)*

LOOKING AHEAD

Jan. 20 Board of Caring Ministry, *1-2 p.m. (Zoom)*

Jan. 26 Older Adult Ministry, *10 a.m. to noon (Zoom)*

Jan. 27 Kansas District Life Conference, *8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (Topeka)*

Jan. 31 to Feb. 4 Council of Presidents *(St. Louis, Mo.)*

Feb. 1-2 Pastor's Winter Retreat *(Bel Aire)*

Feb. 4 Presidents Council, *1-5 p.m.*

Feb. 5 KSLCMS Board of Directors, *9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (District office, Topeka)*

Look for ongoing calendar updates on the Kansas District website

AROUND KANSAS

The 86th Kansas LLL/LHM District Convention is set for Nov. 6-7 at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Hutchinson. The speaker is Rev. Germán Novelli, Director of LHM Hispanic Ministries. A meet and greet is Friday and the convention is Saturday.

• • •

Ascension Lutheran Church, Pratt, recently celebrated the Baptisms of two young people, kindergartner Jackson and seventh-grader Judah, during its Wednesday evening "Baptism Bash." Pastor Matthew Schultz led the youth through an interactive service explaining the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, culminating in the Baptisms of both boys. The event is part of Ascension's outreach to approximately 50 young people through its Fusion and Huddle programs, many of whom come from unchurched families in the community.

• • •

Trinity Family of Faith, Basehor, has counted 17 baptisms since April, with only three of them being infants. They've welcomed 18 new families into membership in 2026, according to Pastor Jason Boetcher.

• • •

Have good news highlighting blessings that have happened in your congregation? Please consider sharing it with your fellow Lutherans across the Kansas District by submitting it for publication in Workers Together. Email Dan at comms@kslcms.org.



CHRIST IS RISEN
TELL THE NEXT GENERATION

The 2026-2029 National Offering theme is "Christ is Risen! Tell the Next Generation." The National Offering theme is taken from Psalm 78:4 and is an extension of the 2026 Synod Convention theme.

Prayerfully consider giving towards the LCMS National Offering! Gifts to the National Offering will directly benefit ongoing domestic work carried out by LCMS congregations, districts and RSOs. Visit the National Offering webpage **https://www.lcms.org/convention/national/offering** to learn more and find resources!

2026 Kansas District Youth Gathering

The 2026 Kansas District Youth Gathering (KDYG) will be held **November 20-22, 2026,** at the Drury Plaza Hotel in Wichita!

The KDYG is designed for youth who are currently in grades 9-12. This year's theme is "AGAIN" based on Philippians 4:4. Visit **https://kslcms.org/kdyg** to register and for more information!

Hotel room reservations need to be made by Oct. 18 to receive the group rate. Click on the provided link to find more information: **Drury Plaza Hotel, Wichita**. The Group Number for the hotel rate is **10132281.**

The speakers this year are Rev. Dr. Pete Jurchen and Rebekah Freed.

The Rev. Dr. Pete Jurchen is assistant professor of Lutheran education and faith formation at Concordia University, Nebraska. A former parish pastor and Concordia Publishing House editor, he teaches Christian education leadership and works to equip God's people for lives of faith.


Rebekah Freed

Rebekah Freed is an author, speaker and Christian educator who serves in Student Life and Campus Ministry at Concordia University, Nebraska. A certified Director of Christian Education, she has degrees in psychology and behavioral science and a master's degree focused on discipleship in crisis and trauma.

Philippians 4:4
AGAIN


Rev. Dr. Pete Jurchen

2027 Congregational Commitments

Every fall, congregations are given the opportunity to make a commitment to support our joint work in the Kansas District and the LCMS Synod for the upcoming year. We appreciate your prayerful consideration for your 2027 commitment!

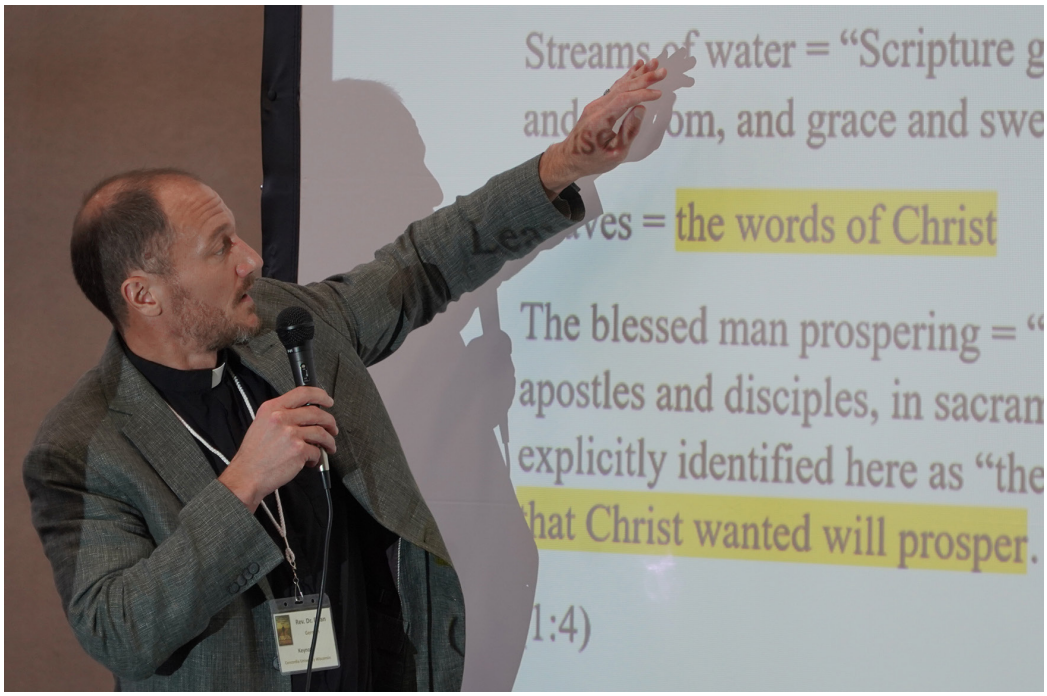
Congregational commitment forms were mailed last week, along with an updated "Mission and Ministry" document and a 2026 Kansas District budget summary. Please submit your 2027 form by **November 30** (January 15, 2027 at the latest) in any of the following ways:

Your congregational commitments support the work done by the Kansas District and the LCMS for and with local churches.

- 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.







The keynote and breakout session speakers at the Fall Pastor's Conference provided insight on Scripture and a Biblical perspective on contemporary subjects, among other speaking topics. **Rev. Dr. Brian German**, Professor and Chair of Theology at Concordia University, Wisc. above right, spoke on the books of Haggai and Malachi on the first day of the conference, while **Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford**, Minnesota South District President, below left, was the keynote speaker on the second day. He spoke on culture and the Word. Kansas District pastors offered breakout sessions both days, including **Pastor Sean Kilg**o, top left, who spoke on *"Mandatum or Adiaphora (or something else?): The Liturgy and the Conscience"*; **Pastor CJ Luttinen**, above left; spoke on *"Matters of Coscience in AI Usage in Pastoral Ministry"*; **Pastor John Kastner**, right, *"All to the Glory of God: Examining Paul's Advice for Christian Conscience and Piety"*; **Pastor Michael Schmidt**, far right, *"The Word Made Flesh"*; **Pastor Jason Toombs**, middle below right, *"Seven Soothing Psalms for Strained Selves"*; and **Pastor Rocky Mease**, bottom right, *"Transitional Interim Ministry."*













The parish activity center at Zion Lutheran Church, Newton, was packed with pastors during the keynote sessions during the fall conference.





The conference allowed the gathered guests to discuss specific topics as encouraged by the keynote speakers, but also just for general fellowship during breaks. Pictured are, above left, Rev. Adam Reichart, DCM Bekah Wadkins, and Rev. Timothy Roth; and above right, Rev. Kenton Abbott and Rev. Jason Toombs.

CONFERENCE

Continued from page 1

Planning committee members along with President Panzer were: Pastor Phil Hoppe, Trinity-Colby; Pastor Chris Warneke, Redeemer-Arkansas City; and Pastor Randall Jahnke, Bethlehem-Greenleaf and St. Peter's-Barnes.

The conference schedule included time for worship services, keynote speakers, breakout sessions led by Kansas District pastors, and food and fellowship.

Rev. Alan Stahlecker, who serves St. John-Lincolnville, finds several benefits to attending the conference and the fellowship is one of them. He said he finds value in making new connections with people in the District and enjoys both new and continuing camaraderie with the brother pastors of the District.

He also appreciates the many speaker sessions spread throughout the two-day conference and said this was the element many pastors look forward to. There were four keynote addresses and eight breakout sessions offered this fall, including many options to gain new understanding of scriptural topics.

Both options had appeal to Stahlecker.

For the keynote speakers, Stahlecker said there are benefits in hearing "a speaker from outside our midst who often brings insights that are supported through some published theological writing. The outside speakers and their presentations often lead me to read something new that probably wouldn't have crossed my radar."

The keynote addresses commonly draw praise from pastors.

"I always look forward to the insights we get from our keynote speakers on Scripture," said Pastor Mark Gaschler, Immanuel-Linn. He said he has attended the conference every year since coming to Kansas in 2023.

The two keynote speakers were Rev. Dr. Brian German, Professor and Chair of Theology at Concordia University, Wisc., and Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford, Minnesota South District President.

German spoke on the books of Haggai and Malachi, while Woodford spoke on culture and the Word. There were question and answer periods after every presentation.

The breakout sessions are usually from pastors in the District, but this year the keynote speakers were also given slots for breakout sessions.

The planning committee receives abstracts for consideration for breakout sessions and based on the conference topic. A wide variety of takes on the theme were included in the breakout sessions, from AI usage in the pastoral ministry to liturgical topics and more.

Pastor Jason Toombs, Grace-Liberal, offered a breakout session "Seven Soothing Psalms for Strained Selves." This was his first opportunity to participate as a breakout speaker as external demands limited his availability in the past.

"I aimed to offer a more devotional approach to studying God's Word," said Toombs. "The background involved a closer look at the Psalms, particularly those for a troubled conscience, as requested. Focusing on seven Psalms allowed a Lenten series to be shaped for devotionals within the congregation's proclamation. Further development will follow, but study precedes writing."

Stahlecker said the breakout sessions are top notch.

"I have never heard a bad presentation in any of the breakout sessions - our pastors do a great job with them," said Stahlecker. "The brothers devote themselves to the topic and bring some good, practical thoughts to the floor and challenge me to think about some deep things."

The next Kansas District conference for pastors is the Pastor's Winter Retreat, which is set for Feb. 1-2 at the Spiritual Life Center in Bel Aire.

Pastors gather together for learning and fellowship at fall conference



Kansas District President Justin Panzer presided over the Kansas District Pastors Conference, which was Oct. 5-6 in Newton.





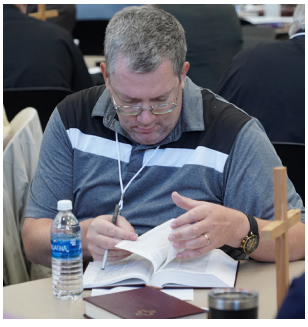




Bible study, hymn singing and more leisurely time make up the gaps between speakers during the fall pastors conference. Vendors and church organization tables were set up around the hall, allowing people like Debra Engelbrecht to chat with Revs. Caleb Stoever and Michael Brockman, above left. Pastor Philip Hoppe, above right, led the worship service. Pictured below are Revs. Dan Harders, Dennis Kootz, Luke Brown; bottom left, not unlike a solid potluck at church, the pastors were fed a buffet meal during lunch break; bottom right, Rev. Magiel Fajardo. Far left, Revs. John Fries (seated) and Larry Boye; left, Mark Lovett; middle left, Ben Oakrey; bottom left corner, Michael Schmidt; bottom left middle, Joel Schultz.



















Time for fellowship at the Kansas District Fall Pastor's Conference is one of the most important and anticipated elements pastors appreciate during the annual event. Above, Revs. Jacob Mueller, Andrew Wehling, Shawn Fenske, Dan Myers; top left, Tim Schmeisser, Rich Schotte; left, Tim Booth, Peter Bertram; bottom left, Alan Stahlecker, Joshua Woelmer; bottom right, Dr. Michael Bingenheimer, Andy Keltner; below, David Kahle, Jason Boetcher. Pastors are given time throughout the conference to be able to catch up and network with each other. Speakers also scheduled time during their presentations for discussion at the tables about the keynote topic. But breaks and open time in the evening were filled with fellowship as well.







LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND
FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS. TOGETHER IN FAITH.

Dear Kansas District members,

November is a season of thanksgiving, and across Kansas there is much to be grateful for. In Spring Hill, the planting team at Good Shepherd Lutheran Mission keeps gathering around God's Word each Sunday as it prepares to launch public worship in one of the fastest-growing communities in the state. And Nov. 20-22, high school youth from across the district meet in Wichita for the Kansas District Youth Gathering, "AGAIN," drawn from Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice" (ESV).

The goal of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is to make the most of God's blessings to serve the needs of the LCMS, both in Kansas and throughout the Synod. When you invest with LCEF, your investment helps congregations, schools and organizations share the news of Christ's love and mercy in their communities—from Light of the World Lutheran Church right here in De Soto, Kansas, to Trinity Lutheran Church in Bend, Oregon. This Thanksgiving, we give thanks to every investor who makes that work possible. See where your support makes a difference on the LCEF Ministry Stories Map.

Blessings,
Jeffrey Maltz
District Vice President, Kansas & Oklahoma
Jeffrey.maltz@lcef.org
785-230-4112

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Life Conference to coincide with March for Life in January

Life MINISTRY
LCMS KANSAS DISTRICT

The 2027 Kansas District Life Conference will be held Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2027, at St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Topeka. The keynote speaker will be Deaconess Jessica Thompson, Program Director of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries. This organization is an RSO of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod that operates two maternity homes in Sanford, Fla., and East Dundee, Ill (Chicagoland). They are fundraising to open a third center in St. Louis.

Check-in and registration will be at 8 a.m. and a Matins service will begin at 8:35 a.m.

The Kansas March and Rally for Life will follow the Life Conference in downtown Topeka, at the State Capitol at 12:15 p.m.

The Kansas District Life Conference, launched in 2019, is held every year in Topeka in January. The conference includes short worship services, presentations from one or two guest speakers, and vendor displays

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