



# **HEIRS OF ETERNAL LIFE**

## **SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT CONVENTION**

### **FEBRUARY 20-22, 2025**

The 60<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention of the Southern Illinois District  
of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Regency Conference Center, O'Fallon, Illinois

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# INTRODUCTION

“For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy.”

(Titus 3:3-8a) ESV

Greetings in the name of Jesus! The *Workbook* that follows contains all the initial information for the 60th Regular Convention of the Southern Illinois District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The various reports, overtures, and additional information are useful in preparation for the upcoming convention. The first issue of *Today's Business*, including biographical information for nominees for office and proposed convention resolutions, will be made available following the meeting of the floor committees. This will be released in mid-January, 2025. If you notice any mistakes or omissions, please contact the District office and corrections will be made in the first issue of *Today's Business*.

## **Southern Illinois District Office**

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## **CHAPLAIN OF THE CONVENTION**

Rev. Tony Troup

## **FLOOR COMMITTEES OF THE CONVENTION**

*(See Floor Committee members on page 85 of this Workbook.)*

Committee One – Resolutions    Rev. John Shank, *Chairman*

Committee Two – Convention Arrangements and Registration    Mr. Jeff Fick, *Chairman*

Committee Three – Nominations and Elections    Rev. Ben Ball, *Chairman*

# SCHEDULE OF THE CONVENTION (TENTATIVE)

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025

4 – 6:00 p.m.	Registration ( <i>In lobby of the Regency Conference Center</i> )
6 – 7:30 p.m.	The Divine Service ( <i>Separate Worship Book will be Provided</i> ) Preacher: Rev. Peter Lange Host Pastors: Rev. Chris Spelbring and Rev. Josh Kintz Host Congregation: Zion, Belleville
7:30 – 8 p.m.	Fellowship/Break
8:00 p.m.	Convention Business Begins Floor Committee Two - Convention Arrangements and Registration Call to Order: Rev. Timothy J. Scharr
8:10 p.m.	President's Address: Rev. Timothy J. Scharr
8:25 p.m.	<i>Floor Committee Three – Nominations and Elections*</i> Balloting for President-preceded with prayer by Chaplain 1 <sup>st</sup> Balloting for Vice-Presidents
8:45 p.m.	Closing Devotions

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2025

Breakfast (*On Your Own*)

8:00 a.m.	Morning Devotion
8:20 a.m.	<i>Floor Committee Two - Convention Arrangements and Registration</i> Call to Order: Rev. Timothy J. Scharr
8:25 a.m.	Business Floor Committee Three – Nominations and Elections (Balloting for Vice Presidents, continued)
8:45 a.m.	Synodical Report: Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison <i>LCMS President</i>
9:45 a.m.	Business* Floor Committee One – Resolutions
10:00 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m.	Advisory Delegates (Pastoral and Commissioned) Caucus to select delegates to the 2026 Synod Convention in Phoenix, AZ
10:30 a.m.	Welcome New Members of Synod and Theological Study with Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders <i>Iowa East District President</i>
11:30 a.m.	Synodical Report Q & A: Rev. Peter Lange <i>LCMS First Vice-President</i>
11:55 a.m.	Noonday Prayer
12:00 p.m.	Lunch ( <i>Meal #1 – <u>MUST</u> have a #1 on Name Tag to be Served</i> )
1:00 p.m.	Convention Resumes with Responsive Prayer
1:15 p.m.	Set Apart to Serve: Rev. Dr. James Baneck

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2025** *(Continued)*

2:00 p.m.	Business* Floor Committee Three – Nominations and Elections (with prayer for guidance by the Chaplain)
2:20 p.m.	Business* Presentation from Eve’s Restoration House Floor Committee One – Resolutions
2:55 p.m.	Greetings from LWML
3:00 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m.	Reports* Report of the Schools and General Executive Report of the Treasurer Report of the Mission Board Report of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Report of the LCMS Foundation
4:00 p.m.	Business* Floor Committee One – Resolutions
5:00 p.m.	Greetings from Seminaries and Universities
5:45 p.m.	Closing Devotions
6:00 p.m.	Evening Meal/Fellowship <i>(Meal #2 – <u>MUST</u> have a #2 on Name Tag to be Served)</i>

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2025**

Breakfast *(On Your Own)*

8:00 a.m.	Morning Devotions
8:20 a.m.	Floor Committee Two – Convention Arrangements and Registration Call to Order: Rev. Timothy J. Scharr Theological Study – Part II: Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders <i>Iowa East District President</i>
9:00 a.m.	Business Floor Committee Three – Nominations and Elections
9:10 a.m.	Business* Floor Committee One – Resolutions
10:00 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m.	Business* Floor Committee One – Resolutions
11:00 a.m.	Closing Service and Installation of Officers and Board Members
12:00 p.m.	Homeward Bound – May God protect and keep us all!

*\*Note: Floor Committee – Nominations and Elections, will have the floor at times as necessary to complete elections.*

**See you at the next District Convention tentatively set for February 17–19, 2028.**

## R-1 PRESIDENT REPORT

**“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us...so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4-5a, 7).**

These verses from Titus three are great news for God’s people. In them we see the bold and comprehensive love of God at work for us children of men. By birth we are sinners who need God’s grace and mercy. By nature, we are no different than the rest of humanity. We too can be foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, spending our days grumbling, complaining, even hating other people as they hate us. Apart from God humanity is a mess as we see daily in the world.

In divine mercy and grace, the Lord does not give up on humanity. He does what no person can do. He saves us from ourselves. He saves us from all the sins we commit in thought, word, and deed. He causes us to be born from above through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit (baptism). The Lord is abundant and lavish in mercy, grace, and forgiveness. He pours out blessing after blessing in Jesus Christ our Savior. The Lord God saves us. Not because of anything we have done. Good intentions nor personal piety do not save. Jesus Christ alone does. We are declared righteous by grace. The Lord takes Christ’s holiness, righteousness and innocence and covers our sinfulness. The result is that we are adopted into His family. We are heirs having the hope of eternal life. This trustworthy saying needs to be stressed that we may devote ourselves to the Lord in good works in thanksgiving for all the Lord does for us. In Christ Jesus we have God the Father’s answer to what is wrong today and in this world. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we have great news to share for everyone that they also may share in the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior, Jesus Christ.

This 60<sup>th</sup> regular delegate convention of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod Southern Illinois District is meeting under the theme: “Heirs of Eternal Life – Your Future Secured” from Titus 3:3-8. The Rev. Dr. Brian Saunders will expound on these beautiful verses from Titus three in our two-part theological study. As heirs of eternal life, our future is secure in Jesus Christ. We are surrounded by millions of people who may never have heard this message. Many may have heard it but have not taken it to heart with the practical result they do not believe it applies to them. Many more simply reject the Gospel out of hand. What Paul says to the Romans applies today. **“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’ So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:14-17).** Brothers

and sisters in Christ, as heirs of eternal life, with our future secured in Christ, the opportunities are before us. The fields are truly ripe unto harvest.

The past three years have continued a decades long trend of declining worship attendance, declining congregations, lower birth rates and the movement of people from rural, small towns to suburban and urban areas. A troubling trend is the death of the middle-sized congregation that averages one to two hundred in weekly worship attendance. One half of all LCMS congregations now average fifty people or less in worship weekly. We are thankful for the large congregations in the Metro-East and towns that have strong church and school ministries. We rejoice that our congregations in Chester and Hamel have plans for new schools. Others are considering additions and remodeling to enhance the ministry.

We remain blessed in Southern Illinois with twenty pre-schools through elementary schools, three Lutheran high schools and another dozen or more free-standing preschools and daycare centers. Over half of our congregations have a Lutheran school or are in a partnership or association with a neighboring school. This is a remarkable blessing and opportunity the Lord continues to provide us. Mr. Jeff Fick continues to provide excellent support and work with our schools as our SAGE – Schools and General Executive.

With these blessings, there are also challenges. We need more pastors and teachers. Half of the congregations that requested a pastoral candidate in 2024 went unfilled across the Synod. The demand for parochial schoolteachers was five times the number of graduates available. These numbers reflect a dire need for church worker recruitment. We need well-trained pastors and teachers to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Set Apart to Serve is an initiative the Synod is undertaking to encourage children through adults to enter full-time church work. The Rev. Dr. James Baneck who is directing this initiative will provide a significant presentation to the 2025 Southern Illinois District Convention. Consider how you and your congregations may help in raising workers for the Lord's kingdom.

Small church ministry has been an ongoing concern for over a decade. The past three years, Southern Illinois District has joined with the Central Illinois District in sponsoring semi-annual workshops for smaller congregations. The pattern is to have a joint meeting mid-state such as Carlinville, Farmersville or Springfield in June and then identical workshops more central to each District in January. We met in Carlyle and Mt. Vernon to date. We have also worked with circuits on addressing the needs of their area. We are grateful for the active pastors willing to do extra duty and for the retired pastors who are serving part-time calls. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to raise laborers for the harvest field.

During this past triennium we have consistently had around ten calling congregations at any given time. The average vacancy in Southern Illinois is two plus years.

Recently Synod updated the software and support technology for districts, rosters, and statistics. Thus replaces thirty-year-old technology. These modern tools are speeding up the process of providing lists to calling congregations. As the system is refined it should prove a valuable tool for our work together.

Administratively it has been a challenging triennium. Our last official audit was for the 2018 fiscal year. When COVID-19 hit in March of 2020, our auditing firm informed us that they would be unable to do an audit for 2019 because of the pandemic. The same carried over the following year for fiscal year 2020. After these two years of no audits, our auditing firm told us in 2022 that they could no longer serve us because of staff shortages they were having. Other local firms were contacted but they were either committed elsewhere or we were too small of an entity for them to consider our business. Our District Treasurer, Gary Hemmer, took up the task of trying to secure an auditing firm. Mr. Hemmer reached out to the LCMS for assistance. Synod's auditing department agreed to add us to the other districts that they audit. There were now five years of unaudited books. The District Board of Directors asked the Synod if they would allow us to do less than the five years of audits, maybe two or three of the years. Since a Synod bylaw requires annual audits, they declined. They did, however, agree to conduct all five years of audits. The audits for 2019-2023 began in July of 2024. They hope to complete the audits early in 2025.

The District office suffered a setback due to health complications with our longtime Bookkeeper and District President Administrative Assistant, Leslie Sramek. She struggled through much of 2023 and was finally able to receive medical disability in 2024. Happily, her health is doing better. She was united in marriage with Rev. Joe Nehring from Faith Lutheran Church in Mt. Vernon in October of 2024. Anna Rowden is our new bookkeeper, which is a half-time position. She has been busy organizing all the finances into QuickBooks and helping with the auditing process. Elsa Mort is the new District President Administrative Assistant. She began her work in September of 2024 and is making valuable contributions to the administrative work of the Southern Illinois District. We have a strong team going forward.

The District underwent another unplanned change in July of 2024. Both District vice-presidents accepted calls outside of Southern Illinois. First Vice-President, Rev. Mark Nebel from St. John, Red Bud, accepted a call to teach at St. Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, Missouri. Second Vice-President, Rev. Dr. Kirk Clayton, Zion, Mascoutah, accepted a call to teach at Concordia University Chicago. We appreciate their long years of service in our District. Rev. Michael Walther, Good Shepherd, Collinsville (on sabbatical) is now the First Vice-President and Rev. Mark Surburg, Good Shepherd,



Marion is our Second Vice-President. We thank them for stepping up to serve and ask you to excuse their brief reports having only been in office since August 2024.

In August of 2020, I was installed as the part-time assistant pastor at Messiah, Carlyle. My duties included preaching 4-5 times per year, visiting 3-4 homebound members, and making hospital calls as asked. Pastor Scott Schilbe accepted a call to Overland, MO in early 2023. His final Sunday was Easter of that year. Messiah was unable to find a pastor to do Sunday morning services. I offered to do most of the preaching and teach adult Bible class if they could move to a full-time Saturday evening service. The congregation agreed, and I have been serving them most Saturdays since then. The extra preaching and teaching have been rewarding. I am often able to serve on Saturday and then another congregation or two on Sunday morning. At Messiah, we look forward to having a full-time pastor and returning to Sunday morning services. We recently extended our seventh call during this vacancy. It is the Lord who provides pastors in His time.

My health has been excellent throughout this triennium. I even made a comment in October that I have not felt this good in twenty years. I still feel good, but in November 2024 I had a health incident. I had a wound on my foot which became infected and resulted in me being hospitalized for several days. I am working with doctors to aggressively treat the infection and will be on IV antibiotics until January 2025. The latest reports show the infection is responding to treatment and the wound is smaller. I am trying to stay off the effected foot as much as possible, using a knee scooter or wheelchair when out. This is my thorn in the flesh. God's grace is sufficient always, especially in our weakness.

God's blessings as you prepare for the convention in February. Carefully read the reports and overtures. By God's goodness and loving kindness, the best is ahead of us. We are heirs of eternal life. Your future is secure in Jesus Christ.

Rev. Timothy Scharr  
*President*

# **R-2 SCHOOLS AND GENERAL EXECUTIVE REPORT**

I am thankful for the support of our office staff and the partnership with the ninety-one congregations and thirty-four educational agencies throughout the District. It is an honor and privilege to serve God's Kingdom in this place and work with so many dedicated professional church workers and lay leaders that have a love for our Lord Jesus Christ and a commitment to the ministry!

## **LUTHERAN EDUCATION: EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY**

The Southern Illinois District has 34 Lutheran education sites: seven free-standing preschools, twenty elementary schools, three Lutheran high schools, and four early childhood centers. Over half of our SID congregations are involved in supporting Lutheran education preschool through high school. The enrollment in all these educational programs has seen an increase during the past triennium (21-22 = 3,488 students, 22-23 = 3,564 students, and 23-24 = 3,725 students) in Early Childhood through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

In 2023-24, about 22% of students in grades EC-12 indicated that they had NO church membership – what an opportunity for reach out to families and communities in Southern Illinois.

We have baptized 79 students during the past three years in our SID schools and either baptized or confirmed another 164 adults whose children attended SID schools! It is my fervent prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to bless our schools and congregations as we proclaim the Gospel message through our programs of Lutheran education!

Elementary tuition averages \$2,722 per student (1<sup>st</sup> child, member) and \$3,840 (1<sup>st</sup> child, non-member) with ranges from \$0 - \$6,200 for member and \$0 - \$6,395 for non-member students. High School tuition average is \$6765 for Member and \$7,265 for nonmember. Starting base for teacher salaries ranged from \$26,000 – \$40,817, with an average base salary in the SID of \$34,597 (the SID base for 2024 is \$40,817).

Faith Lutheran Preschool, Godfrey and Zion Lutheran Preschool, Carlinville ceased operations during the past triennium. St. Paul Lutheran Troy also ceased operation for their school. The Early Childhood Center remains open, while St. Mark's, Steeleville closed their 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

We have welcomed twelve new administrators to our Lutheran schools during the past three years: Larry Urban (Interim), Trinity-Centralia; Eric Brofford, Holy Cross, Collinsville; Ken Krueger, Trinity-Edwardsville; John Schaff, Trinity-Hoyleton; Jami Pryor, Zion-Litchfield; Ed Bower, Immanuel, Okawville; Janet Wicker, St. Mark, Steeleville,

Sherry Prange, Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville; Melanie Cooper, Trinity–St. John, Nashville; Justin Palm, St. John, Red Bud; Robin Booth, Trinity, Red Bud; and Pastor Rene Castillero, St. Paul, Hamel.

Fourteen of our SID Lutheran schools are accredited by National Lutheran School Accreditation: Zion, Belleville; Zion, Bethalto; Good Shepherd, Collinsville; Holy Cross, Collinsville; Unity, East St. Louis; Trinity, Edwardsville; Trinity, Hoffman; Trinity, Hoyleton; Zion, Litchfield; Immanuel, Okawville; St. John, Red Bud; Trinity, Red Bud; Metro-East LHS, Edwardsville, and Christ Our Savior LHS, Evansville. St. Paul, Hamel is accredited through CCLE (Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education). These programs are committed to school improvement plans and submit annual reports to the SID Accreditation Commission.

Zion, Staunton had their Validation Team visit in October 2024 and will be granted NLSA accreditation in July 2025.

SID – NLSA Commission Members are Bob Mayhew (Chairman), Good Shepherd, Collinsville; Beth Boester, Trinity, Hoffman; Francee Kasten, Trinity, Hoyleton; Bill Becker, St. John, Red Bud; Ken Krueger, Trinity, Edwardsville; and Jeffrey Fick (advisory).

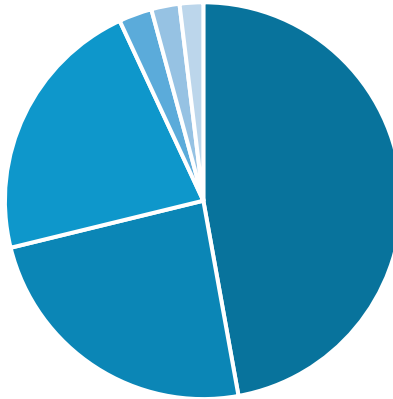
### **THANK YOU DISTRICT SERVANTS**

We are tremendously blessed with all our ordained, commissioned, and lay workers in the Southern Illinois District. These servants to our Lord have put forth an extraordinary amount of effort in their service to the mission and ministry. To our servants of the Lord in the teaching and preaching ministry, we say thank you for touching the hearts of many, the wisdom you've shared, the support you've given, and the love you've shown. All of these reveal the ways the Lord Jesus is at work in you.

We are reminded in Colossians 3:23 – 24, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.” You are serving the Lord. We say thank you for all that you do, and we pray God’s richest blessings upon your ministry.

**FINANCES: DISTRICT 2024 BUDGETED EXPENSES**

Total Expenses: \$1,016,848



- Salaries and Office Expense \$479,561
- District Missions \$244,300
- Synod \$222,553
- Lutheran Witness \$27,500
- LCEF VP \$23,400
- Office Building \$19,534

Our District’s budgeted expenses total \$1,016,848. Please note that *Lutheran Witness* expenses are partially offset by subscription income. Also, please note that the Southern Illinois District forwards to the Synod 25% of all congregation financial gifts received. For 2024, this amount is budgeted to be \$222,553.

God has indeed blessed the Southern Illinois District during the past triennium! May we continue to seek His will for our personal lives, the mission and ministry of our local congregations, and the work of the district and national offices!

**DISTRICT OFFICE PERSONNEL**

- Rev. Timothy Scharr – Southern Illinois District President
- Jeffrey A. Fick – Schools and General Executive
- Elsa Mort – Administrative Assistant to the President
- Anna Rowden – Bookkeeper
- Scott Roberts – LCEF Vice President (SID and Mid-South districts)

Leslie Sramek left the District office for medical reasons. In 2024, we welcomed to the District Anna Rowden, Elsa Mort, and Scott Roberts.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey A. Fick  
*Schools and General Executive*

# **R-3 VICE PRESIDENTS REPORTS**

## **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT REPORT**

In 2024 both our first and second vice presidents took calls out of the District. The Southern Illinois District Board of Directors asked me to serve the remainder of the term for the first vice president. I am glad to do this. I hope my previous experience in both roles will help support the president, the directors, and the congregations of the Southern Illinois District.

Rev. Michael Walther  
*First Vice President*

## **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT REPORT**

The Rev. Dr. Kirk Clayton accepted a call outside of the Southern Illinois District, and on July 27 I was ratified as the Second Vice-President by the District Board of Directors. In the brief time that I have served in the position, I attended the August meeting of the Board of Spiritual Care and of the Presidium. I will be attending the October Board of Directors meeting.

Rev. Mark Surburg  
*Second Vice President*

# **R-04 TREASURER REPORT**

## **FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

I was elected treasurer of the Southern Illinois District in February 2022. I began my term by reviewing the District's financials. Due to COVID-19, the district's financials had not been audited since year end 2018.

The audit firm told the District in 2020 and 2021 that it was not conducting on-site audits. In 2022, after many unreturned telephone calls the audit firm, I was told that they could not complete the audit because they did not have adequate staff. I contacted several other firms and was told they did not have enough staff to take on any new engagements.

In 2023, I contacted the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod to explore options and discovered they had an internal audit staff and did audits for several LCMS districts. Also in 2023, the SID bookkeeping staff had health issues and, as a result, many financial matters were not adequately and timely addressed.

According to the LCMS bylaws, districts are to have an annual audit of their financials. The finance committee requested a proposal from LCMS to complete the audit. We also sought a variance from LCMS from having to have an audit of all five years. LCMS rejected the request and required an audit of all years from 2019-2023. The estimated cost to complete all five years was \$35,000. The SID board approved this expenditure.

The audit began in July 2024. As of this report, the audit is not complete. In 2024, a new bookkeeper was hired. In 2024, the auditors recommended new accounting procedures, we discovered that payroll taxes (for District and Unity School) have not been withheld for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2023, payments to Concordia plan had not been paid, there was a lack of proper documentation for expenses and restricted funds, and uncashed and unsent checks were discovered. In short, the District was faced with a real challenge.

However, I am happy to report that we are making progress, correcting the accounting procedures, and have almost completed the 2019-2023 audits. The finance committee will continue to work through the challenges.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW (UNAUDITED)

### FISCAL YEAR 2021

Revenues:		
	Circuit Income	\$898,000
	Other Income	89,000
	TOTAL	<u>\$987,000</u>
Expenses:		<u>\$991,000</u>
	Net Income (Loss)	(\$4,000)

### FINANCIAL POSITION – DECEMBER 31, 2021

Cash on Hand	\$212,830
Board Restricted Funds	\$345,197
Restricted Funds	\$747,431

### 2021 SUMMARY

In 2021, SID LCMS recorded a loss of \$4,000. There are 91 congregations within the District, and circuit income was \$36,000 over budget. Other income was \$13,000 under budget as LCEF operating results were \$40,000 below budget but gifts were \$19,000 over budget. Expenditures were \$65,000 below budget. Payments to Synod were 27% of circuit income.

### FISCAL YEAR 2022

Revenues:		
	Circuit Income	\$870,000
	Other Income	123,000
	TOTAL	<u>\$993,000</u>
Expenses:		<u>\$998,000</u>
	Net Income	\$13,000

### FINANCIAL POSITION – DECEMBER 31, 2022

Cash on Hand	\$226,818
Board Restricted Funds	\$322,508
Restricted Funds	\$750,558

### 2022 SUMMARY

In 2022, SID LCMS posted net income of \$13,000. Circuit income was \$27,500 or 3.1% less than 2021. Other income was \$34,000 or 38.2% greater than 2021. LCEF operating results added \$52,000 to other income, while gifts were \$10,500 less than 2021. Lutheran Witness income was \$17,200, down \$6,500 from 2021. Expenses were \$10,900 or 11% less than 2021.



### FISCAL YEAR 2023

Revenues:		
	Circuit Income	\$910,000
	Other Income	135,000
	TOTAL	<u>\$1,045,000</u>
Expenses:		<u>\$993,000</u>
	Net Income	\$53,000

### FINANCIAL POSITION – DECEMBER 31, 2023

Cash on Hand	\$236,124
Board Restricted Funds	\$272,527
Restricted Funds	\$893,282

### 2023 SUMMARY

In 2023, SID LCMS posted net income of \$53,000. Circuit Income was up \$40,000 or 4.6% over 2022. The top five congregations (in giving) totaled \$252,722 and represented 27.8% of the total circuit income in 2023. Other income was up \$12,000 or 10.1% over 2022. Gifts were up \$6,600 and Lutheran Witness income was up \$8,100. Expenses were up \$13,300 or 1.4% over 2022. The largest single non-payroll expense was \$4,150 for new railing.

**FISCAL YEAR 2024 – 11 MONTHS**

Revenues:		
	Circuit Income	\$765,000
	Other Income	45,000
	TOTAL	<u>\$810,000</u>
Expenses:		<u>\$873,000</u>
	Net Income (Loss)	(\$63,000)

**FINANCIAL POSITION – NOVEMBER 30, 2024**

Cash on Hand	\$336,177
Board Restricted Funds	\$360,652
Restricted Funds (9-30-2024)	\$935,064

**2024 SUMMARY**

After 11 months, SID LCMS has incurred a loss of \$63,000. There are still several large expenses to be paid in 2024. I am hopeful of providing an update for the year under new business prior to or at the Convention. During the year, the District had to fund the payroll withholding of 2023 totaling \$71,346, paid an interest penalty of \$14,552, and incurred fixed asset purchases (copier, water heater, and air conditioner) of \$17,300. Still pending is an audit expense of \$35,000, interest penalty for withholding (Unity) of \$24,708, and a worker compensation penalty (Unity) of \$11,276. Last year, circuit income in December was \$93,000. If the circuit income were the same in December 2024, income would total \$858,000. That is a reduction of \$52,000 from 2023 income. Also in 2024, there was the sale of St. Peters, Caseyville. The net proceeds from this sale total \$61,485 and is currently in the District's "Cash on Hand" account.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:**

A new bookkeeper, Anna Rowden, was hired in April. LCMS is working to complete the audit of 2019-2023. Payroll processing for Unity has been transferred to Paul Miller.

Lutheran Witness subscriptions have been transferred to individual congregations. We have implemented new accounting and documentation procedures.

**COUNT OUR BLESSINGS:**

The District has new support staff, and everyone is dedicated to correcting the issues. The District has 91 strong congregations. Within Southern Illinois District there are dedicated and committed pastors, administrators and teachers. The District has a strong board. Everyone is committed to maintaining and building a strong and financially sound District.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary D. Hemmer  
*Treasurer*

## **R-05 BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT**

During the 2022-2025 triennium, the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors met quarterly as specified in the District Bylaws. The Board also met once in a special meeting in March of 2022 for orientation. This report outlines the actions and activities of the Board during the past triennium. All the Directors are thanked for their time and attention during the past three years.

Since the District President, Schools and General Executive, Treasurer, Boards, and Committees provide distinct reports to the District, this report will only summarize the actions of the Board of Directors as a whole.

The first gathering of the Board of Directors was a special meeting for the purpose of orientation, along with the Board of Missions. The meeting was held at Good Shepherd in Collinsville, and the Board is thankful for Good Shepherd's hospitality. There were no actions taken at that meeting.

The first regular meeting of the Board of Directors was May 7, 2022. The regular reports of the District President, the Schools and General Executive, the Treasurer were heard. At this meeting, Treasurer Gary Hemmer reported that the District had not had an external audit for the previous two years, but an audit was being planned. Reports were also heard from the Board of Missions and the Board of Spiritual Care which is made up of the Circuit Visitors of the District. It was also at that meeting that appointments were made to re-appoint Jeff Fick as the Schools and General Executive, and to appoint members of the Commission on Communications, the Office and Personnel Committee, the Fund Advisory Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Commission on Congregational Constitutions and Bylaws. Also at that meeting, it was reported that the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matter approved the amendments to the District bylaws made at the District Convention. Finally, Faith Lutheran in Flora was transferred from the Central Illinois District to the Southern Illinois District.

The Board met again July 30, 2022. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. The Board approved a recommendation from the Office and Personnel Committee to raise the base salary of the District salary scale by 4.9%. The Board also approved a Lutheran Church Extension Fund Loan to Zion Lutheran in Carlinville for \$150,000.

On October 29, 2022, the Board met for a regular meeting. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. At this meeting, a proposed budget was presented by the Finance Committee. The proposed budget included a 3.5% increase in expenditures over the

2022 budget. The budget was passed. Additional members were appointed to the Commission on Communications. The Board appointed Rev. Peter Ill to serve as the Board's Advisory Representative to the 2023 Synod Convention. Director Zachary Schnare resigned his position, and the Board appointed Mr. Joe Gerth to fill the vacancy.

The next regular meeting of the Board was January 28, 2023. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. Treasurer Gary Hemmer reported that 2022 income exceeded expenses by \$13,486, and the cash on hand balance was \$1.25 million. The surplus was retained in the general fund. The Board approved designations for housing allowance for District President Scharr and professional expense allowances for District President Scharr and Schools and General Executive Fick.

The Board met again on April 29, 2023. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. The Board approved a designation for School and General Executive Fick's housing allowance.

The next regular meeting of the Board was July 22, 2023. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. Director Kevin Hartkemeyer resigned from the Board. The Office and Personnel Committee recommended raising the base salary for the 2024 salary scale by 3.5% over the 2023 salary scale, as well as adjusting the pulpit supply remuneration recommendations. The Board of Directors approved the recommended salary scale. Matthew Bierman was appointed as a Director to fill the seat vacated by Kevin Hartkemeyer. Director Larry Barringer was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Office and Personnel Committee left by Kevin Hartkemeyer's resignation. Treasurer Gary Hemmer reported that the accountants who usually conduct the District's audits are not able to conduct the necessary audits for the District. The Board made nominations to fill vacancies on the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters, Commission on Handbook, and the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

The Board next met October 28, 2023. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. Director Joe Gerth resigned from the Board. The Finance Committee reported that they requested permission from the Synod to have a Financial Review instead of an audit, but the Synod requires the more involved audit instead of a Financial Review. The Board approved the budget for 2024. John Schaff was appointed to fill the vacant seat left by Mr. Gerth. The Board approved the purchase of a skid-steer for the District's Lutheran Emergency

Response team, with the cost to be covered by a Synod grant and direct-donation funds with no cost to the District.

The first meeting of 2024 was January 20. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. The Board authorized the purchase of a new computer for the bookkeeper, and adjusted the hours worked by the District President's Administrative Assistant. The Board requested an exemption from the Synod regarding the requirements of an external audit for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 with the intention to submit an audit for 2023. The Board appointed District Reconcilers at the request of the Synod Secretary. The Board also approved housing allowance designations for District President Scharr and Schools and General Executive Fick.

The Board met again on April 27, 2024. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. The Board approved the purchase of a new copy machine for a cost of \$5,800. The Board's request for an exemption of the Synod's audit requirement was denied, so the Board ratified an electronic vote to have audits for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 conducted by the Synod for a cost of \$35,000.

The Board next met on July 27, 2024. Reports from the District President, Schools and General Executive, the Lutheran Foundation, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, and all standing Boards, Committees, and Commissions were heard. First Vice President Mark Nebel and Second Vice President Kirk Clayton reported their resignations from the Board, both effective August 1, 2024. The order of succession of vice-presidents set by the District's bylaws was announced, and Rev. Michael Walther would become First Vice-President and Rev. Mark Surburg would become Second Vice-President when the resignations of Rev. Nebel and Rev. Clayton took place. The Finance Committee reported that the audit for years 2019-2023 began the week of July 21. The Office and Personnel Committee recommended raising the base salary of the District's 2025 salary scale 3% over the 2024 salary scale, and the Board approved the recommendation. The Office and Personnel Committee also presented an overture to be submitted to the 2025 District Convention regarding the pulpit supply rates in the District's salary scale. The overture was approved by the Board. Several members who had been elected to the Commission on Nominations and Elections for the 2025 convention are unable to serve, so the Board appointed replacements for three vacancies. The District's Commission on Constitutional Matters had not had anyone appointed to it, so the Board appointed three members to the Commission as expected by the District's bylaws.

The Board met again on October 26, 2024. Reports were heard, and Mr. Scott Roberts, the new Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice-President for the District, introduced himself. During the Treasurer's Report, Mr. Hemmer reported that the external audit of the District's finances is continuing. A motion was passed that mission funds from the Boehning estate would be used to help Hope, Mount Carmel install a new roof for their building. That expenditure was approved and will be paid when Hope provides a contract for their new roof. The Board of Directors appointed Rev. Jess Biermann to a vacant seat on the Mission Board. The Finance Committee presented a proposed budget for 2025, and it was passed. The Board approved an overture on Campus Ministry funding for Convention consideration. That overture was approved and will appear in the *Workbook*.

During the triennium, the Board approved amendments to congregational constitutions and bylaws from Zion Lutheran in Belleville, Christ Lutheran in Jacob, Trinity Lutheran in Hoffman, Trinity Lutheran in Harvel, Trinity Lutheran in Nashville, Zion Lutheran in Bethalto, Trinity Lutheran in Edwardsville, Immanuel in Okawville, and Immanuel in Mount Olive.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Peter W. III  
*Secretary*

## **R-06 MISSION BOARD REPORT**

Matthew 25:34-45 reads “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Jesus’ point here is to urge his disciples to share God’s generous saving grace with all. As a District we share God’s grace, peace and mercy to all. By the workings and help of the Holy Spirit we have been given the insight, and the needs of God’s people. We walk faithfully trusting the possibilities of God’s kingdom being practiced on earth as it is in heaven. The good news is that Jesus is the light unto all the world!

### **PRISON MINISTRIES**

The Southern Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod actively seeks to share THE GOSPEL GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST with the imprisoned within Prison and Jail settings through Word and Sacrament Ministry by way of Worship, Bible Study, and personal visitation.

In summary, at times we have provided regular worship and Bible Study in over 20 facilities, manned by both clergy and lay volunteers.

District Prison Ministry:

- Alton Mental Health – Rev. Randy Fischer of Messiah, Alton
- Centralia Prison – Rev. Tim Mueller of St. John New Minden and St. Luke Covington
- Choate Mental Health – VACANT
- Dixon Springs Prison Workcamp – Chaplain David Otten of Faith, Eldorado and Our Redeemer Golconda
- Greenville Federal Prison and Camp – Rev. Jeffery Nehrt of Our Redeemer, Greenville



- Harrisburg Youth Center – Rev. David Otten of Faith, Eldorado and Our Redeemer, Golconda
- Lawrenceville Prison – Rev. Thomas Kramer of Hope, Mt. Carmel
- Marion Federal Prison – VACANT
- Menard Maximum Prison – Rev. David Kollmeyer of Zion, Pinckneyville & Trinity, Conant; Mr. Ted Mueller & Rev. Justin Massey of St. John, Chester
- Menard Medium Prison Mr. Ted Mueller of St. John, Chester
- Pere Marquette Youth Center – Rev. David Kern of Emmaus, Dorsey; Mr. Craig Eden of St. Peter’s, Prairietown; Ms. Arlene Johnson of Messiah, Alton
- Pinckneyville Prison – Rev. David Kollmeyer of Zion, Pinckneyville & Trinity, Conant
- Rend Lake (Big Muddy) Prison – VACANT
- Robinson Prison – Rev. Thomas Kramer of Hope, Mt. Carmel
- Shawnee Prison – VACANT
- Southwestern Illinois Prison (East St. Louis) – Rev. Alan Beuster of Hope, Granite City
- Vienna Prison – VACANT

We also have a reentry program for returning inmates:

- Freed in Christ – VACANT
- Jail Ministry:
  - Belleville Jail – Mr. Randy Geiser of Zion, Belleville
  - Randolph County Jail – Mr. Ted Mueller of St. John, Chester
  - Pulaski County Jail – VACANT

More information can be found in the R-12 Prison Ministry Task Force Report on page 39 of this Workbook.

### **CAMPUS MINISTRIES**

The Southern Illinois District continues to support Campus Ministries at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Carbondale and Trinity Lutheran Church in Edwardsville. In Carbondale, the congregation is the campus ministry. Many years ago, the former Lutheran Student Center and Our Savior Lutheran congregation joined together into one ministry.

**Student and Family Baptisms** Junior SIU Student Brynnlie, as well as her younger brother Liam, her sister Blaire, her mother Jennifer, and her cousin Briana were all baptized during move-in weekend!

**Summer Orientation Resource Fairs** The beginning of the academic year brings plenty of new activity and opportunities in campus ministry. Pastors Holden and Weeks attended the New Student Orientations on campus throughout the summer, meeting with students and parents and giving them information about our congregation as well as the first few events taking place.

**Saluki Start-Up** Move-in week began August 12th. On Tuesday and Wednesday the pastors were invited to the Center for International Education to welcome the new

international students to campus. We had a drawing for a rice cooker in addition to some “swag” to hand out to anyone who gave us their contact information for email & text invitations to our campus ministry and church events. On Thursday, we typically host a s’mores table at the first all campus event called “Light Up the Lake.” We provide the ingredients to s’mores and students can roast marshmallows at the campfire (which gives us some time to visit with students and give out information). Unfortunately this year, the pouring rain postponed this event until the Friday night of the following week. Finally, Saturday morning, we were invited by SIU New Student Programs to attend a university provided breakfast for students since the dining halls were closed. At the breakfast, hand out information and visit with students.

**Thursday Night Meal & Bible Study** At the end of the last academic year, the students requested an additional Bible study during the week. We chose Thursdays for the fall semester. The congregation provides ingredients for a meal, and the pastors and students gather in the kitchen to prepare the meal together, then eat and study Scripture. Following the Bible study, we gather in the Sanctuary for one of the evening orders of worship or responsive prayer.

**LWML District Convention** Pastor Holden was invited by the SID LWML to speak at their convention to share about the campus ministry at SIU Carbondale. He also set up a table of information to display pictures and resources we use.

**International Student Welcome** Friday, August 23rd, we hosted international students for a potluck meal at Giant City State Park, about 30 minutes south of campus. The pastors prepared an opening dialogue which led into a devotion on Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. We then had an opportunity to visit and hike the trail by the shelter.

### **LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY – LCMS-U@SIUE**

**Activity Report** The fall semester of the 2024-25 school year has been wonderfully blessed by God and LCMS-U@SIUE is well prepared to meet the challenges that the future may hold. Praise God! Our core group of active students continues to grow, and our fellowship events have been a source of great joy and positive, Christian formation for our students.

**Bible Study** Every Sunday evening, LCMS-U@SIUE meets on campus in the Student Success Center for Bible Study. Students enjoy snacks and drinks while studying God’s word and growing in fellowship with one another. This year, we are studying Ecclesiastes asking ourselves along the way, “What’s the point of life?” This class has been a tremendous blessing. Students are beginning to realize that outside of Christ, meaning, purpose, and identity are as transient as the wind. From an apologetic standpoint, the discussions have shown that our faith passes the test of existential repugnance while the

philosophies of the world fall short. While it will likely take the whole school year to complete the book, the painstakingly slow pace is paying dividends. Despite saying “so long” to a number of our graduating students, our numbers continue to hold steady from the year previous with 8-14 students regularly attending Bible class.

**Activity Highlights** To start the year off, a few students and I hosted a table at the SIUE fall activities fair where we handed out Bibles and catechisms along with branded LCMS-U@SIUE items including, pens, mugs, frisbees, note books, sunglasses, t-shirts, and keychains. This was a great opportunity to have meaningful conversation with a significant cross-section of the student body.

In September, we had our first off campus fellowship event. We took 15 students to the orchard to pick apples before returning to the Biermann home for an evening of caramel apples, bonfires, food, games, and theological discussion. Future events for the fall semester are all scheduled and can be found on at [siuelutherans.com](http://siuelutherans.com).

Small group continues to meet off campus on Monday evenings at 6:30. Thank you, and please continue to join me in prayer to the Lord of the harvest, that His word of life and salvation might be made known to his children on the campus of SIUE.

### **UNITY LUTHERAN MISSION SCHOOL**

Mission work in East St. Louis at Unity Lutheran Mission School. Started by the Southern Illinois District, receives only a small portion of its operating budget from the District. The school provides quality education as well as daily teaching about Jesus to over 95 K-8 students in the East St. Louis area under the direction of Principal, Rev. Aaron Dickerson. The annual fund drive and “Share the Miracle Dinners” continues as a main source of fund raising to provide assistance with tuition at Unity. Every family receives financial aid.

### **UNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

The District also helps Unity Lutheran Church and their pastor Rev. Dr, Willie Stallworth to provide word and sacrament ministry to that community. Unity Congregation continues to embrace the school as a wonderful outreach into the East St. Louis Community.

## **LANDSDOWNE INITIATIVE**

The District continues to foster and support the Lansdowne Initiative which provides housing and other improvements in the area around the school and church. In conjunction with this initiative the District supports annual repair and cleanup events for the community. In this way, God's hands are at work through us to care for and show love our neighbor.

## **SEMINARIO CONCORDIA EL REFORMADOR**

The 2022 Southern Illinois District Convention established a partnership with Seminario Concordia El Reformador as the new foreign mission partner. The seminary, located in the Dominican Republic, serves Spanish -speaking Lutherans from all over Central and South America by training pastors and deaconesses who then plant churches in their home countries. The seminary is part of Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Confesional, the church body in fellowship with the LCMS in the Dominican Republic. We encourage congregations to pray for the students and staff of Seminario Concordia El Reformador, share information about their mission, and support it with mission offerings.

Finally, I wanted to take a moment to offer my sincere thanks to all missionary service shown by the Southern Illinois District. For those of you who have given your time and energy to spread the Word of God; Jesus crucified died and buried and raised from the dead who lives on high, we appreciate your efforts. It is a blessing to share your experiences as witnesses to the power of the Lord with those who do not know Him as they should. To Seminario Concordia El Reformador missionaries you have taken this a step further, sacrificing the comforts and routines of your daily lives to offer the gift of Jesus Christ in another land. I applaud your determination and dedication to the mission of spreading the Word of the Lord across cultural and physical boundaries.

Thank you all for your work on behalf of the Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. You have opened the hearts and minds of others and set an example for your brothers and sisters in Christ.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Dr. Willie P. Stallworth, Sr.  
*Mission Board Chairman*

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world." Romans 1:8

# **R-07 LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND REPORT**

## **MISSION**

The mission of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is to support The Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod (LCMS) by ensuring that financial resources and related services are available now and, in the future, empowering ministry and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW**

Since 1847, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has steadfastly pursued its mission to "make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world."

Established in 1978, LCEF plays a crucial role in this mission.

- Purpose: To empower ministry by providing loans, investments and support services designed to serve the financial needs of congregations, schools and other ministry organizations within the LCMS.
- Growth: From humble beginnings with \$100 million in assets to a current portfolio exceeding \$2.0 billion—demonstrating our commitment to financial stability, trustworthiness and advancing Christ's kingdom.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

LCEF's primary function has been to provide loans funded by investments and gifts from dedicated church members and supporters. Over the years, our services have broadened to include strategic advisory services, such as:

- Ministry Solutions: Offering mission clarity and guidance through ministry clarity processes and capital campaigns.
- Real Estate Solutions: Providing expert consultation and execution in property development, repurposing and expansion.

## **FINANCIAL STRENGTH**

LCEF's strong financial foundation plays a crucial role in supporting the LCMS today and securing its future. Our investment programs empower LCMS individuals and organizations, funding projects such as home loans, sanctuary renovations, senior living communities and Lutheran schools.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Our leadership is committed to guiding the organization with vision, expertise and a dedication to our mission. Here's a snapshot of our leadership team and workforce:

- President and CEO: Bart Day, MBA MDiv., reports to a 12-member Board of Directors.
- Workforce: LCEF employs over 150 people across the United States, including our headquarters in St. Louis and representatives in 31 LCMS districts.

## **CONNECTION TO MINISTRIES**

LCMS ministries connect with LCEF through their district vice presidents (DVPs), who act as vital links to ensure our services meet each district's unique needs.

For over 45 years, LCEF has been committed to providing the financial resources and services that support the church's mission. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to serving the LCMS and strengthening ministries through trusted financial and strategic partnerships.

## **ECONOMIC OVERVIEW**

A period of complex and evolving economic challenges:

### **2022:**

- Continued recovery from the initial shock of the pandemic.
- Significant inflation, with the Consumer Price Index peaking at 9.1% in June.
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 2.1%.
- Unemployment was around 3.6% by year's end.
- Federal Reserve initiated a series of interest rate hikes to control inflation.

**2023:**

- Ongoing efforts by the Federal Reserve to combat inflation.
- Interest rates reached levels not seen since before the Great Recession.
- Inflation cooled to 3% by December.
- Tepid GDP growth of 1.8%.
- The housing market experienced a significant slowdown due to higher borrowing costs.
- Unemployment remained low at 3.5%.

**2024:**

- Continued economic challenges but signs of stabilization.
- Inflation moderated to 2.5% year-over-year.
- GDP growth is projected to remain sluggish at 1.5%.
- Unemployment slightly increased to 3.8%.
- The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) paused rate hikes to monitor economic data closely.

**LCEF'S RESPONSE**

LCEF navigated volatile markets with prudence, strengthening our capital and positioning for sustained growth. Despite economic challenges, we ended FY 2024 with over \$17.5M in gains, reinforcing our commitment to financial stability and ministry support.

Scott Roberts

*Mid-South & Southern Illinois District Vice President*

## **R-08 LCMS FOUNDATION REPORT**

The mission of the LCMS Foundation is to care for and grow God's gifts so that ministries flourish. We are grateful to have the privilege to manage the dollars that donors have given to their local congregation, seminaries and universities, districts, Synodical entities, and all other organizations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. These gifts come from different sources-current gifts and deferred gift plans that those that came before us planned out long ago. The LCMS Foundation is blessed and grateful for this, and we know that without God's hand directing and leading our efforts, it would amount to nothing without God.

The LCMS Foundation currently manages over \$1.3 billion in assets under management. We have been trusted to steward the investments from over 525 churches and schools, 7 universities and seminaries, 18 high schools (including 2 from the Southern Illinois District), and 26 Districts, including the Southern Illinois District. Most of these funds are from endowment funds of these institutions, established by God's people which had the forethought to set up a means of providing an income stream to their ministry so that the organization can continue into the future. The funds under management from just the ministries of the Southern Illinois District total \$5.11 million. Praise be to God!

In fiscal year 2024, the LCMS Foundation had the privilege to be involved in the distribution of 3,181 gifts for today totaling \$62.3 million. Gifts that were distributed during the year 2024 are the result of the Foundation's core services in planned giving and gift administration. Some were the result of a donor generously writing a check; others were bequests made through a donor's estate plan. The majority of gifts were created years ago and administered by the Foundation, then distributed to ministry when the donor was called home to heaven. The Southern Illinois District had 24 distributions in fiscal year 2024 totaling \$31,216.00. 167 gifts to SID ministries totaling \$475,890.00 was distributed since last convention in 2022.

The Lifetime Plan for Giving® is a gift and estate planning process developed by the LCMS Foundation that walks a donor through the steps of preparing an estate/gift plan. A Gift Planning Counselor assists donors to meet an attorney to draft their legal documents necessary in their estate plan along with providing ideas and ways to share gifts with the donor's family and favorite ministries and to do this in the most tax efficient method possible. Through the Lifetime Plan for Giving® process 850 new donors created a plan to provide future gifts totaling \$144.8 million last year. Within the District last fiscal year, there was \$5.4 million in future planned gifts. The Lifetime Plan for Giving® has helped thousands of God's people share the gifts He has given to them to steward during their lifetime and leave a legacy of their faith to those they love.



The LCMS Foundation looks forward to another triennium of working closely with the District to provide the comprehensive charitable expertise and services to help God's faithful stewards plan and direct their passion for stewardship to family and all ministries of the church.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Radden, CTFA  
*Senior Gift Planning Counselor*  
*LCMS Foundation*

## **R-09 CAMPUS MINISTRY SIU CARBONDALE REPORT**

During this past 2022-25 triennium, the campus ministry at Carbondale has been reset and revitalized. In 2022, a large class of very musically talented American students graduated, and the international student ministry was still meeting exclusively online. Since then, we have returned to regular activities and have begun new opportunities for students to gather, worship, study Scripture, and serve in the congregation, on campus, and in the surrounding neighborhood.

American campus ministry meets after the Sunday worship service with a home-cooked meal made by members of the congregation plus a Bible study led by the pastors. A Thursday evening Bible study was added at the request of returning students. Ingredients to a meal are provided by the congregation and the students and pastors make the meal together, eat, study Scripture, and complete the evening with a responsive prayer service. The students have gone on hiking tours together on the various trails in the Shawnee National Forest and Giant City State Park.

International campus ministry meets Friday evenings. Once a month, it is a large potluck meal around a celebration where the pastors lead a devotion and program. The other Fridays are snacks and Bible study. Currently we have two international students from India who are serving as the building custodians and live in the apartment at church.

Our relationship with the university is going well. We meet regularly with staff and administration in various departments on campus and have a great working relationship with them. That allows the pastors to participate with New Student Programs, Student Involvement, Housing, Health Center, Center for International Education, and the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Our Savior continues to seek ways to serve our community. We serve the Carbondale Police as a chaplain and participate in the Peer Support Team. That team exists to foster health among the officers as well as their households, including spiritual health. Our Savior continues to provide resources and helps host events to cultivate a sense of connection and support with the law enforcement community. The triennium has also seen significant staff transitions for our partner NeuroRestorative, a residential traumatic brain injury rehabilitation clinic. In addition to the weekly Bible studies with their clients, we rejoice they have sufficient staffing to accompany our Bible study participants so they can once again receive Word and Sacrament in worship.

While the triennium began with seeking to hold the most activities responsibly, our ministries have shifted to focus on future opportunities. We seek more ways to share God's Word and Sacraments in the many contexts of our campus and surrounding community.

Submitted by Rev. Jay Holden

## R-10 CAMPUS MINISTRY SIU EDWARDSVILLE REPORT

When does Christian formation end? As members of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, we operate with the understanding that there is no “graduation” from growing in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and the Christian life. For our children, there is Sunday school. For our youth, there is confirmation and youth group. Adults enjoy Christian fellowship and formation through Bible classes and small groups. In every stage of life, the church is present to offer age-appropriate education and discipleship that seeks to confirm in the lives of her people the all-encompassing extent of Christ’s call to life and salvation.

For our young people, students pursuing professional and academic degrees, this Christian formation is supported through our synod’s LCMS-U Campus Ministry. Here at Trinity Lutheran Ministries, our primary opportunity is to engage with the students at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville through Bible study and Christian fellowship. More than offering challenges and roadblocks, the political and social climate of the last triennium has shown exactly why this ministry is an essential part of our church body’s role within the Metro East community.

In an age when the world’s claims to truth are as disparate as they are relentless, it is critical that the church responds by doubling down on her task of discipleship. The work of LCMS-U at SIUE is to raise up young people who know who their Lord and that who they are in Him is a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly.

Bible study aids our young people in locating their place in God’s grand narrative of salvation, while our regular fellowship events offer opportunities to build relationships in the community of faith learn, work, and play alongside one another. And what a joy it is! Weekly Bible studies and bi-monthly actives including movie nights, ice cream socials, apple picking, bonfires, pumpkin carving, Christmas cookie decorating, egg hunting, paint ball battling, laser tagging, hiking, volunteering, singing, gaming, and serving – they are all essential aspects of our campus ministry at SIUE

Bible study takes place every Sunday evening on campus in the Student Success Center at 7pm. Over the last three years, we have studied Job and Ecclesiastes, and we read through Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Life Together*.

New since the last convention, we have launched a new LCMS-U@SIUE website. At [siuelutherans.com](http://siuelutherans.com) you’ll find a place to leave contact info, get information about LCMS-U, access an event calendar to keep up with all that we do, and find links to Church services at Trinity, Bible Class worksheets, a weekly devotion, and more. On our website, you will also find access to our new Instagram page where you can see regular updates and photos of all we are doing.

Also new for LCMS-U is a small group Bible study that meets at off campus on Monday evenings at 6pm. This has been a great opportunity for the students to step away from campus for some refreshments and time of informal fellowship. I continue to be encouraged by the active participation of the students in these opportunities for theological growth.

Formation never ends. Ideas, beliefs, creeds, and confessions are introduced, challenged, and solidified for all people from birth to death. The church must continue to recognize this. She must form servants whose trust is anchored in Christ crucified and whose confession of His resurrection is embodied in a cruciform life that is lived in service to the other. This is what LCMS-U at SIUE is all about. As always, please keep our ministry, our church, and our world in your prayers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Jess Biermann  
*Associate Pastor*  
Trinity Lutheran Ministries  
Edwardsville

## **R-11 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY AT SIU EDWARDSVILLE REPORT**

In September of 2017, an International Student Ministry (ISM) program was begun supported by the Southern Illinois District and Trinity Lutheran Ministries, Edwardsville. It is an extension of the District's Campus Ministry work at SIUE. The international student outreach is a friendship and hospitality ministry that seeks to help the incoming students feel welcome and gives the District congregations opportunities to show Christian love to these newcomers into our community and to invite them to learn about God's love for them. Many of the internationals come from countries closed to Christian outreach and here we can develop friendships and assist them in settling into a new country and most importantly introduce them to our Savior who makes all things new.

Since the beginning of the program, we have developed relationships with the International Student office, the SIUE International Student Hospitality Program, and have worked hard to become familiar with the approximately 937 international students and scholars on campus. Some of the students from the 66 countries that have representation at SIUE and that we have served are from, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Ghana, and China, etc. The Southern Illinois District, Trinity, and the congregations in the area have greatly assisted in the outreach through financial gifts in support of the work, their donations of household items, transportation of such items, and hosting of students in their homes and by their prayers.

The international students have many needs upon their arrival. The university assists with many, but family members have additional needs that are often not met by the university. ISM helps through English; provides social events for developing friendships between other college students and church and community members; gives tours to help students and family to learn more about Edwardsville and the surrounding area; and provides needed household furniture and household items.

Through the many activities, friendships develop that provide opportunities to talk about God's love for them and gives us opportunities to invite the students to Bible study and to church services. Through the relationships built, we had 67 international visitors to District congregations, 32 visited Bible studies, and one student was baptized and confirmed this year.

Many volunteers are needed to carry out the activities. We are thankful for the students who have assisted, for the Trinity church members who have given their time, and for the other congregations who have gathered household items and helped deliver them to students.

We have Bible studies on campus and at the church. We have combined activities with the LCMS-U students so that relationships can develop among the students. Our

activities have included some of the following: apple picking, pumpkin carving, invitations to Christmas services, Lenten services and meals, and Easter services. We have visited many of the students and helped with many questions and needs facing those who are far from family. It has been a great privilege to learn about their families and home countries and, in turn, help them to learn about Jesus.

We thank you for your prayers and support for this work among those God is sending from other countries. By bringing them here, God is opening doors that often have been closed. We pray that these opportunities continue to be available and that we are faithful in meeting in love and respect those opportunities.

In Christ,

Bessie Fick

*International Student Ministry Coordinator*

LCMS-U and ISM

Trinity Lutheran Ministries

Edwardsville

## R-12 PRISON MINISTRY REPORT

It has been an eventful three years with Prison Ministry in the Southern Illinois District. As with many congregations, we are still working to building back. That effort has yielded many fruits, though not necessarily the fruits we were trying for.

Obviously, one of the biggest things is getting back into the prisons. There are several prisons that we are back into regularly, but there are some facilities that we are still struggling to fill, both from finding volunteers as well as institutional resistance. Many prisons have consolidated chaplains and volunteer coordinator positions down to a single position as well as allowing chaplain positions to be filled by anyone, whether they are ordained in a church body or not. This presents many challenges, but it also opens doors.

We took what had been modeled at the Synod through the Reaching In program and built out a framework. We took it into the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) at Greenville. We started here for a couple reasons. First, Rev. Nehrt has a great relationship with the chaplain at the institution. He was instrumental in providing feedback on the materials that we were putting together. Second, the federal institutions are more consistent than state institutions. The hope is that after we get everything worked out, it could be something that could easily be ported to other federal institutions. There are many who were part of the conversations in the establishment of this effort and many others who are volunteering to be mentors for the inmates. Please feel free to stop by the booth at the convention for more information about the program that we have implemented.

Another big thing for us was representing at conventions. Rev. Nehrt and Rev. Kollmeyer went to Milwaukee to have the Prison Ministry booth at the LCMS Convention and I went to the LWML convention in Milwaukee. We've also had our booth at the two SID LWML conventions. It is a great joy to go and share what is going on in Prison Ministry as well as meeting with others to find out what is going on in their areas. We also get opportunities to share and pray with those who are hurting due to loved ones who are incarcerated, which is a more common occurrence these days. We are looking forward to being at the upcoming conventions as well.

The last significant thing is working with the office of Specialized Pastoral Ministry to host a conference in the Spring of 2024. It was held at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. With representation from 20 districts. It was a joy to get together and meet with people to see where they are in their prison ministry efforts. In addition to the sharing, there were plenary sessions by Rev. Tim Carter, author of *The Executioner's Redemption*, chapel on campus with the seminary students and news from various organizations about how they were working to help prison ministry. A couple great new resources have been developed through Concordia Publishing House and Lutheran Hour Ministries continues to provide

bible studies, and Lutheran Braille Workers continues to adapt materials for the visually impaired in prisons.

We continue to be very thankful of the support that we receive from the District that lets us share the love of Christ that we know and cherish with the incarcerated. It can truly be a light in a very dark place, physically and mentally. The opportunities that many of us have to share with you on mission festivals and the training sessions that we conduct are a gift beyond measure. We look forward to continuing to serve and share the Christ's love with those behind bars. Please feel free to reach out to us if you would like to become involved.

Submitted by:

Jon Hohgreffe



## **R-13 OLDER ADULT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Savior. I am happy to share with you some of the Older Adult Ministry accomplishments since our 2022 District Convention. May our loving God always be thanked for His many blessings. To Him be the glory forever!

Older Adult Advisory Committee is a ministry of the Southern Illinois District. The volunteer members, who comprise the Older Adult Advisory Committee, meet quarterly to assess current activities and develop new areas for growth.

The Older Adult Advisory Committee is chaired by Dan Roth, Bob Polansky is the secretary. Additional members include Rev. Randy Fischer, Mickey Roth, Gary and Joyce Meier, Robert List, Bonnie Levo, and Stephani Meyer.

Two Lutheran Older Adult Retreats (LOAR) were held during the last triennium. LOAR XX was held on April 26-27, 2023, at Pere Marquette State Park Lodge, Grafton, Illinois. The Planning Committee is made up of volunteers from the Southern Illinois District, as well as volunteers from St. Louis who represent the Missouri District. Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Executive Director, Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, Washinton, D. C., was the keynote speaker. Rev. Kale Hanson, Senior Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church and School, Bethalto, IL was the Bible study and closing devotion leader. The theme was "The Lord is My Rock, My Fortress, and My Deliverer", based on Psalm 18:2. One hundred twenty-three seniors attended the retreat. The second retreat LOAR XXI was held on October 23-24, 2024. Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Lutheran Hour Speaker, was the keynote speaker. Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, retired president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO was the Bible study and closing devotion leader. The theme was "Lord Take My Hand and Leader Me", based on Psalm 23:3b. One hundred twenty-five seniors attended the retreat.

**SENIOR TRIPS** Two senior trips were planned during the triennium. The first one was held on October 18, 2022, traveling to St. Louis to visit Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, Soulard and the Cathedral Basilica, St. Louis. Forty-five seniors enjoyed lunch at Llywelyn's Pub in Soulard. The second senior trip was held on October 3, 2023. This time seniors traveled by bus to Perry County, Missouri. They visited the Saxon Lutheran Memorial and Lutheran Heritage Museum.

We also sponsored a senior adult ministry workshop at Camp Wartburg on April 19, 2022. The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, and his theme was "Yet to Come the Mystic Close." The retreat also included a nature walk, a servant event, craft time, meals, and fellowship. Another one-day retreat was held at Camp Wartburg, on April 2, 2024. The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Travis Scholl, director of mission integration at Lutheran Senior Services, St. Louis. His theme was "God's Gift of Life to the Fullest." After

a delicious lunch, seniors had the opportunity to plant flowers at the camp, take a nature walk, play pickleball, and do axe throwing.

The Older Adult Advisory Committee had a booth at the Southern Illinois District Lutheran Woman's Missionary League Conventions on September 17, 2022, and September 14, 2024, and will have one at our Southern Illinois District Convention, February 20-22, 2025.

If you receive the Lutheran Witness, each month the Southern Illinois District section has an article related to Older Adult Ministry.

In Older Adult Ministry, we challenge ourselves to be sensitive to the needs of older adults so that we can effectively minister to them—the older adults in our congregations as well as the older adults in our communities who do not know Christ as their Lord and Savior. “He makes the whole body fit together and unites it through the support of every joint with which it is supplied. As each and every part does its job, he makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:16)

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Roth

*Chairman*

Older Adult Advisory Committee

## **R-14 YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

The youth advisory committee is co-chaired by Bob Polansky and Eric Dunn. We meet as needed to discuss possible youth events. Currently the committee consists of Bob Polansky, Eric Dunn, Jeff Fick, Carrie Kober, and Barry Pferffer.

The YAC plans an annual Junior High retreat at Camp Wartburg that generally happens in October. The most recent event had youth from Edwardsville, Collinsville, Waterloo, and Carbondale. We are also discussing restarting the Senior High Event that we had before COVID-19. There are no concrete plans for that event as of yet.

With the National Youth Gathering coming up in the summer of 2025, we have also discussed the District event and the District booth. Jeff Fick is serving as the District coordinator and he is working with the Central Illinois District and Northern Illinois District to come up with the booth idea for the gathering.

We have nothing else to report at this time. Thank you for the opportunity to serve our youth in the Southern Illinois District.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Dunn  
*Co-Chair*

# R-15 SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The purpose of the SID Scholarship Committee is to provide financial assistance for students from our Southern Illinois District congregations in their academic preparation for service as full-time church professionals. Financial assistance varies from year-to-year depending upon the number of applicants, funds available, individual needs, and year in school.

The SID Student Aid Endowment has about \$264,000, but these funds are in interest bearing accounts and are not ready to be utilized on a yearly basis. Future funding of this program is uncertain and needs your continued prayers and support!

Here is a summary of the grants during the past three years:

Year	Number of Seminararians	Number of Concordia University Students	Total Dollars Allocated
2022	7	4	\$20,700
2023	4	4	\$16,000
2024	5	7	\$21,800

The Southern Illinois District is very appreciative of the funding received over the past years. The Southern Illinois District Student Endowment Fund was started several years ago to provide a future source of funding for the purpose of supporting our future full-time church work students. The main source of funds for the growth of this account is the annual Bob Streuter Golf Scramble and gifts from individuals and congregations of the District. The annual gold outing is held at the Roland Barkau Golf Course in Okawville. Special thanks to the "Golf Committee" members who have organized this annual event for the Student Aid Foundation these past years. This year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> annual golf tournament. 450 recipients have received a scholarship in the past 20 years.

It is the responsibility of the SID Fund Advisory Committee to manage the Student Aid Endowment Fund (and other restricted SID accounts). The Fund Advisory Committee meets regularly throughout the year to monitor these investments.

Respectfully submitted,

SID Scholarship Committee  
Dr. Robin Booth  
Jeffrey Fick  
Kenneth Krueger  
Rev. Scott Schilbe

## **R-16 OFFICE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Office and Personnel Committee this past triennium consisted of Rev. Mark Nebel, Chairman, until he accepted a Call in the Missouri District; Deitt Schneider, Larry Barringer who replaced Kevin Harkemeyer who moved out of state. Advisory members are President Scharr and Jeffrey Fick. We met on a quarterly basis at the District office. Rev. Walther became chairman in October 2024 in the absence of Rev. Nebel.

This committee makes a yearly recommendation on any changes to the base Salay Scale for the District's Board of Directors to consider, taking into consideration the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. For 2022 we recommended a 2.5% increase. For 2023 it was a 4.9% increase. For 2024 our recommendation was for a 3.5% increase.

A motion was made by the committee to eliminate the Multiplier Table beginning with the 2026 fiscal year. The multiplier for not using the table is 1.000. The budget for 2025 will remain the same as the budget for 2024 and will be evaluated following the financial audit.

The Pulpit Supply Policy was revised and approved by the Board of Directors: 1 service = \$125.00; 2 services = \$200.00; Bible Study = \$75.00.

Changes in the office staff during this triennium are: Leslie Sramek went on a medical disability due to health reasons; Roy Setner, custodian, retired and moved out of state. We welcome to the office; Anna Rowder, Bookkeeper; Elsa Mort, District President Administrative Assistant; and Matthew Mueller, Custodian.

Other items that were brought to the attention of the committee over the last triennium included the purchase of a new office copier, postage machine, replacement of iron handrails, new desktop computers for the bookkeeper and administrative assistant, replacement of air conditioning coil and thermostat, sections of office lighting ballasts and bulbs replaced; replaced a section of damaged outside siding and two roof turbines due to high winds.

Additional items brought before the committee is the possibility of a new vehicle purchase for President Scharr in 2025 and the sealing of the parking lot.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey A. Fick  
*Schools and General Executive*

# **R-17 CIRCUIT 1 “MID-STATE” REPORT**

## **ZION, CARLINVILLE**

For 168 years, at the corner of 501 S. Broad St. week after week Zion, Carlinville steadfastly offers our Lord's gracious Word and gifts of Sacrament. Rev. Timothy Wilcoxon had taken a Call to Kansas the summer of 2024, and Rev. Kelly Mitteis has been serving the vacancy. Activities at Zion include a Bible study of Genesis that began over the vacancy summer, two sessions being offered. Members have been group reading LCMS President Harrison's *Little Book on Joy*. An additional Sunday school class was added for children. An AED device has been installed in the church. With prayer and good planning, Zion's council reactivated an old fellowship activity: "Church in the Park" along with a picnic at Beaver Dam State Park. Baptisms and an increase in worship attendance have increased over the summer, and planning has been underway for a young adult group ministry. Therefore, Zion rejoices! To God be the Glory!

## **ZION, FARMERSVILLE**

Being served by Rev. Dr. Mike Strong since 2011, Zion Evangelical Lutheran has been standing diligent in the most northern region of the Southern Illinois District to continue reaching out to the community by its services, bible classes, and ice-cream socials. Rev. Strong has been active in the Small Congregation Outreach workshops with hopes to help Zion maintain its presence in the area for years to come.

## **TRINITY, GIRARD**

Trinity has been in "rebuilding" mode since Rev. Tyler Holt took a Call in the last Triennium. Rev. Chris Prumm served as vacancy Pastor until 2023, when they placed a call to Rev. Kelly Mitteis, who has been faithfully serving since. Attendance has been built up through individual outreach to members who hadn't attended church for quite some time. Children's ministry, through a re-energized Sunday School program and activity packed VBS, has also contributed to more consistent attendance by younger families. Members have graciously contributed to several projects to enhance and sustain the church's buildings. The parsonage had new windows installed, new lighting was added to the sanctuary and basement, and new sidewalks were recently poured around the church. Far greater than we can know, God continues His work of building His kingdom and His church, as stated in Trinity's Constitution Preamble: "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful." To God be all Glory!

## **OUR REDEEMER - GREENVILLE**

Our Redeemer has been served by Rev. Dr. Jeffery Nehrt since 1993. We give thanks and praise to God for the many blessings He has given us. On October 24, 2021 in the year of our Lord, we were able to celebrate paying off the debt of the church. There was a great mortgage burning service and we gave thanks and praise to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Throughout COVID-19, Our Redeemer continued to serve its people with the gifts of Word and Sacrament by having individual families receive the gifts of God throughout the weekend of Good Shepherd Sunday. The Lord has continued to gift to us with His Word and Sacraments and bless us with all His gifts. We thank God for giving us the many gifts and talents of the servants of Our Redeemer, to provide the community with help by supporting the food pantry, hosting trunk or treat, and providing free water at our evangelism booth during the Bond County Fair.

Our Redeemer continues to celebrate worship service on both Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, along with Sunday school and Adult Bible study on Sunday mornings. Our youth are available to participate in a pre-catechesis program called PathLight and summer Vacation Bible School (VBS).

## **TRINITY, HARVEL**

Having been served by Rev. Joe Nehring for the past five years, until his recent Call to Faith, Mt. Vernon, Trinity continues to be the voice of the Gospel in the small town of Harvel, IL. While attendance may be less than 50 on a usual Sunday, her members are very dedicated in keeping the church strong and serving the community, not just in Word and Sacrament, but through its community garden that provides produce to the local residents and food banks. Through its LWML and Quilters, Trinity continues to provide 50-plus quilts for donation to world relief each year.

## **OUR SAVIOR, HILLSBORO**

Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Hillsboro, Illinois, continues to have Sunday Worship Services provided by Rev. Kevin Cook who has faithfully served since 2017. We sponsor a seminary student through the Adopt-A-Student program and donate to the Youth Activities at Zion Lutheran in Staunton, Illinois. In November 2024, we hosted an annual food drive of canned and boxed foods for the local food pantries and contributed cash donations during other times of the year. All members continue to contribute their loose change toward the LWML mites collection.

## **ZION, LITCHFIELD**

Zion is always seeking to go forward with the gospel. We have great joy as we, together with Rev. Fred Kraemer, proclaim God's word and continue to teach how we live the faith as Scripture guides us. Over the past three years, we have held annual missions festival as we convey to our members the mission work being done right in our own area as well as around the world. We have financially supported various missionaries, and this year have begun, supporting missionary, Jordon Andreason, who was a former Vicar here in years past.

The pandemic disrupted a lot of people's lives, as you all know. Enrollment in our school had dropped to about 80 students in preschool through eighth grade. We rejoiced this year that our enrollment is again in triple digits. We are looking forward to several parents going through adult instruction and the baptism of several of our school children. This comes about through the ministry of our school.

We added a third "Christmas Eve candlelight Service" in order to have better spacing due to the pandemic. Because of the desire for people to come, we have maintained that third service as we have seen attendance has grown considerably.

We have seen our worship attendance grow from about 125 per weekend at the beginning of 2024 to now having around 160 average attendance. We also have Sunday school for our children once more, having about a dozen in attendance. As we seek greater involvement from our people once more, we look to our growth continuing.

## **HOLY CROSS, LIVINGSTON**

Holy Cross has been and is currently being served in its permanent vacancy by Rev. Dr. Darwin Schrader.

## **IMMANUEL, MT. OLIVE**

Our church has been under the leadership of Rev. James Ritter since 2017. In 2024, Immanuel celebrated the 50th anniversary of its education building that serves as fellowship hall as well as Bible class and Sunday School space. In connection with this anniversary, we added an awning to enable people to drop off elderly or disabled members without getting wet. This addition has been paid for by generous donors. Our church building is over 140 years old, and as part of the regular maintenance, we tuckpointed and resealed the bricks. Labor Day 2024 weekend was Mount Olive's annual homecoming, and Immanuel provided brats and German potato salad as part of the Sunday ethnic day festivities. Attendance, especially of younger members, continues to struggle, but Our Community Engagement committee is trying various ways to bring people into the church and expand the church's reach into the community.



### **ST. PAUL'S, NOKOMIS**

In the country setting just four and a half miles outside of Nokomis, St. Paul's continues to carry out its mission to be a strong leading congregation of God's mission to baptize and teach, serving God's people the Truth in Word and Sacrament. Rev. Chris Prumm has served St. Paul's since 2012. St. Paul's attendance and giving was not affected by COVID-19, as she continued in-person services throughout the entire ordeal, celebrating her 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the fall of 2020. For decades, St. Paul's has been supporting missionaries in working together spreading God's Word throughout the world – most recently, David Bush in China and Taiwan until his retirement, and currently, missionary David Preuss, with hopes of many years ahead of mission work.

### **TRINITY, NOKOMIS**

Trinity has been working to recover from the sudden death of Rev. Bert Eickhoff just before Christmas of 2019, including a two-and-a-half-year vacancy before calling Rev. Justin Massey in February of 2023. Unfortunately, this Call did not last, and Trinity has found itself in a vacancy situation once again since June 2024. Still working on rebuilding and growing stronger together as a congregation, Trinity has consistently been offering Word and Sacraments each week as they moved to an every-Sunday communion, and caringly reaching out to members to encourage their faith and attendance during these difficult times. They look forward to God's guidance in the Call process as they continue seeking the servant God has for them to take them into the future.

### **ZION, STAUNTON**

Zion Lutheran Church has been continuing to walk the servant's way following our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Prior to the installation of Rev. Philip Girardin in January of 2023, Zion was working to continue to grow as they looked for the Shepherd that was to be sent to them. Following Rev. Philip Girardin's installation, Zion has continued to walk that servant's way reaching out to the community through Word and Sacrament ministry. This has been done by expanding worship opportunities, Bible Study opportunities, and continuing to walk together. Zion Lutheran Church continues to celebrate and support the work of Zion Lutheran School, which has been newly accredited by the National Lutheran Schools Accreditation. The whole ministry of Zion seeks to continue living life in Christ.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Chris Prumm

# **R-18 CIRCUIT 2 “METRO NORTH” REPORT**

## **MESSIAH, ALTON**

Although Messiah continues in a pastoral vacancy, they have a small but dedicated group of lay leaders who are eager to share the Gospel in their neighborhood, and their efforts have yielded some fruit. Pastoral care is primarily provided by Rev. Willard Meyer, along with other area pastors as needed.

## **ZION, BETHALTO**

Zion Bethalto's focus continues to be Word and Sacrament ministry. The congregation sees everything else it does as flowing from and returning to this. In service to Word and Sacrament, Zion has made efforts on outreach to young families, member engagement and mission outside the walls of the congregation. The congregation, served by Rev. Kale Hanson, called Pastor Brandon Metcalf as the Family Ministry pastor to oversee ministry to families. This has been very successful. Through the combined efforts of Sarah Koch, our principal, Pastor Brandon, and many dedicated staff members and volunteers we have seen a wave of new families join the congregation from the school and the community and be regularly present in weekend services. To increase member engagement, Zion filled our vacant DCE position by hiring our longtime youth volunteer Barry Pfeiffer as our Director of Discipleship. The congregation has been tremendously blessed by Barry's ministry, and alongside his responsibilities with the youth and member engagement in the congregation, he is working toward his colloquy as a DCE. In conjunction with Pastor Jacobsen and Our Redeemer Carrollton, Zion hosted a LERT basic training then a chainsaw training. The congregation has had a number of volunteers deployed to local and national relief efforts, and has sent our Parish Nurse on a medical mission to Guatemala. Zion's school continues to grow, and the congregation is exploring a building project to add more space that will allow the growth of that ministry to continue.

## **ST. MATTHEW, BRUSSELS**

Rev. Michael Schempf has been serving an extended vacancy at St. Matthew, Brussels since July 2023. Retired Pastor Robert Weiss served them previously for more than a year. Sunday morning attendance averages between thirty and forty. Three adult women became new members after receiving catechism instruction (each came from Roman Catholic background). A young married couple is receiving instruction (the wife and infant son were recently baptized on the same Sunday). Four funerals were conducted in the past year. Two shut-in members are visited monthly. Two grade school students are receiving confirmation instruction. Vacation Bible School in June numbered over 90

children with many adult members and non-members providing leadership and support. Two organists currently share duties on alternate Sundays. The local population decline is reflected in the high school enrollment. Graduating classes once numbered more than 30 students, the entire high school census is now only 23 students. In spite of shrinking numbers in the community and surrounding area there remains a faithful and dedicated nucleus of members. An adult Bible class meets Sunday morning. Advent and Lenten evening worship services were conducted (members needed to arrive early to get a good seat). Though small in numbers, God is at work through His Word at St. Matthew, Brussels. "Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I, in the midst of them."

### **ZION, BUNKER HILL**

Zion Lutheran Church in Bunker Hill has undergone some major changes in the past triennium. Rev. Brian Holle accepted a call in the fall of 2023 to Kansas after serving 7 years at Zion. Rev. James T. King, a 1997 graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, accepted the call to serve Zion as pastor in May of 2024 after serving previous congregations in Illinois, Missouri and Minnesota and was installed on June 30, 2024.

The congregation is almost finished with a \$90,000 renovation of the church sanctuary which included the interior walls being plastered, a new Baptismal Font that was dedicated on August 25, 2024, new artwork in the sanctuary and the "old" neon cross on the top of church repaired.

During the vacancy the congregation renovated the church parsonage which included a new roof and updating the kitchen.

Zion continues its mission work of outreach. They are active in the community with various opportunities like VBS, participating in the annual Life Chain event and support each month of local and national mission efforts. Macoupin County is one the poorest in the state so the Youth Group built a Blessing Box on the property, and they supply the food and non-perishable items that go in the box along with donations from the congregation. The Blessing Box has proven beneficial as it gets filled two to three times a week. Zion also started an annual "Honors" luncheon for member and non-members over the age of 75. This year they are expecting to serve over 100 for the meal and presentation.

While many rural congregations in our District and Synod seem to be diminishing Zion, Bunker Hill is maintaining its membership and averaging 100 attendees for the Sunday Divine Service, 20 to 30 in Sunday School and 25-30 for adult bible class on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. They continue to pray for God's guidance and blessings as they share the Good News of "Christ Crucified!"

### **OUR REDEEMER, CARROLLTON AND ST. JOHN, KAMPSVILLE (DUAL PARISH)**

The congregations of Our Redeemer in Carrollton and Saint John in Kampsville have continued to work together as a dual parish over the last triennium. Most of the congregational leaders are the same, but aging congregations with only a few new families moving into the area present challenges for the future. Rev. Steve Jacobsen has served the Carrollton congregation for 25 years as of July 2024. The fall of 2024 also saw the complete renovation of the main entry steps and handicap ramp at Carrollton, but community challenges (like the closing of all but one grocery store in the county) are also having an impact on the church. Since the dual parish was arranged, Saint John Lutheran Church has almost always been worshipping on Saturday at 5 PM. This has been a challenge for some in northern Calhoun County that work outside of the area, but was agreed on as the best solution for the membership at large. About once per quarter the schedule is changed to allow a late Sunday morning service.

### **EMMAUS, DORSEY**

During the last triennium, Emmaus celebrated 165 years of ministry in Dorsey. The congregation bid a fond farewell to Rev. David Kern upon his retirement at the end of July 2024. Rev. Jonathan Winterfeldt has been serving the saints during their vacancy. Although uncertainty remains concerning the next steps forward, the members of Emmaus are relying on the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to guide them.

### **FAITH, GODFREY**

The last triennium began with Faith enduring a pastoral vacancy. The Lord showed Himself faithful to the congregation during that time through the dedicated service of lay leaders in the congregation and the steadfast care of area pastors. After a vacancy of just over two years, the saints at Faith welcomed Rev. Timothy Appel as their new pastor in November 2022.

At the beginning of the 2023 school year, Faith suspended the operation of its preschool due to an inability to find suitable staff. Although the congregation was disappointed by this, the members at Faith began looking for new ways to reach out to the people of Godfrey with the love of Jesus Christ. The Lord quickly opened a door for the proclamation of His Word by presenting an opportunity for the members of Faith to visit monthly with residents of a memory care facility right across the highway from the church building.

Faith has rejoiced to renew its relationship with the field work program at Concordia Seminary. Although the devil, the world, and the flesh always attack, the saints at Faith remain confident and joyful in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we rejoice to hear and proclaim until He comes again in glory.

## **HOPE, JERSEYVILLE**

Rev. David Otten received and accepted Hope's call in May of 2023. Attendance could be better, though we have gained back some members that were not coming. We have lost more members than we have gained. Death took five members, and a number of members have been transferred to other congregations as they no longer live in Jerseyville. We have added three members, one by transfer, one by profession of faith and the last by baptism (infant). We do expect to add before the end of the year two more members by baptism, one adult and one infant.

When I came there was only one adult Bible study, we now have two. There was not a children's or youth Sunday School we now have that restored but we have a long way to go to make it more robust. Though I have made a number of home visits I have a ways to go before completing that task. The Shut-ins are being ministered too and once a month worship service was started at one of the nursing homes.

There is a commitment to aid with "meals on wheels" and support local social needs. The town's ministerial alliance folded which we were part of, but a new group has emerged with a strong social agenda. We have been with it from its origin. The local Sheriff, one of our members, was highly instrumental in getting it started and still is active in it. At the food pantry we have set up a tract rack displaying tracts/literature from CPH and LHM. We are attempting to receive permission from the local hospital to place tracts and "Portals of Prayer" in their facility. For the first time the congregation manned a booth at the country fair to distribute tracts/literature. We had 294 visits and 284 items were taken.

Four of our youth attended Higher Things my first summer here and toured Old Trinity, the International Center, and Concordia Seminary this last summer. We need to have a more active youth group, but this is a start.

We need to improve our use of social media and outreach. The congregation is aging and that will continue to be its greatest challenge.

## **ST. PETER, PRAIRIETOWN (Dorsey)**

St. Peter's, served by Rev. Oliver LaMie, will be celebrating 170 years of preaching the Gospel in 2025, and 150 years in our current building as of 2024. As an aging congregation, many people who served us faithfully have by necessity left open their former roles of service, and at the time of report, all of our boards are either underpopulated or empty. Sunday School for children has ceased this year as well. Yet with this comes the call to action, and a spark of rejuvenation is beginning to take hold. Our school remains strong in its work and dedication to bringing up young people in Christ. Our peoples' generosity has been evident in our monthly projects, most

prominently our collection and distribution of toys and resources for Murray Center for adults with developmental disabilities. The congregation seeks revitalization of fellowship and formation of our youth, evidenced by overwhelming support for the effort to attend the LCMS national youth gathering. Saturday night services have been moved to Wednesday nights, with a focus on deeply studying the scriptures and receiving the Sacrament. A palpable yearning to bring Christ's love to those just beyond our walls promises to burst forth in the coming days.

### **ST. PAUL, WOOD RIVER**

The saints of God, served by Rev. Dr. David Schultz, at St. Paul have been blessed in the last Triennium. Our church is not only located in Wood River, but we are a church for Wood River. By God's grace, and the working of His Spirit, we have experienced much growth. We continue to seek ways to engage in our community so that all might know Christ Jesus. Aside from local mission efforts, St. Paul continues to support Rev. James Sharp, Missionary in Uruguay. We give thanks for our 10-year partnership in the Gospel. In 2022 our congregation added a new called worker, Mrs. Jenna Schultz, to serve as our Preschool Director. Our Preschool continues to be a great link to our community. In the last three years, we have experienced significant turnover in lay leadership as new families have joined our congregation and gotten involved. The Lord has blessed us with new voices who share our common goal: to make Christ known.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Timothy Appel

# **R-19 CIRCUIT 3 “EDWARDSVILLE” REPORT**

## **ZION, CARPENTER AND TRINITY, WORDEN (Dual Parish)**

The Word of the Lord continues to do its work in Worden and Carpenter! Besides the usual joys and sorrows common to congregational life (baptisms and funerals, wedding and confirmations, etc.) this triennium has seen new fields of ministry open up for us. Utilizing the help of our summer vicar, we completed a community survey canvas of the entire town. Our men’s Bible Class at the Yellow Dog Bar and Grill on Wednesday mornings is attended by about 30 men representing a mix of congregational members and neighbors curious about the Bible. Besides these outreach efforts, this triennium has seen a positive renewal of our in-reach to our youth: the Walther League concept is back! A generous bequest allowed us to renovate one of our classrooms in Worden into a youth room. Each Wednesday night youth from several congregations (especially our partners in this Walther League: St. Paul, Hamel and St. Peter, Prairietown) and the community join together for games, Bible Study, prayer, and more games. The success of this program has also branched out into two service organizations for boys and girls (the Sons of Schiefedecker hosted at Hamel and the Altar Guild Girls hosted at Worden). Our Walther League also goes on a summer trip to camp (joined by many kids from Good Shepherd, Collinsville and Trinity, Edwardsville) and hosts a couple of English Country Dances for youth each year. Rev. Curtis also continues to serve the Synod in the realm of stewardship and recently completed a series of stewardship workshops around the District in partnership with the Southern Illinois District as part of this Synod work. We are thankful that the Word of the Lord endures forever and never fails to do its work!

## **TRINITY, EDWARDSVILLE**

Trinity rejoiced in the grace and mercy of our Lord throughout the last triennium. Trinity is served by Senior Pastor Rev. John Shank, Associate Pastor Rev. Jess Biermann, and DCE Eric Dunn, who complete the SLED program (Summer 2024). Trinity continues to serve her community through the operation of Trinity Lutheran School. We give thanks to the Lord that He has gathered so many children to all of the Southern Illinois District schools and under the steady and faithful leadership of our new principal, Mr. Ken Krueger, Trinity has also seen overwhelming growth in her enrollment – To God be the glory! Trinity is also excited to support the work of Metro East Lutheran High School, Rev. Shank is honored to sit as one of the two pastoral representatives on the Board. Another area in which Trinity serves her community is through her daycare, which has been growing and increasing offerings to meet the needs of their community. A core aspect of Trinity’s ministry is the mission of LCMS-U at Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville, both to the residential students and the growing population of international students. Both

of these ministries are missions of the District and Trinity gives thanks for your continued support. The Lord has richly blessed Trinity during the past triennium with many joys and gifts of His grace, to God be the glory!

### **ST. JAMES, GLEN CARBON**

In the past three years God has blessed St. James, Glen Carbon, with continued growth in knowledge of Jesus as well as growth in attendance. Last year the church engaged with Lutheran Church Extension Fund to help lead them in a ministry clarity process in which the members have asked God to help them discern their ministry strengths and weaknesses with the goal of focusing the church's time and resources on ministries that are commensurate with the specific gifts the Holy Spirit has given us. St. James has also been in early discussions about expanding the sanctuary and adding educational and office space to the current facility. The church's community groups have also continued growing as many have discovered the joy of gathering together in homes throughout the week to pray and read the Bible together. Youth confirmations have been regular and well attended, and the adult confirmation classes have been full, with many non-Lutherans studying God's word and being led by Him to become Lutheran and join St. James. In summary, God has truly blessed St. James with the gift of His word and sacraments the past three years, and the Holy Spirit has built the congregation up in deep love for each other and a hunger for Jesus.

### **ST. PAUL, HAMEL**

Since 1856, St. Paul Lutheran Church and School of (New Gehlenbeck) Hamel has lived by the preaching of Christ crucified. As the children of God gather by and around His Word and Sacrament, sinners have been forgiven, consciences put at ease, and the name of Jesus has been glorified. During the last triennium there have been several changes in service at the congregation. Rev. William Gleason has become our Pastor Emeritus, still making visitations on the saints and occasionally preaching. In June 2024, the Rev. Rene Castellero was installed as Associate Pastor and Headmaster of St. Paul Lutheran School. Rev. William Weedon continues to serve as Assistant Pastor-Catechist, while continuing his daily podcast Bible Study, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever* [www.thewordendures.org](http://www.thewordendures.org). At the 2023 LCMS convention Rev. Benjamin Ball was re-elected Vice-President for the Central Region of the LCMS, now ranked as 2nd Vice-President. The congregation entered the vicarage program again after a hiatus of well over a decade, and has received two vicars thus far, and hopes to receive another vicar in Spring, 2025. Our school continues to thrive as the only Classical Lutheran School in Metro St. Louis, and is at its highest enrollment in twenty years. Our school



was re-accredited by the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education in 2024, and has added several new teachers over the last triennium- Deaconess Sarah Gaffney, Deaconess Elizabeth Koester, and Miss Katie Rutovicz. Due to the growth of both Church and School, the congregation embarked on a strategic planning process, which culminated in the engagement of an architectural firm to develop new building plans. There is much excitement about the prospects of growth and needed capital improvements. Our congregation remains dedicated to faithfully instructing her children in God's Word and the Small Catechism and doing so tuition free. While there are many things to be thankful for in the life of our congregation, our thanksgiving is grounded in the giving of the Son of God into death as the only perfect sacrifice for the salvation of the world. His resurrection gives life in this world of decay, disease and death, and we joyfully gather in the midst of trials to hear the Word and receive the blessed Sacrament of the living Christ's Body and Blood. We give thanks for His mercy as He keeps our congregation in the one true faith while the Neon Cross continues to shine on Old Route 66.

### **HOPE, HIGHLAND**

It pleased the Lord to gather His children together at Hope Lutheran Church in Highland. Special projects include our Mission of the month and Mission of the year. In 2024, we committed \$10,000 in seed money as well as other in-kind assistance to support any church member(s) who decide to become foster parents. Capital projects this triennium include a new roof, renovated narthex, and major organ updates. The Lord be praised!

### **ST. PAUL, TROY**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School in Troy, IL, continues serving this community with the crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ in word and deed. The past three years have brought many changes and challenges to St. Paul's. In the spring of 2021, St. Paul's Lutheran school closed its K – 6<sup>th</sup> grade operations after 154 years. It was a difficult but a financially prudent decision. To continue the ministry to children at St. Paul's and to the community, St. Paul's opened a licensed, early childhood center. We believe that St. Paul's Lutheran ECC is the only Christian based ECC that is licensed by the State of Illinois. The licensing from Illinois requires that the ECC must abide by all the state regulations for such centers, but also allows St. Paul's ECC to apply for State and Federal grants. Since the last report, St. Paul's remodeled the sanctuary. The congregation continues its ministry to the Lord and the Troy community and beyond with outreach into Granite City with grateful thanksgiving for the blessings Jesus has given us.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. John Shank

# **R-20 CIRCUIT 4 “COLLINSVILLE” REPORT**

## **GOOD SHEPHERD, COLLINSVILLE**

The last three years have brought pastoral changes to Good Shepherd. Rev. Adle took a call to Nebraska in July of 2022. Rev. Andrew Packer accepted the call to be the Associate Pastor in February of 2023 and was installed in June of 2023. The congregation then called Rev. Packer to be the Senior Pastor in February of 2023 and Rev. Michael Walther moved to the Associate Pastor position. Rev. Walther ended his service with Good Shepherd at the end of June 2024 after faithfully serving the congregation for over 30 years. Rev. Andrew Gray was called to be the new Associate Pastor and was installed in October of 2024. With all of the changes, Good Shepherd is thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Gospel are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Good Shepherd Lutheran School continues to steadfastly teach the youth of the church and the community. Last year the school celebrated 40 years of faithful ministry. The school has continued to grow and thrive over the last 3 years under the leadership of Principal Bob Mayhew. We give thanks to God for this faithful and fruitful ministry.

## **HOLY CROSS, COLLINSVILLE**

The Lord has continued to bless Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School with abundant mercy. Over the past three years, the congregation has joyfully celebrated the 175th anniversary. During this milestone, many former pastors, vicars, teachers, and students gathered for various events to honor the gift of life and the church's enduring legacy.

In a new chapter of leadership, Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School called Principal Eric Brofford to serve as the new principal.

The school also underwent a "facelift," rejuvenating its interior to create a refreshed and inviting environment.

Additionally, through a heartfelt in-house fundraiser, "Raise the Ceiling," the congregation successfully repaired the sanctuary's ceiling, further enhancing the beauty and functionality of the church.

**JERUSALEM, COLLINSVILLE (No Report Submitted)**

**UNITY, EAST ST. LOUIS (No Report Submitted)**

### **CONCORDIA, GRANITE CITY**

Served by Rev. Brian Feicho. Membership at Concordia has been gradually declining over the years due to deaths, and some who have moved away from the area. What has continued has been the joint Advent/Lent services with Hope and St. John Lutheran Churches, the other two LCMS congregations in Granite City. I have "officially" retired, but I continue to serve Concordia by conducting the Mass on Sundays and Matins and Bible study on Wednesday mornings; and making home-bound and hospital calls, as they are in no condition to call a full-time pastor. When my wife and I are ready to make our move to Indiana, hopefully within the next 6 months or so, Concordia will officially close its doors.

### **HOPE, GRANITE CITY**

For the last three years, and as we continue going forth by the grace of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit, Rev. Alan Beuster has served as the pastor of Hope Lutheran Church. It has been a time of blessings from God for both their pastor and the congregation.

Hope is an elderly congregation and during these three years God has continued to call a large number of their members to their eternal home with Him. We rejoice in the confidence of knowing that these members have transferred to the joy and peace of the Church Triumphant. At the same time, the Holy Spirit has led and blessed Hope with a steady stream of new members that has kept their membership and worship attendance numbers at a fairly constant level. This includes adult instruction classes and adult baptisms.

The outreach activities at Hope continue to be significant. Their lady's group has taken on a project each month to provide assistance and share God's Word with others. Such efforts as shipping Christmas presents overseas with a Christian message included with them. Serving each Monday at Senior Services Plus in Alton, IL, filling bags of food for delivery to those in need. Providing coats and Christmas toys. Caroling and providing Christmas cookies and presents to the local nursing home for residents that have no family or anyone to visit them at Christmas. Rev. Beuster remains active in prison ministry and the congregation remains very supportive of this. Through private donations of church members and friends of Hope 100 Lutheran Study Bibles have been purchased for the men at the Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center in East St. Louis. During this time through Bible study and growth led by the Holy Spirit 5 men at that facility have been Baptized. Hope also continues outreach through the live streaming of our church services and the live stream and posting of a daily devotion.

All that said, Bible studies continue to be the centerpiece of ministry at Hope with many members active in the various opportunities that are offered each week.

God has also continued to bless Hope with excellent facilities and financial prosperity. For all these many blessings may all glory and honor be to God.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Kyle Wright

## **R-21 CIRCUIT 5 “GREATER BELLEVILLE” REPORT**

The Greater Belleville Circuit #5 includes the following congregations: Zion-Belleville, Signal Hill-Belleville, Zion-Mascoutah, Bethany-Fairview Heights, Messiah-Lebanon, and Blessed Savior-O’Fallon. St. Peter’s-Caseyville held a closing service at the end of 2023.

We rejoice in our partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, even as our circuit goes through many changes in terms of pastoral leadership. After 19 years of service at Zion-Mascoutah, Rev. Dr. Kirk Clayton accepted a call to serve as a professor on the theology faculty at Concordia University Chicago, beginning August 1, 2024. Rev. Vern Lintvedt retired from his call as pastor of Blessed Savior-O’Fallon on December 31, 2023, after serving at that congregation since 1994. Rev. Lintvedt entered eternal glory on April 11, 2024. Both Zion-Mascoutah and Blessed Savior are vacant and in the call process. Below are reports from the other congregations of Circuit 5.

### **ZION, BELLEVILLE**

We give thanks to God for His faithfulness during the ministry transitions and pandemic challenges of the last triennium. After seven years as Associate Pastor, Rev. Chris Spelbring accepted the call to serve as Senior Pastor and was installed on November 20, 2022. Rev. Spelbring succeeded Rev. Brian Downs. On March 13, 2022, a large crowd of congregational members, friends, and circuit pastors gathered to give thanks to God for Pastor Downs’ faithful service at Zion from 2006 to 2022. In 2023, Zion was blessed to receive Rev. Joshua Kintz as pastor upon his graduation from Concordia Seminary St. Louis. Pastor Kintz was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry and installed as Zion’s Associate Pastor on July 16, 2023. Rev. Darwin Schrader continues to support Zion’s called pastors in their ministry to the homebound of our congregation.

Our Zion Lutheran School, which serves PreK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, continues to be blessed by healthy enrollment levels and a vibrant community under the faithful leadership of our principal, Mrs. Ananda Baron.

Zion continues to be richly blessed by the commissioned ministers God has called to serve at Zion. In 2021, Director of Christian Education (DCE) Jill Hasstedt retired after 28 years of faithful service at Zion. KerriAnn Schmid, who was called to Zion in 2002, continues to serve as our DCE with an emphasis on Family Ministry. She has also been serving our Youth Ministry as well as we await a DCE Intern from Concordia University Nebraska, who will begin his internship year at Zion in January 2024. Dawn Tayon, who has served as director of our music ministries since 2005, will be retiring at the end of July 2025. We are beginning the call process in search of her successor.

As we look toward the future, we are currently in the process of working through LCEF's Ministry Clarity program. In all things, we give thanks to God for His continued presence and action among us through His Word and Sacraments!

### **SIGNAL HILL, BELLEVILLE**

Signal Hill continues to serve the west end of Belleville with God's Word and Sacraments. After several years of valuable service to individuals and local congregations, the decision was made to close Signal Hill Counseling, a distinctly Christian counseling service of Signal Hill Lutheran. We are grateful for the hope and counsel provided to individuals and the support provided to local pastors needed a trustworthy service to refer to over the last four years.

Rev. Wiesner is planning to retire at the end of February 2025, after serving as Senior Pastor at Signal Hill since 2012.

### **BETHANY, FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS**

Bethany continues to be a beacon for God's elect on the border between Fairview Heights, O'Fallon, Swansea, and Shiloh, with God's Word and Sacraments offered twice weekly throughout the year. The congregation continues its ministry of encouraging and supporting the deep sacramental piety of the members here and offering the certainty and confidence of the Lutheran confession of faith to those around us with a rich liturgical, sacramental life of worship and rigorous, lively catechesis. Over the last triennium, the Lord has blessed Bethany with new converts and transfers, a more stable and realistic financial perspective, hard-working volunteers, and a part-time worker-priest pastorate.

### **MESSIAH, LEBANON**

Messiah continues to be faithfully served by Rev. Karl Gregory, who was installed in June 2017.

### **ZION, MASCOUTAH**

Zion has a pastoral vacancy, currently served by Rev. Jeff Hemmer.

### **BLESSED SAVIOR, O'FALLON**

Blessed Savior has pastoral vacancy, currently served by Rev. Tony Troup.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Chris Spelbring

# **R-22 CIRCUIT 6 “MON-CLAIR” REPORT**

## **ST. PAUL’S, COLUMBIA**

Under the capable leadership of Rev. Dr. Stephen Krenz who has served the congregation since 2018, St. Paul’s Lutheran has worked faithfully to share the good news of Christ in the Columbia community. During the last three years, the congregation has been active operating Columbia’s only food bank and has been instrumental in exploring the creation of a home to enable women to be reunited with their children presently in the foster care system. Called “Eve’s Restoration Home,” this restoration ministry has been spearheaded by St. Paul member, Amanda Douglas, and will soon become an official non-profit charity. St. Paul has also hosted a number of circuit convocations such as an Elders’ Workshop and a Life Rally.

## **HOLY CROSS, EAST CARONDELET**

Holy Cross continues to be blessed with Word and Sacrament ministry through the work of its pastor, Rev. Ralph Laufer. Holy Cross decided to call Rev. Laufer, a bi-vocational church worker, to be its pastor in May of 2019. He accepted the call and was installed later that year. Rev. Laufer gets up around 2:30 a.m. most mornings to work his first job, then performs pastoral duties in the afternoon. He also leads and preaches at all the services at Holy Cross. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Holy Cross continues to be a light in a dark and fallen world.

## **CHRIST OUR SAVIOR, FREEBURG**

Christ Our Savior continues to thrive in the life given to us by Christ our Savior. Rev. Bruce Keseman has served as the congregation’s pastor for all but one month of its 33 years of existence. Recovery from significant COVID-19 declines has been steady. The congregation has nearly returned to pre-pandemic attendance and there has been a noticeable increase in commitment and community of those who remain active. CareConnect began as a support group for each other coming out of COVID-19; it morphed into a monthly gathering that provides enjoyable activities and opportunities to uphold each other in faith and life. Bible class attendance on Sundays and especially during the week keeps growing, often because members invite others. In addition to as many as four Bible studies at the church, Christ Our Savior’s pastor leads two off-campus studies, assisted by dedicated members. One off-campus study, for the community, meets at Cedar Trails Senior Living. The other, an outreach to those struggling with mental illness, meets at a care facility in Belleville, where as many as 30 residents sometimes attend. Since the Southern Illinois District’s last convention, the Academy of Music at Christ our Savior has begun with support from our District Mission Board. The

Academy seeks to serve students, churches, schools, families, community, and instructors by providing instrumental music lessons, plus a very popular Mini-Music Makers class for preschoolers. The number of students and instructors has grown steadily. Some have connected to the church as a result of the Academy, and student musicians regularly play at Christ Our Savior or other churches. Christ Our Savior recently purchased an Allen 41-stop digital instrument that provides wonderful accompaniment for congregational singing. The church continues to reach into the community in a number of ways, including a Trunk or Treat event, a picnic, a presence at Homecoming, and Christmas Music concerts and recitals. During the 2024-25 school year, Christ Our Savior serves as the host congregation for the Divine Services of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. It also hosts two Friday summer cookouts for students and faculty members of the seminary.

### **TRINITY, MILLSTADT**

Trinity Lutheran Church in Millstadt continues to be served by its senior pastor, Rev. Peter Ill, and its assistant pastor, Rev. Todd Wilken. In addition to focusing on Word and Sacrament ministry and outreach to the community, Trinity serves the church at large by supporting its pastors in their vocations outside the congregation. Pastor Ill serves the saints of Southern Illinois District as the District's secretary and Pastor Wilken is the long-time host of the radio program, *Issues, Etc.* In the past three years, Trinity participated in a Strategic Planning Process facilitated by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund and completed a number of building and technology improvements such as a new basement floor and livestreaming. In 2024 Trinity was blessed to celebrate its 175<sup>th</sup> year as a congregation with a concluding celebration on October 20, 2024.

### **HOLY CROSS, RENAULT**

Spelled out in the Call documents received by Pastor Terry Grebing prior to his accepting the call to Holy Cross was the expressed desire that the pastor "help us do what we are called by God to do." Some ten years later, a signature feature of Holy Cross remains a phenomenal sense of ownership on the part of the laity. While behind-the-scenes lay efforts have been evident over the past three years, "partnership in the Gospel" has been especially pronounced as church members return to congregational activities and outreach efforts that were hindered during the pandemic. This partnership will be especially helpful in the future as Holy Cross prepares for the retirement of Pastor Grebing. Having served the congregation since 2015, Pastor Grebing will retire at the end of December 2024. Although saddened by their loss of Pastor Grebing's leadership, the members of Holy Cross also thank God that he blessed them with such a faithful and caring shepherd.



### **HOLY CROSS, WARTBURG**

Holy Cross, Wartburg, has been joyfully engaging in Word and Sacrament ministry during the past three years. As it has for the past 100 years, Holy Cross continues to provide a Good Friday service in the German language every year. Despite its rural location, Holy Cross maintains a healthy and active membership and takes seriously our Lord's command to "make disciples of all nations." As the church's front sign boldly declares, here you find "God's grace in a country place."

### **IMMANUEL, WATERLOO**

In September of 2022, Immanuel celebrated the retirement of Rev. Dr. Antonin Troup who had served as the congregation's sole, administrative, and associate pastor since his installation at Immanuel in January of 1996. Rev. Merritt Demski then became Immanuel's sole pastor. In March of 2024 Rev. Demski received and accepted a call to serve St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Hanover, IA. Rev. Brian Downs from Belleville then become Immanuel's vacancy pastor. After some extensive fund raising and preparation, Immanuel's Mission Team went to Cambodia to serve Christ and God's people in that part of the world. Immanuel has also reached out to the community by holding a drama called "The Living Last Supper." Thirteen Immanuel members serve as actors in this drama, portraying Jesus and his twelve disciples receiving and reacting to the news that one of the disciples will betray Jesus. Immanuel continues to nurture God's people with God's Word with four weekly adult Bible studies, midweek classes (grades 5-8), and Vacation Bible School. Vacation Bible School has been done in partnership with Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wartburg, for the past ten years. Immanuel recently hosted a circuit wide and very well attended workshop on Stewardship.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Tony Troup

## **R-23 CIRCUIT 7 “UPPER KASKASKIA” REPORT**

At the Circuit forum for Circuit 7- Upper Kaskaskia held on October 6, 2024, the vote was cast to nominate Pastor James Hennig, from Trinity Centralia to be Circuit Visitor for the next triennium 2025-2028.

### **MESSIAH, CARLYLE**

Messiah, Carlyle has a vacancy for senior pastor. Rev. Timothy Scharr serves as assistant pastor.

### **TRINITY, CENTRALIA**

Trinity, Centralia is now served by Rev. James Hennig.

### **BETHLEHEM, FERRIN**

Bethlehem, Ferrin is now served by Rev. Jonathan Jennings.

### **FAITH, FLORA AND TRINITY, IUKA (Dual Parish)**

Faith, Flora and Trinity, Iuka are dual parishes served by Rev. Paul Pater.

### **TRINITY, HOFFMAN**

Trinity, Hoffman is now being served by Rev. Brett Jones.

### **HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, MT. CAMEL**

Hope Lutheran Church, Mt. Caramel is still being served by Rev. Thomas Kramer.

### **FAITH, MT. VERNON**

Faith, Mt. Vernon is now served by Rev. Joe Nehring.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. James Hennig

## **R-24 CIRCUIT 8 “MID KASKASKIA” REPORT**

Circuit 8 is great – by the Grace of God. We are not great in and of ourselves, of course, but the Circuit is great because Christ Himself is present among us with His saving word and sacraments! Circuit 8 pastors ordinarily hold their circuit “Winkel” conferences together with Circuit 7; some still remember the days when the two formed one circuit. A joint “Tre Ore” Good Friday service has been held in 2023 and 2024. Several of the congregations are members of the Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School Association in Centralia.

### **OUR SAVIOR, CARMi**

Our Savior, Carmi celebrated 75 years on September 10, 2023.

### **ST. LUKE’S, COVINGTON**

The community of Covington consists of a few homes clustered near the church. It is one of the few communities where the church has outlasted the tavern! It has benefited from its partnership with St. John’s, New Minden, since 1970. Before COVID-19 hit, worship averaged 17. The congregation has active outreach and mission committees and in recent years has upgraded many things on the exterior and interior of the building.

### **TRINITY, HOYLETON**

Trinity Lutheran School is the only school in the village of Hoyleton (population 531). Led by principal John Schaff its enrollment (PreK-8) is 73. Several auxiliary groups are active in the congregation, including Ladies’ Aid, Youth Group, Senior Social Ministry, and Parent Teacher League. Members from Trinity have also participated in the disaster relief efforts of the LCMS.

### **TRINITY, NASHVILLE**

Nashville, the county seat of Washington County, boasts a population of over 3000. The community enjoys the solitude of farm fields but is just an hour’s drive from St. Louis. Trinity has had periods of one pastor, no pastors, one full-time and one part-time pastor, but for the last few years they have been served by one pastor. Trinity is also home to Trinity-St. John Lutheran School, operated in partnership with St. John’s, New Minden. Ms. Melanie Cooper serves as the principal. The school celebrates a PreK–8 enrollment this school year of 120.

### **ST. JOHN'S, NEW MINDEN**

New Minden is a village of just over 200, and St. John's is the only church in town. She is a full partner with Trinity, Nashville, in operating Trinity-St. John Lutheran School, a partnership that dates to 1974, and has shared a pastor with St. Luke's, Covington for 50 years. St. John's hosts two work centers for Lutheran Braille Workers. Representatives from area congregations pitch in and produce copies of the Book of Deuteronomy in English Braille for use all over the world. Zinc plates are also produced and shipped to other Braille Work Centers. St. John's has been blessed to donate thousands of pounds of fresh produce to area foodbanks over the course of the last several years. The Board of Elders oversees more than an acre of sweetcorn on the church property, and volunteers from St. John's and several other congregations' plant, water, weed, and harvest various other crops in what has come to be known as "God's Garden." It has been a blessed and joyful multi-generational project. A mission quilting group includes participants from multiple congregations. St. John's is a charter member of the LCMS and celebrated its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. St. John's recently renovated its original church building and uses it as a chapel.

### **IMMANUEL, OKAWVILLE**

Okawville is a community of about 1400 people. Immanuel operates a Lutheran Elementary School whose principal is Mr. Ed Bower. Enrollment (PreK-8) is 74. It also operates a Wee Care (day care). It has two parish nurses who serve the congregation and the community. The congregation is known for its annual music festival held every November, and every March the PTL hosts a breakfast for the community. Immanuel has the distinction of being the newest congregation in our circuit (only 117 years in 2025).

### **OLIVE BRANCH, OKAWVILLE**

Rev. Jim d'Entremont is the called Pastor of Olive Branch Lutheran Church and lives in its parsonage with his lovely bride Kristen and their family. Immanuel Lutheran School in Okawville serves Olive Branch's children. Olive Branch is a dual parish with Saint Salvator in Venedy.

## **ST. SALVATOR, VENEDY**

Venedy is a town of 138. St. Salvator is the only circuit 8 congregation close enough to St. Louis to participate in the Resident Field Education program of Concordia Seminary. Under the supervision of Rev. d'Entremont, seminary students get a taste of serving in a small town/rural setting. Even though the Congregation has a rich history, many of the members are young. The average age of a member is 35. Some of the children of the congregation attend Immanuel Lutheran School in Okawville, TSJ Lutheran School in Nashville, and Grace Lutheran School in Huntsville, Alabama. St. Salvator is well-known for its annual Chicken Dinner which is held every Father's Day, and for preparing 1,000 apple pies every October. St Salvator is a dual parish with Olive Branch Lutheran Church in rural Okawville.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Dr. Arthur Eichhorn, Emeritus

# **R-25 CIRCUIT 9 “CAPITAL SETTLEMENT” REPORT**

## **BETHEL, DUQUOIN**

Currently vacant but served by Rev. Cliff Adair.

## **ST. PETER, CAMPBELL HILL**

Currently vacant but calling, and served by Rev. Cliff Adair.

## **ST. JOHN, CHESTER**

Served by Rev. Timothy A. Sims.

## **EMMANUEL, PERCY**

Emmanuel is in a dual parish with St. Paul, West Frankfurt (Circuit 11) and is served by Rev. Al Janneke.

## **ZION, PINCKNEYVILLE AND TRINITY, CONANT (Dual Parish)**

Served by Rev. David Kollmeyer. Rev. Kollmeyer also does pastoral care and ministry in multiple state prison facilities in the SID.

## **ST. JOHN, SPARTA**

Served by Rev. Carl Miller.

## **ST. MARK, STEELEVILLE**

Served by Rev. Mark Harriss.

## **IMMANUEL, WEST POINT (Steeleville)**

Served by Rev. Mark Sedwick.

## **ST. PAUL, WINE HILL (Steeleville)**

Served by Rev. Mark Sedwick.

The pastors of Circuit 9 combine with the pastors of Circuit 10 and Circuit 11 to meet monthly. Gatherings include worship, exegetical study, study in the Lutheran Confessions, and/or study and discussion on confessional pastoral practice.

The following pastor(s) were welcomed into the circuit during this triennium:

- August 13, 2024: Pastor Mark Sedwick was installed as Pastor of Immanuel in West Point and St. Paul in Wine Hill.

The following pastor(s) departed the circuit during this triennium:

- Pastor Justin Massey to Trinity, Nokomis (SID)
- Pastor Sean Smith to Iowa District East
- Pastor Alan Kornacki to Iowa District East

We celebrated the following notable events during this triennium:

- The dual parish of Immanuel/St. Paul initiated an “Operation Barnabas” Veterans outreach and English as Second Language classes.
- St. Mark Lutheran Church and School in Steeleville celebrated their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and began a “Grief Share” community outreach.
- St. John Lutheran Church and School in Chester celebrated their 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary and began a building project to replace the aging school and church offices. St. John also began an outreach specifically aimed at ministry to men of all ages called, “Brotherhood of the Cross.”

Circuit 9 observed the following notable changes during this triennium:

- St. Peter in Campbell Hill and Bethel in DuQuoin dissolved their dual parish and returned to being individual parishes.
- St. Mark Lutheran Church in Steeleville changed the format of their school from preschool–8<sup>th</sup> grade to preschool–5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Timothy Sims

# **R-26 CIRCUIT 10 “KASKASKIA RIVER VALLEY” REPORT**

## **ST. JOHN, BALDWIN**

St. John’s continues to be served by Rev. Brian Nowak, whom they share with their neighbors in Red Bud. The people of St. John also operate the Baldwin Food Pantry to help provide for those in need.

## **TRINITY, DARMSTADT AND ST. PAUL, NEW ATHENS (Dual Parish)**

St. Paul Lutheran Church in New Athens and Trinity Lutheran Church, Darmstadt continue to be served by Rev. Lyle Buettner. St. Paul celebrated its 75th anniversary on October 8, 2023, with a service at which President Scharr preached; a meal followed.

## **ST. PETER’S, EVANSVILLE AND ST. JOHN, RUMA (Dual Parish)**

One day after the completion of the Southern Illinois District Convention in February 2022, Rev. Randy Fischer was installed as the Pastor of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Evansville and St. John Lutheran Church in Ruma. St. John celebrated its 175th anniversary on November 5, 2023, with a service at which President Scharr preached; a luncheon was served afterwards.

## **ST. JOHN, RED BUD**

In the summer of 2024, St. John Lutheran Church in Red Bud bid farewell and godspeed to Rev. Mark Nebel, who had served them faithfully for 17 years, upon his acceptance of a call to St. Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, Missouri. St. John continues to be served by Assistant Pastor Rev. Brian Nowak. They are also served at present by Vacancy Pastors Rev. Mark Winkelman and Rev. Art Eichhorn.

The Pastors of St. John, Red Bud, regularly conduct services for the residents of Garden Place retirement home in Red Bud. Many of the congregations of our Circuit also make their services available through radio and internet broadcasts.



## TRINITY, PRAIRIE

**Trinity Lutheran Church in Prairie** (rural Red Bud) continues to be served by Rev. Scott Hojnacki, who has also served the past triennium as Circuit Visitor.

Circuit 10 is home to three excellent Lutheran Schools:

- St. John Lutheran School in Red Bud is led by Principal Mr. Justin Palm and DCE Mr. Bill Becker.
- Trinity Lutheran School in Prairie (rural Red Bud) is led by Principal Dr. Robin Booth.
- Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School in Evansville is led once again by Principal Mrs. Sherry Prange (Mrs. Prange had also served as principal at COSLHS about twenty years ago). In 2023, Christ Our Savior bid farewell and godspeed to Principal Mr. Matthew Foster, upon his acceptance of a call to Salem Lutheran School in Affton, Missouri. Christ Our Savior continues to be supported by the people of God from ten different Lutheran congregations in our area.

All our schools are also served by wonderful Lutheran teachers, standing as beacons of the light of Christ for our children and the children of our communities.

Through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Holy Sacraments, God continues to bless the people of Circuit 10 with His grace. Through worship, Bible studies, fellowship gatherings within our congregations and communities, and devotional books, the people of God dedicate themselves to the hearing and learning of God's Word, desiring to live out that Word in love for God and in love for one another in Christian vocation, and to respond to God with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, and the ongoing proclamation of His Gospel of salvation into our communities and into all the world.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Scott Hojnacki

# **R-27 CIRCUIT 11 “GREATER EGYPT” REPORT**

## **TRINITY, ANNA AND ST. LUKE, OLMSTED (Dual Parish)**

During the triennium the congregation has been vacant. The Rev. Alan J. Wollenburg serves as vacancy pastor.

Significant accomplishments of the congregation include:

- Dual Parish established between Trinity Lutheran Church, Anna, and St. Luke Lutheran Church, Olmsted.
- Pastor Alan J. Wollenburg, retired, is to be installed to serve the dual parish.
- Several infants were baptized.
- Members, although few in number, have been faithful supporting the congregation.

Goals for the next triennium:

- Increase attendance.
- Encourage more regular attendance of members.
- Remain committed to being a congregation of Word and Sacrament.

Challenges that the congregation is facing:

- Small, declining and aging membership.
- Filling positions and roles within the church.
- Located in a community that is gradually becoming non-Lutheran.
- Community that has few economic prospects.

## **OUR SAVIOR, CARBONDALE**

The Rev. Jason S. Holden serves as Senior Pastor and the Rev. Peter J. Weeks serves as Associate Pastor.

Significant accomplishments of the congregation include:

- Baptisms and confirmations of several youth and young adults from the congregation and campus ministry.
- Revitalized International Student Ministry, two of these students serve as custodians of the building.
- Strong relationship with Southern Illinois University Carbondale students, staff, faculty, and leadership.

Goals for the next triennium:

- Integrating newer members into the life of the congregation.
- Share Word & Sacrament in a variety of campus ministry contexts.
- Identify additional and equip leaders in the congregation.

Challenges that the congregation is facing:

- Reconnecting with inactive households.
- Increase in mental health challenges on campus and in the community.

#### **FAITH, ELDORADO AND OUR REDEEMER, GOLCONDA (Dual Parish)**

During the triennium, the Rev. David Otten accepted a call, and the congregation is currently vacant. The Rev. Jason S. Holden serves as vacancy pastor.

Goals for the next triennium:

- Receive full time pastor.
- Continue growth in both churches along with Prison Ministries being restored.

Challenges that the congregation is facing:

- Finding fill-pastors.
- Declining membership.
- Communion services at least once a month.

## **CHRIST, JACOB**

During the triennium, the Rev. Michael A. Kettner retired. The Rev. Gunnar G. Campbell received and accepted the call to Christ Lutheran Church. He was ordained and installed in July of 2023.

Significant accomplishments for the congregation include:

- Successful navigation of a brief period of vacancy at the retirement of Rev. Kettner.
- The sad but faithful closing of our school in 2021, which served our parish by teaching and nurturing the faith of her students for 145 years.
- An increase in attendance in both worship and Bible classes.
- Implementation of daily worship opportunities.
- Revitalization of congregational activities, including a new women's group, youth group, and bi-annual church picnics.

Goals for the next triennium:

- Continue in the faithful administration of the Word and Sacraments.
- Continue to grow in faith and good works.

Challenges that the congregation is facing:

- The greatest sadness of this past triennium was the closing of our school in 2021. Our school was a major part of the congregation's ministry, as well as a driver of fellowship among our people. We thank and praise the Lord for sustaining our school for 145 years.
- Although in the past year we have seen a slight increase in the number of young families and in attendance, we continue to face significant demographic challenges. Our communities, especially Jacob and the nearby communities of Gorham and Grand Tower, have been hollowed out by government regulations that restrict the building of new homes.
- Despite these challenges, we do not lose hope, but we commend our bodies and souls, our livelihoods and our congregation, into the care Him who gives and who takes away, who is steadfast in His love for us, and whose name is blessed forever.

## **GOOD SHEPHERD, MARION**

The Rev. Mark P. Surburg serves as pastor.

Significant accomplishments of the congregation include:

- Strong commitment to learning in Sunday school/Bible class
- Two members studying to be pastors.
- Support of Lutheran Seminary Uganda.
- Congregation provides grocery store gifts cards to area families in need of help.

Goals for the next triennium:

- Continue to emphasize ongoing catechesis for all ages.
- Expand outreach efforts.

Challenges that the Congregation is facing:

- Sharing the faith in an area where Lutheranism is a foreign entity
- Young adults are tempted to follow the world in matters related to the Sixth Commandment.

## **IMMANUEL, MURPHYSBORO**

The Rev. Matthew J. Christian serves as pastor.

Significant accomplishments of the congregation include:

- Successfully called Concordia Theological Seminary 2022 graduate, the Rev. Matthew J. Christian, to serve as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church & School. He was ordained and installed on July 10, 2022.
- Held a celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church cornerstone being placed and the 126<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation. District President, the Rev. Timothy J. Scharr, attended and preached at the anniversary Divine Service, August 20, 2023.
- Our school continues to offer Christ-centered education for PreK-8<sup>th</sup> Grade to approximately 90 students each year.

- Sponsoring a Concordia Seminary student through the “Adopt-A-Student” program.
- Continue to support LCMS Disaster Response, including assisting the Southern Illinois District in the purchase of a skid steer for use on deployments and Immanuel members volunteering through our Lutheran Early Response Team.

Goals for the next triennium:

- Foster a Lutheran identity within the school by seeking Lutheran teachers to fill needed positions.
- Clean up our membership roster to ensure accurate information and to connect those who have moved away with an LCMS church in their area to provide for their spiritual needs.
- Encourage relationship between church members and school families and welcome more school families into the congregation through continued teaching of Lutheran doctrine whenever possible.

Challenges that the congregation is facing:

- Finding willing members to fill positions as church officers within the congregation.
- Temptations to follow the world in matters related to the Sixth Commandment and cohabitation.
- Building community and encouraging involvement beyond the Sunday Divine Service.

**ST. PAUL, WEST FRANKFORT**

In retirement, the Rev. Dr. Alan W. Janneke serves part-time as pastor of St. Paul’s along with Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Percy.

Significant accomplishments of the congregation include:

- We continue to take advantage of Thrivent action grants to provide support of food pantries in West Frankfort, Benton and Marion; Night’s Shield children’s service in West Frankfort; and Veterans.
- Quilting group contributes quilts to LCMS Disaster Relief, veterans’ home, nursing home and homebound friends.
- Host monthly Red Cross blood drives.
- Host weekly Alcoholic Anonymous meetings.

- We've accomplished several projects to continue to maintain our property and buildings and make them attractive: replacing interior lighting with LED fixtures; replacing heating/AC units; replacing the church roof with an attractive metal roof; and replacing the narthex carpet with an epoxy mosaic floor

Goals for the next triennium:

- Continue to provide weekly Word and Sacrament ministry and Bible Classes.
- Continue to welcome visitors and invite people into congregation as Holy Spirit works through the Word

Challenges that the congregation is facing:

- Aging membership; declining attendance.

Gathered by Circuit Visitor Rev. Jason Holden

# COMMISSION ON NOMINATIONS REPORT

The Commission on Nominations has prepared a slate from the nominees provided by the congregations, workers, and lay members of the District. That slate appears below.

According to the Southern Illinois District Bylaws, nominations from congregations were solicited for the office of District President. While the Bylaws allow for five candidates, only four nominees indicated that they are willing to stand for election and serve if elected. The nominations results are:

- Rev. Timothy Scharr (23 nominations)
- Rev. Dr. Stephen Krenz (9 nominations)
- Rev. Dr. Heath Curtis (7 nominations)
- Rev. Christen Prumm (5 nominations)
- Rev. Benjamin Ball (2 nominations)
- Rev. Nathan Wollenberg (2 nominations)
- One nomination (not eligible for election per Southern Illinois District Bylaws)
  - Rev. John Schank
  - Rev. Dr. Tony Troup
  - Rev. Timothy Sims

In total, 49 District President nominations were received from 39 congregations. Of the eligible nominees, Rev. Benjamin Ball and Rev. Nathan Wollenberg indicated that they will not stand for election at this time. The slate is below, “\*” indicates an incumbent.

## **District President:**

- Rev. Dr. Heath Curtis
- Rev. Dr. Stephen Krenz
- Rev. Christen Prumm
- Rev. Timothy Scharr\*

## **First and Second Vice-President**

- Candidates for these positions will be nominated at the Convention.



**District Secretary (ordained)**

- Rev. Lyle Buettner
- Rev. Gunnar Campbell
- Rev. Dr. George Gude

**District Treasurer (lay)**

- Gary Hemmer\*
- Kevin Koenigstein

**Board of Directors, commissioned: (elect 3)**

- Bill Becker \*
- Edith Laufer
- Elizabeth Koester
- Ken Krueger
- Joseph Meador
- John Schaff \*

**Board of Directors, lay: (elect 8)**

- Larry Barringer\*
- Matt Bierman\*
- Paul Bertels\*
- Larry Erdmann
- Randy Gindler
- Curtis Grote
- Gary Hemmer
- Don Hutchinson
- Kevin Koenigstein
- Kurt Johnson\*
- Jerry Mueller
- James Munden
- Mark Peterson
- Devon Reising
- Brad Rider
- Don Stallman\*
- George Trammel

**Board of Missions, ordained: (elect 3)**

- Rev. James King
- Rev. David Otten
- Rev. Andrew Packer
- Rev. Scott Schilbe
- Rev. Dr. David Schultz
- Rev. John Sedwick

**Board of Missions, commissioned: (elect 1)**

- Hannah Gruben
- Edith Laufer
- Joseph Meador

**Board of Mission, lay: (elect 4)**

- Walter Blotevogel
- Alice Decker
- Frank Glaub
- Hans Gruben
- Janet Kahre
- Sara Manley
- Elaine Muskopf
- Mark Schoenleber

**Board of Mission chair** (elect 1, nominees drawn from the ordained electees of the Board of Missions)

**Nominations and Elections for 2028 (each circuit position elect 1, elect 2 commissioned)**

Circuit 1 (Lay)

- 1 Bill Hoff
- 2 Derek Johnson

Circuit 2 (Ordained)

- Rev. David Otten
- Rev. Dr. David Schultz

Circuit 3 (Lay)

- Jonathon Lindsey
- Mark Schoenleber

Circuit 4 (Ordained)

- Rev. Andrew Packer
- Rev. Scott Schilbe

Circuit 5 (Lay)

- Don Hutchinson
- Sara Manley

Circuit 6 (Lay)

- Jerry Mueller
- Dr. James Munden

Circuit 7 (Ordained)

- Rev. James Hennig
- Rev. Joe Nehring

Circuit 8 (Lay)

- Matt Bierman
- Jeff Obermeier

Circuit 9 (Ordained)

- Rev. Mark Harriss
- Rev. John Sedwick

Circuit 10 (Lay)

- Ray Kaaz
- Jeff Mueller

Circuit 11 (Ordained)

- Rev. Matt Christian
- Rev. Jay Holden

Commissioned

- Elizabeth Koester
- Ken Krueger
- Edith Laufer
- Joseph Meador

**Chair of the Board of Spiritual Care (elect 1, nominations drawn from slate of circuit visitors)**

**Representative to the 2026 LCMS Nominating Committee (elect 1 representative and 1 alternate)**

Layperson and alternate

- Frank Glaub
- Jeff Schwarz
- Zach Stegman

The Commission on Nominations thanks the workers, members, and congregations of the District for their nominations.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Benjamin Ball  
*Chairman*

Rev. Christen Prumm  
*Vice-chair*

Mr. William Becker  
*Secretary*

# FLOOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## COMMITTEE ONE – RESOLUTIONS

### Ordained

Rev. Tim Appel (Faith, Godfrey)

Rev. Scott Hojnacki (Trinity, Prairie)

Rev. John Shank (Trinity, Edwardsville) *Chairman*

### Commissioned

Denise Hennig (Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Centralia)

Ken Krueger (Trinity, Edwardsville)

Edith Laufer (Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville)

### Lay

Darrell Brink (Bethlehem, Ferrin)

Bill Huff (Zion, Carlinville)

Joseph Kirby (St. Salvatore, Venedy)

## COMMITTEE TWO – CONVENTION ARRANGEMENTS AND REGISTRATION

### Ordained

Rev. Peter III (SID Secretary)  
Rev. Timothy Scharr (SID President)  
Rev. Tony Troup (Convention Chaplain)

### Commissioned

Bill Becker (St. John, Red Bud)  
Jeff Fick (SID Schools and General Executive) *Chairman*  
Jon Giordano (Metro East Lutheran High School)  
Donna Kirst (Holy Cross, Collinsville)

### Lay

Don Hutchinson (Messiah, Lebanon)  
Elsa Mort (SID Staff)  
Anna Rowden (SID Staff)  
Kathy Scharr (Messiah, Carlyle)

## COMMITTEE THREE – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

### Ordained

Rev. Benjamin Ball (St. Paul, Hamel) *Chairman*  
Rev. Lyle Buettner (St. Paul, New Athens and Trinity, Darmstadt)  
Rev. Karl Gregory (Messiah, Lebanon)  
Rev. Bruce Keseman (Christ Our Savior, Freeburg)  
Rev. Christen Prumm (St. Paul, Nokomis)  
Rev. Eric Wood (Immanuel, Okawville)

### Commissioned

Bill Becker (St. John, Red Bud) *Secretary*  
Edith Laufer (Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville)

### Lay

Mardell Granger (St. John, Chester)  
Daryl Piering (St. Paul, Wood River)  
Zach Stegman (Good Shepherd, Collinsville)  
Bob Thouvenin (Messiah, Carlyle)  
George Trammel (Good Shepherd, Marion)

### Ex Officio Members

Peter III (SID Secretary)  
Rev. Timothy Scharr (SID President)  
Jeff Fick (SID Schools and General Executive)

# OVERTURES

## OVERTURE 1-01 To Empower the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors Authority to Determine Campus Ministry Funding

### Rationale

The Southern Illinois District has a long history of supporting campus ministries at the Universities within the District. Both Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville have received support from the District for many years. For a time, there has been an understanding of a precedent set by authorizing funding for campus ministries by the Southern Illinois District in convention.

Southern Illinois District Bylaw 2.47 establishes the duties of the Board of Directors as, “The Board of Directors shall function as the executive administrative body of the District between conventions, acting in behalf of the District, and such actions shall be subject, if challenged, to ratification by the convention.” District Bylaw 2.47.j also prescribes that the Board of Directors, “Set the annual budget for the District.” As the Board of Directors serves the needs of the District with full financial and mission-based reports, they are the most equipped to make annual decisions regarding the budgeting of campus ministry.

Therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District in convention give thanks to God for the faithful ministries at university campuses; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District Board of Directors, acting as the executive administrative body between conventions, set the budget regarding campus ministry resources; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the convention chaplain offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the campus ministries in Southern Illinois.

Submitted by:

Southern Illinois Board of Directors

Rev. Timothy Scharr  
*President*

Rev. Peter III  
*Secretary*



1 **OVERTURE 1-02 Concerning the Lack of Use of the Name Lutheran by Congregations of**  
2 **the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod**  
3

4 WHEREAS, At its 1995 Convention the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod passed  
5 Resolution 3-13A stating

6 *“Whereas, We have been called Lutheran since the formation of our Synod*  
7 *(and since Reformation times) and are thankful for our doctrinal background*  
8 *and heritage; and*

9 *Whereas, The name Lutheran clearly identifies what the member*  
10 *congregations and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod believe, teach*  
11 *and confess; and*

12 *Whereas, Basic Christian honesty and integrity require that no deception of*  
13 *any sort be used in declaring the truth of the Gospel before all the world, as*  
14 *St. Paul declares: “Rather we have renounced secret and shameful ways;*  
15 *we do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary,*  
16 *by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s*  
17 *conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor. 4:2); therefore be it*

18 *Resolved, That all congregations and mission stations in our Synod boldly*  
19 *profess in their official title and/or name that they are “Lutheran”; and be it*  
20 *further*

21 *Resolved, That all congregations and mission stations of our Synod state in*  
22 *their materials (bulletins, newsletters, etc.) that they belong to The Lutheran*  
23 *Church—Missouri Synod; and be it finally*

24 *Resolved, That all LCMS congregations gladly proclaim our great doctrinal*  
25 *heritage to a world that needs the clear proclamation of the truth.” and*

26  
27 WHEREAS, CFW Walther wrote, “Concerning the Name Lutheran” (*Der Lutheraner* 1,  
28 1844, translated by Mark Nispel) concluding,

29  
30 “1 - It was Luther and no other through whom God in these last times has  
31 brought the pure clear doctrine of the Word of God together with the right  
32 use of the Sacraments again into the day and onto the plain and,

33 2 - The communion of those who have confessed this pure doctrine of the  
34 Word of God with heart and mouth is therefore named and known by every

1 Lutheran by this name; we can only confess the faith which is in our hearts  
2 purely and completely with the name Lutheran.

3 If we would get rid of the name Lutheran the highest suspicion would be  
4 aroused that either we are ashamed of the old Lutheran doctrine, or that we  
5 no longer consider it to be the only true doctrine agreeing with God's clear  
6 Word and that a new false doctrine is in our hearts. As dear, therefore, as  
7 the truth is to us, as dear as God's honor and the salvation of our souls is  
8 to us, so little can we, especially in this time of widespread error, give up the  
9 name Lutheran. By this name we separate ourselves from all the  
10 unorthodox of all times and publicly confess the right faith of all time.

11 Because of this, the most serious accusation is made against us that by  
12 doing this we tear apart the body of Christ, disassociate ourselves from  
13 brothers, wield the sword against heirs of the same inheritance, and declare  
14 them to be our enemies. But those who say this are wrong. We disassociate  
15 ourselves only from the errors in which so many of our brothers are  
16 captured. And we would act without love towards them if we would not loudly  
17 witness against that which keeps them in such danger of souls. It is and  
18 remains impossible that this action which is in accordance with God's  
19 express command can lead to the ruin of God's kingdom. This fact can and  
20 must cancel out all other thoughts for a Christian, when it is asked what he  
21 should do in any particular circumstance.

22 But the divine command stands clear that we must not just keep our faith in  
23 our heart but must confess it also with the mouth. And so, St. Paul says in  
24 Rom. 10:10: "One believes with the heart, and becomes righteous; and one  
25 confesses with his mouth and is saved." And so says Christ: "He who  
26 confesses me before men, he will I confess before my Father in heaven."  
27 Matt. 10:32-33. So, if we have the Lutheran faith in our hearts, so we must,  
28 if we want to be saved and not be eternally damned, confess it with our  
29 mouths." and

30

31 WHEREAS, There are several member congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri  
32 Synod who are out of compliance with 1995 Resolution 3-13A, and the spirit and letter of  
33 Dr. Walther's argument in retaining the name Lutheran, calling themselves such names  
34 as Pathfinder, The Grove, SoulThirst, The Edge, and others; therefore be it

35

36 *Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District Convention reaffirm 1995 Resolution 3-13A;  
37 and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District meeting in convention agrees with Dr.  
2 Walther's statement that,

3

4 "1 - It was Luther and no other through whom God in these last times has  
5 brought the pure clear doctrine of the Word of God together with the right  
6 use of the Sacraments again into the day and onto the plain and,

7 2 - The communion of those who have confessed this pure doctrine of the  
8 Word of God with heart and mouth is therefore named and known by every  
9 Lutheran by this name; we can only confess the faith which is in our hearts  
10 purely and completely with the name Lutheran.

11 If we would get rid of the name Lutheran the highest suspicion would be  
12 aroused that either we are ashamed of the old Lutheran doctrine, or that we  
13 no longer consider it to be the only true doctrine agreeing with God's clear  
14 Word and that a new false doctrine is in our hearts. As dear, therefore, as  
15 the truth is to us, as dear as God's honor and the salvation of our souls is  
16 to us, so little can we, especially in this time of widespread error, give up the  
17 name Lutheran. By this name we separate ourselves from all the  
18 unorthodox of all times and publicly confess the right faith of all time"

19 and be it further

20 *Resolved*, That the President and District Presidents of the LCMS enforce 1995  
21 Resolution 3-13A and exercise appropriate ecclesiastical supervision for those out of  
22 compliance, encouraging those who are unwilling to comply to leave our Lutheran Synod  
23 in their own freedom; and be it finally

24 *Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District send this resolution to the 2026 LCMS  
25 convention.

26

27 Submitted by:

28 St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hamel, IL

29

30 Ken Moehle  
31 *Chairman*

32 Lynn Poletti  
33 *Recording Secretary*

1                   **OVERTURE 1-03 TO PROVIDE REIMBURSEMENT FOR CIRCUIT VISITORS**  
2

3 WHEREAS, The Circuit Visitor (hereafter, CV) serves as a vital liaison between each  
4 congregation of the circuit and the District President, fulfilling many duties as outlined in  
5 the LCMS Handbook (Bylaw 5.2), including leadership in call processes, support, care,  
6 encouragement, resource, and counsel to each congregation and pastor within his circuit;  
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The CV often is asked by the District President to assist congregations within  
9 the circuit in many of the areas listed above; and

10 WHEREAS, It is often desired, even necessary for the CV to perform these duties in  
11 person, often traveling many miles to do so; and

12 WHEREAS, The CV is also expected to attend quarterly meetings at the District office;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, It places an unfair burden on the CV, or his congregation, to cover the cost  
15 of the mileage and/or meals incurred in the performance of his duties; therefore be it

16  
17 *Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District office create or amend its reimbursement  
18 policy to assess the congregations of each circuit on a per-member basis (as last reported  
19 to the LCMS roster and statistics) in order to acquire the average cost of the mileage  
20 and/or meals incurred by each CV in performance of his duties; and be it further

21 *Resolved*, That CV submit their mileage and/or meal costs to the Southern Illinois District  
22 office monthly; and be it finally

23 *Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District reimburse, on a quarterly basis, the CV at the  
24 current IRS rate for mileage and the cost of meals (meal reimbursement not to exceed  
25 \$30 per occurrence of duties rendered).

26  
27 Submitted by:  
28 Circuit 1  
29 Circuit Forum

1 **OVERTURE 1-04 TO AMEND THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT SALARY SCALE**  
2 **GUIDELINES REGARDING PULPIT SUPPLY**

3  
4 WHEREAS, The current scale for minimum remuneration for guest pulpit supply in our  
5 District's salary guidelines is \$75 for one service, \$125 for two services and \$50 an hour  
6 for Bible study; and

7 WHEREAS, These amounts have been in place since at least 2006; and

8 WHEREAS, Inflation over that time has lowered the value of these reimbursements;  
9 therefore be it

10 *Resolved*, That Appendix B – Pulpit Supply of the SID Salary Guidelines be amended as  
11 follows: \$125 for one service, \$200 for two services, and \$75 for one hour of Bible study;  
12 and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the mileage reimbursement reflect the then current IRS rate.

14  
15  
16 Submitted by:

17 Southern Illinois District Board of Directors

1                   **OVERTURE 1-05 TO WITHDRAW RSO STATUS FROM ORGANIZATIONS THAT**  
2                   **FINANCIALLY BENEFIT FROM OR ADVOCATE FOR EITHER INCREASED OR**  
3                   **DECREASED IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SERVICES**

4  
5   WHEREAS, Jesus teaches there are two kingdoms (Matt. 22:21): the Kingdom of the  
6   Left, which has authority over earthly citizenship concerning one’s country (Rom. 13:1-7);  
7   and the Kingdom of the Right, which has authority the preaching of the Gospel which  
8   yields faith in Christ and thereby heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20; 1 Pet. 2:11; Martin  
9   Luther’s “Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed,” AE 45:75-129; AC  
10   XVI; Ap XVI; FC, Ep XII, 12-16 and SD XII, 17-23); and

11   WHEREAS, “The powers of the church and civil government must not be mixed. The  
12   power of the church possesses its own command to preach the gospel and administer  
13   the sacraments. It should not usurp the other’s duty, transfer earthly kingdoms, abrogate  
14   the laws of magistrates, abolish lawful obedience, interfere with judgment concerning any  
15   civil ordinances or contracts,” (AC XXVIII, 12 [Latin text]); and

16   WHEREAS, Lutheran Services in America and its member organizations actively lobby  
17   the government regarding matters pertaining to the Kingdom of the Left, stating, “The  
18   collective power of our \$26 billion faith-based voice on Capitol Hill plays a crucial role in  
19   advancing policies that improve lives. Together, we ensure that our voices are heard for  
20   millions of people experiencing need,”<sup>1</sup> including “strengthen stability and purpose  
21   for veterans, refugees, New Americans and more;”<sup>2</sup> and

22   WHEREAS, LCMS members have Christian freedom to think differently on immigration  
23   and refugee policy and are encouraged “to exercise the greatest care in judging one  
24   another in their individual and different responses to complex social problems as each  
25   endeavors to apply the divine principle of Christian love to the specific human situation”  
26   (CTCR, *Civil Obedience and Disobedience*, D p. 6, 1965); and

27   WHEREAS, The mission of the Church even in human care, is not to advocate for more  
28   or less immigration and refugee services, or more or less government spending; and

29   WHEREAS, Jesus said “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36); and

30   WHEREAS, “The granting of recognized service organization (henceforth RSO) status by  
31   the Synod signifies that a service organization, while independent of the Synod, fosters  
32   the mission and ministry of the church ... and respects and does not act contrary to the  
33   doctrine and practice of the Synod” (LCMS Bylaw 6.2.1); and

34   WHEREAS, Lobbying and advocating for either increased or decreased immigration, or  
35   increased or decreased government spending on refugee services, is a matter of the

1 Kingdom of the Left and no Christian should feel their conscience bound on such matters  
2 by association of their church with such advocacy; therefore be it

3

4 *Resolved*, That Synod reaffirm Christ's teaching on the two kingdoms; and be it further

5 *Resolved*, That all members take up their duty to pray for wisdom for our leaders; and be  
6 it further

7 *Resolved*, That the LCMS encourage its membership to engage in thoughtful political  
8 discourse seeking the public good with humility; and be it finally

9 *Resolved*, That the Synod declare that RSO status shall not be given to any organization  
10 that lobbies the government for either increased or decreased immigration, or increased  
11 or decreased spending on refugee services, nor such organizations that financially benefit  
12 therefrom.

13

14

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Submitted by:

16

Circuit 3

17

Circuit Forum

1           **OVERTURE 1-06 TO ENCOURAGE CONTINUED PRISON MINISTRY SUPPORT**

2       ***NOTE: This overture has not been officially submitted but will be passed along as a late***  
3 ***overture.***

4       WHEREAS, The Bible states that Jesus said, “*I was in prison, you visited Me.*” Jesus  
5 also said, “*As you did it to the least of these, you did it to Me.*” The Southern Illinois District  
6 has sought to be faithful to our Lord’s mandate to visit those in Prison by its support of  
7 Prison since 1901; and

8       WHEREAS, The District regularly reaches out to 8 Prison/Jail setting on a weekly basis  
9 by way of 6 ministry servants providing weekly visitation, Bible Study and, or worship  
10 leadership; and

11       WHEREAS, The past conventions of our District acknowledged the need to support  
12 prison ministry in our District and provide special training and materials for clergy and lay  
13 people desiring to visit the incarcerated; and

14       WHEREAS, Individual members of District Congregations may require information and  
15 care as families of inmates and /or victims of crime; and

16       WHEREAS, The District continues to promote Freed in Christ to as a tool for Christian re-  
17 entry throughout the Synod; and

18       WHEREAS, The District has worked with the office of National Mission to host a prison  
19 ministry conference in 2024 to share practices and experiences to promote and  
20 encourage prison ministry throughout the Synod; and

21       WHEREAS, The District has implemented the Reaching In program at the Greenville  
22 Federal Correctional Institute to allow for one-on-one Christ-focused correspondence  
23 mentorship; therefore be it

24  
25       *Resolved*, That the Mission board be directed to allocate support to congregations who  
26 dedicate the time of their staff and membership to prison ministry; and be it further

27       *Resolved*, That clergy and lay persons who have an interest in prison and jail ministry be  
28 encouraged to take advantage of training offered through the District: and be it further

29       *Resolved*, That congregations of the District be encouraged to continue to support prison  
30 and jail ministry through regular corporate prayer for prison ministry, hosting mission  
31 speakers to hear about what is going on in the district and synod, and considering prison  
32 ministry for mission offerings; and be it further



1 *Resolved*, That the congregations of the District prayerfully consider providing volunteers  
2 to serve in prison ministry as opportunities become available with facilities, at the county,  
3 state, and federal levels, across the District; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That the membership of the District, lay, commissioned and clergy, prayerfully  
5 consider to support the Reaching In initiative by corresponding with inmates as the District  
6 expands the program to other facilities in the District; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That the District continues to work with the Specialized Spiritual Care Ministry  
8 office of the Synod to promote prison ministry throughout the Synod and share/develop  
9 resources to be used; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Southern Illinois District expand its prison ministry outreach by way of  
11 information and care with both families and inmates and with victims of crime; and be it  
12 finally

13 *Resolved*, That thanks be given to God that the District has been blessed with many who  
14 use their gifts and talents to share the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who are  
15 incarcerated, their families, returning citizens and victims of crime.

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Submitted by:

Prison Ministry Task Force

# **ORDAINED MINISTER ROSTER CHANGES 2022-2025**

## **ENTERED INTO THE DISTRICT**

Appel, Timothy (TX) to Faith, Godfrey 11/20/2022 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Campbell, Gunnar (Candidate FW '23) ordained and installed Christ, Jacob 7/16/2023  
by Rev. Mark Nebel  
Casterillo, Rene (WY) to St. Paul, Hamel 5/20/2024 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Christian, Matthew (Candidate FW '22) ordained and installed Immanuel, Murphysboro  
7/10/2022 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
D'Entremont, James (SO) to St. Salvator, Venedy and Olive Branch, Okawville 7/9/2024  
by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Gray, Andrew (IE) to Good Shepherd, Collinsville 10/13/2024 by Rev. John Shank  
Hennig, James (CI) to Trinity, Centralia 8/7/2022 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Herzberg, Martin (Candidate SD) to Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ, Greenville  
4/3/2023 by Rev. Timothy Mueller  
Jones, Brett (Candidate SL '22) ordained and installed Trinity, Hoffman 6/5/2022  
by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Kintz, Joshua (Candidate SL '23) ordained and installed Zion, Belleville 7/16/2023  
by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Krystowiak, Dustin (Candidate SW) to Candidate SI 6/27/2024 by Timothy Scharr  
LaMie, Oliver (Candidate SL '23) ordained and installed St. Peter's, Dorsey 6/4/2023  
by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Metcalf, Brandon (Candidate SL '22) ordained Christ the King, Lake Ozark, MO 6/18/2022  
by Rev. Kristopher Morris (MO); installed Zion, Bethalto 6/26/2022 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Packer, Andrew (RM) to Good Shepherd, Collinsville 6/18/2023 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Schilbe, Scott (MO) to Metro East Lutheran High School 6/30/2023  
by Rev. Andrew Packer

## **CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

Fischer, Randy (Messiah, Alton) to St. Peters, Evansville and St. John's, Ruma 2/6/2022  
by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Holman, Raymond (Candidate) to Christ Our Savior High School, Evansville  
by Rev. Scott Hojnacki  
Massey, Justin (St. John, Chester) to Trinity, Nokomis 2/26/2023 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Mitteis, Kelly (Zion, Staunton) to Trinity, Girard 8/14/2022 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Nehring, Joseph (Trinity, Harvel) to Faith, Mt. Vernon 4/28/2024 by Rev. Timothy Scharr

Otten, David (Our Redeemer, Golconda and Faith, El Dorado) to Hope, Jerseyville  
4/30/2023 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Packer, Andrew (Good Shepherd, Collinsville) to Senior Pastor Good Shepherd,  
Collinsville 2/11/2024 by Rev. Michael Walther  
Sedwick, John (Scott Air Force Base) to St. Paul, Wine Hill and Immanuel, West Point  
8/13/2023 by Rev. Timothy Scharr  
Skeesick, Dale (Emeritus) to Holy Cross, Collinsville 9/25/2022 by Rev. Kyle Wright

#### **TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS**

Adle, Scott (Good Shepherd, Collinsville) to NE 7/17/2022  
Clayton, Kirk (Zion, Mascoutah) to NI 7/31/2024  
Demski, Merritt (Immanuel, Waterloo) to IW 2/4/2024  
Fritsche, Joel (Missionary, Palmar Arriba) to MO 8/23/2023  
Handrick Sr., Thomas (Emeritus) to MO 7/8/2022  
Hofferber, Mark (Trinity, Hoffman) to SO 2/5/2024  
Holle, Brian (Zion, Bunker Hill) to KS 9/25/2023  
Holman, Raymond (Christ Our Savior High School, Evansville) to OH 6/8/2023  
Jans, Gregory (USAF Chaplain) to NJ 8/01/2024  
Kangas, Aaron (Trinity, Iuka and Faith, Flora) to PSW 1/9/2023  
Kornacki, Alan (St. Peter, Campbell Hill and Bethel, DuQuoin) to IE 2/10/2024  
Larson, Brandon (St. Peter's, Dorsey) to MO 12/1/2022  
Miller, James (Candidate) to MO 3/25/2022  
Mueller, Andrew (St. James, Glen Carbon) to CI 12/31/2024  
Nebel, Mark (St. John, Red Bud) to MO 8/1/2024  
Schilbe, Scott (Messiah, Carlyle) to MO 4/29/2023  
Smith, Sean (St. Paul, Wine Hill and Immanuel, West Point) to IE 4/25/2022  
Wilcoxon, Timothy (Zion, Carlinville) to KS 4/27/2024  
Wilshek, David (Emeritus) to MO 8/31/2022

#### **CALLED TO GLORY**

Brandt, Dennis (Candidate) 1/24/2022  
Byerley, Walter (Emeritus) 11/16/2022  
Lintvedt, Vernon (Emeritus) 4/11/2024  
Wiesner, David (Emeritus) 8/7/2024

**CHANGED TO EMERITUS STATUS**

Eichorn, Arthur (St. Salvator, Venedy and St. Peter, New Memphis) 5/31/2022

Gleason, William (St. Paul, Hamel) 8/15/2021

Hofferber, Mark (Trinity, Hoffman) 1/15/2022

Kettner, Michael (Christ, Jacob) 5/7/2023

Wilshek, David (Hope, Jerseyville) 7/26/2022

**RESIGNED / REMOVED FROM ROSTER**

Richardt, Matthew (Faith, Mt. Vernon) 11/9/2022 by Rev. Timothy Scharr

**CLOSED CONGREGATIONS**

St. Peter, Caseyville 12/31/2023

St. Peter, New Memphis 12/25/2022

# COMMISSIONED MINISTER ROSTER CHANGES 2022-2025

## ENTERED SOUTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT

Bimler, Kimberly to Trinity, Edwardsville 8/22/2022 by Rev. John Shank  
Brinkmann, Jaime to Zion, Belleville 3/25/2022 by Rev. Chris Spelbring  
Brofford, Eric to Holy Cross, Collinsville 8/15/2023 by Rev. Kyle Wright  
Covarrubias, Shanna to Metro East Lutheran High School, Edwardsville 8/22/2022  
colloquy and installed by Rev. Aaron Mueller  
Covert, Christopher to Zion, Litchfield 8/7/2022 by Rev. Fred Kraemer  
Davis, Abigail to Good Shepherd, Collinsville 8/22/2022 by Rev. Michael Walther  
Eatherton, Hannah to Good Shepherd, Collinsville 8/15/2023 commissioned and  
installed by Rev. Michael Walther  
Gaffney, Dcs. Sarah to St. Paul, Hamel 8/13/2023 by Rev. Benjamin Ball  
Heinz, Dcs. Emma to Higher Things (SID RSO), 3/10/2024  
Johnson, Heather to Trinity, Edwardsville 8/22/2022 by Rev. John Shank  
Kassebaum, Tina to Immanuel, Okawville 8/28/2022 by Rev. Eric Wood  
Koester, Dcs. Elizabeth to St. Paul, Hamel 8/13/2023 by Rev. Benjamin Ball  
Lingafelter, Janella to Good Shepherd, Collinsville 8/22/2022 by Rev. Michael Walther  
Meador, Joseph to Metro East Lutheran High School, Edwardsville 8/21/2022  
by Rev. David Schultz  
Meyer, Mardelle to Trinity, Edwardsville 8/22/2022 by Rev. John Shank  
Mikkelson, Jacob to Zion, Litchfield 8/01/2024 by Rev. Fred Kraemer  
Prange, Sherry to Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville 8/15/2023  
by Rev. Lyle Buettner  
Pruess, Micah to Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville 8/15/2023  
by Rev. Lyle Buettner  
Rattelmuller, Barbara to St. Paul, Hamel 8/7/2022 by Rev. Benjamin Ball  
Ridgeway, Kayla to Zion, Bethalto 8/15/2023 commissioned and installed  
by Rev. Kale Hanson  
Ruhmann, Amanda to St. John's, Red Bud 8/14/2022 by Rev. Mark Nebel  
Singler, Susan to Zion, Bethalto 9/24/2023 commissioned and installed  
by Rev. Kale Hanson  
Wallace, Sarah to Good Shepherd, Collinsville 8/15/2023 commissioned and installed  
by Rev. Michael Walther  
Wollenberg, Katherine to Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Centralia 8/7/2022  
by Rev. Nathan Wollenberg

### **CHANGES WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

Hamrick, Mary (Unity Lutheran, East St. Louis) to Holy Cross, Collinsville 8/22/2022  
by Rev. Kyle Wright

Koch, Sarah (Zion, Bethalto) to Zion, Bethalto (Principal) 8/22/2022  
by Rev. Kale Hanson

Moore, Timothy (Zion, Litchfield) to St. Mark's, Steeleville 8/1/2022 by Rev. Mark Harris  
Palm, Justin (St. John's, Red Bud) to St. John's, Red Bud (Principal) 8/14/2022  
by Rev. Mark Nebel

Pryor, Jami (Zion, Litchfield) to Zion Litchfield (Principal) 8/7/2022 by Rev. Fred Kraemer

### **TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS**

Anderson, Laurie (St. John, Chester) to MO 6/20/2024

Betts, Caleb (Good Shepherd, Collinsville) to NW 8/18/2022

DiLiberto, Jamie (Candidate) to PSW 6/18/2024

Foster, Matthew (Christ Our Savior, Evansville) to MO 7/1/2023

Gain, Anna (Good Shepherd, Collinsville) to NW 7/30/2023

Gerth, Joseph (St. Paul, Hamel) to SW 6/28/2024

Hamrick, Roy (Candidate) to NI 4/14/2022

Holman, Melissa (Christ Our Savior, Evansville) to IN 6/8/2023

Holman, Raymond (Christ Our Savior, Evansville) to OH 6/8/2023

Johnson, Heather (Trinity, Edwardsville) to IE 7/2/2024

Kegley, Elizabeth (Candidate) to IN 4/14/2024

Kurtz, Amy (Trinity – St. John, Nashville) to FG 8/15/2023

Lofink, Mark (Zion, Litchfield) to PSW 5/16/2022

Muther, Julia (Zion, Bethalto) to SW 8/1/2022

Roggow, Annalisa (Zion, Bethalto) to OK 7/10/2023

Schnare, Zachariah (Candidate) to MO 10/6/2022

### **CALLED TO GLORY**

Frederking, Dcs. Dolories (Emeritus) 7/12/2024

### **CHANGED FROM CANDIDATE TO ACTIVE STATUS**

Kintz, Rachel (Candidate) to Zion Lutheran, Belleville 9/25/2022, Rev. Chris Spelbring