



MISSOURI DISTRICT

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD



ANNUAL REPORT

2016



About the Missouri District

The Missouri District consists of 297 congregations and 113 educational ministries.

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Missouri District is to serve and encourage congregations to fulfill the Great Commission and promote unity of the true faith.”

VISION STATEMENT

“The vision of the Missouri District is of congregations partnering as one church, united in doctrine, ready, equipped and acting to fulfill the Great Commission in their unique setting with their unique gifts.”

DISTRICT GOALS

In 2015, the Missouri District began to refine its focus to its LCMS congregations, schools and workers by identifying four critical targets that were introduced in 2016.

- Growing Together in the Word
- Healthy Servants
- Peaceful Ministries
- Mission Focused Congregations



Faithful Witnesses – The Vision for the Missouri District

Critical Targets

There are four critical targets that the Missouri District staff and Board of Directors identified for our work throughout this triennium. These are the areas where we will devote our energy and resources and pray that God blesses us as we strive to be Faithful Witnesses, faithful to God’s Word and the Lutheran Confessions, and bold witnesses in our daily callings.

Growing Together in the Word

The starting point in our “Life Together” is in the Word of God. It will remain the primary focus for our district to call our members (congregations, ordained and commissioned ministers) to be faithful in hearing and studying the Word of God. The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation next year reminds us of the blessing it is to grow together as one body through the study of the Word of God.

Healthy Servants

The Missouri District staff and leaders support and equip professional church workers to be healthy and joyful servants and leaders. There are significant pressures facing our called servants today. We want to be more intentional in our care of our called workers as we support them in their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. From our Church Worker Care Team to our professional conferences, church worker health will be a priority for our work.

Peaceful Ministries

The Missouri District staff and leaders support congregations and schools to be peaceable by addressing conflicts guided by the Word of God. Conflict between brothers and sisters in Christ has been one of the most significant manifestations of sin within the life of the Church. When conflicts arises, it destroys our unity and hinders our witness. However, it is our intention that the Missouri District staff and leaders will provide support to be proactive in helping our ministries to be at peace with one another.

Mission Focused Congregations

The Missouri District staff and leaders encourage and equip congregations, schools and other ministries to bring Christ to the communities. We will work toward this critical target through our Plus One Initiative, that every congregation of the district would seek to engage their community in one new way. The district staff and leaders will channel our resources to assist all our congregations and schools to that end. We will provide training and coaching to help to meet this goal.



Dear Partners in the Gospel

It is with great joy that we provide you this update on the work of the Missouri District in our first Annual Report. The last year has been a period of transition and growth for the Missouri District. We also look forward with great anticipation to the opportunities that we will have in 2017 as Lutheran congregations celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

Here are a few things that we can celebrate from this past year.

Church Worker Care Team – The district has formed a team of four pastors and a deaconess who provide spiritual care and support to the ordained and commissioned ministers of the Missouri District. The team will be present for all of our district conferences and events for our called servants and are available anytime there is a need.

Reconciliation Training – We have partnered with Ambassadors of Reconciliation to provide two training events in the area of reconciliation. The first event, open to everyone, drew in people from a dozen congregations across the district to equip laypeople and church professionals with skills to respond to conflict guided by the Scriptures. The second event provided training for Circuit Visitors and several school administrators to assist others in coaching through conflict.

Four New Partnerships in North St. Louis Circuit – The North St. Louis Circuit has seen significant transition both in its communities and congregations in recent years. This past year saw partnerships develop between several congregations to reach their communities with the Gospel. Among the partnerships are four congregations that have partnered with the Missouri District and the Office of National Mission to call a “missionary” to serve as the Director of the Lutheran Hope Center in Ferguson.

“You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

So what can you expect in the future? We will continue to strive to equip congregations, schools and servants to be “Faithful Witnesses.” In the coming months, you will hear more about the following supports from the Missouri District.

E2 (Encourage and Equip) Conferences – The purpose of the conferences will be to encourage, equip and connect volunteers in our congregations through practical presentations, partnerships and networking. The topics will include practical topics on youth ministry, stewardship and outreach, as well as church and state issues and a Christian response to homosexuality. There will be five conferences held across the district in the Fall of 2016.

Plus One Initiative – This is an effort to mobilize every congregation in the district to reach out into their community in one new way. The district will train facilitators and coaches to help congregations analyze their respective communities and identify their means of community outreach.

2017 Mission Summit – The Missouri District will host this summit June 3, 2017, at Concordia Seminary. The summit is hosted by the district in partnership with the seminary, LCMS Office of National Mission, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Lutheran Church Extension Fund and Send Me St. Louis. The summit will feature Lutheran Hour Speaker Rev. Greg Seltz as the keynote speaker, and presentations geared to motivate and assist congregations in community outreach.

Please join me in giving thanks to God for His blessings upon the congregations, and schools of the Missouri District and ask that He will bless our partnership in the future.

Fraternally in Christ,

President R. Lee Hagan



Healthy Servants

The district's healthy servants initiative includes a Church Worker Care Team that offers care and support for our professional church workers, a Grace Place Wellness retreat for interested church workers and the Encourage newsletter to provide weekly support for our servants in their calling.

Pastors and commissioned ministers struggle with personal and professional challenges from time to time. Being in ministry often means bearing others' burdens, and sometimes facing daily challenges feeling isolated and alone. When President Hagan came to office he had a desire that our Missouri District would develop a team of caring individuals who would be in place to support professional church workers and their families. The five-person “Church Worker Care Team” is now in place and the members are here to listen and care, allowing individuals to share the burdens that are heavy on the heart. Other Missouri District colleagues will be identified and recruited for the Church Worker Care Team as the need presents itself.

The Church Worker Care Team is committed to providing a confidential ministry of support so church workers

and their families may: discuss their struggles, confess sin, share hurts and pain, hear God's Word of absolution, be comforted, hear God's promises, and more. These are not professional counselors, but are fellow servants and colleagues in the Missouri District who serve as faithful listeners to hold out the assurance of God's grace and love – to encourage, pray, provide spiritual support and Christian acceptance. There is a confidential ministry, which simply means they do not report to the District President or Circuit Visitors, but are committed to keep confidential the issues and concerns that are shared with them. Only that which Missouri law requires will be disclosed.

Those serving on the Church Worker Care Team are Pastor Ed Arle, Pastor Fred C. Hertwig, Pastor Francis Lieb, Deaconess Kristina Paul, and Pastor Kim L. Scharff.



Peaceful Ministries

The district's peaceful ministries initiative includes our Care Process© and sponsoring Ambassadors of Reconciliation seminars.

CARE PROCESS© – “CARE” is an acronym for “Congregational Assessment and Renewal.” The process provides congregations with the opportunity to grow spiritually, deal with challenging situations, discover the attitudes and opinions of the membership, and chart a course forward for renewal. During the “CARE Process©,” the focus is on Bible study and prayer, along with surveying the congregation to better understand the issues they are facing. If you would like more information, contact Rev. Gene Wyssmann in the district office.



PEACEFUL MINISTRIES — CREATING CULTURES OF RECONCILIATION

One of the many ways that congregations and schools look for support from the district office is in the area of conflict. Rev. Gene Wyssmann has been integral in providing support to conflicted congregations through the CARE Process©. However, additionally, the district has partnered with Ambassadors of Reconciliation (AOR) to provide training for congregation and school leaders. AOR is a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. They provide sound Bible study and training materials to help congregations teach how to respond to conflict biblically. AOR also offers training for congregations and schools, as well as for those who come in from the outside to assist those ministries that are conflicted.



In April 2016, representatives from a dozen congregations attended the AOR seminar, “Go and Be Reconciled” at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Wentzville. AOR Founder Ted Kober presented the newly developed seminar. Pastors, lay leaders and commissioned ministers attended the training and found solid Biblical instruction and practical resources for addressing conflict both individually and corporately.

In August 2016, the district hosted the AOR course “Coaching Through Conflict.” This course was intended for circuit visitors, district vice presidents, district staff members and several school administrators. AOR President Dwight Schettler and Rev. Ed Keinath served as the facilitators for the course. This was the first in a series of three annual training events for the district circuit visitors.

We are tentatively planning another “Go and Be Reconciled” seminar in Winter-Spring 2017. This training is not just for congregations in conflict, but helps everyone to address conflict in godly ways guided by the Scriptures. If you would like more information about the 2017 seminar, contact Rev. Gene Wyssmann at the district office.



Mission Focused Congregations

This year has been spent laying the groundwork for our Plus One Initiative, every congregation engaging their community in witness and service in one new way.

Plus One Initiative You Will Be My Witnesses

Next year is a significant milestone as Lutherans and Christians across the globe celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. While there will be many different ways we mark this anniversary here in Missouri, one of the key ways will be with a mission emphasis that focuses on Christ and the universality of the Gospel. We are calling this emphasis the “Plus One Initiative.” It is an effort across the Missouri District for all our congregations to reach out and engage their communities in one new way. We hope that this anniversary will become a motivation for nearly 300 congregations to seek to reach the lost with the Gospel as we bring the love of Christ to hurting people.

The district is training more than 30 facilitators and coaches to be able to work with congregations of all sizes and across the entire state. This will not be a “one-size-fits-all effort,” nor will congregations be told how they will reach out into their communities. Each congregation will identify for itself the means by which it seeks community engagement.

The facilitators and coaches will help congregations to better understand their communities, determine particular community needs, identify congregational assets, explore partnership

possibilities and then determine the one way that the congregation will reach out to the community through works of mercy and bearing witness to Christ.

Congregations will be invited to attend the Missouri District Mission Summit on June 3, 2017, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Greg Seltz, Lutheran Hour Speaker. The Mission Summit will provide training for church professionals and lay leaders to assist in community outreach. There will be presentations on a host of outreach topics for congregations of all sizes and in all types of communities. From tutoring to food and housing programs to health care and community engagement or ethnic outreach, the summit will include something for everyone.

Small mission grants also will be available to congregations beginning July 1, 2017, to help in the outreach efforts. A mailing will go out to each congregation in the coming months with an invitation to participate. Please keep this initiative in your prayers as we work to mobilize the 297 congregations of the Missouri District to bear witness to Christ in their communities in one new way. For more information, contact Dr. Stu Brassie in the district office.



Above: The Rev. Steve Schave, director, LCMS Urban & Inner-City Mission, was one of many dignitaries participating in the groundbreaking of a new community center on Thursday, July 9, 2015, in Ferguson, Mo. LCMS Communications/Frank Kohn

Below: Micah Glenn stands Wednesday, April 20, 2016, on the site of the former QuikTrip store in Ferguson, which burned down during the unrest following the shooting death of Michael Brown. The Lutheran Hope Center of Ferguson will be built at the site. LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunsford



Lutheran Hope Center, Ferguson

The Lutheran Hope Center (located in Ferguson, Mo.) is a partnership of five St. Louis North County Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod congregations: Salem Lutheran Church, Blessed Savior Lutheran Church, Grace Lutheran Chapel, Chapel of the Cross Lutheran Church, and Immanuel Lutheran Chapel. The goal of the Lutheran Hope Center is to give the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ by providing opportunities for youth and families to grow: spiritually, academically, socially, and personally.

Groundbreaking for the center occurred in July 2015. The site of the new center is significant: the burned-out QuikTrip gas station that served as “ground zero” for authorities after the police shooting death of Michael Brown Jr. on Aug. 9, 2014, ignited weeks of often-violent protests heard and seen across the country, and even around the world.

The Rev. Micah Glenn — a fellow resident of Ferguson — has begun his work as the executive director of the Lutheran Hope Center in Ferguson.



The Rev. Micah Glenn, right, gets the attention of his daughter, Talitha, and wife, Dorothy, after the June 17 Service of Sending for Glenn, one of the Synod's newest U.S.-based missionaries. The Glens also have a son, Jonathan, and are expecting a third child. Also pictured, from left, are the Rev. Steven Schave, director of Church Planting and Urban & Inner-City Mission with the LCMS Office of National Mission, and LCMS Missouri District President Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan. (LCMS/AI Dowbnia)

Mission Focused Congregations

The Missouri District staff and leaders encourage and equip congregations, schools and other ministries to bring Christ to the communities.

Kansas City Oromo Outreach



The Kansas City Oromo Outreach is establishing a worship community of Oromo immigrants (a tribal group primarily from Ethiopia) at Christ Lutheran Church in Platte Woods, Mo. Recently more than 60 Oromo gathered for an afternoon of worship, singing, and a meal.

Christ Lutheran's outreach goals with the Oromo community by next year include: have one Oromo evangelist enrolled at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; 40 Oromo immigrants in a worshipping community with weekly Bible study and seven Oromo children attending youth catechesis and involved in regularly scheduled youth events.

Ebenezer Lutheran Church/ River Roads Lutheran School

Ebenezer Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Mo., is partnering with River Roads Lutheran School to serve the children and families of the Baden community. Ebenezer called Rev. Chris Chandler, a recent graduate of Concordia Seminary, to serve as its pastor. Pastor Chandler, who served his vicarage at Immanuel Chapel in St. Louis, is a native of Queens, N.Y. and lived in Boston before entering the seminary. Pastor Chandler and Ebenezer will focus on forming new relationships with the families of the Baden community and with the

Forming new and deepening existing relationships in the community while stressing the importance of following the Great Commission.

children and families of River Roads Lutheran School. A partnership with Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in St. Charles has been a significant source of support for River Roads. They will also reach out into the community with Christ's love. The congregation has begun a planning process to identify specific ways to reach the community.

Northland Lutheran Outreach

The Northland Lutheran Outreach is a mission plant in Smithville of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Platte City. Recently, Our Savior was able to purchase a former Roman Catholic parish in Smithville to house its weekly services and one of the school sites. Worship attendance continues to grow at the Smithville location.

Outreach is also done through Our Savior Christian Academy's two locations: the east campus in Smithville and the west campus in Platte City. The Academy offers Pre-K through high school educational instruction, and places a high value on demonstrating mutual respect and fostering clear and open communication.

All Nations Church

All Nations Church in University City is a church-planting effort of New Beginnings Lutheran Church in Pacific, Mo.

After Church Planter Chris Paavola finished classes at Concordia Seminary, his wife, Ashley, and their two children moved to "UCity," just inside the inner-belt of St. Louis.

To lay the groundwork for a church plant, Paavola led an innovative community needs assessment with 21 local organizations called UCityNeeds.Me, while Ashley began developing a teen mentorship program in the public high school. In 2016, All Nations will use City Prayer Nights, youth retreats and task forces to build local leadership in order to hold preview worship services in the fall of 2016.



Above: Before jumping in and trying to meet a perceived need in the community, All Nations Church was one of 20 partner organizations in an innovative community-assessment campaign called UCityNeeds.Me. The entire concept was to host a positive conversation with community members about their hopes for the future, all in an effort to better serve the community.



Chris and Ashley Paavola of All Nations Church, in University City with their two young children.



Our Lutheran schools are tremendous blessings to parents, congregations and communities as children are instructed in the faith.

"Students at Grace Chapel Lutheran School in Bellefontaine Neighbors" (LCMS Communications)

Education

The ministry of Child of God Lutheran School began in 2000 with the opening of a Kindergarten class of 10 students in the basement of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in O'Fallon, Mo.

Our Lutheran schools are tremendous blessings to parents, congregations and communities as children are instructed in the faith.

Child of God Lutheran Church grew out of the school population, and the congregation began worshipping each week in August 2002. From its inception, Child of God Lutheran Church's primary mission was outreach to unchurched school and community families. Over the next three years, grades two through four were added to the school and in August 2005, on the very day the school started five years earlier, Child of God opened in its current facility. In the years that followed, Child of God continued to grow adding, grades five through eight, and continuing to grow as a congregation holding weekly worship in a multipurpose area of the school.

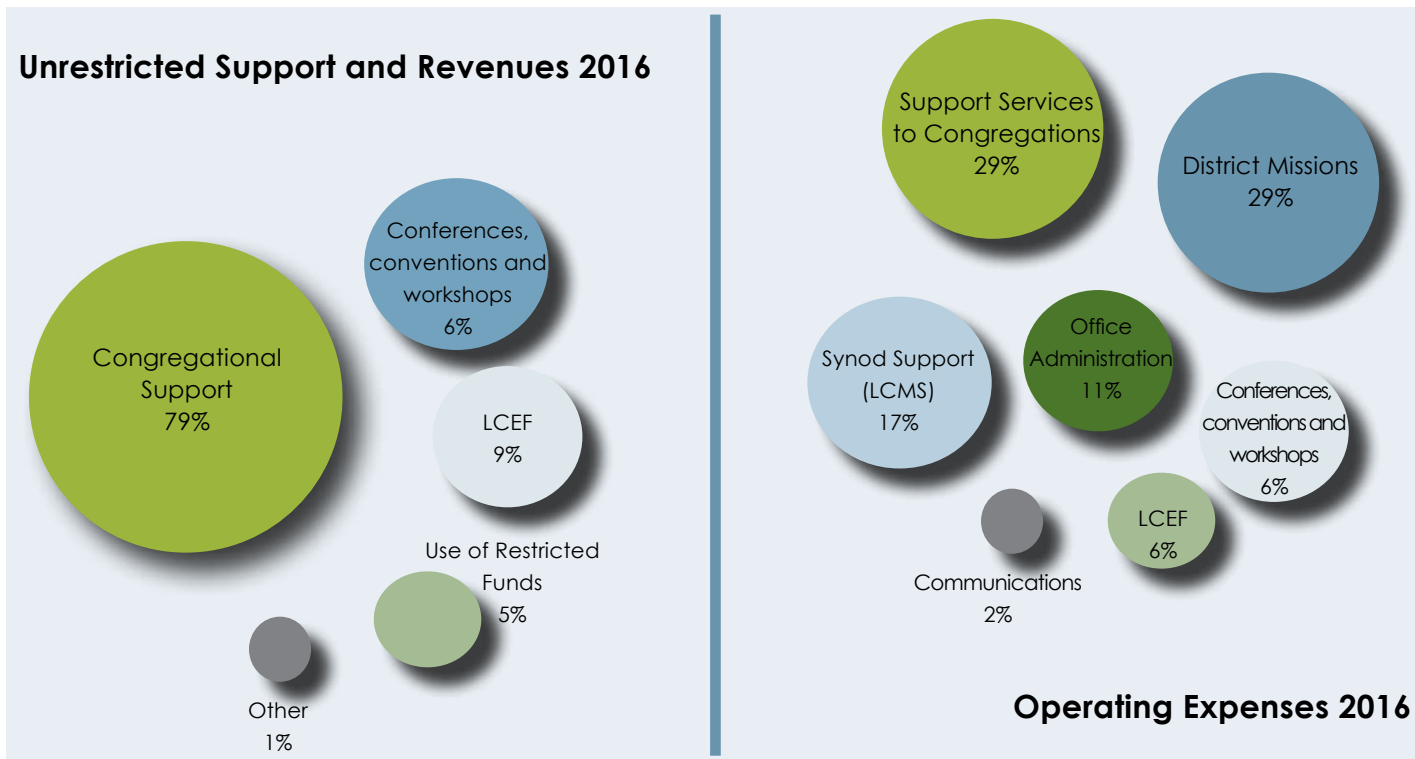
With time came transition. In the fall of 2010 both the pastor and principal took calls to other congregations. The absence of leadership affected school and church enrollment. School enrollment dropped from 150 students to less than 50 intent on returning the next year. In response, Child of God hired Dr. Melissa Sandfort as a consultant focusing on educational ministry growth and revitalization. Student enrollment began to trend upward and Dr. Sandfort was named principal in the fall of 2012. In December 2012, Rev. Christopher Mizel accepted the call to become the full-time pastor at Child of God.

Since 2011, Child of God Lutheran School has increased its student body each year. At 250 students, the school is nearing capacity. Approximately, 80 percent of our school population are not Child of God congregation members. Within that group another large percentage (more than 50 percent) are not regular church attendees, don't have a home church or are not baptized. By and large, our largest mission field continues to be the school. Likewise, the church is growing. With the arrival of Pastor Mizel in 2012, Child of God grew, adding 120 new church members with total membership now more than 300.

Both the pastor and principal attribute Child of God's turn around to the conscious decision to be full partners in ministry. Accordingly, Child of God prides itself on its "one ministry" model. We do not view church and school as two separate efforts but as one community with the same purpose: making disciples for Christ. Within that one ministry the pastor, principal, and lay leaders work closely to unite the community under the theme and mission of "Empowered, Equipped, and Expanding."



District Budget



Statement of Unrestricted Activities
For the years ended June 30, 2016 and 2015

	2016	2015
Unrestricted Support and Revenues		
Congregational Support	2,597,089	2,690,477
Conferences, conventions and workshops	181,823	359,406
Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)	297,943	285,262
Other	31,948	57,031
Use of Restricted Funds	169,278	128,726
Total Unrestricted Support and Revenues	3,278,081	3,520,902
Operating Expenses		
Synod Support (LCMS)	519,418	538,108
District Missions	877,019	927,328
LCEF Expenses	188,319	185,728
Communications	69,556	102,369
Support Services to Congregations	832,596	992,961
Office Administration	339,447	355,256
Conferences, conventions and workshops	173,919	342,619
Total Operating Expenses	3,000,274	3,444,369
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	277,807	76,533

Detailed audited financial report is accessible on the District website: mo.lcms.org

Missouri District Missions

URBAN/INNER CITY

All Nations, University City — see story on p. 11.
St. Trinity, St. Louis — striving to be a church in the neighborhood that is for the neighborhood.
Bethlehem/St. Matthew, St. Louis — a story of God's investment through others in the inner-city.
St. Paul (College Hill), St. Louis — sharing Jesus with the people of North St. Louis/College Hill and beyond.
Ebenezer, St. Louis — see story on page 10.
Lutheran Urban Mission Agency (LUMA), Kansas City — a partnership of congregations in the Kansas City Metro area to identify urban and multicultural opportunities for mission in their local communities.
Open Arms, Springfield/Ozark — connecting families to Christ in the Ozark area through early childhood education.

RURAL SMALL TOWN

Northland Lutheran Outreach, Smithville — see story on page 11.
Faith (Outreach to Whiteman AFB), Knob Noster — committed to sharing Christ to the Air Force personnel at Whiteman AFB.

MULTI-ETHNIC OUTREACH

Liberian and Hispanic, Our Redeemer, Kansas City — making disciples of all nations.
Oromo, Platte Woods — see story on page 10.
Hispanic, Amigos de Cristo, Sedalia — seeking the lost, primarily Spanish-speaking people; serving their needs; proclaiming to them the Word of God and discipleship.
Immigrants and Refugees, Christian Friends of New Americans, St. Louis — linking Christians with opportunities to connect with immigrants and refugees living in the St. Louis region.
Muslim, People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO), St. Louis — reaching with the Gospel to immigrants.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

Lindenwood University, St. Charles — serving a growing student population in the St. Charles area.
Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau — students gather weekly for Bible study and fellowship.
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville — Lutheran Campus Center supports outreach to students in the Maryville community.
Washington University, St. Louis — a ministry supporting students and graduate students in the St. Louis area.
International Student Ministry, St. Louis — reaching out and connecting with international students in St. Louis.
Springfield area campus ministry — providing ministry to Missouri State, Drury, Ozark Technical Community College and others.
University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg — gather each Thursday evening for dinner, Bible study and fellowship.

MISSOURI DISTRICT STAFF

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All photographs are of missions and ministries within the Missouri District. Most photographs are courtesy of LCMS Communications. Additional photographs are provided by ministries or Missouri District staff.



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