

THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Southeastern District, LCMS Convention May 2022



“THE GREAT SENDING!”

Part I: God's Story – In the Southeastern District

God's Story – As we gather for the 39th Convention of the Southeastern District we turn the page for a new chapter in our story. We give thanks for the blessings the Lord of the Church has given in all the years and decades up until this very moment. Our story began long ago. In the Gospel story St. John tells he takes his reader all the way to the first words of the Bible: “In the beginning.” After telling the Gospel story, He ended his gospel with these words: “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would

be written.” (John 21:25) This report tells the other stories of Jesus, not recorded in the inspired Scriptures, yet still stories of God's work in and around us. While this story bears the title Southeastern District, we recognize this story is God's story. The early chapters of our SED story take us back to 1939 when congregations, across the now present geographical area making up the SED, petitioned the LCMS in Convention to become its own district.

The Southeastern District was formed to be in mission to all those moving to the Mid-Atlantic states. During the last eighty-three years new chapters and pages added details to the SED story as new churches have been planted and new school ministries have opened their doors. Today, our SED includes 215 congregations located in Delaware, southwest Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Washington D.C., North Carolina, and South Carolina. Living in our boundaries are 412 pastors, 185 commissioned workers and 53,307 baptized members. Each one of these congregations, rostered workers and people are important characters in the great story of God.

Headlines around the SED story: During the last four years our churches have been impacted by headlines of the national and global story. Never has there been a time when the church's story has not been impacted by the events happening around us. Since our last convention school shootings, polarizing racial divisions, a raucous presidential election, the Insurrection at our National Capitol on Epiphany, and the global pandemic, COVID-19 have challenged our kingdom work. Due to ongoing waves of COVID-19 from March 2020 through our initial convention scheduled in May 2021, a decision was made to extend the deadline for District Conventions through the calendar year, 2022. This report is being prepared at the same time the Omicron variant was discovered in several states. COVID-19 and attempts to mitigate its deadly advance have challenged our church and school ministries. While the story has been punctuated by strong emotions and frustration with those in positions of leadership across the nation, our Lord provided new blessings and opportunities during COVID-19. One of those blessings is the gift of technology and video platform tools like “Zoom.” This specific tool allows us to conduct Part I of our convention online, while we gather for Part II of our in-person in Richmond. We appreciate the willingness of the delegates of the SED to be willing to experience this convention in a new



way, and God's story goes on. The delay of a convention is merely an inconvenience compared to the separation, sickness, and death many families experienced. While this report is being prepared in the early days of 2022, the fact is that even today, Omicron (the latest COVID variant) is raging across the lands. As I prepare this report, one of our own SED Staff members has lost his wife due to COVID-19 after a long battle.

But that is not the end of the story. God weaves our individual stories with our greatest disappointment into his story. We tell the story of our great hope every week in the word of the creed: "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body and the life (+) everlasting." God recreates every disappointment, disaster, and even death into something that can strengthen His Church. (Romans 8:28)

Our story is one of hope – For that reason, this report will not shy away from talking about the real challenges and threats we face as the body of Christ in the United States. Neither will we tell this story as if we are people without faith and hope in the Lord of the Church. Following the death of Stephen in the early days of the New Testament Church, the time of persecution intensified. The followers of Jesus living in Jerusalem fled for safety. How did God use that horrific time? He ensured the seeds of the Gospel were planted in every place these Christians resettled. The Word of the Lord grew, and the story added another chapter of God's provision of His infant church.

Through the time in which we live, many look at the challenging time we face believing the Lord is re-forming His church for a new era. Across all Christian denominations old systems and structures are falling away. As example of this in the LCMS, we have seen this happen dramatically with the closing of three of our beloved universities, two which were considered part of the SED network. We grieve the closing of Concordia – Selma, Concordia – Portland and, in the last year, Concordia – New York. Closer to home we have had to close beloved congregations and schools as they have come to their final chapter.

God has put you at the helm for this moment in time. No matter what the future holds, the Lord has written us into His story precisely at this time in history. Many of us believe He may be stripping away all the externals that get in the way of His Church responding to his missional call, the priority in His Great Sending. He may want us to be nimble, flexible, and ready to respond to His signal and call.

Part II: God's Story – The Great Sending

The convention theme is borrowed from a book with the same title: *The Great Sending: God's Mission Heart for People Beating Through You*. Our convention emphasis echoes the title of the book authored by the Rev. Dr. Will Sohns and fourteen of his mission-minded LCMS friends, all former leaders of our church body. Over the last twelve months, the SED people were given the opportunity to participate in conversations with the many of these fourteen contributors through monthly Great Sending Webcasts.



As an investment in The Great Sending Jubilee, the Southeastern District purchased two books for each congregation: one for the pastor and one for the delegate. Our hope is that pastors and lay leaders will use the book and as a resource to lead their congregations to be immersed in the Word of God and His great sending plan. More than that, we believe that as people engage with the Word of God, their hearts will be transformed. They will wish to align themselves with God's great sending plan in their own vocations and settings.

Cliff Notes on God's Great Sending Story

The Great Sending takes readers back to the Word of God. We don't need to be exegetes to see the obvious. Our Father in heaven has each of His children on His mind and in His heart. The Bible shows our Father as a relentless God who uses everything to get the message to His children. Whether or not they know Him or His name, He loves each one of them. He has sent His one and only Son for all of us and each of them. This great sending plan is sometimes referred to by a Latin term: *Missio Dei*. It means, the Mission of God or God's great sending.

"The motivation, conviction, and passion for the "*Missio Dei*" (God's mission or sending) is found in God's Word. The driving forces behind a *Missio Dei* immersion do not come from the works, practices, activities, and performances of missions. Through His Word, God creates a "*Missio Dei*" person and congregation – the core of who we are. The knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of the *Missio Dei* can only come from God, who we encounter and come to know through Scripture." (The Great Sending, pg. 47)

When Scriptures are read with the *Missio Dei* lens, one will see this predominant theme from Genesis to Revelation. In the Old Testament, God sends messages, dreams, angels, prophets, priests, and kings prior to the birth of His Son. One time he even used a donkey to convey his message. Throughout the pages of the New Testament, it is obvious through His Word spoken and the signs He does, that Jesus is God's Sent One. Jesus accomplishes the mission for which He was sent. He then sends the Holy Spirit to His disciples and sends them into the world. The world apostle means "sent one." The amazing discovery one makes when being immersed in the sending motif of Scripture is that God's plan specifically includes each one of us. God's design to reach every child of his includes each one of us. Let's look more closely at God's sending plan.

1) *Our Father Sends a message of hope.*

Advent personalities fill the pages of Scripture. God sent His Word to people like: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph, and Mary along with countless more people whose names do not appear in Holy Scriptures. While God was sending His Word of promise to them, He also gave each of them the gift to believe and act on His promise.

2) *Our Father Sends His Son as the Sacrifice for our sin*

The sacrifice could not be given by any other person, except the One that was sent by God. God sent Gabriel to prepare Joseph to give Jesus a name that defined his mission,



“for he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21) Thirty years later John the Baptist was sent to point to Jesus on the banks of the Jordan as “the Lamb of God Who will take away the sins of the world.” (John 1:29) Nicodemus, the Pharisee, learns how this sacrifice will happen as He talks with Jesus in the darkness of night. “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so that Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him” (John 3:14-15). “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:17).

3) *Jesus Prepares and Send His Disciples with News of the Gospel*

He calls his disciples telling them they will be “fishers of people. He sends the seventy-two followers to villages he had not yet visited. On the day of His resurrection, He appears to his disciples and says, “As the Father has sent Me, I now sent you.” (John 20:21-23)

4) *The Son Sends the Holy Spirit who Propels the People of the Pentecost*

The Father sent the Son, and the Son now sends the Holy Spirit. Working through the Word of God proclaimed by Peter and the twelve, the Pentecost worshipers heard about the Sent One. Through the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit gave birth to the ekklesia (the church). Jewish worshipers from all over the world received the gift of faith and went back to their homeland as the Lord’s sent ones.

5) *The Holy Spirit sends the Gospel to the Gentiles*

While the church voted to include Matthias as one of the Apostles, God voted for Paul, who was sent specifically to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. The church in Antioch became the sending church. Paul and Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and Luke, all found themselves propelled from a church that was committed to the amazing news that God included everyone in His great sending plan.

The New Testament story continues to be written up until the present moment. The theme of this convention is much more than a theme. We pray that each Southeastern District congregation, school, and mission will immerse the people of their ministry in the Great Sending plan of Holy Scripture by declaring a year of Jubilee and spending the year discovering God’s great sending plan for their congregation and each baptized member.

Part III: God’s Story – Living in Times of Challenge

Challenge is a part of God’s Story

From the very beginning, the infant Church faced challenges. Jesus was clear, His followers would be challenged, even persecuted because they were His followers: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) The Western Church, including the United States is living in one of the most challenging times it has ever faced since the founding of our nation.



The Lord has allowed our ministries to face challenge, too. Behind each challenge is hiding opportunity and blessing. Some of our greatest challenges are internal weaknesses that have needed to be addressed for some time. Other challenges find their way within our fellowship from some external source. Situations inside and outside the church easily overwhelm church members. Following each of the challenges is a solution from God's Word and a story of solutions put in place in the lives of people from the SED.

Five Pre-COVID Challenges

These are the biggest challenges we heard you talking about prior to the COVID in March 2020.

- 1) *The fear factor* – We live in a culture of fear. While violence predated 9-11, terrorist attacks in the border of the United States in the form of mass shootings in schools, night clubs, and churches are no longer surprising. The public is scarred by those events along with cars being used as weapons against innocent citizens, and impatient air travelers punching flight attendants, and angry rhetoric. Life has always been filled with uncertainty. COVID has exacerbated this fear as churches have been impacted by interruptions to gathering for worship, small group Bible studies, and other significant places where people meet and are ministered to by the Body of Christ.

The Great Sending Solution to the Fear Factor: The first words Jesus spoke to his disciples when they saw him walking on the water, was "Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid." (Matthew 14:27.)

An SED Sending Story – In pre-COVID times, Pastor Fred Hedt (now retired) at Ascension Lutheran Church, Landover, MD used a call-in-number for all the seniors and homebound every Sunday night. He would have a devotion, check in with those who could not come to church. The conversation continued long after he had said goodbye, as the body of Christ connected to one another and cared for one another. What an ingenious and simple way to keep the body of Christ connected to one another.

- 2) *People disconnected from God's Word* – The pages of Scripture tell the story of all who heard the Word of God but disobeyed it, disregarded it, or even disbelieved it from cover to cover. We have seen the impact of a whole culture that has slipped from its Biblical-spiritual moorings. The Biblical foundation on which Judeo-Christian mores were based has changed in such a dramatic way that Bible-believing Christians and their churches are finding themselves on the wrong side of the law. The greatest concern is echoed by the former Executive Director of Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Ted Kober. As he visits congregations across the Synod, he asks church leaders to read passages from the Bible. He reports that he has repeatedly experienced congregation presidents, elders, and other leaders of congregations who are unable to find the Gospel of St. John or Paul's letter to the Romans in their Bibles. If the baptized members and the leaders of our church are not immersed in the Word of God, we are handicapped in following Jesus and being used by Him in the Great Sending.



The Great Sending Solution to a Culture being Disconnected from God's Word – We encourage our churches to use a plethora of resources that are available to them through our church body. Every baptized member of our church body needs to be engaged in reading God's Word daily. Every pastor needs to ensure that there are ample opportunities for people to gather in the church or on video platforms for Bible Study. The Great Sending is all about a renewed passion to return to God's Word by declaring a year of Jubilee to reset the action of the church around the reading of Holy Scriptures.

An SED Sending Story – Video technology and streaming grants have been given to 53 churches over the last years. Our own Mid Atlantic Lutheran in Mission worked together with the SED, and DCE Ryan Radke, to provide grant money and know-how for our congregations to put the technology to work. Our churches and their people quickly adapted as they experimented with video platforms and brought the worship service, Bible Study, and fellowship opportunities to their members weekly, and are planning to continue to bring the proclaim the Gospel using that tool from now on. The most amazing thing is this: LCMS people who are not known for their love of change and experimentation jumped in and participated! Way to go SED Body of Christ!

- 3) *Aging Institutional Infrastructures* – Many of our urban and suburban churches were built decades or more ago. Their congregants struggle to maintain properties that require expensive maintenance. The resources of congregation members, many of whom are on fixed incomes are depleted on expensive repairs. The maintenance of the church building becomes the all-consuming priority, even more important than the Lord's Great Sending. When visiting guests do come, they sense the people of the church see them as potential volunteers and sources of income to keep the doors open. These guests often feel manipulated and rarely return for a second visit.

The Great Sending Solution to an aging infrastructure – While our church buildings are wonderful blessings, we recognize that the church Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18) was one that was one built out of living stones. (I Peter 2:9-10) When we find that our church buildings are keeping us from our God-given calling, it is time for a Legacy Church conversation.

Two SED Sending Stories – Some struggling churches in the SED have participated in Legacy Church conversations with their Regional Facilitator for Missional Engagement and sold property to plant a new church or merge with another church.

First Lutheran Church, Towson, MD sold their property and planted "New Thing" a mission under the roof of Concordia Preparatory School, Baltimore MD. With the proceeds they worked together with Concordia Prep to call a campus pastor and mission developer, Pastor Peter Couser.

The congregation presidents of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hampton VA and Resurrection Lutheran Church, Newport News VA worked together to lead their congregations to merge, selling the Emmanuel property and positioning themselves to plant something new in the future.



- 4) *Crisis of Missing Generations – Generation Disconnect* – As the baby boomers age, 46% of LCMS Lutherans are 50 years and older. The average age of a US citizen is 38.1 years of age. The average age of our pastors is over 50 years (64%). It is reported that only 4% of millennials attend church across all denominations. Gen Z, the generation below the millennials is also not present in our churches. In the SED, our baptized membership in 2012 was 66,0000. It is now 53,307. The Rev. Dr. Jock Ficken, the Executive Director of the Pastoral Leadership Institute has begun an outreach to millennials and the Gen Z said that it would be difficult for any Gen Z individual in our neighborhoods to identify three peers they respect who are followers of Jesus. Many parents and grandparents grieve the fact that their own children and grandchildren do not have a church home.

The Great Sending Solution to the crisis of missing generations – One of the principles of the missionary work of Jesus and Paul was to always work in partnership. Jesus sent his disciples out two-by-two. Paul worked in partnership with Barnabas, Aquila and Priscilla, and young men like Timothy and Titus.

- 5) *Crisis of Church Worker Shortages* – At each Council of Presidents' meeting every District reports the number of pastoral vacancies, churches chartered, and churches closed. One line to note in the chart below is the number of churches being served by part-time and retired pastors. While the trend lines seem somewhat stable, more congregations are only able to be served by part time pastors. You will notice that at the November 2021 meeting the number of churches with part time pastors was greater than the number of churches calling full time pastors across synod. These churches tend to be congregations that are small and somewhat remote from the metropolitan areas and unable to afford a full-time pastor.

Unless pastors are assigned to these congregation on Call Day, there are not many young pastors who desire to live in rural or remote areas. Our retired pastoral work force is providing the safety net for these congregations, but this is a short-term solution, for the next five to ten years. Most of these retired pastors have chosen to live in more suburban or metropolitan areas, far from these little congregation. We always look to the seminaries for a solution. For the immediate future, the number of seminary graduates will be far less than the number of retirees.

	SED 11/2021	LCMS 11/2021	LCMS 11/2020	LCMS 11/2019
Sole Pastors	27	356	367	361
Senior Pastors	3	55	57	59
Associate Pastors	3	65	43	54
Total	33	476	467	474
Served by part time pastors	30	498	440	430
New Starts	0	2	4	6
Closures	0	11	8	8



The Great Sending Solution to not enough church workers: Jesus has the answer: Pray for harvest workers, even as he sends the shepherds, sends His twelve, sends the 72, sends Mary Magdalene and the other women who came to the grave, sends the 3000 baptized after the Pentecost and sends us, too

A SED Sending Story – In times of pastoral vacancy, we have seen the way in which the Holy Spirit provides a new leader at just the right time through the Specific Ministry Pastor route. People answering God’s call have begun their training at just the right time to serve places like: Holy Trinity, Bristol TN, Peace, King George VA, St. Paul, Columbia PA, and First St. John, York PA.

The challenge of Twin Viruses

During the last years two viruses have caused injury and death of American citizens: COVID and Racism. Both viruses entered into the world long before the events in Wuhan, China and the death of George Floyd. The seeds of illness and death, unkindness and hate are outcomes of the original sin that infect every person born into this world. But both viruses converged at the same time in the United States with super spreader events.

- 6) *The challenge COVID fatigue* – The people in the neighborhoods around our churches and our homes battle COVID fatigue. Today, January 3, 2022, as I edit this report, the omicron variant is sweeping the globe. It’s hard to imagine anyone who hasn’t had a family member or a friend die because of a COVID-19 infection. Many lost spouses, parents, and children over the last two years. Others lost jobs and closed businesses. Eight hundred thousand people have died in the United States. There is a significant grief that has not been acknowledged. That much grief in that short of time has implications of its own.

There are no fences to keep COVID out of our churches. All of this impacts our congregations, church workers and leaders deeply. Our Lutheran School teachers, and childcare providers have been on the front lines with super-human demands being made of them. Teachers in many schools were expected to teach in-person and use technology to teach on-line simultaneously. Pastors have shown wear and tear as they learned to connect with congregants using technology tools (as best they could), dealt with members on every side of the safety precaution and policy and been prevented from doing the in-person missional outreach and pastoral care that shapes their serving. We own a huge debt of gratitude to our workers.

When a disaster, like 9-11 or Katrina, hits a geographical area and it takes years to recover, we often see the workers suffer from burnout. This is the reality for our entire workforce of church workers and leaders. Many simply continue to function as best they can, not realizing all they are carrying. The toll on the worker has been heavy, shown in the number of ordained and commissioned workers who have determined to retire this in the last few years. In the SED we saw that a number of church workers who accepted calls during COVID-19 even



resigned their calls or accepted another call within a year of being installed. They and their families struggle to develop the relationships for a healthy ministry.

A SED Sending Story – Responding to COVID:

Providing Legal Guidelines: In light of the Governor of six different states and the District of Washington DC, all issuing different Executive Orders during the shutdown phase of COVID-19 the SED Legal Counsel, Mr. Eric Heyer, rolled up his sleeves and provided initial guidance for our worshiping communities and answered individual requests, even as our office continued to monitor Executive Orders for worship gatherings and requirements for Early Childhood programs providing care for front line responders.

Providing Health and Safety Guidance: Air Force Retired Colonel Nancy Boriack, a microbiologist, experienced in helping the military community prepare for pandemics, was our guest presenter at several all-district Zoom Gatherings. She provided excellent scientific information to keep us safe in presentations that were linked to God's Word.

Providing Professional Care for Church Workers: LCMS Pastor/Psychologist/Seminary Professor, retired, Bruce Hartung and DCE/Licensed therapist, Stacey Crosson were willing on several occasions to provide zoom presentations for the entire SED District Professional Church Workers and all-district wide Zoom Gatherings. In addition, a number of our church workers and spouses took us up on grants to cover the cost of a week of therapeutic care at Shepherd's Canyon Retreat Center, a ministry designed specifically for church workers and their spouses.

Providing COVID Relief Grants to Church Workers – It was a great encouragement to the called and contracted workers across our SED to receive COVID relief grants. Through the combined efforts of the LCMS Soldiers of the Cross, the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, The Baltimore Home & Hospital Foundation, and the Southeastern District, 135 called and contracted workers across the SED received COVID grants totaling \$125,000 to sustain them when downsized or without salaries.

- 7) *Racial tension in our nation* – Often when describing the rich and unique history of the Southeastern District, I note that it as the epicenter of the Civil War. Much of the rich history of black ministry in the LCMS, began right here. While racial tension has always been alive around the world, we watched how it flared up in major cities across the United States, but also in places within our SED boundaries: Baltimore, Charleston, Charlottesville, and Washington D.C.

Learning how to respond to Racism – As the family of Jesus, we have things to learn about listening. While critical race theory gets spotlighted by some leaders in our denomination as an inadequate and flawed response to racism, we may find that we have a better way of responding to the racial issues by using God's Word.



Our racial struggles are rooted in the fall into sin. Rather than debating critical race theory, how might we organize ourselves to respond to Paul's words: "if one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it." (I Corinthians 12:26) Paul said, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:23-24) We cannot deny there is an issue. When there are people in the LCMS (and beyond) who are indicating they are suffering, as members of the body of Christ, we all own the issue, because we have all sinned through our sins of omission and commission. We are a family!

The historical fact is that a few congregations have official minutes in their archives describing their decision in the 1960s and 1970s to relocate to the suburbs due to black people moving in the neighborhood. We have places in the SED where a LCMS black church and an LCMS white church are across the road from one another and stand as separate congregations. The optics of white church leaders saying the critical race theory was an inadequate response could easily give the impression that the church body was closing its ears to the cries for help from one part of the body of Christ that was suffering. Our SED Coalition of Lutheran in Black Ministry (COLIBM) has been a significant resource in keeping the church talking, even in the most difficult of times.

The Great Sending Solution to Racial Divide: It's time that we learn what this means. "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So, it is with Christ. For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." (I Corinthians 12:12-13) "God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it, if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (I Corinthians 12:24-26)

These challenges are real. We feel them. At the same time, we believe that they are simply the stage on which the Lord will act. New endings to old stories will form the foundation for those who follow us to engage in the Lord's great sending plan. Let's learn more about it.

The SED Sending Story – Responding to Racism

A Response in SED History—The SED in its 1972 Convention established guidelines to neutralize racism in the churches, circuits, district, and national synod. They are included as an Addendum to this report. Our congregation and church body would be well-served if we updated and used the guidelines today.



A longstanding plan to deal with racism – COLIBM was formed in the early 1970's, at a time of civil unrest. This organization is the longest tenured resource. They provide spiritual and educational presentations to those who attend their gatherings, which are open to every person of every ethnicity and nationality.

A Prayerful Response to Racism – The SED gathered together with one of the largest Zoom gatherings in SED history to have a prayer service upon the death of George Floyd and the subsequent violence in Minnesota. While Minneapolis was on fire, the SED prayed. Now we wonder how we might work together across racial and ethnic lines to model a different way.

The Holy Spirit's Work Among Us – Our Interethnic LCMS Churches in the SED - By far the fastest growing segment of the church in the SED are the churches from many other ethnic backgrounds. Once again at this convention we will welcome new ethnic churches. Every Sunday LCMS people in the SED hear the Gospel proclaimed in the following languages: English, Amharic (Ethiopia) Oromo, (Ethiopia) Tigrinya (Eritrea). Spanish, Urdu, Hindi, Korean, Arabic, Vietnamese, American Sign Language, English – (Liberian).

Our First COLIBM and Inter-Ethnic SED Gathering - Through the efforts of leaders like Ms. Nikki Rochester, the Rev. Dr. Lloyd Gaines, and the Rev. Dr. Yared Halche, the SED hosted its very first COLIBM and Interethnic Gathering in March 2020. LCMS Vice President Peter Lange and 5th Vice President Christopher Esget were our guests.

Part IV: God's Story - His Heart for the World Beating Through You

The SED Mission story begins in God's heart – “Mission begins in the heart of God and expresses His great love for the world. It is the Lord's gracious initiative and ongoing activity to save a world incapable of saving itself.” (A Theological Statement of Mission, CTCR, 1991). “Jesus was the chief agent whom God chose to carry out this mission to our fallen world.” So, states SED Emeritus President Jon Diefenthaler, in his commentary in *The Great Sending* on Acts 1:11. He then says that the mission was handed off by Jesus to His disciples. “God's mission is now our mission as the body of Christ in today's world.” When God's people are aware they are on mission in their home, their neighborhood, at school, and at work, they can be aligned with God's priority – to love Him and to love all people.

A glimpse at our mission field – For the entire history of the LCMS we have understood the mission field to be overseas, where the majority of people did not know Jesus. We now recognize that it is not only places like China and India that are the mission fields. We live in one, too.

Did you know the Southeastern District has more than 10% of our nation's population living within our boundaries? We live in the middle of 33 million people. If the United States is the third largest mission field in the world, we live in the largest mission field in the United States.



Did you know that God loves every single person living in the boundaries of the SED? They might be LCMS members, Hindus, Independents, atheists, single parents, straight or gay. He loves them all. We have every category of individual living in our mission field.

If you want to see the best picture of the mission field in the SED look at what's happening on your street, in your neighborhood, and the people with whom you work or go to school. If you are home on a Sunday morning, look what's going on in your neighborhood. Can you see why we need our pastors to be retooled as missionary pastors and why we need to equip our laity to be sent to the very neighborhoods in which we all now live?

Did you know that less than 2 of every 10 people of your neighbors attend church (actually 18% according to Mission Insite studies in 2013)? Since 2013 things have changed significantly. Over 27 million people living across our SED and in your backyard have little or no spiritual nourishment. With all the bad news in the world, the people in your neighborhood are hungry for some good news!

Jesus' call for harvest workers – Did you know that the 72 that Jesus sent out in Luke 10 were lay people just like you and me? As Jesus sent the 72 two by two into every town where he was about to go, he said, "The harvest is plentiful, but workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Luke 10:1-2) So we believe Jesus' prayer is answered when we realize that we're the ones God is preparing to send to the neighborhood in which we live.

A SED Sending Story – Deaconess Sally Hiller, like many other mission-hearted individuals, has set her alarm on her phone for 10:02 AM every day, remembering Jesus words in Luke 10:2 to pray for harvest workers. Set your alarm for 10:02 AM or 10:02 PM and join the prayer for harvest workers.

Organizing a way to align with God's Great Sending – Our SED Vision

We believe every baptized child of God in the SED is a potential harvest field worker. Encouraged by Jesus' prayer for more harvest workers, we need to recognize that He is talking about each of us. You are the harvest worker! Can you imagine what would happen if every baptized person in the Southeastern District recognized they were on mission to their family members, one or two of their neighbors, classmates, or fellow workers?

That's what this vision is all about! This vision was put in place back in 2012. The delegates in the 2015 SED Convention in Greensboro, NC and the 2018 SED Convention in Hickory, NC established and supported this vision in an overwhelming majority votes.

When we work together, to connect our neighbors with Jesus, lives are transformed, and God's kingdom grows. *Our SED Shared Vision*



In this next section of the report the reader will be introduced to the Mission-Discipling Wheel, vision milestones, and stories of the way in which God is working through you in the SED.

Introducing Our Mission – Disciple Wheel/Map - The SED Staff and others have been using this little wheel with four quadrants to show the way forward. By using each of the quadrants of the Mission and Discipling wheel as a steppingstone, we can prepare ourselves to work in God's mission field.

The steppingstones include:

- The Word and Sacrament Community (green) – the place most of us are disciples and prepared to fulfill our Lord's calling in our various vocations.
- Our Neighborhood (orange) – this might be our actual neighborhood where we live, work or play.
- Neighborhood gatherings (pink) – this is a description of fellowship activity where you and your Christian friends invite and gather with those around you.
- Word Communities (blue) – people gathering to study God's Word under the blessing and direction of your pastor and congregation.



By God's grace we are seeing how some of those Word gatherings begin to be chartered congregations supported by a mother church. Our individual congregations could develop into networks of churches that are meeting in different places under the leadership of a pastor, assisted by lay deacons, and others.

Milestones on the Mission – Disciple Wheel/Map

Jesus gave his twelve disciples "ojt" (on the job training). It was the curriculum that would help them to confidently move forward on their mission field and face challenges with resilience. The world we live in has changed dramatically from the time that most pastors and rostered workers went to school. The SED has dedicated itself and provided significant resources to equip church workers and lay leaders for the missionary work in which we live.

The first two milestones (Equipping and Sending) are activities that happen in the top hemisphere of the mission wheel within the Word and Sacrament community and the various neighborhoods in which we live, work, or play.

Milestone #1: Equipped: Leaders and church workers are equipped to actively model and disciple the baptized to be everyday missionaries in their neighborhoods.

As the rostered workers and lay leaders' re-tool themselves they are best equipped to help those they lead to use their gifts in God's great sending plan.



When the SED Staff was locked down and unable to travel during the first two waves of COVID it took advantage of the opportunity to be in a Pastoral Leadership Institute learning community called Disciple to Missional Community. Leaders of six other SED Congregations learned a methodology a church can use to equip lay people in their congregation to make disciples. The goal is that the SED Staff will be able to offer this training to the SED congregations at a much-reduced cost.

Milestone #1 Sending Stores for Equipping

- *Rev. Travis Guse is preparing to lead a huddle in the Tide Water area and preparing coaches that may be used across the SED.*
- *Deaconess Sally Hiller has already led a huddle from her neighborhood.*
- *Rev Mark Schroeder is leading huddles (under the name: Committed Communities) in the Southern Region*
- *Connie Denninger is preparing to lead a huddle of Visual Faith Coaches around the globe.*
- *Rev. Yared Halche is leading several huddles with inter-ethnic partners after leading over forty individuals in missional training.*
- *Mr. Kirk Hymes, our LCEF DVP, is preparing to lead a huddle as he completes his work to be certified as a lay deacon.*
- *President Denninger has begun leading huddle of missionary pastors in the Baltimore-Washington corridor.*
- *We are now anticipating 12 more congregations will participate in the next offering of Disciple to Missional Community training in February 2022. The SED is providing significant grant dollars to make it possible for churches to participate.*

Milestone #2: Sent: Everyday missionaries are recognized by their local congregation and sent to be a blessing in their neighborhoods.

When a congregation works at helping all the baptized members recognize and respond to the Lord's call, there is an excitement that people experience as they see the Lord working through them and their gifts. This is something we hope every SED congregation can experience.

One of the most significant ways the SED is working to support the sending of God's people is through our lay deacon program. When the LCMS reversed the decision, it made in its 1989 Convention to have lay deacons participate in Word and Sacrament ministry, it encouraged districts to train lay deacons for outreach and mission. The Southeastern District Lay Deacon Training curriculum is designed to prepare lay deacons to work in a partnership with their pastors with the purpose of working in the neighborhood with a church planting focus.

Milestone 2 – Sending Stories

Meet 14 Lay Deacons in Cohort #1 – by the time you read this report the first cohort of lay deacons will have completed their requirements to be certified. In a class last Spring the lay deacons had the following assignment: "Develop a mission plan for a multiplying discipleship group/community that you desire to initiate or be part of. Please include the following: Name of the mission community: purpose of the missional community, goal, objectives and timetable,



resources, multiplying strategy and a functional structure.” Dr. Yared Halche was amazed at the scope of the fourteen mission plans that are now being initiated by the lay deacons. Our second Lay Deacon Cohort began in September. If every SED congregation were identifying and sending men and women to be formed as lay deacons, it would position the congregation for harvest field work.

Milestone #3: Engaged: Everyday missionaries have engaged neighbors with the saving message for the Gospel through acts of compassion, mercy, and witness.

Prompted by the story of Jesus sending the 72 to the villages where he had not yet visited, neighborhood ministry was born soon after the vision was identified in 2012. It took on the moniker iNeighborhood. Over 50% of our SED congregations had teams of people that experienced an iNeighborhood training in which they learned how to bless their neighbors.

B.L.E.S.S is actually a simple set of steps we could follow as we developed a relationship with our neighbors. By following those steps over time trust would develop and an opportunity to share the hope that fills us.

The BLESS steps are Bond, Learn, Engage, Share, and Serve. Every baptized individual could use this tool in each of their relationships.



Milestone #3 SED Sending Stories – During the last two years of COVID, we have heard many stories coming from our churches indicating that churches have connected with a whole group of people living near and far with whom they would not normally interact. Our digital footprint opens new pathways to build relationships through which the Gospel message can be heard. This has formed an important vehicle to bridge the digital divide between older and younger generations who make decisions and receive information on screens. In addition to using video technology, we have many stories of churches who went the extra mile to reach into the lives of people being impacted by COVID-19 by:

- Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fredericksburg, recognized there were children in their neighborhood that did not have the ability to participate in online learning so the church provided classrooms and computers so these children could connect to their school
- Countless individuals from our churches were shopping for elderly neighbors during the lockdown times.
- Concordia Lutheran Church, Triangle has a weekly food ministry that provided food banks for people who might not have enough food in their community. We heard of other churches across the district who started food distribution projects in their communities.

Milestone #4 – Formed: Word Communities are formed out of neighborhood connections.

This is actually the way the majority of churches were started in the Southeastern District. Some of you reading this report are the lay people who, with blessing of their pastor and their



congregations, opened your homes for a small group Bible Study that later would become a chartered congregation. The majority of our churches started as little house churches. Our SED story has been blessed by people who have understood what it is to be the sent ones, partnering with fellow Lutheran Christians, and reaching out into their neighbors. We have too many stories to tell in this convention report about people God sent to us.

Using the Mission-Discipling wheel, we can tell the story of what happened. Those who opened their home were part of a Word and Sacrament community (the green zone). They connected to other people and invited them to come to their home for fellowship (orange zone). These fellowships acted a lot like the description Luke gives in Acts 2:42-27: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

People who gathered Word of God worked together to begin new churches in their homes. They connected with their neighbors (orange zone) and a community (Pink zone) was formed around the Word of God (blue zone). Where this was happening there was a pastor who was active in equipping his people for this kind of mission work. There were also lay people who knew they were on mission.

An SED Sending Story of the Past: Clyde (Hoppy) Hohenstein, from Prince of Peace, Springfield, VA, tells the story of his father, Navy Chaplain Retired Ray Hohenstein, whose name is in the histories of many of our Northern Virginia congregations. Living rooms became sanctuaries and confirmation classrooms as he moved from one community to another. He was the one sent to plant several churches in Northern VA. After one was started, he went to another.

Milestone 4 Stories Today

Meet Pastor Alexander and Ashley Harris. Earlier this year Ashley received a job offer in DC. They moved from Ohio where Alex was serving as an Associate Pastor. He resigned his call so they could move into the city. He has a full-time job working for a jeweler. The Lord has placed it on his heart to plant a church in DC for those who would never walk into a church. He and Ashley have started a Bible Study in the park in front of Union Station. They have met a married couple who asked them to start a church. This couple is very excited about sharing the Gospel with everyone. They have a connection to a person wanting to begin a winery in DC (there’s only one licensed in DC now). Alex hopes his new church might be meeting in that winery. Alex has already been to one immersion with D2MC and is planning to start again with other members of his core group. Pastor Lloyd Gaines and his congregation might be the mother church of this new SED mission. In addition to Pastor Harris, Pastor Gaines and his congregation have also extended a call to EIT Pastor Robert Sawah, was ordained in the middle of COVID and supported by Peace Lutheran Church as he plants a house church for Liberians in Frederick, Maryland, where we currently have only one church.

Milestone #5: Multiplied: Mission Plants are multiplying new leaders.

Through this simple neighborhood ministry process our SED churches were planted. Where small groups of people intentionally gathered around God’s Word with the blessing of pastor and



congregation a new church was planted. We have many stories in our own churches of these wonderful ministry partnerships.

Milestone 5 Stories

We see how God turns ugly racism on its head as we watch what is happening within the mission planting in the Southeastern District. On the dais of the convention hall in Richmond we will have inter-ethnic church planters from around the world who are starting LCMS missions in throughout our Southeastern District.

Meet Pastor Teka Fogi – the pastor of Resurrection Mekane Yesus Lutheran Church, in Kensington, MD who is leading a new word community of Oromo speakers in Woodbridge, VA. Resurrection is one of the newest SED congregations, welcomed at our 2018 SED Convention in Hickory, NC.

Meet Pastor Robert Sawah, the Liberian pastor, that Pastor Lloyd Gaines supervised through EIT. The congregation turned around and called Pastor Sawah to be the mission developer in his home in Frederick, MD. Pastor Sawah is beginning a New Word Community with Liberians and others who will be meeting in his home.

Meet Pastor Daniel Nedjo, Pastor of the Oromo Mekane Yesus church in Cary, NC. The church was chartered only a few years ago. It is now beginning a New Word Community in Charlotte for Ethiopians living in that area.

Meet Mr. Geoff Abendschoen, Mr. Tim Winslett, and Mr. Eugene Bostwick, all applicants to become Specific Ministry Pastor students this Fall. Geoff will be the SMP vicar in a dual parish at First St. John Lutheran Church, York, PA and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Columbia MD. Tim will be the SMP vicar at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Bristol, TN. Eugene will be the SMP vicar at Peace Lutheran Church, King George VA. These men watched their congregations and those around them experience long vacancies and knew the Holy Spirit was calling them to respond to be trained as SMP pastors. All three men have received the affirmation of their congregations.

An Uphill Journey – But it is God’s Sending Pathway

The vision pathway is not for the fainthearted. It calls each one of us to invest ourselves in the lives of people around us. Because of the key role you each play in God’s Story there will be others who discover their names are written in the book of life.

These are some of the specific ways this vision challenges us:

- 1) Your church will be challenged to name this year or next as a year of jubilee to immerse yourselves in His Word with the goal of recognizing His Sending plan and aligning your lives and your church’s agenda around His sending plan.
- 2) This vision begins in the heart of God. As our hearts are transformed in His Holy Word, we will display the Father’s love for all His children, people we may have been ignoring.
- 3) The Holy Spirit uses the divine service to fuel our lives with His Word and Sacrament. The Holy Spirit uses our divine service to BLESS their neighbors with His love.
- 4) Pastor, Commissioned worker and baptized members are all challenged to retool ourselves to serve as missionary people and a missionary church.



- 5) We are challenged to re-arrange our priorities to invest time, energy, and love to develop relationships with people who we currently do not find in church.

Part V: The Characters in God's Great Sending Plan

The SED Staff Through the Years

The Southeastern District has been blessed by its leaders and ministry specialists who have given the ministries of the Southeastern District sacrificial service. Those who started with me in 2012 completed their time of service during the first three years and transitioned into retirement or other calls: Rev. Dr. Lloyd Gaines, Rev. Dr. Glenn Lucas, Rev. Dr. William Seaman, Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, Rev. Arthur Umbach. When we wondered who could ever pick up the mantle they left behind, God provided gifted men and women for the time going forward:

Regional Facilitator for Missional Engagement

- Rev. Don Schaefer – The longest interim facilitator in the history of the SED now in his 6th year
- Rev. Dr. Travis Guse – who has built the SED Coaching Network
- Rev. Dr. Mark Schroeder – who brought his global missionary experience to the SED
- Rev. Dr. Yared Halche – who has pioneered the first interethnic ministry in the SED and is responsible for significant ethnic church planting in the SED
- Mr. Thomas Kolb – SED Facilitator for School and Youth Ministry, newest member to the Executive Staff
- Mr. Kirk Hymes – Our SED LCEF VP and Disciple to Missional Community Advocate– giving semper fi service and keeping us all in line
- Deaconess Sally Hiller – Congregational Outreach, Disaster Response, and corporate and archival memory of the SED

In addition, we have a host of ministry specialists who have come to serve after their counterparts retired or were called away:

- DCE Ryan Radke – Digital Outreach Coordinator
- Mr. Sidney Heetland – Director of Business and Finance
- Mr. Donald Tucker –Bookkeeper
- Esseye Haile – Front Office Manager
- Lisa Long – Data Specialist and Registrar
- Karen Boyette – President's Administrative Assistant

Introducing the most important character in the story – The most important person in this story is: you. Through your beating heart, God seeks to touch and transform someone you know. It may be a spouse, a child, a parent, a neighbor, a workmate, a friend. God has equipped you through His Word and a lifetime of experience. Through you and your willingness to align with His Sending plan, the story will go forward. God can use you to ensure that one more character will be written in the Book of Life.



Thank you –Thank you for the privilege of serving for the last decade. It has been the highest honor to be elected three times and to have an extra year of grace added to my final term, thanks to COVID-19.

I am especially thankful to my lifetime partner, Constance Laine Denninger. This year in August we will have been married 40 years. While I have been off traveling Interstates 95, 66, 85, 40, 78, and 81, Connie has developed a ministry that has global reach named Visual Faith Ministry, with the help of a couple dear friends. A mark of her ministry are prayer cards over which we both have prayed, but lovingly spent time praying over every new church worker.

When I began this job ten years ago, Connie and I had no grandchildren. Our daughters, Jessica, Laura, and Sara, and their husbands are very busy corralling 10 grandchildren all less than eight years old, and most of them under five. It is a privilege to introduce:

Griffin, Gordon, Hadley, Lainey, Levi, Isaiah, Jonah, and Jackson, Charleston, and Hudson. Through their young lives new stories of God's love are being written into our lives.

Now God is sending me somewhere else. By the time I have shared my report in our online portion of our Convention, we will be close to electing the next character in the SED story as District President. He will need your prayers, your support, your love, and care, in the same way you have given those gifts to me.

And now it's time for a new chapter in God's Story of the Great Sending: God's Heart for the World Beating through You! There are many more stories to tell! "Thank the Lord and sing His praise! Tell everyone what He has done!"

Respectfully submitted,



John R. Denninger, President
Southeastern District, LCMS



REV. TRAVIS B. GUSE

Facilitator for Mission Engagement, SED Central Region



It is a privilege to share this Convention Report of my ministry activities over this last year. Truthfully the first half of 2021 was still challenging to navigate due to the realities of COVID-19. However, this did not prevent some exciting ministry from happening. In the first half of the year, a great deal of my ministry primarily took place online, like participating in circuit meetings and trainings. Over spring and fall, I did two coach training courses for sixteen individuals and Group Mentor Coaching with eight participants. Seven new certified coaches will join our ranks with

the SED Coaching Network from this work. Not only will these coaches be available to work with pastors, church workers, and churches more effectively to live out their mission throughout the SED, it is exciting to see the impact these newly trained coaches are having within their congregations. I also worked on helping launch a new website for the SED Coaching Network to promote the value of coaching and our coaches in the network here in the Southeastern District.

In addition to raising up coaches through the SED Coaching Network, a great deal of my time has also been devoted to serving as the coaching director for the SED Lay Deacon Training Program. We currently have two cohorts in the program - 14 participants now in year two and seven in year one. The purpose of this program is to raise up God's people for service within the Church and beyond as everyday missionaries to their neighborhoods. Besides their coursework, each student participates bi-weekly in a coaching huddle with 2 to 3 other students and a coach. Besides coaching my own huddle, I have developed overview videos and suggested coaching questions for each coaching session for our 8 coaches in the program. I have also taught a "Sharing The Faith" course for the lay deacon program. On top of all this, I work closely with the SED Lay Deacon Advisory Team, helping to evaluate and promote the program throughout the SED.

Related again to the theme of coaching, in 2021 I completed my dissertation for my doctoral program in Coaching with Western Seminary in Portland OR. As part of my dissertation, I was able to dovetail this work with my ministry here in the SED by doing a dissertation coaching project in Richmond VA, in partnership with C-10. We gathered 60 participants, both in-person and online due to COVID, from the local Circuit 10 churches for three Called 2B Empowerment Events in the Spiring. These half-day sessions were focused on helping empower those participating in discovering and living out their authentic calling in Christ in love and service to their neighbors in all of their callings in life. After the empowerment events were concluded in May, I interviewed 10 participants on their experience. I also invited another 10 participants to be coached over the summer. Each participant went through 12 one-hour sessions of individualized coaching, representing 120 hours of coaching in total. After the coaching was finished, I then



interviewed them on their experience in the Called 2B empowerment events and the impact of the coaching they received. My dissertation project findings demonstrated the added value of coaching to help believers personally and practically apply what they learned in a way that workshops and trainings cannot do alone.

Besides facilitating these three Called 2B empowerment events and coaching as part of my dissertation work over this last year, I also serve as an ex-officio member of the C-10 Board of Directors as the district representative. As part of this work, I serve as part of the C-10 MissionU team to help with developing training opportunities to equip and empower laypeople within Circuit 10 for service within their congregations and out in the community as everyday missionaries.

This last year, I have also been involved in several other district initiatives in the SED Central Region. On Pentecost Sunday, we celebrated the successful merger of Emmanuel Lutheran in Hampton VA, with Resurrection Lutheran in Newport News VA. During this merger, I worked closely with both congregational leadership teams to find a path forward that honored and made sense for both ministries in becoming one. As a result, Emmanuel was able to sell their property and brought the proceeds with them to Resurrection in the merger. Under the leadership of their new pastor, Pastor Kuder, the new combined congregation seeks to find ways to engage with their community missionally with renewed energy and resources.

Toward the end of 2021, I have been involved in facilitating the start of a new Vietnamese mission outreach between Dr. Daniel Hoang and partner congregations from Circuit 9A & 9B. The vision is for this new mission initiative to be a house church movement to the Vietnamese community in Northern Virginia. Currently, we are working to identify a calling congregation, develop partner support, and raise financial support through mission grants for this Kingdom effort.

In 2021, I had a chance to work with a number of congregations by facilitating Envision events for their ministries. This facilitation included working with Nazareth Lutheran in Hopewell VA as they seek to call a new pastor. Also, I had the privilege to facilitate a visioning and strategic planning day for the fourth time in six years, as well as a Strengths teambuilding retreat for the church and school ministry of Redeemer Lutheran in Fredericksburg VA. I also had the opportunity to facilitate a Strengths workshop for the staff at King of Glory Lutheran in Williamsburg due to a new addition to their team, Pastor Kevin Scott. With Christ the King in Danville VA, I facilitated a “Finding Your Community Sweet Spot” workshop. Additionally, I have worked with the following congregations in helping develop their congregational profile for calling a new pastor: Our Saviors Way in Ashburn VA; Good Shepherd in Midlothian VA; Bethlehem in Richmond VA; & Good Shepherd in Callao VA.

Last but not least, with the generous support of the district and a grant from MALIM, as well as resources and manpower from my wife and son, I was able to put together a podcast studio and launch the Called2B podcast in early fall. With this podcast, the focus is on empowering everyday believers to discover and live out their authentic calling in



Christ in love and service to their neighbor in all their callings in life. Together with 2 other co-hosts, Pastor Kevin Scott, and Trish Freshwater, we put out a video and audio podcast biweekly as well as an everyday believer segment focusing on laypeople who are living out their faith in their daily vocations.



REV. DR. YARED HALCHE

Facilitator for Interethnic Mission Engagement



"The time has come,' He said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'" (Mark. 1:15)

Southeastern District's Interethnic Mission seeks to encourage and empower congregations and missional communities to engage the world with the love of Christ through a vibrant and integrated Missional discipleship. Our mission's roadmap mainly constitutes envisioning, spiritual empowerment, outreach engagement, constraints transformations, resources and partnership, and operational structure.

One of the things the Lord put in our heart is to explore missional focus that aligns with the post-pandemic mission context. In our recent course on Missional Outreach at MTC we devoted our time with pastors and lay leaders working on relevant missiological thinking and timely methods to engage the harvest God placed before our eyes. A major part of the course was to encourage God's people to imagine what God could do through them undergoing various external and internal resistances in life and ministries. It was a call for re-envisioning and refueling. We had 22 leaders successfully complete their course work and are forming an on-going missional network. This connection helps to bring missionaries together under a unifying purpose as it also avails opportunities to provide guidance and coaching along the way. Jesus commanded his followers during his early ministry to examine their time frame meaning to exit their 'chronos' and join his 'kairos' and totally surrender to God's reign in their life. God breaks into His people's heart with, under or above seemingly natural or supernatural occurrences to accomplish His will.

Missional Empowerment

One of the primary areas where we put much emphasis has been the ministry of reconciliation as it is crucial to ensure a healthy spiritual growth. Besides the pandemic, social unrest and divisions posed a serious challenge and threat to God's people in the United States and around the world. Unfortunately, many churches and Christian groups succumb to the temptation of division and exclusion than being Christ's messengers of reconciliation. We provided reconciliation and peace building training for interethnic church pastors and lay leaders for five weeks utilizing resources from Ambassadors of Reconciliation. 21 people participated in the training and testified that they encountered Jesus and his gospel through the lens of reconciliation. Furthermore, our reconciliation group took the initiative to help publish a well written book on conflict transformation in Amharic language. We are thankful for our district's funding support to publish the book. We pray that the Lord use our trained reconcilers as a seed to help peace and unity restored and flourish among the communities in our midst and beyond.



Furthermore, our interethnic mission work focuses on missional leadership development. While a number of our mission leaders join Concordia Seminary's Master of Divinity program and EIIT, others undergo a colloquy interview process to be ordained to serve as pastors in our church body. In addition to formal seminary trainings, mission leaders receive theological and missiological trainings in various ways. We mostly conduct our trainings through online educational platforms. We are partnering with The Lutheran Church of St. Andrew in Silver Spring MD and other mission entities to expand our interethnic mission studio and grow our online presence.

In His time the Lord provides harvest workers. Bruk Kediru, Tesfa Gemechu and Wondwosen Bisrat have joined our interethnic mission as lay leaders. As by-vocational leaders they assist with managing training and follow-ups in addition to handling day-to-day activities.

In addition, we serve our emerging generation with the necessary tools they need to effectively embrace God's calling in their life and ministry. Interethnic Children and Youth Missional team hold regular meetings equipping Sunday school teachers and pastors with Biblical insights on timely issues. We had an in-person gathering of teachers of our congregations in October 2021 to leverage resource exchanges and address human sexuality issues from the children and youth perspectives. We thank our presenters Tom Kolb and Connie Denninger for their valuable insights, encouragement and great resources shared.

Likewise, we conduct visioning workshops with our particularly older congregations to strengthen missional response and engagement in a rapidly changing world.

Missional Engagement

As the Lord blesses His work, we see household of faith communities grow and form their own congregations. Recently we have welcomed DMV Mekane Yesus mission congregation into our district. A group of young adults sought mentorship and coaching and after almost two years of relationship with our mission directors they have submitted their constitution and bylaws and are waiting the committee's recommendation to be a chartered congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Since their numbers continue to grow, they are actively seeking a place to worship and launch outreach activities.

Similarly, Elshaddai Lutheran Church in Maryland has their constitution already approved and is preparing to hold their chartering service. The Lord blessed the church's partnership with Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Greenbelt MD and now they conduct their services sharing building spaces as they work developing communal mission vision.

The Oromo Lutheran congregation in Cary NC gave birth to a daughter missional congregation in Charlotte NC. With district's grant assistance Pastor Daniel Nedjo is able to provide missional leadership to the newly planted mission.



Mekane Yesus Church in Maryland is at the early stage of their chartering process and are served by Pastor Gugssa Biru. They worship at Trinity, Mt. Rainier MD with a generous partnership extended by Pastor Peter Schiebel and his congregation.

As some of our ethnic congregations pursue the chartering route others decide to form relationships with existing congregations and go under their mission wings as one congregation yet with distinct mission fields and approaches. Mission congregations following this option include New Hope in Laurel MD within Our Savior; Amharic Outreach under St Andrew in Silver Spring MD; and Ethiopian Prince of Peace under Prince of Peace in Springfield VA.

Missional Discipleship Communities

One of the factors that contribute to mission growth in our interethnic mission is the formation and multiplication of missional discipleship communities. Currently our interethnic mission leads various discipleship missional communities. These communities exist to leverage Christian growth with mission growth through diligent discipleship and leadership and raising leaders. Providing ongoing coaching solidifies the continuity and vitality of each group.

We are developing missional discipleship pilot projects with the focus on Interethnic Community Development Outreach. This mission has three objectives: 1) Practical skills training, 2) Vocation connections (bridging job opportunities) 3) Community peace and reconciliation initiatives.

Furthermore, utilizing digital and online platforms, ministry engages God's people across the oceans and national boundaries. There is an intentional solidarity and supporting mechanisms established between overseas mission partners through immigrants' natural homeland ties and our ministries in the States. During a catastrophic flooding disaster at Mekane Yesus Seminary, in Ethiopia, Southeastern District congregations stepped in to financially support the seminary. We are very grateful to Pastor Bill Harmon and King of Glory, Williamsburg VA for their support during the crisis.

Finally, we are thankful to our mission partners for their on-going encouragement and generous financial supports, including MALIM, MTC and our congregations.

The Lord uses mission partners to expand His Kingdom in the lives of many who earnestly seek Him. It is evident that our ethnic and immigrant church families as part of the body of Christ face various challenges in carrying out Christ's mission in the hostile environment that includes tribal and racial divisions, consumerism, and false teachings. However, we trust that God will help us to lift up His victorious gospel, diligently work in His mission vineyard and utilize and channel our challenges towards a fruitful mission outcome for His glory.



DEACONESS SALLY J. HILLER

*Executive Director for Congregational Outreach
Director of Operations*



And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” then I said, “Here I am! Send me.” Isaiah 6: 8

The Sending God who sends his Son to be our Savior also calls and sends regular, everyday people to serve in the midst of challenge and need. This report begins to tell the stories of many who have in these past four years answered the call “Here I am! Send me.”

iNeighborhood

In this past triennium, we saw the work of iNeighborhood shift in significant ways. While congregations found themselves to be “shuttered” during COVID mandates, it did not stop them from sharing the Gospel. Many adapted to new online formats and discovered that their communities included people from many states as well as multiple countries. Online worship opportunities reached old and new people who could now gather in their homes for worship, bible study, youth groups, and Sunday school ministry. Today we are taking the lessons learned from this time of digital church and applying it to our everyday outreach.

Individuals lived out being everyday missionaries when they found that they were needed to “BLESS” their neighbors. This took so many forms from shopping for the elderly neighbor, gathering on the front porch for community prayer, bringing lawn chairs to the driveways for Sunday worship. Pastor Ed Grant (Charleston NC) and Pastor John Kassouf (Fredericksburg VA) held worship services in their driveways and nurtured community within their neighborhood. Others found ways to serve their communities such as Redeemer, Richmond VA who begin a drive-through weekly food bank. Members at many of our congregations made face masks and distributed them or donated them to hospitals and schools. Our Savior, Laurel MD created at home Sunday School kits and distributed them as people drove through to pick them up.

COVID-19 certainly didn’t stop the work of the church, it just caused us to think differently about connecting people to Jesus – one person, one family at a time.

School Ministry

During these past four years, 4 schools completed the National Lutheran Accreditation process for the first time: Grace Early Childhood Center, La Plata MD; Little Lambs, Huntingtown MD; St. Paul, Catonsville MD; and St. John’s, Winston-Salem NC. Schools have joined hearts and resources to support Hearts for Jesus: a district-wide offering for schools during February. Our students are generous in sharing gifts. They have responded to various calls for Disaster Response help, contributed to baby care kits



through Lutheran World Relief. In fact, St. Paul's Lutheran School in Glen Burnie received all the contributions and collated them for us. Our students gathered a total of 350 baby bundles.

A Task Force to discuss and develop tools for Early Childhood Centers gathered during the first two years of the triennium to work on resources for these ministries.

When our schools were faced with the challenges of COVID, they pivoted and without losing a day, were serving their students in virtual classrooms. Several of our Child Care Centers never closed doors during the COVID work from home months because they were serving front line workers. What a wonderful blessing to know that when our families most needed the hope of God, our schools were sharing Jesus.

During this time, when schools were struggling financially and worried about laying off staff, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, working in partnership with the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, developed grants to assist all our workers, both commissioned and contracted. These grants, along with grants from the Lutheran Hospital and Home Foundation enabled us to provide \$125,000 support to 135 workers.

Disaster Response

While we do not welcome disasters in our midst, the reality is that we get our share of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and even “bomb-cyclones” in our District. With each call for response, new workers in Disaster Response are identified and equipped for ministry. The SED Task Force for Disaster Response developed a District-wide Equipping Conference to help raise the awareness of being prepared for disaster and to serve in times of disaster. Two very important actions have flowed from the District's ongoing work in disaster response. First is the emerging Lutheran Servants for Christ, a soon-to-be district initiated RSO. Currently, this group is waiting for final approval from the LCMS. Pastor Wayne Puls (Hope, Wake Forest NC) is chair of this group. Pastor Ed Grant (emeritus, Calvary, Charleston SC) serves as the Disaster Response Consultant. The second very exciting outcome of the work of this group is the purchase of a tractor to help with tree and debris removal. We thank Bethel, Claremont NC and Pastor Eric Hollar who keep the tractor serving on disaster sites and in helping with local needs. Soon to join our resources will be a mobile bunk house that will house up to 10 volunteers and allow us to set up camp near a site where a team is serving.

District Office Staff

During these past two years, we said farewell to Kim Winston, Michelle Guilfoil, Carolyn Plue, Paquita Lopez, Elisa Ferguson, Taylor Winston, and Sirpa Quinn. Kirk Hymes relocated and is now serving deployed in North Carolina. These changes were the result of repositioning, retiring, or taking a call and they all happened during the season of COVID. It has been difficult to say “goodbye and Godspeed” to such good partners in ministry. Yet, the Lord has shown that he gathers and sends new workers to answer the call to serve. Today, the SED staff includes:



Office Staff

Sidney Heetland
Don Tucker
Esseye Haile
Karen Boyette
Lisa Long
Ryan Radke

Deployed Staff

Tom Kolb
Kirk Hymes
Mark Schroeder
Travis Guse
Yared Halche
Don Schaefer

I am so thankful to the Sending God who sent each one of these individuals to serve in this time and to support the vision of working together to connect neighbors with Jesus so that lives are transformed, and God's Kingdom grows.

Finally, I thank you for the continued opportunity to serve the congregations, schools, and ministries of the Southeastern District.



MR. KIRK HYMES

Facilitator for Stewardship

There are many positive Stewardship indicators in the Southeastern District.

- First and foremost is that when we look at Stewardship as the way we demonstrate Christ's love to our neighbors, we see a strong desire to reach out and care for the needy
- Many requests for Demographic information to gain a deeper understanding of who our neighbors are and what their needs are
- Congregations who have embraced electronic giving are experiencing strong financial support



There are many challenges to the state of Stewardship within the Southeastern District. We are sound in knowing that our “Justification” is that our salvation is through the grace of God in giving his son Jesus Christ to die for our sins. However, we sometimes fall short in sanctification where we live out the life of showing the love of Jesus in our lives. It is very important that we maintain an awareness to these challenges to good stewardship. Specific observations regarding questionable stewardship “thinking” and practices within Southeastern District congregations include:

- Members being provided with once-a-year stewardship emphasis that is done leading into the budget approval process
- Many pastors are not comfortable discussing or preaching about the topic so there has been no intentional stewardship emphasis for years
- Tithing not generally practiced. Most gifts are at levels of about 2%-3% of income
- Members look at giving from what they consider they own, rather than returning to God that which he has entrusted to our care
- There is a thirst for additional information and program materials coming from congregational leaders

So how does Stewardship look in the “Great Sending?” When stewardship looks like the love of Jesus manifesting in each of us meeting the needs of our neighbors, we start to lay the framework for the “Great Sending.” Here are ways that the Southeastern District will help to facilitate stewardship:

- More robust resources available on the District Website
- Integration of the enhanced LCEF Consecrated Stewards Program
- Stewardship Workshops that continue to emphasize and promote stewardship principals and opportunities within the Southeastern District



- Integrate the LCMS Synod resources into the training and development of stewardship resources to help families grow in their understanding and implementation of stewardship principles and practice

The “Great Sending” is reliant on biblical approaches to develop sound stewardship. Stewardship life examples are key to developing the trust needed to reach others for Christ. We must continue to mold true stewardship examples within the congregations of the Southeastern District. James 2: 14-17 tells us “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

The “Great Sending” depends significantly on action. Let us show the love of Christ to those around us—to love our neighbors as ourselves.

If you have any questions or would like to explore anything outlined above in greater depth, please contact the Southeastern District Stewardship Facilitator, Kirk Hymes. Kirk can be reached at 540-270-6506 or at khymes@sed.lcms.org.



MR. KIRK HYMES

Executive Director of Finance and Stewardship
Vice President – Lutheran Church Extension Fund



Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is an organization that empowers ministry. Incorporated in 1978, LCEF continues a long history of extension fund service to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and its individual and corporate members. Through the dollars invested by thousands of individuals, congregations, schools, organizations, and businesses, LCEF assists ministries with custom loans and ministry support services. Together, these partnerships have grown total assets to \$2.13 billion.

There are 132 church loans in the Southeastern District with just over \$99,000,000 in commitments. It is exciting to see the ministry partnership support that LCEF provides in loans to repair existing or build new worship centers around the District. Over the last three years, LCEF provided new loans to 39 SED congregations that amounted to nearly \$20,000,000.³

The Southeastern District has nearly 4,000 of its members investing nearly that same amount of \$99,000,000 of their personal funds so that LCEF has the resources to lend to our churches. Investors are the source for the funds that LCEF has to lend to our churches and schools. Lutherans providing for Lutherans—Investing in LCEF builds churches, investing in a bank builds more and bigger banks. Where is your stewardship focus?

Over the last three years, LCEF has provided Operational Earnings Distributions to the Southeastern District of over \$300,000. As a non-profit organization, LCEF returns operational earnings (which if not distributed would be considered profit) to support outreach ministries. These funds have been used in the Southeastern District to provide for:

- New ministry starts
- Neighborhood action grants
- Ethnic ministry subsidies
- Live streaming grants

During the initial outbreak of COVID, LCEF immediately put together a COVID response team that worked with each of the LCMS Districts to provide substantial relief in the form of full mortgage deferral, temporary interest-only payments, or emergency lines of credit. This was especially helpful and employed predominantly by Southeastern District congregations who were supporting a school or child development activity. It was extremely rewarding to see how successful those immediate responses to Southeastern District needs kept those congregations afloat and able to restart their children support programs.



LCEF also matched over a million dollars with the LCMS Synod to provide immediate Soldiers of the Cross grants for church workers who experienced severe financial challenges as the result of COVID. This financial assistance was crucial to many church workers who were initially impacted by the COVID-19 shutdowns.

LCEF has always considered ministry partnership as the most important aspect of our relationship with our LCMS congregations. This is why at the beginning of 2022, LCEF is expanding our resources, services and support to our church workers by acquiring Grace Place Wellness Ministries. Grace Place Wellness is a ministry that operates by conducting retreats, conferences and by providing wellness educational resources for all rostered church workers of the LCMS. Since each LCEF District Vice President operates at the individual ministries of the local church, this relationship expands through the LCEF consultations provided to each congregation.

So, what does LCEF contribute for the Southeastern District's "Great Sending?" Grace Place Wellness Ministries will be an important factor and resource in ensuring church worker wellness resources are in place and available to meet future sending needs.

MissionInsight demographics studies are provided to any requesting congregation to get to know and understand those "neighbors" in their communities of interest. Demographics provide critical social, economic, ethnic and family information of those who live around our churches. As we shift our focus from our needs within to those who are outside our worship centers, it's important to get as much information as possible about them. It's the first step in getting to understand and subsequently develop trust relationships.

Stewardship can be synonymous with taking care of our neighbors. It's the "how" we provide and care for our neighbors. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan provided his time to take care of the an injured man along the road. He provided his treasure to the inn keeper to take care of injured man to meet his physical needs. LCEF provides stewardship training to congregations through a training and instruction program known as "Consecrated Stewards." This program is available to requesting congregations and trains church leadership to conduct effective stewardship training.

If you have any questions or would like to explore anything outlined above in greater depth, please contact the LCEF District Vice President for the Southeastern District, Kirk Hymes. kirk.hymes@lcef.org



MR. TOM KOLB

Facilitator for School, Youth, and Family Ministry



Since starting in my new role with the district in the middle of August 2021, I have been humbled by the open-hearted reception I have been given even while many are not 100% sure what my new duties entail. I have been happy to share that my biggest roles are to connect with and walk alongside the school, youth, and family ministries of our district to help source resources and feed information on various district and synod-wide initiatives that affect the above ministries. Any way in which I can support what is already being done and gather ideas and resources to initiate new ministries that affect schools, youth, and families in our district is my goal.

School Ministry

Of the almost 70 school ministries in the SED, I have been able to physically visit $\frac{1}{4}$ of them as of December 2021. These visits may be for a National Lutheran Schools Accreditation Validation visit, a chance to share chapel, or even to deliver teacher anniversary certificates. I especially like sharing chapel, and as a history buff and former teacher, I have a “real” suit of Roman armor that brings the Ephesians 6 “Armor of God” passage to life for the students. Contact me, I’d love to come out to your school to lead that chapel or give any number of other chapel messages I’ve worked with through the years.

Helping schools obtain National Lutheran Schools Accreditation (NLSA) is an important part of my role with the district’s Lutheran Schools. NLSA is a process of self-evaluation followed by a visit of objective observers designed to help Lutheran schools improve the quality of their programs. Six SED schools are working through the NLSA this school year. Twenty-two schools total in our district are involved in the NLSA process.

With the continuing COVID pandemic our schools still are facing many challenges. I have been able to stay in communication with our schools’ leadership through monthly virtual meetings. We held our own Southeastern District Teachers Conference (SEDLEC) virtually this past October but are hopeful that we will all be able to gather in person next October. Our topic this year was about keeping our children and our ministries safe from sexual abuse and abusers. The name of this district-wide initiative is “Not Even One” and we are partnering with MinistrySafe, a company formed by legal professionals whose mission is to protect children and those who serve them. Our goal is to have every SED-LCMS congregation and school complete the MinistrySafe training by the end of the school year 2022. Your school or congregation should already have been contacted about this important program. Please see our SED website for much more information on the “Not Even One” initiative.



We are also hopeful that by the time our District Convention convenes, we will have been able to gather our SED Lutheran School Administrators in person at our annual gathering in February 2022. This year's topic will be on the best practices that encourage an integrated connection between the school and overall church ministries at a congregation.

One final aspect in my role is helping schools find leadership. At least four principal/director positions will be open for the 2022-2023 school year. Finding the right person that God has chosen for these spots has become more and more difficult for these schools as our LCMS system of generating these candidates has not always been able to keep up with the demand.

Youth and Family Ministry

Our district is quite geographically broad and the Youth and Family Ministries within the district are diverse. One of my first goals is to gather as much information on these ministries as I can from across our district. To that end my first "Youth and Family Ministry" Newsletter is a call to all congregations to share what it is they are doing in these areas and ask how I can help them. We are actively working to help disseminate information to all these ministries and find ways in which we can support and resource them from the District Office where possible. What the needs are will vary and I am working to set up regional "round table" discussions with the directors of these ministries to ascertain the best ways in which we can help.

One such way is to get the word out about district-sponsored and synod-wide youth or family events. The first is the SED Junior High Youth Gathering scheduled to be held at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Williamsburg, VA, on April 1 – 3, 2022. More specific information will be forthcoming directly to the congregations on this event. Furthermore, the LCMS National Youth Gathering will be held in Houston, TX, July 9 – 13, 2022. DCE Amanda Bell from Grace Lutheran Church in La Plata, MD, is the District Coordinator for this event. See our SED website for more information or contact Amanda at sedyouthgatheringcoordinator@se.lcms.org

I was able to present at the Interethnic Children and Youth Ministry Group training held at The Lutheran Church of St. Andrew in Silver Spring, MD, last fall. With the help of Connie Denninger, we were able to share some thoughts and vision for working with educating the youth in our interethnic congregations. These included Connie's work with Visual Faith and my sharing of a variety of resources and materials.

It has been a blessing to me to come alongside the congregations and schools in our district, much as Barnabas did for the early Christian Church. While no longer actively working in a local school or youth/family ministry myself, I pray that my years of experience in the SED and its programs will be of benefit to the ministries throughout the district I now serve.



REV. DONALD SCHAEFER

Facilitator for Mission Engagement, SED Northern Region



After the conquest of Jerusalem in 581BC, the remnant of Israel were taken to captivity in Babylon. Toward the end of their exile, when the future was still very uncertain and God's plans for Israel still unclear, the prophet Isaiah wrote these encouraging words from God; "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." The people of Israel believed those words, returning to and rebuilding Jerusalem.

Even though those events transpired many centuries ago, I think there are some parallels between then and now. The institutional Christian church in America finds itself in a new kind of wilderness, becoming a distinctly minority voice in our society. The landscape of church life now is radically different than before. While many of our people might long for "the way things used to be," it has become apparent that as it was for exiled Israel, a new thinking and new courage needs to be among us.

There are currently 76 congregations in the Northern Region; 33 of which are true urban, and the rest suburban and rural. Most have an average weekly worship attendance between 75 and 150; a few smaller and a few larger. With the insistent presence of a most unwelcome house guest named COVID, most of the congregations learned quickly and courageously to adapt. While only about 40% of congregations had any online presence before COVID, now over 95% do.

The twisted blessing of this is a dramatic increase in the number of "visitors" to the worship links. While it is difficult to know exactly who they are and how long they stay on the link, their presence suggests a quiet spiritual hunger going on in America. There is a smoldering weariness and hidden anxiety in the hearts of many people. They click onto church websites looking for something that is deep, true, and lasting. The Gospel of Christ which we proclaim is all of those things and a good deal more. Some of those visitors have become members.

While our pastors have served faithfully, the past almost two years have been exceptionally challenging. COVID affected worship attendance and still does. Almost all of our congregations have returned to some kind of physically attended worship, but adjustments have had to be made. Pastors I speak with tell me they are back to about 65 -70% of the worship attendance they had before COVID, but it is difficult to tell how many members still watch from home.

We are experiencing a dramatic turnover of pastorates in the Northern Region. While a handful of congregations have been and will in all likelihood remain pastorally vacant,



there are presently 17 new vacancies. Some pastors have retired, while others have accepted calls elsewhere. It is exciting to think of how the Northern Region will look in the future. New pastors, new thinking and hopefully new outreach will be present.

In working with these many vacancies, Rev. Dr. Yared Halche, DCO and Spiritual Coach Tina Jasion and I have offered to lead envisioning workshops for leaders. We focus on the Biblical background of mission, the particular context of ministry for a congregation and a coaching component designed to help leaders process where they have been in ministry, where they are now, and most importantly where God might be leading them in new outreach. Thus far, we have led the workshop in about 10 different congregations and ½ of those have elected to do ongoing coaching with Tina. It is exciting to see leaders begin to realize some things about God's calling and how they might fulfill it!

Congregations do have a life cycle and that is an unfortunate truth. Two congregations in the Northern Region have closed: First Lutheran Towson and Christ Dundalk. In the case of Christ Dundalk, the building/property was sold through the fine work of LCEF and "Foundry." Monies realized from that sale are already and will be used by Baltimore congregations for new mission outreach. Immanuel called a second pastor Lucas Witt to be a missionary to the city, engaging the community in areas around the congregational building.

The buildings/property of First Towson were sold to a neo-evangelical tenant congregation. Monies realized from that sale were put towards a unique ministry partnership with Concordia Prep resulting in the calling of Pastor Peter Couser. He is on staff at Concordia Prep Academy as chaplain for the school (350 students, most of whom are not coming out of any Christian background) and planting a congregation called "NewThing" at Prep. It is the first church plant we have had in Baltimore in over 30 years. The former congregation of First is to be commended for this vision!

Trying to re-establish a ministry presence in Sandtown Baltimore after the death of Freddie Gray six years ago, has made a significant step. Faith & Works Enterprises, INC. has purchased and is refurbishing a building in the community to serve as a focal point for their ministry. Many have joined the missional passion of Pastor Martin Schultheis and Emmanuel Catonsville, to offer job training, spiritual discipleship, and community for young men in Sandtown. It is hoped to be a place of grace in an area of the city hard hit by unemployment, the drug trade and hopelessness.

Other signs that God is at work among doing "new things" include St Paul's, Crofton Maryland who called seminary graduate Teklu Ketema to be their pastor. There are also many ethnic house churches who are now using worship space in our church buildings alongside the remaining Anglo congregations. As one of, if not the most ethnically diverse Districts in the LCMS, SED is becoming more true to its honest demographic. The passion of members and pastors in these ethnic churches is a joy to behold and something we all can learn to replicate.



In a time when our society seems more desert wilderness than lively forest, it is easy to despair. As the exiled Israelites learned, however, God is still at work in the shadows rebuilding and reforming. Like children, we stand on tiptoe waiting to see what God is up to among us and with us. I continue to be privileged to serve as a facilitator in the Northern Region and I thank members of the BOD and executive staff who have allowed me to remain using who and what I am for the sake of the Mission God calls all of us to.



REV. DR. MARK A SCHROEDER

Facilitator for Mission Engagement, SED Southern Region



The greatest sending in history was the delivery of Jesus into the world as King of kings. Close on its heels of greatness was the sending of the Holy Spirit into the hearts and minds of the King's people. Because of those two sendings, the great sending of the citizens of heaven is guaranteed.

The Lord is about the business of building his kingdom in our world. As Jesus prayed, "Your kingdom come," so we pray also. As Luther noted in his writings, the kingdom is coming regardless of

our prayers or lack of prayer, our interest or disinterest, our faithfulness or unfaithfulness. There is evidence of the kingdom's coming in the SED Southern Region.

The kingdom of King Jesus has come into the hearts of his people. Despite the pandemic-related difficulties over half the span of time since the last District convention, the citizens of the kingdom gathered, studied God's word, remembered their Baptisms, and received the Sacrament of the Altar. The gatherings at times were distanced, but that didn't stop the study of the Word or the remembering of individual Baptisms. At other times, special services were instituted with special precautions, limited numbers, brave members, and faithful Pastors, so that the Sacrament of the Altar could be received. Now, the gatherings are gradually returning to the new normal and the Spirit is bringing his people back to worship and fellowship. The result of the gathering of the citizens of the kingdom in these ways was a continuation of the ushering in of the kingdom in the hearts of his people.

We saw that evidenced by extensive conversations in the Southern Region about how we can care for each other. We also saw that evidenced by a deep concern for how we reacted to the hardships endured and how those reactions were a witness about the love of Jesus to our neighbors and our society. We witnessed that kingdom being expressed by meaningful conversations across the boundaries of ethnic diversity, which enrich the fellowship of our kingdom, for the sake of enhancing how that diversity can be leveraged to further kingdom growth. We witnessed that by seeing, for example,

- a.) small, committed communities being formed in congregations focused on ministering to neighbors,
- b.) retired pastors leading small, informal Sunday gatherings on lawns in their neighborhoods,
- c.) an aging congregation of citizens knocking on doors of two hundred surrounding homes to deliver thanksgiving baskets and a gospel message,
- d.) continued faithful financial support of congregational ministry through online giving,
- e.) congregations diligently working to search the will of God concerning future ministry to surrounding neighborhoods through structured strategic planning processes,



- f.) congregations and members financially, emotionally, and spiritually supporting missionaries around the world,
- g.) citizens volunteering and being trained to build ramps, repair roofs, remove downed trees, repair flood-damaged homes and
- h.) mutual encouragement of God's people to each other to remember that difficult times are special times to demonstrate the love of Jesus to our world.

These and a myriad of other expressions are evidence of the kingdom coming in the hearts of the servants of King Jesus.

We see evidence of the kingdom coming in our neighborhoods as well. The efforts mentioned above are resulting in those outside the kingdom becoming aware of Jesus' kingdom. This is the fruit of the great sending. Congregations in the Southern region are receiving members from churches that no longer proclaim King Jesus and his reconciliation or teach the truths of Scripture. These individuals long for true kingdom fellowship and so are coming. We see unchurched parents sending their children to our educational ministries, where the gospel is planted in the hearts of young ones. Most of these educational ministries are flourishing; some with waiting lists for enrollment. We see neighborhoods of ethnic diversity coming to events —like Trunk or Treat ministry— and hearing about King Jesus. We see new ethnic ministries opening in metropolitan areas, such as Charlotte NC. We hear stories of spiritual conversations happening between individual members and their unchurched neighbors. We hear of congregations growing in attendance and membership, especially those that are intentional about ministering to those outside the congregational boundaries and membership.

King Jesus, who was sent into the world, is sending us in the Southern Region in like fashion out to our neighbors, neighborhoods, communities, nation, and world. This is a great sending because it is establishing a great kingdom. And that kingdom is coming here in the SED Southern region.





Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Mission,

In the spring of 2019, I got a message from President Denninger that he would like to have a conversation about the “unique circumstances” that had taken place pertaining to the Southeastern District Board of Directors. Our chair had resigned and our vice chair had passed away, both of these unexpected events. As the most experienced member of the SED BOD, I was the next person standing. Of course, in spring of 2019, we were all pretty innocent of what was to come but I said with the help of the Holy Spirit, I would gladly take the reins. It has been a joy to serve as chair these last three years and as a board member for the last ten. Our board meetings are a wonderful opportunity to both examine the mission field and to work to support and guide the work of the District staff. During our board meetings, we engage in Bible study, spiritual listening and prayer, fellowship and, of course, the business of the Southeastern District.

On March 12 and 13, 2020, the Board was meeting at the district office. During each triennium, either the LCMS president or first vice president visits the board. At that meeting, we were being visited by Pastor Peter Lange, the First Vice President of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. As the news of closures and surges of infections began flowing in, many of us were keeping an ear on Vice President Lange and an eye on our phones and computers. By the time I made it home that day, the governor had announced all schools in Virginia would be closed for two weeks, a time period that was adjusted ten days later. As a Board, we were in close communication with each other, making sure our work would move forward. For the next 18-months, we met via Zoom. It was a joy to finally gather in person in Williamsburg in September 2021.

Despite one member’s death, another losing her call and then, to top it off, a global pandemic, the work of the District BOD moves forward. I am pleased to report that the Southeastern District is healthy and mission minded, working tirelessly to connect people to Jesus so that God’s kingdom grows. The SED staff led by President John Denninger has kept its eye on the goal of connecting people to Jesus. Through our deployed workers and SED office based District staff, opportunities still abounded to support local congregations in their work, despite masking and social distancing.

As an overview of the work we have done, here is an outline with a few notes of what is discussed at a District Board of Directors Meeting:

1. Devotion and Listening Prayer. Our day always starts with devotions and an opportunity for us to study scripture with a heart ready to listen to what God has to say to us individually and as a Board. A different chaplain is identified for each



meeting and opportunities for Bible study and prayer are embedded in our two days together.

2. President's Report. This is a time for us to hear about not only the work of the District President but also the work of the office based and deployed staff. During this time we are updated on a variety of topics including the celebrations and challenges of our congregations, schools and other ministries, the unique work of each Regional Facilitator, the growth and particular circumstances of Interethnic Ministries, and a briefing of what is happening in the LCMS at the national level. During this time the Board asks questions of the President and the President asks for the guidance of the Board.
3. Work of the Board. Each meeting includes time for us to accomplish the work we are assigned, which might be as simple as approving a congregation's constitution and bylaws or as complex as looking at the Board approved metrics and asking questions to gain an understanding of the progress being made to connect 32 million people to Jesus. During this time we often share the work we are doing in our own neighborhoods in support of the District mission.
4. Finance Report. At each meeting we are provided a detailed finance report, presented in the beginning of the quadrennium by Kirk Hymes and most recently by Sidney Heetland under the leadership of District Treasurer Tom DeMik. The Board monitors the finances of the District and approves both the budget and the annual audit. The District continues to enjoy a strong financial position, thanks to both excellent management of resources and generous gifts from congregations and ministries.
5. Fellowship. It's mostly work but there is also time for fellowship, mostly at meal times. In September 2018, the Board went on retreat and spent three days in prayer, reflection and planning. This was a wonderful opportunity to build a foundation of trust and friendship that aided the work we did for the next four years.

Earlier in the quadrennium, 2nd Vice President Pastor Bill Harmon challenged the Board to take neighborhood ministry to our own porches. Here are just a few of the activities Board members started on their own streets:

- ❖ One member started a community organization to take turns mowing the grass at the entrance to his subdivision. Through this, relationships that did not exist developed. This man also encouraged his small group to host an ice cream social in his neighborhood club house. About 20 families showed up for "Free Ice Cream" where new friendships were started and opportunities for worship were shared.
- ❖ One member makes it a point to earnestly thank at least two people every day for their service work. Striking up these conversations opens doors to talking about Jesus.
- ❖ One member started a "Caring Campaign" in her neighborhood at the start of the pandemic. These neighbors knew each other in passing but not well. That effort to build community has evolved into a weekly gathering where neighbors meet to fellowship and catch up on each other's lives. At Christmas time this year, these neighbors gathered together to feed the homeless at an area church.
- ❖ One member started a book club with her neighborhood women which has led to great discussions, wonderful fellowship and deeper relationships with them all



getting to know each other better.

- ❖ At the beginning of the pandemic, one of our pastor members and his wife invited their neighbors to an Easter service at the foot of their driveway. 17 people came. At the end of the service, the neighbors asked, “Can we do this again?” During the entire time churches were closed, church still took place at the foot of this driveway. Two years later, the pastor received a letter from an attorney in Texas, thanking him for organizing this outreach because through this, his sister and brother-in-law had come to know Jesus.

In all of these examples, we ask the Holy Spirit to guide our work and words.

Since our last gathering four years ago, much has happened yet much has stayed the same. We all now know what it is like to live through a global pandemic and, through that, we have learned that the world’s need for the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ continues to grow. As we look forward to a new president and new board, I ask that God will continue to guide the work of the people, ministries, and staff of the Southeastern District. To God be the glory! Amen!



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Mission Partnership Support

The ministry of the Southeastern District is primarily funded through first fruits stewardship gifts from congregations, schools, and other ministries in graciously given in support of mission efforts. As we are all collectively members of the Body of Christ, we generously respond so that we can work together to reach the 32 million people within our District boundaries who do not know Jesus as Lord and Savior might hear of His saving grace. We pledge to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Your Mission Partnership Support gifts bind us together and affirm our resolve to unite with the other ministries of the Southeastern District so that *“As we work together to connect our neighbors to Jesus, lives are transformed, and God’s Kingdom is growing.”* Your generosity provides the opportunity for you to support new ministries and opportunities to support our church workers in mission as they serve our congregations and enhance going and making disciples.

We thank you for your support and prayers. We pray that you will consider establishing or increasing a financial partnership with the Southeastern District that will demonstrate a heightened stewardship commitment toward the mission and ministry that we share. It is our hope that all SED ministries might participate by dedicating first fruits giving for the Lord as an act of Christian stewardship. It is our prayer that we all come together to participate in the financial support of our common mission.

The following Southeastern District Congregations have provided the following support per listed communicant member (as self-reported to Synod) for 2021:

Congregations	Remittance per Communicant Member
Good Shepherd-Callao, VA	\$375
St. Paul's-Gambrills, MD	\$375
Redeemer-Fredericksburg, VA	\$327
Immanuel-Charlottesville, VA	\$246
Eternal Shepherd-Seneca, SC	\$237
Trinity Hmong-Newton, NC	\$200
Berea-Baltimore, MD	\$195
St. Paul, Norlina, NC	\$170



Mountainside-Linville, NC	\$170
Grace-La Plata, MD	\$164
Trinity-Bowie, MD	\$159
Fountain of Life-Kernersville	\$158
Calvary-Silver Spring, MD	\$150
Hope-Virginia Beach, VA	\$139
Trinity-Lexington Park, MD	\$136
St. John's-Farmville, VA	\$136
Holy Trinity-Statesville, NC	\$132
St. Paul's-Mechanicsville, MD	\$131
Bethany-Trinity-Fishersville	\$119
Ches. Comm. of Hope-Chesapeake	\$118
King of Glory-Williamsburg, VA	\$117
Jordan-Apex, NC	\$116
Trinity-Chestertown, MD	\$102
Prince of Peace-Virginia Beach	\$101
Prince of Peace, Springfield	\$100
St. John-York, PA	\$99
Redeemer-Parkton, MD	\$97
Our Savior-Arlington, VA	\$96
Concordia-Hagerstown, MD	\$95
Our Savior-Laurel, MD	\$95
Immanuel-Simpsonville, SC	\$94
Advent-Chapel Hill, NC	\$94
St. John's-Alexandria, VA	\$88
St. Paul-Catonsville, MD	\$88
Living Savior-Fairfax Station	\$87
Good Shepherd-Roanoke, VA	\$86
Messiah-Charlotte, NC	\$84
Messiah-Wilmington, NC	\$84
Concordia-Wilmington, DE	\$83
Resurrection-Newport News, VA	\$82
Emmanuel-Asheville, SC	\$82
Our Savior's Way-Ashburn, VA	\$81
Holy Cross- Clayton, NC	\$80
Our Redeemer-Wilson, NC	\$80
Peace in Christ-Walkersville	\$77



Redeemer-Portsmouth, VA	\$76
Bethlehem-Richmond, VA	\$76
St. Paul-Havelock, NC	\$75
Good Shepherd-Herndon, VA	\$75
Christ Community-Leesburg, VA	\$71
St. Paul's-Falls Church, VA	\$71
New Hope-Mooresville, NC	\$69
Greenwood-Greenwood, SC	\$67
St. Stephens-Hickory, NC	\$66
Good Shepherd-Olney, MD	\$66
Faith-Beaufort, SC	\$65
Island-Hilton Head, SC	\$65
Good Shepherd-York, PA	\$63
Christ the King-Danville, VA	\$63
Messiah-Germantown, MD	\$62
Our Savior-Winchester, VA	\$61
Grace by the Sea-Nags Head	\$61
Hope- Wake Forest, NC	\$60
Ascension-Charlotte, NC	\$60
Crosswalk- Columbia, MD	\$60
Christ/Deaf-Silver Spring, MD	\$60
St. Paul-Annapolis, MD	\$57
Grace - Woodbridge, VA	\$55
Calvary-Baltimore, MD	\$55
Trinity-Richmond, VA	\$54
Christ-Hickory, NC	\$54
Immanuel-Easton, MD	\$52
Ascension-Landover Hills, MD	\$52
Grace- Durham, NC	\$51
Our Savior-Clyde, NC	\$51
Holy Trinity-Bristol, TN	\$50
Resurrection-Cary	\$50
Faith-Kinston, NC	\$49
Mt. Olive-Columbia, SC	\$49
First-Huntingtown, MD	\$48
Good Shepherd-Greenville, SC	\$48
Concordia-Conover, NC	\$48



Galilee-Pasadena, MD	\$47
Resurrection-Baltimore, MD	\$47
Faith-Baltimore, MD	\$45
St. John's-Winston-Salem	\$45
Faith-Eldersburg, MD	\$44
Immanuel-Preston, MD	\$42
Bethany-Salisbury, MD	\$42
Crown in Glory-Salisbury, NC	\$41
Redeemer-Richmond, VA	\$41
Grace-Chester, VA	\$38
Holy Nativity-Baltimore, MD	\$35
Mt. Pisgah-Hendersonville, NC	\$35
Emmanuel-Baltimore, MD	\$34
Bethel-Claremont, NC	\$34
St. John-Conover, NC	\$34
First St. John's-York, PA	\$34
St. Paul's-Meherrin, VA	\$33
Calvary-Charleston, SC	\$32
Our Savior-Bryans-Road, MD	\$31
Our Savior-Rehoboth Beach, DE	\$30
Hope-Manassas, VA	\$28
Christ-Norfolk, VA	\$28
St. Andrew-Silver Spring, MD	\$27
Redeemer-Burlington, NC	\$27
St. Paul's-Columbia, PA	\$27
Point of Grace-Huntersville	\$26
Risen Christ-Myrtle Beach, SC	\$26
St. John's-Glen Arm, MD	\$25
St. Matthew-Meherrin, VA	\$25
Our Savior - Raleigh, NC	\$25
St. James-Southern Pines, NC	\$24
Christ-Seafood, DE	\$24
Peace-King George, VA	\$24
St. John's-Dover, DE	\$24
Christ the King-Owings Mills	\$23
Bethlehem-Aiken, SC	\$23
Prince of Peace-Charlotte, NC	\$23



Redeemer-Catawba	\$22
Nazareth-Hopewell, VA	\$22
Grace-Concord, NC	\$21
Emmanuel-Hampton, VA	\$21
Living Hope, Stafford, VA	\$20
Living Water-Baltimore, MD	\$19
Resurrection-Franklin, NC	\$18
First-Towson, MD	\$18
St. Peter-Conover, NC	\$17
Mt. Calvary-Kannapolis, NC	\$16
Good Shepherd-Midlothian, VA	\$15
First-Odenton, MD	\$15
Peace-Washington, DC	\$15
St. James-Baltimore, MD	\$14
Shalom Ethp. Evang.-Alex, VA	\$14
Ebenezer-Greensboro, NC	\$14
Center Grove-Kannapolis, NC	\$14
Church of the Cross-Rockville	\$13
Faith-Bear, DE	\$13
St. Paul-Whispering Pines, NC	\$13
Abiding Savior-Anderson, SC	\$13
Advent-Forest Hill, MD	\$12
Holy Cross-Towson, MD	\$11
Holy Lamb-Myrtle Beach, SC	\$10
St Paul's-Glen Burnie, MD	\$10
Martini-Baltimore, MD	\$10
Unity-Norfolk, VA	\$10
Grace-Greensboro, NC	\$10
First-Bowie, MD	\$9
Pilgrim-Bethesda, MD	\$9
Ethiopian Mekane Yesus-Cary	\$8
Our Savior-Baltimore, MD	\$8
St. Paul-Mechanicsville, VA	\$7
St. Peter's-Concord, NC	\$6
St. Paul's-Hancock, MD	\$6
Lake Norman-Denver, NC	\$6
Trinity-Norfolk, VA	\$6



Galilee-Chester, MD	\$5
Concordia-Triangle, VA	\$5
Immanuel-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
Vine & Branches, Aldie, VA	< \$5
Bethlehem-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
Redeemer-Hyattsville, MD	< \$5
St. Luke's-Lincolnton, NC	< \$5
Our Redeemer-Newark, DE	< \$5
Peace-Smyrna, DE	< \$5
St. Paul on the Shore-Hallwood MD	< \$5
St. Matthew-Bel Air, MD	< \$5
St. Paul's-Kingsville, MD	< \$5
Redeemer-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
St. Thomas-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
Zion Praise Tabernacle-Bowie	< \$5
Pilgrim-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
Oromo-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
Trinity-Cumberland, MD	< \$5
Ev Luth. Mekane-Columbia, MD	< \$5
Mt. Olivet-Washington, DC	< \$5
Holy Cross-Greenbelt, MD	< \$5
Trinity-Mt. Rainier, MD	< \$5
New Hope Mission-Laurel, MD	< \$5
Cristo Senor-Brookeville, MD	< \$5
Lamb of God-Landover Hills, MD	< \$5
Concordia-Upper Marlboro, MD	< \$5
Bethany-Alexandria, VA	< \$5
Christ For All Nations-Alex	< \$5
Virginia Evangelical-Alex, VA	< \$5
New Hope-Chesterfield, VA	< \$5
Resurrection-Richmond, VA	< \$5
Mt. Zion Mission-Midlothian	< \$5
St. Paul-Amelia, VA	< \$5
Our Savior-Lynchburg, VA	< \$5
Our Redeemer-Fayetteville, NC	< \$5
Peace-Goldsboro, NC	< \$5
Calvary-Jacksonville, NC	< \$5



St. Luke-(High Point)	< \$5
St. Mark-Winston-Salem, NC	< \$5
Loving Savior-Greensboro, NC	< \$5
Abundant Life-Charlotte, NC	< \$5
Chapel for the Deaf-Charlotte	< \$5
All Saints-Charlotte, NC	< \$5
Emmanuel-Rock Hill, SC	< \$5
Immanuel-Conover, NC	< \$5
Mt. Olive-Newton, NC	< \$5
Augustana-Hickory, NC	< \$5
Our Savior-Hickory, NC	< \$5
St. Matthew-Marion, NC	< \$5
Salem-Taylorsville, NC	< \$5
Holy Trinity-Columbia, SC	< \$5
Incarnate Word-Florence, SC	< \$5
Grace-Summerville, SC	< \$5
Good Shepherd-Charleston, SC	< \$5
Trinity-Tyron, NC	< \$5
Nazareth-Baltimore, MD	< \$5
Oromo-Kensington, MD	< \$5
Hope of Glory-Silver Spring	< \$5
Elshaddai Ev-Burtonsville	< \$5
Medhanialem Ethiop-Hyattsville	< \$5
Iglesia Nueva Vida-Spfld, VA	< \$5
Ethiopian Lutheran-Alex, VA	< \$5
Trinity-Ashland, VA	< \$5
Lutheran Outreach-Roanoke, VA	< \$5
Concordia-Buena Vista, VA	< \$5
King of Glory-Providence Forge	< \$5
Oromo Ev.- Cary, NC	< \$5

The Southeastern District is richly blessed through your financial support and wants to thank you for our partnership.



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Financial Reporting 2022



December 2021

Dear Friends in Christ:

God's grace and peace be multiplied to you in the name of Jesus!

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

During 2022 the Southeastern District will be focused on the "Great Sending," the Missio Dei (Mission of God). Throughout Scripture we see this sending motif, where He choose to work through you and me to shape others to be co-heirs in the Kingdom. "We are therefore Christ's Ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled with God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The past two COVID influenced years have been a challenge to many of us. Our mental and physical health has been taxed sometimes to the breaking point. And yet, here we are. Romans 12: 2 reminds us, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."

We are certainly impacted and influenced by the patterns of this world. Not only do we continue to be challenged by COVID, but we face severe division by race and differing world views. When we focus on these patterns of today's world, we lose focus on our Redeemer and Savior. So, God invites us to be His partner in His Great Sending.

The Southeastern District has a long history of focusing on the Missio Dei. As we look to 2022 what are some of the ways we look to "Connect People with Jesus" as we step out on God's Mission?

Your generosity in partnering with the Southeastern District has provided for:

- Preparing for developing a discipling culture – reaching out and showing an honest and tangible love for our neighbors



- Supporting congregations through the Call process
- Help professional church workers in the SED reduce suffocating student debt
- Respond to natural disasters that have had significant impact on our brothers and sisters
- Enhancing our ministry and outreach in our urban and multi-ethnic environments

The Southeastern District needs your help and assistance. I first encourage you to lift the Southeastern District up in prayer. We will be holding our District Convention in May and as you know many issues will be considered and decisions made. We ask God for His guiding hand in the process. Secondly, I will encourage you and your congregational leaders to prayerfully consider your Mission Partnership Support (MPS) for 2022. Details of our mission work are included with this mailing. Please make this package of information available to the congregational treasurer, the leadership of your congregation and beyond. Mr. Kirk Hymes, the District Facilitator for Stewardship, is available to answer your questions regarding MPS. He can be reached by phone (540-270-6506) or email (khymes@se.lcms.org).

As you and your congregational leaders have conversations about your 2022 Mission Partnership Intention, I encourage you to reflect on how the Lord has blessed you as a congregation this year. I pray that your gift might be a joy-filled response to Him.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel! During this Advent time, Apostle John's prayer is on our lips and in our hearts, "Come Lord Jesus, Come!" (Revelation 22:21)

In the royal service of the King,



Rev. Dr. John R. Denninger, President
Southeastern District, LCMS

Southeastern District, LCMS

6315 Grovedale Drive
Alexandria VA 22310

www.se.lcms.org

ph: 703-971-9371
fax: 703-922-6047





December 2021

To: Pastors and Presidents of Southeastern District Congregations and Ministries
From: Kirk Hymes, Executive Director, Finance and Stewardship
Re: Your Congregation's 2022 Mission Partnership Support Intention

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:17)

I constantly give thanks and praise to our risen Lord and Savior for each of you and the blessings you are in growing God's Kingdom! The COVID-19 experience of the last two years has been a significant challenge to many and we are all striving to get back to the old normal. Many of us are tired, frustrated, and looking for answers. But what if the new normal doesn't look like the old normal? The Southeastern District heads into 2022 with a commitment to the "Great Sending" -the "Missie Dei" (sending of God). Our prayer is that we will strengthen our mission health to bear greater fruit for God's kingdom. We look to reset, renew, and move to God's Great Sending.

COVID forced us to experience the church outside of the four walls of our worship centers. It showed us that we can have an outward focus and experience God in our daily walk. At the same time, we all recognize that it's important for the body of Christ come together for fellowship. We need to continue to develop ways to allow the love of Jesus Christ to shine through us and into those we meet in our comings and goings. We need to develop our skills to live the example that Jesus set before us.

The Southeastern District is here to provide continuous support as you move forward with your ministry. The feedback I constantly receive from District congregations is that they appreciate the love and support they receive from the Southeastern District. The President's office provides significant support in assisting congregations with Call lists to fill pastoral vacancies, worker wellness initiatives and recognition, and orchestration of the Circuit Visitors. The SEO coordinates and provides for disaster relief, leadership conferences for professional church workers and educators, as well as coordination of the Youth Gathering and youth ministry expenses. The SEO also provides grants for new workers within the District. This includes the credentialing of church workers and worker support. We have stepped up our efforts to help reduce the tremendous burdens of student debt with all our professional church workers. This



helps alleviate some of the burdens they are experiencing. And of course, Southeastern District provides funding for new ministries and new workers to include new mission grants, ethnic ministry initiatives and global mission support.

I am proud to be member of a staff of highly qualified humble servants who work extremely long hours to support our mission. It would be my absolute pleasure to expand on my experience with anyone of you who may have questions. I find the support that the SEO provides for the congregations of the District to be absolutely wonderful. Those on the SEO staff joyfully accept the opportunity to assist each of you in our mission to provide the 32 million people of the District, with the opportunity to get to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6: 38)

The Southeastern District fulfills its ministry primarily through your generous first fruit giving Mission Partnership Support gifts.

Your gifts provide for the following ministries:

- Grants provided directly to congregations, schools, and other ministries
- Support provided to congregations by Facilitators for Mission Engagement and others on the District staff
- Resources and support to develop the next generation of pastors and professional church workers
- Help to our young Professional Church Workers with chocking school debt
- Support of iNeighborhood through neighborhood training, partnering grants, seeding grants, and congregation outreach resources
- Conferences, District Convention, and other sponsored events
- Disaster response and human care
- Support of world and national mission

We pray that you will prayerfully consider a continuation, increase, or begin a financial partnership with the Southeastern District in 2022. Your first-fruits stewardship commitment will enhance and ensure the success of the responses identified by our District President, John Denninger in his letter contained in this correspondence. It is exciting to see the accomplishments achieved by our united effort for as Paul wrote to the Philippians, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

As your members bless your congregation with their tithes and offerings, we humbly request that you might set the stewardship example and provide generously to the



mission of the SEO. Please pray with your church leaders and reflect on how God has blessed your congregation this past year. The Southeastern District attempts to set a good example by providing 20% of Mission Support Gifts we receive to the ministry of the Synod.

Included with this letter is the following information that may be helpful to your congregation in determining its level of support for 2020:

(1) *President John Denninger's Letter to the District of December 2021*

(2) *"Where Do Your Offerings Go?"*

This illustration shows how a portion of the offering given by parishioners to your congregation that are then gifted to the Southeastern District through Mission Partnership Support are put to work in support of mission.

(3) *Southeastern District LCMS 2021 Budget Summary*

A summary of the planned 2021 Mission Priority Budget that outlines our spending for the coming year.

(4) *2022 Mission Partnership Support Intention Form*

Please give serious and prayerful consideration to your congregation's intention as to its level of financial support during 2022. As your congregation has been blessed, we pray that your congregation will also give generously to the mission and ministry of the Southeastern District and beyond.

Please complete the enclosed Intention Form and indicate the level of Mission Partnership Support that you plan to provide during calendar year 2022. Should circumstances arise that the amount of your needs to be changed after you forward your intention to us, please contact us and let us know.

As in every year's request, the information you provide in the form of your 2022 Mission Partnership Intention, informs us as we establish District grants, programs and services for the upcoming year. For those whose fiscal year doesn't align with the calendar year, please let us know the amount that your congregation anticipates providing during the 2022 calendar year. Please provide only one 2022 Mission Partnership Support Intention Form per congregation to the District Office.

We request you provide your 2022 Mission Partnership Support Intention Form to the District Office by January 28, 2021. Please return the completed form even if you chose not to provide a commitment. This helps us know that you are prayerfully considering the opportunity but that you decided that you can't make a commitment at this time. As you will be in the prayers of the District, we would merely ask for you to keep the District in your prayers as well.

We are grateful for your continued support and prayers. May the Lord continue to bless you and your congregation in the work that you do for Him. If you have any




questions on the information provided in this letter, please call me at 540-270-6506 or contact me via e-mail at khymes@se.lcms.org.

In closing, I'd like to share the words of the Apostle Paul,

"And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you maybe filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his loved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1: 9-14)

In His Service,



Kirk Hymes

CC: Dr. John Denninger, President, Southeastern District LCMS
Board of Directors, Southeastern District LCMS

Southeastern District, LCMS

6315 Grovedale Drive
Alexandria VA 22310

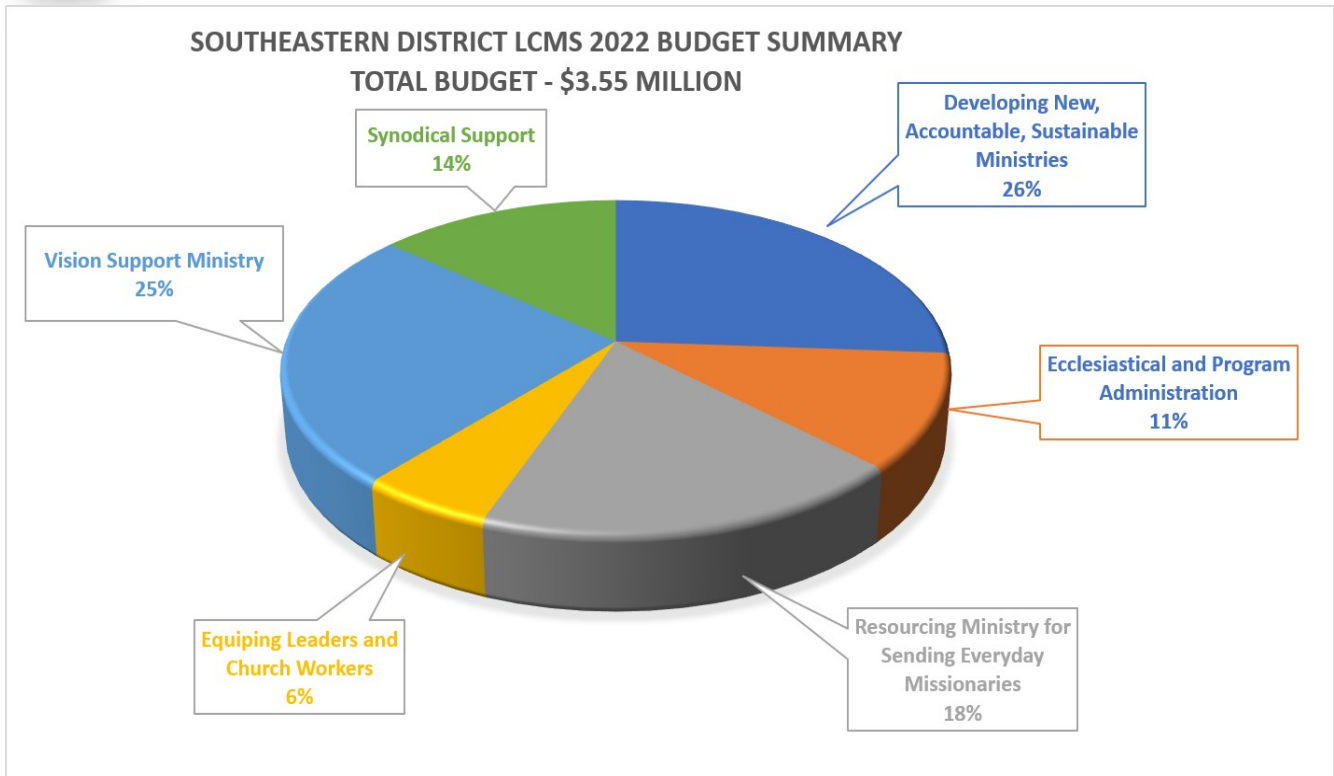
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ph: 703-971-9371
fax: 703-922-6047





**2022 Budget Summary
SED Board of Directors
December 3, 2021**



2022 Planned Expenditures – Amounts and Descriptions

Developing New, Accountable, Sustainable Ministries; iNeighborhood Support – 26%

- Funding for new ministries and new workers to include traditional new mission grants which are planned, ethnic & urban ministry initiatives, and global mission support for Peru Mission.
- Direct support of iNeighborhood initiatives.
- Staff salaries, housing allowance, and benefits for the four Facilitators for Mission Engagement working with congregations and new ministries.
- 2022 expenses of the four deployed executives.

Ecclesiastical and Program Administration – 11%

- The 2022 expense budget associated with the President's office represents salaries, housing allowance, and benefits associated with the staff that is affiliated with this office. This year includes moving & transition costs for our projected new President.
- Also includes Board of Directors expenses, Circuit Visitor expenses, worker wellness and recognition, and the expense of the travel that originates from the President's office.





**2022 Budget Summary
SED Board of Directors
December 3, 2021**

Resourcing Ministry for Sending Everyday Missionaries – 18%

- The 2022 expense budget associated with Congregational Services covers applicable staff salaries and expenses as well as conferences and other congregational activities.
- The level of 2022 budgeted expense includes the following major items:
 - Disaster Relief
 - Annual Summer Leadership Conference
 - Regional Professional Church Worker Conference
 - School Administrators Conference
 - Educators Conference
 - Lutheran School Services
 - Youth Gathering and Youth Ministry Expenses

Equipping Leaders and Church Workers – 6%

- Budgeted funds in this category provides support for new workers within the SED. This includes the credentialing of church workers and for worker support of neighborhood mission development.
- Areas of support include PALS pastoral training, Pastoral Leadership Institute, student aid grants, the Lay Deacon Training Program, the Ethnic Institute of Theology, student debt repayment grants, and congregational vicarage and commissioned worker Intern support.

Vision Support Ministry – 25%

- Funds in this area are used in support of District operations. This includes administrative personnel in the areas of accounting, finance, and stewardship. Also includes building related costs, equipment, and all general operating costs such as supplies, postage, and the annual audit.
- This addresses Information Technology refresh as well as planned maintenance for aging capital items in the SED building and grounds.
- LCEF is also associated with Vision Support Ministry. All LCEF costs are reimbursed directly by the national office.

Synodical Support – 14%

- We apply the Board of Director's guidance of maintaining our gift of a double tithe with 20% of the Mission Partnership Support receipts to be provided to the Synod in 2022.



Where do your offerings go?

Southeastern District, LCMS

2022

THANKS TO YOU . . . your congregation is engaged in gospel-based ministries in the neighborhood and throughout the world. Of each dollar received through offerings to your congregation, a portion is contributed to our work as a District. These gifts are referred to as *Mission Partnership Support*. These dollars support the District's ministry, grants, disaster relief, programs, and services. Thanks to you, we are connecting people with Jesus. To God be the glory!



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Southeastern District Convention Covid-19 Precautions and Responsibilities

The first part of the following document lists the precautions that the Southeastern District Convention Planning Committee and staff will take to help reduce the likelihood that convention participants will contract Covid-19 while they are in attendance at the convention. The second part of this document lists the responsibilities that convention participants have to each other to assist in this work.

Conference Planner Responsibilities

- On-site attendance at the convention will be limited to convention delegates and participants. It is our plan to live-streamed for visitors and guests.
- The physical, spatial density of delegates/participants entering, attending, and departing the event will be an integral part of the event planning process.
- Convention space(s) will have been cleaned and disinfected, as much as is feasible and reasonable, in advance of the convention.
- Ventilation of the meeting space will be optimized_the entire time that the convention is occurring.
- Hand sanitation stations and washrooms with sinks for washing hands will be available for all delegates/participants to use regularly.
- Each delegate/participant entering the convention site will have their temperature checked and recorded.
- Each delegate/participant entering the convention site will have assigned seating.
- No delegate/participant having a fever or any other Covid-19 symptom will be allowed into the facility.
- All delegates/participants will sanitize their hands upon entry.
- If the Southeastern District is informed after the convention has concluded that anyone in attendance at the convention has been diagnosed with Covid-19, all other convention attendees will be notified as soon as possible.
- Boxed lunch meals will be provided to each delegate/participant of the convention.

Conference Delegate/Participant Responsibilities

Each convention delegate and participant is asked to adhere to the following for the safety of everyone who will be in attendance at the convention:

- All delegates/participants are asked to be vaccinated.
- Delegates/participants shall wash or sanitize hands regularly while at the convention.
- As of March 15, delegates/participants may choose to wear a facemask while inside the building. This may change based on local regulations at the time of the Convention.
- If a delegate/participant has had a fever within 72 hours before the convention begins, he or she shall not attend the convention.



- If a delegate/participant develops a fever after the convention has begun, leave the convention site immediately after informing the convention office of your condition.
- If a delegate/participant has any other Covid-19 type symptoms (dry cough, tiredness, aches and pains, sore throat, etc.), they are asked not to attend the convention out of respect for fellow delegates and attendees.
- If a delegate/participant should be diagnosed with Covid-19 within 14 days of the conclusion of the convention, he or she shall notify the Southeastern District office as soon as possible so that we can notify other convention attendees. (Your name will be x confidential.)



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

SED Lay Deacon Program Guidelines



February 2022

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT, LCMS

LAY DEACON PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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I. The Diaconate in Scripture and Lutheran History

The diaconate is a group of people committed to service in and for the Church, a group which has its roots in the New Testament [see Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6]. As the Church catholic has grown, so too, the diaconate has had a history of development and usage.

In historical Lutheranism, deaconesses have long served as the chief model of the diaconate serving in ministerial mercy work. Within The Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod (“LCMS” in subsequent references), Wilhelm Loehe was the earliest founder of the diaconate establishing the Association of Deaconesses in 1854. This diaconal service has been described and embodied as those trained by the church in works of mercy, spiritual care, and teaching the faith. In this way Lutherans have long seen the diaconate as service within the Kingdom of God, guiding people toward Word and Sacrament ministry provided by local pastors. Deacons in the Lutheran context, understanding, and history do not fill the role of a pastor, and yet care for people physically and spiritually serving within Lutheran congregations and institutions.

The diaconate within a Lutheran context has had a variety of definitions over time, and has included a broad range of people, privileges, and responsibilities all dealing with a focus on sharing the Word of God and service in the Lord’s kingdom.

II. Purpose of the SED Lay Deacon Program

Welcome to the Deacon Training initiative here in the Southeastern District! (“SED” in subsequent references) We are excited that you have taken the time to prayerfully consider participating in this new training. In partnership with the Mission Training Center (“MTC” in subsequent references), it is designed to equip and empower men and women to walk in the footsteps of generations of Lutherans trained for Kingdom service within their congregation and beyond as everyday missionaries in love and service to their neighborhood and community.

The purpose of the SED Lay Deacon Program is to encourage lay leadership; to provide some basic and uniform standards for preparation, education, and accountability; to offer opportunities for continuing education, collegiality, and support; to encourage excellence in service; and to be a forum for mutual concerns and needs. The Program also seeks to continue or to bring Lutheran ministry to communities where pastoral leadership is wanting.

III. Program Membership

Members of the SED Lay Deacon Program are men and women selected and nominated by a local congregation of the SED and its pastor and approved by the SED’s Lay Deacon Advisory Board to serve after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ by sharing the Word and doing acts of service.



Members of the SED Lay Deacon Program are those individuals who apply for membership, meet the requirements as set by these guidelines, and subscribe to these guidelines for service and supervision. The title each member has is “SED Lay Deacon Intern” while doing course work and “SED Lay Deacon” after the acceptance process is complete.

An SED Lay Deacon’s focus of work is in the local congregation and in the surrounding community through that congregation.

SED Lay Deacons are licensed to serve in the SED only. Service in other districts of the LCMS would require the approval of the new district president and/or Board of Directors.

IV. Service

Works of Mercy, Word and Witness that support our life together are at the heart of the work of SED Lay Deacons. The actual tasks undertaken will vary according to the gifts and skills of the Lay Deacon and the needs of his or her congregation and its surrounding community. All aspects of SED Lay Deacon work are under the supervision of the Supervising Pastor.

SED Lay Deacons may engage in various types of service, including but not limited to teaching within the congregation; catechesis of youth and adults; caregiving works of mercy like shut-in and hospital visitation, hospitality and integration of members, small group Bible study leadership, and outreach and evangelism.

Care should be taken to prevent any confusion between an SED Lay Deacon and the Office of the Public Ministry.

V. Qualifications

- A. An SED Lay Deacon shall be a confirmed member in good standing of a congregation of the SED. SED Lay Deacons shall have the support of their family and shall be of sound moral character and mature faith, as demonstrated especially within the letter of recommendation from the supervising pastor.
- B. Application Process and Letters of Support:
 - 1) The Lay Deacon Application, a letter of support from the Supervising Pastor, and the Background Check form must be completed prior to admission to the training.
 - 2) The application and background check can be filled in on the SED Website (Resources- SED Lay Deacon Program)
 - 3) The letter from the Supervising Pastor should be emailed to ldcoordinator@se.lcms.org.

VI. Training

- A. As a minimum, applicants for the SED Lay Deacon Program shall have a high school diploma or its equivalent, based on local requirements. Other educational



background or experience, including academic, business, etc., will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis.

- B. The SED Lay Deacon shall have completed the course of theological education through the Mission Training Center (“MTC” in subsequent references) in Irvine, California's custom MTC/SED curriculum. These courses will include:

Year 1:

- Missio Dei in the Scripture (OT) 8 hrs.
- Missio Dei in the Scripture (NT) 8 hrs.
- The Christian Faith 16 hrs.
- Missional Church & Outreach 8 hrs.
- Lutheran Worship: Roots & Meaning 8 hrs.

Total 48 hrs.

Year 2:

- Defining & Engaging Your Community 8 hrs.
- Sharing the Faith 8 hrs.
- Spiritually Caring for Your Community 8 hrs.
- Leading & Creating Christ-Centered Lutheran Worship 8 hrs.
- Teaching the Faith 8 hrs.
- Starting New Ministries 8 hrs.

Total 48 hrs.

VII. Coaching

Coaching is an ongoing intentional conversation that empowers a person or group to deepen their awareness of their calling in Christ and live out that calling in their various stations of life.

In addition to the educational component of the SED Lay Deacon Training Program, students will participate in a 2-year concurrent coaching component. Each year participants will receive 24 hours of coaching (48 hours over the 2 years) which will take place on a semi-monthly schedule. The purpose of this coaching relationship is to help them grow in their spiritual formation both personally and as a deacon, and to disciple them to live out their calling in Christ in love and service to others.

The first year of coaching will focus first on vocational identity in Christ, and secondly on empowerment through a focus on holistic discipleship (heart, soul, mind and body). The second year of coaching will focus on Kingdom impact through evangelism and outreach by living out their holistic vocational calling in Christ.



VIII. Internship Supervision

Each applicant's internship supervisor must be a rostered LCMS Pastor. This supervisor shall:

- A. Assist the candidate in establishing goals and expectations for the internship;
- B. Meet with the applicant no less than twice monthly to discuss specific assignments, development, progress, and concerns; and
- C. Certify that the SED Lay Deacon Intern has successfully completed the required hours.
- D. Provide accountability over internship, especially in relation to the integrity of Lutheran doctrine and practice.

IX. Program Costs

The cost for the Lay Deacon Program includes: Background Check Fee, Coaching Fees, MTC Application Fees, Class Fees, and Books and Course Fees. See Addendum 3 for an updated listing of costs.

X. Compensation

- A. An SED Lay Deacon may receive compensation for service, but this is not expected nor required. An SED Lay Deacon's service is a gift to God and the Church.
- B. Interview Process and Acceptance at Program Completion
 - 1) All applicants, upon completion of the internship, shall submit a written report of his/her service, describing the nature of and personal reflections on the experience. This shall be submitted to the SED's Lay Deacon Advisory Board prior to the final interview.
 - 2) The interview shall be conducted after the course work has been completed. This shall be conducted through a face-to-face meeting of the
 - a. SED Lay Deacon Intern,
 - b. Supervising Pastor,
 - c. SED Lay Deacon Coordinator (or his representative),
 - d. Members of the Advisory Board.

In support of the acceptance process, a letter from the congregation accepting the applicant as a Lay Deacon is required. Once a candidate has successfully completed this interview his/her name will be forwarded to the SED President for final approval. When the candidate has received SED Board of Directors' approval, he/she shall be blessed for service as an SED Lay Deacon in a liturgical rite.

XI. Congregational Accountability

The SED Lay Deacon is always under the supervision of a Pastor appointed by the SED President. The SED Lay Deacon and the Supervising Pastor shall:

- A. Develop goals and tasks for the SED Lay Deacon.
- B. Discuss, develop, and implement congregational and community service that draws upon classwork and coaching, and is appropriate in terms of Lutheran doctrine and practice, in collaboration with congregational lay leadership.



- C. Meet on a regular basis to discuss progress and assignments.
- D. On an “as-needed” basis, clarify and explain the SED Lay Deacon's position in the congregation.
- E. Ensure that all service is in accord with the congregation's own by-laws.

SED Lay Deacons shall always be accountable to the SED President, chiefly through the recertification process, as outlined in the following section. This accountability shall include a triennial report of the SED Lay Deacon's work (Addendum I), filed with the congregation and the SED Office. It is to be completed jointly by the supervising pastor and SED Lay Deacon.

The SED Lay Deacon shall comply with the requirements for continuing education, as described in the section of the same title.

XII. Recertification Requirements

- A. SED Lay Deacons are certified for a three-year period. They may be recertified on a three-year basis without limitation, congruent with the regular Conventions of the SED. Recertification is undertaken after the second year through application for continued service as received through the SED Lay Deacon's congregation and Supervising Pastor. Such application shall include:
 - 1) Attendance at an SED Lay Deacon retreat, unless excused for service or hardship reasons by the Lay Deacon Advisory Board or the SED President.
 - 2) Participation in continuing education, a minimum of one completed opportunity per year (see below: Continuing Education), SED Lay Deacon Training Program courses, or other opportunities approved by the Supervising Pastor; and
 - 3) Submission of a triennial report (Addendum I).
- B. In accord with the historic Lutheran understanding of the qualifications and expectations of those who hold positions in ministry, SED Lay Deacons who do not complete the steps for re-certification shall no longer be considered active. SED Lay Deacons may also be removed for three reasons: adherence to false doctrine, neglect of duties and/or incompetence, and/or an immoral lifestyle. Such removal will be done through the SED President following the Church's usual order.

XIII. Continuing Education Opportunities

SED Lay Deacons shall attend a minimum of one continuing education course on a yearly basis. Continuing education may comprise the following:

- A. Additional course work with the Mission Training Center.
- B. Seminars specific to the Lay Deacon Program as offered by Mission Training Center
- C. Attendance at an SED workshop
- D. Outside seminars approved by the supervising pastor as beneficial for the SED Lay Deacon's particular service. Credit will be given upon a written report by the SED Lay Deacon approved by the supervising pastor.



XIV. Diaconal Transition

- A. An SED Lay Deacon transferring from one congregation to another must inform the SED Lay Deacon Coordinator within 30 days.
- B. An SED Lay Deacon leaving the denomination is removed from the membership list of SED Lay Deacons.
- C. As SED Lay Deacons are attached to the congregation with which they hold membership, when an SED Lay Deacon transfers to another congregation in the SED, the SED Lay Deacon is placed on “transitional status” for no less than six months. “transitional status,” which is a period of supervision by the new congregational pastor, remains for a maximum of three years. Each year the status must be renewed by a simple formal request to the SED Lay Deacon Coordinator. It is up to the congregation, local pastor, and transitional status SED Lay Deacon to determine the role of the transferring SED Lay Deacon, if any. If the congregation and pastor desire the transitional status SED Lay Deacon to serve as an SED Lay Deacon, a letter of request by the SED Lay Deacon and a letter of support from the new supervising pastor must be submitted to the SED Lay Deacon Coordinator, who will forward requests to the SED President.
- D. In addition to these guidelines, SED Lay Deacons serve under parameters set by the SED. It is incumbent upon all congregations where SED Lay Deacons serve to understand that SED Lay Deacons are trained for “Word and Service” related ministry. In extraordinary circumstances, if an SED Lay Deacon is called upon for service outside their training, written permission must be granted by the SED President, who alone may determine the appropriate nature and need of the situation on a case-by-case basis. Note: all SED Lay Deacons serve in accordance with Resolution 13-02A (2016):

Resolved, That nothing in this resolution shall be construed as impeding the training, recognition, credentialing or service of deacons who do not publicly preach or administer the sacraments, namely, those who serve in ministries of mercy, education, or visitation, and so forth, or in an outreach role, assisting in evangelism and church planting (but not in public preaching and administration of the sacraments); and be it further

Resolved, That district presidents may continue to recruit, train, and credential new deacons for *general* varieties of service in the church that do not include public preaching and administration of the sacraments

XIV. Garb and Vestments

Congregations should always act in a spirit of love and unity, being respectful of the practices and norms of fellow congregations. It is incumbent upon the congregation to be clear when it comes to defining the vocation of “Deacon” as it differs from “The Office of Public Ministry” to avoid confusion and disunity. This clarity extends to the use of vestments, and liturgical garb.

Liturgical attire for SED Lay Deacons should always follow the local custom of the congregation where the SED Lay Deacon serves and be in agreement with Lutheran



historical doctrine and practice, careful to avoid confusion. To prevent confusion with the Pastoral Office, SED Lay Deacons are not to wear clerical shirts or other vestments reserved as a symbol exclusively of the duties of the Pastoral Office (chasuble, pastoral stoles, etc.).

XV. District Accountability

- A. The SED Lay Deacon Advisory Board reports to the SED President and consists of a chairman, and five other members, made up of both LCMS ordained and lay members. The SED Lay Deacon Advisory Board is directly appointed by the SED President and supervised by the SED Board of Directors. Other Members serve with the approval of the SED President, renewable every SED convention year.
- B. The responsibilities of the Lay Deacon Advisory Board include:
 - 1) Gathering district-wide, as the Lay Deacon Advisory Board, at least annually;
 - 2) Supervising the SED Lay Deacon Interns in matters pertaining to fulfilling the SED Lay Deacon guidelines;
 - 3) Conducting interviews with potential SED Lay Deacons and SED Lay Deacon Interns as prescribed in other sections of this document;
 - 4) Providing SED Lay Deacon Interns with the guidelines and expectations of the members of the SED Lay Deacon Program;
 - 5) Providing updates to the SED Board of Directors;
 - 6) Through the office of SED District President, providing encouragement and counsel to Pastors and congregations concerning the role, limitation and expectations of an SED Lay Deacon in the parish, to include Scriptural and doctrinal limitations of appropriate service; and
 - 7) In the year of the District Convention, gather and review reports of the Lay Deacons.

XVI. Additional Items

The SED Lay Deacon Program Guidelines cannot cover every issue or concern. Those issues not covered in this document will be handled in a Christ-like manner, calling upon the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit for proper discernment. The SED Lay Deacon Program, as the supervisor of the SED Lay Deacon program, will serve as the final arbiter of any issues not covered by this document in consultation with the SED Board of Directors. All changes to this document will proceed through the SED Board of Directors.



Commitment of SED Lay Deacon Program Applicant

I have read and agree to follow the guidelines as presented in this document.

SED Lay Deacon Program Applicant

Date

Supervising Pastor

Date



Addendum 1- Triennial Report



Triennial Report of SED Lay Deacon

(From the SED Lay Deacon Guidelines)

This form is part of the triennial report that the certified Lay Deacon is to complete every 3 years just prior to the SED Convention. It shall be submitted to the Supervising Pastor and the SED Lay Deacon Program Office

Print or Type.

Personal Information

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Employer (Name and Address): _____

Contact Information

Cell: _____ Home: _____

Email: _____

Congregational Information

Congregation (Name and Address): _____

+++++



Addendum 1- Triennial Report

SED Lay Deacon Service Report

What continuing education have you received over the past year?

Please circle the areas in which you frequently participate as an SED Lay Deacon?

Bible Study Leader

Worship

Evangelism

Social Ministry

Sick/Homebound Calls

Youth Ministry

Other: _____

Continuing Education Completed:

Year 1 _____

Year 2 _____

Year 3 _____

Signed by the certified SED Lay Deacon and the Supervising Pastor:

Lay Deacon

Date

Supervising Pastor

Date

This report is to be reviewed by both the SED Lay Deacon and the Supervising Pastor before being submitted to the SED Lay Deacon Program Office



Addendum 2- Application for SED Lay Deacon Blessing

SED Lay Deacon Program Application

*Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be.
My Father will honor the one who serves me. John 12:26*

The SED Lay Deacon Program is a group of people committed to service in and for the Church, a group which has its roots in the New Testament and has a history of development and usage in the Church catholic from its beginnings to the present. SED Lay Deacons are trained laity that work under the local Pastor in service to the local church through works of mercy and witness, thus supplementing the work of the local Pastor.

What follows is the application for admission to the SED Lay Deacon Program after completion of the academic courses and leading to blessing as an SED Lay Deacon.

Please note completion of the academic program does not automatically qualify an individual for blessing as an SED Lay Deacon.

Completed applications should be given to the individual's local pastor, who in turn will forward them, with additional required materials, to the SED Lay Deacon Program Office.

May the Lord of the Church bless your study and your service in His name, and to His glory.

Soli Deo Gloria

Personal Information

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Cell: _____ Home: _____

Email: _____

Congregation (Name and Address): _____



Additional Letters of Recommendation

1. Pastor – recommending the applicant for Lay Diaconal service;
2. Congregation – endorsement for Lay Diaconal service in the parish;
3. Two [2] letters of recommendation concerning your Christian character, personality and living. These letters should be from individuals, not related, who have known the applicant for a minimum of two recent years.

Name:

[illegible]

Addendum 3- Application for SED Lay Deacon Blessing

**Lay Deacon Program Fee Structure
2021 – 2023 Cohort
Year 1 (September 2021 – May 2022)
Year 2 (September 2022 – May 2023)**

Year One Fees:

Purpose	Amount	Payable to	Due Date
Background Check Fee	\$50.00	SED via check	Upon acceptance into program.
Coaching Fees (within SED)	\$155 -paid by SED	N/A	N/A
Coaching Fees – Optional (outside of SED)	\$600.00	SED via check	Upon acceptance into program.
MTC Application Fee	\$30.00	Mission Training Center (MTC)	When registering for first MTC course.
5 training courses (48 credit hours total)	\$900/year for 48 credits	MTC	Due upon enrollment in each consecutive course.
Books & Course Materials	\$250 - \$300 total	Various	Per requirements for each course.

Year Two Fees:

Purpose	Amount	Payable to	Due Date
Coaching Fees (within SED)	paid for by SED	N/A	N/A
Coaching Fees – Optional (outside of SED)	\$600.00	SED via check	Mid August
5 training courses (48 credit hours total)	\$900/year for 48 credits	MTC	Due upon enrollment in each consecutive course
Books & Course Materials	\$250 - \$300 total	Various	Per requirements for each course

June 7, 2021



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

State of Black Ministry



THE 2021 STATE OF BLACK MINISTRY

A REPORT FROM THE BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK

January 2022

The Black Ministry Think Tank is a group of committed and experienced lay and clergy leaders in Black/African Immigrant ministry who meet regularly, on their own time, to develop strategies for strengthening the ministry among people of color in the LCMS. Below is a report on our concerns and actions during 2021.

Black ministry is our response to the recognition that the LCMS continues to be a 96% White church body despite the demographics of our nation and world. Black ministry is the earnest and historical efforts of a consistent and persistent minority of voices challenging the LCMS to be more wholesome in embracing its mission. Black ministry is the vehicle established to strengthen, promote, support, educate, empower, encourage and propel the growth and sustainability of Black and African immigrant ministries. Black ministry is a sorely needed emphasis to unite and equip God's church to grow!

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS: BUILDING BONDS

During the past two years, THE BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK has focused on encouraging communication and connection between African American and African immigrant congregations. We've suggested that district units make a deliberate effort to involve African immigrant congregations in their communication network and activities. THINK TANK member and African immigrant, Rev. Dr. John Loum, has shared and sensitized us to opportunities for collaboration. For example, in the Southeastern District, the Coalition of Lutherans in Black Ministry asked member congregations to choose a month and collect an offering to support the Lutheran School of Gambia. Congregations have responded and each month contributions in varying amounts have been sent to the school. More importantly, representatives from African immigrant congregations have begun to participate in the Coalition's semiannual gatherings. We are eager to hear other examples of relationship building among African American and African immigrant congregations. Please share your stories. Good ideas can be contagious! Email us at blackministrythinktank@gmail.com.

LABORERS FOR THE HARVEST

An ongoing concern for us all is the need for pastors. There are approximately 800 pastoral vacancies in the LCMS. Our two seminaries are far from capacity enrollment; and within the next 10 years, 50% of our ordained pastors become eligible for retirement. But we



count on the Lord's promise to provide and we believe the Cross-cultural Ministry Center at Concordia University-Irvine (CMC) is one of those provisions.

In collaboration with Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Concordia University-Irvine offers a four-year program with special emphasis on cross-cultural ministry that awards a Master of Arts in Theology upon completion. Students may take all courses online, but must be on the Irvine, California campus for one month each year. A unique feature of the CMC program is a four-year vicarage. Rather than spending one year on vicarage as with traditional seminary training, CMC students participate in a vicarage each year of their matriculation in their own local areas. CMC students are usually able to acquire 80-85% of their school costs in scholarships.

The Cross-Cultural Ministry Center is not a new program and has been operating since 1995. Rev. Dr. S.T. Williams shared that he has recruited three men who have applied to, are currently in or have graduated from the CMC. Vicar Jean Berus, a native of Port-au-Prince Haiti, is currently serving under Rev. Williams and is scheduled to graduate in May 2023. Deacon Kurt Bauer, who currently serves at Christ-Los Angeles, CA has applied to CMC. And Rev. Anthony Foster, a graduate of CMC, has been serving as pastor of Faith-Inglewood CA for a year and a half. For more information on the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, go to www.cui.edu/academicprograms/graduate/cmc.

UPGRADING THE LCMS CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTORY

If you've had occasion to use the church locator on the LCMS website, you may look up congregations by name, location or by "ministry type". (Check out this resource! Go to www.lcms.org and click on the "Locator" tab). Ministry type covers a broad spectrum of categories. Ethnic and/or groups are among the many categories that searchers might check when looking for a place to worship (e.g. Eritrean, Filipino, Native American, Caribbean, Jewish, Muslim, etc.)

As shared in a previous report, we have been in conversation with Synod's Director of LCMS Rosters and Statistics about including "African American/Black" as one of the ministry types in the directory. One of the questions raised by the Director is how they might identify which congregations would be included in that category. Would the determination be made based on the ethnicity of the predominant membership, the worship style or some other factor? We wanted to recommend that inclusion under such a filter be made by congregational request; but we decided first to survey pastors and lay leaders on our email list: if a "African American/Black" filter existed, would you want your congregation listed? While the level of response to our survey was somewhat disappointing (30 responses from approximately 250 addressees), the majority of the responders (24) said YES. Two of those



who responded NO indicated that their congregations were White; but two of the others who responded NO included comments that were pretty much on the same page: that within the body of Christ there should be no need to distinguish ourselves from one another on the basis of race.

While understanding the perspective of those who see the additional category as “divisive”, our viewpoint is that the locator filters advertise our DIVERSITY! With all the other non-linguistic ethnic categories included in the locator, why should there be such trepidation at adding “African American/Black”? (Are we reacting to the world rather than being light in it?) In a church body that, in far too many Black urban communities, is known as “a White church”, we need to advertise our diversity. And diversity is not inherently divisive! The fact that we offer ethnic options in no way suggests that only that ethnic group should attend. Rather it affords anyone who might be using the church locator the opportunity to experience and be enriched by what could be a different perspective of Christian education and a different style of worship. For those reasons and the response to our survey, THE BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK will continue our efforts to have the filter added to our directory.

BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK SEEKING LAY MEMBERS

As we seek to develop and recommend strategies to strengthen the ministry of and to people of color, THE BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK strives to be as representative of our church as possible in our makeup. We seek to include the perspectives of men and women, laity and clergy, Black and White and youth and adult. We also try to be geographically inclusive with members from all of synodical regions. Currently of our 15-member team, 10 are pastors and the majority of our members are from the Southern and Southeastern districts. So THE BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK is seeking lay members preferably from other synodical districts. THE BLACK MINISTRY THINK TANK currently meets via ZOOM conference calls no more than once a month. Think Tank members typically work on one of five teams: COMMUNICATION, MINISTRY FOCUS, OWNERSHIP, RECRUITMENT and REVITALIZATION. Those teams meet via ZOOM as well between THINK TANK conference calls. The only requirement for serving on the Think Tank is having a passionate commitment to Black ministry. If you think you might be interested, PLEASE email us at blackministrythinktank@gmail.com. We'll be very eager to talk with you!

Thanks for your attention and please join us in keeping the ministry of the LCMS in your prayers. We have a valuable message---especially “for such a time as this”! Let's do all we can to get that message out to a broader spectrum of people!

*Wishing you a blessed New Year,
The Black Ministry Think Tank*



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Report From the Nominations Committee

Report from the Nominations Committee To The Southeastern District Board of Directors

February 11, 2022

The following report identifies all candidates nominated for District Offices and Committees and the number of ballots cast by congregations of the Southeastern District. Those whose names that are bolded have agreed to stand for election. The second grouping identifies those who met the number of ballots needed to run but who declined. The last grouping are those who were nominated but either did not meet the number of ballots required or were not eligible.

There were 54 ballots received by February 1, 2022 for 11 positions by 28 congregations (13%).

President

Rev. Dr. William Harmon (19)

Rev. Dr. Lloyd Gaines (6)

Rev. William Beyer (2)

Rev. David Nuss (1)

Rev. Teka Fogi (1)

Vice President – Northern Region

Rev. Teka Fogi (1)

Rev. Dr. Lloyd D. Gaines (6) (incumbent)

Rev. Dr. David Maack (1)

Rev. Elliott Robertson (1)

Vice President – Central Region

Rev. Matthew Bean (7)

Rev. Timothy Bohlmann (2)

Rev. Wayne Fredericksen (1)

Rev. Jack Meehan (2)

Vice President – Southern Region

Rev. David Ziehr (6)



Secretary

Rev. David Maack (1)

Rev. Blaise Sedney (7)

Rev. Peter DeMik (12)

Rev. William Beyer (1)

Rev. John Kassouf (terms out, not eligible to run)

Treasurer

Mr. Ronald Adolphi (13)

Mr. Charles (Charlie) Raphael (13)

Commissioned Member – Board of Directors (Elect 2 – at least one must be a teacher (T))

Mrs. Susan Maack (T) (15) (incumbent)

DCE Paula Weiss (15) (incumbent)

Lay Member

Mr. Ron Bostick (15) (incumbent)

Mr. Joel Gast (3)

Dr. Endy Kidenwold (14) (incumbent)

Mr. Samuel Moore (2)

Mrs. Nancy Nolley (17) (incumbent)

Mrs. Judy Olver (6)

Mrs. Hilary Tew (3)

Mrs. Alice Hedt (5)

Ms. Nikki Rochester (6)

Mr. Dwayne Taylor (5)

Mr. William Evans (2)

Mrs. Kim Bolton (4)

Mr. James Young (1)

Dr. Paul Fowler (1)

Mr. Steve Galing (1)

Mr. David McGuffey (1)

Mrs. Claire Partlow (1)

Mr. Joe Carlin (requested name be removed)

DCE Paula Weiss (rostered worker)

Nominating Committee

Central

DCE Randy Ronning (1)

DCE Shawn Maassel (1)

CLM Krista Stec (1)



Southern

Ms. Sarah Beyer (1)

Mrs. Rae Fangmeier (1)

Mr. Clarence Nolley (1)

Mr. Alex Schandert (2)

Northern

Rev. David Nuss (1)

Rev. Blaise Sedney (1)

Rev. Peter DeMik (1)

Rev. Peter Couser (1)

Rev. Mark Hricko (1)

Rev. Martin Schultheis (1)

**Lay Member – Board of Directors
(Elect 5)**

Mr. Ronald Bostick

Dr. Paul Fowler

Mr. Joel Gast

Dr. Endy Kidenwold

Mr. Samuel Moore

Mrs. Nancy Nolley

Ms. Judy Olver

Ms. Hillary Tew

Mr. James Young

District Nominating Committee**Northern Region – Ordained Member**

Rev. David Nuss

Central Region – Commissioned Member

DCE Randy Ronning

Southern Region – Lay

Ms. Sarah J. Beyer



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Task Force on Realignment Report to the SED BOD

Report on Circuit Realignment

TO: Southeastern District Board of Directors

FR: Rev. Bill Harmon, Central Region Vice President

June 1, 2020

President Denninger formed a Circuit Realignment Task Force whose purpose was to discover, if possible, a means to keep all of the District Electoral Circuits so that the District is in compliance with Synod and District polity. Additionally, the District wants to be a strong position as it pertains to its rights and privileges at Synod conventions and our ability to maximize our voting rights as a District.

Members of the Task Force were: Rev. Tim Bohlmann, Rev. Mark Schudde, Rev. Mike Merker, Rev. Donald Shaefer, Rev. Travis Guse, Rev. Bill Beyer, Southern Region Vice President, Rev. Lloyd Gains, Northern Region Vice President, Deaconess Sally Hiller, Rev. Mark Schroeder, who served as Secretary for the Task Force, and myself. I served as chair of the Task Force.

To achieve the goals set out for us, several meetings took place within each region with members of the Task Force. An additional meeting was held in Baltimore under the leadership of Vice President Gains in order to offer further suggestions for the Baltimore region.

As the Task Force did its work, some lessons that were learned or discussed along the way included:

- The willingness, as necessary, to have some churches move over state lines to be in a Circuit.
 - This ended up not being necessary but it was discussed.
- The Southern Region suggested that it may be necessary to lose a Synod vote rather than move churches from areas of strength to areas of division.
 - This ended up not being necessary but it was discussed.
- It is possible, due to the national decline of the church, that Circuit realignment conversations will need to take place more often than not and that it might be wise to help the District as a whole to understand this possibility.
- It would be helpful if our newly chartered congregations would begin reporting numbers. In several instances numbers would be higher if we had the information.
- As we walk through the national pandemic, the members of the District as a whole have been utilizing technology in ways that some had not before. Technology may be a new means of connecting congregations.



Recommendations

Southern Region Recommendation:

- 1.) Move Our Savior, Raleigh to Circuit 13E from C13W
- 2.) Move Grace by the Sea, Nagshead to Circuit 13E from C12**
- 3.) Move Advent, Chapel Hill to Circuit 14 from C13W
- 4.) Move Grace, Durham to Circuit 14 from C13W
 - a. Our Savior is more aligned stylistically with 13E. Nagshead is in NC, so put it in NC again. Moving Nagshead will not hurt C12. Moving New Kent out of C12 still leaves C12 as a viable electoral circuit.

Central Region Recommendations:

- 1.) Move Trinity, Richmond VA to C11 from C10
- 2.) Move King of Glory, New Kent VA to C10 from C12
- 3.) Move Redeemer, Fredericksburg VA to C8 from C9.0**
- 4.) Move Living Hope, Stafford VA to C8 from C9.0**

Northern Region recommendations:

- 1.) Move St. Paul's, Glen Burnie MD to Circuit 3 from Circuit 4**
- 2.) Move Galilee, Chester MD to Circuit 4 from Circuit 1**
- 3.) Move Trinity, Chesterton MD to Circuit 4 from Circuit 1**
- 4.) Move First Lutheran, Towson to C3 from C2**
- 5.) Move Holy Cross, Towson to C3 from C2**
- 6.) Move Pilgrim, Bethesda, MD to C7 from C6**
- 7.) Move Calvary - Silver Spring to C7 from C6**
- 8.) Move Christ Deaf - Silver Spring to C7 from C6**

As for numbers per circuit, here are the changes. Seven Congregations are required to form a Circuit:

Circuit 1 old:	13	Circuit 1 new:	11
Circuit 2 old:	11	Circuit 2 new:	9
Circuit 3 old:	13	Circuit 3 new:	16
Circuit 4 old:	8	Circuit 4 new:	9
Circuit 6 old:	12	Circuit 6 new:	9
Circuit 7 old:	8	Circuit 7 new:	11
Circuit 8 old:	8	Circuit 8 new:	10
Circuit 9 old:	11	Circuit 9 new:	9
Circuit 11 old:	9	Circuit 11 new:	10
Circuit 12 old:	12	Circuit 12 new:	10
Circuit 13E:	10	Circuit 13 new:	12
Circuit 13W:	10	Circuit 13W new:	7
Circuit 14 old	8	Circuit 14 new:	10



At least 1,500 members must be in a Circuit to form a Circuit. The new recommendations meet these criteria per the 2018 statistics:

Circuit 1: 1,633
Circuit 2: 2,040
Circuit 3: 1,701
Circuit 4: 1,637
Circuit 5: 1,645
Circuit 6: 2,386
Circuit 7: 1,814
Circuit 8: 1,751
Circuit 9: 2,198
Circuit 9.5: 2,360
Circuit 10: 1,891
Circuit 11: 1,950
Circuit 12: 2,051
Circuit 13E: 1,541
Circuit 13W: 3,824
Circuit 14: 1,639
Circuit 15: 2,104
Circuit 16: 2,869
Circuit 17: 3,227
Circuit 18: 1,880
Circuit 19: 1,625

Here is a link with how the new map would look:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1dRSGkiguwGeP2eVnjlSIF8kKcN4GLimb&ll=36.227588836633146%2C-80.29061488472263&z=7>

It is also recommended that should the Board of Directors wish to pursue this change; the District connect with those who would be affected prior to a public announcement.

The committee so moves these recommendations based on affirmation from each congregation.

Note: Conversations with each congregation who would be affected if these changes went forward took place. As a result, the changes that were made are noted in the bolded names on the list of regional recommendations. This information comes to the 2022 Convention in Resolution BL 04-22-04. (April 2022)



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Christ Lutheran Church, Dundalk MD

Christ Lutheran Church, Dundalk MD served the community for over 115 years. Organized as the First Polish Lutheran Evangelical Church on March 20, 1904, it began as a ministry to serve Polish Lutheran immigrants from the Mazurian province of Russian Poland.

A decision to close the congregation and become a legacy ministry enabling new work to happen was made in August 2019 after much prayer and conversation. The final worship service was held in November and the transfer of property (except for the Cemetery) was turned over to the Southeastern District in December.

Items from the church were given to mission congregations, the property was sold, and funding for mission work was made available beginning in 2021. Nearly \$456,000 was received.

A report of the use of the Funds from Christ, Dundalk.

All expenses related to managing the property and settlement were deducted from these funds. Remaining funds were designated as Ministry Expansion Funds. These funds are supporting mission work in the Baltimore area as follows:

2021: \$70,000 in Mission Grants were given to 5 ministries in the Baltimore Circuits.

- New Thing, Towson MD: \$15,000
- Immanuel, Baltimore MD: \$15,000
- Urban Missionary: \$15,000
- Nazareth Hispanic: \$15,000
- Redeemer, Baltimore MD \$10,000

2022: \$117,000 in Mission Grants for 7 ministries in the Baltimore Circuits.

- New Thing, Towson MD \$20,000
- Holy Nativity, Arbutus MD \$20,000
- Immanuel, Baltimore MD \$20,000
- Nazareth, Baltimore MD \$30,000
- Emmanuel, Baltimore MD \$10,000
- Grace House, Calvary, Baltimore MD \$5,000
- Berea, Baltimore MD \$12,000



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

2018 Convention Resolutions

May 21, 2018

Updated: February 2019, November 2019, June 2020, January 2021, April 2022

Mission Resolutions

Resolution 01-18-01a: To Affirm the Mission of the Church

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for each congregation to affirm the Church's unique opportunities to joyfully proclaim Jesus in this missionary age and for the District to resource and encourage all of her ministries to open hearts and doors to all tribes, languages, and people groups as, together, we seek to connect our neighbors with Jesus.

Progress Report:

- Continued opportunities for equipping congregations and individuals to be iGo missionaries within their neighborhoods is made available to congregations and circuits through the Regional Facilitator for Mission Engagement.
- Northern Region Mission Engagement Team members are assisting with the equipping of individuals in iNeighborhood.
- Lutheran Hour Ministry's Spiritual Conversation, Households of Faith, and Better Together kits sent to every congregation.
- Dr. Tony Cook and members of Lutheran Hour Ministry staff have been guests on Thursdays@Noon.
- iNeighborhood newsletters have featured Spiritual Conversations information.

Resolution 01-18-02a: To Affirm iNeighborhood Ministry

Resolution Summary: In adopting the resolution, congregations are affirming the mission work of reaching neighbors of every generation, ethnicity, and background with the Gospel.

Progress Report:

- An inter-ethnic meeting in December 2018 with Minnesota South District President David Meier gathered people from the Baltimore-DC metro area to discuss first generation immigrant ministry.
- An Urban Ministry Summit, in partnership with Center for US Mission brought together 47 individuals from 19 congregations to pray for neighbors.
- iNeighborhood equipping events have been led in all three regions during Fall 2019.
- A Church Planting Essentials workshop with Center for US Mission will resource participants to take next steps with neighborhood ministries.
- A cohort of inter-ethnic workers participated in Mission Training with PLI.



- 29 SED congregations are listed as on-line churches on the SED website. Many of them were resourced for this ministry through Mission Partnership Support funds.
- Spring Training was a 5-day series on iNeighborhood teaching led by SED staff.
- iNeighborhood Action grants have enabled a number of congregations to host events in their neighborhoods that enabled them to connect in new ways with their communities. The Good Shepherd, York PA -Laundromat Ministry; Bethlehem, Aiken SC-Octoberfest; St. John, York PA-Butterfly Release; Prince of Peace, Springfield VA-Patio of Peace; Resurrection, Newport News–Neighborhood Picnic
- Inter-ethnic meetings have gathered ministry partners in conversations through PLI, Sunday School training, discipleship training, and a large gathering in November of inter-ethnic ministry workers.
- Refer to Rev. Yared Halche's report to see the additional work that is on-going.

Resolution 01-18-03: To Support Gainesville, Virginia Mission

Resolution Summary: In partnership with congregations in Circuits 9 and 9.5, Gainesville VA is targeted for a new mission start.

Progress Report: Mission Engagement Facilitator Travis Guse is working with congregations in the circuit to establish a mission committee (2/2019). A date has been set for the first gathering to be held at Our Saviors Way, Ashburn VA. A survey of the Circuit 9 congregations who may have members in the area is underway. Rev. Gary James is serving as point person for the Circuit. Work has been set aside during the season of COVID.

Resolution 01-18-04: To Encourage Engagement with Long and Short-Term Mission Opportunities

Resolution Summary: Working with partners, such as Mission of Christ Network, office of International Mission, Mission Central, and Lutheran Hour Ministry will help to strengthen congregational engagement in outreach.

Progress Report:

- Multiple opportunities to serve short-term mission efforts in Peru are available, shared on web site and in news.
- Servant events in partnership with Youth Ministry continue to be held in SED. Servants (2020) events are being canceled due to COVID-19 Pandemic.
- On-going restoration work in Jacksonville NC and Myrtle Beach SC continue to gather servant-hearted members of the SED, three events were held summer of 2019, one for first week of DEC.
- Three teams have responded to work in the Seneca SC area as a result of the March 2020 tornado.
- St. Matthews, Bel Air MD hosted a virtual Mission Trip.
- Congregational overseas mission trips were put on hold during COVID. Opportunities to go out of the country are currently limited.



Resolution 01-18-05a: To Develop Worker Training Plan

Resolution Summary:

This resolution calls for the District President working with the Board of Directors to develop a worker training plan to raise up and equip workers who will serve the mission and congregations of the District. The encouragement to work with our partner institutions, when appropriate will help to expand our ability to develop workers. The District will petition the Synod in Convention to do the same and the SED President will present a report to the 2021 SED Convention.

Progress Report

- An overture was drafted by the SED Board of Directors and forwarded to LCMS President Harrison for submission to the Synod Convention on December 7, 2018.
- Conversations with Paul Mueller, NW District and Director of the Lay Ministry Program through NW District continue to take place.
- Circuit 10 has incorporated this into their mission plan for the circuit.
- Travis Guse is staff person working most directly with a newly gathered team.
- The Task Force has continued the development of this program which will be officially September 2020. Instructors have been and promotion is about to start.
- The SED Lay Deacon program will graduate the first cohort in June 2022. A second cohort is completing the first year.
- A copy of the SED Lay Deacon Program guidelines is included in the report section of this workbook.

Resolution 01-18-06a: To Continue the Licensing of Certified Lay Deacons for Word and Sacrament Ministry in Emergencies

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for continued commitment in supporting residential seminary programs and nonresidential pastoral training programs like SMP, and that the SED continue to certify lay deacons, licensing them for preaching and administration of sacraments in emergencies, and to facilitate a conversation within the LCMS that will lead to a well-defined consistent path for the training, certification, and licensure of lay deacons Synod-wide.

Progress Report

- This is ongoing work with conversations happening at many levels of district and national. Currently a committee is being established to determine next steps. (See above 01-18-05A)

Resolution 01-18-07: To Commend to Synod Priorities for National Mission and Ministry Emphases

Resolution Summary: Each District is encouraged to identify and forward to Synod in Convention priorities for mission and ministry emphases. This resolution lifts up church planting in densely populated and multi-cultural settings, extending mercy by performing



human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries, and revitalizing our member congregations.

Progress Report

An overture was drafted by the SED Board of Directors and forwarded to LCMS President Harrison for submission to the Synod Convention on December 7, 2018. The LCMS in Convention determine the mission priorities for 2019-2022: Resolution 4:03A

Resolved, That Synod in convention establish *Making Disciples for Life* as its mission and ministry emphasis for the 2019–2022 triennium and directs the Office of National Mission and Office of International Mission under ends policies established by the BNM and BIM to resource congregations, schools, circuits and districts to do the following:

- evangelize and disciple the lost;
- retain the faithful;
- strengthen congregations and schools;
- plant new congregations and schools wherever possible, especially in urban and multi-cultural communities; and
- engage in international mission in partnership with the Office of International Mission;

The LCMS in Convention has also made a bylaw change impacting the way the priorities are gathered, Resolution 4:04A, 3.8.2.2 (3.8.3.2 is the same with exception that it refers to Board for International Mission):

3.8.2.2.1 The Board for National Mission shall, during the course of each triennium between national conventions of the Synod, work with the Board for International Mission to gather pertinent and sufficient information from the Synod's members that will facilitate the boards' assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Synod's triennial mission and ministry emphases, and shall develop accordingly a joint overture to the national convention for beneficial amendments thereto. The boards shall also provide a joint report in advance of the Synod's district conventions, offering ideas and guidance for proposing triennial mission and ministry emphases to the national convention.

Congregational Outreach

Resolution 02-18-01: To Create and Implement a District Program to Support Our Vital Ministry of Early Childhood Education

Resolution Summary: In adopting this resolution, congregations are committing to pray for the vital mission and ministry opportunities of our early childhood centers. In addition, the District will establish a Task Force to develop resources and response to the various challenges of early childhood education and ministry. A report will be presented to the 2021 Convention.

Progress Report: A Task Force for Early Childhood Ministry has been established, is meeting, and working on several resources for established and new centers. A meeting



for Early Childhood Directors was held in January 2019 and connected directors from 16 programs for young children, meetings continued until stopped by multiple transitions of directors and COVID.

- A MALIM grant for all Early Childhood provided a series of hard cover religious books for each program and a 3-part video training program that addressed Teaching the Faith in the Preschool.
- People resources to assist with key components in Early Childhood programs.
- Committee: Wendy Huff, Chrissy Campbell, Andela Dudek, Rebecca Stewart, Michelle Swain Clauberg, Ned Waterhouse, Peter DeMik, Garet Ellis, Dave Panning, Bill Nau, Sally Hiller
- During Covid a weekly Zoom meeting with Early childhood Directors was held. This is now continuing on a monthly basis.
- Best Practices survey was conducted to learn where the areas for resourcing are.

Resolution 02-18-02a: To Advocate for Church Workers and the Congregations that Care for Them

Resolution Summary: In adopting this resolution, the Convention recognized the great need for worker care and health. Providing the SED Worker Care Team with direction to move forward in identifying a variety of ways for the District through staff, Facilitators, Reconcilers, the Worker Care team to address the well-being of rostered church workers.

Progress Report:

- A pilot project with Grace Place Ministries to resource the development of congregational worker care teams was held in February 2019.
- Worker Care Team has been expanded and continues to meet. They will be doing a series of Thursdays@Noon broadcasts to highlight Worker Care concerns and resources to support our church workers. They are working to present virtual meetings, online resources, and the training of local worker care teams.
- The 2020 Congregational Presidents meeting will feature presentations from the worker care team.
- During the Pandemic, care for workers was made possible through online conference rooms.
- Members of the team have been available to be on-site in congregations/schools to assist in times of crisis or need.
- Worker Care Team hosted tables and sessions at pcw and educators' conferences.

RESOLUTION 02-18-03: To Support LCMSU and other LCMS Campus Ministries throughout the SED

Resolution Summary: Congregations are encouraged to use the various LCMS websites and campus ministry resources with their co-eds and the District will maintain a current listing of congregations involved in campus ministry.



Progress Report:

- The SED website has added a section for campus ministry and has an interactive map identifying the congregations who are involved in campus ministry. (<http://se.lcms.org/campus-ministry/>)
- At the September 2019 Board of Directors' Retreat, members from Circuit 11 shared their concern for a more intentional approach to both campus ministry involvement by local congregations, but also lifting up campus ministry among youth groups in our congregations.
- Information about campus ministry, and invitation for congregations to make contact with ministries where they have young people attending, and prayers for our campus ministries have been included in the various communications of the District.
- The Mission Vicar at Living Savior, Fairfax Station VA is involved in campus ministry at George Mason University.

RESOLUTION 02-18-06: To Ask for Guidance Regarding Non-Legal Marriages Recognized by the Church

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for a formal request to be made to the Council of Presidents to study the issue non-legal marriages being recognized by the church and to provide a report to the LCMS Districts.

Progress Report

- A letter was sent to the Chair of the Council of Presidents in August 2019.
- In response to the SED Committee on Constitutions and Bylaws, a formal request was sent to Synod's legal team asking for input on this issue as at least two congregations included statements in the Constitution referencing this.
- A report was issued by the CCM in 2021:
<https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/5B8F1B78-903D-4429-A705-09DE7CF201D5?>
- The Introductory Letter can be found at:
<https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/B7BE1C01-BDC7-4DA7-ABE1-E0D15712F98A?>

Stewardship & Finance

RESOLUTION 03-18-01a: To Recognize the Work of Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission as a Funding Source for Southeastern District Mission Efforts

Resolution Summary: This resolution recognizes and thanks congregations for their support in the work of mission. Recognizing that there are different ways to support this work, the District in Convention welcomed a new mission funding partner: Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission.

Progress Report

MALIM is now a 501(c)3 organization with social media and web presence. Projects and activities for funding are being identified. With a gift from the closing of Luther Memorial



School, Richmond, MALIM is able to provide significant grants to elementary schools. They are anticipating distributing the first grants by August 2019. The SED continues to support this effort by providing a link on the website, giving them opportunities for presentations, and continuing communications and sharing mission opportunities. MALIM was also able to present numerous COVID grants as a result of the Art Scherer Memorial Crisis Grant. MALIM will be making a presentation at the Convention.

RESOLUTION 03-18-02: To Reduce Southeastern District Convention/Conference Costs

Resolution Summary: This resolution calls for a continued commitment to keep costs of Convention down.

Progress Report: Due to the type of venue and careful convention planning and preparation, the 2018 SED Convention cost was 31.35% less than in 2015. Plans to return to the Hickory Convention Center for 2021 are confirmed.

- The impact of COVID changed the Convention location and the design of the event. The 39th Convention of the Southeastern District will be a hybrid event featuring all non-voting portions on-line on Monday-Wednesday, with elections and voting on Thursday evening and Friday (May 9-13, 2022). In addition, the site was moved to Richmond VA to enable most of the participants to be able to commute within a 4-hour drive.

RESOLUTION 03-18-03a: To Ensure Proper Financial Reporting From the Synod

Resolution Summary: A call for transparency in Synod finances is made of the LCMS Chief Financial Officer. This resolution also requests that the District also continue to provide financial information for her members.

Progress Report: The LCMS 2019 Convention Resolution 8-03 “To Ensure Timely and Transparent Financial Reporting in the Synod” addressed these concerns. In addition, the SED continues to monitor its own financial reporting with the Board of Directors and the Finance Committee. Members of the District are kept informed through web, letters to congregations, communications.

- Note the Financial Reports located in the Reports section of the Workbook as well as on the SED website at <http://se.lcms.org/resources/financial-information/>

Bylaws

RESOLUTION 04-18-01a: To Amend Synod’s Constitution to Allow All Member Congregations Voice and Vote

Resolution Summary: All congregations in Synod have the right to vote, but not all congregations are able to do so if they are a dual parish. This resolution calls for the Synod to revisit this and change the language to allow for clarity in interpretation and for each congregation to have voice and vote.



Progress Report

An overture was drafted by the SED Board of Directors and forwarded to LCMS President Harrison for submission to the Synod Convention on December 7, 2019. This was addressed in LCMS Resolution 9-05.

RESOLUTION 04-18-03a: To Bring Southeastern District Bylaws into Harmony with the Constitution, Bylaws, and Resolutions of the Synod

Resolution Summary: This resolution reflects the impact of Bylaw changes at the National level as a result of the 2016 Synod Convention. It brings SED Bylaws into harmony with Synod Bylaws.

Progress Report: A letter with the proposed Bylaw changes was received by LCMS Secretary, Rev. Dr. John Sias. The changes were reviewed and found to be consistent. 5/10/2018

RESOLUTION 04-18-05a: To Encourage the Use of the Koinonia Project

Resolution Summary: District, Circuits, and Congregations are encouraged to review and use the Koinonia Project as a beginning step to reconciliation.

Progress Report

- Presentations were made at Circuit Visitors' meeting throughout the triennium.
- The Koinonia Process has been used several times throughout the SED.

Theology & Practice

RESOLUTION 05-18-01a: To Rescind CCM 16-2791

Resolution Summary: In this resolution, the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) is asked to visit their opinion on CCM 16-2791 and to rescind it.

Progress Report: Overture to overturn this was sent to the 2019 LCMS Convention. Resolutions 10-01, 10-03B addressed this topic.

- Report of Synod actions in the 2019 Convention Proceedings at <https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/W0oPZk7su2FGjxVN61mAD33k7bEPZghm?>

RESOLUTION 05-18-02: To Remove the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) Bylaw 2.14.5

Resolution Summary: This resolution directs the SED Board of Directors to memorialize the 2019 LCMS Convention to reinstate the 2004 method of Ecclesiastical Supervision.

Progress Report

An overture was drafted by the SED Board of Directors and forwarded to LCMS President Harrison for submission to the Synod Convention on December 7, 2018.



RESOLUTION 05-18-03a: Formation of a Task Force on Ecclesiastical Supervision

Resolution Summary: this is a second resolution addressing Ecclesiastical Supervision and call for a Synod Task Force to study this issue.

Progress Report

An overture was drafted by the SED Board of Directors and forwarded to LCMS President Harrison for submission to the Synod Convention on December 7, 2018.

RESOLUTION 05-18-05: To Memorialize Synod in Convention to Authorize the Council of Presidents (Acting As the Board of Assignments) to Create a System for the Placement of Members on Candidate Status

Resolution Summary: In his resolution, the members of the Southeastern District are asking the Council of Presidents to review and develop a system with eligible members on the LCMS Roster who are candidate may be considered for a call when there are not enough seminarian candidates.

Progress Report

An overture was drafted by the SED Board of Directors and forwarded to LCMS President Harrison for submission to the Synod Convention on December 7, 2018.



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Ministry Safe



Ministry Safe Training

In September 2021, The Southeastern District committed to a goal of having all workers in our congregations, schools, and missions, equipped with training so that all of our programs would be safe places for children and families.

The Board of Directors at their September 2021 meeting felt strongly enough about the importance of this topic, that they passed the following resolution:

Whereas training re: sexual abuse needs to be addressed, and whereas the SED has noted the importance of training in this area, be it resolved, that the Board of Directors and SED staff take the "Ministry Safe" - "Not Even One" training by the December BOD meeting."



As of April 2022, 14 ministries representing 692 workers have completed or are in the process of taking this this training. It is basic training that is conducted on-line and those who successfully complete a brief exam following the training receive a certificate, which can be used to share with parents of children, identify the ministry as a safe place to the community, and be reported to the ministry's insurance company.

This program has been made available to SED ministries at no cost. Currently, through the month of April, Parent Training is free for everyone. To sign up for the training or to review the Ministry Safe website and access free resources, please send an email to Lisa Long at the District Office (llong@se.lcms.org).

Sexual abuse of children is a "quiet" epidemic that is only occasionally brought to light when sensational news stories hit the press. The reality is that one in every four girls and one in every six boys in the US is reportedly abused before the age of eighteen. Ninety percent of the time they are abused by someone they know and trust. Sadly, we all know that neither the Lutheran Church nor school ministries are necessarily safe from this potential. That is why President Denninger made the decision to partner with MinistrySafe and launch the **Not Even One Initiative** to better educate and equip the workers in our congregations and schools to recognize the signs of child sexual abuse and better understand the tendencies of child predators...**AT NO COST** to our congregations and schools!



The Goal is for every staff person (professional or volunteer) in every congregation and school in the Southeastern District to complete the 90-minute, video-based, online training course that will help protect children and ministries throughout our district.

We urge you to commit to being a *Not Even One/MinistrySafe Ministry* for the sake of God's children entrusted into your care. Further information may be gleaned from the MinistrySafe website at <https://ministrysafe.com/>.



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Care and Comfort

Report Regarding the SED's Response to the Care and Comfort Fund Request for the Faculty and Staff of Concordia College, New York

Concordia College – New York (CCNY) announced their closing beginning with the Fall 2021 Semester. There are many SED workers and congregational members who attended this college throughout the years. The first SED Convention Action regarding CCNY happened in 1939 when delegates voted to “recognize the need for Christian higher education by giving our prayerful support to the work which Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, N. Y., and similar schools are doing in the interest of the development of faithful ministers and consecrated laymen and lay women.”

At the news of the closing of CCNY, people responded by giving special gifts to provide support to the faculty and staff. Through designated gifts received and a special SED Board designation of funds, a total of \$155,813 was sent to support those who lost jobs at Concordia. (Additional gifts were given directly to CCNY from individuals.) The District received this letter of acknowledgement:

Dear Concordia Alumni and Friends:

Peace be with you.

On behalf of the *Care and Comfort Fund* Committee, thank you for your generous hearts towards the faculty and staff of Concordia. Over the course of the last months, your gifts have supported former colleagues of the college we all love. Thank you!

Many of the people supported by you through this fund have reached out and expressed their gratitude for your care in a challenging time. The most recent word of thanks from a former employee of Concordia sums up the general feel of all the comments expressed:

We cannot express our gratitude enough to the Care & Comfort Committee and the donors for their commitment to the Concordia employees. I have heard from many of my colleagues; without your support they were not sure what they would have done. This is also true for my family; thank you. The Lord puts those in our path when we need them; it could be a shoulder to cry on, a friend to share joyful memories, a monetary gift to help pay the bills, or a place to be still. However he presents himself, we will continue to “walk by faith even when we cannot see” (2 Cor. 5:7).

I am pleased to share with you that through the leadership of the Atlantic District-LCMS, the support of the Eastern, New England, New Jersey, Southeastern and Florida Georgia Districts-LCMS, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and each of you, **\$466,736** has been distributed in support of faculty and staff of Concordia.



Our work as a *Care and Comfort* Fund Committee has now come to an end. Special thanks to: Barry Keurulainen (Class of '72), Tom Marks '76, Kevin Cook '76, Richard Norris '79, Jeffrey Skopak '88, and Mark Hricko, father of alumni from '14 and '17. Their time and support for the servants of God at Concordia has been a gift and a blessing.

As we complete our work and now bid one final farewell to Concordia, may the memories we share and the impact that was made within each of us inspire us to give witness to the best of Concordia in all that we do.

May the Lord richly bless you and thank you for your care and comfort to the faculty and staff of Concordia, New York.

Sincerely,

Bill Harmon (Class of '94)



ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Siblings in Christ of the Southeastern District,

2021 was many things — frustrating, surprising, heartbreaking, and heartening — to name a few. At Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, however, the word we find ourselves using the most is *transformative*.

Like all of you, we found ourselves facing parallel crises: the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, an influx of vulnerable immigrant children at our border, and the devastating refugee crisis in Afghanistan. While it was an incredibly difficult year in many ways, it was also one of the most inspiring in our 83-year history.

People of faith and communities like yours stepped up in ways that we never could have expected to meet this moment and fulfill our Biblical call to welcome the stranger. In the last year alone:

- **100,000 volunteers** signed up to support our refugee and immigrant neighbors
- Supporters provided more than **\$30,000 worth** of essential items like cell phones and gift cards to our Afghan brothers and sisters
- **14,000+ generous donors** opened their hearts to the ministry of welcome
- LIRS welcomed more than **10,500 Afghans** through our nationwide resettlement network
- Our team assisted in reunifying or placing nearly **33,000 children** in loving homes
- We sent nearly **20,000** holiday cards and **1,750+ gifts** to families affected by immigration detention
- LIRS launched several exciting new programs and offices, such as field offices in Northern Virginia and Fargo, ND; the New American Cities economic empowerment program; Mental Health services for refugee children and families, and more.

Our resettlement and immigration services were complemented by our ever-growing slate of annual programs, which offer the public opportunities to **ADAPT**: Act, Donate, Advocate, Pray, and Teach. We invite you to engage with LIRS, as an individual or community, through one of our five key programs:

- [Stand Up Speak Up](#) — Our interfaith advocacy program organized each spring
- [Gather](#) - A cultural education program hosted in the fall
- [Hope for the Holidays™](#) - LIRS' flagship winter program for supporting families impacted by immigration detention



- [EMMAUS Congregational Network](#) – Our network of congregations who receive resources and support from LIRS
- [LIRS Ambassador Network](#) – A community of change-makers from around the US

In 2022, we are deepening our commitment to the work of welcome and believe that together, we can realize Matthew 25:35 in communities across the United States. We are so grateful for your astounding support and look forward to welcoming our newest neighbors alongside you.

In peace,



Dr. Kristin Witte, Director for Outreach

National Headquarters: 700 Light Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230 | Phone: 410-230-2700 | Fax: 410-230-2890 | www.LIRS.org

Advocacy Office: 110 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 506/507, Washington, DC 20002 | Phone: 202-381-1030 | Fax: 202-330-5807

