



District
convention
wrap-ups

3



In Texas:
recovery
continues

6



Servant Events
registration
now open

12



REPORTER

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD | MARCH 2018

'Relationships, NOT PROGRAMS':

YOUTH MINISTRY SHARES RESEARCH ON YOUNG ADULTS



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

By Cheryl Magness
cheryl.magness@lcms.org

The LCMS Youth Ministry Symposium — held Jan. 28–30 in St. Louis — was all about ministry to young adults, with a particular emphasis this year on recent research concerning millennials in the Church.

The research — conducted by LCMS Youth Ministry and overseen by Ryan Curnutt, LCMS senior research analyst — focused on the question of retention of LCMS youth following confirmation. It was prompted in part by a 2016 poll of young adult volunteers at the LCMS Youth Gathering. The first-of-

its-kind poll was a modified version of one that has been administered to Gathering participants since 1980.

Julianna Shults, program manager of the LCMS Young Adult Corps, says that the 2016 survey of Gathering volunteers was revealing, but “raised even more questions” about today’s young adults — questions Youth Ministry wanted to pursue. To that end, a research team created and administered two surveys.

Survey of congregations

In the first, a random sampling of 1,800 LCMS congregations were invited to respond to an online

questionnaire regarding those who were confirmed in their parish during the years 2004–06. There was a 10 percent response rate, with 184 congregations answering the survey, resulting in a 6 percent margin of error.

The research team encouraged those at the Symposium to review and be diligent about record-keeping procedures, noting that nearly one-fourth (23 percent) of congregations responding to the survey did not have usable confirmation records.

Assuming a typical confirmation age of 12–14 — the majority of those studied were confirmed in seventh grade — the subjects of the

survey would likely be around 23–27 years old. Survey respondents — usually the pastor but sometimes another person, particularly if the current pastor wasn’t on staff during the years being studied — were asked to review their confirmation records and provide information to the extent possible about the target population.

Research findings included the following statistics regarding the current church attendance behavior of 2004–06 confirmands in the churches surveyed:

- 18 percent are still regularly attending the church in which they were confirmed;
- 10 percent have moved away

but are still LCMS;

- 3 percent attend a different LCMS church near the one in which they were confirmed;
- 15 percent “occasionally” attend their home church;
- 11 percent attend a church in another denomination;
- 11 percent are no longer attending any church; and
- 30 percent are of unknown status regarding worship practice.

The numbers equate to roughly 1-in-3 confirmands still attending an LCMS church, a statistic in line with a 2014 Pew Religious Landscape Survey that revealed a similar retention rate for mil-

See YOUNG ADULTS, Page 9

Seminaries to cover tuition for church-work students

By Paula Schlueter Ross
paula.ross@lcms.org

Residential pastoral ministry and deaconess students at the Synod’s two seminaries will pay zero, nada, zilch in tuition — beginning with the 2018–19 academic year. But the students still will be responsible for non-tuition charges such as housing and books.

The paid-tuition policies apply to all such students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and incoming first-year students at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Both seminaries say they’re hopeful they can cover tuition for the students — with the continued partnership of donors — through the completion of their programs. And, they add, there is no restriction on the number of students eligible.

The new tuition plans include grants — which do not have to be repaid — and represent savings of \$26,640 per year for M.Div. students and \$20,160 for deaconess students at the St. Louis seminary. Those costs are \$29,790 and \$28,620, respectively, in Fort Wayne.

The seminaries’ new financial-aid policies for the coming school year are intended to ease the financial burden



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

New paid-tuition policies for the 2018–19 year at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (in photo), and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, are intended to ease the financial burdens of church-work students.

of church workers, many of whom graduate with huge debts, only to answer calls to low-paying positions.

Perhaps best of all, the paid-tuition policies might even encourage some would-be students to enroll.

'We need to be in partnership'

“Some of our future pastors and deaconesses don’t

receive enough financial aid to cover their tuition bill in full,” acknowledged Concordia Seminary President Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer. “This new policy will cover that shortfall, relieving that burden and, I pray, opening the door to more students down the road who can put the worry of how to pay for their seminary education behind them.”

See TUITION, Page 8

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Anton Lutz, LCMS missionary to Papua New Guinea (PNG), was featured in a Dec. 20 *Huffington Post* article about the country's epidemic of torture and murder of girls and women for allegedly practicing witchcraft.

Lutz, who was born in Iowa, has lived in PNG for 30 years. He says that in just



Lutz

two months there were 30 attacks on women in Enga Province. In November he helped rescue a 6-year-old girl who was burned for supposedly practicing sorcery. Her mother was killed as a witch in 2013.

PNG has roughly 8 million people, most of whom live in under-developed areas with limited infrastructure and services. A government task force is planning a campaign to educate the population against violence toward women. To read the *Huffington Post* article on Lutz, go to bit.ly/2Edslu8. Look for more about Lutz in April's *The Lutheran Witness*.

TOGO

On Jan. 27, the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies (Centre Luthérien d'Études Théologiques, or CLET), opened 12 new student dormitories in Dapaong, Togo, West Africa. The day began with a Service of the Word with song, followed by the blessing of each house and its occupant(s), and ended with a community meal.

The project began on Feb. 2, 2016, with the laying of a cornerstone. The dormitories were constructed in 2016, and painting, electrical and interior work were done in 2017.



Molly Christensen

The Rev. Micah Wildauer, LCMS missionary to Togo, West Africa, blesses a family that will occupy one of 12 new student dormitories at the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies in Dapaong.

CAMPUS CLIPS

NEWS FROM LCMS COLLEGES AND SEMINARIES



Ryan Pennington/Aaron Turner

Nursing students practice simulations at Concordia University Texas, Austin. The school's College of Nursing has been named the fourth-best nursing school — out of 116 Registered Nurse programs — in Texas.

★ AMONG THE BEST

The College of Nursing at Concordia University Texas, Austin, has been named the fourth-best nursing school — out of 116 Registered Nurse programs — in Texas.

The rating at registerednursing.org/state/texas/#rankings calls the school's traditional and accelerated BSN-degree nursing programs “highly competitive,” providing students with “the tools they need to find success as nursing caregivers.”

★ A HELPING HAND TO PASTORS

Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, has launched a new program that aims to meet congregations' needs by training called workers who can play a vital support role to pastors. Students who complete the new Director of Church Ministries (DCM) four-year undergraduate program will be eligible to receive a call to an LCMS congregation where they can serve alongside pastors, helping them with duties such as visiting shut-ins, leading Bible classes and organizing vacation Bible school programs.

Check it out at thelc.ms/cuw-director-of-church-ministries or contact the Rev. Dr. Kurt Taylor at kurt.taylor@cuw.edu for more information.

★ OPEN-HOUSE EVENTS AT SEMS

The Synod's two seminaries are opening their campuses to prospective students in the coming weeks and months. The events are free, including housing and meals, and are open to college students and men and women considering second careers as pastors or deaconesses. Spouses also may attend.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will host “Contemplate” (March 8–10 and Oct. 4–6) and “Green & Gold Days” (April 6 and Nov. 2). To register and find out more about these and other open-house events, visit csl.edu/admissions/visit.

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., announces its “Prayerfully Consider Visit” March 14–17. To learn more about all campus-visit opportunities, go to ctsfw.edu/visit-ctsfw.

SHARE IT!

HOW DID READERS ANSWER LAST MONTH'S QUESTION:



With Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent on Feb. 14, in what special ways does your congregation or school observe Lent?



HERE ARE SOME RESPONSES.

Todd Stevens, DCE at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broken Arrow, Okla.:

“Our church has the pre-Lenten tradition of creating Alleluia banners the week before Transfiguration Sunday with all of our Sunday school children from age 2 through sixth grade.

“In the past, the children have used paints, crayons and other art media to create the banners. This year, each kid wove multi-colored ribbon through a fabric banner to create the unique Alleluia sign.

“Then on Transfiguration Sunday, all the children walk the banners down the church aisle to a chest in the chancel area. The children then place the banner in the chest and close it. We keep it closed until Easter Vigil when the children will take the banners out and hang them in the sanctuary.”

From Rebekah Curtis, a volunteer at Trinity Lutheran Church, Worden, Ill.:

“Our small town, Worden, Ill., has a huge ‘Wordi Gras’ celebration every year. A crowd bigger than the town's population comes to celebrate a redneck-style Mardi Gras with a family-friendly parade,

followed by live music and big parties.

“This year our church got in on the fun by entering a Lent-themed float in the parade, reminding everyone of the true meaning of Mardi Gras. The float's hillbilly clothesline displaying a hair shirt and fish were a big hit with the crowd. Parade walkers in ‘Lent is coming’ sandwich boards gave out 300 pretzel snack packs with our church's Lent and Easter service schedule attached.

“Pedestrians called ‘Lent is coming!’ as our float operator drove through town after the parade to see the festivities. We had a great time letting our neighbors know that Trinity Lutheran Church is Worden's source for Lent, and that they are always welcome in the Lord's house!”

James Oloff, a teacher at Hope Lutheran Church and School, Idaho Falls, Idaho:

“Lenten activities at Hope Lutheran are a collaborative effort involving the school (preschool through sixth grade), the youth group (seventh through 12th grades) and congregational members.

“Lent begins on Shrove Tuesday with a pancake lunch made and served by the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders for all school students, their families and congregation members. Midweek services are preceded by soup-and-roll suppers in partnership with St. John Lutheran Church, an LCMS congregation in Idaho Falls. Students also perform an operetta to share the Easter message with the community.

“On Easter Saturday, the youth group hosts an Easter-egg hunt with 5,000-plus plastic eggs filled with candy as well as school and church information. Over 450 children from the community collect the eggs scattered over the soccer field and church lawns. Volunteers at information and craft booths share church-service times, school-enrollment forms and an invitation to Easter breakfast. But most

important, each egg contains a message of salvation through Jesus Christ.”



See more ideas at reporter.lcms.org

Our next “Share it!” question:

How does your congregation or school welcome visitors? How do you make new parishioners and students feel welcome?

In brief, please share your ideas in an email to paula.ross@lcms.org. (Include your name, title, church/school name and its city.) We'll publish as many as we can in the April *Reporter*.



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District Convention WRAP-UPS

NORTH DAKOTA

Jan. 21–24 • Dickinson, N.D.

The Rev. Arie D. Bertsch was elected to his first three-year term as president of the LCMS North Dakota District.

Bertsch, who served two terms as first vice-president, stepped in as president when the Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck left the post to serve as executive director of LCMS Pastoral Ministry beginning Jan. 1, 2017.

Bertsch was elected on the first



Bertsch

ballot. He stepped down Feb. 12 as pastor of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in Minot, N.D., to devote more time to the district presidency.

Also elected was the Rev. Kirk Peters of Hazen, N.D., as first vice-president, and the Rev. Steve Schulz of Fargo, N.D., as second vice-president.

The officers were installed into their new positions during the convention.

The theme of the convention — the first of 35 LCMS district conventions to take place this year — was “Unity in Christ,” based on Eph. 4:1–16.

Delegates adopted resolutions to:

- ▶ extend the term limit for district president from three three-year terms to five three-year terms.
- ▶ allow the district president and district board of directors to determine the location of the district president's office.
- ▶ provide \$10,000 per year to Christ's Care for Children–Kenya, and \$25,000 per year to help fund LCMS

mission work in Santiago, Chile.

- ▶ foster unity and “walking together” within the district by producing a handbook on district policies, procedures and guidelines for pastors and congregations.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Feb. 8–10 • O'Fallon, Ill.

The Rev. Timothy J. Scharr of Aviston, Ill., was re-elected to his third full term as president of the LCMS Southern Illinois District on the first ballot.

Among others elected were the Rev. Mark Nebel of Red Bud, Ill., as first vice-president, and the Rev. Benjamin Ball of Hamel, Ill., as second vice-president.

All elected officers were installed into



Scharr

their positions during the convention.

The convention theme was “Confessing Christ Jesus is Lord,” based on Rom. 10:9–10.

Delegates adopted resolutions to:

- ▶ encourage continued emphasis on prison ministry.
- ▶ confess and affirm six 24-hour day creation and the official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
- ▶ confess the Scriptural truth regarding marriage and pray for the Synod, especially for Concordia University, Portland, Ore., including a “Resolved” that marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman, and God designed sexual intercourse within marriage for procreation.
- ▶ exhort LCMS partner churches to leave the Lutheran World Federation.
- ▶ encourage the district's congregations to enhance their older adult ministries.

FAQs provide ‘Update on Licensed Lay Deacons’

By Kevin Armbrust
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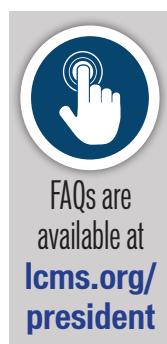
A new online resource — available on the LCMS president's website at lcms.org/president — provides answers to a set of eight Frequently Asked Questions about licensed lay deacons and the implementation of Resolution 13-02A (adopted by the 2016 LCMS convention): “To Regularize Status of Licensed Lay Deacons Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry.”

The use of licensed lay deacons can be traced to 1989, when the LCMS in convention adopted Resolution 3-05B, which recognized a need

for men to regularly preach the Word and administer the Sacraments when a pastor isn't available.

Licensed lay deacons were to serve temporarily in Word and Sacrament ministries in these exceptional circumstances or emergencies.

With that in mind, a Whereas of the 2016 resolution (13-02A) noted, “The Synod needs to move forward together with deep concern for fidelity to the word of Christ as we confess it together and for faithfulness in the mission that



Christ has given to His Church.”

That resolution Resolves, therefore, “That those deacons currently licensed for and serving in Word and Sacrament Ministry (that is, publicly preaching and administering the Sacraments) shall have

until July 1, 2018, to: (1) apply to one of our seminaries for admission into an alternate route program; (2) apply for entrance into an SMP [Specific Ministry Pastor] program; or (3) apply to the regional colloquy committee for

admission to the SMP roster, unless granted a waiver by his district president, the plenary of the Council of Presidents, and the appropriate regional colloquy committee.”

Implementing the resolution

Of the 591 licensed lay deacons serving as of 2017, this resolution affects approximately 250 men. These men are regularly preaching and presiding at the Lord's Supper.

The remaining licensed lay deacons are serving in roles that assist pastors, and are not *de facto* pastors. These men will continue unaffected to serve in their current roles. Districts remain free to train deacons for such assisting roles in evangelism, visitation, mercy work, etc.

An October update on Resolution 13-02A noted that “significant progress has been made — policy manuals are prepared and approved by the Council of Presidents, the Commission on Constitutional Matters and the Colloquy Committee according to the

procedure outlined in the resolution; instructions have been provided to the district presidents and affected licensed lay deacons so that they might apply for colloquy to the SMP roster of the Synod.”

That progress, according to LCMS First Vice-President Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr., represents “the church at its best — we are working together to ensure that those whom the church sends to do the pastoral work of public preaching and presiding for the Sacrament are recognized by the church as pastors.”

With the combined efforts of the Synod's districts, seminaries, the COP and the men who are serving, the goal is for each of the men affected by Resolution 13-02A to begin or complete the colloquy process by summer 2018.

See a more in-depth version of this story at reporter.lcms.org.

Dr. Kevin Armbrust is manager of Editorial Services with LCMS Communications.

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BOARDS AND BUSINESS

COP

Council hears report on LLDs, colloquies

By Cheryl Magness
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“We have much work to do, but God is blessing” the Synod’s colloquy process through the participation of licensed lay deacons (LLDs) applying to the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, says the Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr., LCMS first vice-president and chairman of the Colloquy Committee.

The Synod’s Council of Presidents (COP) heard a report on the colloquy process at its Feb. 6–9 meeting in St. Augustine, Fla., the costs of which were underwritten in part by Lutheran Church Extension Fund and Concordia Plan Services.

The report was an update on Resolution 13-02A, “To Regularize Status of Licensed Lay Deacons Involved in Word and Sacrament Ministry,” approved by the Synod at its 2016 convention.

Mueller reported that in 2017 the Colloquy Committee processed 35 applications for



general colloquy and is now processing 14 applications for LLDs applying for the SMP program. More regional committees are being formed to handle the interviews.

Mueller added that the Colloquy Committee is developing a colloquy process for Chinese-speaking pastors

modeled on the Korean colloquy program, which is more than 30 years old. LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison reported on Synod finances, noting an improved fiscal outlook with healthy giving through January 2018. This is in addition to the \$9.5 million given for disasters in 2017, \$7 million of which has already been distributed or committed.

Harrison said that funding for international missionaries is on target, with the network-supported missionary model working well. But he added that project support for international missions is below where it ought to be, so expenses are being cut to match revenues.

Harrison also highlighted the recent LCMS study on millennials, emphasizing the importance of relationships to this generation, and observing, “The Synod doesn’t grow; congregations grow.”

The COP also heard from

the Rev. Bart Day, president and CEO of Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), and Jim Sanft, president of Concordia Plan Services (CPS), on how LCEF, CPS and the districts can work together on areas of intersection.

The Rev. Mark Wood, director of Witness and Outreach Ministry, gave a presentation on the Synod’s new evangelism resource, *Every One His Witness*.™ Nebraska District President Rev. Richard Snow noted: “I am excited that we have shared this resource with all of our circuit visitors and circuits. I am even more excited to see how laypeople are using this study in their homes and then hearing the stories of how they are using tools in intentional witness in their lives.”

The COP also:

- engaged in business regarding placement and

- requests for reinstatement;
- continued its annual review of the unique situations of those who are on candidate status and desire a call;
- heard a report on vacancies, calls, new starts and other statistics; and
- received an update on the Committee for Constitutional Matters from LCMS Secretary Rev. Dr. John Sias.

Want Synod news fast?

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BNM

Priority: keeping the Gospel ‘UPPERMOST’

By Megan K. Mertz
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During its Feb. 5–6 meeting in St. Louis, the LCMS Board for National Mission (BNM) continued the process of revising the policies that direct the work of the LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM).

The board’s goal in this work is to ensure that the seven mission priorities — established by the Synod in convention — “are not forgotten or ignored,” said the Rev. Steven Briel, BNM chairman.

Those priorities are to plant, sustain and revitalize Lutheran churches; support and expand theological education; perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries; collaborate with the



The Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson, director of LCMS Disaster Response, gives a presentation during a Youth Corps pilot project in 2014. At its recent meeting, the Board for National Mission discussed the challenges of keeping young people in the church.

Synod’s members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness; promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of professional church workers; enhance early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry; and strengthen and support Lutheran families in living out God’s design.

“The BNM is thoroughly committed to writing policies that will keep the Gospel of our Lord Jesus uppermost in

everything our Synod does in national mission and that will reflect the doctrinal standard of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as so clearly stated in Article II of Synod’s constitution,” Briel said.

At its meeting, the BNM also heard updates on:

- **The state of Lutheran schools** — Terry Schmidt, director of LCMS School Ministry, reported on the findings and recommendations of the Synod’s Blue

Ribbon Task Force on Lutheran Schools, which was created by the 2013 Synod convention and directed to continue its work by the 2016 convention. Schmidt noted that he hopes the first draft of the task force’s report will be ready by the start of the 2018–19 school year.

► Millennials in the Church

— The Rev. Mark Kiessling, director of LCMS Youth Ministry; Julianna Shults, program manager of the Lutheran Young Adult Corps; and Ryan Curnutt, senior research analyst with LCMS Research Services, presented the results of a survey of young adults (the so-called “millennials”) in the LCMS (see related story, Page 1). The report highlighted the Synod’s continuing loss of young

people after confirmation and led to a discussion of what the BNM can do to support districts, congregations and families as they seek to retain young people in the church.

- **The search for an ONM executive director** — The BNM also received an update on the ongoing evaluation process for candidates to fill the ONM executive director position, which has been vacant since Sept. 1, when the Rev. Bart Day left the post to become president and CEO of Lutheran Church Extension Fund. In the coming weeks, based on its participation in these candidate assessments, the BNM is aiming to reach concurrence with the Synod president on a final slate of candidates (per Bylaw 3.3.1.3e).



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LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

BIM

Board occupied by missionary vetting, international schools

By Pamela J. Nielsen
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At its February meeting, the Board for International Mission (BIM) heard reports from LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, Chief Mission Officer (CMO) Rev. Kevin Robson and the Rev. John Fale, executive director of the Office of International Mission (OIM).

Headlining the presentations made to the board were consultants from Colarelli Meyer & Associates Inc. (CMA), a consulting firm providing services to LCMS mission leaders for 20 years, and assisting in evaluating and vetting LCMS missionary candidates for the past seven years. The BIM discussed the ongoing mission and operations of the Synod's international schools in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Hanoi, and continued an ongoing discussion about future funding for missionaries and mission projects.

International schools

Robson described a "flurry of work" with the international schools, including vetting of

school board members and the search for a new head of school for Hong Kong International School. He noted that "our international schools and the Synod could benefit from the development and expression of a comprehensive, unified strategy for their collective work, as

The Rev. Eddie Hosch, LCMS career missionary to Peru, embraces children at Castillo Fuerte in November in the Chorrillos area of Lima. At its February meeting, the Board for International Mission heard a report on the vetting of missionaries.

integral to LCMS mission in the Asia region and around the world," expressing a desire for the BIM, OIM and schools together "to think through how we serve the Church and the Gospel in keeping with our mission priorities."

The CMO encouraged the BIM to continue fostering closer working relationships with the international schools, noting recent progress.

Finances, disasters, witness

"Our fundraising is up this fiscal year," said Harrison, including a million dollars more for direct missionary support. "I've pushed our

major-gifts people to get into the mission field to get to know our regional directors so they can have regular contact and can keep donors up-to-date on mission work."

Noting the string of disasters in late 2017, Harrison shared news of the overwhelming support for LCMS disaster-relief efforts. Synod members have given some \$9.5 million, and more than \$7 million already has been earmarked for projects or distributed for recovery efforts, primarily in Texas and Puerto Rico. Disaster-response leaders expect to receive requests for funds related to the 2017 disasters for the next two to three years.

"Our people are doing fantastic work, the world is an open field, ripe for the harvest," said Harrison, who noted that domestically, the retention of LCMS members is "the most significant challenge we face. It's very clear," he said, "that we need to reach out to more diverse communities, support families and work on retention."

Following a presentation the previous day by Director of Church Relations Rev. Dr. Al Collver III, Harrison shared that internationally, "we have a door that has never been opened before, a once-in-a-500-year moment, where the African church is shifting toward the Missouri Synod because they want biblical fidelity."

Missionary vetting

In his report to the BIM, Fale described the increased efforts to vet missionaries, and introduced the CMA consultants in addressing the challenges in placing workers overseas in any industry.

"We do 6,000 assessments a year [but] what we do for you, these are the most challenging to get right," explained psychologist Dr. Terence Bostic, CMA senior vice-president. "We learn each time we do this."

The BIM heard how missionaries are assessed, the tools used and the way the data are reviewed to mitigate the risk of failure. "This is both an art and a science," noted Bostic.

"CMA assessments have proven extraordinarily helpful in determining who is best suited for successful service on the mission field," commented Fale. "Their experience over many years working with LCMS mission leaders and field missionaries before, during and after their service has contributed to their accuracy and success."

Lutheran Hour Ministries

The Rev. Dr. Douglas Rutt, executive director of International Ministries with Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM), reported on LHM's efforts in the Middle East and North Africa, where some 21 million refugees have fled. The LCMS has supported this work — especially in Lebanon, where relief is provided through food and medicines. Rutt also described the success of a social media campaign aimed at the more than 300 million Arabic speakers and reported on work to start a TV program in the region.

Hong Kong and Taiwan

Robson and Fale addressed rumors and news regarding LCMS properties in Hong Kong.

"It's no secret that the Synod has been looking at its options to sell certain properties in Hong Kong," said Robson, referring to previously published Synod Board of Director (BOD) meeting minutes wherein the BOD had authorized LCMS Church Relations staff "to conduct studies of certain of Synod's overseas property holdings, to identify potentially beneficial transactions."

The BOD collaborated with both the CMO and OIM to determine the "best use of these assets" in support of the Synod's work in Asia and around the globe. Robson described careful consideration and due diligence over many months preceding the decision in an effort "to be effective stewards of these resources."

With the blessing of the BOD, it was decided to move the LCMS Asia regional headquarters to Chiayi, Taiwan, Republic of China. The team will live and work on a campus of the China Evangelical Lutheran Church in Taiwan at no expense to the LCMS. The facility will provide a place for on-field training with meeting rooms. It also has audio and video recording facilities to create evangelistic and educational content for use in Asia.

Deaconess Pamela J. Nielsen is associate executive director of LCMS Communications.



Internationally:
"Our people are doing fantastic work, the world is an open field, ripe for the harvest."



Domestically:
The retention of LCMS members is "the most significant challenge. It's very clear that we need to reach out to more diverse communities, support families and work on retention."

— Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, from his BIM report

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STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

“The only church that has answered the bell is the Lutheran church,” said Homer Allison, Magnolia, Texas.

“I’m gonna tell you one thing, this has made me want to study and figure out what the Lutheran church is all about. ... It’s ‘we’re Christian and [we’re] going to do something in the name of Jesus.’ So, we are just grateful. It is a blessing to us.”

The LCMS Texas District effort has changed from splintered work in response to changing needs to that of a well-coordinated operation with people in place to process volunteers and materials and work with local congregations to address the needs of each community.

LCMS Texas District President Rev. Ken Hennings and Texas District Mission and Ministry Coordinator Rev. Steven Misch have worked with LCMS Disaster Response and others to establish a team to facilitate the Texas District’s work. Julie Tucker, director of Disaster Response for the district, serves with area coordinators like Chelsea Beck in the Coastal Bend area, which includes Corpus Christi, Rockport, Port Aransas and others, and Michael Turner in the Golden Triangle, which includes Beaumont, Port Arthur, Rose City and Winnie.

In small towns, small cities and even throughout Houston, Lutherans are helping, volunteering, cleaning out and building. And as they work, they speak of the love of God in Christ.

The work is just beginning, and the long-term effects of the storm and subsequent flooding have yet to be measured. Many homes have been mucked out but left vacant and overrun with mold since the initial work. As a result, the owners have abandoned them and moved on, leaving the community devastated.

“Every place you go, you see dead yards, where their belongings were piled up. There are homes in Port Arthur that haven’t been [entered] yet.” Turner noted that according to the county clerk, 17,000 voter registration cards were returned because there was no one living at the address anymore.

LCMS generosity bears fruit

People’s lives are being rebuilt through the generosity and love of the people of the LCMS.

Chelsea Beck explained that she is in constant contact with both Julie Tucker and LCMS Disaster Response. Beck expressed her thanks for the generosity of the people of the Synod and added, “If I want money from the LCMS, I have to tell them exactly what I am going to do with it, and then I report back and let them know we have helped 80 households and these are the jobs that we have done.”

The generosity of the people of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has resulted in over \$9 million given to LCMS Disaster Response for disaster relief since Harvey hit Texas and other disasters afflicted the United States and Puerto Rico in 2017. Over \$8 million has been spent or planned for allocation within the next three years, all in concert with the donors’ wishes. Those dollars are blessing people as they seek recovery.

Thanks to experience with previous



A trailer serves as a temporary home in front of a family’s hurricane-damaged house.



Volunteers Denise and George Perdziak and Jeff Husar, from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mount Prospect, Ill., help rebuild a home.



Noah Leraas and the Rev. Gary Rehborg, vacancy pastor at St. Paul’s, Perham, Minn., volunteer in Rose City, Texas.

disasters, the LCMS has a long-term perspective of the work and finances required.

“We’ve learned from past disasters like Katrina, Joplin, and Superstorm Sandy that we will still be receiving requests for help — two or even three years from now — long after the inflow of donations for these specific events stop,” observed Mark Hofman, executive director of LCMS Mission Advancement. “Those requests will be for needs people don’t even know they have yet. We try to retain some dollars in accounts restricted only for disaster work to retain the ability to respond as those needs become known. This long-haul, long-view strategy allows us to meet both immediate relief and long-term restoration needs.”

The mission statement of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, southeast of Houston in Nassau Bay, is “Helping more people live life with Jesus every day.” Gloria Dei’s senior pastor, the Rev. Dan Schepmann,



Volunteers, from left, Jon Gehrt, Jim Wille and Bill Makuch, from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rose City, Texas, help rebuild a home.

noted, “I see in this disaster relief God is laying before us, right in our forefront, how we can live out that mission in our community and surrounding neighbors in such a beautiful way.”

As Gloria Dei ran out of resources responding to the needs of its community, Schepmann recalls, “I got word from another pastor about the blessing of our LCMS Disaster Relief, and that there were grants available to congregations who were serving in disaster relief. I called up [LCMS Disaster Response Director Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson] and asked, ‘Ross, how does this work?’”

Schepmann said, “It was amazing. We sent this grant [request] in and within two weeks the check was back at Gloria Dei.”

Schepmann adds, “Had we not had that grant from LCMS Disaster Relief, that partnership and our long-term relationship and our long-term recovery for disaster would have never taken place. So, I say to LCMS Disaster Relief, thank you. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for your commitment to doing disaster relief in this community.”

Johnson described the collaboration between the Texas District and the LCMS as a “great partnership through which LCMS Disaster Response can bring resources, experiences and capacities from across the Synod to support the work of Lutheran congregations responding to disaster across Texas.”

Volunteers needed

“In just the month of January, we housed 229 volunteers. They came to our church; we got to feed them three meals a day,” said Laurie Holleway, who manages the donated warehouse run by Salem Lutheran Church, Tomball, Texas. She continued: “Their joy is contagious, so they keep us going. They sleep on cots. We are able to offer them clean towels and fresh showers because we have volunteers down here keeping that process going, but we are in the middle of a marathon. We have a long way to go.”

“But if we don’t have volunteers, we don’t have the labor and



Laurie Holleway of Salem Lutheran Church, Tomball, Texas, moves materials to be used for relief efforts. Holleway manages the donated warehouse that houses relief supplies.



theran Church, Mount Prospect, Ill., help rebuild a home in Port Arthur, Texas.



A donated warehouse in Tomball, Texas, serves as a collection point for LCMS congregations. Materials are constantly being received and distributed by Salem Lutheran Church, Tomball.

we can't hang the sheetrock. We know of families that to this day still have no walls, and it is cold.”
God provides. Through generous donors, the LCMS Texas District, LCMS Disaster Response, anonymous volunteers, and through His people, God provides. And the people of Texas are hearing about God's love in Christ from the Lutherans.

Story by Kevin Armbrust (kevin.armbrust@lcms.org)
and Pamela Nielsen (pamela.nielsen@lcms.org)
Photos by Erik M. Lunsford (erik.lunsford@lcms.org)

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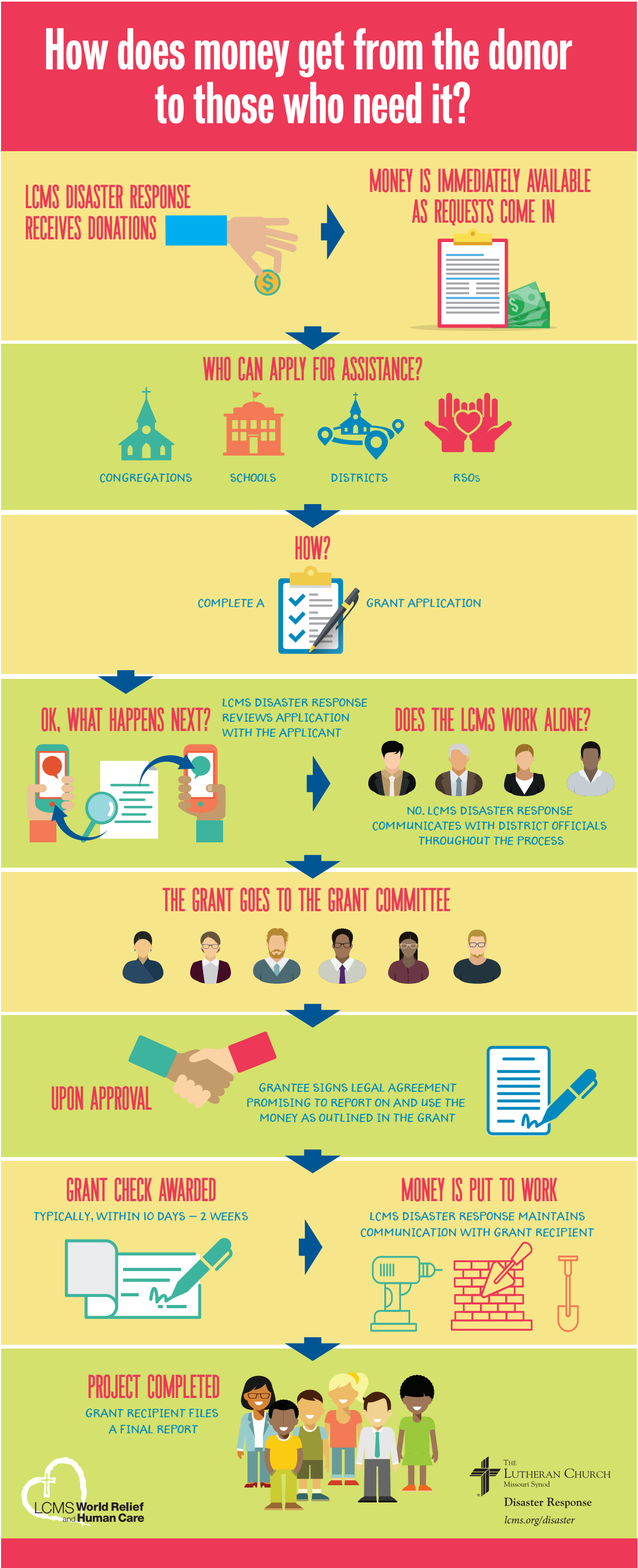
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TUITION

Continued from PAGE 1

In a Feb. 9 news release, the St. Louis seminary noted that students receive financial assistance from many sources, including scholarships, the Adopt-A-Student program and home congregations and districts.

Under the new policy, if an M.Div., Residential Alternate Route or deaconess student still has a tuition shortfall after factoring in that outside aid, the seminary will cover the shortfall with a Residential Program Grant.

To maintain their eligibility for the tuition grants throughout all years of their enrollment, students agree to maintain satisfactory academic performance, apply for scholarships and correspond with donors.

The application deadline for the upcoming academic year at the St. Louis seminary is Feb. 28, and the financial-aid

deadline is April 1.

“While we celebrate and give thanks to our donors for their generous support, which has been given as a result of the Generations Campaign and makes this new policy possible, it’s important to remember that removing our students’ out-of-pocket tuition expenses can only continue and get even better with the ongoing support of our partners and donors,” Meyer said. “We need to be in partnership in this.”

Other, non-tuition, expenses — including housing, insurance, books, supplies and fees — are the responsibility of students. Those costs typically total between \$14,026 and \$15,776 per year at Concordia Seminary.

While there are no aid funds specifically earmarked for non-tuition costs, students who receive outside financial assistance in excess of their tuition typically use those extra dollars to pay part — or,

in some cases, all — of their living expenses, according to Laura Hemmer, the seminary’s director of Financial Aid.

‘Where there is a plan, God provides’

Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW) President Rev. Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. noted that “100 percent tuition support” for students has been a goal of the seminary since 2013, when it launched “an exhaustive study of student debt” underwritten by the Lilly Foundation.

“Where there is a plan, God provides,” Rast said. The school’s Board of Regents approved full-tuition support for first-year M.Div. and deaconess students, beginning with the 2018–19 academic year.

In its three-step plan for new students, CTSFW first provides aid that covers 77.5 percent of tuition, then each student’s outside aid is applied, and finally, the

seminary covers any remaining tuition with a grant — a process it plans to continue each year through completion of those students’ programs.

Returning students will see their endowment assistance for tuition rise from 70 percent to 77.5 percent for each school year and, along with other aid and scholarships, will see “a greatly reduced amount in tuition,” according to the Rev. Matthew J. Wietfeldt, the seminary’s director of Admission.

Non-tuition costs for residential CTSFW students typically total between \$15,396 and \$16,191 annually, but those amounts are offset by each student’s home-congregation and Adopt-A-Student support, which does not go toward tuition.

There are no application or financial-aid deadlines for the Fort Wayne seminary, but LCMS districts that provide aid to students do have varying deadlines, so Wietfeldt advises would-be students

to “get applications in as soon as possible.”

Rast notes that the paid-tuition plan for incoming students “isn’t free tuition,” but rather, “this is God’s people, the Church, providing for the tuition of our future pastors and deaconesses through their bountiful gifts to CTSFW.

“We are thankful to our faculty and staff who have developed this plan, our Board of Regents for approving it, and the people of God who have been so generous with CTSFW for their financial support in making this a reality.

“Most of all,” Rast added, “we are thankful to our gracious God who provides us with the gifts necessary to provide pastors, deaconesses and lay leaders in His Church. To Him alone be the glory!”

For more information about Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, visit csl.edu. To learn more about Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, go to ctsfw.edu.



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- ▶ the Rev. Ted Giese’s review of the new motion picture “Black Panther.”

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YOUNG ADULTS

Continued from PAGE 1

lennials raised in the LCMS for at least the last three generations (pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study).

In fact, the Pew study suggested that retention of millennials may be slightly higher than that of previous generations. This may seem surprising considering the current widespread concern about millennial under-representation in the Church today, but that fact is due more to their never having been in church at all than to poor retention.

Factors identified in the LCMS study as positively influencing retention included:

- having adults on staff who work with youth (not necessarily paid);
- having a Lutheran school;
- having the same pastor over a long time; and
- involving young people in church leadership.

It was also noted from the research that larger, suburban congregations seem to retain youth at higher rates than rural and small-town churches, but rural and small-town churches are more likely to remain connected with their young people in that they know where the youth are.

Some factors that seem to have little or no impact on retention are:

- the age of the senior/sole pastor;
- having a large proportion of young adults in worship; and
- the presence of a local college or university.

The volume of information that was presented at the Symposium was such that it would be easy to get lost in simply reporting numbers. But perhaps more helpful is to report a larger takeaway, which was the emphasis on relationships, especially of parents, as opposed to programs.

Presenter Dr. Dave Rueter, director of the Director of Christian Education program at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif., and author of the book *Teaching the Faith at Home*, said in one of his presentations responding to the data: "Parents are the single greatest influence on the future faith lives of children and youth. Emblaze this on your mind. ... How we empower and ... equip parents to take an active role in the faith lives of their children is critically important."

Survey of young adults

Curnutt echoed that sentiment as he presented results of the second survey, completed by the research team in 2017, of over 2,000 young adults ages 18–35 (average age 24) who have at some point in their lives had a connection to the LCMS.

When asked who has had the greatest influence on them spiritually, they responded as follows:

- 29 percent – parents;
- 13 percent – pastor of home church;
- 12 percent – other family members;
- 12 percent – teacher;
- 11 percent – another pastor; and
- 10 percent – youth minister.

The majority of respondents in the Young Adult survey (around 1,400) are still active members of LCMS congregations.

Commonly reported factors in this group were:

- parents who actively practice the faith;
- healthy relationships in which they were comfortable talking with parents about faith and doubts;
- a pastor who showed personal care for them;
- attendance at an LCMS Youth Gathering and/or Lutheran camps;
- remaining geographically close to their home church; and
- involvement in LCMS campus ministry (either a Concordia or another LCMS congregation or campus ministry) during college.

Of those surveyed who no longer identify as LCMS (around 375), the following were given as reasons for leaving the LCMS:

- lack of care for them by their church at a time of crisis;
- feeling that the LCMS is exclusionary, unwelcoming or dismissive, including to them personally;
- disagreeing with the LCMS on social issues;
- lack of support/opportunities for them to get involved;
- preferring a different kind of worship; and
- finding people in the LCMS to be "inauthentic."

The research team presented a number of quotes from the "no longer LCMS" group, noting that the inclusion of unbiblical views in some of the quotes was not meant to

suggest that the Church needs to change to accommodate those who have left but to emphasize the importance of "careful listening so that church leaders and ministers are equipped to defend doctrine while compassionately engaging ... this diverse generation."

The research team also noted that while there is a widespread belief that people tend to drift away from the Church

when they are young adults, intending to return when they start their own families, there was only one comment among all respondents that reflected such a view.

'Hard numbers'

In attendance at the Symposium were a mixture of representatives from over 25 LCMS districts, the Concordia University System, LCMS U, pastors, lay leaders, DCEs and young adults.

The Rev. Jay Winters, pastor at University Lutheran Church & Student Center in Tallahassee, Fla., found the Symposium to be "helpful in giving me, as a campus minister, the opportunity to show hard numbers about the realities we have been seeing on campus for quite some time. It is helpful to be able to show the importance of a home church's impact on a student before they ever arrive at college. I have even joked at times that the best thing that I could do for campus ministry would be to take a call to a middle school context because that is where we seem to be losing our students well before they arrive at college."

Winters noted that "the responsibility for catechesis and discipleship ... isn't

something that we can leave" in any single set of hands, whether at a student's home, campus or future church. "It takes all of us serving that student together to show that we are truly a Synod that prioritizes 'life together' along

with witness and mercy."

Asked what he would like to see come out of the findings of the 2016 retention study and the 2017 Young Adult survey, LCMS Director of Youth Ministry Rev. Mark Kiessling said: "We hope the opportunity to listen to many young adults will strengthen and encourage congregations, schools and church workers in their support of Christian parents and Christian education. We hope to add resources which encourage this work to support young people in their walk with Jesus."

Dr. Kevin Borchers, assistant professor of Christian Education at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., may have effectively summed up the predominant message of the 2018 Youth Ministry Symposium when he said, "Young people don't want more to do. They want safety, authenticity and the sacred."

LCMS Youth Ministry is planning a series of webinars to present and further discuss the data outlined above. For more information, go to facebook.com/events/588749181471774.



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Notices

Note: Reporter cannot accept notices about items offered for sale or that people wish to purchase. Items described as "Wanted" or "Available" are sought or may be obtained for shipping costs only. Notices should be sent to notices@lcms.org. The deadline for the April issue is March 9.

WANTED

Church bell, about 28 to 32 inches in diameter. Email christlutheranperry@gmail.com or call 478-397-5914.

AVAILABLE

There are no "Available" items this month.

FROM THE DISTRICTS

KIM E. DAVIS, KEVIN P. MOERBE and **SHERRY R. ANDERSON** have resigned from the commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, no longer eligible to receive a call. — Rev. Ken Hennings, president, Texas District

JOEL K. BRADLEY, TIMOTHY R. SCHERMBECK, REBECCA W. SMITH, ALLISON L. WILSON, KRISTEN L. BROWNING, AMY A. KRENGEL, DAVID J. MUELLER, STEPHANIE M. MUELLER, ANGELE C. TAYLOR and **NATHAN B. WALLINGSFORD** have been removed from the commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, no longer eligible to receive a call. — Rev. Ken Hennings, president, Texas District

PATRICIA A. SODEMANN has resigned from the commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, no longer eligible to receive a call. — Rev. Dr. Jamison J. Hardy, president, English District

JILL E. HASSEMER's request for reinstatement to the roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been approved and she is, therefore, eligible to receive a call. — Rev. Dwayne Lueck, president, North Wisconsin District

REV. JASON RUST, Ruidoso, N.M., has been appointed circuit visitor for Pecos Circuit 1, replacing Rev. Andrew Dimit. — Rev. Allen Anderson, president, Rocky Mountain District

REV. MICHAEL DORN, Houston, Texas, has been appointed circuit visitor for Circuit 43, replacing Rev. David Leeland. — Rev. Ken Hennings, president, Texas District

REV. CHAD LUECK, Bloomington, Ill., has been appointed circuit visitor for Bloomington South Circuit 3, replacing Rev. David Bergelin. — Rev. Mark A. Miller, president, Central Illinois District

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, Allegany, N.Y., and **ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**, Ellicottville, N.Y., are no longer congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. — Rev. Dr. Chris Wicher, president, Eastern District

VICTORY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Youngstown, Ohio, has merged with **ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**, Boardman, Ohio. — Rev. Terry Cripe, president, Ohio District

ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Bazine, Kan., is no longer a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. — Rev. Peter K. Lange, president, Kansas District

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, Marshall, Mich., is no longer a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. — Rev. Dr. David P.E. Maier, president, Michigan District

COLLOQUIES

TIFFANY M. PEDROLEY, St. Peters, Mo., has completed the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is eligible to receive a call. — Kevin L. Borchers, director of Colloquy, Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.

EUGENE KIM, Irvine, Calif., has completed the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is eligible to receive a call. — Dr. Cari Chittick, director, Colloquy Program, Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.

ERIN K. BANKS, Wanamingo, Minn., and **MARY M. STUEDEMAN**, Plato, Minn., have completed the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are eligible to receive a call. — Mark Schuler, Th.D., chairperson, Department of Theology and Ministry, Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.

MYOUNG EON (DAVID) KANG, Suwanee, Ga.; **YONG RAK LIM**, Flushing N.Y.; **DONG SU SON**, Lewisville, Texas; **SUN HO SHON**, Dallas, Texas; and **YUN SOO LEE**, Los Angeles, Calif., have submitted their applications to the Korean Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

DON COPLEY, Humboldt, Kan.; **GARY KINNE**, Memphis Tenn.; and **DENNIS BOWMAN**, Kaukauna Wis., have submitted their applications for the Specific Ministry Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

JAEWOO JEONG, Fort Wayne, Ind., and **VERNON APPEL**, Shamrock, Texas, have submitted their applications for the Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

ESTEBAN MESA, Miami Fla., and **SAMUEL DERE-SSA**, Lauderdale, Minn., have completed the Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible for a call.

TIMOTHY HUNZE, Mount Juliet, Tenn.; **JERRY STOBAUGH**, Arlington, Tenn.; **JIM BELLES**, Germantown, Tenn.; and **MARK STAPLETON**, Westmont, Ill., have completed the SMP Pastoral Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are therefore, eligible for a call.

AMANDA DEMARSH, West Dundee, Ill., serving in East Dundee, Ill.; **SCOT DOBBS**, Rapid City, S.D., serving in Rapid City, S.D.; **KELLY REILLY**, Belleair Bluffs, Fla., serving in Tampa, Fla.; **JENNIFER JAROCKI**, Farmington, Minn., serving in Faribault, Minn.; **JESSICA IRWIN**, Knoxville, Tenn., serving in Knoxville, Tenn.; and **LEAH BAKER**, Edmond, Okla., serving in Edmond, Okla., have submitted their applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University Education Network, Bend, Ore.

Correspondence regarding their applications should be directed within four weeks after publication of this notice to Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr., Chairman, Colloquy Committee, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

REQUESTS FOR REINSTATEMENT

MELANIE ANN DREWS, Tremont, Ill.; **KAREN L. KEMPIN**, Midland, Mich.; **PAMELA JANE PIEL**, West Dundee, Ill.; and **AUDREY WALKER**, Kyle, Texas, have applied for reinstatement to the Minister of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Correspondence regarding these applications should be directed to the undersigned for receipt no later than April 5.

Rev. Dr. John W. Sias, Secretary, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

POSITIONS

The following institutions of the Concordia University System (CUS) are seeking candidates for positions:

► **Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.:** assistant or associate professor of Theology; assistant or associate professor of Communication;

assistant professor of Sociology; program coordinator for Master of Arts in Teaching programs; coordinator, Middle Grades Education program; head women's basketball coach.

► **Concordia University Texas, Austin:** assistant professor of Education; assistant professor of Education and director of Placement; system administrator; Human Resources administrative assistant; assistant professor of Criminal Justice; assistant professor of Chemistry; assistant professor of Psychology; assistant or associate professor of Nursing; assistant or associate professor of Nursing — Critical Care Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing; admissions counselor, 1 Freshman.

► **Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon:** dean of the School of Education.

► **Concordia College New York:** teaching supervisors.

► **Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn.:** academic advisor; administrative assistant; BSN (pre-licensure) faculty in Nursing; department chair in Nursing; faculty in Physical Therapy; faculty in Accounting; instruction and outreach librarian; registrar; curriculum and instructional designer.

For more information about these and other positions, including complete job descriptions, qualifications and application process, visit cusapps.cus.edu and click on "Campus Positions Available."

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: DIRECTOR, CONCORDIA PLAN SERVICES MINISTRY SOLUTIONS

Concordia Plan Services announces an opening for the position of **director, Ministry Solutions**, housed at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis.

Among responsibilities, the director will recommend and present potential new products and services that support the CPS goals of partnering with LCMS ministries and the CPS executive team.

Candidates should have a bachelor's degree in human resources, business, marketing or communications; advanced degree preferred. Minimum of five years experience in employee benefits.

Qualified applicants may apply online at lcms.org/careers. Nominations are welcomed and may be submitted to Nathan Thomas at nathan.thomas@lcms.org. The deadline to apply or submit nominations is March 31.

(See a longer version of this ad in the "Notices," "Positions" section of *Reporter Online*, reporter.lcms.org.)



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Servant Event volunteers tear out old siding on a house and garage in Chisago City, Minn., in July 2014 before putting up new siding.

Youth ministry offers summer Servant Events

Registration is now open to youth and adults for more than 40 Servant Events in the categories of construction, human care, environmental, outreach, multicultural and crisis. Most of the opportunities to serve others — from a few days to several weeks — are available in May, June, July and August, and include activities such as:

- ▶ helping lead a multicultural vacation Bible school in Colorado or New York.
- ▶ working on light construction projects for elderly, low-income and disabled people in Idaho, Indiana, Minnesota, New Mexico or Virginia.
- ▶ working with underprivileged children in California, Michigan or North Dakota.

Although most of the Servant Events are designed for high-school-age teens, three are available to middle-school students.

Jim Lohman, director of Servant Events for LCMS Youth Ministry, notes that in the 30-plus years the program has been offered, participants have

made an “amazing” impact on people’s lives through their service.

“There’s been a little phrase that’s been a part of Servant Events for many years, and it’s ‘Leaving your fingerprints of faith,’” Lohman says. “So, as young people serve in their settings, that’s what they’re doing — they’re sharing the joy, their love for Christ and their ‘fingerprints of faith’” with others.

Registration costs vary, depending on the event, and typically include housing, meals, local transportation, materials and a T-shirt.

To find out more about this year’s Servant Events, visit lcms.org/servantevents.

March issue full of ‘good’ things

What does it mean to live “the good life”? Does it mean having money? Power? Fame? Health? Beauty?

Or does it — for Christians, at least — mean something entirely different: self-sacrifice, devotion and seeking first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33)?

This Lent, *The Lutheran Witness* explores some of the elements that make up the Bible’s counter-cultural vision for “the good life,” including prayer, fasting, devotion, piety and trusting in God’s Word.

Among the highlights in this issue are the Rev. Dr. Russell P. Dawn’s explanation of two commonly misunderstood theological terms (“Piety vs. Pietism”) and the Rev. Bryan Wolfmüller’s pastoral counsel to people confused about when (and when not) to listen to their emotions (“More Than a Feeling”).

Visit cph.org/witness to subscribe today. Web-exclusive stories and a selection of sample articles from

the print magazine can be found at lcms.org/witness. Readers also can connect with *The Lutheran Witness* on social media at facebook.com/TheLutheranWitness and twitter.com/LutheranWitness.



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† This offer is available on a one account per investor basis only to new investors 18 and older who have not had an LCEF investment in the past 24 months.
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