

TEXAS

OCTOBER 2025

M E S S E N G E R

The Texas District • The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



A common cause



Rev. Dr. Jon Braunersreuther

District President

Lutheran Christians in the Texas District have a *common cause* — to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to make them His followers.

In my brief remarks immediately after being elected district president, I emphasized the *common convictions* that we share in our district, the *common cause* that we have, and the *common community* that we treasure. My column last month emphasized the importance of holding to our common convictions — our beliefs about what God's Word teaches. "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this," St. Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16).

But that verse doesn't end there. It concludes like this: "...for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers." There is a purpose to pure teaching — the salvation of people, the eternal lives of those who hear the pure Good News that we hold near and dear!

Here's the point: if we truly believe what we say we believe (our *convictions*), we can't help but be about our *missional cause*.

That's true, in the first place, because our convictions have implications — *missional implications*. If, for instance, we believe that the only way to eternal salvation is through the grace of God shown to us in Jesus (John 14:6), that has real, eternal implications

for, well, everyone! It has great implications for those who trust in Jesus as their savior; it has grave implications for those who do not.

No wonder St. Paul writes "Christ's love compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14) to the ministry of reconciling people to God. We, who understand the grace of God and all its implications, absolutely must share that Good News with those who are far from God. We can't help it — it's a matter of their eternal destinies.

In the second place, our *missional cause* is one of our *doctrinal convictions*. God's Word is replete with references to the necessity of *missional outreach*. In addition to the passages in the paragraphs above, there are the words of Jesus himself: "...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7) and "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). He's enlisted us in that holy effort: "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18), and for which we are a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

There is an essential relationship between our convictions and our cause. Our convictions can't help but lead to *missional zeal*. And our *missional zeal* (our cause) must be for something that we hold dear (our convictions). Otherwise, what is there to be zealous about?

We maintain our convictions and engage in our cause best when we do so together — in *common community*. More on that to come... .



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford



A PLACE TO CALL HOME: Welcome to Our New Church Location

I can help other people learn that there is a God who loves and cares for them. For all that debt and baggage they've been carrying, God has something better.

- Rev. Josh Miller, ACTS Church Leander



SPREADING THE GOSPEL ACROSS TEXAS

Your contribution to **Texas Partners in Mission** goes directly to support missions in the Texas District.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



GIVE NOW!
txlcms.org/tpim



PRAY

It is our number one priority. Our goal is to have 10% of the Texas District, LCMS members praying regularly for the mission.
bit.ly/missionprayertx

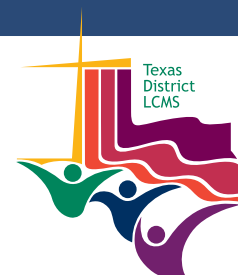


GIFTS

No gift to Texas Partners in Mission is too small. We need gifts to reach the thousands of people in Texas with the life-saving Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Every dollar contributed to Texas Partners in Mission goes directly to bringing the Gospel to people who don't know Jesus Christ. Thank you for your dedication to the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ!

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." ~ Mark 16:15



A growing mission



Rev. Pete Mueller

Area C Mission Strategist

On Aug. 14, Epiphany Lutheran Church, Bastrop, closed on 5.58 acres that will become the home base for its expanding ministry. A \$250,000 loan from the Texas District's Church Extension Fund enabled the young congrega-

tion to combine its own resources and purchase the property for \$360,000.

The land sits in a rural yet fast-growing part of Bastrop, about a mile south of TX Hwy 71 and near several new housing developments. Just a couple of miles away, a 1,500-home community has already opened a new elementary school.

Rev. E. B. Holschuh is quick to deflect credit for the church's progress, insisting he's still learning the ropes of planting a congregation. But his confidence in God's work through the Gospel, combined with his willingness to rely on the diverse gifts of others, has helped the church flourish.

Pastor Holschuh became Epiphany's first pastor on Jan. 6, 2024 — just eight months after the congregation chartered. The congregation's roots stretch back further, to when several area congregations joined forces to start a new ministry in Bastrop.

The name Epiphany Lutheran Church was chosen with a clear goal: to hold the first service near the Feast of the Epiphany in 2022. That vision became reality on Feb. 6, 2022, when 44 saints gathered for worship.

Today, the congregation meets at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church on TX Hwy 21, about 10 miles east of the new property. Plans are underway to begin worship on their own site, and members are excited to finally have a permanent home.

As the late Dr. Charles T. Knippel once wrote in *The Lutheran Witness*, "Epiphany has a remarkable 'epiphanizing' splendor all its own. ... God emboldens our faith and sets our lives ablaze to be what Christ calls us to be: the light of a dark world ... and revelations to others of Jesus' saving manifestations."



(Left) Rev. E.B. Holschuh leads Bible study before Divine Service in April 2024, at Epiphany, Bastrop; and (below) distributes the Sacrament



Photos: LCMSErik M. Lunsford

The reach of giving



Brodie Sparkman

Staff Accountant

When I first joined Legacy Deo, I knew the organization had a mission to serve those in need. It wasn't until I became more immersed in the day-to-day activities that I truly began to

understand the full scope of that mission. Every day, I witness the love and commitment of our staff and donors, who come together to share God's love through acts of service, compassion and stewardship.

My journey with Legacy Deo began close to a year ago, and to be honest, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. I knew about the variety of services we offered and understood our goal, but it quickly became apparent to me just how much I had underestimated the people and the resolve of this organization. Never in my career have I met a group of individuals so dedicated to meeting the needs of others. I am constantly reminded of Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." The example set

by our Savior, who we are all called to follow, is one of servant leadership. This attitude is pervasive in everything done at Legacy Deo.

While individual giving is crucial to our mission, it is the impact and reach of a single act of charity that truly drives us. Watching charitable acts transform from simple gifts into scholarships for grateful students across the nation, or seeing them evolve into support for organizations with stories that span every corner of the globe, is truly inspiring. It's the creativity of our clients and staff in not just giving thoughtlessly, but intentionally. It's determining how we can turn the most modest giving into truly having a long-term impact.

If there is one lesson I've learned from my time here, it is this: our legacy will not be determined by how much we gave, or even how much we cared. It will be defined by the reach of our efforts. Whose lives did we touch? How have others benefited from our time here? We must all be reminded of the example set by our Savior and adopt a servant's attitude if we are to live the legacy and build the community we desire.

legacydeo.org • 800-880-3733



HAPPENINGS

SAN ANTONIO



Rev. Chase Greenhagen was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Crown of Life on Aug. 3. He is a recent graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. From left, Pastor Greenhagen is pictured with Rev. Dr. Jon Braunersreuther, Texas District president, and Rev. Dr. Brian Kachelmeier, Crown of Life senior pastor.

HOUSTON



A tie quilting marathon for Lutheran World Relief was held at Gethsemane over four days in August.

SAN MARCOS



The congregation of Grace was blessed to bear witness to the baptism of five children of God on Aug. 17. Pictured are Ava, Sonia, Elijah, Viviana and Yazmine along with their proud parents and Rev. Dr. Craig DuBois.

AUSTIN



Above, at Christ, Rev. John C. Stennfeld baptized his first grandchild — Sunny — on June 29. Sunny was the fifth infant member baptism he has performed since March 2024 at Christ. Each of the infants was the first child in that family, and amazingly all five are girls! Pictured below are the moms and daughters: Christin and Penelope; Amanda and Delta; Taylor and Josephine; Caitlin and Collins; and Trinity and Sunny.



HAMILTON

St. John installed and blessed its 2025-26 Church Council and Ministry Board members on Aug. 3. The congregation is grateful to have such a commitment from members. Pastor is Rev. Aaron Kalbas.

BIG SPRING

Alive in Christ Lutheran Church hosted vacation Bible school on Aug. 2. Pictured are five attendees showing off their foam Noah's Ark and sticker sheets.

SAN ANTONIO

Mount Calvary celebrated the confirmation of Sullivan Wille and Sadie Olson. They are pictured with Rev. Craig Meissler.

SAN MARCOS

The family of Grace, Lamesa, welcomed three new members through Baptism on June 29. Pictured are, from left, Shelby and Sterling Jones with their daughters, Hagen Lanell and Shilo Avery; Rev. Dr. Alan Korenick; and Mr. and Mrs. Johnathan Terry with their son, Theodor (Theo).

WINNIE

At Hope Lutheran Church, Rev. Timothy Dinger confirmed Gracelyn Abshire, Nicholas Abshire, Allison Erickson and Addison Gaus on July 27.

GUN BARREL CITY



St. Peter by the Lake welcomed new members on June 1. Pictured are, from left (first row) Tara Holland, Grace Holland, Curtis (Bib) Holland, Anne Parker, Lolly Moore, Ann Williams; (second row) Cliff Holland, Theresa Germaine, Clay Moore; (third row) Scott Germaine, Tim Burt, Brianna Sloan, Rev. D R Nelson and James Bock. Missing from the photo are Michael Parker, Ryan Germaine and Matthew Germaine.



On June 25, St. Peter welcomed four confirmands, from left, Caden Brown, Zoey Wendt, Addyson Wendt and William Starnes.



Brianna Sloan was baptized at St. Peter by the Lake on May 23.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Congratulations to the following couples, who are celebrating marriages of 50 years or more:

Our Savior, Abilene

Tom and Kathy Denslow
55 years, Aug. 29
Robert and Irene Geiser
54 years, Aug. 14
George and Janie Igram
65 years, July 16

Christ, Lincoln

Clyde and Cathy Schulze
50 years, Oct. 25

St. Paul, Serbin

Mike and Susie Maass
50 years, Aug. 23

Marvin and Charlyn Matthijetz
61 years, Sept. 26
Gilbert and Dorothy Krause
65 years, Oct. 15
Ken and Ruby Weiser
63 years, Oct. 20
Willard and Marjorie Albrecht
65 years, Nov. 20
David and Irene Hempel
50 years, Jan. 4

Mount Calvary, San Antonio

Jeff and Ann Harwood
52 years, Sept. 14
Lamar and Inkie Gillian
58 years, Sept. 16

Living Savior, Montgomery



John and Wanda Puffer
65 years, Aug. 26

Gethsemane, Houston

Bill and Sue Binford
74 years, Oct. 12
Jim and Maria Keeling,
54 years, Oct. 16

St. Paul, The Grove

Richard and Jill Lorenz
50 years, Aug. 17

Zion, Tomball



Elroy and Joann Hirsch
70 years, Oct. 8

Lloyd and Brenda Arldt
55 years, Sept. 5

Keith and Mavis Shafer
53 years, Sept. 10

Sy and Sherry Hartgrove
53 years, Sept. 15

Bobby Joe and Beverly Wood
51 years, Sept. 20

Community of ONE in CHRIST



Dr. Bill Hinz

Director, School Ministry

Every year, before the start of a new academic year, our Lutheran school staffs gather in August before a community, comprised of those dedicated to sharing the love of Christ with their students and their families. It is truly a high calling and a privilege for our Lutheran educators to have the opportunity to shape the lives of the youth that are part of our school's community, along with ministering to their families.

What a wonderful gift we have to be able to share the message of God's great love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ with each of them.

The celebrations began on Aug. 5, for the Houston area Lutheran schools at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Houston. The group worshiped together and were uplifted with some truly amazing singing, and encouragement from Gloria Dei pastors Revs. Steve Garrabrant, Dan Schepman and Randy Miller.

On Aug. 6, the Austin/San Antonio/Central Texas Lutheran schools gathered at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran School, San Antonio, to celebrate a new school year. As is tradition, the new administrators along with their prayer partners assembled for a time of dedication and prayer.

The celebrations concluded on Aug. 8, with the Metroplex Lutheran schools gathering at St. Paul Lutheran School, Fort Worth. Rev. Andy Audette, St. Paul senior pastor, and the St. Paul worship team led our educators in a spiritual and uplifting worship experience, reminding us that even though we are serving in changing times, we serve a changeless God (Daniel 2:20-21).

What a blessing it is to grow and worship as a community of one in Christ. Our schools may be scattered across the state, but we serve the same God with the same message of His enduring love and eternal salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To God be the Glory.



From top, district educators are gathered in Houston, Fort Worth and San Antonio.

Do not be discouraged!



By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

Eric, our Uber driver upon arriving in New York City, had been living there for five years. Since he was originally from Ghana, and I love Africa, we struck up a conversation.

When we arrived at our destination, I asked Eric if he would stay with our group until we made sure we were at the correct location. Eric obliged!

The mission house we were looking for was supposed to have a red front door and an entrance code box. The house he delivered us to had neither of these attributes. In fact, the downstairs door had an eviction notice on it. I told Eric that although it appeared to be the correct address, it was not the correct house.

Then I promptly called our host and explained our dilemma. The house we were looking for was supposed to be close to Immanuel Lutheran Church in the Whitestone neighborhood of Queens, so while keeping our host on the phone, I used Apple Maps to try to find the location of the church. Eric and I started walking toward the church and in a few minutes we spotted a house with a bright red door! Thank you, Jesus!

This house did have an entrance code box, so I put in the code and it opened. That alarmed the dog inside the house and I feared that I had just entered the wrong house. I was not aware that there would be a dog and a wonderful lady named Mimi, who lived downstairs in the mission house. After rudely awakening her at 12:45 a.m., she assured us that we had found our accommodation for the New York City mission trip! It was a rocky start to the trip, but God is good!

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” **Joshua 1:9 NIV**

When things don't go as planned, remember this verse!

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” **Joshua 1:9 ESV**

When you face scary situations, remember this verse!

I have commanded you, ‘Be strong and courageous! Don’t tremble or be terrified, because the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.’” **Joshua 1:9 GW**

When you feel like there is no hope, remember this verse!

Here is what I am commanding you to do. Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go. **Joshua 1:9 NIRV**

When you forget how good God is, remember this verse!

Yes, be bold and strong! Banish fear and doubt! For remember, the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. **Joshua 1:9 TLB**

Thank you, Jesus, for making all things work together for good, and for being with us wherever we go!

Translations

NIV: New International Version • ESV: English Standard Version
GW: GOD’S WORD • NIRV: New International Reader’s Version
TLB: The Living Bible





Investing in kingdom growth



Becca Jones

Texas CEF Executive Director

As we grow older, many of us find ourselves reflecting on the legacy we leave behind, not just financially, but spiritually.

What impact will your resources have beyond your lifetime? How can your investments serve a higher purpose?

At Texas District Church Extension Fund (Texas CEF), we understand these questions. Texas CEF is more than just a place to invest. We are a ministry that provides a way to grow God's Kingdom while stewarding the resources He has entrusted to you.

Your investments can make a difference when you invest with Texas CEF. They help LCMS Texas District congregations create spaces and places for ministry.

While your money is working for the Kingdom, it's also working for you. Our investment options are

designed with competitive interest rates and flexibility to meet your financial needs.

We have investments for every age and every stage of life:

- ▶ Flex Savings
- ▶ Fixed Rate Notes
- ▶ Floating Rate Notes
- ▶ IRAs
- ▶ Rainy Day Fund
- ▶ Jumbo Investment

Join us in advancing God's mission across Texas. Remember, when you invest with Texas CEF, you don't just grow your finances — you invest in Kingdom growth.

Visit texascef.org to download your investment application and support the work underway in our Texas District!

Mission Grant Spotlight

Discipling youth for Gospel outreach

Glocal Mission, founded and led by Rev. Dr. David Kim, is a Christian non-profit organization based in Houston, focused on equipping and mobilizing people for disciple-making and church multiplication both locally and globally.

The \$12,000 LWML Texas District mission grant has enabled Glocal Mission to create specialized programming to gather, train and organize youth ministry leaders and youth evangelists in Houston for Christ-centered outreach. This mission grant also provides for training, materials, supplies, food for activities and outreach, and Gospel outreach resources.

In 2025, Glocal Mission trained over 125 students and youth ministry leaders in cross-cultural outreach, celebrated 79 baptisms, and equipped 28 churches with their 5-3-1 evangelism model and “Good–Better–Best” missional outcome framework.

Testimonials from youth and church leaders emphasize the transformative impact of the program, which empowers participants to actively share their faith and serve as disciple-makers. Various mission activities



include sharing the Gospel in parks, ministering to laborers and the homeless, assembling care packages, and engaging in cross-cultural training. The initiative has inspired a new generation of bold ambassadors for Christ.

Thank you, LWML Texas District, for helping raise youth who go, share and multiply!

A mission team from Tyler assembles care packages for community outreach.

Young Woman Representatives

At the 41st Biennial LWML Convention in Omaha, Neb., in June, Texas District Young Woman Representatives (YWR) Mikayla Heckmann and Amy Perez brought their vibrant energy and dedication to mission work. Passionate about advancing the LWML's mission, they were eager to connect with like-minded women from across the nation.

Their involvement centered on learning, worship and deepening their commitment

to serving others in Christ's name. Under the theme “Growing in God's Grace,” Mikayla and Amy contributed to discussions and service projects, while strengthening relationships with fellow attendees.

The women are a dynamic and diverse representation of the LWML's future — compassionate, energetic and committed to impacting local and global communities. Their participation ensures the mission of the LWML continues to thrive for generations to come, both in their home congregations and beyond.

Lutheran World Relief Ingathering Dates

Houston

Nov. 1, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. • Epiphany, 14423 West Road

Marion (San Antonio area)

Nov. 5, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. • St. John, 600 S. Center Street

Plano (Dallas area)

Nov. 8, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. • Messiah, 1801 W. Plano Parkway

Visit lwmltxdist.org/mission-service for more information.

2024-26 Mite Goal: \$403,000

Mites received through July 31: \$240,014 (\$162,986 still needed)

Mission Grants paid through July 31: \$176,064

Send your mite offerings, with a remittance form to:
LWML Texas District, Attn: Alissa Elley, Financial Secretary
P.O. Box 183; Seguin, TX 78156