

TEXAS

OCTOBER 2026

M E S S E N G E R

The Texas District • The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Immeasurably more!



Rev. Dr. Jon Braunersreuther
District President

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV)

Over the course of the past few months, I have had the honor to speak to a couple of groups about these words of Scripture. In each case the members of the groups were readily able to identify what they would like "more" of in their professional and personal lives — time, money, human resources, closer relationships, peace, vacation — the list goes on. What would you like more of?

Does God want to give us what we want more of? Well, maybe. We should ask, knowing that He will give us what is good for us (see Luke 11:5-13). But here's the "more" that He most definitely wants for us (from Ephesians 3:18): "to grasp how wide and long and deep and high is the love of Christ."

In fact, the love of Christ is not only more; it's

immeasurably more. It's the kind of love that removes your sin as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103). It's the undeserved love of God (grace!) that abounds all the more where sin abounds (Romans 5). And speaking of immeasurable — it's love, because of the forgiveness Jesus won for us on the cross, that assures us of eternal life with God, in paradise, FOREVER. Time without end. Talk about immeasurable!

How do you feel about a God like that? How will we respond to God who loves us so immeasurably?

In the days since my election in the summer of 2025, I have been writing about the impelling force that our *common convictions* have toward our *common cause* — reaching those who are far from God with the precious Gospel. They are convictions maintained and a cause pursued best when we work together in *common community*. (See 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Corinthians 5:14ff., Acts 15:1-31 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-31.)

The convictions that we have about a God whose over-the-top love for us in Christ guarantees our eternity can't help but move us to the cause of sharing that Good News with others. As God's Word says, "Christ's love compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Mission stories

Visit txlcms.org/videos for a documentary series that travels the state of Texas, sharing stories about Lutheran ministries, the people who serve them and those served by them.



In "The Vicar of St. Paul," Michael Cruz shares his story of growing up in Honduras and being shown Jesus' love through missionaries serving in his hometown. Working for them as a translator, Michael had the opportunity to come to San Antonio.

Now, through the Center for Hispanic Studies program of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Michael serves as vicar at St. Paul, the oldest Lutheran church in San Antonio. He leads a Bible study — "art, coffee, and Jesus" at Poetic Republic, a coffee shop next door to St. Paul. At least 30 people are now attending the study.

Join us as Michael shares his fascinating story of God working through others to lead him to the pastoral ministry and share Jesus with others.

To support church workers like Michael and congregations in the Texas District, visit txlcms.org/tpim.



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. Give now at txlcms.org/tpim. Thank you for your support!

Go home and tell



Deaconess Noemi Guerra

District Wide Evangelist
Development Leader

Could Jesus be sending you to tell someone what He has done? In Mark 5, a man whom Jesus had rescued asked to follow Him.

Jesus answered, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19).

The man had lived among the tombs, isolated and tormented. Jesus confronted the evil that held him and restored him. Then Jesus sent him home. The man went throughout the Decapolis telling what Jesus had done, and the people marveled. His witness did not begin with a title or impressive speaking ability. It began with Jesus and His mercy.

Your story may look nothing like his, but you also know what it means to need and receive Christ's mercy. An evangelist is not necessarily someone with a stage or microphone. An evangelist is someone who has received Christ's mercy and is prepared to tell others. Could that be you?

At the 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, held July 18–23 in Phoenix, LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison urged Christians to be "Abounding in witness. Abounding in proclaiming the abundant forgiveness of Jesus. ...



Texas District evangelists enjoy time for fellowship.

Abounding in your sacred vocations ... evangelist!" His words identify Gospel witness as a sacred Christian vocation.

An LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations report in *Convention Workbook* recalled the "identification and training of laity for the role of evangelist." It also said that "programs intended to theologically train laity ... may be of great benefit for our churches."

We can see that benefit through Deaconess Becky Jungklaus, who serves as an evangelist. Becky teaches ASL to deaf people and their hearing family members and friends. While sharing the gift of language, she also shares Jesus. Many participants are disconnected from a Christian congregation. Her classes build relationships and create opportunities to speak about Christ's mercy and forgiveness. Like the man in Mark 5, Becky goes to people God has placed around her and tells what the Lord has done. God uses her language teaching and faithful witness to bring His Word to others.

The need is urgent. Many people have little or no connection to a Christian congregation. We need trained witnesses who understand Lutheran teaching, explain the Gospel faithfully, and meet people where they live and work.

Evangelist training helps Christians witness with biblical clarity, Lutheran faithfulness, confidence and compassion. Participants learn to listen, distinguish Law and Gospel, answer questions, share their testimony and invite people into congregational life. They are not expected to know everything. Trained lay evangelists serve under pastoral guidance, supporting pastors and congregations by carrying the Gospel into relationships the church might not otherwise reach.

Perhaps Jesus' words are also an invitation to you: Go home. Go to your people. Tell them what the Lord has done and how He has shown mercy. Try evangelist training and become better prepared to share faithfully the abundant forgiveness of Jesus.

Visit txlcms.org/evangelisttrainingseries.

For generations to come

One-hundred years ago, faithful Christians had a vision. They believed a Christ-centered university would shape men and women to serve Christ in their churches, schools, homes and communities. They invested not only in buildings and classrooms, but also in people. They gave generously because they believed the Gospel was worth passing to the next generation.

Today, as Concordia University Texas prepares to celebrate its centennial, that same vision continues. Every student who walks across campus carries a story. Some are preparing to serve in ministry. Others will serve as teachers, nurses, business leaders or scientists. Many arrive with tremendous gifts, deep faith and a calling from God, while others will hear the Gospel message for the first time. They also arrive with financial hurdles that could stand in the way of that calling.

This is where faithful generosity becomes something extraordinary. An endowed scholarship is never just a scholarship. It becomes the encouragement that allows a student to answer God's call without overwhelming financial burdens. It becomes the teacher who inspires hundreds of children over the course of a career. It becomes the church worker who faithfully proclaims Christ for decades. It becomes the business leader who serves with integrity because their education was rooted in biblical truth. One gift can echo through generations in ways no donor will ever fully see this side of heaven.

That is why Legacy Deo is honored to partner with Concordia University Texas as the school launches into a new century in stewarding the gifts entrusted to its mission. As Concordia's planned giving partner and endowment manager, Legacy Deo will help donors establish lasting gifts while providing faithful stewardship of the university's endowment funds.

At Legacy Deo, our vision is that God's people, each and every one, will leave a legacy for faith and family. We believe faithful stewardship is one of the ways God makes that vision a reality. Every planned gift, every endowed scholarship and every act of generosity has the potential to strengthen Christian families, equip future leaders and advance the Gospel for generations to come. When God's people prayerfully establish an endowment, they are choosing to create something that outlives

them. Long after a donor reaches their heavenly home, their generosity continues opening doors for students, strengthening Christian education and supporting the mission Christ has entrusted to His church.

This is the remarkable nature of an endowment. A single gift is invested wisely. Income from that investment is distributed year after year, allowing one act of generosity to become a continuing source of blessing. The gift keeps serving because God continues providing through it. The original donor may never know those names. Yet heaven will.

This partnership between Concordia University Texas and Legacy Deo is ultimately about creating more stories of impacting students on a Christian campus. It is about helping faithful Christians leave more than an inheritance. It is about helping them leave a witness.

As Concordia enters its second century, we rejoice that another generation of faithful stewards has the opportunity to invest in what God is doing through Christian higher education. The buildings may change. The students' faces certainly will. Our mission remains the same: equipping men and women to serve Christ wherever He calls them.

That is the beautiful promise of faithful stewardship. Today's generosity becomes tomorrow's ministry and by God's grace, tomorrow's ministry changes lives for eternity.



HAPPENINGS

BASTROP

Epiphany Lutheran Church continues to grow!

Right: Anastasia Lanette Shoemate was brought to the waters of Holy Baptism on Aug. 23. Pictured are Rev. E.B. Holschuh and Anastasia and her family, parents Adalynn and Logan and brother Bradley.

Below: Madeline Robb was confirmed at Epiphany on Aug. 9. She is pictured with her parents, Ryan and Lindsay, her brother, Harlan, and Pastor Holschuh.

Walter and Jean Hattox were received into membership by transfer on Aug. 16.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

St. Paul, Fort Worth

Ed and Janet Socha
Kasper
62 years, Sept. 19

Gethsemane, Houston

Bill and Sue Binford
75 years, Oct. 12

Jim and Maria Keeling
55 years, Oct. 16

Our Savior, Abeline

Walt and Pat Kionke
60 years, Sept. 24

Happenings around Texas

Submit your news!

Send photos, stories and newsletters for
The Lutheran Witness to:

txmess@txlcms.org

Texas Messenger
1221 Satellite View
Round Rock, TX 78665

Please be sure all photos sent
electronically are in color and 300 dpi
(high resolution).

The Texas Messenger is available online at
txlcms.org.

GUN BARREL CITY



Owen Caden Hensel was welcomed into the family of God through the waters of Baptism on July 12 at St. Peter Lutheran Church. Holding Owen is his mother, Kayla Gragsone. Conducting the Baptism is Rev. D R Nelson. Grandparents James and Jennifer Gragsone were witnesses.

SWEENY



Rev. Ralph Hobradsch, interim pastor of St. Luke, was recognized by the congregation for the 50th anniversary of his ordination. Following service, a potluck barbecue was held in honor of Pastor Hobradsch, who was ordained on Aug. 8, 1976. He is pictured with Mark Hopkins, congregation president.

CEDAR HILL



Cross of Christ Lutheran Church has moved from DeSoto to 332 Cedar Street in Cedar Hill. Selling the previous church building has enabled Cross of Christ to pay off all debts, buy the new facility and retain a substantial cash reserve. Since the move the congregation has been blessed to welcome visitors every week. The entire congregation has pitched in to clear out the old building, and clean and prepare the new building along with making desired changes.

HAPPENINGS

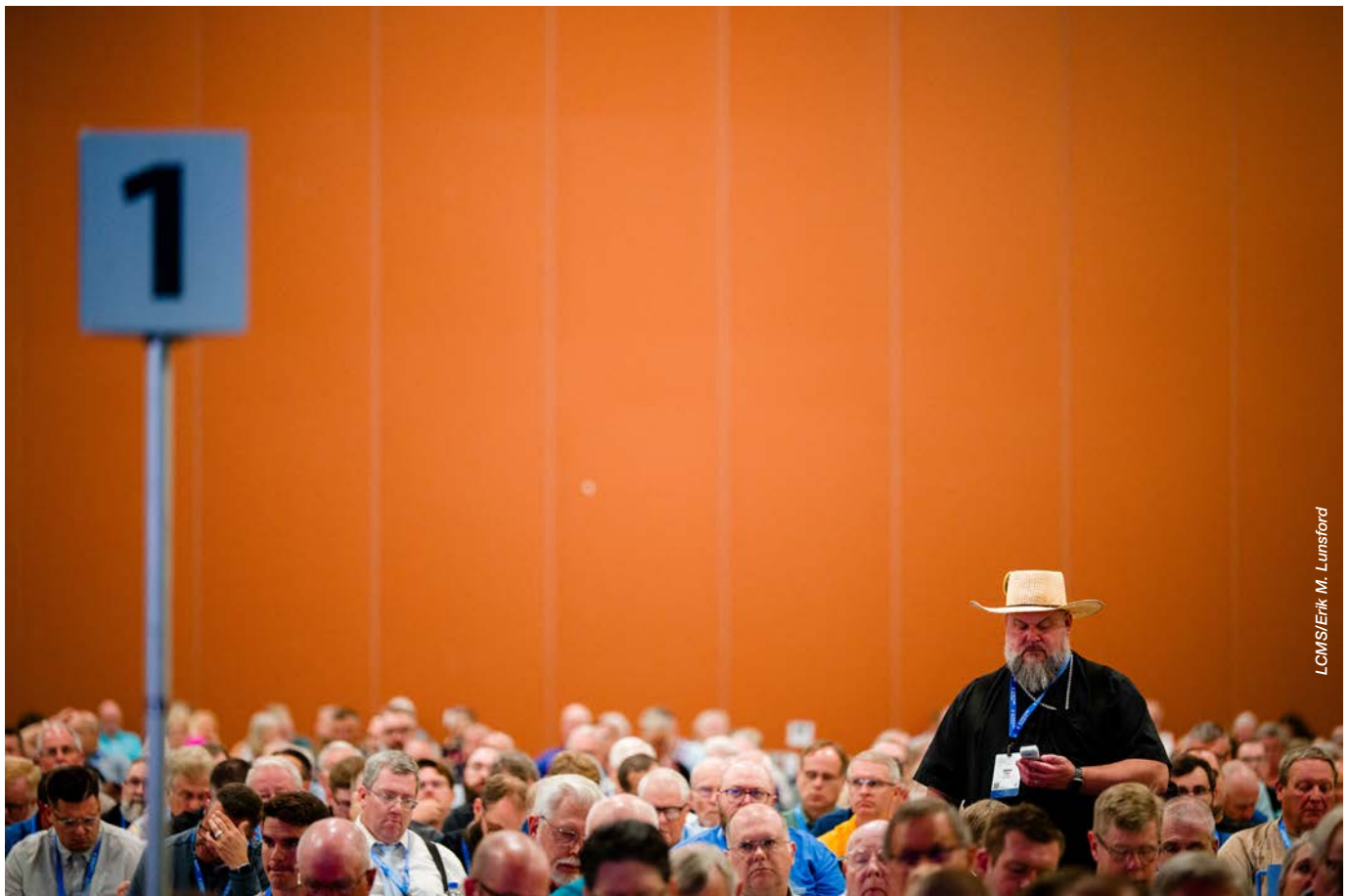
CEDAR PARK

Rev. J. Brown, emeritus (pictured at right), volunteers for Fortress Ministries, a Christian non-profit that holds karate classes for the public inside the community center of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Along with martial arts training, these classes contain devotions, prayer and Scripture memorization. The class emphasizes sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have never set foot inside the doors of a Christian church.

On July 26 at Good Shepherd, Pastor Brown shared a message of Jesus' victory in the midst of spiritual warfare. Present to hear the

Gospel were many karate students who are not Christians. Cedar Park has recently seen a big influx of those from India, and this population makes up the majority of Brown's classes. It's a prime mission field that is fertile for planting Gospel seeds.

While these individuals may not have ever found their way onto the grounds of Good Shepherd, they are now there regularly for Brown's catechesis instruction. Please join us in prayer as we ask the Lord of the harvest to gather and collect more souls to be added to His kingdom.



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Rev. Jason Kaspar, pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, La Grange, served as a Texas District pastoral delegate during the 69th Regular Convention of the LCMS, held July 18–23 in Phoenix.

TEXAS TWO-STEP

Increase your **INVESTMENT**.
Double your **DONATION**.



STEP ONE:

An individual opens a new fixed-rate investment of \$5,000 or more and gives a gift of at least 10% of the initial investment amount to Texas Partners in Mission.

STEP TWO:

Texas District Church Extension Fund will match the gift 100% to Texas Partners in Mission AND pay an additional 1% APY during the first term of the new investment.

Texas Church Extension Fund and Texas Partners in Mission are pairing up to increase financial resources available for starting new ministries in Texas. Every dollar contributed to Texas Partners in Mission goes directly to support missions in the Texas District. Join the “Texas Two-Step” Program to increase your investment and double your donation.

Take steps across Texas to share Jesus. Learn more at texascef.org/texastwostep

**Texas District
Church Extension Fund
& Texas Partners in Mission**

Ministry Focused. Financially Responsible.



Texas District CEF is a non-profit religious organization, therefore, CEF investments are no SIPC- or FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This does not constitute an offer to sell or a request to buy. The offer is made solely by CEF's Offering Circular.

A community of one



Dr. Bill Hinz

Director, School Ministry

The 2026–2027 school year is in full swing. Every August, staffs from our Lutheran schools gather as a community of one 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 also part of our school's community.

The celebrations began on Aug. 5 as the Austin/Central Texas/San Antonio-area Lutheran school staffs gathered at Redeemer Lutheran Church and School, Austin. The group worshiped together and were uplifted with some truly inspiring singing and messages of encouragement from Rev. Kevin Westergren (Redeemer senior pastor) and Rev. Mike Knippa (Redeemer associate pastor).

On Aug. 6, the staffs of Houston Lutheran schools gathered at St. Mark Lutheran Church and School,

Houston, to celebrate a new school year. Rev. Matt Popovits, St. Mark senior pastor, shared a message based on Colossians 2:6-7.

The celebrations continued on Aug. 7 with staffs of the Metroplex Lutheran schools gathering at Crown of Life Lutheran Church and School, Colleyville. Rev. Martin Richardson, Crown of Life senior pastor, led our educators in a spiritual and uplifting worship experience.

As is tradition at every service, all the new administrators along with their prayer partners assembled for a time of dedication and prayer. What a blessing it is to grow and worship as a community of one in Christ. Our schools maybe 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.



The staffs of Houston-area Lutheran schools gathered at St. Mark for worship and uplifting messages for the new school year .

Tell the next generation



By Pat Fick
CAN-DO Director

After graduating from Concordia University, Nebraska, I had the privilege of serving St. John's Lutheran, Lincoln, and Immanuel Lutheran Giddings. The friendly folks in Lee County welcomed me into their homes and adopted me into their families.

I learned so much in those first years of ministry, and it was a tremendous joy to teach, coach and travel with their children and youth. I remember painting lines on the gym floor when I first arrived, attempting to coach flag football, playing volleyball for hours at the annual youth tournament (I even had to referee some of the championship games — that was a bit stressful!), and getting a speeding ticket in the school's minibus on the way home from our youth ski trip to New Mexico (oops).

Thirty-seven years later, I get a call from Rev. Curtis Dorsey, who grew up at Immanuel, Giddings, while I served the congregation. He invited me to gather a mission team that would be willing to travel to New York City to lend a hand to the churches in Queens that are trying to provide vacation Bible school programs for their children. It sounded like a fantastic opportunity, so nine willing servants hopped on a plane headed for John F. Kennedy International Airport. (Our first flight was canceled, delaying us for a full day, but that didn't stop us from completing our mission!)

Only nine of the 13 children who signed up for the VBS at Immanuel (in the Whitestone neighborhood of Queens), followed through and came to par-

ticipate. One-to-one is a surprisingly good teacher-to-student ratio! God's economy is surprising sometimes, but a good reminder that He has a purpose and plan for what He does, and He cares for the "one."

In the afternoons we visited St. Paul and helped their members hand out free water and snacks on the busy street in front of their church. It gave us the opportunity to share Jesus' love in a tangible way and invite them to St. Paul for worship on Sundays.

We pulled weeds at a community garden at St. John's, and we did a family night presentation and barbecue at Redeemer, where Pastor Dorsey serves in the Glendale neighborhood. When Pastor Dorsey made his closing comments, he mentioned how special it was for his daughter to have the opportunity to participate in spiritual activities just like he had done as a little boy. What a full circle moment. What a privilege to tell the next generation about the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. What a mighty God we serve!

We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

Psalms 78:4 (NIV)

What opportunities is God giving you to tell the next generation about the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord? Let's joyfully share the Good News of Jesus' love, shown in His willingness to die for the sins of the entire world!



Investing in Tomorrow's Church Leaders

As voted on during the 2022 LWML Texas District Convention, *Seminarian Scholarships for Texas Students* are designated as an automatic recipient of Mission Grant funds each biennium. Delegates at the district convention this past June approved a \$50,000 Mission Grant for the 2026–2028 biennium.

Matthew McCarthy shared in a thank you letter last spring that he was nearing the midpoint of his second semester at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, where he balances his studies with multiple campus jobs. As he devoted his heart, mind and spirit to being shaped by the Holy Spirit into a faithful servant of the Word, meeting financial obligations grew increasingly difficult. The generous support he receives from the LWML Texas District Mission Grant allows him to stay focused on Scripture, doctrine and spiritual formation, channeling his energy into becoming a pastor equipped to care for souls and shepherd the flock.

Wesley Clark, who is preparing to become a pastor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, shared, "I am deeply grateful for your generous support and the encouragement it brings to our family. Through your kindness, the Lord shows once again how He provides for those preparing to serve in His church. Your gift helps make it possible for me to continue my studies with focus and joy, trusting

that His Word will accomplish all that He promises." He added that each day is a reminder of God's faithfulness and the privilege of preparing to proclaim His Gospel. Wesley thanked the ladies of the LWML Texas District for being part of this work, for their prayers and for their fellowship in Christ.



Wesley Clark

The LWML Texas District has long supported seminarian scholarships for students from the Texas District. These scholarships help future pastors enter ministry with reduced financial strain, and recipients remain deeply grateful for this ongoing support.

Young Women: Your Voice Matters!

Do you know a young woman who would be encouraged by connecting with Lutheran women from across the country? The 2027 LWML Convention will be held July 8–11 in Oklahoma City. It is a wonderful opportunity to grow in faith, build lasting friendships and be inspired to a life of joyful service.

The LWML Texas District is seeking women ages 22–35 to serve as Young Woman Representatives (YWRs). If your congregation has a woman who is passionate about her faith and eager to learn, serve and share her experiences with others, now is the time to encourage her to apply.

Pastors, congregation leaders and LWML groups play an important role in identifying and supporting these future leaders. Forms and more information can be found at lwmltxdist.org (go to "Faith and Service" and select "Young Women" from the drop-down menu), or you may reach out to Christine Spofford, Committee on Young Women chairman, at youngwomanrep@lwmltxdist.org.

Together, let us invite, encourage, and equip the next generation of Lutheran Women in Mission. Your invitation today could have an eternal impact.

Send your mite offerings along with a remittance form to:

LWML Texas District
Attn: Alissa Elley, Financial Secretary
P.O. Box 183; Seguin, TX 78156

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