

Sess ID	First Name	Last Name	Affiliation (company, association, university...)	City, State	Job title	Title	Summary
2	Travis	Gulke	Michigan District, LCMS	Ann Arbor, Michigan	Superintendent of Schools	Biblical Leadership Lessons through Picture Books	We will dive into more than three dozen picture books to grow as leaders and tie each of them to a scripture verse as we learn how to use these texts to help us instill essential traits/skills in those we serve. (We are never too old to grab a few nuggets of wisdom from storybooks.) There will be a few classics of children's literature you'll recognize, but quite a few new ones to add to your Amazon wish lists. At the very least, you'll come away with some great ideas for chapel, youth group, Sunday school, future children's messages, or must-read stories to your grandchildren. And feel free to bring along a few of your own titles to share with the group!
3	Lee	Larsen	Acts 1:8 Ministry	Green Bay, WI 54304	Ministry Coordinator	Building Faith, Church, Kingdom Through Simple Acts of Kindness!	P.A.C.K. (Planned Acts of Christian Kindness) Outreach makes it easy for the everyday Christian to share Christ's love and an invite to their church/school with everyone in their community. Because this places Jesus at the center of every unusual act of kindness the Holy Spirit has an opportunity to do some pretty miraculous things, and He takes full advantage of this! You will soon find out that God uses your unselfish service in this way to deliver many different blessings. Your faith grows the more you witness how God uses these opportunities to reveal His power and presence! The shared Connect Card serves as a lasting reminder of this uniquely refreshing experience and where they can come to learn more about Jesus. All of the P.A.C.K. resources are totally FREE with NO donations accepted for them. Kindness and the Holy Spirit work in all languages and cultures and this is why today P.A.C.K. is at work in 116 countries. There is a growing darkness in our communities and we know Jesus, not Government money & programs, is the true and only cure. Together with the Holy Spirit we can push back the darkness in the same way Jesus showed us, loving kindness shown to all.
4	Daniel	Ross	LCMS Oklahoma District	Mustang, OK	Evangelism Executive	Working in a Volunteer District	<p>As Districts better husband resources, many are looking to non-paid District officers. What are the pro's and con's of volunteer officers? How do districts operate under a volunteer model? What are expectations, realities, challenges, and joys in a volunteer model?</p> <p>The Oklahoma District can offer significant insight into these questions as it has been an all volunteer district since its inception 100 years ago (all District officers are in full-time parish ministry and do not receive a salary from the District).</p>
5	Justin	Bell	GraceHill Church	Omaha, NE	Pastor	5 Mindset Shifts to Help Your Church Grow	There are no silver bullets when it comes to church growth. What programs work at one church, might not work at another. Each church has its own context and variables to deal with. But, there are 5 ways to think about your church, and questions to ask one another, that can help your church grow.

6	Matt	Koenig	Prince of Peace Lutheran church	Palatine, IL	Discipelship Pastor	Rewriting Your Playlist: Healing Mentally, Emotionally, Physically, and Spiritually	<p>Have you ever felt like your thoughts are running wild—and your life is following suit? Maybe you or someone you love is stuck in a spiral of destructive thinking, battling depression, anxiety, or other struggles that weigh heavy on the heart, body, and soul. I’ve been there. I am there. And I want to talk about it.</p> <p>I’m a survivor of depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and self-destructive behavior. But my story isn’t just about the pain—it’s about the journey toward healing. Healing that reaches beyond the mind to restore emotions, strengthen the body, and renew the spirit. There is a way forward and it starts by changing the soundtrack that plays in your mind every day.</p> <p>Together, we’ll explore how mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health are all deeply connected—and how neglecting one area can throw your whole life off balance. But we won’t stop at awareness. We’ll dig into practical tools and biblical truth that can bring restoration across every part of your being.</p> <p>Mental health is a battle. Emotional wounds run deep. Physical health is often neglected. Spiritually, many wonder if God truly loves them. But you don’t have to face it alone. Together, we’ll rewrite the soundtrack of our lives, find healing in every part of who we are, and let God’s truth become our foundation, hope, and battle plan.</p>
7	Rebecca	Tieman	LifeWise Academy	Cordova, TN	LifeWise Academy Area Director	LifeWise Academy Bible Education for Public School Students	<p>LifeWise Academy provides Bible Education for public school students during the school day. Since its inception in 2019, LifeWise has quickly grown to serve over 1000 schools nationwide in 34 states. Learn how to empower your church and community with the resources and tools to launch and maintain an effective program, reaching public school students with the Gospel every week.Find out how to combat the anxiety, depression, and rising suicide rates among our young people with a Gospel-centered model with the highest standards.</p> <p>The LifeWise Academy mission is "to postively impact student, schools and communities by providing Bible-based character-focused Released Time Religious Intruction program."</p> <p>Pastor Tieman and Rebecca Tieman began with 4 students and over the course of the first year saw that number grow to 100 students hearing the Gospel every week. Several High school football players were baptized and students testified that this preaching changed their lives. Impact stories from the program showed students growing in their relationship with Jesus.</p> <p>Learn how to start this Legal, Simple, Practical program in your community and reach the mission field at your doorstep.</p>
8	Robert	Lessing	Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota	SAINT PAUL	Professor	Hope in the Wilderness: Practical Insights from the Book of Numbers	<p>In-between times. You’ve likely been there. Waiting for a new job to start. Transitioning from engaged to married. Packing up your belongings, but unable to move into that new house yet. The Book of Numbers is also about the in-between times; how to survive, and even thrive, when traipsing through difficult days. This workshop is based on the presenter's 2025 CPH book on Numbers.</p>

9	Daniel	Ross	LCMS Oklahoma District	Mustang, OK	Evangelism Executive	The Seduction of Christian Nationalism	Christian Nationalism is a hot button topic today. But definitions vary wildly. This presentation would seek to give a working definition of Christian Nationalism. Address potential dangers, pitfalls, and false theologies within various forms. And seek to give a strategy to help those who have been seduced by more extreme or radical forms and help them deradicalize.
10	Dr. Kirk	Triplett	Pastor Positive Mental Health Institute	El Paso	Founder/Pastor/Presenter	They Really Love Me! Strategies to Help Leaders Prevent Burnout and Flourish	"Nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I'm gonna eat some worms", is too often how those in church work feel. Let's face it, ministry is hard. There are moments when pastor, leaders, and even church members are ready to give it all up. However, there are great joys to be celebrated. There has been an increase in those leaving the ministry due to burnout. Even with all the challenges there is hope. Join Rev. Dr. Kirk from a fun interactive session that brings to light practical and pragmatic solutions to the mental health crisis among church leaders. Whether you are a professional church worker, a lay leader, or a church member, these tools will enhance your ability to work together in the body of Christ and build one another up in love.
11	Jim	Marriott	Faith Lutheran Church	Austin, Texas	Pastor	The Love Paradox	The Love Paradox, written by Rev. Dr. Karl Galik, explores the relationship of loving God (and being loved by God!) and loving your neighbor as yourself. For many church workers, we strive to love God and love others. For many church workers, we struggle to love ourselves as God loves us. This leads to fear, frustration, and significantly contributes to systemic church-worker burnout. The Love Paradox equips us with tools and strategies to more effectively love ourselves—including the self-management of anxiety, rest, restoration, and rejuvenation. If you are running on empty, this is the breakout for you! If you want to learn how to sustain the good pace you are running, this is the breakout for you!
12	Jim	Marriott	Faith Lutheran Church	Austin, Texas	Pastor	Liturgy and Discipleship: How the Redeemed World is Done	In this breakout, we'll explore the connection between Christian worship behaviors and their application to the daily life of discipleship. Rooted in an understanding of the two kinds of righteousness, behaviors such as hospitality, reconciliation, advocacy, generosity, and many others help connect God's work for us in Christ to our Christian work for our neighbor.
13	Jim	Found	Immanuel Loveland	Loveland CO	retired	Sharing Faith Naturally in Converston	Highlights of this workshop include (1) how to transition from secular to spiritual conversation by listening for topics that connect to the gospel, (2) how to foster dialog that avoids being either aimless or rote, by the use of “permission questions,” (3) how to shift objections back to the content of the salvation message, and (4) how to keep the door open for future engagement.

14	Joshua	LeBorious	Hope Lutheran Church	Friendswood, TX	Senior Pastor	Building a Formative Community	<p>Building a Formative Community: Building Authentic and Formative Connections Many of us long for a community that goes beyond surface-level relationships, where we can be truly known and grow together in our faith. This presentation is for anyone who desires to move from a community of passive participants to one of active, authentic, and life-giving connections.</p> <p>Through intentional steps, we can foster a congregational culture where deep relationships are the norm, not the exception. We will explore practical and theological insights to help you cultivate a space where true spiritual formation can flourish.</p> <p>Key Takeaways Will Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- From Both Ends:Specific, actionable strategies for building community from both the top-down (leadership-driven initiatives) and the grassroots (empowering individuals to connect).- Small Groups, Big Impact:A new approach to small group ministry that shifts the focus from simply studying a topic to creating a genuine, formative experience for every member.- Laying the Groundwork:Essential ground rules and principles for fostering an environment of trust, vulnerability, and mutual support that allows for authentic community to thrive. <p>Join us to learn how you can take deliberate steps to build a more authentic and deeply connected congregation.</p>
15	Jon	Niebuhr	Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Glencoe, MN 55336	Pastor	How do we pick up the pieces? The aftermath of suicide.	<p>Suicide is devastating for families. How can we give them the tools and direction to start to rebuild in the aftermath of suicide? We will talk some about prevention and recognitioin of signs, but more about what happens afterward.</p>
16	Donna	Patton	Peace With Christ Lutheran	Aurora, Colorado	Director of Ministry Pathways	Beyond Sunday: Using Podcasts to Equip and Disciple Your Church	<p>In a world where people consume content on the go, discipleship can’t stop at Sunday morning. Podcasting is one of the simplest, most cost-effective tools your church can use to equip, encourage, and disciple your people throughout the week.</p> <p>In this session, you’ll discover how Peace With Christ launched a podcast with minimal equipment, a clear vision, and a heart for discipleship. We’ll share practical steps any church—big or small—can take to create a podcast that extends the conversation, deepens relationships, and multiplies your reach. Whether you’re a pastor, ministry leader, or volunteer, you’ll leave with a roadmap for launching your own podcast and new ideas for how digital discipleship can transform your community.</p> <p>This is our podcast link: https://rss.com/podcasts/jesuscentricleadership/</p>
17	Joyel	Vandenboogart	Known Women's Conference	Appleton	CEO	Navigating Your Spiritual Gift	<p>For the one wondering, “What is my purpose?” Your gift isn’t random — it’s a calling. If you’ve ever felt unsure about your role in ministry or life, this talk will help you discover and better understand your spiritual gifts through Romans 12. Whether you’re new to faith or wanting to step more boldly into your calling, you’ll walk away with clarity, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose.</p>

18	Joyel	Vandenboogart	Known Women's Conference	Appleton	CEO	Letting Go of Control: Finding Rest in Surrender	For the one who’s tired of striving and ready to trust. Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:28 — “Come to me... and I will give you rest” — are more than a gentle invitation; they’re a lifeline. If you're feeling worn down by the need to manage everything, this message offers a path toward freedom through surrender. Come and explore what it means to release control, trust God’s timing, and find deep rest in His strength.
19	Tanner	Olson	Written to Speak	Nashville, TN	Writer & Spoken Word Poet	Creating Space for Hope: Poetry, Music, and Belonging	<p>Join spoken word poet & author, [Tanner Olson](https://www.writtentospeak.com/), and singer-songwriter, [Blake Flattley](https://www.blakeflattley.com/), for an evening designed to quiet the noise, renew your spirit, and open space for hope. Through conversation and creativity, they will explore how art can become a gentle companion to faith, offering language for what we feel but cannot always say. Together, they will share how intentional gatherings rooted in story and song can foster rest, cultivate belonging, and point us toward hope. Come to listen, breathe deeply, and leave with practical ways to create spaces of restoration in your own community.</p> <p>Tanner Olson and Blake Flattley will be sharing original music and poetry, offering a glimpse into the evenings they host at churches, schools, and conferences across the country. Through story and song, they invite audiences to pause from the noise of everyday life and step into a space of reflection. Their events are designed to make room for rest, giving language and melody to the hopes we carry but cannot always name. Each gathering becomes an opportunity to encounter beauty, belong to community, and leave renewed.</p>
20	Katie	Harrell	Upward Bound Preschool	Orcutt, California	Director	Embracing Play: Dissecting What "Play Based" Really Means	<p>We see the words “play based” often, especially when looking at preschools and early childhood centers. Sometimes it might seem like a quick, attractive tagline that draws your attention because the wording is upbeat and welcoming. And too often, it is treated as a feel-good phrase instead of the powerful, evidence-backed approach it truly is. It’s important to stop and delve into what "play based learning" actually is. It’s not just a tagline!</p> <p>A child, especially one in the early childhood age between 2-5, is discovering how the world works. They are discovering cause and effect from their actions. They are observing the adults around them, watching the back and forth in their conversations. They test boundaries, notice how people respond, and begin to make sense of their place in the world. A child learns through.</p> <p>Play-based learning is far from “just play”. In fact, play has evidence-backed research that shows how foundational play-based learning is in a child's longterm educational life. This session is meant to be conversational, community-centered, and attainable to achieve now. The term "play-based" shouldn't just be a buzzword. It's more than that.</p> <p>So... let's PLAY!</p>

21	Steve	Johnson	lutheran valley retreat	Woodland Park	Executive Directo	Boy's to Men - men to leaders	Get more men involved...Men need to step up more in church, but to do that they need to know they are enough right now. Men need to see the pathway clear to Jesus' feet, not be told they need to do more, lead with grace and men will step up!
22	Steve	Johnson	lutheran valley retreat	Woodland Park	Executive Directo	Come to camp/get your church outdoors	Outdoor is an amazing place - experience it with your church - parents, students, children, and families. Explore new spaces and connections, live in a christian community allowing the Holy Spirit to change lives!! Get out of the church walls.
23	Andrew	Johnson	Christ Lutheran Church	Milford, Michigan	Pastor	Telling Better Stories: Techniques from the Stoics to Moth StorySlams to Craft Better Stories.	<p>Great stories captivate, and masterful storytellers are rare. As pastors, teachers, and Church workers, we often use stories to illuminate teachings or engage audiences. What sets exceptional stories—and storytellers—apart? This session explores classic and contemporary principles to help you craft memorable, impactful narratives. Attendees will gain practical tools and techniques for storytelling, along with activities to build a rich reservoir of stories to draw upon.</p> <p>This session focuses on storytelling, not public speaking or sermon design.</p>
24	Lee	Hinton	LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces	St Louis, MO	Operation Barnabas Coordinator	Operation Barnabas: Support for the Military-Connected	This presentation will explore Operation Barnabas, the LCMS ministry dedicated to supporting veterans, active duty service members, and their families. Attendees will learn best practices for congregational engagement, including practical ways to provide encouragement, care, and resources to the military community. Through real-world examples and actionable strategies, participants will leave equipped to strengthen their congregation's role in walking alongside those who have, or continue, to serve.
25	Matt	Koenig	Prince of Peace Lutheran church	Palatine, IL	Discipelship Pastor	Out of the Bubble, Into the World: Connecting and Caring for People as They Are	<p>Have you ever asked yourself, “What’s the best program for discipleship?” or “How do I motivate people to share their faith?” Maybe even, “I just don’t know what to do next?” I’ve been there. For years I searched for the perfect plan, thinking the right program would be the answer. But after 30+ years of ministry, I’ve realized the real key isn’t a program—it’s people.</p> <p>Discipleship starts with connection. It’s about stepping out of the church bubble and into the community, meeting people where they are, and truly caring for them—no matter who they are, where they’ve been, or what they believe. Jesus modeled this perfectly. He connected with fishermen, tax collectors, and outcasts, not because they had it all together, but because He loved them as they were.</p> <p>That’s our calling too. It’s about intentional living for Jesus—choosing daily to connect with others, to listen, and to show His love in real, practical ways. Whether it’s at work, in the neighborhood, at the ballfield, or in the grocery store, every encounter is an opportunity to care for someone in His name.</p> <p>In this session, I’ll share the lessons I’ve learned about discipleship and church growth that go beyond programs and into everyday life. Together we’ll explore how connecting with people and caring for them as they are can open the door for the Spirit to do the real work of transforming lives and growing God’s kingdom.</p>

26	Michael	Eschelbach	Concordia University Irvine	Coloma, MI	professor	Question Quest; how good questions make a way to great conversations?	We can engage in positive conversations about the most important subjects in culture, religion, and philosophy if we begin with a good question. Questions lay a foundation of collaboration rather than contention. Consider the nature of at least 150 questions used as discussion prompts with college students. Podcasts that consider the potential of these questions are available as well.
27	Michael	Eschelbach	Concordia University Irvine	Coloma, MI	professor	Let’s Get This Started? Curriculum, materials, and methods for Youth Ministry.	Have a look at a 5 year study curriculum for grades 8-12. These study guides support conversation and study of the Bible, Catechism, Liturgy, and topics of special import to young people. This weekly curriculum includes a monthly activity to grow a culture of faith, fellowship, and service among the youth and between the youth and the congregation.
28	Marjaana	Kuivalainen	All Saints Lutheran Church Bellevue, WA	Duvall, WA	NCD Coach, Church Administrator	Do you dare to become a healthier church?	Are you ready to witness spiritual growth and energized disciples in your congregation? Just as the lilies of the field flourish by aligning with God’s natural growth principles, churches thrive when they grow according to the life-giving forces He designed. In this session, you’ll discover the biblical and research-backed principles behind Natural Church Development (NCD)—a proven approach to cultivating vibrant, sustainable church life. You’ll learn how these growth forces work, why they matter, and how easy it is to begin applying them in your own context. Whether you're a pastor, ministry leader, or key influencer, this session offers practical tools and fresh perspective to help your church grow in health and impact.
29	Marjaana	Kuivalainen	All Saints Lutheran Church Bellevue, WA	Duvall, WA	NCD Coach, Church Administrator	Feel energized and empower others!	What does it take to feel truly empowered—and to empower others in turn? As an empowering leader, you bring clarity, spark motivation, and release people to pursue what God is calling them to do. You also take care of your own empowerment by spending time in ways that renew your energy and deepen your connection with God. According to Natural Church Development, empowering leadership and passionate spirituality are characteristics of leaders in healthy and thriving churches. In this session, you’ll explore how God personally energizes you in His unique relationship with you—and how His energy naturally flows through you into the lives of those around you. You’ll learn how to be a source of strength and encouragement for others, while staying grounded, refreshed, and whole yourself.
30	Margo	Heath-Dupre	Concordia Publishing House - Author Speakers Bureau -	St. Louis, Missouri	Author	Christian Intentionality in a Chaotic World	Living as a child of God intent to follow His guidance and glorify Him in a world where we are encouraged to lean on our own understanding is challenging. CPH Author, Margo Heath-Dupre introduces her Bible study: Be Thou My Guide: A Bible Study on Trusting God, written to encourage developing and maintaining diligence to live as a child of God and practice intentional Christian living in a world that celebrates exercising freedom to choose to obey or not our Heavenly Father's commandments written on our hearts.

31	Mark	L’Heureux	Christ Lincoln	Lincoln, NE	Executive Director of Schools and Facilities	Preparedness: A Journey, Not A Destination	When was the last time you reviewed your emergency operations plan? Does everyone know it? Do you practice it?
<p>This session will guide church and school leaders in developing a practical and sustainable approach to emergency planning. Participants will learn how to simplify their plans for clarity and effectiveness, establish a dedicated Emergency Operations Team, and put their strategies into action through consistent practice. The presentation will also highlight the importance of leveraging local resources and equipment, as well as creating a thoughtful reunification plan to ensure student and family safety. Emphasizing that preparedness is an ongoing process, this session equips leaders with tools and strategies to build confidence and resilience in their communities.</p>							
32	Tom	Couser	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Carrollton, Texas	Senior Adult Ministry Coordinator	Following the Cloud: Navigating Change in the Church	Change can be difficult for the church. Leaders often avoid change because of potential conflicts. Still, while the gospel message is the same the way it is presented is constantly evolving. In their season of change the Children of Israel followed the cloud to the Promise Land. What can we learn from their experience? How can we develop a strategy that facilitates change?
33	Tom	Couser	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Carrollton, Texas	Senior Adult Ministry Coordinator	Soaring with the Eagles: Aging from a Biblical Perspective	The word "retirement" is not in the Bible. Our culture promotes a life of leisure and relaxation for those who have moved on from full-time work. Abraham and Moses were both in their seventies when God called them. What might God be calling us to, and where can we find the strenght to do it? Young men might "stumble and fall" but God is calling us to "soar on wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31).
34	Beth	Pester	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward, NE	Director of Dual Credit	Emotional Intelligence: Why it Matters!	“You just don’t understand me!” Whether it’s a Sunday School classroom, a high school history class, or the Board of Elder’s meeting, it seems there are always opportunities for us to work at understanding, empathy and compassion. Come get a refresher on the four competencies of Emotional Intelligence in this fun and interactive session as we all continue to work on sharing the love of Jesus with everyone in our church and school environments! (All Grades/Administrators)
35	Caitlin	Dinger	Concordia Seminary	St Louis, MO	PhD Student; Director of Christian Education	When Identity Fails: Helping Youth and Young Adults Find Themselves in Christ	Our culture tells young people that identity is something they must perform, curate, and defend—whether through social media aesthetics, gender expression, or the constant pressure to "be your authentic self." But these pressures don’t come only from secular culture. Alongside the stories of Caitlyn Jenner, Hunter Schafer, and others in the transgender spotlight are equally powerful "traditional" scripts that measure worth by carefully curated ideals of masculinity and femininity. What happens when the weight of these self-made identities proves too heavy? This session will explore how performance-based identity—whether progressive or conservative—ultimately breaks down. We will consider how the gospel of Jesus Christ speaks directly into this struggle, offering young people a received identity that is firm, fully embodied, and freeing. Through case studies, discussion prompts, and take-home ministry resources, participants will gain conversation tools for youth groups, parent education, and Bible study frameworks that address identity questions with truth and compassion.

36	Val	Hennings	retired	Chandler, AZ	retired	Living with a Medical Challenge	I am in the middle of 5 generations of a family that has the challenge of a rare genetic disorder. Expected to pass away 12 years ago, I chose Prayer over Prescription or Procedure. I will touch on the problems of family members and mostly tell of my personal path. The #1 challenge that I have experienced is unlike anybody else in the world - no one else has had this problem.
37	Kristin	Highley	Risen Savior Lutheran Church	Broomfield, Colorado	Director of Christian Education	Managing the Juggling Act: Maintaining Work/Life Balance	As ministry leaders, one of our constant struggles is how to maintain a balance between our personal and professional responsibilities. Planning and implementing the best classrooms and programs possible often leaks into time at home, if any of that even exists! We strive to honor God in all that we do, but managing multiple spinning plates can become costly when it means neglecting loved ones and opportunities for true growth. In this session, we will explore Biblical encouragement for boundaries and will discuss together how we can develop practices that build and uphold healthy distinctions between work and home.
38	Kristin	Highley	Risen Savior Lutheran Church	Broomfield, Colorado	Director of Christian Education	Dreaded Conversations: Talking with Teens About Sex	Do you cringe when it's time to teach the Sixth Commandment to Confirmation students, or avoid any topics related to sex? This workshop will encourage you to approach the inevitable and important conversations that deal with sex in appropriate and meaningful ways. We will discuss how to help teens understand God's design for sex and marriage and how to talk about our priorities when it comes to them. We will also consider which areas are best left to parents. We'll explore Scripture regarding the topic and "do's and don'ts" for practical application. We will also brainstorm what to do in challenging circumstances. Join the conversation and equip yourself with the tools needed to tackle tough topics.
39	Kyle	Townes	Kidsarecapable.net	El Paso, TX	Author	Equipping Christian Parents of Young Children	Are you unsure about what to prioritize in the early years? Do you feel confused, incapable, anxious, or overwhelmed by the challenges of raising up Christian children? Then this talk is for you! We'll discuss key aspects of early childhood, including (but not limited to) godly discipline, great books, screen time, and socialization, all from an evidence-based and biblical perspective. We will also explore foundational aspects of early education, providing parents with a clearer understanding of what to look for and prioritize during their children's early years. This honest and holistic discussion will leave Christian parents feeling equipped with facts and vital information that are not typically found in secular parenting books or in the prevailing pop culture.
40	Heather	Churney	Concordia University, Irvine	Queen Creek, CA	Assistant Professor	Mental Health Implications of Twice Exceptional Students with Autism	This session will share findings from a mixed-methods dissertation (2025) exploring the mental health implications of twice-exceptional (2e) students identified as gifted and diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Drawing from both teacher survey data and parent interviews, the study highlights the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and social struggles among 2e learners, as well as the impact of rigid school structures and inadequate accommodations. Themes such as masking, identity formation, and the critical role of interest-based learning and flexibility will be discussed. Educators will leave with research-based insights into how mental health challenges intersect with giftedness and disability, along with practical implications for supporting 2e students in the classroom.

41	Timothy	Klinkenberg	St. John's Orange	Orange	Senior Pastor	Quick/Slow/Slow: Workshop on Listening for People Paid to Talk	Scripture calls us to a communication style that is hard to handle when we are paid to talk. Pastors, teachers and so many other church workers are focused on talking. This interactive workshop will help you learn some basic listening skills and how to find value in listening to people in your ministry.
42	Nikki	Winkelmann	Zion Lutheran School Bethalto	Bethalto, IL	Director of Marketing and Engagement	Content Marketing for Beginners using Canva and Scheduling with Meta Business Suite	<p>Content Marketing for Beginners using Canva and Scheduling with Meta Business Suite</p> <p>This session provides a practical introduction to content marketing for individuals and small businesses. Attendees will learn how to create visually engaging graphics and posts using Canva, and how to efficiently schedule and manage social media content with Meta Business Suite. By the end of the presentation, participants will have the tools and confidence to develop consistent, professional content that effectively reaches and engages their audience.</p>
43	Kathy	L'Heureux	Concordia University	Seward	Director of Counseling	Creating Christ-Centered Safe Spaces: Trauma-Informed Practices for the Classroom	This presentation introduces educators to the concept of trauma and the many forms it can take in students’ lives. Participants will develop an understanding of both the physiological and psychological effects of trauma, gaining insight into how these experiences shape learning and behavior. The session will also explore the impact of trauma on student engagement, highlight ways to recognize potential triggers, and provide strategies for creating safe, supportive, and responsive classroom environments.
44	DeAnn	McCue	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church	Urbandale, IA	Director of Women’s Ministry	Anchored in the Word in Women’s Ministry	<p>Anchored in the Word in Women's Ministry</p> <p>Come and share ideas of what is working in your Women's Ministry and hear from the Women's Ministry team at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Urbandale Iowa.</p> <p>Reaching young women, moms, career women, retired women, widows, seniors - all ages and stages - reaching in, reaching out, sitting with, growing together - creating stand alone events and ongoing events that women want to attend. Go home with ideas you can implement right away!</p>
45	Daniel	Lepley	Genysys Group Inc.	Belmont, MI	Lead Consultant	An Exciting Adventure Awaits!	There is untold potential in uniting your team around a unified vision for the future. Learn the steps in building meaningful consensus from an experienced expert who has helped congregations, organizations and businesses around the country get unstuck, and make big strides towards God's vision for their future. Learn a practical process and pick-up a few handy tools to spark the conversation needed to take the first step towards a bold and exciting future in your context.

46	Daniel	Lepley	Genysys Group Inc.	Belmont, MI	Lead Consultant	Leaving a Legacy of Faith	<p>Join podcast host Pastor Dan Lepley to learn how journaling through the Bible is a great way to leave a legacy of faith! His journey of journaling through the Bible began when a retired heavy equipment operator shared how he had journaled through the Bible for all thirteen of his grandchildren. This inspired Dan to journal through the Bible for each of his kids and launch a podcast to equip others to do the same.</p> <p>The Family Bible Journey podcast, now has listeners in 48 states and over 50 countries. Learn how this journey is a blessing to all who embark on this path, and some of the discipline and tools that help make a seemingly impossible task of journaling through the Bible a great encouragement and joy!</p>
47	Macy	Kem	Northview Church	Carmel, IN	Special Needs Coordinator	Fearfully and Wonderfully Made	<p>Everyone has the ability to learn about and feel God’s love, sometimes it just takes a different approach. In this session we would discuss topics in the special needs ministry for all ages and abilities. Including the importance of a special needs ministry, how to start a special needs ministry, how to create curriculum for your class, and how to engage with this population that is often overlooked. After this session, there will be a desire to see that everyone is wonderfully made.</p> <p>Psalm 139:14</p>
48	Jim	Galvin	Galvin & Associates, Inc.	Elgin, IL	Consultant	Scenario Thinking for Boards	<p>Most ministries would describe themselves as navigating in a turbulent environment. What sudden changes will be see in economics, politics, and donor engagement? Becuase the future is unknown and unknowable to us, leaders and boards can be more prepared by creating several scenarios about how the future may unfold for the organization. This session willll help you engage your board in scenario thinking.</p>
49	Jim	Galvin	Galvin & Associates, Inc.	Elgin, IL	Consultant	Guide for First-Time Authors	<p>Getting your book in print has never been easier. You have access to software, tools, and services that can help you produce a quality product. Participants will learn how to conquer the writing challenge, how to test a working title, how to get word of mouth jump-started, and how to make a book available on Amazon and retail stores.</p>

50	Sandy	Mercier	Concordia University Irvine	Lake Forest, CA	Associate Professor of Education	Servant Leadership and Self-Efficacy as Protective Factors Against Burnout	Unfortunately, burnout is an issue affecting both educators and churchworkers alike, yet there are protective factors that can be taken into account. One research-based definition of burnout includes three arms: emotional fatigue, low personal accomplishment, and depersonalization, and these elements will be used to introduce and discuss common burnout symptoms. This session will educate the audience on the stark reality of burnout among those serving at schools and churches nationwide; yet, we will not stop there. The majority of our session will focus on practical ways to combat full-blown burnout that can lead to depression, anxiety, and even the decision to leave the ministry. There is wisdom in fostering self-efficacy due to its protective nature against burnout tendencies, and this will be explored regarding ways to encourage self-efficacy among a faculty, staff, or ministry team. In addition, a positive servant-leadership culture can nurture collaboration and help create an environment where burnout is less likely to occur. This session will be both informative and collaborative, and practical, cost-effective strategies and examples will be shared in support of promoting self-efficacy and establishing a servant-leadership mindset.
51	Stephen	Nickodemus	Glocal Mission	Mount Angel, Oregon	Pastor Emeritus, Glocal Trainer	Pastor Steve Nickodemus, Glocal Trainer	<p>Disciplemaker Training For Church Workers</p> <p>Jesus told us, "Make Disciples!" But as a busy church worker, how can you find time to make disciples who make disciples?</p> <p>This session will:</p> <p>Convict you that training Disciplemakers is the greatest legacy that you can leave in your congregation.</p> <p>Practically help you make disciplemaking a priority in your ministry.</p> <p>Give you a plan and resources to intentionally train disciples like Jesus did!</p> <p>Multiply that disciple making movement in your congregation and beyond!</p>
52	Tim	Dreier	Ablaze Church (LCMS)	Tulsa, Oklahoma	Pastor	AI verses Almighty Intelligence	Church leaders need to show how God provides insight, advanced decision-making, problem-solving, and proactive assistance for the collaboration of body, soul and mind. In this session participants will learn a highly memorable illustration of original sin and the work of the devil, i.e, "Artificial Intelligency" (AI) verses the righteousness of God and the work of the of the Holy Spirit, i.e., "Almighty Intelligence". Participants will be able to clarify the meaning of the Third Article in an easy to duplicate explanation, by using three chairs and asking one question, "If you were a car what would you be?". People love to answer this question and can imagine being a car, it is also a perfect segue into an unforgettabel insight of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God's (AI), Almighty Intelligency. This indelible depiction will enable God's people to decipher Artificial Intelligence verses Almighty Intelligency, on the highway of life.

53	Dust	Kunkel	NOW District	Portland, OR	Director of Ministry Leadership	"Every Ministry, Every Youth -- Gospel Responsibility:" Launching a District-Wide Initiative to Raise Up Youth as Servant Leaders	<p>What are the actual behaviors of adults that best help youth become servant leaders?</p> <p>The NOW District launched an initiative in 2022 (The Youth Leadership Initiative -- YLI) that led to in-depth research into the behaviors of adults who help youth become servant leaders (built on the LCMS's "7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry," and "Sticky Faith" research). The findings from the research were ground-breaking and the ensuing process led by DCEs across the district has become transformative in both individual lives and across faith communities.</p> <p>Our team will share not only the research findings but also the specifics of the initiative we are engaged in (using the research as a foundation) across the regions of the NOW District in helping young people become servant leaders. Though many youth programs focus on values, ideals and processes, the YLI chooses instead to focus on behavior: what are the actual behaviors of adults that best help youth become servant leaders?</p> <p>The YLI is becoming a servant leadership movement across the Northwest and we're excited to share our most recent findings!</p>
54	Paula	Heckert	Faith Family Reunion	Winter Park CO	Founder	I Have A Prodigal, Now What?	<p>How can we help parents whose child has left the faith in Jesus Chris? Too often parents that have a prodigal become isolated and feel alone not only with their immediate family but also with their church family. Many of you have read or heard about the loss of people in our church or are experiencing this phenomenon within your own congregation. As we watch our members fade away, we may experience a sense of hopelessness, not knowing what to do or how to deal with the situation. Some congregations have focused on our youth, and this makes sense. But are we missing part of the equation? Could parent's be the answer in reaching the prodigal? Let's disucss how we can engage these parents, support them and help them through this difficult time. Visit [faithfamilyreunion.com](https://www.faithfamilyreunion.com/).</p>
55	Paula	Heckert	Faith Family Reunion	Winter Park CO	Founder	Breaking Down The Walls	<p>How can we begin a conversation with parents that have a prodigal? How do we help them open up and begin talking about it? Get ideas and learn how to break down the walls of shame and secrecy that keep parents from discussing the pain of having a child that has left the faith in Jesus Christ. My brothers and I grew up in a loving Christian home then one by one we each fell away from faith in Christ. By the grace of God, after being away from the faith for over 25 years, I returned to faith in Jesus Christ enabled by the Holy Spirit. Together my parents and I started Faith Family Reunion, an outreach to parents with prodigals. Our passion is to inspire and encourage parents to nver give up on their prodigals as their children are never out of reach of their Heavenly Father.</p>

56	Tim	Ahlman	Christ Greenfield	Gilbert	Pastor	Confessing Jesus' Mission: A Pastor's Prayer for the LCMS	<p>Mission and confession aren't at odds. They are two sides of the same coin - working together to proclaim Jesus to the world. One sends, one anchors. One energizes, one clarifies. This is how it was always meant to be. The Gospel must be preached. Eternities are at stake. We need more proclaimers. Pastors and marketplace leaders, united in common confession, declaring with boldness: Jesus is Lord!</p> <p>Mission is why the Church exists. God wants all of His rebellious kids back. He is radically - some may even say ridiculously - in love with us. Jesus is the proof. Confession is what we proclaim. Pastors preach. The priesthood of all believers proclaims. Christ crucified. Christ risen. Christ reigning. The Spirit poured out. For you. For me. For the world.</p> <p>Priorities matter. Values matter. At some point, we shifted. In the LCMS, we began protecting the faith rather than advancing it. When "what" and "how" start to outweigh "why" organizations stagnate - power struggles emerge.</p> <p>Hello, LCMS culture in 2026. This breakout session will explore the interconnection between confessional and missional Lutheranism, with insights on how we work toward unity in the LCMS.</p>
57	Beth	Zier	NA	Minot, North Dakota	Retired Christian counselor for women	Telling Your Story	<p>Beth Zier (Speaking ministry: Grace for the Journey)</p> <p>~ Telling Your Story ~</p> <p>We all have a story to tell. Beth Zier tells her story of God’s grace and lessons learned, as she faced nearness to death following a near-fatal car accident, and while fighting breast cancer. As Beth shares her story, you will be challenged to think about your own life experiences, explore God’s presence, learn to recognize His faithfulness, and begin to discern the life lessons He has for you. You will also be encouraged to start "Telling Your Story"!</p>
58	Zier	Mark	Retire LCMS Pastor	Minot, ND	Pastor Emeritis	Visitors or Guests?	<p>Is your congregation ready for guests? Do you treat them like guests or simply visitors? There's a difference. We all want to see new people attend our churches but do we have the right mindset about them and are we doing things that might discourage their return?</p> <p>In this session we'll explore some of the differences and how to be better prepared to welcome those who attend the first time in ways that will encourage their return. We'll also look at some of the things we think are welcoming but actually may turn off people. We'll also brainstorm together other ideas to enhance our efforts to welcome folks. You know, some best practices.</p>

59	Lee	Loveridge	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Lethbridge, Alberta	Pastor	I'm Just The Pastor!	"I'm just the pastor!" I find myself thinking and even saying that out loud "I'm just the pastor." False humility? Burn out? Or is it a deep appreciation for who God surrounds me with as we do ministry together as God's people? When I arrived at this congregation in 2018, they had just come through conflict and a two year intentional interim process and we knew things had to change. I've been serving as "just the pastor" for over seven years and it's been quite a ride. By God's guidance and grace, the shift here has put us in a surprisingly positive place with fresh energy and an openness to how the Spirit leads. I often find myself saying, "I'm just the pastor" because I can't and shouldn't do it all. My role is to preach, teach, care, and lead - but more and more, it's all been to support, release, and cheer on the people around me. Along the way God surprised us with things we never planned: a pickleball ministry that exploded, a Lego outreach led by a Baptist turned Lutheran, and a preschool that now serves 55 children and their families from the community.
60	Nathan	Sutherland	Gospel Tech	Puyallup, WA	CEO	Tech's Big Three: Smartphones, Video Games, and Pornography	<p>Raising kids in a tech world can feel overwhelming. Gospel Tech bridges the gap between scary tech conversations and the hope of the Gospel.</p> <p>This workshop equips teachers, mentors, and parents to address the three topics that come up most when raising healthy youth in a tech world: Smartphones, video games, and pornography. With helpful insights and practical advice, this workshop empowers caring adults to raise youth who use the best tech well.</p>
61	Steven	Hokana	Ministry to the Armed Forces	St. Louis	Assistant Director	Anger- Condemnation or Redemption	We see anger all the time- Home, Work, Chruch. We are at a loss with what to do about it. Anger points to serious health problems and leads to high blood pressure, and a higher risk of heart attack and stroke . Anger can steer us to horrible conclusions including suicide and homicide. We see anger as a back drop for depression and a distorted sense of reality. Most seriously, anger if not expressed appropriately leads to serious illness, death, and eternal separation from God. But anger is not a failure or a flaw. We know God becomes angry. Yes, God gets angry, we get angry. Jesus gets angry, we get angry. There is a redemptive quality to anger if used appropriately. It can help us understand our relationship with our Lord, fellow Christians and the world in which we reside. What do we do with our anger!
62	Frank	Italiano	Faith Unleahsed Consulting	Milwaukee, WI	Lead Pastoral Consultant	Going from 20/80 to 100	It always seems that 20 percent of the people are doing 80% of the work. What if you could get 100% of your members doing the work, actively using their God-given gifts to serve him? Pastor Italiano will tell the story of Trinity Lutheran Church in Crete, IL and how they went from very few members serving, to 100% actively using their gifts to glorify God.
63	Frank	Italiano	Faith Unleahsed Consulting	Milwaukee, WI	Lead Pastoral Consultant	Lessons from Jethro: Equipping God's People to Serve with their God-Given Gifts	How do you keep from being completely overwhelmed with the work of the church and burning out? The answer is the godly advice Jethro gave his son-in-law, Moses. We'll do a deep dive into Exodus chapter 18 and learn from Jethro's godly advice: Do what you are called to do. Select capable people to carry out the work. Put them in the right positions. Train them for what they need; and communicate clearly. The end result? God is glorified.

64	Nathan	Sutherland	Gospel Tech	Puyallup, WA	CEO	Walking in Freedom: Living Out the Gospel in a Porn-Saturated World	<p>Pornography is a terrifying conversation. Every one of us knows someone who has been hurt by this content. Sometimes we handle this topic by simply preaching a clear gospel and hoping Jesus takes care of the rest. If the '90s taught us anything, it's that avoiding hard subjects only builds guilt and confusion, not the freedom Christ calls us to live in. So what do we do? We get informed, talk it out, and make a plan.</p> <p>This workshop is designed to clearly call out the lie of pornography, connect it to the hope and freedom that are available in Christ, and give practical steps for walking in the freedom: Namely the freedom to do God’s will and not our own. This talk relies on scripture, research, and lived experience to bring the hope of the gospel—the good news that God saves sinners—to the broken world of pornography. This conversation is for anyone who has struggled, loves someone who has been hurt by this content, or wants to be a resource for others who want to walk in freedom.</p>
65	Jennifer	Hotopp	Veritas Academy	Wylie, TX	Head of School, Teacher	The Art of Multi-Level Teaching: Differentiation that Builds Confidence and Growth	<p>Teaching in a multi-age or multi-level classroom provides unique opportunities to meet students where they are, but it also requires intentional differentiation to ensure every student is challenged and supported. In this session, participants will explore practical strategies for differentiating instruction with students spanning multiple grade levels. We’ll look at ways to structure lessons that address varying readiness levels, use flexible grouping effectively, and integrate choice to foster independence and ownership of learning.</p> <p>Drawing from real classroom experience, I’ll share examples of how to design lessons in reading, math, and project-based learning that both honor individual needs and build a strong, collaborative classroom culture. Participants will leave with ready-to-use tools, sample lesson frameworks, and strategies to maximize learning time.</p>
66	Terry	Thompson	Small Church USA	Crawfordsville, IN 47933	Pastor, Founder and president of Small Church USA	Revitalization - Four Steps to Accelerate Church Health	<p>Four Steps to Accelerate Church Health</p> <p>Church revitaliztion can seem like a daunting task because the question we often get asked is this, "Where do I start?" Join us to learn the four key steps of the revitaliztion process. These steps are logical, practical, and attainable. There is hope for struggling churches, it can be done! Join us for an interactive session, guaranteed not to be boring!</p>

67

James

Cleland

Shepherd of the Sierra Lutheran Church

Carson City, NV

Pastor

Hope in Humanity’s Stories: From Netflix to Nintendo

We live in a world where stories surround us, in movies, music, video games, and even around the table with a game of D&D. These are not just sources of entertainment; they are modern parables that reflect what people believe about humanity, community, and hope. The challenge for Christians is not whether to consume culture, but how to engage it faithfully.

In this session, Pastor James will explore how cultural artifacts, whether a blockbuster film, a chart-topping song, a late-night gaming session, or a role-playing campaign, can become tools for discipleship when we learn to read them through the lens of Scripture. Participants will discover practical ways to ask the right questions of culture: What does this reveal about humanity? Where does it show our longing for redemption? How does it challenge or echo the Gospel story?

Rather than seeing culture as a threat or distraction, this session equips adults to use it as a springboard for deeper conversations with their families, churches, and communities. Come ready to reflect, laugh, and maybe even rethink your favorite playlists, streaming queues, and game nights. By the end, you will be better equipped to live and share your faith in a world full of competing stories, anchored in the story of Christ.

68

James

Cleland

Shepherd of the Sierra Lutheran Church

Carson City, NV

Pastor

From Rules to Relationships: The Gospel in Games

Games are more than a way to pass the time. They are small worlds where we practice how to live together: learning mission, following rules, sharing goals, and making space for everyone at the table. What if our approach to play also became a reflection of the Gospel?

In this session, Pastor James introduces the MORE Method (Mission, Objective, Rules, Equipment), a simple framework for creating games and activities that are not only fun but also inclusive. Drawing on nearly 20 years of camp and retreat ministry, he will share how games can teach Gospel truths, build community, and make sure no one is left on the sidelines.

Participants will learn practical ways to adapt games for different abilities, personalities, and needs, all while keeping Christ’s love at the center. Together, we will explore how playful moments can become powerful tools for discipleship, hospitality, and joy. Expect to laugh, move, and maybe even play a little, and leave with fresh ideas for building communities where everyone belongs.

69

Philip

Zimmermann

Simple Fasting

Madison, WI

Physician

Fasting and Faith: Reconnecting our Physical and Spiritual Health

We are in the midst of a metabolic health crisis in the US. Over 2/3 of adults are either overweight or dealing with obesity. Of those over 65, more than 3/4 are either pre-diabetic or diabetic.

Less appreciated is the spiritual crisis. The apathy, disillusionment, complacency and confusion of this modern moment.

Fasting is both a physical practice in the body and a spiritual practice experienced in our spiritual reality. It sits at the intersection of these two worlds and offers us a path forward in both domains.

By opening up a food-free space we allow the body to burn through the excess and revitalize the system. We stop relying on "bread alone" and tangibly experience what it feels like to rely on God. This can empower both our physical body and our spiritual wellbeing. Something God clearly desires for us.

Author Arthur Wallis describes fasting as "a divine corrective to the pride of the human heart. It is a discipline of the body with a tendency to humble the soul."

As we all seek to "walk humbly with our God" we would do well to consider the scriptural pattern of prayer and fasting we see repeated so many times. We live in a consumption culture and I believe this cultural influence has led us to forget about and under-appreciate the fasting component of this practice.

70

David

Kim

Glocal Mission

Houston

Founder and Lead Pastor

Breaking Barriers and Building Momentum: Best Practices for Ministry Growth and Renewal

Are you or your ministry feeling stuck, stagnant, declining, or even dying—personally or congregationally? This workshop will explore the essential principles and practices that foster spiritual vitality and sustainable ministry growth. Based on a proven model from Glocal Mission—which in the past nine years has resulted in over 600 baptisms, thousands of disciples, and hundreds of competent and active ministry leaders—participants will learn both biblical foundations and practical strategies that generate fresh momentum. We will also address common barriers, roadblocks, and blockages that hinder leaders and congregations. Through teaching, reflection, and interactive discussion, attendees will gain practical tools to overcome obstacles and cultivate a culture of renewal, impact, and long-term Kingdom fruitfulness in their ministry contexts.

71	David	Kim	Glocal Mission	Houston	Founder and Lead Pastor	Multiplying Leaders for a Ready Harvest: Best Practices and Pitfalls in Ministry Development	<p>Across the Church today, many congregations face a shortage of trained ministry leaders, disciple-makers, and evangelists—even as the harvest fields remain white and ready to reap. This workshop addresses both the “what to do” and the “what not to do” of leadership development and multiplication. Based on a proven model from Glocal Mission—which in the past nine years has resulted in over 600 baptisms, thousands of disciples, and hundreds of competent and active ministry leaders—we will explore best practices for identifying, equipping, and releasing leaders for sustainable growth and impact. At the same time, we will examine the common blockages, barriers, and missteps that stifle leadership pipelines and ministry fruitfulness. Participants will gain practical insights on how to cultivate a culture of multiplication, avoid leadership bottlenecks, and embrace new approaches that lead to breakthrough and long-term Kingdom effectiveness.</p>
72	Woody	Keim	St. Paul Lutheran Church in the Marigny	New Orleans, Louisiana	Film Maker/ Attorney	3 Lutheran Dudes on the Camino de Santiago	<p>Join Woody as he shares stories of adventure (and misadventure!) from his three-week pilgrimage through Spain with his son and brother-in-law in Spring 2025. Discover the many Camino routes, tips on gear, lodging, food, training, and the realities of blisters and even bedbugs. Most importantly, hear why the Camino has drawn pilgrims for over a thousand years as a deeply spiritual journey. You may even be inspired to plan your own pilgrimage—or join Woody on a future guided adventure.</p>
73	Rob	Bailey	South Lake Church	League City	Pastor	AI for Gospel-Shaped Ministry: Law & Gospel Clarity, Real-World Workflows, and Encouragement for the Kingdom	<p>Session Format Breakout with live demos, guided practice, and peer discussion;</p> <p>Our Focus</p> <p>We’re not asking AI to do ministry for us. We’re asking it to hold the ladder while we climb. This session shows how tools like ChatGPT can serve Word-and-Sacrament ministry by clarifying our message, multiplying our time, and encouraging witness, without outsourcing the pastor’s call or the church’s voice. We’ll ground our approach in the Lutheran distinction of Law and Gospel and in AC V’s confession of the Ministry: God gives faith through the external Word and Sacraments, not silicon magic. Then we’ll get practical: sermon study accelerators and guardrails, care-team communication, volunteer coordination, outreach messaging that keeps Jesus at the center, and a simple, printable AI workflow you can take home. You’ll leave with free resources, a “prompt pack” tailored to ministry tasks, and a pastoral ethic for using AI as a servant of the Gospel and a help to the saints.</p>
74	Woody	Keim	St. Paul Lutheran Church in the Marigny	New Orleans, Louisiana	Film Maker/ Attorney	Seven Ways to Supercharge Your Prayer Life	<p>Do your prayers ever feel routine—or even stuck? You’re not alone. In this session, we’ll explore time-honored ways to reconnect with God in prayer. From Martin Luther’s simple guide to Lectio Divina (holy reading) written for his barber, to the meditative prayers of the Orthodox tradition, the sacred pilgrimages of the Catholic Church, and the contemplative prayer methods taught by the Jesuits—Christians have practiced these approaches for centuries. Discover how these timeless disciplines, freshly adapted for today, can renew and deepen your own prayer life.</p>

75	Michael	A Thomas	Concordia University Irvine	Irvine	President	“Getting Off the Hill: How a Lutheran University Became the Official Educational Partner of OCVIBE and the Anaheim Ducks”	<p>For over fifty years, Concordia University Irvine quietly formed wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens for church and society. Yet a major perception study revealed an unsurprising truth: everyone who knew us loved us — but no one knew us. That realization drove us to clarify our mission, articulate new core convictions, and unify our messaging to students, alumni, donors, and the wider community. Our goal was simple but urgent: to “get off the hill” and let Orange County see what God is doing through this Lutheran university.</p> <p>That work reached its culmination in 2025 when Concordia became the Official Educational Partner of both OCVIBE and the Anaheim Ducks. OCVIBE is one of the largest sports and entertainment complexes in the United States — a \$5.1 billion, 100-acre development rising around the Honda Center (home of the NHL Ducks) in Anaheim. With 30+ restaurants, hotels, a 5,700-seat concert hall, 20 acres of parks, and millions of annual visitors! What began as a marketing strategy promising two billion impressions has grown into a full educational partnership with internships, cohort classes, capstones, alumni and donor events, and a mini-campus in the heart of Orange County.</p> <p>This session will show how a confessional Lutheran university moved from “best kept secret” to visible partner, offering practical lessons for ministries seeking to align mission, brand, and bold community engagement.</p>
76	Ted	Doering	Narrative Church	Round Rock, TX	Pastor	Connected for the Kingdom	<p>Over the past decade, the landscape of the church has changed. Every congregation, no matter its size or setting, is facing new challenges—cultural shifts, financial pressures, leadership struggles, and the constant call to remain faithful in an uncertain world. These challenges can feel overwhelming, leaving leaders and members alike wondering how to make a lasting impact.</p> <p>But what if these struggles aren’t just obstacles—what if they’re opportunities? What if God is using this season to remind us that no church is meant to walk alone?</p> <p>Pastor Ted Doering has wrestled with these questions in his own ministry, coming to a simple yet powerful realization: the Kingdom of God is always greater than a single congregation. While egos, limited resources, and the enemy’s lies often cloud this truth, God continues to bring His people together for the sake of His mission.</p> <p>Along the way, Ted discovered a key he had overlooked: relationship. By building authentic connections across the body of Christ, he found a way forward that has brought deeper life, joy, and impact.</p> <p>Come hear the story of how God is at work in Williamson County, Texas—and how your church, too, can be encouraged to strengthen the saints and connect the disconnected to Jesus.</p>

77	Jonathan	Dinger	Grace Lutheran Church and School	Pocatello, Idaho	Senior Pastor	Church and School Partnerships	Nestled among the foothills of Idaho's mountains, Pocatello is a community of 75,000. 65% of this community claims Mormonism as their faith. But Grace is blessed to be the largest Christian ministry in the region, with a school of 565 students from age 2 through grade 12, and a congregation that worships 425 per Sunday in 3 worship styles. We believe God's favor has been shown to us in our collaborative working relationship that allows the church to fill the school with purpose, vision, and mission -- and the school becomes the bridge to our community proclaiming the full Jesus and His complete Gospel, and meets a relevant need for our neighbors for education and child care. We're eager to share how this works for us and what key elements are shown priority and ministry attention.
78	Jonathan	Dinger	Grace Lutheran Church and School	Pocatello, Idaho	Senior Pastor	Building project? Capital campaign? Key tips and hacks from a non-professional	After nearly 20 building projects and more than 10 capital campaigns in 30 years, there are a few things learned that are pretty easy to identify and execute that can save you 10's of thousands of \$, if not much more. Pastors and lay leaders fall into the trap that "I don't know anything about that." If you don't, you better start learning, or listen to people who do know. From "Do we pay 7% of our total cost to an architect (NO!!)" to "How do I get the city to play ball? (be transparent)" to "How do I get the subs to show up and do what they promised? (Pay the same day they finish)" to "How to utilize volunteers" and "How do I get the money we need?" This session is built completely around very practical things that can save you real money and make it possible to expand your ministry capacity.
79	Christopher	Gieschen	Self	Fort Wayne, IN	Retired Teacher	How to train teens in Apologetics.	<p>By exposing Lutheran teens to the way Christian skeptics, ahteists, and evolutionists think and talk and then teaching those teens how to defend the Truth, it is unlikely that they will give up their faith when older. In addition, they will be more effective witnesses for Jesus than using only the Lutheran tenets of our faith.</p> <p>Biblical knowledge is great, but practical knowledge of what are the scientific and philosophical strong points concernng creation, Biblical historicity, and other relevent topics will produce teens able to stand their ground when challenged by the real world.</p> <p>Using real world examples from YouTube comments and evolution "facts" attendees will come away with tactics and methods for equipping our tenns with several tools for their "Apologetics Toolbelt".</p>
80	Rev Dr Matthew	Bean	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Richmond, Virginia	Senior Pastor	Winning the Leadership Game 2.0	What does top-tier effective church leadership look like? What distinguishes growing congregations from others? Not what you think! Based upon over a year's research of Senior Pastors of mid-sized LCMS congregations, this session will equip church pastors, staff, and leaders to elevate their leadership to a new level.

81	William	Utech	Trinity Lutheran Church	Medford, MN	Missiologist	From Acts To Action	The church is not a building, but a living organism that God uses to grow and expand His kingdom, and only the word of God, and especially that word as it comes to us in the Book of Acts, has the power to change hearts, mind, and lives toward becoming more involved and invested in that divine mission. I wrote, “From Acts To Action” (A2A) with that simple truth in mind. So, if you’ve come to the conclusion that there are too many man-made “status quoes” at work in too many local Christian congregations (including your own), then this session will be a blessing to you! Come learn how A2A can help to revive, rejuvenate, and move you and your church toward missional living!
82	Kristi	Galindo Dyson	King of Kings Lutheran	Renton, WA	Lay Leader	Navigating Grief and Loss - Finding Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow	<p>Experiencing grief and loss is common to all people. We most often associate grief with the death of a loved one and that is certainly at the top of the list, however, life is full of losses: the end of a marriage, the loss of a job, disappointment over an expected outcome and so many other expectations that don't happen as we planned or hoped. Learning to navigate any of these life altering experiences is challenging, overwhelming and isolating. Grief is complicated! Where do we begin when everything has changed?</p> <p>The answer to grief is always found in God's word, promises and presence! Discovering what that looks like in a life that has been upended by loss is what we will share together. I will share some of my own story of loss and the unexpected blessings of God's plan for me in the midst of loss. I was surprised daily by his provision and I learned to trust God even when things didn't make sense. I learned that God's abundant Grace was indeed more than sufficient and that I could trust His plan and His promises! I found strength for each day and a bright new hope for my tomorrows. God always shows up to meet us where we are and to provide what we need. How has God met you in your most challenging times? Lets explore together God's Amazing Grace and what life can look like after loss when we trust in Him.</p>
83	Adam	Countryman	Countryman Consulting LLC	Houston TX	Owner	Addressing Toxicity on Your Worship Team	<p>In this session we will talk about dealing with toxicity on your worship/music team. What do I do with legacy members? How to rid negativity from the "hang". Why does it seem impossible to fire a volunteer?</p> <p>The idea of equity and fairness are not pillars we can build an excellent team on. Compassion for the individual and respect for the final outcome must be our goal.</p> <p>We will talk about everything from the audition call to the stage. How do you recruit in a way that heads off toxic people before they ever infect your team? If they are already there, we will also talk about how to eliminate that risk to your effectiveness as a leader.</p> <p>This is a great conversion for any worship leader to have and reminds us that just because a conversation is hard doesn't mean it isn't necessary to have.</p>

84

Leslie

DeMattia

Church HR Network

Ventura, California

President

Don't Waive Your Statutory Protections

Safeguarding Your Ministry: Protecting Your Mission Through Statutory Protections

Your ministry exists to serve God’s Kingdom—not to waste time and resources fighting lawsuits. Yet many churches unknowingly jeopardize their statutory protections through simple missteps. A secular employment poster, a poorly worded equal opportunity statement, or even an employee handbook can weaken your legal safeguards as a religious nonprofit. Failing to declare your beliefs during hiring may also open the door to wrongful termination or discrimination claims.

These aren’t small mistakes—they are gateways that can strip your ability to operate freely as a faith-based ministry. The good news? They’re preventable.

This seminar equips leaders with insight and confidence to guard their ministries. Attendees will discover where they’re most vulnerable, why employment documents matter, how to preserve statutory rights, and what proactive protection looks like. You’ll leave with practical steps—and a checklist—to safeguard your church’s foundation, strengthen integrity, and keep your focus where it belongs: advancing the Kingdom of God.

Because when your ministry is protected, your mission thrives!

85

Adam

Countryman

Countryman Consulting LLC

Houston TX

Owner

Song Selection for Modern Worship

We will spend our time together discussion the importance of song selection in the worship service. What is the frequency we should use songs? How often should we be introducing new songs? Do hymns play a role in modern worship services?

If you think your church should be singing better than it is right now then this talk is a great one for you to attend. Song selection is not all about theme. It is also about continuity and musicality. All these things need to be present in our programming.

How do I introduce new songs effectively? When is it time to stop doing a song? We will address building a "song bank" and being more efficient in the way we plan out our worship service in advance and allow for more time to refine.

86

Leslie

DeMattia

Church HR Network

Ventura, California

President

Understanding the Ministerial Exception

Understanding the Ministerial Exception

The ministerial exception is one of the most significant yet misunderstood legal doctrines impacting churches today. At its core, it affirms the constitutional right of faith communities to choose their own spiritual leaders without government interference. But what truly defines a “minister” in the eyes of the law? This seminar explores the evolving interpretations of the ministerial exception and its far-reaching implications for churches, schools, and ministries.

Together, we will unpack landmark Supreme Court cases and real-world examples that illustrate how courts determine who qualifies as a minister. Is it just pastors and preachers—or could music directors, teachers, or counselors also be included? Understanding this distinction is crucial for safeguarding your church’s mission, making wise employment decisions, and protecting against unnecessary legal challenges.

Participants will gain both a theological and practical perspective on why this doctrine matters. We’ll explore how it intersects with hiring, discipline, and termination, while also honoring the biblical foundation of the church’s authority to call and send its leaders.

By the end of this session, attendees will walk away with clarity, confidence, and actionable insights to help their ministries remain faithful, compliant, and protected in an ever-changing legal landscape.

87

Heather

Dimmel

Hosanna Lutheran Church

Mankato, MN

Parent Life Director

Parents are Spiritual Influencers

How do we engage, support, and equip our parents in our schools and churches to be strong spiritual influencers in their homes? Join me as we explore ideas and find new, creative ways to do Family Ministry - focusing on meeting our parents right where they are at in their season of life.

My presentation would include practical ideas for relational discipleship and educational content to parents in all seasons of life. Whether they are parenting or grandparenting littles, middle or high schoolers, we as the church have a strong influence to help them raise passionate Jesus followers.

I have 25 years of experience in leadership roles in Lutheran churches and schools, and feel passionately about parent discipleship! I'll provide resources, ideas for parenting events, retreats, parenting life groups, and including parents in strong ways during milestone events.

88	Todd	Biermann	Concordia Center for the Family	Ann Arbor, MI	Executive Director	2 Together to Prosper: Homes & Congregations	Children baptized into the faith are leaving the church before adulthood. Congregations are aging, dying and closing every month. The best and proven way to address this is by uniting homes and congregations in making lifelong disciples of Jesus. Concordia Center for the Family’s tested, biblical tools are effective at supporting the growth of faith in Jesus’ disciples every day. Come receive simple, memorable, Christ-centered tools to help every family stay focused on Jesus in daily life. Receive guidance toward how to keep these growing families connected to their congregation and delighting to support its shared ministry through simple tweaks to what’s already being done. Learn of opportunities to receive further training and coaching. Be part of a shift toward family discipleship that’s revitalizing the LCMS and making disciples of all nations. Let God do as He delights by drawing more to be His disciples and walk with Him every day for life...eternally.
89	Stace	Rollefson	Christ Lutheran Church	Fort Worth, Texas	Pastor	Being Real with Emotions	<p>I hope to help my audience see emotions as windows into our life with God, good and bad. Our relationship with God is lived in real time where He's always at work in us though we aren't aware. We do have time with Him in Sunday Service, weekly Bible study, and daily devotions, but God's ministry of sanctification is organic. God rescues us from our emotions and blesses them more than we know, but He's also on tap when we need Him. This happens when our automatic living is interrupted by fear, or a comment making us angry, or when some other emotion holds us captive. It often takes a while before we're aware of our anger or fear, but when we realize emotional grip, we need God. In the moments following awareness there is important ministry only God can do. Failing to heed the prompting of the Spirit's lead brings spiritual danger that not only impacts our lives but the lives we touch.</p> <p>To help the audience with their emotions I will showcase a specific moment of fear and work them through faith opportunities and spiritual dangers. I will give some Bible passages that help with emotional health in the Gospel, share a few personal stories, and give them a theological model to take home. I will use power point or a white board and provide a handout on finding calm in the midst of emotional chaos.</p>
90	Matt	Hoehner	Christ Community Lutheran School	Kirkwood, MO	Executive Director	Christ Community Schools Resources	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d-8vdnOKMhTRrbcAExzewPNR94FKu8Vjd5LbcmPGWd8/edit?tab=t.0
91	Matt	Hoehner	Christ Community Lutheran School	Kirkwood, MO	Executive Director	Increasing Mission through Microschools	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D9ShQjCYQ1bRGaIPvwQjXuaHFAfnNxOvcRvev2G2Tg/edit?tab=t.0

92	Philip	Rigdon	St. John Lutheran Church and School	Kendallville, IN	Pastor	Selecting Biblical and Confessional Hymns and Praise Songs for Traditional and Contemporary Worship	<p>Worship is central to the spiritual health of Christians, and song is a foundational part of it. Through song we praise the Lord, responding with words based in the Word He first gave to us. In singing, we are reminded of what God's Word tells us. In essence, God blesses us as we sing His praises. As such, it is essential that worshippers have a clear Biblical and Confessional answer to questions such as: why do we sing, what is the purpose of worship, how does singing enhance our worship, can what we sing in worship be detrimental to our spiritual health?</p> <p>As Contemporary Worship has now been a part of the LCMS worship practice for decades, both hymns and praise songs are prevalent in a large portion of congregations. Given this ever widening reservoir of musical options for both traditional and contemporary worship, it is essential that pastors, church musicians, and praise team leaders have a reliable set of criteria for selecting hymns and songs which are Biblical, faithful to our Lutheran Confessions, and edifying for worshippers. Far from being nothing more than a matter of personal taste, we find that the Bible and the Confessions have a great deal to say about how we are to select music for worship. This presentation will present and reflect upon a given set of criteria.</p>
93	Rick	Jones	Chaplain and Vice President of Spiritual Life	Minot	Chaplain, Vice President-Spiritual Life	Is a Hot Dog a Sandwich? Reclaiming Identity in an Age of Confusion	<p>In our sin-broken world there is immense pressure to figure out "who we are." From political parties to sexuality and gender identity, from ethnic backgrounds to social justice causes, we are constantly being asked to label and define ourselves. In this session we will explore the need for having an identity and sense of self that comes not from the cacophony of voices in this world but instead from the enduring and eternal Word of God.</p>
94	Rick	Jones	Chaplain and Vice President of Spiritual Life	Minot	Chaplain, Vice President-Spiritual Life	Trauma, the Brain, and Ministry	<p>In this session we explore the causes and effects of trauma in our lives, minds, and bodies. We will discuss trauma-informed care principles for care of those impacted by trauma. The session will also examine God's Word to discover biblical principles that will help us in responding with compassion to the needs of those we serve in our congregations, and communities.</p>

95	Tyson	Bentz	St. Peter's Lutheran Church & School	Big Rapids, MI	Senior Pastor	Formed for Freedom: Reclaiming Gospel-Driven Worship	<p>Worship is for proclamation! All too often we fall into the trap of thinking that worship is about aesthetics, novelty, or preservation. But, in our Lutheran Confession, worship is first and foremost proclamation. It is God serving His people with the Gospel of Jesus!</p> <p>This session invites pastors, worship leaders, and lay leaders to wrestle with the central purpose of worship and how it reshapes the way we plan and lead worship.</p> <p>We'll explore the tensions between freedom and formation and between repititon and innovation. We'll examine how our worship choices, from liturgy to music to posture, communicate to both "insiders" and "outsiders," often more than we realize. Participants will leave with a simple framework to help evaluate their worship practices in light of their context, inside and out.</p> <p>It is not a debate about "traditional vs. contemporary," nor is it a call to discard the riches of our heritage. It is a practical, hopeful convesation about reclaiming worship for proclamation. As Martin Luther said, this is for the sharing of the Gospel to "heathens" and "your young and old" through worship.</p>
96	Pamela	Dickerson	The Harbor Leadership Collective	St. Louis, Missouri	Executive Director	Executive Director	<p>Every congregation is asking the pressing question: “Who’s next?” Who will step into leadership, serve faithfully in our congregations, and carry the mission forward into the next generation? The Harbor Leadership Collective was created to answer that question by equipping young adults (ages 17–28) for ministry and service. This 9-month program provides participants with hands-on experience in local churches and nonprofit organizations, serving weekly in areas such as youth ministry, worship, communications, and community leadership. Alongside these placements, each young leader is paired with a Navigator—an experienced mentor who offers personal guidance, encouragement, and vocational discernment. Finally, all participants gather monthly in a cohort setting for leadership training, spiritual reflection, and peer community. This three-part structure—placement, mentorship, and cohort—ensures that young leaders are not only serving but also growing in faith, skills, and clarity of calling. In this session, you will hear inspiring stories of transformation, learn how The Harbor is strengthening the church leadership pipeline, and discover practical ways your congregation can partner to raise up and send out the next generation of leaders. Together, we can answer the question of “Who’s next?” with confidence and hope.</p>
97	Jill	Dodge	Shepherds Canyon Retreat	LA MESA	Therapist	STILL THEIR PARENT: Navigating the Pain of Estranged Adult Children	<p>There is a growing trend in America for Adult Children to cut off contact with one or both of their parents. This leaves parents wondering "What happened? Did I do something to cause this? Can I do anything to fix this?" This workshop witih explore the phenomena known as "parental estrangement" and look at ways to navigate through the pain of being cut off.</p>

98	Christopher	Gieschen	Self	Fort Wayne, IN	Retired Teacher	Defining, Declaring, and Defeating the Darkness	<p>Using John's gospel and other Scriptures, we can see that there is more to reality than the physical. There exists a spiritual reality more real than the physical. Just as there is an Absolute Truth or Good, there must be an Absolute Lie or Evil. The one thing that the Father of Lies hates is Truth. Opinions must always give way to Truth.</p> <p>If Christians are to overcome Darkness, we must first learn all we can about it. Recognition of its tactics and ways are essential. We also must learn that Absolute Truth exists and and can only be found in His Word. Thus humans can never be the source of that Truth.</p> <p>Finally believers in Jesus must become adept at using the Sword of the Spirit in our dealings with others. Gentleness and respect are characteristic of our actions. Ultimately we must be certain that we shall be on the winning side no matter what it looks like today.</p>
99	Todd	Biermann	Concordia Center for the Family	Ann Arbor, MI	Executive Director	3 Estates & Family Discipleship Go Together	<p>Luther spoke of human life being ordered across the three relational "estates" of government (politia), home (oeconomia) and church (ecclesia). A faithful Christian is conscious of his vocations in all three estates and seeks to live according to God's perfect will in each. This breakout reveals how a proper understanding of family discipleship fits with such a right understanding of Christian vocation in all three estates. A commonly accepted definition of family discipleship based on Matthew 28:18-20 is that Christ's gifts daily nurture faith in God's children through the partnership of homes and congregations. We'll unpack this definition and see how Christ empowers us to fulfill our vocations in all three estates when we receive His gifts every day in public gatherings with fellow believers and in the interactive life of the Christian home. You'll also hear how Concordia Center for the Family (CCF), an LCMS RSO, is fostering family discipleship and empowering Christians to live as joyous witnesses in all three estates every day, for life.</p>
100	Clint	Colwell	Saint Paul Lutheran High School	Concordia	Director of Advancement	An Un-Civil Union. God's Biblical Plan for Marriage.	<p>Scripture is clear that marriage is between a man and a woman. Why would He say that? Marriage isn't just about having a life-long partner; it's about understanding the fullness of the relationship God has with His Church.</p> <p>Let's discover why the LCMS and other Biblically based denominations maintain the sanctity of marriage as one man and one woman.</p>
101	Clint	Colwell	Saint Paul Lutheran High School	Concordia	Director of Advancement	Uncovering Comunion	<p>When Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper, He chose bread and wine. But why those? How is that different from the Passover meal that Jesus and his disciples were celebrating? And what does it have to do with the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant, and Jesus' death on the cross? Let's dive into the Bible and explore how all these pieces fit together. We'll uncover what the Lord's Supper means and why, as Lutherans, we celebrate it as we do.</p>

102	Deanna	Nowadnick	Peace Lutheran Church	Monroe	Author Speaker Mentor	Signs in Life: Finding Direction in Our Travels with God	<p>Our theme is SIGNS IN LIFE. We are all uniquely called, uniquely equipped, uniquely challenged, and uniquely sent. We are uniquely God's. The signs are all there.</p> <p>Street signs will lead us in our time together. We'll ENTER and get to know each other. We all have unique names and a unique calling. We'll GO into our place in God's great story. We are all uniquely equipped for our travels with God. We'll TURN RIGHT and talk about our unique challenges. Added will be a TRAVEL ADVISORY. And then we'll EXIT, remembering we are all uniquely sent with God's promises.</p>
103	Mark	Zehnder	Always Forward Ministries	Omaha	President, Pastor Emeritus	Leading While Leaving...How to Retire and Successfully Pass the Baton	<p>Workshop Description: Pastor, you have been leading your congregation for many years.Now you are ready to retire. This leadership challenge will make or break your church. Leadership transitions and succession planning are critical for the health of your church. Sadly the majority of these leadership transitions do not go well and the church's mission suffers.In preparation for his retirement Pastor Mark Zehnder passed the baton of leadership in January of 2020 to his successor, Pastor Greg Griffith. More than five years later King of Kings is experiencing profound blessings. Tremendous attention was given to planning and communication. Since this time, Dr. Zehnder has assisted dozens of churches with great success as Founder and President of Always Forward Ministries. Come and hear Pastor Zehnder share insights on this important matter.</p>
104	Monte	Meyer	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church - LCMS	Pequot Lakes, MN	pastor	A Blueprint Towards Revitalization	<p>A Blueprint Towards Revitalization</p> <p>Churches are in desperate need for revitalization. How does the church sharpen their vision - motivate their members - connect to the community - and find new opportunities to bring the Gospel to the lost? This session will give you 6 tools to begin this revitalization in your church. Monte Meyer is a pastor who has over 38 years of experience working in the area of church revitalization in the congregational, district and synodical levels. His gifts are centered around outreach, discipleship and assisting struggling congregations/ministries find their focus.</p> <p>Here is a list of the Six Tools for Church Revitalization</p> <p>1) Don't let the 3rd strike go by without taking a swing. You need to make a decision to change your ways. You can't just sit and wait for the situation to change.</p> <p>2) Narrow/sharpen your vision/purpose. Why do we do what we do? Are we an institution or a movement? How do we become "a movement"?</p> <p>3) Reconciliation - learning how to forgive and heal your congregation. Churches in survival mode often need this step before they can connect to the community.</p> <p>4). Walk with your Pastor - encourage him - set him up for success. He doesn't always know how to connect to the community. Partner with him.</p>

105	Amy	Hubach	Concordia University	SEWARD	Associate Director of the DCE Program	When They Hurt	There is no prescribed way a person deals with trauma - but there may be some guideposts to look for and ways you can begin to help. This is not an easy discussion, but it is important. Too often the trauma is ignored hoping that healing will just happen. In this session, we will talk about the definition of trauma, the different types, statistics and how you, as a leader can help students (and adults) on the journey through trauma.
106	Amy	Hubach	Concordia University	SEWARD	Associate Director of the DCE Program	When The Church Hurts	Organizational trauma can be caused by different factors: one-off events, witnessing harm, or even leadership. This session will define organizational trauma, talk about how leadership can cause it and what kind of a generational cycle can reoccur if the trauma is not healed. Finally, we will discuss organizational resilience and next steps for a church.
107	Timothy	Kern	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Marlette, MI	Pastor	From Schoolhouse to Homeschool: A Path for Small Congregations	After years of struggling to keep the school doors open, many of our congregations are forced to make hard decisions concerning their schools. This is our story in Marlette. Difficult decisions had to be made, and the school was closed. What now? We looked at our congregation, and noticed that we do have children in the pews. Most of them go to the public school, but some are homeschool families. We gathered the homeschoolers together and asked questions. What do your families need? How can we help or provide for this need? We learned that these families are not looking for a better school that fits their values, a teacher, or a place to go to every day of the week. They like the freedom of homsechooling. What they need is 2 things: people and stuff. People: They need friends for their kids. Parents need other parents to ask advice and bounce ideas around. It is also easier to have a choir or to play a sport if there is a larger group of people. What about stuff? Homeschool families need infrastructure and materials: lab equipment, art equipment, kitchen, library, etc... We realized that we are perfectly situated to meet the needs of these families. We have a whole school full of "stuff" and we have "people" who are already homeschooling. In this presentation, I hope to give a roadmap for small congregations who are no longer able to support their school. Perhaps, they can support a homeschool co-op. Perhaps, God is not done with Christian education in their congregations.
108	Rev. Dr. Greg	Walton	LCEF	Woodstock	Vice President, Ministry Solution, Grace Plae Wellness	The Power of Partnership--Healthy Pastors and Leaders Walking Together	Jesus said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand!” Ministry today can be difficult, especially when there is no clear direction. The model for a healthy church is a pastor and leadership intentionally walking together in unity. This session will talk about some ways to strengthen the partnership and look together at five markers for a healthy ministry

109	Rev. Dr. Greg	Walton	LCEF	Woodstock	Vice President, Ministry Solution, Grace Plae Wellness	And the Rest is History	Sabbatical rest is rooted in the Old Testament picture in Leviticus 25 of leaving the ground fallow in the seventh year so that it becomes more productive. Worn and weary church workers can be overcome by fatigue and burnout without a time to refresh and rejuvenate. A Ministry Sabbatical offers this opportunity. This session will not only talk about the historic and biblical elements of a ministry sabbatical, but also some practical steps to establish a sabbatical guideline for a congregation or ministry, important elements to plan a restful sabbatical, how to educate a congregation on the benefits of a sabbatical, and tips for budgeting for a ministry sabbatical, including the Grace Place Ministry Sabbatical Scholarship and other potential resources. Learn how a well-planned ministry sabbatical for a church worker can lead to a renewed energy and productivity for ministry and a ministry leader.
110	Hunter	Chapin	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Greenville, Wisconsin	Assistant Director of Worship & Music	Encouraging Your Team to Achieve Worship Excellence	Excellence in worship is not achieved by accident—it is cultivated through intentional leadership, team development, and a shared vision rooted in Christ. In this session, Nathan Johnson (Director of Worship & Music) and Hunter Chapin (Worship Leader & Technology Director) will explore practical strategies for encouraging your worship team to grow in both skill and spirit. From fostering a culture of accountability and trust, to equipping volunteers with the tools they need, to aligning musical and technical efforts in service of the Gospel, this presentation will provide tangible takeaways for pastors, musicians, and ministry leaders seeking to lead their teams toward worship excellence that glorifies God and builds up His Church.
111	Greta	Bernhardt	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Everett, WA	Doctoral Student / Deaconess / LCSW	Wired for Grace: Integrating Neurocounseling and Theology in Mental Wellness	In pastoral care settings, the convergence of neuroscience and theology offers a powerful framework for holistic healing. This session introduces “neurocounseling” as a brain-based approach to understanding mental health, and explores how theological insights—particularly grace, compassion, and spiritual formation—can enrich relationships and foster wellbeing. Participants will learn how stress and trauma impact brain systems like the amygdala and vagus nerve, and how spiritual practices such as prayer, lament, and meditation can support neurobiological healing. Through case examples and experiential exercises, attendees will gain practical tools to integrate scientific and spiritual wisdom in ways that honor both the complexity of the brain and the sacredness of the soul. This session is ideal for pastors, spiritual care providers, and anyone seeking deeper spiritual attunement and empathy.

112	Jeffrey	Skopak	Emmanuel Lutheran Church and School	Asheville	Senior Pastor	Light and Hope in the Aftermath of Disaster	<p>In the immediate hours following Hurricane Helene - a hurricane that reached the mountains of Western North Carolina - the surrounding community was crippled in shock and despair. The loss of power and water, catastrophic flooding and mud slides, roadways destroyed and downed trees limiting (and in some cases prohibiting) access to mountain communities - Asheville and the immediate area was simply cut off from the rest of the world. After all, hurricanes do not typically make their way this far inland! The mountains served as enormous funnels brings river surges of over 30 feet. Left in Helene's path was a sense of hopelessness and loss. Emmanuel was presented with a moment to serve as beacons of Light and Hope to our eclectic and diverse community - in a word, Jesus had us right where he needed us. In the days that followed the church was presented with the opportunity to engage in ministry that flowed from a heart of love as it strove to care for and assist the community back on its feet. In this presentation we will explore emergency "readiness," resources that are available near and far, financial accountability, and the profound opportunity to bring the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ to a community that lives quite contrary to traditional Christianity. You never know when and where tragedy will strike - but Jesus Christ will have you right where you need to be!</p>
113	Bernard	Bull	Concordia University, Nebraska	Seward, NE	President	The Radical Call to Loving Leadership	<p>Leadership is not a game to be won as much as it is a calling to love God and neighbor. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 13, this session will explore the truly radical notion of leading with biblical virtues like patience, kindness, humility, rejoicing in truth, endurance, faith, and hope...and in a world that often things of leadership in terms of power. Together we will ask questions like: Where in your leadership are you called to bear with others in patience as Christ has borne with you? What would kindness look like in your leadership? What does it look like to lead with a focus on advancing the mission rather than self-advancement? How might humility, listening, learning, serving, and honoring others change your leadership? Where might you be assuming your way is the only right way instead of receiving the wisdom God may be giving through others? What does easily provoked or grudge-keeping leadership look like, and how would patience and forgiveness transform it? Where are you tempted to take satisfaction in what is wrong instead of rejoicing in what is good, true, and beautiful? What does it feel like to carry the burden of leadership, and where is God calling you to trust His promises, believe the best about others, and lead with hope and endurance? Through insights from Scripture and real world scenarios, we will explore these questions and more.</p>

114	John	Juedes	Mesiah Lutheran Church	Highland, CA	Pastor	Demonic Activity in the USA and Africa and What You Can Do About It	There are dramatic stories of demonic possession in the New Testament and in the world today. Can extreme behavior, haunted houses, witchcraft, psychic experiences, personal torment, and supernatural events be attributed to demons? Why do some people think that demons lurk around every corner, while others think that there are psychological explanations for everything? Is there a link between mental illness and demons? Does the occult or family curses open doors for demons to afflict people? What are the various degrees to which people are affected by demons? What steps can Christians take when they think demons are oppressing people? How should churches address this? This session offers Biblical background, modern application, and specific guidance on dealing with demonic activity.
115	Bernard	Bull	Concordia University, Nebraska	Seward, NE	President	Modern Games and Ancient Wisdom: Why the Church Should Pay Attention and Get Involved	What if escape rooms, treasure hunts, alternate reality games, riddles, Socratic conversation games, and other forms of ancient and modern game play weren't just entertainment but powerful tools for discipleship, outreach, lifelong learning, cultivating wisdom? From Plato to puzzlecraft, Christians have long recognized the role of games and play in faith formation and cultivating wisdom. This session will explore the joys and opportunities if various forms of games and play in Christian schools, churches, community programs, para-church ministries, and beyond. We will explore topics like how riddles can cultivate wisdom, what treaure hunts teaching about truth seeking, how puzzles cultivate wisdom and virtue, how adventure-based challenges nurture faith, and how games can open doors for outreach. We'll examine why the church should pay attention to play and how leaders and educators can harness it.
116	John	Juedes	Mesiah Lutheran Church	Highland, CA	Pastor	How Mental Disorders Disrupt Families	Families and friends of people with mental disorders experience frustration, confusion, guilt, isolation, the burden of caregiving, danger, spiritual issues, family conflict, marriage stress, hopelessness, disappointment with God, grief and anxiety. This session describes how mental disorders affect families, the negative emotions we feel, and how to handle them. This session focuses on family struggles, not on practical matters like diagnosis, treatment, health care providers, and access to care. Pastors, counselors, teachers, principals, peer supporters, and friends can better understand how to provide support. The approach of this presentation is not that of a psychologist, but of peer and pastor.
117	Bob	Smith	St. Lorenz Church	Frankenmuth, Michigan	Pastor	Global Outreach Center	A team at St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, Michigan is bringing an exciting new vision to life with the Global Outreach Center (GOC)! This incredible initiative is designed to showcase the presence of God with every community and culture touched by the Gospel in the world. With lively interactive exhibits and engaging programs. The Center will radiate the love of Jesus in amazing ways. Get ready for a groundbreaking learning journey that will inspire and uplift both believers and seekers alike. Come and catch the exhilarating vision for the GOC – your next great adventure awaits.

118	Caleb	Cox	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Fort Collins, CO	Associate Pastor	Near and Now: Everyday Encounters with God	<p>We preach, we teach, we pour ourselves into Sunday—but by Monday morning, most of it disappears. For many households, Sunday morning feels disconnected from the real rhythms of dishes, deadlines, and diapers. The result? People who know how to “go to church” but struggle to encounter God in the very places they spend most of their lives. What if the ordinary moments we overlook are actually the frontlines of formation—and we’ve been missing them all along?</p> <p>This session will challenge the assumption that discipleship is primarily about adding more programs or getting people to show up more often. Instead, it will offer a practical cross-shaped framework for equipping households to encounter God in the ordinary—transforming laundry rooms, commutes, and dinner tables into holy ground. If our people only expect God on Sundays, they will miss Him in the other places He promises to be present.</p> <p>The vision is simple yet profound: instead of the disintegration of Sunday worship and daily life, you can help build a culture within your congregation where everyday encounters with God are not rare surprises but regular expectations. Discover how you can carry the presence of Christ into the everyday—and how this change could transform the way your congregation speaks, acts, and bears witness to the God who is both near and now. Let’s close the gap between worship and ordinary life and recover a church culture where encountering God every day is normal, natural, and necessary.</p>
119	Matthew	Kistler	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Chief Strategy Officer	Getting Traction in Ministry: Tools for Alignment and Growth	<p>Many ministries can feel like they’re fighting an uphill battle. Endless tasks and management responsibilities can distract leaders from the critical parts of their work that need to change. Other times, it feels like we’re all working as a team, but we’re not “rowing together”. Or, when a founder or strong executive runs a ministry, they might struggle to release their grip on daily operations resulting in frustration for everyone.</p> <p>Lutheran Bible Translators felt these tensions and decided to adapt the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) to provide structure as we embarked in a season of change. Hear LBT’s Chief Strategy Officer and Executive Director share about their shared experience of setting a direction, setting priorities, and setting off on the ministry adventure God has for LBT. This session will describe situations where the EOS framework might help your ministry, identify tools useful to regular strategy alignment, and differentiate LBT’s adoption of EOS to the standard approach. We hope these useful tips from our experience will encourage other ministry entrepreneurs as they pursue kingdom work.</p>
120	Hannah	McLaughlin	Kids Kount Ministries	Yutan, NE	Director of Kids Kount Ministries	Ten Big Ideas to Take Your Kid Min to the Next Level	<p>Children’s ministry leaders are always looking for new ways to engage kids, partner with families, and keep Jesus at the center. In this workshop, you’ll discover ten practical and powerful ideas that can bring fresh energy to your ministry. Along the way, you’ll be encouraged by connecting with other leaders who share your passion for reaching the next generation. Whether you’re just beginning or a seasoned veteran, you’ll leave with tools, inspiration, and renewed vision to take your Kid Min to the next level.</p>

121	Julianna	Shults	LCMS Youth Ministry	Saint Louis, MO	Program Manager for Resources and Leadership	Discipling Resilient Gen Z and Alpha	Generations Z and Alpha are facing a challenging and divided world with a multitude of influences. We will look at data and trends in our youngest generations to help give insight into how congregations can best share the unchanging Gospel. We will discuss practical ways to walk alongside tweens, teens, and young adults to help them deeply understand their Baptismal faith, have a resilient identity in Christ, and be deeply rooted in God's Word and His church for life.
122	Emily	Phoenix	KINDLE Servant Leaders	Baltimore, MD	Program and Communications Director	Prayer ADHD	Prayer is a simple, beautiful gift. But we are easily distracted, make excuses, and put it off for later. Turn your “I will pray for you” into action with KINDLE Servant Leaders, Emily Phoenix, as we take a closer look at how Jesus prayed unceasingly. We will learn how to widen our understanding and participation in prayer, both personal and corporate, through visual and kinesthetic means.
123	Matthew	Schultz, CFRE	Schultz Consulting Group/GSB Fundraising	League City, TX	Consultant	How do you know if its time for a Capital Campaign?	How long has it been since your ministry strategically grew its capacity for ministry impact? Are you deferring needs and opportunities? Many churches and organizations are finding new opportunities and needs that were put on hold during the Covid years, and now may be the time to step boldly and turn these ministry dreams into realities. But how? And when? We'll explore the factors and decisions leading to a confident and successful Capital Campaign. With proper planning, research, engagement and execution, we are seeing a wave of incredibly generous responses to capital appeals that are accelerating ministry in every context.
124	Tommy	Keown	Arrowhead Conferences and Events	Cumming, GA	Account Manager	Planning an Event from A-Z	This session is designed to help a less experienced meeting planner know how to plan a successful event.....from inception to completion. The experienced team from Arrowhead Conferences and Events will share tips to make your event a success from beginning to end.....regardless if it is an event for ten people or one thousand people.
125	Matthew	Schultz, CFRE	Schultz Consulting Group/GSB Fundraising	League City, TX	Consultant	How to Cultivate A Culture of Generosity	Congregations in all settings struggle to make stewardship a core piece of their congregational culture. It is usually a once-a-year sermon series, but is all too often an anxiety-inducing, guilt-ridden, and avoided topic. Yet church leaders are left wondering how do we grow giving? How do we put in place a culture of generosity instead of a culture of scarcity? The feeding of the 5,000, manna in the wilderness, the creation story, and more lead us to a God that provides all that we need. Yet, in our churches, we often say, “Oh no! We don’t have any money”. It starts with leadership from staff and board and messaging that God is, in fact, up to something in your midst. Tried and true best practices for non-profit fundraising are built atop solid biblical principles, and when we capture the correct story, we can lead people to significant generosity.

126	Jacob	Heine	Faith Lutheran Church	Topeka, KS	Senior Pastor	Preaching, Teaching, and Living As If the Resurrection Matters	"We preach Christ crucified" is both biblical and accurate. However, it has also come with the exclusion that we do not emphasize the importance of the resurrection life. The implication of the resurrection on our preaching, teaching, and living is important as we await Christ's return. In our time together we will see how ignoring the resurrection leads us to miss the opportunity for living as the baptized now. We will then explore ways to draw attention to the resurrection and how that should impact how we and our congregations live out the baptized, resurrected life.
127	Deaconess Debra	Lennox	The Lutheran Diaconal Association	Valparaiso, IN	Director of Student Experience	From Doing to Being: The Power of Strategic Pause	<p>In a culture of constant activity, both congregations and organizations often find themselves driven by urgency rather than discernment. This presentation explores the concept of a strategic pause: a purposeful, prayerful season of slowing down in order to listen, reflect, and realign with mission. Drawing on biblical and theological foundations such as Sabbath, Jesus’ rhythms of withdrawal and prayer, and the wilderness as a space for clarity and calling, participants will discover how pausing creates space for the Spirit to guide.</p> <p>The session will highlight how intentional pause prevents burnout, fosters creativity, strengthens community, and sharpens mission focus. Practical models will be shared—such as congregational retreats, sabbaticals, and discernment seasons—that can help churches and ministries embrace renewal and clarity in the midst of change. Examples from the Lutheran Diaconal Association’s journey will serve as a case study, but the focus will remain on how any faith community can benefit from building in time to step back. Participants will leave with tools and inspiration to cultivate practices of strategic pause in their own settings, ensuring that their work is not only effective but Spirit-led.</p>
128	Tim	Barone	Holy Cross Lutheran Kearney	kearney	Associate Pastor	The Original Altar Call - How to use your communion address as a gateway to engagement with visitors	Tensions between outreach and confessional unity are often difficult to navigate. When visitors come into our churches for the first time, rather than feeling welcomed, they may be offered an anti-invitation. That is, they are not invited to the table where we encounter Christ. This session explores these commonly experienced tensions and offers a way forward to use our communion address to both provide clarity to visitors about communion practice, and also sincerely invite them to further exploration and engagement with your community.

129	Mark	McCrory	Desert Foothills Lutheran Church	Scottsdale, AZ	Senior Pastor	Lead Like Moses: How to Disappoint Your People!	What if great leadership isn’t keeping everyone happy, but guiding them faithfully through necessary disappointment? We follow Israel’s desert road map - grumbling, golden calves, “let’s get a new leader” votes - and uncover a hopeful framework for change. This session translates wilderness wisdom into church reality: distinguishing technical fixes from adaptive work, setting healthy boundaries, regulating heat without burning out, and pacing change so people can grow without bolting back to Egypt. Expect practical tools for reading the room, naming loss, protecting the core while experimenting at the edges, and surviving the inevitable parkinglot feedback with grace. If you’re navigating renovations, ministry shifts, or just the weekly bulletin, come learn how to carry the staff, part anxiety, and keep your eyes on the Promised Land, leading with courage, candor, and a pastor’s heart.
130	Charessa	Koontz	Bethany Lutheran Church	Austin	Director of Family Life Ministries	How to Team and Empower Your Female Leaders (Male Only Session)	After leading two Women's Only Leadership training events at Best Practices, I have been blessed to meet amazing female leaders, listen and learn from their challenges, and encourage/equip them for the work that God has prepared for them to do. But we need you Gentlemen Leaders! I have had many of you ask me for the slides or insights from this training...and now is the time. Please come join me as I teach you 5 simple, practical ways that you can team and lead together for the best results.
131	Jason	Hamrock	Missional Marketing	Scottsdale, AZ	CEO	Don’t Get Left Behind: Making Your Church Visible in an AI-Driven Future	More people now turn to AI tools like ChatGPT and Google’s AI Mode to find answers—including spiritual ones. To stay visible and relevant, churches must adapt their digital presence for AI search and embrace AI tools in ministry—not to replace human connection, but to enhance outreach, discipleship, and care.
132	Rev. Tom	Evans	Emanuel Lutheran Church	Inver Grove Heights	Sr. Pastor	Death - The Great Equalizer	Everyone eventually faces death - whether walking a loved one through the dying process or facing it oneself. The question is, how best can one help others and oneself to manage through this process? Death is a natural part of life that everyone can face without fear. With the proper knowledge and understanding of the death and dying process, people can live life to the fullest, replacing fear of death with fulfillment in life and the hereafter. Pastor Tom takes 36 years of ministry and life experience to help you through this.
133	Jon	Jordening	Church	Las Vegas, NV	Director of Worship Ministries	Director of Worship Arts Ministry	Leading without clarity is difficult and can be a significant contributor to burnout. We have ministry job descriptions, but those can sometimes just be a list of identified gaps for someone to fill or have on their weekly To-Do list. Tasks, however, don’t inspire a profession or grow ministry leaders. The intent of this session is to, 1) explore three core competency areas needed for worship ministry leaders, 2) identify the many hats you may be asked to wear each week, and 3) help you find clarity of purpose behind the things you do in your vocation each week; a new perspective to prevent burnout.

134	Mike	Curtis	Redeemer Lutheran Church of Northern Colorado	Fort Collins, Colorado	Associate Pastor/Director of Care Ministries	Creating a Lasting Span of Care	Whether your church is providing care ministry through one person or fifty, your people need a "span of care" that grows and meets the challenges of everyday life. Learn how to develop a philosophy of care ministry that starts at the front door on Sunday mornings and advances through meeting the deepest of psychological, relational, and emotional needs. Explore how to lean into interdependent care ministries that support and supply each other. Be encouraged to grow in care ministry as God has empowered you and your congregation.
135	Mark	Love	Trinity Lutheran Church & School	Toledo	Senior Pastor	Pastor	<p>TITLE: To Seize the Day ... try the power of Pausing</p> <p>How often during any given day do you feel like the day has seized you? What tends to seize and overwhelm us is not so much what we're given to do or the events of the day. We are most seized and overwhelmed when we attempt to do what we are given and try to do what we were never given. Come and discover the liberating benefits for you and your family when you use your freedom to pause and ask 5 simple questions.</p>
136	Marty	Moro	MOST Ministries - Mission Opportunities Short Term	Ann Arbor	Executive Director	Send Me! How to get your church involved in short-term missions.	<p>Does your congregation have a heart for missions...international missions? Do you have a core group of people who would like to share the Gospel in word and deed in underserved communities around the world? Would your mission team want to work alongside a local pastor/missionary in a foreign land? Do you need help sending a short-term team into the mission field?</p> <p>Come and learn how MOST Ministries can help your congregation send that team or how you can join a multi-congregational mission team. MOST mission teams have worked on a variety of projects to benefit people in underserved communities around the world: water filtration, construction, VBS, ESL, women's ministries, children's ministries, medical clinics, and eyeglass clinics. We go where we are invited by a local pastor/missionary to provide a project of their choosing to share the Gospel in word and deed. If you are having trouble getting started with international missions, come learn how MOST Ministries can help.</p>
137	Lisa	Martinson	Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church	St. Croix Falls, WI	Director of Christian Education	Fully Ready to Run towards Your Goals?	How are marathon running, the Christian life, cultivating whole person health powerfully connected? DCE Lisa Martinson (2009 KINDLE Associate) will help you consider how your emotional, physical, intellectual, financial, and social health impact reaching your personal and ministry goals. You don't have to share Lisa's marathon running ability (nine in total!) to bring your questions and insight for a discussion about how focusing on the health of all God's gifts to us helps us serve Him.
138	Paul	Federwitz	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Chief Programs Officer	Building Trust on Multicultural Teams	Do you have a team with people from different cultural backgrounds? These different perspectives can give you amazing ideas and results, but can also create internal team conflict. Each person has a different expectation of how they share information, make decisions, and take action. Having lived and worked cross-culturally all his life, Paul will give you key concepts for how to build trust on your team and an understanding of how different cultures perceive workplace practices differently.

139	Paul	Steinhaus	Wolf River Lutheran High School	Shawano	principal	Christ on the Court - Biblical Functionalism	This is topic will be a discussion based format with specific details of how to integrate Scripture into every facet of one's athletic program. We will discuss seasonal goal setting, establishing a culture of success, and every day practice mentality all based on Scriptural guidance. Bring your A game!
140	Paul	Steinhaus	Wolf River Lutheran High School	Shawano	principal	Share your Hope - High School Apologetics	This presentation will be a discussion based format that will explore how we can direct contemporary topics to "seed planting" a saving faith in Jesus. We will explore a sequential class format to help "prepare" disciples, and the use of redundancies and buzz words to reinforce the historicity of Jesus. Then we will be able to bridge the gap to cultural hot topics to "share the Hope we have."
141	A.J.	Cluck	Church Voice	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Director of Strategic Partnerships	Listening to Your People: How Real-Time Feedback Shapes Thriving Ministry	<p>Listening to Your People: How Real-Time Feedback Shapes Thriving Ministry invites leaders to move beyond anecdotes and guesswork to a culture of continual listening. The talk opens with the growing desire for ministries to know the “real story” of their people and contrasts listening to the loudest voices with hearing the whole crowd. It identifies the feedback gap—decisions made on assumptions, silent majorities unheard, outdated or misleading metrics like attendance, and the resulting reactive leadership and misaligned priorities.</p> <p>Drawing on insights from ParentPulse & ChurchVoice tools, A.J. shows what timely data can reveal, from closing the back door to spotting discipleship opportunities. He outlines a simple, repeatable process—define goals, ask focused questions, share results transparently, and act—emphasizing small, continuous surveys over one-off efforts. Case studies demonstrate how feedback becomes action in worship, communication, outreach, and strategic planning.</p> <p>A key section equips boards to use real-time dashboards for sharper decisions, clearer alignment, and stronger vision-casting. Finally, A.J. highlights how consistent listening builds trust, noting that clear is kind, and challenges leaders to begin one concrete conversation this week based on what they hear.</p>

142	Andrew	Eddins	Pacific Southwest District	Orange	Mission & Ministry Developer	Training With The Master: How (Exactly) Does Jesus Change Lives?	<p>We all want our lives to be better. We all want to become better people. But how, exactly, does real life transformation happen? How, exactly, do we become people pervaded by peace, joy, and love?</p> <p>When we think of Jesus, we often picture Him as Lord, Savior, King, Messiah, Son of God. But one of His most overlooked roles is one that dominates the gospels: Teacher.</p> <p>In this session, we'll explore Jesus as the greatest teacher the world has ever known—the one who invited people to learn how to live the “Good Life” with Him.</p> <p>Together, we'll uncover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How Jesus shaped His first apprentices- What He understood about human growth and lasting change- How your congregation can go deeper in your training with Jesus—together <p>Come ready to see Jesus in a fresh way, and discover practical steps for training with the Master!</p>
143	Jessica	Tibben	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	GREENVILLE	Director of Family Life	Figuring It Out: Children's Ministry in Real Life	<p>Ministry with kids and families doesn't come with a neat instruction manual. Whether it's Sunday School, VBS, Bible Buddies, or family events, we are constantly figuring it out—learning, adjusting, and trusting God along the way. This presentation will explore how ministry leaders can embrace the process, celebrate small wins, and find joy in the ordinary moments. Together we'll discuss practical ways to plan engaging events, build connections across generations, and create spaces where kids and families encounter Jesus.</p> <p>“Figuring it out” doesn't mean we have all the answers—it means we're leaning on God's wisdom, equipping one another, and staying faithful as He works through us.</p>
144	Jessica	Tibben	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	GREENVILLE	Director of Family Life	Every Child, Every Family, Every Gift: Making Church Accessible for All	<p>Making a welcoming place for ALL God's children is important. Whether they are a newborn or 99, we want our church to be a place that loves, cares, and includes in their unique abilities and differences. How do you do that? What can that look like for any size church with any size volunteer team? How can you make your church a more welcoming and understanding environment for ALL families? Come find out.</p>
145	Heath	Trampe	LCMS Office of National Mission	St. Louis, Missouri	Director of Discipleship Ministry	Talking About Jesus Makes Me Feel Anxious...	<p>Does the thought of sharing your faith give you anxiety? Do you worry that you won't know what to say when the time comes? Do you feel like your congregation could be doing more to reach your community? Finally, do you wish you could share some best practices with your church leaders?</p> <p>Join Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe, LCMS Director of Discipleship Ministry, as he shares the LASSIE approach for evangelism, the difference between witness and outreach, and real application stories from his many years as a parish pastor, serving three growing congregations in three different districts around the country. This will be a practical session!</p>

146	Heath	Trampe	LCMS Office of National Mission	St. Louis, Missouri	Director of Discipleship Ministry	Why Won't They Help?	<p>Do you find that a small group of dedicated people are doing the vast majority of the work in your congregation? Do you notice people feeling burned out and under-appreciated? Do you find it difficult to recruit new volunteers to help with things around the church?</p> <p>Join Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe, LCMS Director of Discipleship Ministry, as he shares the motivation behind Members of One Body, a new workshop designed to engage every member of the congregation. He will offer practical suggestions while sharing real application stories from his many years as a parish pastor, serving three growing congregations in three different districts around the country. This will be a practical session!</p>
147	Jonathan	Schleicher, CFRE,	Concordia Lutheran High School MA	Tomball, TX	Director of Advancement	Tips for Building a Sustainable Alumni Relations Program	<p>Alumni and alumni parents are some of the most powerful word-of-mouth advocates your school can cultivate. Their lasting emotional ties and positive experiences can fuel both marketing and admissions efforts—if effectively engaged. This session will guide you through creating a sustainable alumni relations program with manageable, cost-effective strategies that can be tailored to any school size or level.</p> <p>We'll explore the foundational questions to ask before launching an alumni network: What's your purpose? What do you hope to gain? What data should you gather? You'll learn how to set achievable goals, even with an incomplete database, and how to leverage tools like social media, email platforms, and community events to foster engagement. Practical ideas include alumni-focused social gatherings, networking opportunities, business directories, and special recognition events like Homecoming and Graduate Walk-Throughs.</p> <p>We'll also discuss strategies to turn alumni and alumni parents into passionate ambassadors—sharing talking points, showcasing success stories, and offering incentives. Revenue-generating ideas, such as selling commemorative bricks or swag, will be shared to help fund your efforts. Walk away with a clear roadmap to strengthen your school's legacy and build long-term relationships that benefit your entire community.</p>
148	Jeff	Sutherlin	Christ Greenfield Lutheran Church	Gilbert, AZ	Pastor	SMP Pastoral Leadership in Action - Listen to how an SMP pastor and his supervising pastor work together to acheive results for the Kingdom!	<p>In this topic, I would like to feature Timothy Ahlman, Michael Heiden, and myself as we will describe how we have been able to have the SMP pastoral ministry program acheive results within the context of Christ Greenfield in Gilbert, Az. We would like to talk about different areas where we work together. This should help other pastors who are looking for support on how to manage and work alongside of their SMP pastors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mutual Respect and Honoring the Different Skillsets 2. Weekly accountability, measurements, development plans 3. When to allow SMP pastors to step into more duties 4. Proper supervision of SMP pastors 5. How to make SMP pastors feel valued and a part of the team 6. Team Building

149	Trisha	DePasquale	Our Savior Lutheran School	Plantation, Florida	Kindergarten Teacher	Passport Adventures: Inspiring Young Minds to Discover the World	<p>Explore the world with Passport Adventures, as you discover new ways to bring the world into your classroom. This session is geared towards kindergarten - third grade and will have you moving and using your imagination!</p> <p>You will leave the session with the confidence to turn your students into global citizens and receive resources you can immediately start integrating into your teaching.</p> <p>It is never too early to start teaching children about the world. After all, the sooner children start learning about the world, the longer they can care for it.</p>
150	Peter	Frank	St. Peter's Lutheran Church	Conover, NC	Senior Pastor	God Doesn't Waste Anything: Bleached Jalapeño Buckets, Pallets of Pickles, Tractor-Trailers, and Other Things They Didn't Teach Me About in Seminary	<p>After a 17-year wait on God's timing, Pastor Peter Frank finally arrived at his first call—only to face a hurricane in the mountains less than three months later. Join him as he shares unexpected opportunities God provided and how his rural congregation discovered its important role in the larger church body. You'll learn that God can use all your past relationships and experiences—both good and bad—in surprising ways. With our God, nothing goes to waste.</p>
151	Peter	Frank	St. Peter's Lutheran Church	Conover, NC	Senior Pastor	If I Only Had a Second Brain: The Benefits of a Personal Knowledge Management System	<p>In this practical presentation for church workers and laypeople, Pastor Peter Frank will demonstrate how he uses Notion software as an indispensable "second brain" for his personal and professional life. Drawing from his previous career in software and database management, he used Notion to organize his seminary experience and now relies on it daily in his pastoral work. He'll show how this powerful tool can transform your organizational systems—whether you're managing sermon notes, tracking pastoral visits, or organizing committee meetings—by providing a centralized platform that adapts to your ministry needs. Participants will learn how to implement the PARA method (Projects, Areas, Resources, Archive) to develop a system that helps reclaim mental space and focus on what truly matters.</p>
152	Annette	Anschutz	Concordia University, Nebraska	Seward	Program Director Graduate Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education	Making Professional Development Meaningful	<p>Learn more about Concordia University Nebraska's new Early Childhood Initiative. Explore a variety of faith-based professional development opportunities for administrators, directors, teachers, paras, and teacher aides that focuses on leadership development, faith formation, play-based learning, developmentally appropriate practice, and authentic assessment. Discuss innovative paths to make equipping meaningful, accessible, and affordable for every early.</p>
153	Donna	Snow	Artesian Ministries	Houston, TX	Author/Speaker	How to Outline and Write a Nonfiction Book/Bible Study	<p>Discover a clear, step-by-step framework to turn your message into a well-structured nonfiction book or Bible study. In this practical course, you'll learn how to clarify your purpose, craft a compelling outline, develop engaging chapters, and write with confidence. Whether you're creating a devotional, Bible study, or teaching resource, you'll gain the tools and templates to move from idea to finished manuscript—without feeling overwhelmed.</p>

154	Donna	Snow	Artesian Ministries	Houston, TX	Author/Speaker	Bible Study Techniques: Deepening Your Personal Walk with the Lord to Lead Well	<p>Strong spiritual leadership flows from a deep, personal walk with God. This practical session equips Christian leaders to cultivate consistent, life-giving Bible study habits that fuel their ministry and transform their daily lives. We will learn how to approach Scripture with fresh eyes and build sustainable rhythms of study, prayer, and reflection.</p> <p>We will discover how to move beyond surface reading to meaningful engagement with God’s Word—developing habits that strengthen your faith that overflow into effective leadership.</p>
155	Jim	Found	Immanuel Loveland	Loveland CO	retired	Senior Ministry: Why We're Excited	<p>Sharing ideas for a thriving senior ministry, with a focus on building community and creating a mutual support system. Emphasizing the value of providing a range of programs to attract people with different interests, and making use of the gifts and talents of the members.</p>
156	Debbie	Arfsten	Concordia University Chicago	River Forest, IL	Professor of Christian Education/DCE Program Director	Caring for God's Called Church Workers	<p>Being a called church worker is such a tremendous blessing! There is so much joy in serving but it also comes with a lot of hard work and heavy demands on a person in all aspects of their lives. Healthy church workers can make a huge difference in having a healthy congregation so come find out how you can support, encourage, and make a difference in the lives of those called to serve in your setting.</p>
157	Brian	Booth	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	St. Louis, MO	Ministry Solutions Consultant	Next Steps for Ministry Growth and Expansion	<p>Is your ministry growing and looking to expand? Do you need to raise capital to fund growth? Do you need to add more space, build a new addition, or remodel your existing facility? Are you facing various options for how to move foward and not sure which one is best?</p> <p>The Ministry Readiness Process, offered by LCEF Ministry Solutions, can walk alongside you through these questions. This process is designed to provide clarity on your next steps for Kingdom impact, and equip your ministry to move into a funding campaign with confidence.</p> <p>Learn more about how to get started, and let LCEF partner with you in your ministry's next steps for growth and expansion.</p> <p>This process is designed for Schools, Churches, Camps, and can be customized to any type of ministry.</p>

158	Benjamin	Squires	Bethel Lutheran Church	Gurnee, IL	Pastor	Art & Advocacy in Ministry	<p>Art—especially visual art—can empower a congregation for advocacy within the church and out in their community. Ben will tell his story of slowly recognizing himself as an artist who happens to be a pastor who happens to use art as part of his pastoring. His stories can help leaders use their artistic gifts or empower artists in their congregations.</p> <p>Advocating Growing in Faith</p> <p>Ben will share examples of using art in worship, preaching, and teaching to engage the congregation with visual and creative elements that complement the Word. Visual arts helps disciples envision biblical teaching in their lives as disciples.</p> <p>Advocating in the Community</p> <p>Ben first used art for advocacy in the community through a photography project that broke down stereotypes about the unhoused. That project became a traveling exhibit in Lake County (IL) to support the local homeless advocacy agency. He's also used art on the streets to invite people to prayer; art in his front yard to prompt conversations about current issues; and art on social media to advocate for the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Advocacy in the Congregation</p> <p>Art disarms the congregation in order to face difficult issues. Ben used folk art outdoor displays to help the congregation face COVID and then racial justice in the wake of George Floyd's murder. He's introduced art pieces</p>
159	Carrie	Duesenberg	Christ Community Lutheran School	St. Louis, MO	Director of Finance	From Classrooms to Congregations: Navigating Taxes for the Self-Employed	<p>Provide clarity to the tax implications of being a "minister of the Gospel". I'll help answer those daunting tax questions such as:</p> <p>-What's the difference between income tax and self-employment tax?</p> <p>-What counts as a housing expense?</p> <p>-How much of my housing am I taxed on, if any?</p> <p>-How do I calculate and pay in my self-employment taxes?</p> <p>I'll also explain ways to help lower self-employment taxes, including utilizing programs offered through Concordia Plans (CPS) and how your pension from CPS is a valuable tool in retirement for housing expenses.</p>

160	Sue	Hasselbring	International Student Ministry Inc.	St. Louis, Mo	Ministry Catalyst	Nation, tribe, people, language: how understanding identity strengthens connection	<p>We all desire what Jesus wills: that those from every nation, tribe, people, and language receive God's gracious gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, both now and eternally. These four words are some of the ways that we talk about those who are ‘other’ or ‘them’ to ‘us’. We naturally assume that everyone is like us: that our way is the "normal", "right" or "only" way. We fail to realize that for people of other nations, tribes, peoples and languages, our way may be “unusual” “wrong” or “impossible”. Our normal ways may hinder people from learning more of Christ or participating in the ministry we offer.</p> <p>In this session we learn to better engage with those we desire to serve. We’ll learn to approach ministry among others as a learner, curious about their identities of tribe, people, language, nation and more. We explore the blessings and challenges of the patience we need both with ourself and with those we minister among. We reflect on what it might look like to let go of “our way” and embrace their “normal” ways. Each of us will identify a next step in growing in understanding others and making adjustments to how we minister.</p> <p>This session is broadly relevant to anyone wondering why people aren’t getting involved, or bumping into differences in how X should be done. Principles are applicable to outreach, worship planning, women’s ministry, youth ministry, and cross cultural ministry.</p>
161	Rev.	Kris Whitby	Northern Illinois District LCMS	River Forest	Assistant to the President - Mission and Ministry	Transforming Chapels	<p>Would you like to have a midweek chapel Jr. High students would sprint to get to for its content? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have students find church staff highly relatable to them as they connect through chapel times together? How can we take the truths of God's Word and our confession and practice of faith and present them in a way that connects on a deeper level for students during our chapel times? Join Pastor Kris Whitby, Northern Illinois District's Assistant to the President - Mission and Ministry, as he shares how the church/school ministry of Saint Paul, Mt. Prospect, IL transformed their chapels to have solid faith content coupled with dymanic student engagement. A shift in chapel message concepts, practical ideas, and starter resources will all be shared.</p>

162	Stacy	Lung	Center for Faith and Children/Lutheran Island Camp	Perham	Research Fellow/Executive Director	When Youth Lead with Wonder: Lessons for Ministry and Life	<p>In our hurry to create meaningful and joyful ministry for young people, we often overlook what young people themselves offer us in ministry. What does it look like when ministry is not only directed to youth but also flows from youth?</p> <p>One of the greatest gifts young people bring is their capacity for wonder. Children and youth notice the miraculous in the ordinary. They see the beauty of God’s creation with clarity and joy, unclouded by busyness or distraction. This natural sense of awe invites us to slow down, to see differently, and to remember truths beyond what is physical—truths that are central to God’s story and our lives of faith.</p> <p>This talk will explore how ministry by youth might look like wonder in action: being captivated by awe, cultivating space for wonder to grow, and creating out of the inspiration it brings. Together, we'll consider how following young people into wonder can deepen our own discipleship, strengthen our ministries, and renew our communities with the joy of discovery in God’s presence.</p>
163	Ali	Federwitz	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Prayer & Member Care Manager	Trauma- It's not just the big events	<p>Trauma. You've heard the word many times, but do you know what it is? Do catastrophic events come to mind? Although trauma is an unpleasant topic, it's one that we can't ignore. In this session, we'll talk about trauma and ways in which you may be experiencing it unaware. We'll talk about what happens to the body before, during, and after a traumatic experience. Trauma has an impact on our overall health and well-being. We'll discuss the methods used to help our bodies heal from past trauma, and why it's important to recognize and address each trauma we experience. Participants will explore ways in which we can better interact with others knowing that we all have trauma as a shared experience in our lives.</p>
164	Randy	Raasch	First Immanuel Lutheran-Cedarburg, WI & Our Redeemer Lutheran-Wauwatosa, WI	Cedarburg, WI & Wauwatosa, WI	First Immanuel-Pastor of Generosity / Our Redeemer-Vacancy Administrative Pastor	Building A Better Budget	<p>In many congregations, budgeting feels more like guesswork than ministry planning. Too often budgets are built on last year's numbers with fingers crossed. This session explores why some budgeting practices fall short and how they can hinder ministry and mission. Participants will learn about financially sound, mission focused steps to create a budget that supports the congregation's vision and honors the church's faithful stewards. Whether you are a treasurer with years of experience or a pastor wondering how to make numbers work for the church, this session offers insight, clarity, and steps to build a realistic budget that serves the Lord, His people, and His mission.</p> <p>The session is led by a pastor who directed the budgeting process for his church and school for 30 years. Each year concluded with the ministry financially in the black.</p>

165	Jeni	Walker	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Palatine, IL	Director of Communications and Hospitality	Investing in Hospitality: Transforming Church Ministries Through Radical Hospitality	<p>Imagine walking into a church where every volunteer knows exactly what to do, every guest feels genuinely welcomed, and every ministry hums with energy and purpose. That’s the kind of transformation that happens when a church invests in hospitality.</p> <p>Prince of Peace Lutheran Church took that leap, sending their Director of Communications and Hospitality to the Disney Institute to earn a certification in Guest Experience. What followed was a redesign of volunteer systems, onboarding, and scheduling, a refresh of long-serving teams, and a culture shift that gave volunteers both clarity and ownership.</p> <p>This session explores how radical hospitality—beyond just feeding people—can touch every ministry, foster connection, and make a church a place people can’t wait to experience. Attendees will leave with real-world strategies to create that same culture of care and belonging in their own communities.</p>
166	Nicole	Lopez	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Indianapolis	Director of Connect Ministry	Connect Ministry - The Guest Experience	<p>Have you ever felt like an outsider? No one wants to feel like that. Connect Ministry is the opposite!</p> <p>Connect Ministry is the welcome experience, giving people a glimpse of the love of Jesus, creating an environment where people feel known & loved, and connecting people closer to God and each other. Sometimes guests come to church with burdens they may not be equipped to navigate. A smile and friendly hello from the Connect Team may put them at ease.</p> <p>Our vision is not to simply greet, but to Connect on a deeper level. This is who we are not what we do. We want our guests to feel Jesus' unconditional love in the few minutes that they are with us. It's possible! We continue to build a relationship with them as part of our guest follow-up process that will lead to Next Steps and the deepening of their faith. Connect Ministry is about loving people like Jesus, b/c once you have experienced what Jesus has done for YOU, how could you not want to give that away to others? It's that simple. He has changed my life and I want our guests to experience that too!</p> <p>It's like being at a party and saying to someone "come with me, there's someone I want you to meet" -that someone is Jesus. We go the extra mile & love our guests no matter what, b/c of His love.</p> <p>Processes and procedures matter. But, none of that matters if you don't love like Jesus.</p> <p>Will guests meet Jesus through us? Or will they get an apathetic "morning" from a greeter. Which experience will you choose to provide?</p>

167	Jason	Paltzer	The Meros Center	Phoenix, AZ	Executive Director	The Global Flourishing Study (GFS) and the Church: Turning Data into Discipleship and Community Health	<p>The Global Flourishing Study (GFS) is the largest international study of human flourishing ever conducted and includes measures of spirituality and religiosity. It offers new insights into how faith, health, relationships, and community shape people’s lives. Drawing on data from over 20 countries and over 200,000 people, the GFS provides evidence that churches can use to better understand both the strengths and struggles of their communities and mission fields.</p> <p>This session will introduce ministry leaders to the Global Flourishing Study, highlight key findings relevant from wave 1, and explore practical ways these insights can guide local ministry. Participants will learn how to use flourishing measures to assess impact, strengthen community connectedness, and expand outreach.</p> <p>The session will also showcase the work of the Meros Center, a global community dedicated to measuring and growing impact in Christian health ministry. Through case examples, we will demonstrate how Meros helps churches and ministries move from research to real-world application, offering a framework for integrating flourishing data into discipleship, outreach, and community health programs.</p> <p>Attendees will leave with both inspiration and practical tools to evaluate their ministries in light of flourishing—and to take part in a larger global movement where research strengthens the work of the Gospel.</p>
168	Jessica	Bordeleau	Concordia Seminary	St. Louis	Digital Publications Coordinator	Befriending Neighbors: Serving and Empowering Immigrants	<p>There are nearly 52 million immigrants living in the US. We don’t need to travel to a distant nation to share God’s love, the nations are being brought to us! Many congregations want to help, but don’t know how. The audience will become more aware of the needs and experiences of refugees as well as our call to love these new neighbors. Participants will explore the example of a thriving ministry, Christian Friends of New Americans as an example of a flourishing ministry to immigrants that started from scratch. Learners will be introduced to a new resource that enables congregations to follow their lead. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis has produced Befriending Neighbors, a video-based curriculum that equips congregations to begin serving and empowering immigrants. Thanks to a generous grant, the resource is available at no cost. Participants will hear first-hand from volunteers who are being the hands and feet of Jesus in their community. The group will interact with the videos, be led through processing activities, and discuss strategies for implementing the curriculum in their own congregations!</p>
169	Ali	Federwitz	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Prayer & Member Care Manager	Caring for the Called: A Practical Model for Church Worker Care	<p>Church workers are often deeply committed to serving others, yet neglect their own care. This interactive workshop explores a framework for self-care to sustain long-term wellness. Participants will reflect on current practices and determine where additional resources are needed. The session includes strategies for seeking outside support and building a member care structure within a congregation.</p>

170	Arleah	Talbott Lorenz	Salem Lutheran Church	Tomball, TX	Associate Director of Student Ministry	Raising Leaders Instead of Volunteers: how identify, engage, and equip students to lead within your ministry	Too often students are used as a last resort, clean-up crew, ragtag group to call in when we need extra volunteers for big events. But we don't need more extras, we need more leaders. In this session we'll learn how to identify, engage, and equip the most underutilized super power in ministry into becoming our biggest advocates and greatest leaders!
171	Martha	Van Buskirk	Writer and Advocate	Houston, Texas	Author and Speaker	Do our Everyday Actions Matter? Be Encouraged by God's Extraordinary Grace!	<p>Have you ever wondered if you are making a difference in the world? As we know from Ephesians 2:8-9, we are saved by grace through faith. We are also divinely purposed by God for His good works.</p> <p>Opportunities are right around us. What can happen when God gives us fresh eyes (and ears) for others? Our ordinary lives—our vocations, location, and the uniqueness of our creation—can serve His small but important purposes. Whoever we are, wherever we are, and wherever we go.</p> <p>Anchored in the Lord, our day-to-day kindnesses are lovely expressions of faith are door openers to the Gospel for people in need. God provides places to shine His light as we open our lives in new ways to humbly serve in our homes, neighborhoods, churches, and communities. Our loving and Spirit-led acts do make a difference!</p> <p>A cheering session for both church workers and church members alike. Come and be lifted, affirmed, and encouraged as you serve the Lord!</p>
172	Tiffany	Hanson	Twisted Tech	Phoenix	Technology Consultant	Beyond Firewalls: Protecting People, Data, and Campuses in Today's Threat Landscape	Cybersecurity in education has outgrown firewalls and antivirus software. Today's schools, universities, and ministries face layered risks: ransomware that can shut down learning, phishing attacks targeting staff, and even gaps in emergency communications that affect student safety. This session breaks down how leaders can build a defense strategy that integrates both digital and physical security—without overwhelming budgets or teams.
173	Tiffany	Hanson	Twisted Tech	Phoenix	Technology Consultant	From Patchwork to Purpose: A Tech Growth Roadmap for Schools & Ministries	For many schools and ministries, IT has grown into a patchwork of disconnected tools and quick fixes. What once worked no longer scales—leading to frustrated staff, wasted dollars, and compliance blind spots. This session offers leaders a step-by-step approach to move from reactive tech management to a purposeful, future-ready roadmap that aligns with mission, growth, and the digital expectations of today's students and families.

174	Matthew	Wietfeldt	Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne	Fort Wayne, IN	Assistant Vice President of Admission	Family Discipleship and Vocational Discernment: Using the FTE Discern Together Model in Congregational Life	<p>Families are the first and primary communities of discipleship. Yet many congregations struggle to provide parents and caregivers with the tools and confidence to guide their children in exploring both their identity in Christ and their vocational calling in the world. This workshop will explore how congregations can partner with families in discipleship and introduce a practical, conversation-based model of vocational discernment drawn from the Forum for Theological Exploration’s “Discern Together” resource.</p> <p>Participants will learn how the model—grounded in listening, storytelling, and mutual discovery—can be adapted for use in family settings, youth ministry, and intergenerational discipleship. The session will highlight both theological foundations and practical strategies for equipping households to nurture young people in asking and living out life-shaping questions of faith and vocation: Who am I? Whose am I? What is God calling me to do in the world?</p> <p>By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:</p> <p>Articulate a biblical and Lutheran understanding of vocation as lived out in family, work, church, and community. Describe the Discern Together model and its key practices of storytelling, listening, and collaborative discernment. Identify ways to equip families to foster vocational imagination and discipleship conversations in the home. Develop strategies to integrate vocational discernment into existing ministries.</p>
175	Paul	Heiser	Faith Lutheran Church	Green Bay, WI	Director of Music	Getting the most out of your educational staff: Modular scheduling for Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs	<p>Everyone wants to support the educational programs for the youth of the church. While funding for such programs is usually a priority in most church budgets as part of their ongoing mission, it is often staffing that offers the greater challenge. This session reveals the successes that our Sunday School and VBS programs have had in addressing this challenge through the use of modular scheduling.</p> <p>Sample schedules for each application will be explained and included for each attendee. While our staffing model lends itself most readily to this approach, I will discuss how it might be adapted to other situations. Also covered will be the challenges that have arisen in using this type of scheduling as well as some unanticipated benefits.</p>
176	Greg	Finke	Dwelling 1:14	St. Paul, MN	Executive Director	Joining Jesus on His Mission: How to Disciple People to be Everyday Missionaries	How can you transform your church's mission statement into a mission movement? By discipling your people to join Jesus on His mission in their everyday lives. There are three simple, biblical practices that Jesus advocates in the gospels. Come hear what Greg Finke has taught to tens-of-thousands of Lutherans about how you, too, can join Jesus on His mission and disciple others to do the same.

177	Tim	Kurth	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	Whitestown, IN	VP Ministry Solutions	Principles for Good Order: How Governance Creates Organizational Harmony	<p>Try as you might, sustaining a healthy, well-run, focused governing board over time is an elusive ambition. Far too often boards get mired in historical review and operational nit-picking leading to interminable meetings that seemingly accomplish nothing but the frustration of those in attendance. In truth, a healthy, well-functioning board is the cornerstone to harmonious and effective ministry. But, how do we get there?</p> <p>Anyone frustrated with their current board will walk away hopeful, refreshed, and equipped to make their board better. Understand why the board sits between ownership and operations. Learn about the three duties of every board and legal authority they are given. Discover why boards get confused and how they can find clarity of purpose.</p> <p>Tim Kurth is a Governance Systems Professional who has studied the work of John Carver and developed the Principles Based Governance model specifically tuned for Lutheran churches and organizations. Built on Carver's ten principles, Tim will walk you step-by-step through a governance model that fits every ministry regardless of age or size. He has presented this model to school boards, district boards, church boards, and the LCMS Foundation board of Trustees. Come with your questions, doubts, conceptions, and fears and engage in a lively session on governance...really!</p>
178	Tim	Kurth	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	Whitestown, IN	VP Ministry Solutions	Strategic By Design	<p>In a fast-paced culture changes come at your ministry so quickly it's hard to process everything. How are you prepared to flex, adapt, hold fast, and maintain the integrity of your ministry in an ever-changing world? Having a strategic plan is great. Having a strategic design is even better! What's the difference?</p> <p>Strategic Ministry Design is a process that undergirds strategic planning. It answers a variety of questions allowing you to clearly articulate the values of your school. Standing on the foundation of Christ, the values serve as pillars holding up the vision for ministry you're striving to accomplish. Walk through the process and understand how your value pillars become the filter through which all strategic decisions are made.</p> <p>Learn how your values and vision determine how your staff is deployed, what programs you'll continue, which you'll close, what new things you'll start, the facilities you need to enhance, refurbish, or create, and the financial impact of all those decisions. Strategic Ministry Design is your tool for building a robust yet flexible strategic plan that serves your school for years to come.</p>
179	Mark	Pulliam	Lazarus Church	Spring, TX	Pastor / Church Planter	Breaking Through: Reaching the Unchurched and Dechurched Today	<p>Headlines speak of church decline; God is writing a different story. Both established churches and new church plants within our denomination are challenging the narrative and connecting unchurched and dechurched people to Jesus. How? Because of a mindset shift that you can make, too -- Kingdom over castle. Join leaders from the Harvest Partnership as they share their journey of transformation and offer practical steps to create a culture of mission that inspires your congregation to launch new initiatives to reach new people in your community.</p>

180	Quintin	Cundiff	LCMS Office of National Mission	St. Louis, Mo	Director of Church Planting	Church Planting as a Group Activity	In this session, we will explore the importance of undertaking church planting with a team of people, especially laity, who will be working together to plant a congregation. This is not a project for just one person, but it is better when the church gathers together. We will explore the relationship between church planting and both the priesthood of all believers and the office of the holy ministry. Both are important and both bring necessary elements to this process. It is not one over the other, but both/and.
181	Quintin	Cundiff	LCMS Office of National Mission	St. Louis, Mo	Director of Church Planting	Theology of the Cross in Church Planting	How does the world measure success? If we consider church plants only along the lines of the world's definition of success, we fall victim to becoming theologians of glory. We will explore what it means to be a theologian of glory and see how a proper theology of the cross will assist and strengthen church planting teams to weather the storms that accompany the work of mission and to stand firm in times of trial.
182	Mark	Pulliam	Lazarus Church	Spring, TX	Pastor / Church Planter	That Did NOT Go As Planned: Hope for Life’s Unexpected Turns	When life takes an unexpected turn—through breakup, divorce, rejection, or the death of a loved one—it can leave people feeling stuck and without hope. This session will help you rediscover the identity, gifts, and habits that sustain resilience in Christ so that you can help your community walk through painful changes and emerge with renewed hope in the One who holds the future.
183	Lindsey	Schmidt	Woodbury Lutheran	Woodbury	Director of NextGen ministries (DCE)	Bought In: Helping Volunteers Thrive	We love our volunteers and we want them to thrive. Bethany and Lindsey will be sharing ideas, resources, and strategies that they have used over their collective 30 years of ministry cultivating strong volunteer leadership and buy in. Volunteers who are cared for, equipped, invited with purpose, and are given opportunities to lead & contribute are more likely to buy in and own the ministry roles we so deeply need them to carry. Let's learn together how to help our volunteers thrive!

184	Charles	Squires	Holy Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Bloomington Minnesota	Outreach Chair	My road to finding purpose near and in retirement	<div>Charles (Chuck) Squires</div> <div>Bloomington, Minnesota</div> <div>Stretching your faith and life with purpose</div> <div>(My road to missional living)</div> <div>How might you plan to spend your time with purpose? For me, I have sought to fill my life with active participation in giving back utilizing my professional background (Robert Half International) in recruiting and human resources: e.g.by serving my church as the outreach committee chair, on the board of two nonprofits that help the disadvantaged in their job/career searches, mentoring students at two Universities and coaching new employees at my employer (in a semi-retired role).</div> <div>My goal in a conversation or presentation is to promote interest in unlocking your story. Over the years I’ve focused on themes of stretching, purpose and connecting.</div> <div>I continue to stretch my activities with international adventure travel and community support (e.g mountain climbing in Patagonia, bike racing in South Africa, an educational trip to Cuba, a visit to the North Pole, teaching elementary students in Morocco, zip-lining with grandkids in Costa Rica, hiking the TMB (Tour Du Mont Blanc) and helping to build a community center in Sri Lanka).</div>
185	Melaney	Jones	Faith Community Lutheran Church	Las Vegas, NV	Director of Communications & Connections	Building Bridges: Enhancing Community Outreach in Your Church	<div>In a world where communities are increasingly diverse and disconnected, how can the Lutheran Church break down barriers and create meaningful connections? This presentation will explore practical strategies for enhancing outreach and engagement, helping churches become vibrant hubs of faith and service. We'll examine common obstacles that limit involvement—such as perceptions of exclusivity, outdated communication methods, and lack of community awareness—and discuss ways to remove these barriers.</div> <div>Through real-world examples and actionable steps, attendees will learn how to build stronger relationships, develop welcoming spaces, and empower their congregations to become active participants in community life. Together, we can move beyond the walls of our churches, extend Christ’s love, and transform our neighborhoods through impactful, relevant ministry.</div>
186	Paul	Tepker	Ministry Insights International	Scottsdale, AZ	Coach/Consultant	Strengths at Work	<div>Discover how to unlock the full potential of your team at this engaging “Leading From Your Strengths” workshop on leveraging personality insights! Learn to identify and harness the natural strengths of each team member, improve communication, and strengthen personal relationships using a powerful tool. Whether you’re a pastor, team leader, or collaborator, this workshop will equip you with practical strategies to build a more dynamic, motivated, and effective team. Take this opportunity to transform the way your team works together!</div>

187	Paul	Tepker	Ministry Insights International	Scottsdale, AZ	Coach/Consultant	Stronger Together	Join us for an inspiring “Different by Design” marriage workshop designed to strengthen your connection, deepen your understanding, and ignite the love in your relationship. Whether you're newlyweds or have been together for years, this interactive experience offers practical ideas, heartfelt conversations, and a tool that you can use for ministry. Invest in your marriage and create a foundation that lasts a lifetime!
188	Mark	McCrory	Desert Foothills Lutheran Church	Scottsdale, AZ	Senior Pastor	Live Like Moses: How to Find Strength in What Breaks You	In this follow-up session, “Live Like Moses: How to Find Strength in What Breaks You,” (Part 2 of Lead Like Moses), participants will explore how to survive and even thrive amid the pressures and challenges of adaptive leadership. Drawing on Tod Bolsinger’s Tempered Resilience, this session emphasizes the personal and spiritual strategies leaders need to endure sustained stress, navigate crises, and maintain effectiveness in ministry. Using Moses as a case study, we will examine how leaders can face complaints, conflict, and systemic challenges without burning out, while cultivating resilience that strengthens both themselves and their communities. Participants will reflect on the realities of adaptive challenges, the losses inherent in leading through change, and practical tools for pacing, renewal, and sustaining their leadership over the long haul. By the end, leaders will leave with a deeper understanding of how to embrace the weight of leadership, prevent burnout, and transform the very trials that feel crushing into sources of growth, wisdom, and enduring impact for their ministry.
189	Mark	Blanke	Concordia University, Nebraska	SEWARD, NE	Professor Emeritus and Director, Institute for Religious Education	Defining a "Maturing Disciple"	Effective adult education is key to developing an integrated faith. To be effective in any educational endeavor, one must identify specific goals and outcomes. Ask yourself, have the members of your church been provided clarity about how God wishes for them to live their lives? Less than 10% of our members attend adult study opportunities at their church. The Gospel is preached in our worship, but when do they hear the priorities for their sanctification journey - a journey that won't be completed until their earthly journey is completed. This session will provide a rationale for clarifying these outcomes and will provide you with a tool to assist you in defining the characteristics of a maturing disciple in your congregation.
190	Mark	Blanke	Concordia University, Nebraska	SEWARD, NE	Professor Emeritus and Director, Institute for Religious Education	The Three Es - A Systems Approach to Developing Lay Leaders	Empowerment, Enabling, Equipping - the "Three Es" that congregational leaders should consider as they work to activate members into their roles as "priests and priestesses." Congregational systems and norms work to enhance our efforts or detract from them. Our work will be more effective if we think of our congregation as a system that has complimentary and competing forces that should be considered carefully as we seek to equip our members for service in the church and in their vocations.

191	Ann	Henny	Christ Lutheran Church	Norfolk, NE	Director of Worship Arts	Harmony in Community: Collaborating Through Church Music	When churches join their voices together, something beautiful happens—fellowship grows, musicians are encouraged, and the community is blessed. This session will share practical ways to collaborate in music ministry, from hymn festivals and combined outdoor services to outreach events like live nativities filled with music. You'll also hear real-life examples from churches in Norfolk, NE who have partnered in these kinds of events, offering inspiration and ideas you can bring back to your own congregation. Come be encouraged, connect with fellow music leaders, and dream about what God can do when we make music together.
192	Jacob	Youmans	Concordia University Texas	Austin	Director of the DCE Program, Professor of Ministry	X Why Z	Join a Gen X Dad, who graduated high school the same year as the gang from 90210 and Saved by the Bell, and one of his Gen Z daughters, who watched High School Musical as a child and then watched High School Musical the Musical the Series as a High Schooler, as we talk about generations, faith development and Discipleing the next generations.
193	Tim	Ritter	Immanuel Lutheran Church and School	Wisconsin Rapids	Senior Pastor	The Power of Reimagining	<p>Discover how you can take your congregation from the death spiral of mainteance mode to a kingdom growth mindset!</p> <p>Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in Wisconsin Rapids is an 145 year old congregation. However, following the Covid pandemic and a long pastoral vacancy was on the verge of closing it's doors for good. That is when the congregation, guided by the Word of God, decided to Reimagine who they were, what they were doing and where they wanted to go. Most importantly the members of Immanuel regained their focus on the "why" they exist.</p> <p>This presentation will share the inspiring story of how one congregation established a new vision for the future, set a strategic plan and carried it forward to go from a dying congregation to a thriving hub of spirtial growth and discipleship in a community desperately in need of hearing the Gospel.</p>
194	robert	hartwell	Lutheran Braille Workers	Yucaipa, Ca	President	Leading a Fundraising Team in a Church or Parachurch Setting	The workahop examines pitfalls and best practices for creating successful funradraising teams with professional staff (often without training in fundraising) and volunteers (who can struggle to feel included). Churches and parachurch organizations can be successful with the power of the Holy Spirit and these simple yet important tips.
195	Todd	Jones	The Center	Ann Arbor, MI	Executive Director of Concordia Market	Producing Content for the Church Market	Would you like to write study materials, produce music or other media, or launch a national mission endeavor? This session features a panel discussion with several successful content creators. Besides sharing high-level advice and insights, the session will introduce Concordia Market's tools to help expand connections. It's ideal for those who want to start or have stalled in developing church content. There will be plenty of time for questions.

196	Todd	Jones	The Center	Ann Arbor, MI	Executive Director of Concordia Market	Walther Speaks on The Relationship Between Synod and Its Members	The relationship between the Synod and its members has always been one of tension. The freedom of the Christian and congregation is held in tension with the call for unity and bonds of love. In this session, we will explore parts of C.F.W. Walther’s presentation at the first convention of the Iowa Synod convention as he speaks at length on this subject. Through this exploration, we will gain a better understanding of our role in preventing organizational drift. The session offers a preview of a free study guide that can be used for personal growth, congregation Bible study, or church worker discussion groups.
197	Brian	Axtman	Triun3 LLC	Phoenix, Arizona	Practice Lead & Director of New Business Development	The Church or School Business Office: Pain Point, Necessary Evil, or Resource Partner?	<p>For too long, churches and schools have viewed ministry and mission as noble pursuits, separate from the business operations. Talk of budgets and debt and money management and fiscal health are not ministry-oriented, are they?</p> <p>When an organization spends the time, the energy, and the resources to professionally plan, implement, and manage their business operations, they quickly realize that ministry and administration go hand in hand. When finance and human resources are aligned with ministry, there is no differentiation. The result is effectiveness.</p> <p>Take a journey to discover how laying out a solid organizational plan not just supports ministry, but grows ministry. A healthy church or school, with a professional approach to managing finances and human resources, can increase effectiveness, experience growth, and live out their purpose through all avenues of ministry.</p> <p>Learn how to identify and eliminate the pain points, change the perspective on the assumption that this part of our organization is a "necessary evil," and learn how to build out your operations to be a true resource partner.</p>
198	Jon	Bjorgaard	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Scottsdale, Arizona	Pastor	Church Resurgence	This session is for pastors and church leaders from congregations that have been stagnant in growth or are declining in worship attendance. Pastor Jon Bjorgaard has worked with many churches that are struggling and with God's help have seen resurgence. He is currently serving at Holy Cross which was one of the churches he was working with. He decided to invest himself in that church and use the model he was teaching others. In the last five years Holy Cross has experienced growth from 60 in worship to nearly 300 each week, a budget that has grown nine fold, and more than 200 adult baptisms. The church is involved in prison ministry, ministry to those struggling with addiction, serving in retirement centers, helping the unhoused and serving many other local and international missions. How was this done? By instilling the discipleship model of Jesus. This model will be shared in the session.

199	Ramona	Carper	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Richmond, VA	Contemporary Worship Leader	Beyond Verse, Chorus, Bridge: A New Approach to Music in the Contemporary Service	My name is Ramona Carper. I have been the contemporary worship leader at Redeemer Lutheran in Richmond, VA for 4 years. This session explores a different approach to planning contemporary worship services. We will look at curating song lists that go beyond the radio playlists which often promote popular worship songs that are not always appropriate for congregational singing. We will also discuss how to bring a higher level of musicianship that is often apparent in the traditional service but not always seen in the contemporary realm. In addition, we'll look at ways to collaborate with our traditional colleagues to create a sense of unity within the music program. This session will be a chance to discuss what "Contemporary" means and how we can enhance and enrich the music in these services that match the depth and musicality of traditional services.
200	Pastor	Nader Hanna	King of the Nations Ministries	Buena Park	Pastor	Muslims in Our Midst: Threat or Divine Opportunity?	<p>America’s Muslim population now exceeds 4 million and continues to grow. Public controversies in cities like Dearborn, Michigan, stir fears and raise an urgent question: is the increasing Muslims presence in our midst an imminent threat—or a divine opportunity? Are they an enemy to resist, or neighbors to love and bless with the good news of Jesus?</p> <p>Drawing on decades of ministry among Muslims in Egypt, Lebanon, Cyprus, and here in the U.S., this workshop confronts both realities head-on. We will uncover the ambitions of political Islam movements to take over the West, while also addressing cultural flashpoints that create tension in local communities. We will also explore practical ways to engage Muslims as friends and neighbors—learning to overcome fear, answer common objections, and bear witness to Christ with both love and truth.</p> <p>Participants will leave equipped to see beyond the headlines, discerning the difference between Islam as an ideology and Muslims as people made in God’s image, whom Christ died to redeem. Instead of anxiety, you will discover confidence and joy in the mission God has placed right at our doorstep.</p>
201	Tim	Gerdes	Victory Church, Chula Vista, CA	Chula Vista	Pastor	Pastors, How Not to be the Problem	This session isn’t coming from a place of strength—but from the middle of the struggle. As a pastor walking through a difficult season, I’ve been reminded that leadership isn’t about having it all together; it’s about learning to rely on God and the people He’s placed around us. Together, we’ll explore what it means to lead with humility, to trust your team when you can’t carry everything yourself, and to let God work through your weakness. You’ll walk away with practical insights and biblical principles for empowering your staff and volunteers—not by projecting confidence, but by cultivating authenticity, grace, and shared strength in Christ.

202	Pastor	Nader Hanna	King of the Nations Ministries	Buena Park	Pastor	“What’s Going On in the Unseen Reality?”	<p>Our nation and world are marked by deep division, moral confusion, and unrest. Yet behind the visible headlines lies a deeper truth: a spiritual battle. St. Paul reminds us that “we may not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:11).</p> <p>This workshop unpacks the biblical worldview of the unseen realm—angels, demons, principalities, and powers—through a confessional Lutheran lens. We will affirm Christ’s decisive victory over the enemy while guarding against both sensationalism and skepticism. Participants will gain tools for spiritual discernment, practices for prayerful resistance, and congregational strategies for spiritual readiness.</p> <p>Drawing on Scripture, Lutheran theology, and field stories from cross-cultural ministry contexts, we will explore how these spiritual realities affect our lives, churches, and mission. Interactive elements will help leaders apply insights in their own ministry settings. Attendees will leave equipped to recognize the enemy’s schemes, walk daily in Christ’s triumph, and bear faithful witness—advancing His kingdom in a culture drifting from God.</p>
203	Rich	Rudowske	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia MO	Executive Director CEO	Back to the Bible: Why most Christians struggle to read the Bible (And what your church can do about it)	<p>By 2033, we project that every one of the world's 7300 plus spoken and sign languages will have access to at least part of the Bible for the first time in history!</p> <p>However, here in the US, recent research from the American Bible Society (2025) reveals a striking paradox in American religious life: while 110 million Americans qualify as "Bible users" under minimal standards (reading Scripture three or more times annually), only 52 million—approximately 20%—demonstrate deep Scripture engagement (reading the Bible at least once a week).</p> <p>Using the Human Flourishing Index, researchers documented significant correlations between Scripture engagement and measurable life outcomes. Benefits include 22% higher ratings for meaning and purpose, significantly lower stress and loneliness, doubled community volunteer rates, and stronger social relationships. This presentation examines the implications of this engagement gap for Lutheran congregations and explores evidence-based strategies for fostering transformational Bible reading.</p> <p>Attendees will be introduced to "God Speaks" a comprehensive resource inspired by the frontlines of Bible translation ministry, inviting readers to grow spiritually and rediscover the life-changing power of Scripture.</p>

204	Jonathan	Butterfield	Lutheran South High School	Saint Louis, MO	Head of School	Creating an Impactful Visit Experience for Prospective Students	The private high school landscape in the Saint Louis region is highly competitive, and schools must be able to give their prospective students and their families an exceptional experience when they make a visit to campus. After many attempts at improving the visit experience, Lutheran South has carefully crafted a process that is repeatable and replicable with proven success. This presentation will highlight aspects that have worked well for Lutheran South, and participants can look forward to taking away ideas that may help their school turn prospects into new students.
205	Amie	Winningham	Sing, Move, and Memorize!	Holland	5th Grade Teacher, Speaker	Bible Memory made FUN!	Make memorizing God's Word the most joyful part of your students' day! We will use integrated arts to help children effortlessly memorize Scripture in a way they will beg for again and again. Come experience each technique first hand with movement, singing, coloring, playing instruments, and using American Sign Language to fall in love with God's Word and memorize it for a lifetime. Guaranteed to be a fun workshop with very practical teaching techniques and materials you can use immediately in your classroom.
206	Michelle	Diercks	Concorida Publishing House	Grand Mound, Iowa	Author, Master Certified Christian Life Coach	Learning to Be Still: How God's Word Can Change Your Anxious Thoughts	<p>We know the command: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). But what do we do when being still feels impossible? When anxious thoughts spiral at 2 AM about church members, ministry challenges, finances, or loved ones? When we carry the weight of responsibilities that seem to rest entirely on our shoulders?</p> <p>As church workers, we often feel we should have this figured out. We teach others about God's peace, yet struggle to experience it ourselves. We know Scripture says "be anxious for nothing," but our racing thoughts don't seem to listen.</p> <p>Here's the good news: learning to be still is exactly that—a learning process. And God's Word can literally change how our brains process anxious thoughts.</p> <p>In this workshop, we'll explore how combining biblical truth with brain science offers practical hope for transformation. You'll discover why anxious thoughts feel so automatic (we think 80-90,000 thoughts per day, following well-worn neural pathways) and how Scripture can create new pathways from panic to peace.</p> <p>Through vulnerable storytelling and practical teaching rooted in Philippians 4:4-7, you'll learn to identify your anxiety patterns and develop tools for choosing trust over worry. We'll discuss the difference between carrying burdens God intended versus burdens He never asked us to carry—and how to tell the difference.</p>

207	David	Rindt	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward	Director of Secondary Education	Unpacking The Anxious Generation	<p>Presentation Title:</p> <p>Unpacking The Anxious Generation</p> <p>- This course session is designed to condense, report, and discuss key takeaways from Jonathan Haidt’s 2024 book,The Anxious Generation. This session will include key conclusions from the text, discussions of Biblical insights on working through adolescent life influenced by technology and social media, and provide time for peer to peer discussion on classroom approaches to fostering positive solutions for classroom management and a Christ-centered perspective in our students.</p>
208	Mark	Kiessling	LCMS Youth Ministry	Saint Louis	Director, LCMS Youth Ministry	Impact of Healthy Youth Ministry	<p>How do you want young people and their families to be different because of their time in your congregation youth ministry? Using the lens of the Seven Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry, we will talk about practical ways to create vibrant, sustainable youth ministry to reach the end goal of young people who are disciples of Jesus for life.</p>
209	Mark	Kiessling	LCMS Youth Ministry	Saint Louis	Director, LCMS Youth Ministry	Guiding Young Men	<p>The young men in our congregations are facing many cultural challenges and stereotypes. Explore the data and how it informs how we care and mentor them. Discuss practical ways to help them develop resilient identities in Christ, and live in God’s foundational truths around relationships, identity formation, success and vocation.</p>
210	Dr. Eugene	Kim	Concordia University Irvine	Irvine	Professor & Chair	Starting your own Grassroots AI Movement in Lutheran Education & Ministry	<p>Artificial intelligence is transforming how we teach, lead, and serve - often faster than our schools and churches can keep pace. Many faithful educators and ministry leaders want to explore AI but feel uncertain or unsupported. This session shares how God used simple hallway conversations about faith, learning, and AI at Concordia University Irvine to spark a grassroots movement—growing into AI Cafés, a School of Education AI & Education Conference, and ongoing Faculty Professional Development Communities of faculty and staff advancing, researching, and teaching with AI.</p> <p>Rooted in a theology of vocation and service, this session explores how faith and innovation can work together to cultivate discernment, humility, and creativity in Lutheran education and ministry. Through stories, tools, and classroom examples, you can learn how to begin faithful conversations about AI in your organization or community in order to engage AI with wisdom, hope, and love for neighbor.</p>
211	Julianna	Shults	LCMS Youth Ministry	Saint Louis, MO	Program Manager for Resources and Leadership	4 E's of Raising Young Leaders	<p>Healthy congregations are always looking to raise up new young leaders, but it is not an easy task. These four E's will help you to better identify and mentor young Christian leaders for your church and community. We will discuss the ins and outs of practically providing opportunities to lead and how you can engage young leaders in their unique vocations.</p>

212	Jay	Reed	Light of the Valley Lutheran Church	Elk Grove, Ca	Pastor	From Disconnected to Leading: empowering everyday people for Kingdom impact	What if there was a simple way to engage disconnected people in your church or organization so that they LOVE serving and leading in ministry? AND what if there was a way to implement it without adding stress to your already-maxed out staff? Good news! There is! Join us in this session where you'll learn the five basic principles of engaging people in service and leading with joy and how to implement them in the context of your local ministry. This session comes with a money back guarantee!
213	David	Seabaugh	Immanuel Lutheran Church & School	Elmhurst, IL	Senior Pastor	Explain the Meaning of Life Using Stick Figures and Arrows	It may seem too good to be true, but you can illustrate for someone the meaning of life using simple stick figures and arrows. This technique is called Agape Sticks and it has helped thousands of people to discover God's beautiful interdependent design, the damage of sin to our relationships and how Jesus restores us to the image of God. This powerful teaching has made a transformative impact upon those who have experienced it. Best of all, once you learn the basics of Agape Sticks, you can begin to share it with others immediately. Agape Sticks is great for one-on-one conversations, Bible studies, sermons, classrooms, international settings, and even evangelism. So, where does your agape stick?
214	Jessica	Albers	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Editorial Lead	The Power of Story: Turning Ministry Communication into Connection	<p>Every ministry has stories worth telling—stories of God at work, lives being changed, and people living out their faith. But too often, those stories get buried in announcements, reports, or campaigns that don’t connect.</p> <p>Whether we’re communicating with donors, school parents, or our own congregations, clarity and connection make all the difference. Storytelling helps people see themselves in the mission God is carrying out through your ministry. When we communicate with authenticity and purpose, people don’t just hear information—they experience meaning.</p> <p>This isn’t about learning a new marketing trick. It’s about rediscovering storytelling as ministry—one that builds trust, deepens relationships, and inspires people to take part in what God is doing. You’ll leave with practical tools and simple frameworks to help your ministry share stories that move people from awareness to engagement—and from engagement to lasting connection.</p> <p>Takeaway: When we tell stories well, we’re not marketing—we’re discipling. We’re showing how God is at work and inviting others to join in.</p>

215	Kendall	Davis	Concordia University, St. Paul	St. Paul, MN	Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies	Debunking Myths About the Spirit, the Church, and the Mission of God in the Book of Acts	The book of Acts is a frequently and deeply misunderstood book. Many are struck by a church that looks so radically different from our own. The Spirit is powerfully active, the gospel is boldly proclaimed, and the church is on fire for mission (literally). And yet it's all too easy to take the wrong lessons from Acts. It's easy to assume, for example, that the Spirit is an agent of chaos and spontaneity opposed to human structures and planning. This was, after all, the same mistake the church in Corinth made. However, when we pay attention to how the whole book of Acts works, rather than isolated verses and passages, we see how the church works together with the Spirit. We see how God pursues his mission working through and with his church. We can even begin to see how the church of Acts need not seem so strange and alien from our own congregations today.
216	Deaconess Debra	Lennox	The Lutheran Diaconal Association	Valparaiso, IN	Director of Student Experience	Equipped to Serve: Using People’s Strengths in Congregational Ministry	<p>Every congregation is filled with gifted people—each uniquely equipped by God to serve in meaningful ways. Yet many congregations struggle to connect individuals’ natural strengths with the church’s mission. This session explores how understanding and intentionally using people’s strengths can transform ministry, deepen engagement, and foster spiritual growth.</p> <p>Grounded in biblical theology of vocation and the Body of Christ, participants will discover how strengths-based leadership and the CliftonStrengths model can help individuals identify their God-given talents and use them for service. Rather than simply filling positions, leaders will learn to call people into purpose—matching gifts with needs in life-giving ways. Through reflection, discussion, and practical tools, this session will equip participants to create congregational cultures that celebrate differences, encourage collaboration, and reduce burnout. Participants will leave with strategies to help their communities recognize, affirm, and steward the strengths already present among them—building ministries that are both effective and Spirit-led.</p>

217	Jessica	Albers	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Editorial Lead	Forming Leaders, Transforming Culture: Why Leadership Development Matters in Ministry	<p>Healthy ministry doesn’t just happen—it grows from strong, intentional leadership. Yet many churches today struggle with burnout, high turnover, and difficulty recruiting new leaders. At the heart of these challenges is a gap in leadership development and support.</p> <p>This research-based session explores how intentional leadership development can transform organizational culture, strengthen retention among church workers and members, and inspire new leaders to step forward. Participants will discover how forming leaders at every level—staff, volunteer, and lay—creates healthier teams, builds resilience, and sustains ministry over the long term.</p> <p>Blending insights from current research with real-world ministry experience, this session offers practical, actionable steps for cultivating leaders who embody both competence and character. Whether you’re mentoring one person or shaping an entire leadership pathway, you’ll leave equipped to invest in people in ways that transform culture, nurture growth, and create lasting impact for the Church.</p>
218	Trisha	Benton	Our Savior Lutheran	Norfolk	Communications Director	More Than Words: Storytelling that Transforms Church Communications	<p>Jesus, the master storyteller, didn’t lecture. His parables cut through confusion and touched hearts. It’s the same with church communications. God uses our own stories – shared with one another – to awaken faith, carry hope, or reignite passion. Stories have reach where facts alone fall short. Are you willing to move beyond information and share in transformation?</p>
219	Kimberly	Clark	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward, NE	Assistant Professor of Agriculture	Everything I Know about Scripture I Learned in the Tractor	<p>This presentation, Everything I Know about Scripture I Learned in the Tractor, explores the deep connection between agriculture, Scripture, and ministry. From the beginning of creation, God created agriculture at creation and told us to let mankind take care of His creature, the livestock, and the land (Genesis 1:24-26). God placed Adam in the garden as the first farmer, establishing agriculture as humanity’s earliest calling (Genesis 2:15). Today, rural communities remain vital yet often overlooked mission fields, where farmers and ranchers face unique challenges such as long hours, economic uncertainty, and isolation. Effective ministry in these settings requires understanding the rhythms of agricultural life and adapting outreach to meet people where they are—whether in fields, barns, or community gatherings. Through Biblical foundations, practical strategies, and real-life applications, this talk encourages leaders to view agriculture not only as a livelihood but also as a mission field ripe for harvest. Participants will leave with a renewed vision to cultivate both soil and souls, planting seeds of faith that can grow into lasting spiritual fruit in rural communities.</p>
220	Christine	Ekberg	Our Savior Lutheran	Norfolk, NE	Director of Ministry Development	Invitation NOT Expectation	<p>What if volunteering felt like a gift, not a duty? This session explores how shifting from a culture of expectation to one of invitation can transform church volunteerism. Discover how invitations ignite deeper engagement, joy, and purpose, among those serving in a variety of volunteer roles. Real examples and insights will be shared from a church where 30% of worship attendees actively volunteer.</p>

221	Mary	Scott	Orange Lutheran High School	Orange, CA	Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director	Timeless treasures or Dinosaurs walking to extinction - LCMS schools in the age of AI?	<p>We take pride in the educational opportunities provided by our Lutheran schools, and we should! From early childhood through graduate programs, Lutheran education is valued and respected around the world!</p> <p>Will the use of artificial intelligence help or hurt that in the future? What can our schools do using AI to maximize relational time with Lutheran faculty and staff? Will the declining churchwork population force us into efficiencies which AI can support? How long can we keep increasing tuition? If you, your Board members, parents, faculty or staff have wrestled with these questions, you are not alone!!!</p>
222	Jim	Sanft	Concordia Plan Services	St Louis, MO	Chief Executive Officer	Accountability: Why is it so Elusive?	<p>Accountability can seem simple and straightforward in concept, but yet is so difficult in practice. Why is something that is so widely desired and embraced, so hard to find? Join Jim Sanft, CEO of Concordia Plan Services and author of "Leading by Faith: Practical Insights for Christian Leaders" (CPH) for a deep dive into the concept of accountability and the keys to making it happen in your work.</p>
223	Jim	Sanft	Concordia Plan Services	St Louis, MO	Chief Executive Officer	Leading in Times of Crisis	<p>A Swedish proverb states that "Rough waters are truer tests of leadership. In calm water, every ship has a good captain." During his tenure as CEO of Concordia Plan Services, Jim Sanft has been at the helm of the ship during the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis and the global COVID pandemic. Author of "Leading by Faith: Practical Insights for Christian Leaders" (CPH), Jim will share some of the lessons he gleaned as a leader during times of crisis.</p>
224	Don	Hougard	Benediction Lutheran Church	Milwaukee, WI	pastor	Cross Cultural Ministry - Opportunities and Challenges	<p>Today there are many opportunites for Cross-Cultural ministry. Sadly many of the efforts in our church either fail or they have limited success. Could that be because by becoming LCMS Lutherans many of our ethnic leaders and members become outcasts in their own cultures? Can we build a ministry which is distinctively Lutheran, embracing of that culture, and in which our leaders are also leaders in that community? Benediction Lutheran Church has been engaging the ethnic communities around the congregation for 20 years. Today most of our members and worshippers are from our ethnic communities. We have done so with ethnic pastors and a social ministry director, who enables us to concentrate on our spiritual responsibilites. Our pastors and members have become leaders in their respective communities. There are many joys in such ministry. We celebrate our unity in Christ, despite how diverse our congregation is. At the same time there are many challenges. There are simple things, such as misunderstandings among cultures or coordinating events, so that a venue is never double booked. But the devil is also not pleased when people are coming to faith in Christ. He brings much suffering and tribulation, but we know that the victory is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.</p>

225	Jennifer	Edwards	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Palatine, Illinois	Director of Family Ministry	Wanting an Intern? Here's what you need to know!	Liz Rossow and Jennifer Edwards are a first time DCE Intern and a first time Supervisor. They have learned a lot over the last 6 months of working together and want to share what they have learned. In this session, they will talk about interns' needs, how the supervisor and congregation can respond, what the supervisor's experience is, and how that shapes the intern's experience. There will also be a short segment about how to navigate the finances of having an intern. This session is meant to help church workers who are considering applying for an intern or are anticipating an intern, to think and talk through what that means for their life and ministry.
226	Christine	Ekberg	Our Savior Lutheran	Norfolk, NE	Director of Ministry Development	Grit & Growth: Leading Youth Ministry with Purpose	<p>You Have to Start Somewhere: How Three Kids and a Prayer Grew Into 100+ in Youth Ministry;</p> <p>The youth group at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Neb., started with three kids and a lot of prayer. Today, it is flourishing with consistent weekly attendance in the 100s. It's not from cracking some secret code or developing flashy programs. Success comes from a commitment to youth ministry development, building relationships with both kids and adult mentors, and not giving up when the going gets tough. You can start right where you are, stay intentional and stop the comparison game. Pointing youth to Christi relies on authenticity and real connection, investing deeply and relying on the Holy Spirit to do the rest.</p>
227	Andy	Becker	LCMS	St. Louis, MO	Manager of Family Discipleship	Developing a Culture of Family Discipleship	Developing a Culture of Family Discipleship: How do you develop a culture of family discipleship in a congregation? Join us for this practical discussion on being intentional in conversations, rituals, meetings, planning, and programming to help a congregation shift from a church centered model of discipleship to a model that partners with the home for discipleship.
228	Andy	Becker	LCMS	St. Louis, MO	Manager of Family Discipleship	Engaging Parents	Parents today are stressed and stretched thin. Discover what parents are struggling with and how to support, encourage, and empower them to pass on faith to the next generation.
229	Kevin	Bueltmann	Shepherd's Canyon Retreat	Wickenburg, AZ	Executive Director	Living an Unoffendable, Non-Anxious Life	In a world full of outrage, conflict, and constant pressure, how can we live with peace, resilience, and grace? This breakout session explores what it means to live an unoffendable life—one that lets go of bitterness, defensiveness, and pride—and how to cultivate a non-anxious presence in the face of stress and uncertainty. Grounded in Scripture and practical insights, we'll unpack the habits and heart postures that help us respond with humility, compassion, and calm confidence in Christ.

230	David	Paul Zimmerman	Renton Prep Microsoft Showcase School	Renton, Washington	Executive Director	Empowering Teachers and Learners for the Age of AI	<p>There is no playbook for what is next. AI is not coming! It is already here, and it will reshape the way LCMS schools must work, compete, and create. Combining Lutheran theology with effective strategies to merge human and AI capabilities can superpower LCMS schools to fulfill their mission in ways not previously possible.</p> <p>This session is designed for participants who are interested and curious about moving from proof of concept to actual implementation of AI into the classroom. It offers a process to understand and evaluate AI, GAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence), AAI (Agentic Artificial Intelligence), and ASI (Artificial Super Intelligence) as it relates to education. It will give confidence to understand that Lutheran theology with components of traditional classical education and emerging AI tools will give their school the power to turn the volatility of AI into focused velocity that sets their school apart from any other school in their community. We can choose to lead, as Martin Luther did, or we can follow and be left behind.</p> <p>As AI increasingly influences how we access information, communicate, and make decisions, AI is rapidly becoming essential for navigating daily educational interactions between administrators, teachers, learners, families, and the community. This presentation presents the rationale and evaluative process for AI integration into any Lutheran school, while helping participants discover the risks and opportunities AI presents.</p>
231	Kevin	Bueltmann	Shepherd's Canyon Retreat	Wickenburg, AZ	Executive Director	Supporting Your Pastor & Church Workers: Caring for Those Who Care for Us	<p>Pastors and church workers face unique pressures—spiritual warfare, compassion fatigue, and constant expectations that can lead to exhaustion and burnout. In this session, you’ll learn practical ways to encourage, support, and strengthen those who serve in ministry. Come discover practical, life-giving ways to bless your pastors and staff—through prayer, encouragement, rest, and shared responsibility—so they can serve with joy and your congregation can flourish.</p>

232	David	Paul Zimmerman	Renton Prep Microsoft Showcase School	Renton, Washington	Executive Director	All You Need to Know About AI in Education	<p>Written by an LCMS teacher, the book "Teaching AI: Exploring New Frontiers for Learning" is globally recognized as the first published book on AI and education. Commissioned by a grant from General Motors to ISTE, it has been translated into five languages. It is used in all the Middle East Gulf States, Korea, China, Taiwan, Europe, and South America as a template for best practices to integrate AI into the classroom. The executive director of Renton Prep is the author, Dr. Michelle Zimmerman, who holds a PhD in neuroscience and education from the University of Washington.</p> <p>This session will dive into how educators can introduce artificial intelligence without overwhelming any participant. We will unpack AI basics: what it is, how it works, and why it matters. Drawing from AI experts in Australia, Japan, South Africa, Europe, and the US, we will show AI boosting STEM through projects, design thinking, and real-world ties—like using films, the opera, plays, music, art, dance to spark debate.</p> <p>We will show how AI augments teaching, not replaces it, focusing on prepping students for an AI-filled world and ways to build expertise.</p> <p>We will hit these frontiers, demo quick tools, and chat about an emerging new specialist all LCMS schools will need, an "AI-Faith Integration Specialist".</p>
233	Douglas	Krengel	Immanuel Lutheran Church and Preschool	Saint Joseph	Sole Pastor	Healthy and of a High Quality: The Formation and Support of Professional Relationships	<p>Rev. Dr. Bruce Hartung and Rev. Dr. Douglas Krengel will invite participants in this session to view biblical leadership through the lens of the Wholeness Wheel as developed by the Inter-Lutheran Committee for Ministerial Health and Wellness. Special focus will be given to Relational and Vocational Well-Being. This session will support the proposal that healthy congregations feature high quality professional relationships that in turn result in ministerial and missional goals being achieved to the glory of God and the good of one's neighbor. This proposal will be supported by new research from the Wellspring Center for Leadership and Wellness on the Senior Pastor-Associate Pastor Dyad as presented by Bruce. In addition, Doug will present some of the results from his Ph.D. research on the Pastor-Preschool Director Dyad. The presenters hope that hese two bodies of research will act as a springboard for a larger conversation in the church regarding role relationships. While the LCMS now has many professional church worker positions (e.g., Sole, Senior, Associate, and Assistant Pastors, DCE, DCO, Deaconess, Teacher, Principal, Preschool Director, DMM, among others), these roles have received little training on how to effectively connect with each other.</p>

234	Anne	Heine	Woodbury Lutheran Church	Woodbury, MN	Hospitality Lead, Valley Creek Campus (volunteer)	Be Our Guest: Leveraging Intentional Hospitality to Create a Welcoming Culture	<p>Is your church welcoming and inviting? Without realizing it, the church can often put up barriers that keep people, especially newcomers, from feeling comfortable and included.</p> <p>Hospitality is about making people feel welcome and putting people at ease, so that they can find Jesus and connect with His disciples.</p> <p>In this session, we'll share what has worked at Woodbury Lutheran to help us create a warm and welcoming environment, one that is memorable, impactful and effective.</p> <p>We'll look at lessons from the business world, where companies spend millions of dollars on customer service, retention and loyalty programs.</p> <p>We don't have all the answers, so we'll spend time brainstorming ideas together and sharing lessons learned.</p> <p>You'll spend time thinking about what hospitality looks like for your church and create a set of actionable steps you can put into place when you get home.</p> <p>Finally and most importantly, you'll be encouraged to look at your weekend experience through the eyes of a newcomer, a guest and a visitor, and transform how you think about your building, your services and the language you use, so that you can reach more people and make more disciples.</p>
235	Deb	Jurchen	Concordia University, Nebraska, & Nebraska District LCMS	Seward, NE	Director of University Institutes, Family Ministry Consultant	If Only These Parents Would...!!! Engaging Parents in Simple and Effective Ways	<p>We know we want more engagement of parents in our ministries, but the task can seem insurmountable. Where and how do we begin? Together we will explore simple and effective strategies to engage parents and whole families through intergenerational connection, creating a web of support for the next generation to grow to be lifelong disciples of Christ.</p>
236	Ryan	Peterson	Concordia University, St. Paul	St. Paul, MN	Senior Development and Church Relations Officer	Energy Management, not Time Management	<p>Many of us, especially as we serve in the church as lay leaders or professional church workers, are interested in time management. We use planners, smartphones with calendars, and Microsoft Outlook or Google to help us manage our time better. We work hard to "keep it all together." But have you ever considered energy management instead? This session will give you practical tools for proper energy management, thus helping you more fully live into the gifts God has given to you and the season into which He has called you.</p>

237	Steve	Zank	Concordia University Irvine, CWL	Tustin	Director, Center for Worship Leadership	Revolutionize Your Worship Planning: Meet Weave	<p>In a world where worship leaders have access to more songs than ever, how can we faithfully choose the ones that form our people in the faith? Weave is a new digital resource from the Center for Worship Leadership at Concordia University Irvine, designed to help worship planners evaluate and select songs through the lens of theology, discipleship, and context.</p> <p>This session introduces Weave—a searchable platform that combines theological insight, musical practicality, and pastoral wisdom. Attendees will explore how Weave organizes songs by scriptural connection, law/gospel analysis, thematic resonance, and liturgical function, offering leaders a way to curate music that not only fits the moment but shapes the heart.</p> <p>Through a live demo and real-world examples, participants will see how Weave serves as both a planning tool and a theological companion—helping worship leaders, pastors, and musicians discern song choices with confidence and care for the souls they serve.</p>
238	Steve	Zank	Concordia University Irvine, CWL	Tustin	Director, Center for Worship Leadership	Bethel, Elevation, Etcetera: Uncovering the Theology That Shapes Modern Songs	<p>This breakout maps the theological ecosystem behind movements like Bethel/Elevation (often tied to the New Apostolic Reformation) and shows how its distinctive flow into lyrics and worship culture. Using the #WakeUpOlive moment as a careful case study (with pastoral empathy), we’ll surface psychological and ethical concerns and then get practical: a song-selection framework that treats what we sing as formative and lasting. Participants leave equipped to care for congregations and worship teams with greater clarity, charity, and confidence.</p>
239	Kevin	Callahan	Callahan Studios Corporation	Scottsdale	President	Worship Space Design: Traditional/Contemporary Case Study Risen Savior Lutheran Chandler AZ	<p>This session will discuss Worship Space Design including the "body language" seating layout of the room, natural room acoustics (the shape of space for sound) and audio/video/lighting integration in both new and existing traditional and contemporary worship environments.</p> <p>It will be team taught by an architect and an AVL technology professional with combined 67 years of practice in church projects around the world ranging from 30 seats to 300,000 seats in church environments from Roman Catholic to Pentecostal and everything in between.</p> <p>Best Practices for Worship Ministry will be discussed with a Case Study of two separate projects at Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Chandler AZ; the New 800 seat "zero-level" North Building completed in 2021 and the Existing 350 seat Sanctuary renovation completed in 2024.</p>
240	Harlan	Anson	Our Redeemer Lutheran Church & School	Staplehurst, NE	Principal/Director of Youth & Outreach	Jumping out of the Silo: Creating a Culture of Connection	<p>Jumping out of the Silo: Creating a Culture of Connection</p> <p>When looking at the ministries of our churches and schools, so often the areas can become increasingly siloed. This presentation will explore how to raise our eyes up and out from a siloed ministry to collaboration and increased connection with teachers, families, congregations, and the community. Together, we will explore simple and effective strategies to engage families through connection, creating a web of support for our students, families, and households to grow to be lifelong disciples of Jesus.</p>

241	Pete	Jurchen	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward	Assistant Professor of Lutheran Education and Faith Formation	Everyone Wants Community—But How Do We Get It?	Everyone says they want community—but what does that actually look like in our churches today? In this session, Rev. Dr. Pete Jurchen will facilitate an exploration of recent research on community-building in Christian contexts and Scriptural principles and ask how Lutheran congregations can move beyond surface connection into something deeper and lasting. Bring your experiences, your questions, and your creativity—we'll workshop this together.
242	Pete	Jurchen	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward	Assistant Professor of Lutheran Education and Faith Formation	Why We Crave Story—And How the Gospel Delivers	What if the Christian faith isn't about abstract principles, but about participating in an epic narrative? Join Rev. Dr. Pete Jurchen to explore how story shapes our humanity, our faith, and our life together. This session will enhearten you to see your church community as part of God's ongoing story of redemption and equip you to take that joyful story back to your contexts.
243	Jacob	Youmans	Concordia University Texas	Austin	Director of the DCE Program, Professor of Ministry	13 Things I Want Future Church Workers to Hear on the 1st Day of Their 1st Ministry Class	After training future church workers for 17 years, I have developed a list of things I want future chuch workers to hear on the first day of class. Come join and add to the conversation! What do you wish you would have heard on your first day of ministry class?
244	Naomi	Stohlmann	Innovative Leadership Solutions LLC	Honolulu, HI	Leadership Coach, Mental Health Coach, Trainer	5 Effective Coping Strategies to Elevate Your Well-Being	More often than not, the struggle is real when it comes to coping with the stressors of life. Why? It's not for lack of trying, but rather your efforts are being poured into coping styles that are simply ineffective. Now is the time that you get a great return on your coping investment! In our time together, you will learn 5 effective coping strategies to leverage what's in your control and how to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus with what's outside of your control.
245	Randy	Donahue	Christ Church Lutheran	Phoenix, AZ	Pastor Emeritus	Living with Pain and Suffering	Pain and suffering are constants in our lives. It is in mine. Whether we have physical, emotional (including Anxiety), mental, relational, spiritual or intellectual pain and suffering, we all deal with it - some of us every single day. What pain and suffering do we live with? Is it temporary or lifelong? Is it a curse or a blessing? What does God say about pain and suffering? Does God help us in the midst of our pain and suffering? How are we to live?
246	Terrence	Chan	Multi Asian Inter-ethnic Network (MAIN); MAG at Concordia Seminary; Board for International Mission	San Francisco, CA	MAIN Founder and Team Leader; Pastor, Christ for All Nations Lutheran Church	10 Things to Know and Do to Improve Your Cultural Intelligence and 3 Mistakes to Avoid!	How can you improve your cultural intelligence? What mistakes must you avoid? Have you ever had an awkward moment talking with someone from another culture? Have you avoided a conversation with another person because you were afraid they didn't speak English? Do you ever wish you could discern differences among cultures? What are your best practices and tips for others? This will be a fun interactive session.
							In this sessionyou will learn and experience:
							<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to strengthen your Christian witness and spiritual conversation skills with others from a different culture. 2. Identify common mistakes and assumptions that create barriers among cultures. 3. Provide practical tips and best practices on communicating with other cultures.
247	Sue	Starks	Concordia University - St. Paul	St. Paul, MN	Professor of Education	Christ-Care to Serve	Individuals working in the field of education and in ministry positions are often pulled in numerous directions, facing many demands which can be challenging as we all want to give our best to our students, families, and colleagues. Join in a conversation on being intentional about embedding Christ into self-care to equip you to serve and be your best play-filled selves.

248	Sue	Starks	Concordia University - St. Paul	St. Paul, MN	Professor of Education	Created to PLAY!	Teachers of young children understand they need to play, they learn through play, they are created to play! This mindset doesn’t need to end – what if we continued to value choice and elements of play beyond the early years? God created us to play! – let’s talk about ways to make this happen in our classrooms and our lives.
249	Mark	Schreiber	Shepherd of the Coast	Palm Coast	Rev. Dr. Mark J. Schreiber	How to Get Rid of Your Guilt Forever	Forgiveness is an elusive, stealthy animal. Just when we think we have it in our grasp it slips away leaving only a melancholy valley of sorrow, self-regret and self-loathing. Amendment of life promises a new beginning but the strategy predictably fails to reach a plateau of peace and ease the conscience. How do I really know that all is right between me and God? How can I believe in the forgiveness of sins when I can't forgive myself? How can I rejoice in the joy of justification when my life is replete with backsliding behaviors? Answer: It takes a chisel and the cross of Christ to produce peace in a guilty conscience. Come and learn the art of chiseling.
250	Karl	Fay	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Palatine, IL	Senior Pastor	Band of Misfits: Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Staff Culture	How do you build a healthy culture and a high-achieving team out of an assortment of creative cats and odd ducks?
251	Joel	Helmer	Concordia University, NE	Seward NE	Professor of Geography	Go Into All the World: Tips for Organizing and Leading International Travel Experiences	The Prince of Peace staff team will share stories and principles of team building that have helped them gain mission momentum in the Chicago suburbs post-pandemic. In the Great Commission Jesus calls us to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” For some, venturing overseas, whether for travel or mission work is not overly daunting, but for many it is a formidable and complicated process, especially the first time. The Church therefore needs leaders willing to lead people abroad, and in doing so reducing fears of the unknown, opening eyes to the wonders of travel, and planting the seed for future mission work. This session focuses on practical strategies for developing, organizing, recruiting, and leading people “into all the world” through travel experiences. Dr. Joel and Holly Helmer serve at Concordia University, Nebraska and have led numerous trips, both within the United States and internationally to Cambodia, Peru, New Zealand, Europe, and most recently Vietnam. Leading groups of people of various ages, experiences, personalities, and abilities is a formidable task, with leaders carrying the weight of responsibility; smooth logistics, health and safety, dietary considerations, and selection of accommodations and destinations. Told through the lens of our experiences, our goal is to encourage and equip you with tools for planning and leading future trips at your school, congregation, organization, workplace, or with your own family.

252	John	Schmidt	A Christian Ministry in the National Parks	Denver, Colorado	Regional Pastor - Pacific Northwest-Alaaska	Work, Serve, & Worship in a National Park	Do you love our Lord, people, the outdoors, AND our national parks? Are you interested in outreach to other young adults in an a setting of natural wonder? Does a worker-witness, relational ministry with international students intrigue and challenge you? Are you retired with national parks on your bucket list? “A Christian Ministry in the National Parks” (ACMNP) “embodies and extends the ministry of Jesus Christ through worship, witness, and the development of Christian leaders.” Opportunities are available for three months to one year. Come and learn more. John Schmidt is the resident-regional minister for ACMNP in the Pacific Northwest & Alaska. Josh Schmidt (not related but a brother in Christ) served with this ministry program in three different parks. He now serves as pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Monterey, California.
253	John David	Mull	Shepherd of The Valley Lutheran Church	West Des Moines, IA	Senior Pastor	Out of Order - Of Course You are Exhausted	<p>In 2007, I was leading a thriving LCMS youth ministry with over 300 students. Pastors came through PLI to learn from our model. Outwardly successful, I was secretly depressed and nearing burnout. Working 60–70 hours a week was harming my marriage and fatherhood. So, like many burned-out DCEs, I went to seminary.</p> <p>After graduation, I planted a church in DFW for a decade. There, I was disciplined for the first time through 3DMovements and later joined the renewed PLI under Jock and Gail Ficken. These communities taught me how to be a better husband, father, and pastor.</p> <p>Through PLI and discipling LCMS pastors, I saw how common it is for church workers to have unhealthy priorities. God gives us a relational order: Him first, then spouse, children, disciples (“Persons of Peace”), church, community, and the world. When this is reversed—putting church before family or God—we become overwhelmed and unhealthy.</p> <p>Only Jesus marries the Church; we are part of the bride, not the groom. Our best gift to our churches is to model healthy, balanced lives rooted in intimacy with God and strong family relationships. Singleness is a gift for some, offering more time for mission—but most of us must steward marriage and family well.</p> <p>Discipleship and accountability restore health through Jesus' grace. This is the best gift we can give our churches.</p>
254	Kelly	Menke	Concordia Plans	St. Louis, Missouri	Health and Wellness Educator	Mental Health First Aid: Equipping Our Community for Compassionate Care	The LCMS community, like society at large, faces significant mental health challenges. The 2024 Concordia Health Plan Mental Health Survey indicates that 62% of our members experience the impact of mental health on their personal and professional lives at least once a month. However, we have an opportunity to distinguish ourselves through the support and care we extend to one another in times of need. This session will provide an overview of how Mental Health First Aid training can enhance participants’ confidence in supporting individuals experiencing mental health difficulties. We’ll also share how Concordia Plans has collaborated with the LCMS Office of National Missions Mercy to incorporate a perspective grounded in biblical principles for this training at no cost.

255	Kelly	Menke	Concordia Plans	St. Louis, Missouri	Health and Wellness Educator	Vitality 101: Your Gateway to Wellness	Want to live healthier, lower stress, and even earn cash rewards along the way? Vitality makes it simple. From tracking steps to preventive exams, spiritual growth, and financial wellness, your everyday choices can add up to points, perks, and lasting well-being. Join us for Vitality 101 and discover how easy it is to start building healthier habits—and get rewarded for it.
256	Greg	Schatz	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Norfolk, NE	Director of Adult Discipleship	It’s All Fun & Games and then Someone Gets Baptized	Through simple yet powerful interactions, a small group of ordinary people are building trust, forming relationships, and creating opportunities. Throw in snacks and a game of UNO, and you’re pointing people to Christ. Greg Schatz will share real-life stories of lives transformed through spiritual conversations and Game Nights. Attendees will leave equipped to implement similar approaches in their own contexts, seeing firsthand how authentic presence can spark life-changing encounters with Christ.
257	Greg	Schatz	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Norfolk, NE	Director of Adult Discipleship	The Art of Discipleship: Lessons from My Ceramics Professor	Before entering ministry, Greg Schatz spent his first career as a studio potter—guided by a professor who became a mentor, a friend, and, unexpectedly, a model of discipleship. Though an atheist, this mentor’s way of teaching and walking alongside others mirrored the ways of Jesus. In this session, Greg shares how that unlikely relationship shaped his vision for ministry and discipleship—and how the church today can channel the power of walking with people the way Jesus did.
258	Jeremiah	Majorins	Christ Lincoln Schools	Lincoln	Principal	Living our Mission: Building a culture that Loves Jesus, Loves Others, and Loves Learning	How can a school community truly live out its mission every day? This session will explore how Christ Lincoln Schools intentionally cultivates a culture that Loves Jesus, Loves Others, and Loves Learning. Principal Jeremiah Majorins and Kindergarten teacher Michelle Dale will share practical approaches to developing a positive staff culture, fostering student and family engagement, and aligning daily practices with faith-driven values. Through real examples and collaborative strategies, participants will gain insight into how shared vision and leadership in both church and school can create an environment where both students and staff thrive, academically, spiritually, and relationally.
259	Kip	Fox	Concordia University Irvine, Center for Worship Leadership, The Songwriter Initiative	Scottsdale	Director - The Songwriter Initiative, Center for Worship Leadership at Concordia University Irvine	The Songwriter Initiative - Concert Singalong	Come hear a powerful program of congregational songs written by the LCMS songwriter community called, "The Songwriter Initiative." TSI is an initiative of the Center for Worship Leadership at Concordia University Irvine. We'll highlight the songs that LCMS churches across the country have been singing around the country and songs that are brand new in 2026! Come sing with us and celebrate what God has done!
260	Stephanie	Neugebauer	LCMS	Paragould, AR	Manager, Resource Development for ONM Mercy	Sex Crazy: Our Confusing Sexual Ethic and the Way Out	Culture has gone sex crazy. In this session, we'll explore how that leads to confusion among teens and adults, married and singles... and how the Church provides a "best practices" for sexual ethics, which leads the way to what is good and beautiful in every way of life, even beyond sex.

261	Kip	Fox	Concordia University Irvine, Center for Worship Leadership, The Songwriter Initiative	Scottsdale	Director - The Songwriter Initiative, Center for Worship Leadership at Concordia University Irvine	Martin Luther's Theology of Music - A Case for Diverse Creativity in Worship	Throughout the history of the church, music has played an integral role in worship practice. At the turn of the millennium, an explosion of musical expression and accessibility has caused questions to arise about the appropriateness of certain styles, rhythms, and sounds in the worship practices of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations. Tracing the roots of aesthetic philosophy, from Plato to Augustine to John Calvin, I will show how Martin Luther's theology of music breaks from these three thinkers significantly and how this has important implications for the attitudes and approaches of church musicians in the LCMS.
262	Stephanie	Neugebauer	LCMS	Paragould, AR	Manager, Resource Development for ONM Mercy	Stay Married and LIKE Each Other!	- "I love you and I like you." Marriage is supposed to be fun! Join Pastor Kirk and Steph Neugebauer to learn about how spouses can be a good hang in marriage.(I know, very "informal" sounding...please of course make this how you'd like it to sound.) Basically, Kirk and I were hoping to make a point, especially to our fellow church workers, that oftentimes ministry takes a great toll on marriage. Even so, there is a way to cultivate marriage so that you can actually ENJOY your spouse and not just put up with them. Loving someone in marriage is sacrificial. Liking them is more akin to friendship. Similar to Lewis' Four Loves. It is possible to have a marriage with both, but it takes extra effort. It is worth the extra effort.
263	Liane	Henkell	Garuna Ministries	Chandler	Content Developer	From Me to Mission: Helping Kids See God's Bigger Picture	Are you struggling to find ways to motivate children and youth in your congregation to think beyond themselves and their own world? Have you wrestled with how to inspire them with a heart for “seeing the bigger picture” of what God is doing in the lives of others? Do you wonder how you’ll even find the time to research and plan meaningful, engaging activities to accomplish these goals? Garuna Ministries is here to help! Come learn about the FREE digital resources we offer to Lutheran schools and congregations to help educate, engage, and inspire the next generation towards developing a love for global missions. In this interactive session, you’ll learn more about our scripted, low-prep resources for VBS, Chapel/Sunday School, and Family Mission Night as we “Experience Cambodia” together!
264	Jeffrey	Mueller	Child Beyond International	Waikoloa, Hawaii	Chairperson	10,000 Ways to Grow as You Go!	10,000 minutes = a seven-day mission trip. God uses international mission trips to change lives in incredible ways! But you might be surprised whose lives are changed more. Mission trips change our perspective, restore our purpose, and grow our faith like no other life experience. Mission trips are one of the most effective faith-building discipleship tools a congregation has at its disposal. Come find out the 10,000 ways God will get your church members off their “blessed assurances” and begin to engage their faith in a real, growing and lasting way! There are so many powerful benefits for churches and Christ-followers on a mission adventure, but it’s all fueled by the Love of Christ for us, with us and through us as rescued and renewed children of God! It all starts there!

265	Barb	Pennekamp	Retired teacher; Glocal Missionary;	Lakeland, FL	Catalyst Team Disciple maker	I Love to Tell the Story - the power of God's Word in the mouths of Children	Helping students and athletes bring the power of God's Word home. These children can be our greatest missionaries as we help them share The Good News at home with their family and friends. We will explore some creative ways to help children share God's story and discuss building godly character into their lives. We will also look at the importance of empowering them with memorizing God's Word.
266	Kathleen	von Kampen	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward, Nebraska	Director of Marriage and Family Therapy, Family Life Education, Visiting Professor	I-Gen & Suicide: Myths, Tools, and Faith	Suicide is now the second-leading cause of death among teens and young adults ages 10–34 (CDC, 2023). Though difficult to discuss, it is vital for parents, pastors, and ministry leaders to be prepared to recognize and respond with wisdom and compassion. This session explores common myths about suicide, identifies early warning signs, and provides practical tools for having courageous, faith-centered conversations. Participants will learn how to offer support, hope, and the comfort of Christ to those who are struggling and will receive resources to strengthen their ministry response. Please note: this session includes direct discussion and role practice on how to ask someone about suicide.
267	Kathleen	von Kampen	Concordia University Nebraska	Seward, Nebraska	Director of Marriage and Family Therapy, Family Life Education, Visiting Professor	Hold Onto Your Kids: Keeping Children Close from Childhood through High School	In a culture where peers and social media often shape identity more than family or faith, how can parents and churches help children stay connected to what truly matters? Drawing on insights from Hold On to Your Kids by Gordon Neufeld and Gabor Maté, this session explores a Christian approach to building strong, enduring parent-child relationships. Participants will discover practical, faith-based strategies for fostering attachment, guiding emotional and spiritual development, and creating church communities that support families. This session offers tools for parents, pastors, and ministry leaders committed to helping children remain anchored in Christ and close to their families throughout the formative years.
268	Kristi	Marriott	Faith Lutheran Church and Preschool	Georgetown, TX	Superintendent of Preschool and Children's Ministries	Kids, Kids, Kids!	Jesus challenges His disciples to have the faith of a child. What does this look like for us in the church today? How do we foster faith in a child and how do we help the adults in our congregations to cherish the childlike faith Jesus talked about? Through conversation we will share best practices and new ideas for engaging children in the church this includes worship, Sunday school, preschool, day school, homeschooling, and more!
269	Martin	Danner	Bethany	Austin TX	Senior Pastor	Solution Focused and BRIEF Tools for Supporting People in Your Congregation	In this session on Solution Focused BRIEF Therapy, participants will gain practical, easy-to-use tools for offering meaningful support to others in times of need. You don't have to be a trained therapist to make a real difference—sometimes a few well-chosen questions, a hopeful perspective, and a short, intentional conversation can help someone take the next step forward. This approach equips leaders, volunteers, and caring community members to provide quick interventions that restore hope and direction while bridging the gap between what most of us can offer in daily interactions and the ongoing care a professional therapist provides. The goal is to empower everyday helpers to respond with confidence, compassion, and clarity when someone is struggling.

270	Susan	Klemstein	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Palatine, IL	Director of Outreach & Financial Controller	Sharing Peace: How to Be a Source of Care and Connection for Leaders in your Community	<p>Building on our existing community connections, our church desired to be a welcoming space where community leaders could be cared for, additional connections could be made, and collaboration improved to better serve all people in our community.</p> <p>What started with a simple invitation to share "What keeps you up at night?" has grown into quarterly gatherings of diverse leaders for the last 3 years. Learn who we invited, sample topics we've covered, hospitality ideas, and how you might be able to create this collaboration in your community.</p>
271	Scott	Mauser	Lutheran Church and School of Messiah/Alpha Omega Institute	Grand Junction, CO - Mountain	Teacher/Administrator	So the Next Generation May Know - Egaging Younger Generations in the Church, School and Home	<p>Why are so many in the younger generations leaving the church? What are some of the primary causes and can they be addressed? Whether you are a parent, teacher, pastor or a friend, we are seeing so many we love abandoning Christianity. It is heart breaking as well as disconcerting because eternal consequences are at stake. Is it really as complicated as we think, and is it primarily answers to questions or relationships, or something else? How much influence can we have anyway and can we increase that influence in such an overwhelmingly invasive technological culture? Join me as we go through the problem and some insights from many who call this issue home. We can be the influencer and support that God has called us to be in the lives of the upcoming generations in the church. I hope you will find in our time together that it is really not that complicated, but it does require intention and some tools.</p>
272	Erica	Allen	Horizons Stewardship	Richmond	Senior Ministry Strategist	Navigating Giving Trends with an Integrated Funding Strategy	<p>Church giving is changing—and fast. From shifting attendance patterns to the rapid rise of digital and recurring giving, today’s generosity landscape looks vastly different than it did even five years ago. The churches thriving in this new environment aren’t just adapting; they’re aligning.</p> <p>In this session, Erica Allen of Horizons Stewardship will explore the latest giving trends shaping the Church today and reveal how an Integrated Funding Strategy can help you engage givers, grow generosity, and sustain ministry impact year-round.</p> <p>You’ll discover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How demographic and cultural shifts are reshaping generosity—and what that means for your church.- Why relying on a single funding stream (like Sunday offerings or capital campaigns) no longer works.- How to build a holistic funding approach that connectsannual, capital, and legacy givingunder one shared vision.- Practical next steps to move your congregation from fragmented fundraising to a unified generosity plan that fuels ministry and deepens discipleship. <p>This presentation equips church leaders to move beyond short-term budget goals toward a sustainable model of funding ministry—one that inspires people to give not just to a need, but to a vision.</p>

273	Matt	Popovits	St. Mark Houston	Houston, TX	Sr. Pastor	Make It Simple: The Secret to Compelling Sermons, Talks, and Staff Meetings	<p>Whether you’re preaching a sermon, leading a meeting, or giving a talk, the greatest enemy of communication isn’t distraction, it’s clutter. We often mistake complexity for depth and fill our messages and meetings with too much content, too little clarity, and not nearly enough purpose.</p> <p>The result? Listeners tune out, staff members leave confused, and even faithful congregants walk away wondering, “What was that about?!”</p> <p>In this session, we’ll explore the secret to compelling communication in any setting: simplicity with intention. You’ll leave with practical tools to teach, preach, and lead with greater focus, warmth, and effectiveness, without adding more work to your plate.</p>
274	Scott	Mauser	Lutheran Church and School of Messiah/Alpha Omega Institute	Grand Junction, CO - Mountain	Teacher/Administrator	Love Your God with All Your Mind - A Reasonable Perspective.	<p>We hear about Loving the Lord with all our heart... but how about loving him with all our mind. Have we focused so much on emotion at the expense of reason that we find it hard to give a persuasive answer to those who ask for the reason for the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15). How good are we at "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1). The most fundamental questions of our faith and the truth of why Christianity matches reality are not determined by emotion (although great hope and encouragement and joy come from these realities) but by the propositional Truth and Historic realities of the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). Do we need some course corrections as we engage an unbelieving world, and is the minimal effect of the great numbers who claim to be Christian because we don't preach the Gospel, but a weak emotivism? Come and explore how the church has come to this position and if for the sake of reaching the world we need to reevaluate a balance needed in the Love for our Lord... and our neighbor. Learn how all vocation can be directed for the glory of God and our neighbor when we also love God with all of our mind.</p>

275	Nate	Guelzow	Multipli	Hendersonville, TN	Multipli Dir. of Ecosystem	Doing the #1 Thing Asked of Us by Non-Christians	<p>"According to our data, the number one thing people look for in a conversation with a Christian is that they listen without judgment."</p> <p>-“Engaging the Spiritually Open” p.25 Barna 2025</p> <p>Join Gail Ficken (President and Founder of Multipli) and Nate Guelzow (Dir. of Ecosystems for Multipli) as they share what they've learned over the last 5 years of training over 500 Christians in evangelsitic discipleship.</p> <p>- You'll hear real stories of how listening to non-Christians in order to learn their stories is so powerful.</p> <p>- You'll hear how to create spiritual space and enage in spiritual conversations.</p> <p>- You'll get 5 Key Principles for Creating Spiritual Space and...</p> <p>- plenty other stories that will give you hope, build your confidece and spark your imagination for sharing Jesus.</p> <p>Jesus listened and asked questions.</p> <p>Jesus had a posture of curiosity and compassion.</p> <p>Jesus made space for people to discover him.</p> <p>We can too.</p>
276	Rhoda	Schuler	Concordia University	Saint Paul	Professor Emerita	Searching the Scriptures, Discovering Jesus: Small group Scripture reflection tools for both seekers and disciples	<p>This interactive session begins with a presentation on the four stages of an adult catechumenal process and the central role of small group reflection on Scripture (especially the four Gospels) in that process. See below for description of the stages.</p> <p>Most of the session is experiential learning for participants, who will be divided into small groups and put into practice three distinctive Scripture reflection tools: 1) the aural or African method; 2) Luther’s four-strand garland; 3) the visualization method. Participants will reflect on their small group experiences with whole group; discussion will focus on the three Scripture reflection tools in relation to the stages of the adult catechumenate and on assessing each one’s potential use in participants’ ministry contexts.</p> <p>Stages of the catechumenate: 1) period of inquiry is an opened ended time for seekers to explore Christianity, be introduced to Christ, and for the group facilitator to foster community; 2) period of catechesis is for those ready for instruction in the faith of the Church and for formation as disciples through worship, prayer, and in daily life; 3) period of enlightenment, which immediately precedes baptism or reception into membership, is a time for intense instruction and for purification of disordered desires that impeded a life of faith; and 4) period of mystagogy follows the ritual of incorporation into the Body of Christ, emphasizing the ongoing dying to self and rising to Christ in daily life.</p>

277	Eden Keefe LWML	President	Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML)	Overland Park, KS	President	Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) and Women’s Ministry—Competition or Collaboration?	<p>Title: Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) and Women’s Ministry—Competition or Collaboration?</p> <p>What does the Lutheran Women in Mission group or women’s ministry look like in your congregation? Join this interactive session to explore ways that Lutheran Women in Mission and Women’s Ministry can work together to invigorate women’s ministry in your congregation.</p>
278	Karen	Tripp	Cancer Compainons	St Louis, MO	Executive Director	It’s True. Healthcare Systems are Increasingly Promoting Mindfulness and Demoting Faith: Learn 4 Ways to Keep Christ Center Stage from Diagnosis and Beyond.	<p>The healthcare community typically views our faith in Christ as a weakness even though we know it is the only true source of strength. In the past five years, mindfulness cancer studies have outpaced those on religion by 43% and faith by 105%. Learn 4 ways you can renewed your Christ-filled strength through any medical ordeal for you, your loved one or your church.</p>
279	Rick	Marrs	Concordia Seminary St. Louis	St. Louis, Missouri	Senior Professor	Meditation: Can it be Christian? And even Lutheran?	<p>Meditation and Mindfulness have become very common prescriptions for helping people with anxiety, and even widely taught to elementary school students. Many studies show very positive results for those who practice Mindfulness. But many Christians avoid practicing modern meditation because of its Buddhist foundations. This workshop will explore the history of Christians practicing meditation before "Transcendental Meditation" had ever come to the USA, and how even Luther taught people to "meditatio" on the Catechism and God's Word. Attendees will have the opportunity to practice a meditation focused on God's Word, especially the Lord's Prayer.</p>
280	Adam	Burke	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	PRESCOTT VALLEY	Pastor	Suffering and Trauma: a conversation between spiritual and mental health.	<p>What is the relationship between the biblicial understanding of suffering and the more modern notions of trauma in the mental health field?</p> <p>Biblically we are challenged with the notion that suffering produces endurance (Rom 5:3) and that to suffer for following Jesus is blessed. We have many biblical examples of God making use of suffering (Job, Joseph) to bring about his good will.</p> <p>However, bad things happening to a person in the modern world is understood to often cause trauma, categorically understood as bad and something to be avoided. Trauma is never lauded to be beneficial for one's mental health.</p> <p>This is a conversation between a pastor and a mental health counselor. We seek to understand each other's perspectives from each lens of experience and guiding principles.</p> <p>Suffering is inevitable. We all experience trauma. How can we understand it and be of service to our neighbor when it befalls them?</p>

281

Andrew

Locke

We Teach Truth Lutheran Education

West Allis, WI

Advancement

What Your Church and School Donors Want to See BEFORE You Start Building

[Submitted by: Matt Bilitz & Andy Locke, Development Executive School, in partnership with Triun3 and Catalyst Construction under We Teach Truth Schools][Submitted by: Matt Bilitz & Andy Locke, Development Executive School, in partnership with Triun3 and Catalyst Construction under We Teach Truth Schools Church and school leaders often leap into construction before cultivating donor confidence. This session equips development and ministry teams to understand the key signals donors look for before committing, spiritual alignment, clear vision, financial transparency, and mission-driven storytelling. Drawing on real-world experience from Catalyst Construction, We Teach Truth Schools and Triun3, participants will learn practical frameworks to prepare hearts, plans, and partners before breaking ground, building trust that not only builds buildings, but help ministries thrive long after building.)

[Church and school leaders often leap into construction before cultivating donor confidence. This session equips development and ministry teams to understand the key signals donors look for before committing, spiritual alignment, clear vision, financial transparency, and mission-driven storytelling. Drawing on real-world experience from Catalyst Construction, We Teach Truth Schools and Triun3, participants will learn practical frameworks to prepare hearts, plans, and partners before breaking ground, building trust that not only builds buildings, but help ministries thrive long after building.](Submitted by: Matt Bilitz & Andy Locke, Development Executive School, in partnership with Triun3 and Catalyst Construction under We Teach Truth Schools Church and school leaders often leap into construction before cultivating donor confidence. This session equips development and ministry teams to understand the key signals donors look

Introducing a 12 month process for raising up, equipping, and training lay people for leadership in the workplace, community, home, and congregation. This customizable process will help participants more fruitfully live out their various vocations. If as a leader you have been wondering about a manageable way to lift up next generation leaders, this pathway will get you there.

Outcomes:

- Annually, 8-12 people between 25-40 years of age will be equipped and prepared to take on leadership responsibilities.
- Stronger relationships will be built with Jesus, a congregational leader, and the cohort of participants.

Activities:

- Your group of 8-12 participants will meet in a group setting every other month.
- Participants will meet in the alternating months in pairs.
- Participants will grow in leadership capacity by reading, discussion and personal reflection.

Deliverables:

- 48 weekly emails on Christian leadership issues.
- Reading plans for Scripture
- Agendas for all meetings

282

David

Davis

Michigan District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

ANN ARBOR, Michigan

President, Michigan District LCMS Leadership Pathway

283	Zach	McIntosh	Zion Lutheran Church	Georgetown, TX	Pastor	Leading in an Outraged and Partisan Age	<p>We live in an age where outrage has become the dominant language of public life and partisanship shapes even the most ordinary conversations. Many pastors and ministry leaders find themselves walking a tightrope—wanting to speak the truth of God clearly and courageously, yet longing to do so in a way that reflects the compassion and humility of Christ.</p> <p>This session takes a fresh look at biblical examples of people who were both hated and loved—rejected for their faithfulness yet respected for their character. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers but honored by Pharaoh. Daniel was condemned to the lions’ den but cherished by King Darius. These leaders, along with others, stood firm in truth while extending grace to those around them, modeling a kind of faithfulness desperately needed in our own polarized age.</p> <p>Through Scripture, story, and practical reflection, this session will explore how leaders can cultivate credibility and calm in anxious systems, resist reactive leadership, and embody both courage and kindness in divided environments. Participants will leave with renewed confidence to lead with truth and love—even when partisanship and division are raging.</p>
284	Michelle	Reuter	Independent	Thompsons Station, TN	Advocate	Preventing Human Trafficking	<p>This session will cover what is human trafficking, how it happens, and how to prevent it. New in this session will be the rampant attacks on our youth via the epidemic of sextortion.</p>
285	Jonathan	Ruybalid	Church & Ministry Law	Phoenix, AZ	Attorney	The Law and the Church	<p>Discuss and provide practical guidance to legal compliance for churches and associated ministries. Will look at current legal issues and steps to take to address and maintain compliance.</p>
286	Vince	Parks	Salem Lutheran Church	Tomball, TX	Executive Pastor	Leadership & Church Size Dynamics	<p>A common cause for pastoral leadership mistakes is blindness to the significance of church size. Size has an enormous impact on how a church functions. Every church has a “size culture” that profoundly affects how decisions are made, how relationships flow, how effectiveness is evaluated, and what pastors, staff, and lay leaders actually do. We’ll consider the 5 leadership systems in every church (Clergy Leadership Roles, Staff Team Design, Governance, Acculturation, Strategy) and the roadblocks which hinder ministry growth through Leadership Development – Professionalization – Alignment – Decentralization.</p>
287	Vince	Parks	Salem Lutheran Church	Tomball, TX	Executive Pastor	Staffing Your Plan	<p>Many lead pastors consider staffing their most difficult responsibility. This session will focus on the most important elements of recruiting, training, and retaining a staff team to expand ministry, implement the plan, and advance the Kingdom. We will look at staffing progression as a church grows, basic staffing mistakes, and apply the example of Jesus. Vince will share 8 major staffing concepts you need to know, along with a few of his 20+ years of staffing mistakes! (Leadership and Church Size Dynamics is not a prerequisite but may be helpful prior to this session.)</p>

288	Crystal	Niemann	Peace Lutheran Church	Brookings SD	Congregation Member, former Church Admin Assist.	When Words Fall Short: supporting each other through grief	<p>At some point, we’ve all stood beside someone who is grieving, wanting to offer comfort—but unsure of what to say. In those tender moments, even with the best intentions, our words can sometimes miss the mark and cause unintended hurt.</p> <p>In this heartfelt and faith-filled session, Crystal and Stacy will share from their own experiences of grief and walking with each other through their own seasons of loss. They’ll gently highlight some of the common, well-meaning phrases Christians often say that may do more harm than good—and why. More importantly, they’ll offer Christ-centered, compassionate alternatives that truly minister to the heart of someone who is grieving.</p> <p>Together, we’ll explore how to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those who are hurting—offering presence over platitudes, and support rooted in love, empathy, and grace. Bullying or cyberbullying are words that can get tossed around, misused and completely misunderstood. In our session, we will explore the challenges of bullying and cyberbullying as well as work through some hands-on activities to empower all to stand up for yourself or others who may be the targets of bullying. Come join us as we explore Scripture, tackle an issue that impacts mental health, grow our skills and voices to be used by the King, and most importantly be reminded of the value that YOU have.</p>
289	Sarah	Schultz	KNOWN Women's Conference & Dignity Revolution	Appleton, WI	Speaker & Trainer	Untangling the Bullying Mess	
290	Sarah	Schultz	KNOWN Women's Conference & Dignity Revolution	Appleton, WI	Speaker & Trainer	In His Presence, We Belong: Embracing Singles in the Family of God	<p>Singleness is often viewed as a season of waiting or something to be overcome, but what if we began to see it as a beautiful and integral part of God’s design for His people? In this empowering talk, we will explore the emotional, spiritual, and practical struggles that singles face, while offering biblical truths that affirm their worth, purpose, and belonging in the body of Christ.</p> <p>"In His Presence, We Belong" invites the church to reimagine its role in welcoming singles—not just as individuals waiting for their "other half," but as fully whole members of the family of God. We will dive into how singles can experience deep connection, purpose, and community right now, as they live in the presence of God and in fellowship with one another.</p> <p>Join us for a powerful conversation that challenges the church to create spaces where singles are not merely accepted but celebrated—where every person, whether single or married, can find their place in the heart of the church.</p>
291	Greg	Finke	Dwelling 1:14	St. Paul, MN	Executive Director	Family Discipleship: From Church-Goer to Jesus-Follower, How to Disciple Your Children	How can we disciple children so they become life-long followers of Jesus? Going to church is important, but going on daily adventures with Jesus is what convices children to become followers of Jesus for a lifetime. Come hear Greg Finke layout a simple, biblical discipleship process churches can champion and families can weave into their busy, beautiful, everyday lives.

292	Jennifer	Tanner	Florida-Georgia District LCMS	Orlando, Fl	Executive Director for School and Youth Ministry	Building a Positive Ministry Culture One Good Thing at a Time	A healthy ministry culture starts with a positive perspective. Blending Scripture with current research, this session explores how the simple practice of identifying "One Good Thing" each day can transform attitudes, strengthen teams, and renew joy in ministry. Participants will discover the powerful link between gratitude, encouragement, resilience, and unity. Whether you serve in a school, congregation, or ministry team, you'll leave with practical ways to cultivate a positive, Christ-centered culture and inspire others to do the same.
293	Amy	Waltz	Our Savior Lutheran Academy	Nashville	Early Childhood Director	Beyond Childcare: Transforming Early Learning into Missional Ministry	<p>Early childhood programs are more than classrooms — they are mission fields filled with opportunities to share the love of Jesus with children, families, staff, and the broader community. In this interactive session, we'll explore how early childhood centers can serve as vibrant ministry extensions of the local church, intentionally building relationships that lead to lasting faith connections.</p> <p>We'll discuss practical ways to bridge your school and congregation, engage families who may not have a church home, and empower staff to see themselves as ministry leaders. Participants will hear real examples of outreach, learn communication strategies that foster trust and belonging, and leave equipped with tools to help their early learning program shine as a light in the community.</p>
294	Tosca	Grimm	Concordia University St. Paul / Amazing Grace Christian Preschool	Pensacola, Florida	Program Chair MAED DI / Preschool Director	Face-to-Face with Families	As Christian educators we become specialists in understanding child development, perfecting student ministry environments, and positively guiding student behavior. There is an additional huge dynamic in our ministry goals: reaching the whole family! This session will help us better understand family dynamics, build recognition and compassionate responsiveness, and consider communication tools that promote powerful God-honoring outreach to families.
295	Stephanie	Grandestaff	Springfield Lutheran High School	Springfield, Missouri	Executive Director	Recognizing God at Work: Walking by Faith and Giving God the Glory in Ministry	Leadership in ministry is a journey of faith, filled with both challenges and blessings. In this session, leaders will pause, reflect, and recognize God's work in their ministries—both in big, visible victories and the small, everyday moments. Through scripture, real-life stories, and guided reflection, participants will leave encouraged and refreshed, with a renewed sense of God's calling and a desire to give Him glory, testify to His goodness, and watch for what He will do next.
296	Brooke	Pernice	Lutheran Braille Workers	Louisville, KY.	Director Of Outreach	Searching, Seeking, and Speaking Salvation to the Blind: Evangelizing and Equipping an Unreached People Group	We don't have to look beyond our city limits to find a mission field. The blind in America comprise a subculture that has become increasingly resistant to Gospel proclamation, and stagnant in many of its Christian manifestations. Dr. Brooke Pernice will discuss how to find, engage, evangelize, and disciple this American subculture. This session will explore the countless opportunities to minister to and with the blind in and outside of the local church.
297	Cori	Woltmann	Christ Lutheran Church- Norfolk, NE	Norfolk, NE	Director of Christian Education	Building a Bridge Between Childcare, School & Church Ministries	Your campus-wide ministries can be joined in mission together! We will walk through simple processes and share ideas of how you can connect your school, childcare and church families and ministries across the campus.

298	Brooke	Pernice	Lutheran Braille Workers	Louisville, KY.	Director Of Outreach	The Safe, Sanctified Sanctuary: Beyond Accessibility Concerns; Into Discipleship Practices	When the idea of people with disabilities joining a local church comes up, it's easy to get overwhelmed with worry about the accessibility of the Bible, the building, or the bulletin. For the blind or visually impaired, solutions for safety and access to resources are actually easier than most people think. In this hands-on session, Dr. Brooke Pernice will explain and demonstrate practical ways any church leader or layperson can ensure the safety, belonging, and full participation of visually impaired visitors and church members. This isn't another session about how the church needs to take care of another people group, it's about encouraging and challenging the blind and others with disabilities to fulfill Jesus' charge to love and serve their neighbors as equals with their sighted brothers and sisters in Christ.
299	Sarah	Britton	Blood Cancer United	Newbury Park	Campaign Development Manager	Revitalizing Fundraising: Inspiring Generosity in Faith and Education Communities	Rethinking fundraising in today's church and school communities requires moving beyond traditional methods and embracing innovative, values-driven approaches that inspire both engagement and generosity. By cultivating authentic relationships, communicating clear impact, and fostering a shared sense of purpose, organizations can transform fundraising from a transactional necessity into a meaningful, community-building experience. This session will explore fresh strategies and practical insights to help faith-based and educational groups energize their fundraising efforts, meet financial goals, and strengthen the bonds that make their missions thrive.
300	Zach	A. Zehnder	Red Letter Living / King of Kings	Omaha, NE	Pastor, Author, Speaker, Podcast Host	Hope and Hurdles: What 1,054 Lutheran Leaders Reveal About the LCMS Future	<p>The 5 Biggest Obstacles and Opportunities for the Future of the LCMS.</p> <p>What if we could see the LCMS through the eyes of its own leaders? In this data-driven yet hope-filled presentation, we'll explore insights gathered from 1,054 pastors, teachers, and lay leaders across the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This research identifies the five biggest obstacles and opportunities shaping the LCMS today—from pastoral formation and institutional trust to evangelism, leadership development, and generational change. Through honest analysis and redemptive storytelling, this session will help leaders understand where the church is hurting, where it's healing, and where God might be calling us next. Participants will leave with practical takeaways, a renewed sense of unity, and actionable ideas for walking together—faithfully and courageously—into the future.</p>
301	Chelsea	Chapin	Trinity Lutheran Church	Arcadia, Michigan	Community Coordinator	"We're running an experiment!" Understanding How Language Opens Doors to Innovation"	<p>Church leaders often experience some kind of resistance when introducing new ideas or making adjustments. Often, the barrier isn't the idea itself, but how the idea is framed. In this session we will explore how our church staff, coming off a 9-month pastoral vacancy, used a simple shift in language to help eliminate fear of the new and create greater buy-in within our congregation.</p> <p>The language of experimentation helped us lower perceived risk, invite curiosity over criticism, and create opportunity for learning and growth. This session will highlight some practical communication strategies with our real-life examples of how "running an experiment" can foster openness and healthy innovation within the church.</p>

302	Jean	Rajaonasy	House of Hope Madagascar	Ihosy	Founding Director	Raising and Forming Orphans to Christ-Centered Leaders: Insights from a Ministry in Rural Madagascar.	<div>Session Description: This session will explore the practical realities, joys, and challenges of ministry in Madagascar, offering insights for leaders and practitioners seeking to make a sustainable impact in under-resourced communities. Participants will gain actionable strategies for team building, child care, and holistic community development, drawn from real-world experience in one of the world’s poorest nations.</div> <div>Session Outline: 1. Ministry in Madagascar: Challenges and Joys of Rural Ministry 1. Creating a Team Culture 1. Starting an Orphanage 1. House of Hope Madagascar: Vision and Impact</div>
303	Zach	A. Zehnder	Red Letter Living / King of Kings	Omaha, NE	Pastor, Author, Speaker, Podcast Host	From Pulpit to Platform: 7 Keys to Becoming a Faithful Lutheran Influencer	<div>How to Share the Gospel Online Without Losing Your Lutheran Soul?</div> <div>What does it look like to be a faithful Lutheran voice in the digital space? In a world driven by clicks, controversy, and quick takes, how can content creators and pastors leverage media without losing their theological integrity? Drawing from experience in creating books, small group series, youversion bible reading plans, podcasting, and more, this session unpacks key principles for becoming a Lutheran content creator or influencer that honors Christ online. Whether you’re a pastor, church communicator, or just curious about starting, you’ll leave with practical tools for finding your message, shaping your tone, using digital platforms strategically, and avoiding the pitfalls of self-promotion.</div>

304	Joel	Held	Edgewater Lutheran Church	Eastvale, CA	Pastor	The Art of Worship Leading	<p>Do you long to see your congregation more fully engaged in worship? Do you want to hear stronger singing, see joyful clapping, and experience a connected community of worshippers?</p> <p>Worship is not meant to be a “warm-up act” for the sermon. It is an essential part of the Divine Service—a time when God speaks to His people and His people respond in praise.</p> <p>In this session, we’ll explore what it takes to be an effective worship leader in today’s Lutheran church context. Together we’ll discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How to foster participation instead of performance.- How to plan liturgically faithful and engaging worship.- How to lead with confidence and humility, pointing people to Christ—not ourselves.- How to create a flow that draws the congregation into active, joyful worship. <p>Whether you are new to worship leading or have been leading for years, this workshop will give you practical tools and theological grounding to help make worship a vibrant, integral part of the service.</p>
305	Tom	Hilpert	Life Together Churches	Lebanon, TN	Pastor/Director	It is Well With My Soul: Leaning on Jesus in suffering	<p>In the modern world, we are often tempted to see suffering as an aberration, something abnormal. In fact, we are tempted to see suffering is something that is universally bad. However, such attitudes lose sight of the fact that, in the New Testament, suffering is integral to faith in Jesus Christ. In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul writes:</p> <p>15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” 16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering (Romans 8:15-17)</p> <p>What is it mean to suffer with Christ? How can we learn to cope with intense suffering? Where is God, and why would he allow this?</p> <p>Pastor Tom Hilpert is no stranger to physical suffering. During this session we will explore together the challenges and glories of suffering. We are unlikely to arrive at answers that are easy, or glib.</p>
306	Dinku	Bato	Lutheran Heritage Foundation	Macomb, MI	Regional Director for Africa	Engaging Ethnic Ministries as a Vital Expression of Congregational Mission	<p>As the diversity of congregational communities continues to grow, congregations are presented with both opportunities and responsibilities to engage ethnic ministries in meaningful ways. This workshop offers practical strategies for pastors and church leaders to support, collaborate with, and integrate ethnic ministries into the life and mission of their congregation.</p>

307	Tom	Hilpert	Life Together Churches	Lebanon, TN	Pastor/Director	LUTHERAN HOUSE CHURCHES	<p>In 1995 Pastor Tom Hilpert and his wife Kari started a house church in their home. Seven years later, their congregation was made up of 140 people who met in seven different connected house churches all around the Twin Cities Minnesota. Fully half of those people had not been Christians before finding the Lord in that house church context. In addition, those who had been believers moved deeper into discipleship. That small church sent two missionary families, and two additional men from the church went on to become pastors.</p> <p>Although it is not widely known, there is a long and venerable tradition of house church ministry within Lutheranism. In addition, for the very first Christians, “church” meant a gathering in a home as they focused on the Word, fellowship, the Lord’s supper, worship and prayer. While Christians are not obligated to imitate the early church, or other times in church history, in certain contexts house church might be the Lord’s choice for his people. This is a model that has a proven record of effectiveness for evangelism and discipleship.</p>
308	Joel	Held	Edgewater Lutheran Church	Eastvale, CA	Pastor	The Pastor and the Worship Team: Leading in Harmony	<p>In many congregations, the pastor and the worship team operate on parallel tracks both striving to serve the Lord faithfully, but not always moving in sync. When pastors, worship leaders, and musicians learn to collaborate intentionally, the result is a more unified and powerful worship experience that points the congregation to Christ.</p> <p>This session will explore biblically grounded, Lutheran-informed, and practically tested ways for pastors and worship leaders to build healthy partnerships. We’ll look at how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cultivate mutual trust and shared vision between pastors and worship leaders.- Coordinate sermon themes, liturgical structure, and music planning for a cohesive service.- Balance musical creativity with theological depth and confessional clarity.- Address common tensions and misunderstandings before they become roadblocks.- Equip both roles to complement one another rather than compete for attention. <p>The session will conclude with a live panel discussion featuring pastors and worship leaders who will share real-world experiences and take audience questions.</p>

309	Julie	Mann	LCMS - Iowa District West	Fort Dodge IA	Director - IOWAY	Outreach, yes! Now what?	Most of our congregations want to be involved in outreach, but often get stuck in that spot. What can we do? Where should we do it? Our neighbors (may) have changed over the last several decades, and we don't know how to connect. What are some options that are going to be needed in almost every community, circuit, congregational neighborhood that may just work in your church. This session will share several ideas that cover different options using gifts and talents, for ages middle school and up. Presentation will give options of things to be done using your church building as a resource spot, as well as being out in the community. Ideas are based on small teams and short time commitments that can grow, build, and flourish. I would also like to hear ideas from attendees as to what is working well in their locations.
310	Aaron	Gehrke	Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church + Glocal Mission	Houghton, MI	Senior Pastor	I Don't Want to Run Anymore Programs	<p>Church workers and volunteers pour countless hours, resources, and energy into keeping programs going. Yet behind the scenes, many of us quietly admit, “We don’t want to run any more programs.” What we really long for is more time with people — the relational, life-on-life ministry we imagined when we first felt called.</p> <p>But if we cut the programs... would there even be a church left?</p> <p>In this session, we’ll talk honestly about evaluating our programs in light of the Great Commission discovering which ones actually make a difference, and how we can reclaim the heart of ministry: walking with people on their journey with Jesus.</p> <p>Join me for this session. Because I don’t want to run any more programs either.</p>
311	Seth	Kunze	The Dwelling	New Caney, Texas	Pastor/Church Planter	Forgotten Leadership Fundamentals	If you're like me, you know how easy it is to forget the fundamentals of biblical ministry. This session is to remind leaders, or help identify for future leaders, three crucial areas every leader needs to develop as they spend time in ministry: Hearing God's voice, Praying through problems, and Spending alot of time with people. We will engage all three of these areas with some best practices, new ideas, and a shared desire to continue growing in those areas which are foundational to any and all ministry leadership.
312	Marilyn	Sievert	Faith Unleashed Consulting	West Bend	Faith Unleashed Consultant	Spiritual Gifts for Everyone: It is More than You Think	Did you know that nineteen or more spiritual gifts are listed in the Bible? What if every person in your church were made aware of and used at least one of their spiritual gifts daily? Would your culture improve? Would your community be attracted to the way members interacted with each other and treated others? What if people celebrated each other’s gifts as a way to show love to God? This topic needs to be better understood and utilized on a much higher level. We will discuss how this can be a vital part of any gathering of believers.

313	German	Novelli	Lutheran Hour Ministries	St Louis, MO	Hispanic Ministry, Director	Is My Church ready for Multiethnic Ministries? (Bilingual Session)	<p>When someone shows interest in multiethnic ministries within their contexts, my first reaction is always the same: Are you sure you want to do this?</p> <p>In 2011, I did the first exploratory visit to the congregation I ended up serving for more than a decade. Although the church was almost entirely Caucasian, it was located in the area with the largest Latino population in the entire state of Wisconsin. The leaders were looking for a pastor able to serve them, but at the same time ready to open the doors of the congregation to the growing Hispanic community. Together, we had to find the keys for that door, and together we needed to work in being ready to open it. I don't think I was aware of the magnitude of this ministry, and I don't think the church was ready for this challenge either. Yet God was ready to work in us, and through us!</p> <p>Join me in an exciting conversation that will lead us to explore models of ministry that worked for us, and that were helpful in other contexts within the United States, and let's talk about how the Holy Spirit can guide us in doing multiethnic ministries, even though sometimes things don't go as planned.</p> <p>However, before you join our session you should ask yourself: Is my Church/Ministry ready and willing to welcome and serve those who are different and live in our country? I know ONE that is more than ready and wants to do this!</p>
314	Marilyn	Sievert	Faith Unleashed Consulting	West Bend	Faith Unleashed Consultant	Women in the Early Church: Romans 16 - God Entrusting Growth of the Church with Women	<p>In Romans 16, the Apostle Paul lists several women who were instrumental in the growth of the early Christian church. Who were these women, and what roles did they play? We will look at what the Bible and biblical scholars tell us, basing our conclusions on the interactions Jesus had with women in the gospels.</p>
315	Blake	Flattley	Concordia University Irvine	Irvine, CA	Director of Worship Arts	Creating A Culture of Creativity	<p>As creatives in the church, we are not just curators of worship but cultivators of culture. In this breakout session, Blake Flattley invites worship leaders, artists, and church creatives to reimagine their roles as stewards of both tradition and imagination—attending to the soil of their communities, engaging culture with grace, and cultivating beauty, hospitality, and hope through intentional worship and creative practice.</p>
316	Evan	Johnson	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Norfolk, Nebraska	Director of Digital Media & Associate Director of Worship	Swiss Army Knife Ministry	<p>A Swiss Army knife is one tool with many functions; it's practical, adaptable, and ready for any task. In ministry, many of us find ourselves wearing multiple hats and juggling a variety of responsibilities just like a Swiss Army knife. How can we thrive in these overlapping roles without losing focus, purpose, or joy? Presenter Evan Johnson, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Neb., draws on his Swiss Army knife experience serving in the past in a variety of roles including communications, middle school ministry, digital media, parish education and music ministry, learning lessons along the way about balance, effectiveness, and calling.</p>

317	Seth	Kunze	The Dwelling	New Caney, Texas	Pastor/Church Planter	Discipleship Continuum	Wanting to organize a high level/more organic discipleship process in your ministry setting? This session helps identify where different people in your life might be along a faith continuum, from those on one side who are "against Jesus" all the way to the other side of those who are "spiritually mature/or making more disciples", and the stages in between. This session focus's on this continuum especially identifying the needs at different levels, what it takes to meet people where they are, and help move them in the right direction along the continuum.
318	Evan	Johnson	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Norfolk, Nebraska	Director of Digital Media & Associate Director of Worship	Social Media: A Weapon	<p>For decades, social media has been wielded as a weapon. One that distracts, divides, and draws people away from truth and authentic connection. It has harvested attention, data, and even identity from a generation searching for meaning.</p> <p>But what if we, as church leaders, could reclaim this powerful tool? What if the same platforms that have been used for destruction could instead be used to proclaim hope, truth, and the Gospel?</p>
319	Michael	Harvery	Redeemer Lutheran Church	Rochester	Director of Faith Formation	_____ Servant Event: Insert Your City Name Here!	15 years ago God moved the heart of a youth to challenge a church to bring a servant event home. That youth gathered some trusted people and in 6 months we watched God move mountains. Over 15 years the Rochester Servant Event has grown and adapted. It has grown recognition throughout the community and open doors to spreading the gospel. Our prayer is that God whispers to you, "Bring a servant event home!"
320	Becca	Crawford	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Edmond, OK	Director of Communications	Crafting Your Communication Blueprint	<p>It can be overwhelming to create a strategic communication plan for your church. With so many different audiences to reach and the abundance of communication platforms, recommendations, and tools available, it's hard to know where and how to begin. So let's start strong together!</p> <p>This interactive session will guide church leaders and/or volunteers through communication goals, audiences, software, and best practices to set your church on a path to successful communication. Each attendee will leave with a blueprint and timeline of standard communication practices for churches, recommended software, along with a customized communication plan developed during the interactive small group portion of this session.</p> <p>Becca Crawford is a lifelong Lutheran and has served as the Director of Communications for Holy Trinity Lutheran Church & School for 7 years. Becca has a passion for church communication and continuously seeks new tools, and creative ways to keep HIS church moving forward to spread the good news of Jesus Christ in this noisy digital age.</p>

321	Pat	Maier	Visual Faith Ministry	Frankfort, Michigan	Visual Faith Coach	VISUAL FAITH MINISTRY: PRACTICES AND RESOURCES FOR TIME WITH JESUS	Church communities offer rich opportunity to hear God's Word in worship and Bible study. When we consider learning styles and hectic lifestyles, however, there is a struggle for many to keep God front and center in their minds and hearts. Have you ever struggled to recall the truths of a devotion or sermon later in the day? Does your mind wander during prayer - or do you forget who you promised to pray for? Are you searching for help with focus during your quiet time? Visual Faith practices are processes which connect visual and kinesthetic learning principles during time in prayer and God's Word. Find out about these useful spiritual disciplines which help us slow down, pay attention, deal with distractions, and allow time to "be still" as we read, reflect and respond to God's Word. You will find them not only valuable in your own life but filled with endless ministry possibilities.
322	Dr.	Trey Cox	Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church and School	Gilbert	Director of Family Ministry/Mathematics Professor	Dimensions of Grace: Unpacking the Gospel in a Multidimensional Universe	<p>What if modern physics and Scripture were telling the same story—from different vantage points? In this engaging and thought-provoking session, we'll explore how the language of higher dimensions, time, and space can deepen our understanding of the Gospel and the nearness of God. Drawing from Scripture, C.S. Lewis, and insights from contemporary science, we'll consider how Christ's incarnation, resurrection, and ascension reveal a reality far greater than what we see in three dimensions.</p> <p>Participants will encounter a faith-building perspective that inspires awe, strengthens confidence in God's Word, and equips leaders to communicate the wonder of the Gospel in fresh, meaningful ways. This session invites pastors, teachers, and lay leaders to rediscover grace—not as an abstract idea, but as a multidimensional reality that transforms how we see ourselves, our world, and our Savior. Come ready to think deeply, imagine boldly, and leave with a renewed sense of worship for the God who transcends dimensions yet dwells within us.</p>

323	Larry	Tieman	Immanuel Lutheran Church	Crystal Lake	Senior Pastor	Volunteers 101	<p>Volunteers 101 is a workshop for lay leaders, volunteer coordinators, assimilation coordinators, and other leaders that are having difficulty identifying, recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers for their church or school ministry. The session will help you create a culture of servanthood in your ministry setting through the casting of vision and telling stories, so that your constituency will desire to use their God-given talents to further God's kingdom.</p> <p>The practical training will help you match your volunteers' talent, interests, and passion with the ministries that will serve your needs and fulfill your volunteers' need for meaning and fulfillment. You will learn how to "lower the bar" so that everyone, including children can find their niche in ministry. There will be practical lessons to help you identify who potential servants and leaders might be, where to find them, how to win them over and recruit them to ministry, how to train them for their tasks, and how to effectively communicate their value to your team.</p> <p>Samples of written documents and job descriptions, as well as instruction on how these concepts have been used effectively will be given along with any ongoing assistance congregations or ministries might require.</p>
324	Kristen	Bissontz	The Coalition for a Better Indiana	Fort Wayne, IN	Secretary of the Board	AI creates cognitive deficit: a call for the return to classical Christian education and how you can help	<p>With the advancements in Artificial Intelligence and the rise in technology in the home and the classroom, there is rising concern over “cognitive debt.” A recent MIT study revealed that 83% students using ChatGPT to assist in composing essays could not recall a single sentence they had written just minutes before. The answer to this concern is a return to the well-worn road of the pedagogy of Classical Christian Education. There are compelling reasons why our churches and local ministries ought to consider the role they play in K-12 education. This presentation will explore the tenants of Classical Christian Education and its outcomes while tracking its rise. Leaders can, and should, assist in the formation of schools, scholarship, home education resources, and help pave the way legislatively for success with our classically trained students.</p>
325	Kristen	Bissontz	The Coalition for a Better Indiana	Fort Wayne, IN	Secretary of the Board	Crafting Careful Conversations: how to use the Socratic Method to engage your audience	<p>Ever wanted to dive deeper during a Bible study, small group roundtable, or youth group discussion? Most audiences are not trained to think independently or critically. They are told what to think, but not always how to think. The Socratic method encourages cooperative argumentative dialogue by asking and answering questions that stimulate critical thinking to draw out ideas and underlying presumptions. This presentation will introduce the Five Common Topics of the Dialectic and demonstrate how this method draws participants into the conversation. Learn how to foster an environment that allows exploration of complex ideas to develop a deeper understanding through dialogue.</p>

326	Becky	Chaplin	Faith Community Lutheran Church	Las Vegas, NV	Director of Children's Ministry	Not Just An Object Lesson: Truth or Air	<p>We're back for Year 5: Truth or Air!</p> <p>Whether as a pastor, leader, or volunteer, we've all been asked to do the children's message. We've Googled countless object lessons and can skillfully turn any on-hand prop into a last-minute metaphor, out of thin air! But what if we could make every children's message simple, interactive, and Gospel-focused? Learn how to easily and intentionally plan your children's message with engaging activities, science experiments, and memorable connections to the Gospel—all to transform students into lifelong disciples of Jesus.</p>
327	Kris	Kunkel	LCEF	Seattle, WA	VP, Ministry Solutions	Better Not Richer – Raising up New Leaders in an Unexpected Way	<p>Are you struggling to identify new leaders, increase participation of members in ministry and align your church resources (people, facility & finances) forward in mission?</p> <p>This session will help you see a unique and different approach to larger congregational involvement in your church’s ministries. Come and find out a very unexpended way you can identify and develop leaders through active short-term ministry participation verses multi-year committee meetings.</p> <p>Ministry Expansion Campaigns are about people and ministry not programs and money. You will learn about a trusted ministry partner who’s proven process has helped hundreds of LCMS churches grow and expand ministries by defining opportunities, designing solutions, and aligning resources (people, facilities & finances) for strategic kingdom impact through the local church family God has formed.</p>
328	Tim	Onnen	Christ Lutheran Church, Montrose, Colorado (LCMS)	MONTROSE	Pastor	An “Out-of-the Box”, Comprehensive Format for Doing Catechesis and Confirmation	<p>This format (which could be used in part or in full) . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Ties a pastor’s Sunday children’s messages to the catechesis of children + Taps into children’s eagerness and ability to memorize at an early age + Involves parents and the whole congregation in that same memorization + Provides children several opportunities to hear their parents (and congregation) promise to remain true to the faith even unto death + Takes a child through the Catechism up to three times as they grow and mature + Provides ongoing interaction with the pastor over several years + Highly incorporates parents/mentors into the child’s learning and profession of faith + Offers children/youth opportunity to make several smaller public professions of faith + Provides many opportunities for individual children to be encouraged by the congregation + Can incorporate “catechesis retreats” + Can be used with any catechetical materials you are presently using + Can be incorporated into any catechesis being done in a Lutheran Day-School <p>Helpful Resources will also be shared for helping special-needs children learn and profess the faith, and help their parents, pastors, or teachers in assessing that they understand the faith.</p>

329	Shari	Miller	Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML)	St. Louis, Missouri	LWML Vice President of Christian Life	OBJECTively Speaking	Two new free, doctrinally reviewed resources are available from the LWML website: A set of 30 object lessons created for use as children’s messages in worship services for children ages 4–8; and a set of 30 object lessons designed to be used with adults with intellectual and developmental challenges in a 30 to 60 minute session. Our Lord Jesus often illustrated His teachings with objects, such as sheep, coins, pearls, and seeds. These everyday objects help us to grasp the important truths of the Bible. Join us as we explore featured lessons from this wealth of resources, OBJECTively Speaking!
330	Shari	Miller	Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML)	St. Louis, Missouri	LWML Vice President of Christian Life	Life After ... Support for Widows	<p>Do you know a widow? Chances are you know several. How can you and your congregation support these women who have lost their husbands?</p> <p>Join us for an interactive session as we engage in meaningful discussion about ways to support widows in the congregational setting. Resources presented will include devotions from the popular LWML books, Life After ... Devotions for Widows and Life Continues On. Both books are written by widows to help them see that God is continuing to hold them in His hands and that He understands all they are experiencing — even the leaky sink, the puzzling financial statement, or that isolated feeling of sitting alone in the pew on Sundays. The book also shows ways that the family of Christ can reach out to the widows (and widowers) in their midst.</p>
331	Andrea	Bell	Woodlands Lutheran Early Learning Center	Montverde, FL	ELC Director	Creating an Outdoor Learning Environment	<p>We all know playing outside is good for kids. But what if we could transform our outdoor spaces for hands on learning beyond 30 minutes of recess?</p> <p>From outdoor chapel, to art, music, reading, and science— let’s take those lessons plans outside! The outdoor learning experiences are truly endless- and this is just the beginning!</p> <p>Come learn simple ways to incorporate learning outdoors into your routine and transform your current outdoor space!</p>

332	Greta	Alex	St. Luke's Lutheran Church	Federal Way, WA	Teacher	Shifting Sands: Chasing the 5 Star Review in a Fake World	<p>Are you and your youth one of the millions profoundly affected by the assassination of Charlie Kirk? How to truly inspire and teach youth to rise up, speak boldly, and fulfill the mission that thousands of us have claimed. Let’s look hard in the mirror and accept the truth that we have far more fear of man than of Almighty God. Let’s do this! You are not alone!</p> <p>In this highly relevant session, Greta Alex and her two teens, Anneke (19) and Grae (17) have returned yet again to unashamedly speak truth, encourage, uplift, and provide practical paths to living differently in our changed world. They will share their own story of standing and speaking, and having the discernment to walk away. Using Scripture as their guide, this tough topic will be addressed with unusual candor, transparency, and understanding.</p> <p>We will address how to properly fear God vs man, recognize & speak truth in a lying world, and why it urgently matters. Real life examples will be shared of how we’ve put this into practice for the last 15 years. Our world has gone dark because silence is consent.</p> <p>Calling all carnivores, this session is all meat, no milk toast. It’s time to discuss this topic openly in the church with radical truth telling and answers. Q&A is highly encouraged, so bring what is on your heart and mind. The time is now to preach what you practice, and we can’t wait to see you!</p>
333	Timothy	Fote	Restoring the Foundations, New Promse Church	Phoenix, AZ	Ministry Team Director	Restoring the Foundations: A Church-Based Model for Inner Healing	<p>Many congregations long to care for members carrying emotional wounds, relational brokenness, or spiritual discouragement—yet often lack a clear, biblically grounded, and pastorally sound process for guiding people toward healing in Christ.</p> <p>This session shares best practices for integrating Restoring the Foundations (RTF) within a congregational context. Drawing from a decade of experience at New Promise Church, participants will learn how this ministry model can serve as a practical framework for deeper pastoral care and discipleship.</p> <p>We will explore how scriptural truth, confession, forgiveness, and Spirit-led renewal can work together to bring freedom from long-held patterns of pain and help believers walk in the wholeness Christ provides. The presentation will highlight how RTF principles can be safely and effectively adapted to support pastoral counseling, small groups, and lay care ministries.</p> <p>Through case studies, lessons learned, and implementation insights, you will discover how your congregation can cultivate a culture of ongoing renewal—where the Gospel not only saves but also heals the heart and strengthens the Body of Christ.</p>

334	Terri	Albrecht	Life and Legacy by Design	Danbury, WI	Speaker, Coach, & End of Life Doula	Living Well, Dying Well- What Does that Look Like?	<p>What does it truly mean to live well- and prepare to die well?</p> <p>This workshop invites grace filled, meaningful conversation and offers practical insights for living fully and preparing fiathfully for life's end. Whether you're 35 or 65, we all benefit from honest reflection on death and dying, through the hope and promise of the resurrection in Christ. This session helps make the hard conversations easier by creating space for open, faith centered dialogue on life, death and legacy. Together we'll explore how to live well now and face life's final chapter with peace and purpose. We'll also consider ways the church can walk alongside individuals and families in this season of life.</p>
335	Eric	Kennaugh	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	North Canton	Vice President for Ministry Solutions	Stewardship - Growing Mature Disciples	<p>Stewardship is God's plan for teaching His people to trust Him. Throughout the bible God uses the model of faithful stewardship to encourage His people to believe that He has all that they need. As a generous Father, God shares His vast resources with His people to provide for their needs. As they learn to manage what He has entrusted to them, they learn that God is trust worthy. This simple interchange between God and His children is the most basic and critical interaction in discipleship. Unfortunately, instead of learning trust, most congregational teaching on stewardship leads people to a legalistic transational relationship with God. We support our churches out of a sense of obligation. It does not understand the natural human process of learning to trust, and creating habits that last out of a sense of freedom and joy. In this presentation we will explore why this happens, and provide practical steps to make the transition from oblicational giving to joyful, habitual ministry support.</p>
336	Alyssa	Petty	Lutheran Bible Translators	Concordia, MO	Chief Development Officer	From Chaos to Collaboration: Transforming Ministry Teams with Working Genius	<p>Church teams often struggle with burnout, miscommunication, and underutilized gifts—not because people aren’t willing, but because they’re not working in their areas of God-given strength. Lutheran Bible Translators has seen tangible benefits from implementing Working Genius on its marketing and development teams, including clearer communication, more energized collaboration, and strategic alignment of roles with individual strengths. Working Genius, a practical model developed by Patrick Lencioni, helps individuals and teams identify how they naturally contribute to the process of getting work done—from ideation to activation to implementation. This session will introduce the six types of Working Genius and explore how understanding these can transform collaboration, increase joy in serving, and build healthier ministry teams. Through biblical reflection, real-life examples, and interactive discussion, attendees will walk away with tools to better steward their own gifts and empower others in thier ministry community.</p>

337	Greg	Griffith	King of Kings	Omaha	Lead Pastor	Making your ministry Unstoppable	<p>What does it take for your ministry to be unstoppable?</p> <p>It takes a systematic strategy</p> <p>It takes an intentionality of simplicity</p> <p>It takes engaging others to serve in their giftedness</p> <p>During this session you will learn systems that will make your ministry thrive, engage the community, and serve others. Utilizing Working Genius to it's fullest, building a systematic strategy for engagement with the city your ministry is planted in, and engaging volunteers to follow up with intentional invitation to your church, where people already know they belong.</p> <p>Everyone will come away with tangible resources at your disposal.</p>
338	Ryan	Kirchoff	Blueprint Schools	Appleton, WI	Educational Consultant and High School Educator	What do I do when my students struggle to learn? Generative AI can help!	<p>Discover how generative AI tools can empower educators to support struggling students effectively. This session explores practical strategies to leverage AI for personalized learning, scaffolding complex concepts, and fostering student confidence. Whether you're a tech novice or an experienced user, you'll leave with actionable insights to integrate AI seamlessly into your classroom practices.</p>
339	Richard	Carter	World Mission Prayer League	Saiint Paul, MN	Associate Worker	There Are Very Few Sinners in Hong Kong	<p>This session will involve personal reflection, small and large group conversation, and some "lecture."</p> <p>Few sinners in Hong Kong? In the traditional Chinese Bible, "sinner" reads "criminal." There are few sinners in Hong Kong, a well-behaved city. Learning this while teaching in Hong Kong was a dose of humility: oh, what I want to say about the Good News of Jesus, with my traditional theological words, might not actually share the Good News with most people.</p> <p>Coming back from six years of serving in Hong Kong, I wondered what many people in America "hear" when they hear traditional Christian words. Sinner? Grace? Church? Let me go back to square one, explore what is so good about "our" words that I want others to hear, and then look for words that say that in their hearing.</p> <p>At the moment serving in Mongolia, the young guy in the gym locker room explained that he's a Gen Z and an atheist, but he likes Jesus. I will need to listen lots, and then find words that open doors for him to enjoy Jesus, trust Jesus. This session will invite you to recognize favorite words, delve into their value for you, and figure out what words can help others discover that value, in grace, in Christ.</p>

340	Emily	Belvery	Mission of Christ Network	Omaha, NE	Mobilization and Church Partnerships	Women and Shame	Body shaming. Mom guilt (shame). Purity culture. While shame is a human experience, there are particular ways that women experience shame in regards to our bodies and familial roles. What do women of Scripture and especially women who met Jesus have to tell us about experiences of shame and the freeing power of the Gospel? Come look together at the stories of several Biblical women and see how God meets us and the women we serve in the midst of our shame, bringing through Christ true and lasting honor.
341	Douglas	Krengel	Immanuel Lutheran Church and Preschool	Saint Joseph	Sole Pastor	Widows, Women, and Relationships in Service of the Gospel Witness	The true and triune God makes his will very clear in the Bible when it comes to the role of widows, women, and the relationships they form in service to the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ: These members of the Kingdom of God are important to God and his work in the world. A brief review of pertinent biblical texts will be shared. Rev. Dr. Douglas Krengel, Ph.D., will also apply his own research on how men and women form professional relationships in the church to a broader spectrum of relationships within that same ecclesiastical context. As the LCMS demographics continues to age, the number of widows in the church also appears to be growing. Widows are identified by the Holy Spirit as an important part of the service of the church, as are women, and mixed-gendered service teams (i.e., dyads) of men and women. Similarity-Attraction Theory and Status Characteristic Theory will be introduced and applied to the conversation. This is Pastor Krengel's 34th year of serving as a parish pastor in the LCMS. As of writing this summary (on 10/14/2025), the visitation teams he is a member of have made 192 shut-in visits in 2025 to 71 individuals. These two two-member teams are composed of himself and a widow, and/or female senior citizen.
342	Lee	Weander	Our Savior Norfolk NE	Norfolk	Sr Pastor	Reigniting Joy in Ministry	Felling like the fire that once fueled your ministry is flickering-or worse, nearly extinguished? You're not alone. Ministry is both beautiful and demanding. Too often, the joy of ministry gets snuffed out beneath the weight of expectations and exhaustion. Whether you're thriving, surviving or somewhere in between, reigniting your joy can be a ministry lifeline. Pastor Lee Weander, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Neb., has been through it all after more than 30 years in ministry. Through Scripture and real-life examples, he'll share how to fan the flames and reignite your joy for ministry.
343	Beckie	Kruse	Showing Up LLC	New Berlin	Pastor's Wife, Certified Showing Up Trainer	Equipping Your Congregation to Show Up: Bridging the Empathy-to-Action Gap in Ministry	Churches have committees and care teams for nearly everything, but structured care alone isn't enough. The deeper question is: how do we equip everyone in the congregation to show up for the people in their everyday lives? That's what transforms care from a program into a culture. Research tells us that people consider themselves compassionate but don't feel seen themselves and don't share what they are struggling with. This creates isolation and frays culture. We need to give people the confidence to both give back and seek support. This session introduces Showing Up, a research-informed practical framework that helps people move from empathy to action. Participants will not only experience its core relational practices but also learn how to bring Showing Up training back to their own congregations to cultivate a culture of genuine care.

344	Hannah	Cmeyla	Our Savior Lutheran Church (Norfolk, NE)	Norfolk, NE	Director of Worship Arts	Contemporary Worship Without Confessional Compromise	Thinking about adding more contemporary elements to worship but worried about losing your traditional congregation? You don’t have to choose one or the other. Discover how Our Savior Lutheran Church in Norfolk, NE, offers three distinct orders of worship—blending fresh expressions with rich LCMS tradition. Learn practical ways to introduce variety, engage multiple generations, and keep the Lutheran liturgy and confession at the heart of worship.
345	Ashley	Wiehe	Worship Anew	Fort Wayne	Matthew Leighty, Executive Director	JOY “Just Older Youth” – Working with Aging Adults in your Congregation	<p>In many churches, the emphasis on youth as the “future” can overshadow the vital role aging adults play in the life and growth of a congregation. Drawing on insights from Worship Anew’s research project with Barna Group, “Aging Well,” we will explore how the future of the church could be not just youthful, but vibrant and gray.</p> <p>With 51% of surveyed retirees reporting they hadn’t attended church in over a year, there's a clear opportunity for churches to engage aging adults both inside and outside their walls. Whether you're considering launching a ministry for older adults or looking to expand an existing one, this session will offer practical steps and new perspectives to help your church grow through meaningful outreach to aging adults.</p>
346	Emily	Belvery	Mission of Christ Network	Omaha, NE	Mobilization and Church Partnerships	What Missionaries Wish Their Supporting Churches Knew	<p>Mission of Christ Network has 50 missionaries around the world supported by hundreds of Lutheran congregations (maybe yours included!). One of our hallmarks as an organization is intentional, best-practice member care. Sending and supporting churches play a huge role in this!</p> <p>Hear from missionaries on the field what they wish their supporting churches understood and learn practical ways to send, support, and host global missionaries well.</p>
347	Stephanie	Kollbaum	St. John Lutheran School	Battle Creek, Nebraska	Middle School English and Social Studies Teacher	Going in the WRITE Direction with Your Writing Instruction	<p>Teaching writing can often feel overwhelming—there are countless skills to address, endless resources to sort through, and always a few students who still struggle to grasp what we want them to learn before they move on.</p> <p>In our session, we (Tia and Steph) hope to lead a discussion with fellow educators about practical ways to make teaching writing feel less daunting and more immediately applicable in their classrooms. Writing is a complex skill, but God has equipped us to be strong and capable teachers. Our goal is for participants to leave feeling encouraged, confident, and ready to help their students grow as writers.</p>

348	Chad	Lakies	Lutheran Hour Ministries	St. Louis, MO	Vice President, Ministry Engagement	How to "Find Yourself" in a Secular Age	<p>Every person tells a story to themselves about themselves—this is who I am. We’re encouraged to live authentically, to find ourselves, to become who we are. We’ve been told (and often tell others) that you can be whatever you want to be if you desire it strongly enough. This all sounds very liberating. And it's quite common.</p> <p>But what if this path is a false form of freedom? What if becoming who we are is rooted in the gifts and callings given by our creator? What if seeking to distinguish ourselves from others in our own authentic uniqueness actually means relying on others, recognizing our inter-dependence? What if identity is not a journey of becoming who we are but a realization that our callings and relationships always already establish who we are?</p> <p>This presentation will offer an alternative vision for understanding authenticity and identity in our secular age.</p>
349	Ted	Kober	Unforgivable	Billings, Montana	Author/Speaker	Forgive and Forget -- Why Not?	Forgive and Forget – Why Not? Isn’t that what Christians should do? Ted and Mark address the misconceptions about forgetting when forgiving based on the Scriptures and contemporary stories of people who forgive – but still remember. But they remember it differently. Find out more...
350	Tom	Eggebrecht	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	Orlando, Florida	Senior Vice President - Ministry Solutions	Better Collaborative Decision-Making for Groups	Looking for a process that combines solid decision-making, collaboration that brings about consensus, and a fun way to provide solutions for complex issues, concerns, or strategic planning? In this workshop we will walk through just such a proven process that group sources answers to "big picture" questions, allows for every voice to be heard, and provides clearly written outcomes for successful projects, plans, or propositions.
351	Mark	Rockenbach	Concordia Seminary	St. Louis, Missouri	Author/Professor	Anger -- It's My Right!	Anger – It’s My Right! Don’t I have a right to be angry? Especially righteous anger! But how long should I remain angry? What are the consequences of anger? Mark and Ted address anger in our families, ministry settings, and community.
352	Keith	Johnson	Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills	Vestavia Hills	Discipleship Director	Take the BS out of VBS (Boring and Stale)	Planning a successful Summer Vacation Bible School outreach event requires four key elements to success. The first step is early planning and gathering supplies and decorations with a small group of leaders. Partnering with other churches minimizes the need for huge budgets and creates a scale that makes a huge impact multiple times during the summer. Youth involvement is key to developing young people who stick to church work because they've been involved early on to assume growing levels of responsibility under the watchful eye of other adult leaders. Finally, the put-up and take-down blitz should be carefully executed with a strategic group of volunteers to maximize the event's success in a multi-use facility.
353	Kent	Burreson	Concordia Seminary	Saint Louis, MO	Professor of Systematic Theology	Luther’s Contemporary Worship: Worship that is Always of, by, and for Faith	This presentation will explore how Luther’s vision of the church’s worship life was always contemporary: oriented toward birthing, strengthening, and nurturing the baptismal life of faithful trust in God the Father here and now. For Luther, worship’s contemporaneity always entailed freedom and responsibility, freedom to create new rituals that nurtured faith and responsibility to the church’s ritual tradition, filled with elements that continued to nurture faith. Through Luther's own words we will construct a dialogue that seeks to bridge the various approaches to worship within the LCMS and the church at-large.

354	Keith	Johnson	Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills	Vestavia Hills	Discipleship Director	Preparing and Presenting Children's Messages with Impact	Speaking to children is more than an art; it is a discipline that can either work well or go exceedingly poorly. Plan something for them, or they'll plan something for you. In a service setting or even in a school assembly, there is a primary target (young children) and a secondary audience (their parents or other adults or older children). Knowing your audience is the key factor in presentation success. Scripture coming alive requires both a knowledge of the passage's purpose, but also the main application that the intended audience can understand and apply. Find out the five components of a children's message that turns the time spent into a memorable and longed-for opportunity that keeps kids coming back.
355	Erica	Sorensen	1517	San Clemente CA	Development & Relations	What the World needs now: CHRIST FOR YOU	Join Erick and Erica Sorensen of 1517 as they make the case for why the distinctives of Lutheran theology are precisely the answers our culture is dying to hear. BONUS: get a sneak peek of an upcoming feature length documentary soon to be streaming on all major platforms.
356	Tiffany	Weigand	Company	Waukesha WI	Co-Founder & Talent Developer	Building Strengths-based Education & Ministry Teams	<p>Would you like to go from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Exhausted to energized Clashing to collaborating Feeling not good enough to knowing you are fearfully and wonderfully made <p>When individuals and teams focus on their God-given strengths (you can find out your strengths using CliftonStrengths, formerly StrengthsFinder, assessment), you see an increase in energy, engagement, and overall ministry results.</p> <p>We encourage you to shift to a Strengths-based mindset to focus on ENERGY management instead of managing time and perceived weaknesses. This can shift your perspective and improve cultures and relationships, whether they are your family, church, ministry team, classroom, and beyond. Bless your ministry with what you do naturally and utilize others who have different strengths, working together to further His Kingdom.</p>
357	Jessica	Knoll	Trinity Lutheran Church	Arcadia, MI	Church Secretary	Navigating Cancer in Ministry	<p>Church workers have a unique relationship with their congregation. We lead and organize; we worship and participate; we grow in faith and share in joy; we live life with the community we serve. When personal struggles arise, life and work get messy.</p> <p>As a church worker with a cancer diagnosis and a young family, Jess has been there. Walk with Jess through her journey as she shares the joys and challenges of vulnerability, service, and support. Hear stories of grace, stumbling blocks, triumphs, pitfalls and the faithfulness of God through it all.</p> <p>This session is for people who are supporting ministry workers through personal challenges or who find themselves in the midst of their own crisis. Together we'll reflect on attitudes, postures, tools and resources for navigating muddy waters.</p>

358	David	Fiedler	LCMS Foundation	St Louis, MO	President	Five Things You Can Do Today to Promote More Estate Gifts from your Ministry Supporters	<p>Planned giving seems complicated. Wills and attorneys and taxes, oh my! But there are five simple things you can do TODAY in your ministry to ensure that you will receive more estate gifts TOMORROW.</p> <p>Come and hear tips from the experts on estate gifts at the LCMS Foundation, who will show you specific actions that anyone can do to encourage more deferred gifts from ministry supporters. No big campaigns, no complicated activities, just simple steps that every ministry can put in place to help your Christian stewards complete the cycle of giving to ensure ministry is supported even after they are called home to Heaven..</p>
359	Chris	Singer	Lutheran Church Charities	Northbrook. Illinois	President / CEO	Trauma is the New Mission Field	<p>Across our communities, people carry unseen wounds - from loss, abuse, disaster, and disconnection. Trauma doesn't just affect individuals; it shapes families, classrooms, and congregations. This session explores how the Church can become a place of healing and hope for those walking wounded among us.</p> <p>Participants will discover practical ways to bring Christ-centered compassion into daily ministry - learning to recognize signs of trauma, respond with empathy, and foster environments where healing can take root in homes, schools, and churches. They will also learn how their congregation can participate in SFA (Serving and Faithful Action) training, becoming trauma-informed and equipped to minister daily to the hurting around them. Together, we'll reimagine the mission field not as a distant land, but as the hearts of those in our own pews and neighborhoods.</p>
360	Allison	Brewster	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	St. Louis, MO	Administrative Support Lead	Finding the Balance: Managing Tasks and Time While Supporting Your Team	<p>Balancing multiple responsibilities while supporting a team requires organization, communication, and adaptability. Administrative support professionals are often the backbone of a team's efficiency — juggling schedules, managing details, and keeping projects moving forward. This presentation explores practical strategies for prioritizing tasks, managing time effectively, and maintaining flexibility when unexpected needs arise. By learning to balance your workload with the demands of the team, you can create a smoother workflow, reduce stress, and help your team operate at its best.</p>
361	Denise	Snider	Lutheran Church Charities	Northbrook, IL	Director of LCC Cares Ministry	Hope in Action: Living Out Christ's Love in Times of Need	<p>This inspiring and practical session explores how congregations can actively demonstrate Christ's love by responding to the needs of their communities. Participants will learn strategies for building a network of resources, engaging volunteers, and coordinating effective responses to crises and trauma. Through real-life examples and actionable steps, the session equips pastors and church volunteers to empower their congregations to serve with compassion, hope, and intentionality. Attendees will leave motivated to turn faith into tangible action, making a meaningful difference in the lives of those facing hardship.</p>

362	MAURA	LEINONEN	Sts. Peter & Paul Lutheran Church, Houghton, MI	Atlantic Mine, MI	Lay leader and founder of JFJ	Discovering Relational Joy Through Women’s Discipleship	<p>Are there women on the fringes of your congregation who have not established meaningful relationships within the church or are new to the faith? Are there women who are eager to gain confidence in speaking their faith in order to share it with others?</p> <p>In this session, we will explore how Joyfully Following Jesus (JFJ) creates a Spirit-filled space for women to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus and one another. Through intentional and nurturing micro-groups, we build meaningful, lasting community while worshiping together, practicing gratitude, studying Scripture, and exploring what it means to live each day as disciples of Jesus.</p> <p>As women discover their God-given value, meaning, and purpose, joy begins to overflow. However, we don’t just grow on an individual level— we start reaching out, sharing our faith, and discipling others with a renewed sense of passion and purpose.</p> <p>Come explore how Joyfully Following Jesus helps women move from the sidelines into joyful, active faith and Jesus-filled living.</p>
363	Dave	Kuschel	Concordia Plan Services	St. Louis	Assistant Vice President	Caring for those who Serve: A Panel Discussion	<p>In this panel discussion hosted by Concordia Plan Services and the LCMS Office of National Mission, leaders from LCMS ministries of different types and sizes discuss why and how they care for their ministry’s workers, with a focus on supporting physical, mental, emotional and financial health and wellness. Panelists will demonstrate how any ministry can show increased care for their workers regardless of workforce characteristics, budget, resources or other factors. The discussion will explore how being well helps workers serve well, why these ministries have prioritized caring for workers, what they’ve found to be impactful, ideas for getting started and more.</p>
364	Jacob	Unke	Blueprint Schools	Bozeman, MT	Educational Consultant	The Chase: Aligning Collective Behaviors with Organizational Ambitions	<p>In Christian schools, organizational ambition is often clear—mission statements, strategic goals, and ministry visions are well defined. Yet the daily behaviors of teams don’t always align with those aspirations. The Chase explores this vital intersection between purpose and practice, helping leaders close the gap between what their schools believe and what they actually do.</p> <p>This session will challenge participants to reflect on the collective behaviors that shape their culture and to identify where those patterns may drift from their stated mission. Through practical frameworks, real-world examples, and faith-based insight, attendees will learn how to create clarity, consistency, commitment, and connection within their teams.</p> <p>Participants will leave with actionable tools for diagnosing misalignment, strengthening culture, and leading teams that “run the race” together—translating mission into momentum and purpose into practice.</p> <p>[Presentation Outline](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nLm3jTdKksDMyG1fgSmK9zuFRISM3sVD/view?usp=share_link)</p>

365	Sarah	Sekki	Lutheran Church Charities	Northbrook, IL	Director of Hearts of Mercy & Compassion Ministry	The "Heart" of Hearts of Mercy & Compassion - how to be present with those in need	<p>Get to the "Heart" of this new ministry at Lutheran Church Charities.</p> <p>You have probably seen the light blue hearts with white crosses all over the country at memorial sites - they become a focal point where crisis strikes - at school shootings, natural disasters and other violent attacks. Did you know that they are all made by LCMS churches around the country? Our churches SHOW UP to comfort those grieving in these situations - so that those affected know they are NOT ALONE.</p> <p>In addition to responding to these larger, national level events, each church has an outreach to their local community with the Hearts of Mercy & Compassion. The teams give hearts to comfort the grieving and support the ill or lonely; but they also give hearts to celebrate milestones and to offer gratitude to volunteers or first responders.</p> <p>Come discover why this ministry is growing every day. This is a unique opportunity to inspire connections and engagement with your local community.</p> <p>The mission of Lutheran Church Charities is to share the mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need.</p>
366	Arthur	Stevens	Grace Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA	HAWTHORNE, CA	PSD Prison Ministry Coordinator	What's New in Prison Ministry Today	<p>Vision: To fulfill the Lord's Mission to the incarcerated and those affected by crime.</p> <p>Mission: To share the gospel message of life and salvation in Jesus Christ with the incarcerated, to reach the lost, strengthen the faith of Christian inmates and their families, and encourage them in their faith walk, along with the recently released and those whose lives have been impacted by crime.</p> <p>We will offer our hearers opportunities to become involved in prison ministry in various ways, some of which do not require going inside a prison.</p> <p>We will explain that in our fast-paced world, changes in our judicial system continue to change, and how those changes challenge our Christian worldview.</p>

367	Jason	Phelps	Gloria Dei - Houston/Disciples Made	Houston, Texas	Discipling Director	Breaking the Addition Addiction: 3 Foundational Shifts for the Future Church	<p>Across the Church, a growing number of leaders are confronting a hard truth: we’ve become addicted to addition. We’ve measured success by attendance, activity, and output—yet seen little lasting transformation. But what if Jesus modeled a better way?</p> <p>This session challenges the prevailing ministry mindset and invites leaders to embrace three foundational shifts essential for true disciple-making: from information to transformation, programs to pathways, and crowds to generations.</p> <p>Drawing on real-life stories from churches in the Texas District LCMS and insights from the upcoming Disciples Made book, Brian Phipps and Jason Phelps will offer a practical, biblical framework for moving from managing programs to multiplying people.</p> <p>Attendees will gain some tools to assess their church’s spiritual health and multiplication readiness, explore proven models for disciple-making, and leave equipped with some clear, reproducible steps to begin forming a culture of generational impact.</p> <p>If you're ready to stop chasing numbers and start multiplying lives, this session will show you how.</p>
368	Randy	Duncan	University Lutheran Chapel	Ann Arbor	Pastor of Campus Mission	Seizing the Moment: Reaching and Discipling Gen Z	<p>In this presentation, Randy Duncan explores how to effectively reach and disciple Gen Z, a generation marked by digital saturation, deep questions, and a longing for authenticity. With passion and practical wisdom gained by over a decade of experience as a Campus Pastor at CUAA and 125 baptisms, Randy will unpack the unique challenges Gen Z faces and how the Church can respond with relational discipleship, honest conversations, and Gospel-centered community. Drawing on Scripture, cultural insight, and personal ministry experience, Randy encourages leaders to seize the Kairos Kingdom moment we are living in and meet Gen Z where they are so as to guide them into a life-changing relationship with Jesus.</p>
369	Becky	Chaplin	Faith Community Lutheran Church	Las Vegas, NV	Director of Children's Ministry	Rethinking Religion Curriculum: Focus Group	<p>Many Christian schools rely on curriculum that covers Bible stories but doesn’t fully engage young disciples’ hearts, minds, and everyday lives. This interactive focus group invites administrators and teachers to share what’s working, what’s missing, and what they dream of for the next generation of religion curriculum. Together, we’ll explore how to move beyond worksheets and rote memory to create meaningful, developmentally appropriate faith experiences for preschool–elementary students. Your feedback will help shape a new curriculum designed to inspire lifelong faith formation.</p>
370	Debbie	Yocky	Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML)	St. Louis, Missouri	Public Relations Director	Surprise! I'm Leading Today's Devotion-Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) can help	<p>Need a devotion for a meeting or event? Did you find out you are scheduled to lead devotions at the last minute? Lutheran Women in Mission can help. We have over 300 free, doctrinally reviewed devotions sorted by topic on our website. Our 2025–2027 planner, Seek. Pray. Serve is also available as a free download. We will share examples of traditional devotions, interactive devotions, object lesson devotions for small children or developmentally challenged individuals, and sketch type devotions. There are even audio devotions available on the LWML App.</p>

371	Regina	Kehl	reginakehl&co LLC (Formerly upRouted Coaching & Consulting)	Afton, MN	Founder/Owner	Working Genius: A Better Way to Understand Your Gifts, Your Frustrations, and Your Team	<p>This session is for anyone who wants to transform their work and team. Using the proven Working Genius model, explore what brings you joy and fulfillment, learn how to lead better, increase productivity, build effective teams, and more. This fun, interactive session will fill you with new tools to implement immediately; you won't want to wait until you get home!</p> <p>Note: To get the most out of this breakout, take The Working Genius Assessment at workinggenius.com before attending and bring it to the session.</p>
372	Gerald B. (Jerry)	Kieschnick	Pastoral Leadership Institute	Georgetown, TX	Presidential Ambassador	What the Bible and Lutheran Confessions say or do not say about "Closed" Communion.	<p>At BPM 2025, I shared what I consider some of the major reasons for the rapid decline of The Lutheran Church---Missouri Synod, especially in the last two decades. One of those reasons is our church body's stated position on sacramental hospitality, aka "closed" communion.</p> <p>In this year's presentation, I'll dig more deeply into what the Bible and our confessions say or do not say about who should or should not be invited or allowed to partake of this precious means of God's grace in congregations of The LCMS.</p>
373	Regina	Kehl	reginakehl&co LLC (Formerly upRouted Coaching & Consulting)	Afton, MN	Founder/Owner	Brave Enough to Break the Cycle: Finding Freedom from the Lies That Hold You Back	<p>Sometimes the hardest battles we fight are the ones inside our own minds. We know the truth, but somehow the lies get louder. The ones that tell us we're not enough, that what we do doesn't matter, that everyone else has it together but us.</p> <p>What lies have quietly become part of your belief system? What strongholds keep you from living as the person God has called you to be?</p> <p>You're not alone. In this 90-minute session, we'll name and challenge the false beliefs that distort the truth of who God says you are and keep you stuck in cycles of self-sabotage. Through guided personal reflection, you'll begin uncovering those lies and inviting God's truth to take their place, creating space for real renewal and freedom.</p> <p>This is courageous, soul-level work. It won't all be finished in one session, but you'll leave with tools and practices to keep the process going long after you walk out the door.</p> <p>And yes, it will be hard... but we will find time to laugh a little along the way.</p> <p>Facilitator's Note</p> <p>This session involves personal reflection and optional sharing, but no one will be asked to "air their dirty laundry." Each participant will have space to process privately and engage at a level that feels safe. The goal is growth,</p>

374	Josh	Harste	Cross Solutions Group	Woodbury, Minnesota	Founder & Principal Consultant	The Nonprofit Security Grant Program Explained: A Practical Guide for Churches and Schools	<p>Faith-based organizations continue to face increasing safety challenges, yet many remain unaware of the federal funding available to address them. This session provides a practical walkthrough of the Department of Homeland Security’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), which offers up to \$200,000 per facility annually to support physical and cybersecurity improvements.</p> <p>Attendees will learn the full process, from identifying vulnerabilities and writing a compliant application to managing an awarded project. Drawing on Cross Solutions Group’s experience assisting churches and faith-based schools nationwide, Josh will share key best practices for building security plans that qualify for NSGP funding. These include developing layered security (access control, surveillance, and intrusion detection), improving communication systems and emergency response readiness, designing safer facility layouts, implementing volunteer safety teams, developing emergency operation plans, and maintaining compliance with local authorities and FEMA guidelines pertaining to grant awards.</p> <p>Participants will leave equipped with actionable steps, templates, and strategies to fund and implement security enhancements that protect their congregations while supporting mission continuity.</p>
375	John	Reinke	WLDO - World Lutheran Deaf Outreach	St charles mo	Deaf Disciple Maker	NOT Sunday School Level!!! More FULL visual story	<p>NOT Sunday School level!!</p> <p>How many each animal God tell Noah bring on Ark? (Hint NOT only 2X2)</p> <p>Did Noah have metal tools?</p> <p>Did God make you 3 in 1?? (Hint YES) (How to explain the trinity visually!)</p> <p>We want to help our people move beyond “Sunday School” level to see God’s Word more deeply and visually.</p> <p>Sadly, in today’s world the spoken word gets lost</p> <p>We want to bring our people more to the visual meat of God’s Word.</p> <p>How you can start to see more FULL stories from a visual story perspective, not only words.</p>
376	Patra	Mueller	Hope Lutheran Church	Seattle, WA	Family Life Minister	JESUS JOY JOURNEY	<p>Would you like to experience more joy in journey? Join us as we dig into God’s Word to discover transformation and strength for your next steps.</p> <p>Be reminded of your identity in Christ.</p> <p>Experience how the death and resurrection of Jesus changes your daily life.</p> <p>Discover the authors, types and purpose of specific Psalms.</p>

377	Eric	Gradberg	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Norfolk, Nebraska	Associate Pastor of Visitation	Noticing People Noticing Life	When we encounter people are in need, they are often the most open to God’s love. We all want to share the live-changing hope and peace found in Jesus but when people are hurting, it’s important to engage in a meaningful way. Join the pastoral staff at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Neb., as they share lessons learned from trial and error, and effective systems you can replicate in your own church setting. Simply showing you care can make big impacts for the Kingdom!
378	John	Reinke	WLDO - World Lutheran Deaf Outreach	St charles mo	Deaf Disciple Maker	ASL (American Sign Language) 3 year curriculum for Elementary, High Schools, Universities, Homes, and Congregations	<p>ASL Jesus Signs – teaching ASL with Bible Stories</p> <p>For you, your members, your Elementary School, Middle School, High School, even your University – we have a three-year ASL program. With videos, Power Points, lesson guidelines, etc...</p> <p>www.ASLJesusSigns.org</p> <p>This is currently being used to teach ASL at our Lutheran Schools and Sign Classes around the country. We want to offer it for free (donation based) so that more people can learn to share their faith with ASL.</p> <p>ASL is the 3rd most used language in the U.S.</p> <p>98% of Deaf people do NOT believe in Jesus.</p> <p>Mentoring and training available from our ASL professionals.</p> <p>We teach ASL plus Deaf culture and Deaf Outreach.</p> <p>www.DeafOutreach.org</p>
379	Peter	Mueller	Hope Lutheran Church and School	Seattle, WA	Senior Pastor	Peace in Panic: Finding Freedom from Anxiety	Do you or someone you know struggle with anxiety or panic attacks? If so, you’re not alone and this session is for you. Come learn some of the causes and triggers for anxiety and panic, as well as some of the strategies that can provide short and long-term relief and healing. Anxiety and panic attacks can bring great distress and agony in a person’s life - this session is about finding real and lasting hope!
380	Peter	Mueller	Hope Lutheran Church and School	Seattle, WA	Senior Pastor	When the Worst Happens: Preparing for, Navigating, and Recovering from Trauma and Tragedy in Ministry	Whether you're a church or school staff person or a dedicated volunteer, ministry can take you on a journey through all kinds of experiences and emotions as you serve others. Unfortunately, and almost always unexpectedly, life sometimes harshly interrupts us when we are suddenly faced with caring for and leading those in our faith community in the wake of traumatic and tragic events in the lives of one or more people. This session has been decades in the making and its content has been learned the hard way - but the good news is it will help you prepare for, navigate, and recover from whatever gut-wrenching crisis or event you and your ministry face next.

381	Thomas	Winters	St. Mark Houston	Houston, TX	Associate Pastor	Creating a Worship Experience That Connects	A worship service should point people to Jesus, not to distractions. This session explores how thoughtful planning and technical excellence can shape a seamless, Christ-centered experience. We'll look at how lighting sets a tone, media tells a story, and service flow turns individual moments into a unified service. Whether your tools are simple or advanced, you'll learn how to remove distractions and use technology in service of the Gospel, not the gear.
382	Rika	Beckley	PLI	Wheaton, Illinois	Director of Donor Engagement	Keys to Your Successful Fundraising Program	<p>A Spirit led Strategic Planning process lays the foundation for your successful fund raising efforts. In this session you will learn how the DISCERN planning framework helps you create a plan with agility and relevance for both internal and external constituencies tailored to remain relevant as it is updated annually.</p> <p>With your plan in place, you will learn the key takeaways needed to be prepared to launch a successful fundraising campaign for your ministry. Including: When and how to launch; how your campaign relates to or is integrated into your current fund raising program; the essential preparation for your board and/or staff, and the key “must haves” so you know when you are ready to move forward. All undergirded by an active Prayer Team.</p>
383	Jack	Kalleberg	Christ Greenfield	Gilbert, Arizona	Executive Director	Transforming Your Church Through Engagement: Building a System to Reach, Retain, and Multiply Disciples	<p>Most churches engage their communities—but often without an intentional system guiding how they do it. This session introduces the Church Engagement Model (CEM), a practical framework that identifies the five jobs every church must do to connect people to Jesus: Attract, Get, Retain, Grow, and Multiply. Each “job” reflects a natural phase of relational engagement—from initial awareness to lifelong discipleship and leadership multiplication.</p> <p>Using data-driven insights and real-world case studies from Christ Greenfield Church and other partner ministries, attendees will learn how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Diagnose where engagement breaks down.- Align staffing, systems, and communication strategies around engagement goals.- Measure outcomes with tools like Net Promoter Score (NPS) and website analytics.- Integrate leadership development into every level of the engagement pipeline. <p>Participants will leave with a clear framework, proven metrics, and practical steps to move their church from organic engagement to intentional impact—helping more people know Jesus and grow as disciples.</p>

384	Christian	Stohlmann	Family of Christ Church - Ham Lake	Ham Lake, Minnesota	Young Adult Leader/Youth Ministry Associate Mentor	The Young Adult Shift	<p>There’s a powerful shift underway: Gen Z and Millennials church attendances are growing rapidly—something rarely seen in recent years.</p> <p>As a young adult myself who’s walked through the tensions, questions, and hopes of this season, I believe now is a critical moment for the Church to respond. Whether your congregation has already seen this movement or is just beginning to sense something stirring, this session will equip you to build or strengthen your young adult ministry.</p> <p>We’ll dig into (1) why young adult ministry isn’t optional—it’s essential; (2) how to create environments for honest grappling with faith, (spiritual) discernment, and authentic community; and (3) practical steps to launch and sustain a ministry that helps young adults move from curiosity to conviction, from mere attendance to active discipleship.</p> <p>Let's get them actively into His Word and church, as they seek out truth in an age of misinformation.</p>
385	Mitch	Gowen	OShi, Aies	Aies, Hawaii	Lead Pastor	How the church can learn from Southwest Airlines, Starbucks and Cracker Barrel (and it not be what you think.)	<p>Lots of finger pointing, name calling and naysayers in the world today. The church has a unique mission and ministry. Are we up to it? It involves baggage, branding and trying to stay relevant - or does it? Are we ready to put in the work to find ourselves in the midst of all the voices and expectations of the world so we can remain true to our call8ng as unique and unreproducible miracles of God?</p>
386	Debbie	Kline	Samaritan Counseling Center	Menasha, WI	Mental Health Therapist	No Filter: Getting Real About Social Media and Your Child's Mental Health	<p>From the endless scroll of social media to the 24/7 news cycle, the internet has woven itself into the fabric of our children's daily lives. While it offers our children connection and provides information, what is its true impact on their mental well-being? This talk will explore the paradox of our children's online lives, examining how constant connectivity can contribute to anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep disruption, and the fear of missing out (FOMO). We'll explore the psychological effects of screen time and social media use, and offer practical strategies for setting healthy boundaries.</p>
387	Ken	Greimann	Campus Lutheran Church	Columbia, MO	Hospital/Hospice Chaplain	Grace for the Grieving	<p>This presentation helps others understand what grief is and what it can do to an indivual - physically, mentally and spiritually. It comes from a Christian perspective of life, death, and life after death. It is filled with time-tested steps that can be taken to help address the pain and agony of a loss and the grieving process. It can assure participants of what things are normal parts of grief. It gives godly advice on positive steps to move forward, as well as pointing out hindering aspects that are to be indentified and avoided.</p> <p>Overall, the presentation comes from a loving, caring, and encouraging approach, both from the presenter and from the God who loves us and offers us grace, healing and hope in the darkness.</p>

388	Todd	Larkin	Hearts & Hope for Uganda	Saint Peters, MO	Executive Director	A+ Mission Opportunity with the Lutheran Church of Uganda	<p>Burning Bright - The Lutheran Church of Uganda is On Fire for Jesus!</p> <p>Learn how three LCMS pastors work with the Lutheran Church of Uganda to spread the Gospel across the country and expand the Kingdom - and learn how the Holy Spirit moved within their own churches to deepen the faith and engagement of their congregants. Learn how each of their churches' desire to bless the people of Uganda also blessed and transformed their own congregations! If you have ever been curious about international missions or have wondered if there was an easier way to get involved, this is the session for you!</p>
389	Thomas	Campbell	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	St Louis, MO	Senior Vice President - Real Estate Solutions	Senior Vice President - Real Estate Solutions	<p>Property with Purpose: How congregations are transforming excess real estate into unique ministry models that generate alternative revenue sources.</p> <p>As ministry landscapes change, so must the ways we think about our surplus property. This session explores how congregations are reimagining excess or underutilized real estate into creative ministry models that both serve their communities and create alternative sources of revenue. We will explore inspiring case studies and gain practical insights to help your church transform its surplus property into a powerful tool for ministry sustainability and mission impact.</p>
390	Jason	Scheler	Hope on the Beach Church	Santa Rosa Beach	Sr. Pastor	4 Questions you need to know	<p>Most people describe the church by a worship service, program or a loving community. Is this the business we are in? If you want to reach people and develop people you need to know your what, why, how, and when about your ministry. This workshop will bring clarity and vison for your ministry and change the way you think and talk about church.</p>
391	Jason	Scheler	Hope on the Beach Church	Santa Rosa Beach	Sr. Pastor	THE LITTLE CHURCH THAT THINKS IT CAN	<p>There are many challenges in the church. One of the oldest is how do we get people to come to church and stay in church? The church has been in search for the magic bullet for growth. If we just had the right Pastor, building, style of service, program, money, etc. The early church didn't have that and yet it grew. Invite you to learn from our story of church planting with very little and how God made it grow and multiple. These principles will help you if you are planting, revitalizing, or wanting to start some kind of ministry on your own. Its time to stop limiting God and trusting to see what he can do.</p>

392	Jeanette	Dart	Calvary Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, NC (where my husband is pastor)	Jacksonville, NC	Wife and homeschooling mother	Leave No One Behind: Trauma Informed Life Together	<p>“Leave No One Behind: Trauma Informed Life Together” takes its cue from the Marines leaving no one behind in battle, dead or alive, or in normal life when facing various struggles. As Christians, let us aspire to the same thing.</p> <p>In the area of trauma, more is known now than a few decades ago. One particular study, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, showed definitively that traumatic experiences like abuse and neglect are more common in childhood than previously realized. It also showed that those experiences have long term implications for physical health, besides the risks for emotional and mental health. Research also shows a variety of tools that help and support healing. Two foundational tools include talking about experienced trauma in a safe relationship and good, safe, healthy touch within a safe relationship. These correspond well with our Christian faith, with its emphasis on speaking the truth and God's work through His Word combined with touchable water in Baptism and the touchable body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion.</p> <p>Even though it was not commonly known how many people were dealing with trauma or how that impacted health, God knew all along. With His help we can learn to speak and listen more about difficult things so that people know they are not alone. We can learn to use tools to care for one another, so that our communities are places of love and support, where no one is left behind.</p>
393	Terri	Albrecht	Life and Legacy by Design	Danbury, WI	Speaker, Coach, & End of Life Doula	Sacred Ground: The Church's Role in End-of-Life Ministry	<p>The Church has long stood on sacred ground with those who are dying, offering presence, hope, and care during life’s most vulnerable transitions. As our aging population grows, congregations have a profound opportunity to renew and strengthen this vital ministry.</p> <p>This workshop combines teaching and collaborative discussion to help you discover what end-of-life ministry can look like in your unique congregation. You'll explore ways to offer Christ-centered care, guide meaningful end-of-life and legacy conversations, and learn about Christian end-of-life doula care as a ministry model.</p> <p>Leave with practical tools and actionable steps to walk alongside the dying and their families with compassion and grace.</p>

394	Robert	Libka	Attitudinal Dynamics International, Inc. (Concordia University Chicago-Volunteer)	Lake in the Hills, IL	President	THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE	<div><div><div>- Three panelists will launch our session as they share impediments to their optimum personal effectiveness in time use.</div><div>- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - sharing</div><div>- What are your challenges?</div><div>- Panelists will share specific strategies they employ daily to achieve high productivity.</div><div>- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - sharing</div><div>- What are your strategies?</div><div>- Exploring what scripture has to say about productivity and time use.</div><div>- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - sharing</div><div>- What is God's challenge to us?</div><div>- What does research say about Time Management</div><div>- SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - sharing</div><div>- What did I learn? Who will I tell? What will be different?</div></div><div>Handouts will extend the experience, providing personal thoughts for individual reflection and devotional activities post-conference.</div></div>
395	Jeanette	Dart	Calvary Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, NC (where my husband is pastor)	Jacksonville, NC	Wife and homeschooling mother	Family: Drift in Definition, Implications, and Options	<div><div>Anyone using a map to travel off roads knows that one needs to orient the map accurately. Depending on how far one is traveling, a slight shift at the start may mean miles of discrepancy later on. A multitude of societal changes over the last decades have reshaped our culture’s accepted view of family. In other words, the map shifted.</div><div>The definition of “family” itself has slowly drifted over the generations. Several aspects of this shift, including the idea of the “nuclear family,” undermine both Christian families and homes and our life together as a Christian congregational family.</div><div>This presentation explores this definition drift and its implications for family life, and possible options. The implications and options impact our families financially, geographically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Because as Christians we are given our families and are called to be family together, these shifts in definition also carry implications for how we live together in the body of Christ.</div><div>Knowing how the family map has shifted or how the definition has drifted affords us the opportunity to adjust course. We can with God's guidance look at the situations and options which might help and chart a different path.</div></div>

396	Robert	Libka	Attitudinal Dynamics International, Inc. (Concordia University Chicago-Volunteer)	Lake in the Hills, IL	President	DISC - Exploring personalities of Men and Women in the Bible	<p>Increase your personal effectiveness by exploring your strengths, opportunities, and weaknesses in group dynamics. Further enhance your Bible knowledge by thinking about the personalities, strengths, and weaknesses of individuals in the Bible. Reflect on how you can capitalize on your strengths to increase your personal effectiveness.</p> <p>- pre-summit- Ask church workers to identify the significant personality characteristics found in the Bible and share results in my session. - opening- Share basic assumptions in personality theory. - personal investment- Complete a self-profile - dig deeper- Humorous illustrations reviewed to amplify understanding of personality differences - small group discussion- contemplate what Biblical personalities match our four key personality types. - sharethe input of other church workers on personality characteristics reflected in the Biblical narratives. - small group discussion- What can I do differently post-workshop to be more effective in working with people who have either the same or different personality profiles.</p> <p>Handouts will provide additional thoughts about God's remarkable design, devotional ideas, and more information about how to apply personality theory to daily living.</p>
397	Slade	Weaver	CCL	Phoenix, AZ	Layperson	"AI in Christianity: Ethical Engagement and Transformative Ministry	<p>This presentation will offer a faith-centered exploration of artificial intelligence (AI), providing practical insights for Christian lay leaders and congregants to use AI responsibly in ministry, rooted in values of stewardship, service, and discernment (Galatians 5:13-14, Proverbs 3:5-6).</p> <p>Session Overview</p> <p>This 45-60 minute presentation, followed by a 10-15 minute Q&A discussion, will demystify AI and demonstrate its potential to enhance ministry while emphasizing ethical boundaries. The session will provide an accessible overview of AI terminology, its common uses, and how laypeople and church workers can leverage it effectively. A key focus will be on the pitfalls of AI in relation to faith, such as the risk of over-reliance on diminishing personal prayer, scripture study, or our direct relationship with Jesus, and how to navigate these challenges to keep Christ at the center.</p> <p>Why This Topic Matters</p> <p>As AI reshapes society, Christian lay leaders and congregants must navigate its opportunities and challenges with wisdom and faith. This session aligns with the conference’s best practices focus by equipping attendees to use AI as a tool for Gospel-centered ministry while prioritizing human connection, ethical integrity, and a deepened relationship with Christ. The presentation will conclude with a Q&A to address attendees’ specific concerns and ideas.</p>

398	Jacob	Corzine	Concordia Publishing House	St. Louis, MOo	Vice President of Publishing	"Train up your child"	Every Christian parent can raise Christian children, but sometimes it’s hard to know where to start. A father of three (aged 5,3,2) and a Lutheran pastor, Jacob Corzine serves in a publishing leadership role at Concordia Publishing House. He is constantly thinking about how to pass along the faith to children - both his own and others. In this session, he’ll offer 7 practical things parents can do and say that will help their children to embrace their Christian faith as their own and not have it be overwhelmed by the distractions and false belief systems that bombard them every day.
399	Jacob	Corzine	Concordia Publishing House	St. Louis, MOo	Vice President of Publishing	Embrace your Lutheran Identity	There are lots of ways of talking about what a Lutheran is, or what "identifies" a Lutheran. No surprise that they're not all equally helpful. A common mistake is to confuse the things that identify the Lutheran Church with the things that identify the Lutheran Christian. But we the Lutherans are much harder to characterize than the Lutheran Church ought to be. That's because our identity is life and story. It's formed and shaped by God through what's preached at church about Jesus Christ. It can't be related in a few keywords or purely with reference to a book, even the Lutheran confessions or the bible! This presentation will tell some stories of real Lutheran men and women, and then offer some discussion questions to help lead a fruitful conversation about who or what is a Lutheran.
400	Blake	Warren	LCMS Office of International Mission	St. Louis, MO	Managing Director- Global Business Operations	Plug Your Congregation into International Mission	Would you like to form a long-term connection with a mission field, but aren’t sure how to start? Has your congregation cultivated multi-year relationships in an international mission field? LCMS International Mission uses a model of collaboration called the FORO to directly connect congregations, LCMS districts, mission societies and more with the work that is happening in a mission field. Currently there are FOROs established more than 15 countries, with several more actively in development. Come learn how a FORO works, the partnership benefits to congregations, and how your church can plug in!
401	Anne	Gonzalez	LCMS International Mission	St Louis, MO	Manager, Lay Missionary Recruitment	Culture & Ministry	Culture is everywhere – and often invisible. Learn about a variety of cultural dimensions, such as time orientation, how decisions are made, and conflict styles. We'll explore the implications of these cultural dimensions for the church and discuss how to manage them in ministry. Whether your congregation appears to be from a single cultural background or is vibrantly multicultural, this session can help you consider the impact of culture on your church and on your community outreach with the good news about Jesus.
402	Anne	Gonzalez	LCMS International Mission	St Louis, MO	Manager, Lay Missionary Recruitment	Discipleship through Volunteer Recruitment	Volunteer recruitment is more than just filling roles - it’s a meaningful opportunity to foster spiritual growth and engage people in the life of the Church. What would it look like to use the recruitment process as a pathway for discipleship? DCE Anne Gonzalez will highlight ways to incorporate discipleship into the recruitment process, based on her experience in parish ministry and missionary recruitment.

403	Mike	Giddings	University Lutheran Chapel	Lincoln, NE	Pastor	Finding a Campus Ministry: No Rocket Science Required	For many high schoolers and their parents, the thought of going to college can probably seem a lot like going to Mars. For many church workers, the challenge of getting college bound high school graduates connected to a campus ministry can probably seem a lot like building the rocket ship to get the student to Mars for a successful mission and then safely back home again. But connecting new college students to a campus ministry actually doesn't require rocket science. During this session, we will collaborate on simple, easy ways parents, church workers, and campus ministry leaders can partner together to make a life-long impact in the lives of our college students.
404	Dereem	Hoff	Our Savior Lutheran Church	Tacoma & Puyallup, WA	Direcor of Schools & Women's Ministry	Transforming Work with Working Genius	What if you could spend more of your working hours doing things that give you energy and less on things that drain you? What if your organization could better utilize the natural giftings of its staff and volunteers? We'll investigate The 6 Types of Working Genius by Patrick Lencioni and see how one church is using this information to transform their effectiveness, productivity, and joy, both at work and beyond. Led by a Certified Facilitator of The 6 Types of Working Genius Model.
405	Katie	Gaeta	Green Park Lutheran School	St. Louis, MO	Marketing and Admissions Director	Marketing with a Mission: Standing Out Without Selling Out	<p>In a competitive educational landscape, Lutheran schools must stand out without compromising their identity. This presentation shares how mission-driven marketing rooted in Christ and authentic community can grow enrollment and deepen trust.</p> <p>I'll share my journey from stay-at-home mom to Marketing & Admissions Director at Green Park Lutheran School, where enrollment grew from 210 to 273 students through intentional, values-aligned communication. This session isn't just a how-to; it's a testimony to the power of telling your school's story well.</p> <p>Attendees will explore how to identify their school's unique strengths, communicate consistently across platforms, and create authentic connections with prospective families. Key topics include low-cost strategies, trust-building through storytelling, and why your mission is your greatest marketing tool.</p> <p>Every message is an invitation: You are Known. Loved. Valued. When we lead with faith and clarity, we don't just grow our schools, we grow the Kingdom.</p> <p>This presentation will pique the participants' interest in digging more deeply into Pastoral Leadership Institute and its new training series, offered at no cost to ministry leaders. Here are poignant questions addressed in the training that will be covered in this session:</p> <p>Am I the kind of leader people want to follow?</p> <p>Is the ministry I lead aligned with the mission and vision of God?</p> <p>How do I best lead change that will focus more clearly on God's mission?</p> <p>How do I unite all of God's people around this change?</p> <p>How do I multiply leaders to sustain the change?</p>
406	Gerald B. (Jerry)	Kieschnick	Pastoral Leadership Institute	Georgetown, TX	Presidential Ambassador	PLI's Ben & Jerry Show with a Special Scoop of Paul	

407	Mike	Giddings	University Lutheran Chapel	Lincoln, NE	Pastor	Project 24: Orphan ministry in Kenya	Project 24 and Christ's Care for Children-Kenya are two sides of a coin that is making both a daily and an eternal difference in Kenya. Project 24 is a network of nine boarding facilities in Kenya operated by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and our partner church in Kenya, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya. The program brings stability to at-risk children who have lost one or both parents providing them housing, food, clothes, access to education, connection to the body of Christ, and the support and love that they need. Christ's Care for Children-Kenya provides for these needs as the only child sponsorship program in the LCMS. If a picture is worth a thousand words, this session will allow you to enter into a different world than your own, help you see the needs that exist, and invite you into a ministry partnership that in the LCMS is truly one of a kind.
408	Matthew	Hurtienne	H&K Advisors	Columbia MO	Founder	Strategic Leadership: Navigating the Tension Between Immediate Goals and Sustainable Mission Fulfillment	<p>Leading a mission driven organization involves a unique and often complex set of challenges that differ considerably from those faced by for-profit organizations. While for-profit companies measure success primarily through financial results, leadership in mission based organizations demands aligning a diverse group of stakeholders, each with individual priorities, around a shared purpose.</p> <p>In this session, two experienced leaders from LCMS will share their insights on effectively navigating this complex environment. They will address the inherent tension between achieving immediate, tangible results and ensuring long term sustainability to fulfill the organization's mission. The leaders will also introduce a framework for scenario planning, which can help anticipate and prepare for different futures, thus ensuring the mission remains resilient.</p> <p>Attendees will learn practical strategies for communicating with and balancing the needs of various stakeholders while maintaining a focus on the organization’s core purpose. This session is essential for any leader looking to enhance their organization's impact today without compromising its future.</p>
409	Jacob	Boessling	Concordia University Texas	Leander	VP Faith Identity and Culture	Building a Rule for your life.	Join Jake and Joe as they guide you through an ancient practice of crafting a Rule of Life. This practice becomes a guide for your daily, weekly, monthly and yearly disciplines and practices to keep you emotionally and spiritually healthy. Come to this session to gain knowledge about the ancient practice of Rule of Life, Understand the way Rule of Life has benefited others and can help change your life practices, and Begin to craft your own Rule of Life and take with you a guide to complete the work at home.
410	Kellie	Lohmeyer	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	St. Louis, MO	Manager, Administrative Support, Growth Solutions	Building Administrative Excellence to Strengthen Ministry	In many ministry organizations, administrative teams are often behind the scenes—and yet the quality of administrative support directly impacts how effectively ministry staff can serve. This session will explore how to build administrative excellence through strategic process improvements, stronger alignment across departments, and leadership skills that empower administrative staff to champion cross-ministry collaboration. Attendees will walk away with actionable frameworks to evaluate existing admin workflows, identify “quick win” improvements, and strengthen the partnership between leadership and administrative teams.

411

Lyndsay

Smokovitz

Messiah Church

Midland

Director of Communications

Practical Ways Your Church Can Impact the Community

If your church closed its doors tomorrow, would your community notice?

Maybe you do know your church needs to be involved in the community, but the question then becomes what do you do and how do you do it? We took these questions to heart and knew we needed to figure out some solutions. Since 2007, our church has launched several ministries in the community — a coffee shop, auto garage and dealership, grocery store, childcare center, job creation and appliance ministry, a healthcare clinic, roofing and ramps contracting — and soon, an affordable laundromat and auto parts store. Each ministry was created with this simple goal: meet a real need, build a real relationship, and create intersection points where people encounter Christ.

After all, Jesus said, “For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10), and that hasn’t changed for our church or for yours as we join Jesus on mission.

In this session, you’ll discover a practical, needs-based ministry model, not with the hpoe that you will copy-paste but that you will take the principles and apply them to your context. You’ll leave inspired with next steps to help your church reach the lost, serve your community, and become a place your community can’t imagine living without.

This session is presented by the hosts of The Beyond the Breakwater Podcast. If you’d like to get a taste of some of the content that will be discussed in this session, [click here](https://www.youtube.com/@BeyondtheBreakwaterPodcast/videos)

412

Ellie

Corrow

LCMS Office of International Mission

St Louis, MO

Missionary Care Specialist

Christian Care for the Whole Person

The Church's care for our neighbors is sometimes collapsed exclusively into care for their spiritual needs, or it swings to the other extreme, focusing exlusively on perceived physical needs. How do we navigate and prioritize care for people whose needs extend to their bodies and their souls? Join me as we consider James 2:15-16 and evaluate how this perspective might shape our ministries.

413	William	Dasch	Bill Dasch Ministries	Mansfield TX	Pastor	Unleashing God’s Power on Earth Through Prayer	<p>Every church can see God’s power unleashed on earth through prayer!</p> <p>In this session, you will learn how God has moved intercessory prayer to the forefront. God is calling His church to pray for others and see Him work. You will learn how to pray simple and effectively.</p> <p>In this session you will learn:</p> <p>A definition of intercessory prayer</p> <p>How to pray together, for each other</p> <p>Prayer for others in the worship service</p> <p>Prayer in families – children, adults</p> <p>Three starting points to increase prayer</p> <p>Changing the world through prayer</p> <p>The future belongs to intercessors. Presented by Rev. Dr. Bill Dasch, you will learn how to unleash God’s power through prayer.</p>
414	William	Dasch	Bill Dasch Ministries	Mansfield TX	Pastor	Praying for Others – Best Practices	<p>While there is no set formula for praying for others, Bill Dasch Ministries will share best practices in their ministry of prayer for healing and wholeness.</p> <p>In this session, you will discover and be empowered to confidently pray for people with issues in body, mind and/or spirit. You will be given examples of how to pray when people have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Cancer· Back Problems· Leukemia· Anxiety· Grief· Addictions· Marital Problems· Issues with Children· Faith· And Much More

415	Adam	Woldt	The Point	Knoxville, TN	Pastor	Hungry Stomachs Have No Ears	Hungry stomachs have no ears, but full ones just might listen. Come hear the story of two churches reimagining Christ-centered, community focused ministries meeting the needs of the hungry, the hurting, and the broken. From mobile grocery stores to health clinics, we'll give more than blueprints to copy, but vision for dreaming what could be done in your community. Come ready to discover new ideas, see your community differently, dream big, and start small.
416	Joseph	Beran	Christ Lincoln	Lincoln, NE	Pastor	Fractured: How Distraction Is Quietly Deforming the Church	We're constantly being discipled, just not by Jesus. Every ping, swipe, and scroll trains our hearts towards distractoin. The algorithms have become our new liturgy shaping what we fear, love, and trust. In this talk we will discuss how the attention economy is fracturing our focus, deforming our faith, and quietly reshaping the church. It's time to fight back, not with outrage, but with intentional formation. If the Gospel doesn't reclaim our attention, something else already has.
417	Connie	Danke	Trinity Lutheran Church	Arcadia, MI	Director of Music	Limits and Dependence in Music and Worship	<p>God created limits. In creation each day included certain limitations. Then, on the seventh day we were commanded to rest. We can only do so much, and then we either reach our breaking point or we increase our dependence on Jesus.</p> <p>Prayer is the most important part of a Music Ministry. The more we acknowledge our need for Jesus, the more we will be able to flourish.</p> <p>This workshop will include a roundtable discussion about music and worship, and how embracing our limits increases our dependence on Jesus (and how recognizing our dependence on Jesus helps us to accept our limits).</p> <p>Topics will include what to do when you bump up against limits in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Your facility- Your health- Worship planning while dealing with a pastoral vacancy- Partnership when 'breaking in' a new pastor- Time for rehearsals or cancelled rehearsals due to circumstances beyond your control

418	Laura	Montgomery	Lutheran Elementary School Assn.	St. Louis, MO	Director, Educational Resources	Our Story: How the Lutheran Elementary School Association Built an Organization to Support Lutheran Schools	<p>Across the country, Lutheran schools face shared challenges: enrollment pressures (both high and low), affordability for families, professional development needs, making their presence known in the community, and the importance of strong collaboration. One way to address these challenges is through the creation of regional organizations that unite schools for the sake of Lutheran education.</p> <p>In this session, you will hear the story of the Lutheran Elementary School Association (LESA) in St. Louis. Founded in 2004, LESA was born from the passion of business leaders and school principals who saw the power of collaboration. Today, LESA supports 38 schools through need-based tuition assistance, professional development, STEM programs, and joint marketing efforts.</p> <p>Whether you are a principal, pastor, lay leader, or board member, this workshop will equip you to imagine and implement new ways to support Lutheran education in your community.</p>
419	Rod	Lindemann	Timothy Lutheran Church	Blue Springs, MO	Retired Pastor	How to Say No and Gain Respect - A Biblical Guide to Setting Boundaries and Living with Purpose	<p>You are a person of faith with a servant’s heart. You want to love your neighbor, serve your church, and be there for your family. So, you say “yes”—to the extra project, the new ministry, the friend in need. You say yes even when you’re stretched thin and emotionally drained, fearing that to say “no” would be selfish, unloving, or a sign of weak faith.</p> <p>And yet, you feel the bitter taste of resentment and the heavy weight of burnout. You live under the tyranny of “yes,” suspecting this frantic, joyless service isn’t the abundant life Jesus promised.</p> <p>If this resonates with you, you are not alone. This book/presentation is built on a life-altering premise: a boundary-less life is not a high calling but a misunderstanding of what it means to love. The path to freedom, purpose, and more authentic relationships is found in learning the courageous and holy art of saying “no.”</p> <p>The goal isn't to reject others, but to become a wise steward of your precious life. A strategic “no” creates space for a more wholehearted and effective “yes” to what truly matters. This is the journey from being a people-pleaser to a God-pleaser, trading shallow approval for the deep respect that comes from a life of integrity. It is the courageous step into the freedom you were saved for.</p> <p>Discover the joy of a freely given yes.</p>
420	Dr. Tracie	Salgado	Lutheran Special Education Ministries	Ann Arbor, MI	Director of Special Education	Which Will Benefit My Students? Differentiation vs. Intervention	<p>Oftentimes, "differentiation" and "intervention" are used interchangeably in some circles. However, they are quite different in the approach and the impact. During this session, you'll learn the difference and specific approaches you can implement in your school and/or classroom that will help you address specific student needs. There will also be a brief introduction to next steps when either of these are not working for a few students.</p>

421	Mark	Koschmann	Concordia University, St. Paul	St. Paul, Minnesota	Vice President of Faith and Ministry and Chief Mission Officer	Effectively Engaging College Students with the Gospel	<p>Drawing from years of teaching and mentoring college students at Concordia University, St. Paul, this presentation offers a practical and theologically grounded approach for engaging young adults with the Gospel. In an age of competing worldviews and growing disconnection from institutional religion, Christian theology continues to offer a coherent framework for intellectual curiosity, spiritual formation, and vocational discernment.</p> <p>This session identifies key attributes essential for reaching today’s young adults with the message of God’s grace—addressing their longing for authenticity, purpose, belonging, and hope. Through real examples from classroom conversations, campus ministry, and congregational life, participants will gain insights into how congregations can more effectively equip, support, and mentor people of all ages, especially college students, as they navigate questions of faith, identity, and calling. Together, we’ll explore how Christ “holds all things together” (Colossians 1:17) and how the Church can form resilient disciples for life in a complex and changing world.</p>
422	Bruce	Hartung	Wellspring Center for Leadership and Wellness; Rockville, Maryland Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis		Leadership Team, Wellspring Center for Leadership and wellness; Professor Emeritus, Concordia Semina	Senior Pastor--Associate Pastor Teams: How Well Do They Work and What Can We Learn about Teamwork From the Extensive Research Conducted by the Wellspring Center for Leadership and Wellness	<p>What can we learn from the experience of all Seminary students that were placed as Associate or Assistant Pastors from 2012-2023? Might their experience help us understand team relationships and dynamics betfer? What can we learn from Senior Pastors in the LCMS who, as of mid-April, 2025, had an Associate or Assistant Pastor on their staff? Might their experience help us understand team relationships and dynamics better? The Wellspring Center for Leadership and Wellness completed two intensive studies via surveys of the Associates and the Seniors. This workshop will explore those findings and offer specific observations, implications and suggestions emerging from these two surveys. Conversation and engagement with the data in the workshop and beyond, will be encouraged. While the results are speciic to the Pastor-Associate Pastor team, the implications for all team ministry in our congregations are, potentially at least, clear. Here is a chance to go beyond narratives and individual experiences/stories and look at the big picture of hundreds of Associate, Assistant and Senior Pastors in the LCMS.</p>
423	Kari	Vo	Lutheran Hour Ministries	Saint Louis, Missouri	Theological Writer	Loving Impossible People	<p>Dr. Kari Vo is the speaker for this session.</p> <p>“Love one another as I have loved you,” Christ says. But with some people, we are left asking, How? How can I love Uncle Fred, who starts arguments over the Thanksgiving dinner table, or my next-door neighbor, whose political views are exactly the opposite of mine—and she refuses to stop pushing them on me? This session talks about practical, effective ways you can show love and maintain relationships with people who are difficult to love for many different reasons. It offers strategies that work in real life—actions you can take to create a truly loving relationship without forcing one of you to change. In today’s polarized environment, these suggestions offer a way for Christians to carry out Christ’s command effectively and with kindness.</p>

424	Richard	Gast	Lutheran Hour Ministries Float Committee	Canyon Lake	General Chairman	Infiltrating one of the largest Secular Events	75 years ago 12 Lutheran Laymen came up with an idea to have a Christian Witness Float in the annual Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. This year will be our 75th float being a gospel message not only to the 1 million people who line the 5 and 1/2 mile parade route but to millions of individuals both in the US and worldwide through the multiple TV and social media platforms. In addition to having a float in the parade, the Lutheran Hour Float Committee promotes Christian witnessing through our other activities. Looking to have our message be more than a 2 hour event 1 day a year, we have developed additional opportunites. Each year we promote a coloring contest of the Float to Lutheran Schools across the country. This K-8thgrade contest requires that both the parents and teachers sign each entry. Each year we have a line of merchandise that not only financially supports the float but provides Christian witnessing opportunites for those who purchase whether it be our Christmas Cards or our Shirts featuring our rendering on the back. Then there is the volunteer effort (Petal Pushers). What started out as a fund raising idea where we bartered volunteers to get a discount on the LHM Float, has turned into a Christian witnessing opportunity for about 4,000 volunteers to work on the LHM Float and 7 other floats in the parade. And finally, we have witness teams available at the decorating site, the parade formation area and the post parade viewing.
425	Kari	Vo	Lutheran Hour Ministries	Saint Louis, Missouri	Theological Writer	Learning to Forgive—Practical Tools to Help You Forgive People Who Have Hurt You	<p>Dr. Kari Vo is the speaker for this session.</p> <p>“Forgive, and you will be forgiven,” Jesus says. But how do I forgive someone who has never said they’re sorry? How do I forgive when the hurt goes so deep? I want to obey Jesus, but I’m having serious trouble. This presentation offers a number of very practical and effective strategies that make it easier for Christians to forgive those who have hurt them. It isn’t easy—but it IS possible, with the Spirit’s help. By the end of this session, you’ll be prepared to use one or more of these strategies to move forward on your way to a life free from grudges and resentment.</p>

426	Roberta	Richardson	Lutheran Indian Ministries	15350 W Capitol Drive Brookfield WI 53005	Ministry Coordinator	Healing the Wounds of Trauma: American Indian/Alaska Native Healing & Restoration Through Christ	Lutheran Indian Ministries (LIM) is an American Indian/Alaska Native-led ministry dedicated to bringing healing and restoration to indegenous communities across the United States. Rooted in both biblical truth and mental health best practices, LIM helps individuals identify and acknowledge the deep wounds cause by trauma, grief, loss, and other forms of harm. Freedom from cycles of harm for the individual, the family and societies are achieved through scriptural truth and Christ-centered healing. Native populations experience disproportionately higher rates of incarceration, recidivism, foster care involvement, domestic violence, sexual abuse, neglect, human trafficking, suicide, and the lasting effects of boarding school trauma. To address these, LIM utilizes the Trauma Healing Institute and American Bible Society curriculum, Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help. This 16-hour training provides more than just knowledge - it offers an avenue for deep emotional and spiritual healing though Christ and also offers equipping to participants to become facilitators of healing in their own communities. The curriculum follows the Participatory Model of "Ask, Listen, Add" which engages the learner rather than being lectured to. This approach fosters understanding, reflection, and transformation in a safe and supportive space. Activities encourage participants to share stories, often for the first time, experiencing healing though connection and biblical truth.
427	Matt	Stueber	Messiah Lutheran Church and School	Lincoln, NE	Elementary Principal	The Happiness Hub	<p>Personal Relationships is a celebrated area of strength at Messiah Lutheran School by parents, students, and staff alike. Over the past two years, our team has taken this strength to a new level with the launch of the School Happiness Hub, a committee which intentionally helps support one another through monthly activities, birthday gifts, and celebrations throughout the school year. This level of intentionality has increased a culture of love and support among our school faculty and staff.</p> <p>Come learn how you too can intentionally add some very simple, and very impactful fun to your team culture.</p>

428	Trent	Minneman	Grace Hill Lutheran Church	Omaha, NE	Director of Technology	AI Truths for the Tech-Wary	<p>"I'm not a tech person." If that's you, this session was designed specifically with you in mind. Many faithful church workers feel overwhelmed by AI—worried it's too complicated, too impersonal, or somehow incompatible with ministry values. You might fear looking foolish, breaking something, or being left behind. But what if AI isn't the threat you imagine? What if it's actually a simple tool that could help you serve God's people better?</p> <p>This gentle, encouraging session meets you exactly where you are—with no assumptions about technical knowledge and no jargon. We'll answer the basic questions you've been afraid to ask: What exactly is AI? How does it actually work? Why is everyone talking about it? And most importantly—what can it do for someone like me who just wants to be faithful in ministry?</p> <p>You'll discover that AI is more like a very fast assistant than a complicated computer program. You'll see how pastors and church workers just like you are using AI to write that difficult email, prepare Bible study materials, organize their thoughts, and handle routine tasks—saving hours every week for the things that truly matter: prayer, pastoral care, and proclaiming the Gospel.</p> <p>We'll address your concerns honestly—yes, AI makes mistakes; no, it can't replace human ministry; yes, there are wise boundaries to set. AI is here, and it can, if we chose to leverage it properly, empower us to better serve our church and our missions.</p>
429	Cathie	Humbarger	Ascension Lutheran Church/Coalition for a Better Indiana	Fort Wayne	Vice President	Creating pro-life outside the box: critical thinking, bold initiatives, and lessons learned from the past to save babies in a changing environment.	<p>With the overturn of Roe v. Wade, it would follow that abortions would cease to exist in the United States. This is clearly not the case as abortion cases continue to rise in our nation. If we cannot outlaw it outright, how then shall we creatively combat the rhetoric and defend innocent human life through advocacy and policy legislation. Technology and the abortion pill have changed the fight. This presentation will walk through some creative and successful operations that have historically limited abortions, explore some pitfalls, and call pro-life advocates to action.</p>

430	Trent	Minneman	Grace Hill Lutheran Church	Omaha, NE	Director of Technology	Advanced AI Strategies for Church Operations	<p>Churches today face mounting administrative burdens that pull staff and volunteers away from their core mission of gospel ministry. Advanced AI tools offer unprecedented opportunities to streamline operations, reduce burnout, and free up more time for meaningful ministry work.</p> <p>This session cuts through the confusion and fear surrounding AI by presenting practical, proven strategies specifically designed for church operations. Drawing from real-world implementation at Grace Hill Lutheran Church and other non-profits, you'll discover how AI can transform everything from communication workflows to volunteer coordination, from facilities management to member care.</p> <p>We'll explore AI applications that are already working in churches. You'll learn which AI solutions deliver the highest ROI for churches, how to evaluate their safety and integrity, and understand how to implement them ethically while maintaining the personal, relational nature of ministry.</p> <p>Whether you're a solo pastor wearing multiple hats or part of a larger staff team, this session equips you with actionable strategies to leverage AI as a ministry-multiplying tool. You'll leave with a clear roadmap for identifying your church's operational pain points, selecting appropriate AI solutions, and implementing them successfully while keeping Christ and people at the center of everything you do. Let AI handle the impersonal so that you can focus on the personal.</p>
431	Dave	Benson	Faith Lutheran Church- Springfield, Missouri	Springfield, MO	Pastor Emeritus	Your Congregation Can Learn to Be More Missional	<p>In this session you will discover ways to raise the level of missional understanding and participation in your congregation. Through the use of the "learning communities" model and Biblical equipping you will be introduced to a process of making your members disciples who make disciples.</p>
432	Kristie	Flohra	Lutheran Church Extension Fund	Knoxville, TN	Education Consultant, Real Estate Solutions	From Steeple to Students Transforming Underutilized Property into a Thriving Educational Asset	<p>Do you see potential in that empty church, vacant community center, or unused commercial building? This workshop is your comprehensive guide to realizing the dream of launching a new school without the expense and timeline of new construction.</p> <p>Join us to learn the practical strategies for unlocking the value of existing structures. We'll focus on the creative vision and financial planning required to turn non-traditional spaces into dynamic, inspiring, and fully functional learning environments.</p>
433	Jeff	Shanks	St John Lutheran Church and School	Ocala	Senior Pastor	Chapels and Children's Messages that Connect	<p>Stop waiting for the perfect build, and start teaching in your perfect, repurposed space!</p> <p>During this hands-on workshop we will get busy presenting new resources for 2026 as well as work together to generate ideas in real time to help deliver chapels and children's messages that engage students and connect families. Our goal is learn together and to send participants home with several ideas they can use in their chapels or worship services. This will include a vast library of resources found on our website at 48thlane.com</p>

434	Doug	Mauss	Pathfinder Church	St. Louis, MO	Pastor	The Pathfinder Principles: Four next steps for an abundant Christian life—that also have the power to stem the decline of the Lutheran church!	There’s a tension in the LCMS. Denominationally, our doctrine is terrific, yet most of our churches are dwindling. Individually, our salvation is assured, but many of our lives are unhealthy and our relationships unfulfilling. Is this because the faithful remnant is always persecuted? Or is it because we’ve lost the bold spirit of the Gospel and of Martin Luther? Pathfinder Church has found a powerful way to reconnect people with the purity of the Gospel and a redeemed and “abundant life” (John 10:10) as embodied by Jesus Christ. Come learn the four principles that have allowed our staff to thrive and helped our church to rebound in growth post-pandemic.
435	Doug	Mauss	Pathfinder Church	St. Louis, MO	Pastor	The Lutheran Enneagram: a law/gospel tool to guide healing and spiritual growth	What if 89% of the people in our congregation are missing out on the Gospel, because they haven’t felt Christ’s grace for their deepest wounds? What if most discipleship programs fall short, because they treat sanctification as a one-size-fits-all process? Ephesians 2:10 says that we are individually “God’s finest craftsmanship.” We’re not mass-produced on an assembly line; we’re uniquely known to God! I believe that we only truly know justification when we understand exactly which wounds of ours Christ healed through his stripes. I believe that spiritual growth looks like rediscovering God’s unique design for each of us. Come understand your own patterns of holiness and sin through the Enneagram. It will save your marriage, revive your ministry, and help you become an authentic, grace-based follower of Christ, with an exponential impact on His Kingdom.
436	Michael	Scheer	Center for Liturgical Art	Seward, NE	Director	Seeing is Believing: Liturgical Art in an Age of Distraction	You've heard that "Seeing is believing," but the oft omitted conclusion to that quote is "but feeling is the truth." In a world where our eyes are constantly glued to screens, how can the Church help people see, and more importantly feel the sacred again? “Seeing Is Believing: Liturgical Art in an Age of Distraction” explores how beauty and visual art can cut through digital noise to engage the eyes and the hearts of a people who desperately crave authenticity and meaning. Through beauty and presence, liturgical art can refocus our attention and proclaim the saving grace of Jesus Christ through our liturgical practice.
437	AJ	Mastic	Pathfinder Church	Ellisville, MO	Pastor of Weekend Ministry	Preach Better: How to Build a Collaborative Process for Creating High-Impact Messages	<p>Preaching is a craft to be honed, but how much better can we really get when we're writing ALONE week after week?</p> <p>We'll discuss best practices from Pathfinder Church on how to bake COLLABORATION and input into each step of the sermon creative process; from conception to post-delivery feedback. AJ will share specific examples and templates that you can use with your people to open the door for higher-impact series and messages.</p> <p>If you want to grow as a preacher, deliver high quality messages more consistently, and coordinate better with your team, let's talk about how a more collaborative process can help.</p>

438	Adam	Osier	Free Lutheran Bible College	Plymouth, MN	Dean	The Value of Lutheran Higher Education	<p>My intent would be to speak on the topic of biblical higher education and the need for a solid grounding in biblical studies and ministry training. Located in Plymouth, MN. the Free Lutheran Bible College is a school that trains about 115 students each year in order to establish them in the eternal and inerrant word of God for a life of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful service in his kingdom. We offer two degrees, a bachelors and associates degree in Bible and Ministry. Roughly 40% of our curriculum is exegetical studies, and 30% of our curriculum is focused on systematic theology taught from a Lutheran perspective. The rest of our classes center on helping students understand and communicate that Word. We would love to be able to present our mission to the attendees of your conference.</p>
439	Christine	Escobar	Crown of Life Lutheran Church	Sun City West	Coordinator of Care Ministries	You Are Not Alone: Organizing Care Ministries that Really Care	<p>Our congregations are full of people quietly carrying heavy loads, grief, illness, caregiving, tech frustration, even a leaky faucet that keeps them up at night. This session is a practical, Christ-centered blueprint for launching or strengthening Care Ministries, so no one slips through the cracks. You’ll see how we structure four nimble teams, Love Meal, Visiting, Handyman, and Technology, under one coordinator who connects needs to gifts, closes feedback loops with pastors, and sustains care beyond a single visit.</p> <p>You’ll leave with ready-to-use tools: role descriptions, intake and follow-up scripts, a simple triage/matching flow, a first 90-day plan, volunteer pipelines, boundary/safety guidelines, and a “signals of need” checklist (worship absences, caregiver stress, recent widowhood). We’ll share stories, mistakes, and minor tweaks that have had a significant impact, including free grief support groups that welcome the wider community and re-engage people through prayer, presence, and practical help.</p> <p>If you have the gifts of leadership, mercy, or helps, or you shepherd those gifts, this session will help you build a culture where love is organized, care is consistent, and every act points to Jesus.</p>

440

Beth

Truett

Concordia University Chicago

River Forest, IL

Project Leader, Center for Gerontology

Elderhood is a Life Stage Not an Age: Refocusing Ministry For, By and With Older Persons

Rooted in Christian theology and accepted gerontological principles, Specialist in Aging Ministry (SAM) is a new training curriculum developed by the Center for Gerontology @ Concordia University Chicago. It examines some of the complex factors involved in ministry for, by and with older adults. It offers church workers and volunteers an opportunity to view aging through a gerontological lens and consider how including older adults in all aspects of congregational life can deepen everyone’s faith, foster well-being and emotional resilience and utilize the wisdom and experience that older persons can offer.

The workshop will provide an overview of the six-module SAM course, comprised of 90-minute sessions which include devotions, presentations and group discussions. Topics covered range from spiritual and mental health and caregiving to demographic perspectives, ageism, isolation and loneliness, dementias and preparing for a good Christian death. The curriculum includes short readings, a congregational readiness assessment, a resource guide for group exercises and a template to create a community resources flyer.

SAM was piloted in congregations by Concordia in 2024 and revised in 2025 based on the evaluation of nearly 70 participants. It has been recognized as a meaningful research pilot by the Gerontological Society of America. BPM workshop participants will benefit from a lecture, sample exercises using Scriptures about aging and brief time for sharing ideas and questions.

441

Jack

Kalleberg

Christ Greenfield

Gilbert, Arizona

Executive Director

Embracing the Executive Director Role in Lutheran Churches

This session will explore the untapped potential of the Executive Director role and other executive operational leadership roles within Lutheran churches, a role that is well-established in many non-denominational settings but often less commonly utilized in our context. Drawing from my own experiences transitioning into this role at Christ Greenfield Church, we’ll discuss how an Executive Director can streamline church administration, align ministry strategies, improve ministry execution, and free up pastoral staff to focus more on spiritual leadership. By the end of this talk, attendees will have a clearer understanding of how this role can be a valuable asset in their own congregations.

442	Carol	Flanary	Lutheran Counseling and Family Services of WI	Wauwatosa, Wisconsin	CEO	My Favorite Book Says We're All Adopted!	<p>Addressing the Adoption Crisis: Raising Awareness</p> <p>In this compelling talk, Carol Flanary, CEO of Lutheran Counseling and Family Services of Wisconsin and Kate Feiertag, Adoption Coordinator at LCFS, explore the decline of adoption’s prominence and the Church’s role in revitalizing it as a life-affirming ministry.</p> <p>In today’s culture, when young women face a crisis pregnancy, adoption is rarely considered as a viable option. Instead, abortion and single parenting dominate the conversation, often overshadowing the life-affirming potential of adoption.</p> <p>This speech addresses:</p> <p>Key insights and powerful stories from our interactive exhibitor booth at the 2025 National Youth Gathering, interacting with thousands of LCMS youth.</p> <p>The history of adoption and how we got to the point where adoption is seldom considered as an option in unplanned or crisis pregnancies.</p> <p>The critical issue that the majority of youth are uneducated about adoption.</p> <p>Societal factors that have led to this point. Information a birthmother will receive when she looks to the internet, AI, or a pregnancy resource center when facing an unplanned pregnancy.</p> <p>The role the church must play in reshaping perceptions to promote adoption as a compassionate, faith-aligned choice.</p>
443	Matt	Markey	Elevate Community Ministries/ Messiah Lutheran	Midland, MI	Director Pivot Point/ Elevate Community Ministries	Ministry Meets Business 2.0: Faith That Fixes Things	<p>Over the past four years, Matthew Markey has been deeply involved in PivotPoint’s evolution from a small, faith-driven job-skills program into a multifaceted ministry that restores dignity, provides employment, and meets community needs. While he didn’t found PivotPoint, Matthew helped launch the construction arm and has shaped programs, culture, and vision across the organization.</p> <p>In this session, Ministry Meets Business 2.0: Faith That Fixes Things, Matthew shares how PivotPoint blends entrepreneurial ministry with real-world business to create meaningful opportunities. He highlights lessons in intentional program design, organizational culture, innovation, and faith in action — showing how mentoring, hands-on work, and community-focused projects like appliance repair, construction, and laundromat expansions can transform lives.</p> <p>Attendees will gain practical strategies to integrate faith into business and ministry, cultivate culture, and respond creatively to community needs. This session is ideal for ministry leaders, nonprofit and church staff, and anyone seeking actionable ways to let faith guide work, build people, and create lasting impact.</p>

444	Jolene	Siebarth	Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Jenison MI	DCE - Youth and Family Ministry	Serving with Students and More!	As caring adults, you play a vital role in guiding and equipping students to live out their faith through service. In this session, we'll explore practical ways to connect students with meaningful service opportunities—both inside and outside the church—that help them grow spiritually, build character, and reflect Christ's love in their communities. Whether it's through summer servant events, missions, local outreach, or simple acts of kindness, our goal is to inspire and empower young people to become active, compassionate servants in God's kingdom.
445	Daniel	Puls	Shepherds Canyon Retreat Ministry	Whittier, CA	Clinical Psychologist	Humans in the Image of God; Trinity in Union	After nearly three decades of practicing counseling and psychology, it has been my desire to bring insight,healing, comfort and wisdom to people. I have come to recognize how the three primary domains of human function; thoughts, feelings and behavior incredibly overlap the characteristics of the Trinitarian nature of God. In seeking to understand, know and relate to people (who are made in the Image of God), it seems we can also know, understand and be in relationship with God Himself. In this seminar, I explain and illustrate how I utilize my model of Primary Personhood in counseling and my perspective on life in general. "I've never thought of it that way before..." is the most common response I hear after I have spent the first 20 minutes with a new client. I hope you can gain a new perspective of yourself, others and of God.
446	Cathie	Humbarger	Ascension Lutheran Church/Coalition for a Better Indiana	Fort Wayne	Vice President	Simple Civics: why faith leaders, pastors, and churches are called to engage.	When people of faith abdicate their influence in the political arena, we allow the secular influences to be the primary voice in advocacy, legislation, and policy creation. Our Founding Fathers did not want the state to rule over the church, but they did want the church to play a role in government. There is a spiritual price to political silence. This interactive session will look at how the church has played a role in politics in the past and call the faithful to engage once again.
447	Renee	Gibbs	Concordia Seminary	Saint Louis	Speaker, bible teacher, encourager	After the Choice: Post-Abortion Healing	Estimates vary, but it is likely that as many as 1/3 of all American women of child-bearing age have experienced abortion first-hand-- including many, many people in our pews. Yet they usually suffer alone in silence, afraid to speak about it even to their pastors or friends. They often haven't told anyone of their past. And with mail-order chemical abortions, this problem is only growing. After viewing the quiet but powerful video, "After the Choice," we will discuss ideas for caring for these women and men. How can we create a life-affirming church and better love her members? Renee has shown this video repeated at Concordia Seminary and at high schools to raise awareness and to equip others for compassionate ministry. Come learn how to care for these dear women and men and how to prevent others from making this choice.
448	Phil	Robarge	Tabor Church	Chicago, IL	Pastor	Beauty from the Block: Funding Creativity in Urban Ministry	In the heart of the city, creativity thrives—but funding often falls short. This session unpacks the journey of an urban church turning vision into reality through the creation of a cultural center that brings together art, community, and faith. Learn practical insights for overcoming financial barriers, building partnerships, and shaping spaces where culture and the gospel meet.

449	Anne	Hartman	Lutheran Women in Mission - LWML	Eau Claire. WI	Vice President of Gospel Outreach, Lutheran Women in Mission - LWML	Mission Grant Writing 101	<p>Is there a ministry or missionary that you support? Have you seen the Gospel being shared in a way that continues to need support so others can come to know the love of the Lord and His Word?</p> <p>Lutheran Women's Missionary League supplies financial resources and prayer support for mission and ministry all over the world, and we would like to hear about the work you know about.</p> <p>Every two years we have a process for submitting mission grant requests and choosing which grants we will put before our convention body to fund in the next biennium. Join us in this session to learn the process of applying for these grants.</p> <p>We will share the application process, the criteria used to choose the grants, and everything else you will need to know to submit a grant proposal to LWML - Lutheran Women in Mission. Lay leaders can play a vital role in a ministry's leadership team, yet often they are underutilized and fail to contribute to their fullest potential. This can happen when a ministry places the wrong people with the wrong traits in the wrong positions. A recent survey of LCMS leaders identified the key traits necessary for effective lay leadership. In this session, we'll review those findings and discuss how these traits show up (or don't) in your ministry's lay leaders, as well as how you can use this information to identify your ministry's next impactful lay contributor.</p>
450	Dave	Kuschel	Concordia Plan Services	St. Louis	Assistant Vice President	Traits of Effective Lay Leaders	<p>Making disciples is the mission of all believers. Every believer is a missionary called by God to fish for and walk alongside people to bring them to maturity in Christ. We will look at practical strategies for evangelism and discipleship that lead to the multiplication of disciple makers. These strategies apply everywhere, because they come from Jesus and were modeled by the Apostles.</p>
451	Ron	Pennekamp	Glocal Mission	Lakeland Florida	Glocal Mission Catalyst leader	Strategies for evangelizing and disciplining in your Oikos	<p>In this engaging, interactive session, participants will explore how accessibility in communication benefits everyone, not just those with visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments. Through real-world simulations and practical strategies, you'll discover how small changes in the way churches, schools, and ministries share information can make a big difference in inclusion and understanding.</p> <p>Accessible communication ensures that everyone can access and comprehend information by using tools like plain language, alternative formats (large print, audio, or sign language), and multimodal content. Participants will learn best practices such as providing captions and transcripts for videos, using high-contrast colors and readable fonts, and ensuring digital materials are compatible with assistive technologies.</p> <p>By the end of this session, attendees will leave equipped with simple, actionable steps to make their communications more inclusive - enhancing clarity, expanding reach, and embodying the Gospel's call to welcome all.</p>
452	Rachel	Potts	Lutheran Braille Workers	Yucaipa	Director of Ministry Relations and Strategic Partnerships	Are You Talkin' to Me? Communicating so Everyone can Listen	

453	John	Karle	University Lutheran Chapel	College Station, Texas	Missionary Campus Pastor	What in the World Can a Sophomore Teach Us about Campus Ministry?	<p>Last year at BPM we learned the importance of “not fumbling the freshmen.” It worked! Now we’re amazed at the difference just one of those former-freshmen-now-a-sophomore is making in reaching this year’s new freshmen. Come learn with us why peer engagement in the campus mission is critical to its success. Formulate with us a plan to provide the right support at the right time. Exit with us in hope for a bright future.</p>
454	Justin	Rossow	Trinity Lutheran Church, Arcadia, MI and Next Step Press	Arcadia, MI	Pastor	Flipping the New Member Classroom: An Experiment	<p>The experiment was born out of frustration: the same old new member class run the same way it had always been run getting the same dismal response. Show up. Fill in the blanks. Pause for questions. Put in the time and >POOF< you become a new member.</p> <p>There must be something more to equipping followers of Jesus than this.</p> <p>The initial ask was simple: take an experience designed to shape discipling leaders, translate it for a new member context, and add in gracious helpings of the Small Catechism. But the real spark came with the final parameter: Can we flip the classroom? Make the experience mostly online? Use our gathered time to debrief content rather than deliver content? Create an easy way for people to engage, even if they have to miss a meeting or two?</p> <p>So a new kind of new member class was born. New members join an online cohort, watch brief videos, read, pray, and respond to questions that help them express where they are on their journey of faith.</p> <p>In a one-size-fits-all culture, we offered enough options for people to choose what was most helpful for them. In an isolating online world, we used online content delivery to foster real community on Sunday mornings and real faith conversations during the week.</p> <p>As a result, we experienced not only increased engagement with the content of the faith, we have seen real relationships deepen as our newest members find a church home that supports their faith journey.</p>
455	Justin	Rossow	Trinity Lutheran Church, Arcadia, MI and Next Step Press	Arcadia, MI	Pastor	Discipleship in Times of Transition	<p>After six years away from local parish ministry, I began a new call at Trinity Lutheran Church in Arcadia, Michigan (on April 1, no less!). A handful of discipleship tools and attitudes helped me navigated that change.</p> <p>If you are trying to engage a new community, starting in a new role, or changing your location or job description, you’ll find something in this session to help you make that shift.</p> <p>I’ll share what I found most essential for engaging a new role in a new community. If we can move from measuring performance to measuring orientation and direction, we can find a new way forward. If we try running experiments, we can navigate change more naturally. If we lead with curiosity and delight, we’ll find more joy in our service and more options for relationship. Most importantly, if we ground any transition in dependence on Jesus, and we’ll never walk alone.</p>
456	Lorinda	Sankey	Concordia University, Nebraska	Seward	Dean	Strategies for Retaining our Educators	<p>Leaders can influence educators to stay in their schools and churches. Retention relies on leaders. Educators' employment experiences strengthen their desire to stay. Learn research-based strategies to retain educators in your school and church.</p>

457	Lorinda	Sankey	Concordia University, Nebraska	Seward	Dean	Christian Habits Every Day	The most important things - Jesus, students, heaven - are taught through our day-to-day habits and routines. Christians devote time to Jesus with Bible reading, prayer, singing, and more. This session presents teaching Jesus throughout our daily lives together.
458	Christopher	Shearman	Lutheran Development Group	Saint Louis	Executive Director	The Power of Proximity	<p>Today, many of us in the church have more choice than ever before.</p> <p>We can chose where we live, what home we live in, and by connection who we live near. These choices are not limited to where we live, but where we work, where we shop, where we serve, and where we go to church. Much has been gained from these choices. Much has been lost.</p> <p>Often these choices lead us to be geographically overextended. Our home may be in a different area than our church, our work in another, our children educated in yet another. Sports, volunteerism, shopping, each activity taking us to a different place. We find ourselves pulled by our various activities and vocations into disparate and often disconnected communities.</p> <p>There is an alternative which is itself defined by choice. To choose proximity. To chose permanence.</p> <p>Having first been served by our Savior, we are then sent by the Spirit to love and serve our neighbor. In order to serve our neighbor, we must know our neighbor. A life marked by proximity and permanence, a life lived with an irrational love of place and the people found therein, drives us to know our neighbor, and reveals new ways to love and serve them as a reflection of our God who has loved and served us.</p> <p>For me, Rev. Christopher Shearman, it led to the founding of Lutheran Development Group, a community development organization focused on bringing healing and restoration in the Dutchtown neighborhood of Saint Louis and living in the community.</p>
459	Chad	Bresson	The Table Church	San Benito, Texas	Pastor	Neighbors on Purpose: Equipping your church to live the Gospel where it matters most—right outside your door.	Missiologist Robert Moss has said "in order to most fully be the church, we must also be intimately involved in and with our neighborhoods." Jesus didn't just send His followers to distant places—He sent them into their own communities, homes, and streets. This workshop invites us to see our neighborhoods as mission fields, where the church functions as a community builder through outreach and community service. Learn how a church on the border has had far-reaching impact through creative engagement with city and community leaders as well as high school clubs. Jesus is using outreach and everyday encounters as opportunities for grace and presence where we live, learn, work, and play. Based on God's directive to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah, we have found "pursuing the peace of the city" (Jeremiah 29:7) to be an effective means of connecting people to Jesus at The Table.
460	Judyann	Gallego-Leonard	Shepherd's Canyon Retreats and River of Rest hospitality house	Wickenburg, AZ (Home in Lake Almanor, California)	Therapist	The Hidden Life of a Pastor's Wife	This is a discussion based workshop on the challenges of living in a "glass house" where others watch and judge your choices and decisions. We will be talking about how to be real, even when everyone is watching. We'll discuss how to find grace for yourself, your husband and your church. God values what is unseen more than what is applauded, so we want to find ways to protect our sacred place. We will be sharing ideas on how to let God minister to us so we can better minister to others.

461	Cheryl	Ehlers	Garuna Ministries	Phoenix, Arizona	Director of Educational Ministries	"Boots on the Ground....in Southeast Asia!"	Join us as we visit about international mission partnerships that can make a huge global difference! Garuna would love to be your "boots" on the ground as you find ways to connect in the support of God's indigenous mission troops in this region! Our focus is on mission work in Southeast Asia where Garuna Ministries emphasizes Bible training, church planting, and school/youth ministry (using local leaders) as an effective strategy for sharing the Gospel with those who have never heard or understood God's message of salvation. We'd love to visit about ways in which you might connect with our 12 Garuna Christian (Lutheran) Schools, 2500 Garuna Kid students/families, 80 Asian teachers, 200 teenage teacher aides, and 250 Luther Institute Southeast Asia adult Bible students who are growing and leading with strength in countries with wide open doors for the Gospel! "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring tidings of good things." (Rom 10:15)
462	Shelly	Schwalm	Concordia University, St. Paul	St. Paul	Asst. Prof. of Christian Ministry & DCE Program Director	What if the Church wrote creatively?	What if prayers were poetic? What if we could use our creative sense to speak to the hearts of today with the eternal promises of God? What if the Church wrote creatively to tell the unchanging story and truth of Jesus in a beautiful, captivating way? This session will look at what it means to utilize creative writing in service to the Church—for worship, prayers, and more. It will also include a workshop time to try our hand at some writing and creating together.
463	Shelly	Schwalm	Concordia University, St. Paul	St. Paul	Asst. Prof. of Christian Ministry & DCE Program Director	What do we do with college students in the Church?	College is a unique time of life in so many ways and can be a challenge for many to stay connected to the Church. Is your congregation and its leaders equipped for reaching and serving college students well? Come learn about the current generation of college students, as well as ideas and resources for reaching, encouraging, and discipling college and college-aged young adults, from those who know.
464	Boyd	Hopkins	Hopkins Ministries International	Ypsilanti, Michigan	Founder	A master class on forgiveness application	This teaching provides tools to help people who are bound by unforgiveness and trauma. We will explore a philosophy of ministry based on understanding the heart of God, the great commandments of Jesus, the role of repentance and how unforgiveness blocks our ability to experience the grace of God ourselves. We will look at the foundational nature of sin and basic temptation to turn to our own strength rather than the strength of God. Core to this teaching is the truth of Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God". We offer an immersive teaching designed to catalyze an encounter with the Holy Spirit that brings healing.

465	Cheri	Selander	Christ Lutheran Church La Mesa, CA	LA MESA	Coordinator of Youth Ministry	Good Children's Messages	<p>One of the best ways children learn to worship is by sitting with their parents each week who model what it looks like to praise and honor our God. And as a church one way to engage families in worship is to extend invitation to children to come up front during the service and talk about what is being read and learned from God's Word.</p> <p>The Children's Message is an opportunity for children to be part of the worship experience. A well prepared message that follows the Bible readings and sermon theme for the day, delivered in a lively, fun and yet respectful way during the service enables kids to be joyful worshippers and part of the body of Christ.</p> <p>Come to share in some of the best practices of good children's messages which include solid preparation, the use of props and objects, managing littles up in front of church, and how to make the words of Scripture come alive with the love and grace of Jesus.</p>
466	Michael	Lange	CNH District - LCMS and Transitional Interim Ministry of the LCMS	Livermore	President CNH District	Press the Pause Button! Consider Transitional Interim Ministry	<p>Pressing the Pause button between "Settled" Pastors creates healthy space for a congregation to reflect, consider, heal, and carefully examine where God is leading them next. It allows space to discover the right man to "pastor" them in their next phase of life. Interim Ministry has been around in the LCMS for more than thirty years and can be a tremendous blessing to congregations. Mike Lange, a District President and Toby Joeckel, an experienced Transitional Interim Pastor share the blessings and benefits that are brought to bear for a congregation through Tranistional Interim Ministry in the LCMS today</p> <p>Joeckel shares the Five phases of Transitional Interim Ministry</p> <p>Lange shares accounts and experiences gained from seven years serving as a CNH District President and twelve years on staff in a District where interim ministry has long been embraced.</p> <p>Story and testimony will be shared. Questions are welcomed. Concerns will be addressed.</p> <p>Is interim ministry right for your congregation?</p> <p>If you are a pastor, should you consider interim ministry in the future?</p> <p>Why is interim ministry especially important in today's church?</p> <p>What are the circumstances we have found where interim ministry might be especially helpful?</p>

	Wood	Christian	Hales Corners Lutheran	Hales Corner, WI	Associate Pastor - Local and Global Mission	Teams That (Actually) Work!	<p>Team ministry is a beautiful thing when it works well, but can be difficult to execute well. When teammates lead with humble hearts, real collaboration leads to ministry multiplication.</p> <p>At Hales Corners Lutheran, teaming well is a must. Everything from Weekly Worship, Sermon Planning, to Bible Studies, to Local and Global Mission utilizes the principles for healthy teams.</p> <p>Come and learn key principles for healthy team ministry that have been tested and proven through hard (but successful) work. You will also see practical results that you can bring home and put into practice right away in your ministry.</p> <p>Christian Wood and Todd Liefer are two Associate Pastors who share over 25 years of ministry experience, and are part of the dynamic ministry team at Hales Corners Lutheran.</p>
467	Woolsey	Bill	Five-Two	Texas	Founder and President	Money Problems? What Really Fuels Generosity	<p>If growing giving in your congregation feels like pulling teeth, it's not a money issue - it's a heart issue. And hearts are attracted to cause and vision. Help your church see where you're going and who you're serving so they'll help fund the ministry that gets you there. In this workshop we'll explore practical frameworks and rhythms that create buy in and clarity. Because when vision is clear, generosity follows.</p>
468							