FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Katie Kane Named 2026 LEA Outstanding New Lutheran Early Childhood Teacher

Katie Kane was selected to receive Lutheran Education Association's 2026 Outstanding New Lutheran Early Childhood Teacher Award. She is in her first year of teaching at Bethany Lutheran School in Parma, Ohio, where she teaches Kindergarten.

Ms. Kane earned a Bachelor of Science in Primary Education from Xavier University. Ministry experience related to this award that Katie has experienced is volunteering to be the assistant coach of the fifth and sixth grade volleyball teams at Bethany, which was a great opportunity to interact with older students and share the faith through athletics.

Katie has found joy in her teaching. She said, "My greatest joys as I work with my students are forming relationships with them, watching them finally understand something that they've been working on, and watching them grow closer to God. I love getting to know my students on a personal level and hearing about their lives outside of school. I also love getting to see their "ah ha" moments when they are learning something new or I teach them something in a different way than before and they finally get it. One of the greatest joys of all though is helping them grow closer to God, and watching them use what they've learned to practice their faith on their own."

Ms. Kane has not escaped challenges. "My greatest challenge as an educator in a Lutheran ministry is helping the students and families that are not a part of the faith to fully embrace what we are teaching and to feel the goodness of God. I believe most of the families understand the value of Christian education, because they chose to send their students to our school, but a lot of them don't fully understand the deep value of what we are teaching their children. The students are also only getting information and practice with the faith within the school, which makes my job more challenging in a way because of how much more important what I do is."

Katie's nominator, said, "Katie's ability to build positive relationships fosters a strong sense of community in and out of the classroom. Instructionally, Katie excels at meeting each student where they are, using a wide range of developmentally appropriate strategies to help every child grow and thrive. Her classroom is a dynamic space of hands-on learning, rooted in best practices and guided by her deep commitment to student success. Most importantly, Katie's teaching is centered on Christ. Her classroom is a place where Jesus is present in words, actions, and heart."

One colleague said, "I have worked alongside Katie through a variety of situations, including student and parent concerns. In each instance, she has demonstrated professionalism, respect, and thoughtful communication. In her kindergarten classroom, students know they are loved, safe, and valued. Katie intentionally teaches God's Law while continually pointing students to the comfort of forgiveness and grace through Jesus Christ. Through her Christ-centered example, her students are growing not only academically but also in their faith and love for Jesus."

Katie's personal mission statement is "to be the best person I can be and to help others whenever and however I can. My goal in life is to make a positive impact on every person I meet, even if it's something small. My parents are the most giving people I know, always looking out for others, and I want to be just like them in this way."

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