



## LCMS Summit considers challenges, blessings of smaller congregations

*By Roy S. Askins*

A group of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) national and district leaders gathered June 25–26 in St. Louis for a “Smaller Congregation Summit” to discuss issues facing the Synod’s smaller congregations.

The statistics are sobering. LCMS congregations with an average weekly attendance fewer than 50 account for 45% of the Synod’s churches. It’s hardly unique to the LCMS. Recent studies suggest

that weekly or nearly weekly church attendance in the U.S. has declined from 42% to 30% among Americans.

The Rev. Dan Galchutt, executive director of the LCMS Office of National Mission (ONM), said these realities are well-known across the Synod. In his portion of the 2023 LCMS Annual Report, he wrote that LCMS district and Synod staff had “identified [the] need to address the challenges and opportunities of smaller congregations.”

In addition, 2023 Resolution 1–02A, adopted by the Synod in convention, calls for aiding small congregations and multi-congregation pastors and parishes. The June 25–26 summit is one outcome of these ongoing efforts.

The Rev. Dr. Mark Wood, ONM managing director for Church Planting, Renewal and Support, opened the summit and set the tone with a quote from Martin Luther. Luther wrote that although the church “is a tiny little flock of the most wretched, forlorn, and hopeless men,” the church does not look for external evidence of success, but to the Word of God and the Sacraments. “If the church is still not in evidence, you should remember that our blessings are hidden and that their magnitude cannot be perceived in this life” (LW 6:149).

“The goal of this summit is to identify issues, not to seek out solutions,” Wood noted. “The issues we identify will be addressed later by smaller congregations, their pastors and their lay leaders, people who understand the dynamics of smaller congregations.”

Summit attendees began by acknowledging common challenges of smaller congregations. For example, lack of financial assets can make calling a pastor and providing for him and his family difficult. They noted how some attitudes within a congregation can hamper opportunities to join with or support other congregations.

In addition, it is all too easy for smaller congregations to feel alone and isolated. On the other hand, summit attendees noted that smaller congregations also have their own strengths, such as high levels of success at passing the faith on to the next generation.

The Rev. Dr. Ken Schurb, LCMS Central Illinois District executive for evangelism and missions, said that smaller congregations often “get a shot in the arm” when they participate in conferences that allow them to meet others like themselves. In so doing, they learn that they are not alone.

After initial discussions, attendees split up into eight working groups to begin identifying areas of challenge and opportunity for smaller congregations. These groups then reported back to the full group with a number of topics for ongoing discussion; resource preparation; and study by LCMS entities, congregations, pastors and laypeople.

Next steps will include forming smaller congregation working groups. The groups will consider challenges, organize and develop resources, and communicate these tools to the rest of the Synod.

*Posted Aug. 26, 2024*

# PRESCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS



Registrations for 2024-2025 are now being accepted. Children who will be 3 years old by June 1, 2024 (T/TH 2-day class), and those who will be 4 years old by August 1, 2024 (M/W/F 3-day class or Monday through Friday 5-day class), may register for their respective classes to begin this Fall. Please call the preschool at 419-337-8471 or email any questions to [emmauschristianpreschool@yahoo.com](mailto:emmauschristianpreschool@yahoo.com).



Field Trip to Leaders Farm  
October 2nd (Rain Date Oct. 9th)  
9:00-11:30 am



Family Fun Night  
Pumpkin Carving  
October 19 from 2:00-4:00 pm

Students are having fun with our little preschool mascot, Ash.



Visit us at:

[emmauschristianpreschool@yahoo.com](mailto:emmauschristianpreschool@yahoo.com)  
[emmauschristianpreschool.webs.com](http://emmauschristianpreschool.webs.com)  
[www.facebook.com/EmmausChristianPreschool](https://www.facebook.com/EmmausChristianPreschool)



If you do not have giving envelopes and would like them for the coming year 2025, or would like to make a change, please leave your name in the office, call or get in touch with Karen Grieser, (419 445 8361), Sue Boysel or Mary Behnfeldt. Thank you.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

BE SEEN. BE CONNECTED. BE INFORMED.

**Thursday, Oct. 10, 2024**

**5:30 pm**

Elders Team  
Preschool Team  
Trustees Team

**6:30 pm**

Emmaus Council



## EMMAUS FOOD PANTRY

**Thursday, October 17**  
**4:00 pm Discipleship Meeting**  
**5:00-7:00 pm Food Pantry**

Items needed:  
Brown Paper Bags

Join Us For  
**Trunk or Treat**



Wauseon AA Group  
will be hosting a Trunk-or-Treat  
at Emmaus  
Saturday, October 26th  
4:00—6:00 pm

Reformation  
Sunday



Reformation Day is October 31.  
and will be observed at our regular  
10:00 am Service on Sunday, October 27.

**OFFICE HOURS**



**Fall-Spring  
Office Hours are**  
Monday—Thursday 8:00 am—1:00 pm

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES—September 12, 2024

Opening Devotion was read from Jesus Calling by Sue Boysel and an additional devotion was read by Bev Schlosser with 7 members in attendance.

Minutes, August 8, 2024 were approved as written.

Pastor's Report Membership Numbers: Baptized: **254** Communicant: **202**

### Administrator Report:

- Worship services are complete through November.
- Guest pastors are scheduled through the end of December.
- October newsletter will be printed on September 25.
- Fall-Spring office hours are Monday – Thursday 8:00 am – 1:00 pm. Closed on Fridays.

### Financial Officer's Report:

- Financial Review  
August offerings 8,130.87  
August expenses 6,593.64  
Positive net 1,537.23  
YTD income vs. expenses negative 7,525.32  
General Fund 98,419.94  
Parsonage proceeds 184,017.88

### Education Team Report:

- Tante Lovins reported that Sunday School has begun for the new school year. Curriculum is planned for the year. The team has added a song that will be practiced each week and have requested that once a month the song will be sung as a sing along at the end of the last service.

### Elder's Team Report:

- Roger reported Pastor Joel Morgan has 2 potential Interim Pastors to fill our vacancy.
- Roger has contacted Zion Ridgeville to see if they are interested in sharing a pastor. Zion had a council mtg on Monday night, they will meet with Pastor Scheiwe to hear the pros and cons of dual parish.
- Guest Pastors for September:  
September 1 Ted Rellstab  
September 8 Ted Rellstab  
September 15 Dale Kleimola  
September 22 Dale Kleimola  
September 29 John Schinkel
- Guest Pastors for October:  
October 6 Dale Kleimola  
October 13 Ted Rellstab  
October 20 Terry Cripe  
October 27 Ted Rellstab

### Discipleship Team Report:

- Sue Boysel reported the food pantry had 26 cars, 76 people served.

Trustee Team Report:

- Leo Rabe reported work on the parking lot will begin on Sept 23 with grinding and will conclude on Sept. 24 paved. Discussion on what to do with preschool parents entering and exiting.
- Ceiling has been fixed.
- Leo is getting a quote for LED bulbs- discussion on whether or not the bulbs are already LED, Bev will look into it.

Preschool Team Report:

- Enrollment T-Th 2, M-W-F 6, M-F 1 (2 children withdrew and chose public school)
- Chapel will be held 2 times a month- looking for church volunteers to assist. A sign up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board.
- Family Fun Night will be held once a month. The first will be held September 21 at 5pm. There will be a volunteer sign-up sheet.
- Will be holding Little Caesar's Pizza fundraiser soon.
- Planning on holding a Trunk or Treat, consider partnering with Wings of Change.
- Current balance as of today 9/12/24 \$27,718.36

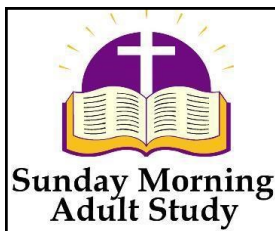
Committee Reports:

- Sign Committee- Tante Lovins reported that the committee met to discuss clarity of slides on the sign. The committee edited the slides and deleted un-needed signs.
- Call Committee- Council discussed how to proceed with the Call Committee. It was suggested that we follow Pastor Bob's suggestion of involving the whole congregation in the call process.

***A motion was made and passed unanimously to include the whole congregation as the Call Committee.***

Closed meeting at 7:40 pm with the Lord's Prayer in unison followed by the benediction

Next Meeting will be **October 10 @ 6:30 pm**



**SUNDAY ADULT  
BIBLE CLASS**

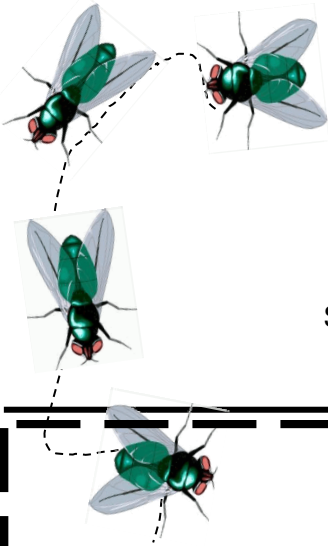
Sunday mornings at 8:30 am  
Please join us!

**CHILDREN'S**  
*Sunday School*

Beginning October 6 Children's Sunday School Class, for 3 years old and up, will be from 8:30—9:30 am in the Emmaus room.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for volunteers to teach the class.

If you have any questions, please see Tante Lovins or Adriane Baldwin.



## FLY ON THE WALL

Thanks to those who painted the fellowship hall and the 2 special guys who waxed the floors. It looks amazing.

Thanks for those who continue to donate to the food pantry.

Special thanks to those who helped with the preschool family movie night by donations of food and help setting and cleaning up.

Stewardship minute....

### **Under New Management**

When a business such as a restaurant changes ownership, we may see a sign that reads, “Under New Management.” The restaurant will often change the menu, the service, and even the décor. The old restaurant is hardly recognizable. So it is with our lives in Christ. St. Paul writes, *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20). In essence, we live under new management. The old godless person is hardly recognizable as the new person in Jesus is created. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). God is now in control of our lives. We have a new Father, master and a new purpose: to live for Christ.

Jesus Christ, Savior and Lord of the world, alone meets our needs perfectly. His love, given as He sacrificed Himself for the world conquering death and sin, is the “drawing power”—drawing us away from selfish desires and sinful habits and pulling us to real peace and joy in Christ. His love changes the direction of our lives from self to Him Who has made and redeemed us all. Living for Christ allows no room for self-love that denies the priority of God and of service to others both within and outside our congregation. The compelling love of Christ pulls us away from a gratification of our old nature and of sinful desires or of seeking security in earthly things and human ingenuity and strength.

God’s love is the energizing power so essential to every life. Christ’s love summons us to a secure and joyful life of repentance, forgiveness, and fruitful service. Indeed, *“Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died”* (2 Corinthians 5:14 NIV). Under Christ’s new management, we *“no longer live for [ourselves] but for Him Who died and was raised”* (2 Corinthians 5:15). As new people in Christ, we see our blessings as gifts from God that are to be used to serve Him by loving and serving others. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we recognize our time, talents, and treasures as tools to be used in ways to advance God’s kingdom.

We do not wear signs that read, Under New Management, but our thoughts, deeds, and purpose give evidence to the new management. We have new attitudes and new actions.

### EMMAUS VISION

**CARING LIKE JESUS , WE WALK WITH OUR  
NEIGHBORS, SO THEY MAY SEE THE SAVIOR.**



**Prayers for our Emmaus Family:**

Grace Clair  
Jeff Flory  
Barb Franklin  
Jamie Hanson  
LaTishia Horrell  
Roseanna Parsons  
Joyce Plassman  
Tiffany Prayter  
Linda Prather  
Leo Rabe  
Barb Shannon  
Our Emmaus Family  
Our Emmaus Preschool  
Our Inactive Members

**Prayers for Relatives and Friends of Emmaus:**

Carlan Badenhop  
Pastor Steve Geske  
Rodney Kurth (*Norma Kurth's Son*)  
Marcia Mattin (*Vickie Oberla's Friend*)  
Ted Mirabal (*Jennifer Rodriguez's Father*)  
Ken Prater (*Bev Schlosser's Friend*)  
Sharon Prather (*Don Prather's Sister-in-law*)  
Jim VonDeylen (*Leone Huner's Brother*)  
Derek Wilson (*Karen Wilson's Son*)  
Ted Wright (*Roseanna Parsons' Brother*)  
Kelsey Wyse (*Renee Wyse's Daughter*)  
Dale Yackee (*Darl Beachy's Friend*)  
Tammy & Rick (*Darl Beachy's Friends*)

**Prayers for our District Pastors:**

Pat Kramer (*Pastor Kramer's Wife*)  
Rev. Logan Scheiwe

**Shut-Ins**

Margaret Detter  
Linda Prather  
Chris Tuckerman

Darrel Garmenn  
Irene Rabe  
Terry Volkman

Annabelle Leupp  
Gladys Rue

Gerri O'Brien  
Barb Shannon

**L.W.M.L. NEWS**



The September 4th meeting of Emmaus LWML began with a devotion, "Service on the Side" by Deb Burma. Our Bible Study was an Interactive reading, "A Light for my Path."

Leone Huner sent cards to our shut ins in August, Dawn Sumner in September and Marilyn Dachenhaus in October. Please contact any LWML acting member if you would like to join us in sending cards.

LWML Sunday is October 6. There will be a Noisy Offering that will be used to support the mission of spreading the good news of our Savior's death on the cross promising eternity to all those who believe. All ladies are encouraged to wear purple that day, the LWML color.

Our next meeting will be November 6 at 1:00 pm. Marilyn Dachenhaus will serve as hostess and give the devotion. LWML recognizes every lady of our Missouri Synod churches as members. We are all Sisters in Christ. Please know you are always welcome to join us.

After the meeting was adjourned, our group visited the Grotto at St. Casper's. The song "A Walk in the Garden Alone" came to mind as I was trying to share my experience there. It is a place for prayer and meditation worth knowing about.

*"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works...encouraging one another..."  
Hebrews 10:23-24*

## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Nicholas Davis
- 7 Avery Baldwin
- 8 Betty Clair
- 10 Kathy Kahrs
- 23 Estella Hilyard
- 25 William Smallman



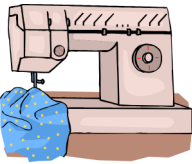
## OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

18 Brian & Adriane Baldwin

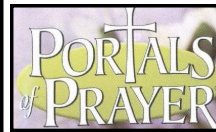
## ALTAR FLOWERS



*If you wish to provide the altar flowers to commemorate a special occasion or in someone's memory, please let the office know. The cost is \$30. Please make checks payable to Emmaus Lutheran Church and turn check into the office prior to the date.*



The Tuesday's with Arlene's Emmaus Quilters meet every Tuesday @ 9:00 am



The OCT to DEC 2024 **Portals of Prayer** are available in the church hallway. Please pick up your copy today.



Tuesday **Oct. 15**  
Please get your information to the church office for next month's newsletter.

## FREE FOOD

**Senior Commodity Box @ Fulton County Fairgrounds** 4th Monday of each month from 10:30 am to Noon. **You need to be 60 years or older to receive free healthy food and vegetables.**



Thank you to all of our members who have volunteered to deliver meals on wheels this past month. If any of our members would like to deliver the Meals on Wheels from the hospital, please contact Mary Behnfeltd at 419-337-0134. The recipients of the Meals really appreciate the lunches that they receive.

