

## **President's Commentary Fall 2024**

This edition of the Ministry Update is a response to the thoughtful question, **“What does the Northern Illinois District do, anyhow?”**

What the Lord does is perfect, but what we do is not. The Lord is faithful, even when we are faithless and try to control what we can't. Our strength and hope are in Jesus, as they have always been. We are given wisdom by the Holy Spirit...and given each other.

I can assure you that no one who serves at the NID serves with the goal of keeping a bureaucracy alive. We're serving the Lord, His Church, and His work. Serving the front line is what congregations, schools, ministries, workers (called and lay) are doing among the faithful, and for those in our communities who are disconnected from Christ and His salvation.

It's a little like as a young Pastor when I was asked, “I see what you do on Sunday, but what do you do the rest of the week?”

### **Here are some things we get to do in support of those on the front lines of the Church...**

- Visit congregations, schools, ministries, called workers and lay leaders. This is intentional and regularly to be supportive and encourage our bond of love and theological commitments in the LCMS.
- Work with congregations who are in a vacancy or are in the call process, grateful for our Circuit Visitors who serve locally and faithfully. The challenge is great with fewer workers, more retirements, and concern for who will serve in the future. And, the financial support of workers continues to stretch congregations, schools, and ministries.
- Provide Ecclesiastical Supervision, which is entrusted by the LCMS to the NID President, that we might watch our life and doctrine closely. (I Tim 4:16)
- Consult with congregations, schools, ministries, as well as with called and lay workers. Sometimes, in the midst of a crisis, but often, because most people in the church want to see ministry flourish. It's exciting to hear the ministry and mission hopes and dreams in the NID.
- Manage the roster of workers including 321 pastors; 694 teachers and administrators; 26 deaconesses; 62 Directors of Christian Education/Directors of Christian Outreach, Directors of Family Life Ministry, Director of Church Ministries; and 7 parish musicians. (This includes our retired workers and those on candidate status.)



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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

- Care for and supporting our professional church workers who have joys, sorrows, dilemmas, as well as challenges - physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Provide financial scholarships for those preparing for professional church. As a district, we support all those from across the NID who are. Some of them return to serve here!
- Represent the LCMS to the northern third of Illinois and represent the NID at various meetings of the LCMS, including the Council of Presidents, Concordia University Chicago, and most recently, at a summit on LCMS Smaller Congregations. (Almost 80% of LCMS congregations have less than 100 people in worship on a weekend.) We love and value all of our congregations, both large and small, because Jesus does!
- Encourage partnerships and relationships between congregations, schools, ministries, and local gathering of circuits.

I know that I do not do my work perfectly. I ask the Lord's forgiveness and yours. I know the NID does not do its work perfectly. None of us do, right? But, Jesus did and does! When all is said and done, we are Stronger Together, as we are led and upheld by the One who is Lord of the Church and our only Savior!

Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss

**President**

**LCMS Northern Illinois District**