



Northern Illinois District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY MINISTRY UPDATE SPRING 2026

I met my friend, Claire, not at church, but in our community. We became friends over the years, and we shared an appreciation for the same football team.

One day when we met, he stunned me by his question. “Pastor, what makes you different?” My mind went in a few different directions. “Claire, do you really want to know?” I asked. “Well, I asked you,” he replied. “Claire, Jesus is the one who makes me different.” Our friendship deepened over the years, and I found out he listened to The Lutheran Hour each Sunday morning from Chicago.

Dr. Ken Klaus was the retired Lutheran Hour speaker, and he was going to be speaking at our congregation. I invited Claire, but he said he probably would not come. So, I asked Dr. Klaus if he would do me a favor. He said, “Yes.” We piled into my car and off we went... to meet Claire. There in the community—they connected! We even took a picture! Not only did Jesus show up through Dr. Klaus, but he also cared for my friend and shared the Gospel. **All this in the Community.**

I always appreciate the beginning of Jesus' Ministry. He went to the synagogues, the Temple in Jerusalem, but also to Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, open fields, and to the mountains. He traveled to the towns and villages. He went to homes, weddings, wells, funerals, and parties. He showed up at both friendly and hostile places. He met with the religious, the hypocrites, and with the outcasts. All of them sinners in need of repentance and a Savior, just like today, just like you and me.

His suffering and death were a public matter outside Jerusalem. “So, Jesus suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify (make holy) the people through His blood. Therefore, let us go outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.” (Hebrews 13:12,13) Jesus gave people a truthful Word (Law and Gospel) wherever He found them, whether in the synagogue or in the community. **The Word of our Risen Savior works in Church and in the Community wherever He leads us!**

I love Acts 9. Jesus meets filled-with-hatred Saul and brings him to faith! Saul has been chosen by saving grace to be Jesus' instrument to carry His name and Gospel to Gentiles, Kings, and Israel! He, too, will be in synagogues, the Temple, but also palaces, homes, jails, courtrooms, and even on ships. He will enter new communities with the Good News of Jesus' Death and Resurrection, a message he once hated.



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He was no religious compromiser, but a Christ-Alone-for-salvation proclaimer.

I was taught much about ministry in the community by my Vicarage Supervisor in Northern California. Additionally, my first congregation encouraged me to be involved beyond the local church. When asked by the local fire department to serve as chaplain, the lay-leaders heartily endorsed the opportunity... a role I still have in the community in which I live. Our congregations are not islands, but Christ-proclaiming gatherings, present in the messy and sinful communities we live in. For some requests from the community, I've had to say, "No." They often understand, but there are many opportunities to say, "Yes," too, as individuals and congregations.

I am thankful for you, but especially thankful for my Savior, your Savior, Jesus!

Rev. Dr. Allan R. Buss

President

LCMS Northern Illinois District