
PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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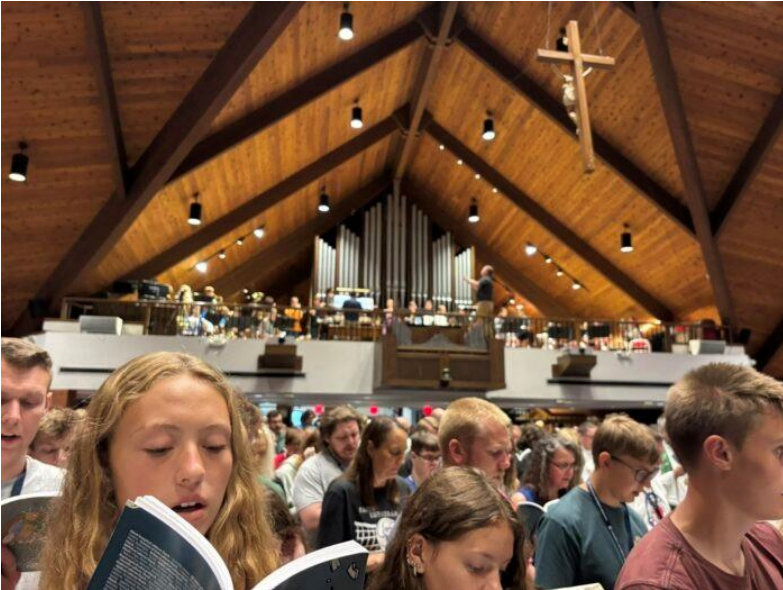
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Vacancies, Pastors and the Table of our Lord

Jesus meets with His faithful!

Whether you are being served by a called pastor or vacancy pastor, where two or three...you know the rest. Whether God is currently giving you a pastor on site or supplying you with a vacancy pastor, love God and each other. Each Lord's day Jesus says, "Come." You either do, loving Jesus and each other, or you don't, walking away from Jesus and your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Jesus meets with His faithful at His table. Jesus sat at table with His disciples most every day. What a blessing to sit at table with Jesus during our days. More and more congregations around Iowa District West and throughout our synod are returning to our historic, Lutheran, Biblical practice of the Lord's



Supper for the Lord's people each Lord's Day. Yay! Jesus meets with God's dear sons and daughters at His table to clear minds with what is true, warm hearts with godly love, heal bodies as our Great Physician, and restore souls with His cleansing blood. Such gifts! Even during pastoral vacancies!

One thousand Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod congregations face vacancies

currently. 80% of these vacancies have been for over a year. Our Lutheran Witness magazine devoted its February 2026 issue to the topic of vacancies.

Here's a few ideas for congregations as you

patiently await God's will for calling your next pastor:

- + Be flexible, willing to change service times to adapt to your vacancy pastor's schedule.
- + Continue congregational activities and check up on each other.
- + Communicate with regular bulletin and social media announcements.
- + Explore partnerships with neighboring congregations. Think short term AND long term.
- + Love your vacancy pastor and, in time, your called pastor. Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." Never adopt the godless attitude, "We'll care for our pastor conditionally – IF he does what we want or WHEN he does what we want. Instead, care for and love your vacancy or called pastor BECAUSE God has given him to you. Care for your pastor BECAUSE he is God's servant. Care for your pastor BECAUSE He brings you God's living Word; BECAUSE he sets the very body and blood of Jesus into your hand and mouth.

LW editor Stacy (Egger) Eising, who also happens to be my niece, writes: In preparation for this issue, I spoke to several district presidents, circuit visitors, vacancy pastors and laypeople about vacancies and how congregations can weather them well... Among it all was one constant refrain: Christ is the Lord of His church, and He holds you always in His tender care. No matter what the numbers may look like, we can take heart – He will never let the testimony of His Word pass from His earth.

Jesus loves your pastor and cares for your pastor's family – you can too! And each Lord's day, Jesus meets with His gathered faithful and He sits with you at table, holding you always in His tender care.

As Jesus lives,

Pastor Paul Egger