

2026 President's Equip Conference Workshops



WORKSHOP SESSIONS A

A-1 Faithfulness and AI: Building a Relational and Redemptive AI Policy

Dr. Eugene Kim (Chair of Organizational Change & Professor of Leadership, Concordia University – Irvine, CA)

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how we live, learn, and lead. This session helps participants think theologically and practically about AI's role in ministry and education. Explore how to evaluate tools through a Lutheran lens, establish healthy guardrails, and leverage technology in ways that strengthen—not replace—relationships. You'll leave with a clearer framework for leading confidently in a tech-shaped world.

Tags: AI / Technology, Leadership

A-2 Faithful Innovation in a Changing World

Eun Chu Kim (Education Executive, Christ Lutheran - Costa Mesa, CA)

Innovation doesn't have to compete with faithfulness. This session highlights how Lutheran schools can thoughtfully adopt new tools and practices while remaining anchored in Christ-centered mission. Participants will explore real examples of innovation that increase teacher capacity, improve student outcomes, and create space for deeper relationships.

Tags: AI / Technology, School Leadership

A-3 Shaping Organizational Culture

Scott Gress (President, Lutheran Coaching Network – Boynton Beach, FL) "We've always done it that way" is a reliable default mentality. Yet this and similar approaches can be the gravitational pull that gets us stuck in ministry. These often include assumptions and behaviors that hold us back and may even lead to decline. Join us in this breakout to grow in awareness of where we may be stuck and gain clarity for Biblical alternatives that by God's grace we may flourish.

Tags: Leadership, Culture, Change Management

A-4 You Carry a Movement Within You

Peter Meier (Retired Mission Executive, Hope Lutheran – Orlando, FL)

God has already placed influence in your daily life. This session invites participants to recognize their role in His mission—not just in formal leadership, but in everyday relationships. Discover how simple, intentional actions can spark meaningful impact and how to lead others naturally toward Christ in your current context.

Tags: Leadership, Discipleship

A-5 Faithful Staffing Decisions in Changing Ministry Seasons

Rusty Huseman (President, Lutheran Legal League)

Staffing decisions can be some of the most challenging moments in ministry leadership. This session provides legal clarity and practical guidance on hiring, restructuring, discipline, and termination. Participants will

learn how to protect both people and mission by creating clear processes that build trust and reduce conflict.

Tags: Governance / Legal, Leadership

A-6 Lutheran Perspective on Well-Being

Tiffany Manor (Managing Director of Wellness, LCMS – St. Louis, MO)

What does it mean to flourish as a church worker? This session explores whole-person wellness—physical, emotional, and spiritual—grounded in baptismal identity. Participants will reflect on sustainable rhythms, boundaries, and practices that support long-term health in ministry.

Tags: Wellness, Leadership

A-7 Lessons from a Griever

Heidi Wuggazer (DCE, Residential Coach at Her Song Ministry – Jacksonville, FL)

Tools for You (or Your Neighbor's) Changed world. Grief touches every ministry context. This session offers both personal insight and practical tools for walking through loss and supporting others. Participants will explore the role of lament, understand realistic expectations, and gain strategies for responding with compassion and care.

Tags: Wellness, Trauma Care

A-8 How NOT to Let Issues Prevent Relationships

Chad Lakies (Vice President & Ministry Engagement, Lutheran Hour Ministries)

Disagreements are inevitable—but broken relationships don't have to be. This session focuses on navigating conflict with clarity and grace. Learn how to communicate effectively, preserve trust, and maintain Christ-centered relationships even in challenging situations.

Tags: Leadership, Culture

A-9 Don't Be Your Authentic Self - Be Your Best Self

Jim Pingel (Dean - School of Education – Concordia University - Mequon, WI)

Growth requires intentionality. This session challenges participants to move beyond "being authentic" toward becoming their best, most effective selves. Through practical insight and reflection, you'll identify habits and mindsets that support leadership and influence.

Tags: Leadership, Wellness

A-10 My Life Through Johari's Window

Kylee French (DCE - Faith Lutheran - Merritt Island, FL)

Self-awareness is key to effective leadership. Using the Johari Window framework, this session helps participants better understand how they see themselves and how others experience them. Gain tools to strengthen communication, trust, and personal growth.

Tags: Leadership, Wellness

A-11 Making Bible the Best Part of Their Day

Becky Aviles (Teacher, Holy Cross Lutheran Academy – Sanford, FL)

Bible time should be the highlight of the day. This session offers practical strategies to make Scripture engaging, memorable, and meaningful for students. Walk away with ideas you can use immediately.

Tags: Discipleship, Elementary

A-12 Passport Adventures- Inspiring Young Minds to Discover the World

Trisha DePasquale (Teacher, Our Savior Lutheran School – Plantation, FL)

Help students explore the world through engaging, hands-on learning. This session provides creative strategies to build curiosity, cultural awareness, and connection.

Tags: Elementary, Practical Tools

A-13 Shining in the Classroom: Fostering Engagement Through Faith and Positivity

Katey Battreal and Allison Kindred (Teachers, St. Luke's - Oviedo, FL)

Explore how to create a vibrant classroom culture rooted in faith, connection, and active engagement. In this session, participants will learn how whole brain teaching methods, meaningful visual supports for faith-based learning, and collaborative classroom structures can deepen student understanding while fostering trust and encouragement. Walk away with strategies to help students actively participate, strengthen relationships, and shine God's light through learning and collaboration.

Tags: Faith Integration, Student Engagement, Whole Brain

A-14 More Than A Checklist

Cheryl Haun (Adjunct Professor, Concordia University Nebraska – Seward, NE)

Assessment in early childhood is more than checklists. Learn how to observe, document, and respond to student learning in authentic ways.

Tags: Early Childhood

A-15 Your Church's Digital Front Door- Helping Visitors Find You Online

Chris Kollmann (Pastor, First Lutheran Church – Gainesville, FL); Tais Brekke (Communications Specialist, FLGA District)

Your website is often your first impression. Learn simple ways to improve clarity, accessibility, and engagement so visitors can easily connect with your ministry.

Tags: Outreach, Technology

A-16 Flourishing on the Vertical Screen - Video-based Social Media Discipleship

Jay Winters (Pastor, University Lutheran Church – Tallahassee, FL)

Meet people where they are—online. Learn how to use social media platforms for meaningful Gospel engagement.

Tags: Outreach, Technology, Discipleship

A-17 Visual Faith® Practices in the Era of Distraction

Constance Denninger (Co-Founder, Visual Faith® Ministry)

Experience hands-on ways to engage Scripture through creative expression, helping deepen focus, reflection, and spiritual growth. Since we live with devices nearby, how can we help build a toolbox of resources that lead to creative prayer and time in God's Word to counteract the call of the "tool in our hands"? Understanding the "why and how" of the practices helps implementation for young students to adults, as well as individual and group settings. This session will be focused on prayer applications.

Tags: Discipleship

A-18 The Revelation of Jesus

Jeff Niederstadt (Pastor, Son Life Lutheran Church – Boynton Beach, FL)

Understanding the book of Revelation in today's world is important for our church workers as they engage with culture in the end times. In this workshop you will be provided with a basic overview of major themes in the book of Revelation and have the opportunity to ask pertinent questions as well. Resources for engaging with the book of Revelation will be provided.

Tags: Biblical Studies

A-19 An Excellent Task - The Pastoral Ministry according to the Pastoral Letters

Paul Deterding (Retired Pastor/Faculty Member/Adjunct Professor)

The presentation explores what the Pastoral Letters (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) teach about the pastoral office, focusing on necessity, qualifications, preparation, responsibilities, authority, faithfulness over success, and the making of a theologian. It is intended especially for pastors and others interested in the essential foundations of the church's life and mission.

Tags: Biblical Studies

A-20 Doing the #1 Thing Asked of Us

Nate Guelzow (Director of Ecosystems Master Trainer & Teacher, Multipli)

Non-Christians are often more open to honest conversations than we assume. This session explores the #1 thing non-Christians ask of Christians and offers practical ways to respond with humility, clarity, and Gospel-centered care. Participants will consider how listening well, building trust, and engaging real questions can open doors for faithful witness in everyday relationships.

Tags: Outreach, Evangelism, Discipleship

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WORKSHOP SESSIONS B

B-1 Flourishing and AI: Designing Your Own Lutheran AI

Dr. Eugene Kim (Chair of Organizational Change & Professor of Leadership, Concordia University – Irvine, CA)

AI is not just a tool—it's shaping how people think, learn, and interact. This session helps leaders move beyond curiosity into intentional design. Explore how to build a thoughtful, Christ-centered approach to AI that aligns with your mission, protects relationships, and equips your people for the future. Participants will leave with practical frameworks for integrating AI responsibly in both ministry and education settings.

Tags: AI / Technology, Leadership

B-2 Working with Complicated People

Chris Futch (Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church & School - St. Petersburg, FL); Wendy Morris (Principal, Our Savior Lutheran Church & School – St. Petersburg, FL)

Every leader encounters challenging personalities and complex situations. This session provides practical strategies for navigating those realities with clarity, compassion, and confidence. Learn how to address conflict directly, maintain healthy boundaries, and lead people effectively without losing relationships or momentum.

Tags: Leadership, Culture

B-3 Leadership - Flourishing - Wellness

Tiffany Manor (Managing Director of Wellness, LCMS – St. Louis, MO)

Join this interactive session to explore and discuss how to become an effective leader who enhances the life and well-being of your congregation. Topics will include Christ-centered decision-making, conflict resolution, and building trust among members and staff. Gain insights from experienced lay volunteer and church staff leader, Tiffany Manor, who now serves as the leader of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Worker Wellness efforts.

Tags: Church Leadership, Conflict Resolution, Worker Wellness

B-4 Burnout Recharge for Re-engagement

Roger Schwartz (Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church – Augusta, GA)

Ministry can be deeply rewarding—and deeply exhausting. This session creates space to reflect on personal challenges while offering practical pathways toward renewal. Participants will explore the role of rest, support, and identity in Christ as they reconnect with their calling.

Tags: Wellness

B-5 Faithful Leadership in Changing Times: Holding Fast to Word and Sacrament

Miguel Sanabria, Jr. and Katherine Sanabria (Pastor and Deaconess, Immanuel Lutheran Church & School – Brandon, FL)

In a rapidly changing world, leaders must remain grounded while adapting wisely. This session explores how to navigate change with theological clarity, spiritual confidence, and practical leadership strategies rooted in Word and Sacrament.

Tags: Leadership

B-6 Get One More for Jesus

Michael Mast (Mission Facilitator, FLGA District – FL); Eric Sahlberg (Executive Director, FLGA District – FL)

Sharing faith doesn't have to feel overwhelming. This session breaks disciple-making into simple, practical steps anyone can take. Learn how to focus on one relationship at a time and create natural opportunities for Gospel conversations in everyday life.

Tags: Outreach / Evangelism, Discipleship

B-7 Creating Inviting Culture: Helping Your Members Invite Others

Chris Kollmann (Pastor, First Lutheran Church – Gainesville, FL)

An inviting culture doesn't happen by accident—it's built intentionally. This session explores how to create an environment where inviting others is natural and where guests feel genuinely welcomed, valued, and connected.

Tags: Outreach, Culture

B-8 AI for Sermons & Bible Class

Rev. Dr. Brian Stolarczyk (Senior Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Cross – Port Charlotte, FL)

See how AI tools can support sermon preparation and teaching without replacing theological depth. This session demonstrates practical workflows, prompt strategies, and ways to verify content while maintaining strong engagement and integrity.

Tags: AI / Technology, Practical Tools

B-9 Analyzing and Using Data to Drive Improvement

Jon Peterson (Principal – Grace Lutheran - Winter Haven, FL); Jessica Palomaki (Educator – Grace Lutheran - Winter Haven, FL)

Data can inform powerful decisions when used well. This session helps educators identify meaningful data points, interpret trends, and apply insights to improve instruction and student outcomes. Learn how to make data manageable, useful, and actionable.

Tags: School Leadership, Practical Tools



B-10 The Other Subjects

Audra Dupuis, Dawn Lang, Josh Jones, Nelly Coleman, Valeria Duque (Teachers - Holy Cross Lutheran Academy – Sanford, FL)

Specials teachers play a critical role in student development. This collaborative session shares practical ideas and strategies across areas like art, PE, and STEAM, helping teachers strengthen engagement and effectiveness.

Tags: Elementary, Practical Tools

B-11 Making Reading Groups and Centers That Work (Tech Free)

Becky Aviles (Teacher, Holy Cross Lutheran Academy – Sanford, FL)

Reading centers and small groups can be challenging to manage. This session provides practical strategies to improve organization, engagement, and student success in literacy instruction.

Tags: Elementary, Practical Tools

B-12 Mathematizing Early Childhood

Cheryl Haun (Adjunct Professor, Concordia University Nebraska – Seward, NE)

Early math experiences build the foundation for future learning. Explore how to integrate meaningful math opportunities into everyday interactions with young learners.

Tags: Early Childhood

B-13 Revelations 7:9: Engaging the Coming Nations

Victor Belton (Coach/Mentor, REV 7:9 – Decatur, GA)

Communities are increasingly diverse. This session equips participants to build relationships across cultures and recognize opportunities for Gospel conversations right where they are.

Tags: Outreach / Evangelism, Missions, Multicultural

B-14 Trauma Is the New Mission Field

Rev. Chris Singer (President & CEO, Lutheran Church Charities – Northbrook, IL)

Many people carry unseen wounds. This session helps participants recognize trauma and respond with Christ-centered compassion, creating environments where healing can begin.

Tags: Trauma Care, Discipleship

B-15 Raising Your Congregation's or School's Profile in the Community

John List (Communications Director - FLGA District Office) Is your ministry or school a “hidden gem” in your community? This practical workshop will help congregations and Lutheran schools strengthen outreach through clear, Christ-centered communication and authentic community engagement. Participants will explore:

1. Creating a welcoming “digital front door” through social media and websites.
2. Building authentic community connections that encourage organic word-of-mouth.
3. Equipping staff and congregation members to confidently share the mission and story of the ministry or school.

Tags: Community Engagement, School Communications, Outreach & Evangelism

B-16 Motivate, Don't Manipulate

Jim Pingel (Dean - School of Education – Concordia University - Mequon, WI)

Five ways to inspire and bring out the best in others. Discover practical ways to inspire others and bring out their best without relying on pressure or control. Learn how to lead in ways that build trust and lasting motivation.

Tags: Leadership, Culture

B-17 Visual Faith® Practices in an Era of Distraction

Constance Denninger (Co-Founder, Visual Faith® Ministry)

Engage Scripture in creative and meaningful ways that deepen reflection and focus. This hands-on session introduces practices that can be used individually or in group settings. Since we live with devices nearby, how can we help build a toolbox of resources that lead to creative prayer and time in God's Word to counteract the call of the “tool” in our hands? Understanding the “why and how” of the practices helps implementation for young students to adults, as well as individual and group settings.

Tags: Discipleship

B-18 Woven Together in Christ

Deaconess Liz Borth (Deaconess, LCMS; LWML District President – FL)

In a world that often emphasizes division, Christ calls His people into unity. This session explores how men and women, with different gifts and vocations, are woven together in Christ for the sake of His mission. Participants will reflect on identity, calling, and collaboration within the Body of Christ, gaining a clearer understanding of how to live and serve together in ways that honor God's design and strengthen the Church's witness.

Tags: Discipleship, Leadership

B-19 Luke–Acts: Key Foundation in a Changing World

Greg Michael (Pastor, Christus Victor Lutheran Church & Student Center – Athens, GA)

This workshop explores the structure of Luke–Acts, highlighting Christ as the center of all history and the Church as His Body in a changing world. Participants will trace the movement of the text, uncover key implications, and apply them through guided discussion and simple case studies—equipping them to teach, lead, and live with clarity and confidence in Christ.

Tags: Biblical Studies, Discipleship

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WORKSHOP SESSIONS C

C-1 Supporting Healthy Identity and Relationships in Middle School

Megan Meissler (Executive Director, Lutheran Counseling Services - Winter Park, FL)

Middle school students are navigating major changes in body image, identity, friendships, and early romantic relationships. In this workshop, Megan will help educators better understand the developmental experiences of adolescents and the important role adults play in shaping students' self-esteem and relationship skills. She will explore how language and attitudes from trusted adults can impact body image. As well as how to support students as they begin forming romantic relationships focusing on fostering trust, healthy boundaries, empathy, and appropriate expressions of affection in age-appropriate ways.

Tags: Adolescent Development, Identity & Self-Esteem, Healthy Boundaries

C-2 Revolutionary Leadership: Courage, Clarity, and Calling in an Age of Artificial

Jim Pingel (Dean - School of Education – Concordia University - Mequon, WI)

Lead with clarity, courage, and purpose in a rapidly changing world. This session challenges participants to think differently about leadership and step into their calling with confidence.

Tags: Leadership

C-3 It is the Little Things that can make a BIG Difference

Greg Register (Principal, St. Luke's Lutheran Church & School – Oviedo, FL)

Small, consistent actions can have a powerful impact on school culture. Learn simple leadership practices that build trust, improve morale, and strengthen community.

Tags: School Leadership

C-4 Rhythm-Based Discipleship: Formation That Fits

Jacob Hoyer (Navigator, Clarity Navigator)

Discipleship doesn't need to be another program. Discover how to build faith practices into everyday rhythms, making discipleship more natural, relational, and sustainable.

Tags: Discipleship

C-5 Does What I Do Matter?

Jacob Berlinski (Pastor, Rivercliff Lutheran Church – Rivercliff, GA)

Explore how identity in Christ gives meaning to everyday work and vocation. Learn how God uses ordinary moments for extraordinary purpose.

Tags: Discipleship, Vocation

C-6 Managing Legal Risk Without Losing Mission Focus

Rusty Huseman (President, Lutheran Legal League – Jacksonville, FL)

Understand how to navigate legal responsibilities while maintaining mission focus. Learn practical strategies for reducing risk and leading with confidence.

Tags: Governance, Legal

C-7 Raising New Church Workers by Caring for the One You Have!

Greg Walton (Vice President, Grace Place Wellness & Ministry Solutions, LCEF)

Healthy ministries begin with healthy workers. Learn practical ways to support staff and build resilience within your ministry team.

Tags: Wellness

C-8q Apologetics in a Secular World

David Grining (Lay Leader, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer – Vero Beach, FL); Elaine Futch (Science Teacher, Our Savior Lutheran - St. Petersburg, FL)

Engage today's culture with confidence and clarity. Learn how to respond to questions of faith using both Scripture and reason.

Tags: Apologetics, Classroom, Family Ministry

C-9 Teaching and Preaching are not the Same

Pete LeBorious (Associate Pastor of Youth & Education, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church – GA)

Understand the differences and strengths of teaching and preaching, and how both can be used effectively to communicate God's Word.

Tags: Discipleship

C-10 Church Planting

Bernard Julmiste (Pastor, Grace Tabernacle Lutheran Church, Ft. Lauderdale – FL)

Hear real experiences from church planting and explore how God is working through new ministry efforts to reach communities.

Tags: Missions

C-11 Bridging Literacy and Science Through Picture Books

Wendy Niska (Teacher, Our Savior Lutheran School – St. Petersburg, FL)

Discover how picture books can anchor both literacy and science instruction, creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences.

Tags: Elementary

C-12 **Back to the Basics**

Sara Willocks (EC Director, St. Paul Lutheran School – Boca Raton, FL); Jessica Claxton (Teacher, St. Paul Lutheran School – Boca Raton, FL)

Explore developmentally appropriate practices that support strong foundations and reduce stress for young learners.

Tags: Early Childhood

C-13 **Joining Jesus as a Family: How to Raise Children to Be Lifelong Followers of Jesus**

Greg Finke (Executive Director, Dwelling 1:14 – MN)

Discover how families and schools can partner to raise lifelong followers of Jesus through simple, intentional practices.

Tags: Discipleship

C-14 **Hospitality Beyond Borders: Welcoming Others and Enemies**

Chad Lakies (Vice President & Ministry Engagement, Lutheran Hour Ministries)

Explore how Christian hospitality extends to all people, even in challenging circumstances, reflecting Christ's love in a divided world.

Tags: Outreach

C-15 **Mathematizing Early Childhood**

Cheryl Haun (Adjunct Professor, Concordia University Nebraska – Seward, NE)

Early math experiences build the foundation for future learning. Explore how to integrate meaningful math opportunities into everyday interactions with young learners.

Tags: Early Childhood

C-16 **Visual Faith® Practices - a Wider Lens**

Constance Denninger (Co-Founder, Visual Faith® Ministry)

This is a part 2 look at resources intended for family devotional life, individual and group Bible Study, and worship enhancement. Taking the educational research of the importance of visual-kinesthetic learning, we explore how this might apply to spiritual formation. Learn more about Faith Formation IEPs, your Bible "as diary", and the blessing of shared practices. How do practices become a lifestyle that encourages us to share the story of a life with Christ?

Tags: Discipleship

C-17 **Charitable Strategies to Maximize Impact**

Bill LaGrange (Wealth Advisor, Thrivent - Oviedo, FL)

This workshop outlines the benefits of utilizing various charitable giving solutions to help grow financial support for your ministry and increase your impact. Topics include planned giving strategies, donor-advised funds, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD), and much more.

Tags: Stewardship, Planned Giving, Ministry Funding

C-18 **What Does Disaster Relief Look Like?**

Chad Swanson (Board Member, FLGA Lutheran Early Response)

When crisis hits, the Church has a unique opportunity to serve both physical and spiritual needs. This session provides a practical look at how the disaster relief ministry works in real time—what it takes to mobilize, how to respond effectively, and how to care for people in moments of great need. Participants will gain insight into how their church can be prepared to respond with compassion, organization, and Gospel-centered care.

Tags: Missions, Practical Tools

C-19 **Growing Through Change**

Julia Heinz (Executive Director, KINDLE Servant Leaders)

Change is constant—and often challenging—but it also creates opportunities for growth. This session helps participants navigate transitions with resilience and faith, exploring how to respond to change with clarity, purpose, and trust in God's work. Through reflection and practical strategies, attendees will be equipped to move forward with confidence in both ministry and daily life.

Tags: Wellness, Leadership
