

# KANSAS DISTRICT CASE FOR SUPPORT



## ***Our History***

The Kansas District of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod was founded in 1887 with 30 congregations. One hundred twenty-one years after its inception, the Kansas District has grown to:

- ◆ 165 congregations
- ◆ 16 elementary schools
- ◆ 50 early childhood centers
- ◆ 52,065 baptized members
- ◆ 48,244 communicant members

Since the late 1800s, communities within the Kansas District have continued to change, evolve, grow and develop needs that we as Lutheran Christians must continue to address.

## ***Our Church Today***

Today, the 165 congregations of the Kansas District, together with their educational institutions and other agencies, are reaching out with the Gospel in urban and rural communities. In many cases, these communities are very different from what they were 20 years ago. Kansas has experienced an influx of people over the past two decades, many of varying nationalities. As we welcome our new neighbors, we also recognize that this presents us with new opportunities and challenges for spreading the Gospel to individuals and people groups whose cultural and native language differ from our own.

Right now, congregations in our district are working diligently to embrace new occasions to share the Good News. We continue to share the love of Jesus with those in hospitals, care centers, and prisons, on college campuses, and with those who are physically and/or mentally challenged.

As part of its overall mission, the Kansas District has a goal to assist congregations and agencies to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord to, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” To do that, our district supports the mission efforts of our congregations and agencies with resources, along with conducting mission work on their behalf. Working together as God’s people, we will continue to connect people in Kansas with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## ***Our Challenge***

Christ commissioned the church for all ages to preach the Gospel to all nations. The message of repentance and forgiveness is unchanging. Faithfulness to our Lord’s commission, to all things pertaining to His Word and the clear Confessions of our church, is a joyous and powerful calling.

Through our support and participation in the *Ablaze!* movement, we embrace the commission to assist congregations, church leaders, and special ministries throughout our communities and the world to reach out to the two out of three people on our planet who have not personally acknowledged Christ as Savior. We support the *Ablaze!* movement in its worldwide effort to initiate Gospel conversations - “critical events” - between Christians and 100 million uncommitted or unreached people.

Our district will strive to complete 500,000 “critical events” by 2017, which breaks down to one Gospel conversation annually per communicant member. We do this because as Christians we recognize our Lord Jesus instructed us to:

*“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20)*

## ***Our Needs***

The Kansas District steering committee has adopted a comprehensive and challenging *Ablaze!* Mission Plan to be implemented in 2008 through 2017. Goals have been set in three main areas: new church and mission starts, congregation revitalization, and human care ministry. The initial parts of the plan will be launched as a result of our participation in the national *Fan into Flame* campaign. Our goal for the campaign is to raise at least **\$3 million** in unrestricted gifts (\$2 million from congregations and \$1 million from major gifts).

### **New Church & Ministry Starts**

Our comprehensive Mission Plan calls for 12 new congregation starts by 2017. Areas of current population growth include the Kansas City and Wichita regions. These are obvious places to start. Our district's plans also include efforts to serve ethnic and immigrant populations. Ministry starts in these groups may account for as many as half of the new congregations. Military ministry will center on the Fort Riley base expansion.

To accomplish this comprehensive plan, the district will use *Fan into Flame* gifts over the next three to five years to initiate church planting activity. Any needs for sustaining and completing these mission goals will be planned and developed in the next three to five years by the Board of Directors of the Kansas District.

To start a new congregation today involves calling a church planter, gathering a core group, locating space, and providing equipment. The process can take from three to five years, and cost between \$250,000 and \$500,000 to complete. To support this process, our district plans to use *Fan into Flame* gifts to initiate a revolving loan fund which will eventually grow to **\$1,700,000**. This fund will be used for expenses to initially plant at least three new congregations, and meeting the larger goal of establishing 12 new congregations by 2017.

### **Revitalization of 70 Congregations by 2017**

Revitalization aims at the ongoing transformation of a congregation's life by sharpening the awareness of the congregation's setting and environment. Congregations that find themselves in decline for any number of reasons can be helped through one or more of the services below.

- ◆ Urban Ministry Outreach Workshops (\$5,000 per program) gather Kansas District congregations that find themselves in urban settings to learn how best to meet the ministry challenges and opportunities presented by an urban environment
- ◆ "We Can" Module Workshops (\$4,000 per program) are designed to revitalize the mission and outreach in rural churches. These workshops are presented by the St. Paul Institute for Education of Concordia, Missouri and sponsored by the district.
- ◆ Strategic Ministry Planning Workshops (\$500 per program) bring together members of a congregation for:
  - ◆ Intense and intentional encounter with God's Word, focused on a study of God's purpose for a congregation
  - ◆ Study of the congregation's unique situation in place and time
  - ◆ Fervent prayer for God's guidance to discern His calling amidst the challenges and possibilities of the future
  - ◆ Creating a specific ministry plan to carry out God's calling
- ◆ Foundational Fund (\$70,000) set aside for Revitalization Grants to congregations in the district for helping with coaching fees for the pastor and SMP vicar.

Our district plans to sponsor annually through 2017:

- ◆ 1 – Urban Ministry Outreach Workshop
- ◆ 4 – "We Can" Workshops (1 per region)
- ◆ 4 – Strategic Ministry Planning Workshops (1 per region)

The total cost to revitalize 70 congregations will be **\$300,000**. *Fan into Flame* will launch this mission focus, by allocating \$100,000 for the first three years.

## **Human Care Vision**

With the 2007 natural disasters – the Greensburg tornado and the flooding in the Coffeyville area – our district churches and staff have been called upon to exercise opportunities for much needed human care. When such natural disasters afflict our state, our congregations, people, and workers have great opportunity to reach out to hurting people and communities. In turn, the presentation of the Gospel takes place in a multitude of manners. We want to develop resources for disaster readiness and prepare preconceived plans for quick deployment of human and physical resources when the need arises.

- ◆ Capacity Building: \$250,000 for Mobile Command Center to be used in Kansas and other Midwest Disasters to provide on-site pastoral care and essential communications immediately following a disaster.
- ◆ Training: \$100,000 Salary and expenses for a full-time person to do congregational/individual disaster planning in the district – a one-year program.
- ◆ Congregational Preparation Grants: \$250,000 to be made available to congregations to make alterations in their physical plants to ready them to become official Red Cross Shelters (showers, etc).

We also want to provide for financial resources that would benefit church workers for utilizing the Kansas District Retreat Center. These resources would provide for a \$400,000 endowment fund to ensure that all workers might find needed respite and Sabbath.

Our total need for disaster readiness and the District Retreat Center endowment fund is **\$1,000,000**. Fan Into Flame gifts will provide the seed money for these human care projects.

## ***Fan into Flame***

Two out of every three people in the world today have no relationship with Christ! The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and its 30 church partners worldwide have initiated a mission movement to reach 100 million people by the year 2017 entitled Ablaze!. This movement will deliver hope and spiritual renewal by communicating the message of the saving Gospel and igniting the flame of faith in the hearts of people everywhere.

In order for the Kansas District to collaboratively continue ministry work in support of our people, and in response to the opportunities for new mission work God is placing before us, we plan to fund each priority area of our District Mission Plan over the next decade.

Working in partnership with LCMS World Mission, the Fan into Flame campaign is designed to help the mission objectives of the Kansas District. Fully funding the comprehensive district Mission Plan through 2017 will require not only continued annual support of the mission and ministry efforts of the district, but also *Fan into Flame* unrestricted gifts from congregations along with major gifts totaling at least \$3 million. Our district will receive 15 percent of the net unrestricted campaign gifts offered by Kansas District members. This return will help launch our dynamic Mission Plan.

Consider this appeal as your personal invitation to covenant together with the congregations, schools, ministries, missions and workers of the Kansas District in this historic effort that, with the Lord's blessing, will bring Jesus Christ into the lives of millions, as well as His renewing Word among His congregations and missions of The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.