

## **SUGGESTED FOR A PASTOR'S COLUMN IN A CONGREGATION'S NEWSLETTER**

Our congregation is a member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its Central Illinois District (CID). This membership is not absolutely necessary. Churches agreeing in the Lutheran confession of Christ, based on Scripture, should recognize church fellowship with each other. Yet they need not form an organization. Our congregation joined the Missouri Synod to do things with others better than we could do them on our own.

Like what? *On behalf of its congregations*, the Synod carries out far-flung mission programs, trains pastors and other church workers, and provides supervision and advice for them. Our District President and Education Executive play key roles in the latter. CID also operates a mission program that includes prospective church starts, ministry in Spanish, campus ministry on four state university campuses, a multi-point deaf ministry, and ministry in several prisons. All of this does what individual churches cannot by themselves.

Synod and District directly serve congregations too. The Synod develops resources in evangelism, stewardship, youth, church revitalization, and more. Its school ministry office coordinates the largest non-Roman Catholic network of parochial schools in the U.S. CID's Education Executive provides help to our schools. The District also assists churches in congregational life, evangelism, stewardship, and human care. Both District and Synod offer *services to congregations*.

Both do so even though support has diminished. In the year 2000, congregations sent \$2.32 million to CID, which forwarded much of this money on to the Synod. In 2023, CID received \$1.55 million from its member churches. The District is prepared to draw on its savings to make up possibly as much as \$224,000 in contribution shortfall in 2024, but it cannot maintain this practice very long.

Administrative belt-tightening continues at the District level. CID is getting set to move during 2025 from 2 full-time programmatic executives on the payroll to more like 1.5. Even so, possibly major cutbacks in actual mission outreach at the District level may also be necessary if CID is to keep on sending 30% of contributions received from congregations to the national Synod.

These are hard realities that every CID congregation should understand and contemplate as it establishes its budget for next year. For more, see

<https://www.cidlcms.org/resources/stewardship/WorkingTogetherForChrist.pdf>

A related video can be found at <https://youtu.be/UMB5ekFQIJ0>

Through the Synod and its Central Illinois District, there is help for your congregation to remain a faithful church in which to receive salvation from the Lord via His Gospel and Sacraments. And through the Synod and District, your congregation joins with others to reach out further with the Good News of Christ Jesus.