

What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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LC-MS Organization and Governance

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS) is organized as 35 districts across America. 33 of these districts are defined along geographic lines, and 2 are non-geographical. See Figure 1 on Page 4 for a map of those districts.

Each district has a president who oversees the congregations in his district, which are further subdivided into local circuits.

Each LC-MS district elects its president from among the pastors of the district at its triennial convention. In some districts the district president occupies a full-time position, while in others he may continue to serve as pastor of a local congregation, or of a specialized ministry (hospitals, military chaplains, social services agencies, etc.)

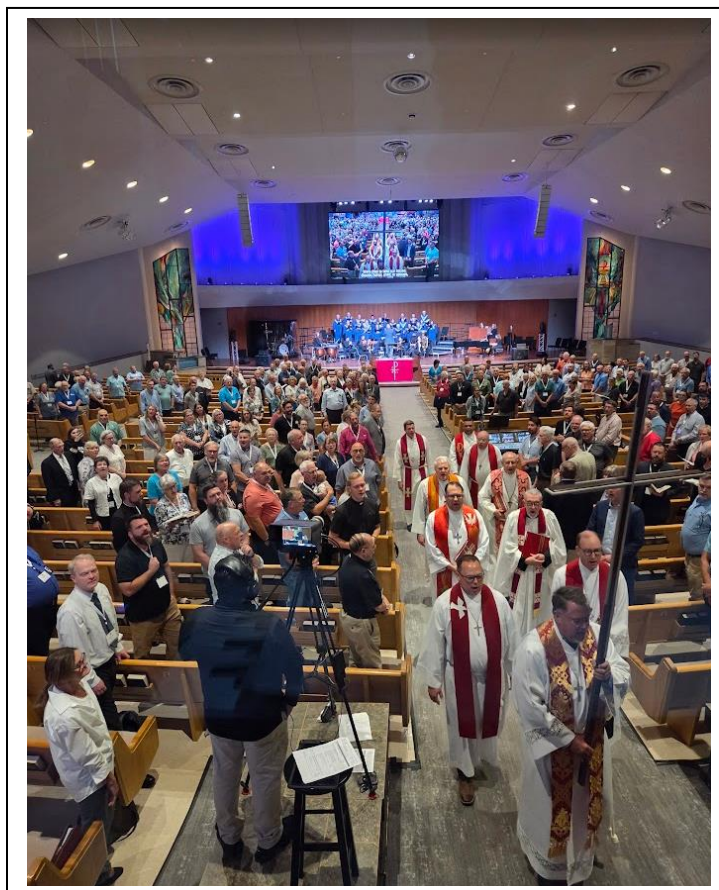
The Texas District

The president of the Texas District is [Rev. Dr. Jon Braunersreuther](#) (extra points for correct pronunciation!), elected at the 63rd TX District Convention in June 2025, succeeding **Rev. Michael Newman**, who had served as president since 2018.

Each District President oversees the district's staff, and provides ecclesiastical supervision to all church workers within the district. He also may have other duties specified in the synodical and district bylaws.

The proceedings of the 63rd TX District convention can be found here:

<https://txlcms.org/2025-texas-district-convention/>



Synodical (National) Level



The position of **Synod President** is similar to the role of *bishop* in some other church bodies, including the ELCA. The president serves as an administrator, and also as a “head pastor” of the church body, though the office of the president has no authority to establish or alter church doctrine. The current president of the LC-MS is [Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison](#). He is the 13th man to serve as president of the LC-MS since its founding in 1847.

In addition to President Harrison, [six synodical vice-presidents](#) make up the LC-MS “Praesidium.” The First Vice-President is a full-time executive who serves as an advisor and assistant to the Synod President. All VPs represent the President, and can assume the presidency in case of vacancy or incapacity, and the First VP chairs colloquy committees for pastoral and commissioned ministry. The First VP also serves as a non-voting, advisory member of the LC-MS Board of Directors

Call the COP(s)

The 35 district presidents plus the Synodical president form the [Council of Presidents \(COP\)](#), one of whose duties is to place graduates from the two LC-MS theological seminaries as pastors in congregations that have requested such a candidate. If a congregation desires an experienced pastor to fill a vacancy, the district president may suggest a list of possible candidates (gleaned from interactions with the COP as well as other sources), but the district president does not assign pastors in this case; the congregation extends a “call” directly to the pastor.

Church Governance/Polity

The LC-MS employs “synodical polity”, which combines congregationalist (local congregation-based) and episcopal (church body-based) polity. For comparison, the

Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodoxy, et al employ episcopal polity only, and nearly all independent and non-denominational churches employ congregationalist polity only.

About Conventions

The national Synod holds a triennial convention in addition to the individual district conventions. District conventions are held in the calendar year before the national one. The next national convention of the LC-MS will be in July 2026 in Phoenix, AZ. The Convention web site is <https://www.lcms.org/convention/national>

Following its founding in 1847, the LC-MS held annual synod-wide conventions. With rapid growth in the number of congregations, and the increasingly larger geographic area covered by the synod (in the early days from Iowa in the west to western New York in the northeast, and from Minnesota in the northwest to Louisiana in the south), a new synodical constitution was adopted in the latter year that split the synod into four geographical districts (Eastern, Western, Northern, and Central), each with its own annual convention, and each electing its own officers. The intent was to provide for more cooperation among congregations and pastors within the smaller geography grouping. It would also take over some of the responsibilities of the general synod and enable more ministry, service and outreach to be made with localized autonomy. These original 4 districts were further divided in subsequent years, resulting in the current 35.

(The two non-geographical districts, the English and the SELC, are the result of smaller church bodies merging with/into the LC-MS.)

And Now, A Message from President Harrison

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtSWAXfPdQ0>



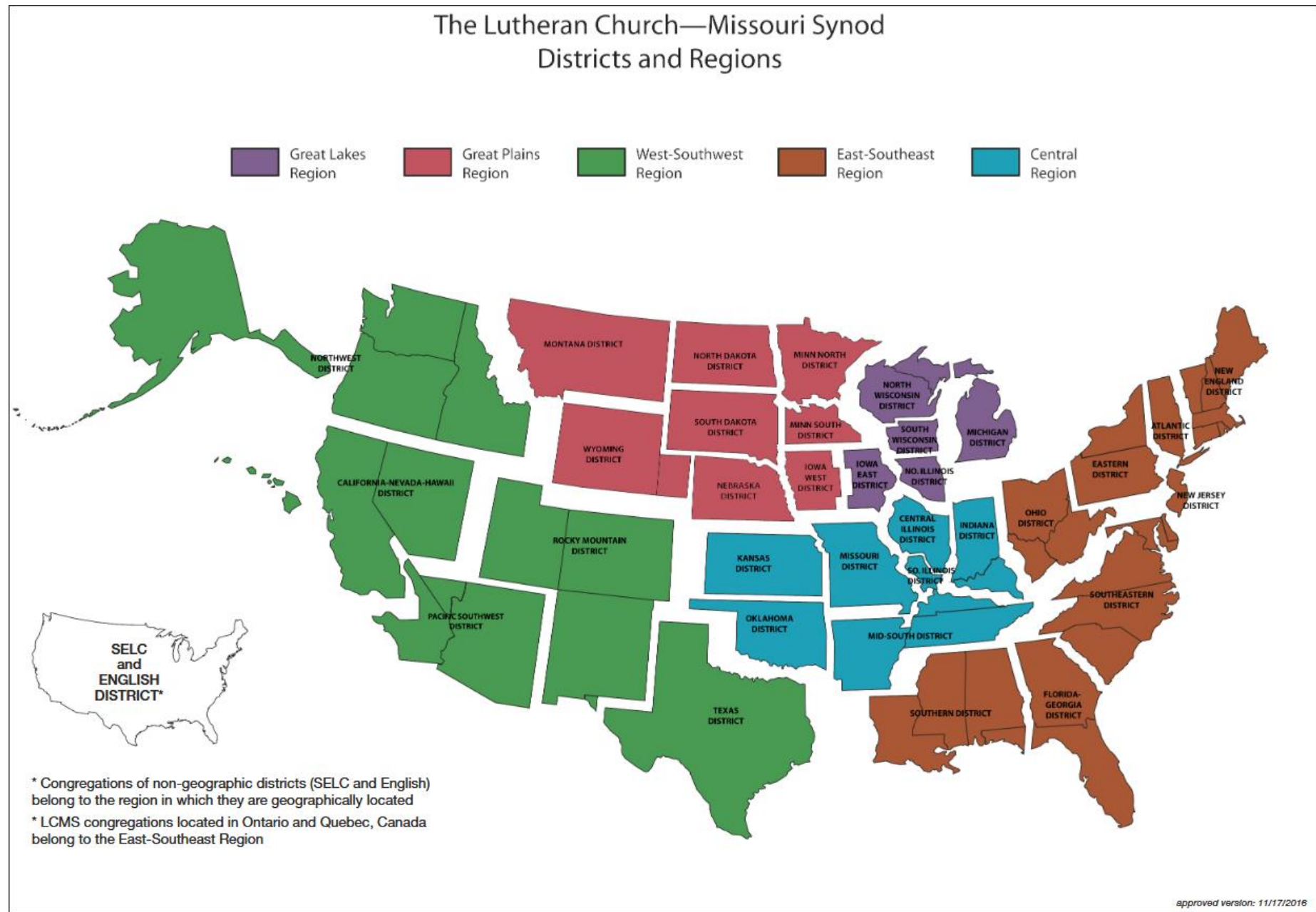


Figure 1: District Map of the LC-MS