



Sectional Descriptions

Sectional 1 – Thursday 1:00-2:00 PM

The Pastoral Vocation and the Projected Self

Rev. Dr. Justin Hanneman

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Audience: Pastors

In this sectional, Dr. Hanneman will dig deeper into the topic of vocational health within the unique experience of the pastoral role.

Building Blocks of Faith: Teaching Yahweh's Character

Sarah Salzberg

Location: Copper Top III

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs

Let's be honest, trying to teach everything in the Bible can be overwhelming. And oftentimes the stories don't even seem appropriate to be reading with middle schoolers, let alone kindergartners. Let's spend time laying a foundation with kids using the words that Yahweh has to describe Himself. Then you can build upon the base for every age level at camp with more and more stories that reveal who He is. And just as Paul says, you'll realize that those traits are the foundation of our faith because they are who Christ is.

Your Website Isn't the Front Door Anymore – How AEO Answers When People Knock

Hannah Bucholz

Location: Peaks 6-8 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Administrators

A parent asks ChatGPT for "the best small Christian schools near me for a shy kid who loves art." It gives her three names. Was your school one of them? And who wrote the sentence it read back to her? Right now, 68% of Google searches end without a single click, and AI summaries already appear on 83% of education-related searches, up from just 18% a year ago. Families aren't reading ten blue links anymore; they're reading one AI-generated paragraph and deciding from there, and most administrators haven't caught up to what that means for how their school gets found.

This session is built for school administrators who wear the marketing hat themselves, with little to no dedicated staff or budget for it. Building on last year's session on knowing yourself, your customer, and your competition, we'll bring that same framework into the AEO era. Answer engines no longer give everyone equal airtime - they show one or two schools, and they favor the ones that can state plainly who they are. The good news: you don't need a marketing department to compete here, just a few hours and a plan. This session will help you get started so those few hours aren't wasted.

Dyslexia 101

Karen Maxwell

Location: Peaks 9-10 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers

Dyslexia 101 is an introductory professional development course designed to build a foundational understanding of dyslexia and how it impacts students as learners and readers. Participants will explore the characteristics and common signs of dyslexia, understand the difference between dyslexia and other reading difficulties, and learn how dyslexia can affect reading, writing, spelling, and classroom performance.

The course will introduce participants to evidence-based practices for supporting students with dyslexia, including explicit, systematic, multisensory instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, spelling, and fluency. Participants will also learn practical classroom strategies, modifications/accommodations, and ways to recognize when a student may benefit from additional screening or intervention.

Whether you are new to the topic or looking to strengthen your understanding, Dyslexia 101 will provide practical knowledge and tools to help educators recognize, support, and advocate for students with dyslexia.

The Worth and Warning of a Second Chair Leader

AJ Vega

Location: Peak 11 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Parish Educators or DCEs

The value of any second-chair leader is high in an organization, especially in the workings of a church ministry. When working properly, ministry grows, individuals are using their God-given gifts, and the work of the church continues to spread for the sake of the Kingdom. When improperly used, the effects on the individual and the organization are grand. In this sectional, we will discuss the blessings and the warnings of what it means to be a second-chair leader, along with some encouragement and anecdotes from previous experiences to help second chair leaders in ministries thrive as God leads them.

From Me to Mission: Helping Kids See God's Bigger Picture

Liane Henkell

Location: Peak 12 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators

Are you struggling to find ways to motivate children and youth in your congregations to think beyond themselves and their own world? Have you wrestled with how to inspire them with a heart for "seeing the bigger picture" of what God is doing in the lives of others? Do you wonder how you'll find the time to research and plan meaningful, engaging activities to accomplish these goals? Garuna Ministries is here to help! Come see what God is doing on the other side of the world in Southeast Asia and learn about the FREE digital resources we offer to Lutheran schools and churches to help educate, engage, and inspire the next generation towards developing a love for global missions. In this interactive session, you'll learn more about our scripted, low-prep resources for VBS, Chapel, Sunday School, and Family Missions as we "Experience Cambodia" together!

Sectional 2 - Thursday 2:15-3:15 PM

Open, Close, and Closed Communion

Rev. Johannes Nieminen

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Intended Audience: Pastors

In this session, we will discuss an overview of the terms "open," "close," and "closed" in reference to communion practice. We will also look at a Scriptural, Historical, and Confessional application to the matter.

Let's Reach One More

Rev. Josh Krepel

Location: Copper Top III

Intended Audience: Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

Most Christians know they should share Jesus with the people around them, but many don't know where to begin. Too often, we either overcomplicate evangelism or simply tell people to "go and share" without giving them a practical way forward.

This session will equip pastors, church leaders, and everyday Christians with a simple, reproducible framework for faith conversations. Participants will learn five practical steps they can begin using immediately—and teach others to use as well. The goal is not to create expert evangelists, but to help ordinary believers confidently join Jesus in reaching the people He has already placed in their lives. If we want to see more people come to faith, we must make sharing our faith simple, intentional, and accessible. Let's reach one more for Christ.

Partnering with AHG & Trail Life

Rev. Chris & Lisa Matthis

Location: Peaks 6-8 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

American Heritage Girls (AHG) and Trail Life USA are prominent, Christ-centered scouting alternatives designed to build character and outdoor skills while reinforcing traditional Christian values. Find out what makes these programs different from other scouting programs and how they can become essential ministries of your church or school.

Church Worker Mental Wellness

Rev. Dr. Kirk Triplett

Location: Peaks 9-10 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

Ministry is hard and too often we focus on the negative things that occur in ministry. After all, we lead with our hearts and we long for our labor to not be in vain. In this engaging session, Dr. Kirk gives practical insights to combat the negative mental health aspects of ministry with strategies that build positive mental health attributes.

From Mormon to Christian

Shellie Pardoe

Location: Colorado Ballroom

Intended Audience: Everyone

Learn from Shellie about how the God of the Bible took her out of the Mormon Church.

The Frozen Mission Field: Embryo Adoption

Rachel Andersen

Location: Peak 11 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

There are currently an estimated 1,000,000 frozen embryos who were created via IVF but who have no plan for being transferred to their genetic mothers. Most of these tiny babies made in the image of God will be killed because they're "extra," or donated to science, then killed after experimentation. These little ones have no hope of hearing the Gospel and coming to the waters of Baptism without being adopted. Learn about the immense blessings of embryo adoption as well as practical tips on educating your congregation about how to care for the tiniest orphans from someone who became a parent through embryo adoption.

You are Not in Ministry Alone

Rocky Mountain District Staff

Location: Peak 12 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

Discover the people, partnerships, and practical resources your Rocky Mountain District provides to assist, resource, and engage your ministry. Meet the District staff, learn what's available to you, and see how the new District Ambassador Program is building stronger connections so no congregation serves in isolation.

Sectional 3 – Thursday 3:30-4:30 PM

Hispanic Ministries: How to Start and Sustain

Rev. Stephen Heimer

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Intended Audience: Pastors

People in Hispanic communities love being part of the LCMS. This sectional will share strategies for starting and sustaining Hispanic ministry in your congregation, even if you do not speak Spanish. Ministry in Spanish is part of our LCMS heritage, 100 years strong! Rev. Stephen Heimer, who leads LCMS All Nations Ministry and has served in Hispanic ministry for 30+ years, will share strategies and resources for this important aspect of God's mission here in the US.

Biblical Peacemaking as a Way of Life

Rev. Chris Matthis

Location: Copper Top III

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

What is the difference between conflict resolution and Christian reconciliation? How do we make confession and forgiveness a regular practice in our families and friendships? How do believers who disagree with one another live together in peace? Come and learn practical, Biblical peacemaking principles and processes for all of life.

Learning without an Answer Key

Daniel Robinson

Location: Peaks 6-8 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Middle or High School Teachers

Today's students have almost unlimited access to the answers. Google can find them. YouTube can demonstrate them. AI will generate, summarize, explain, and even complete them. Yet, just like reading a recipe isn't the same as making the cookies, having the answers isn't the same as understanding what you're doing.

This breakout will attempt to explore the value of hands-on, experience-based learning through electives such as robotic engineering challenges, art classes, and other project-based experiences. We'll look at what happens when students are asked to stop consuming information and start building, testing, failing, adapting, and trying again.

In a world where technology can produce more and more of the final product for our students, how do we create learning experiences that still require them to think, struggle, collaborate and grow?

Christian Worldview as the Foundation for Lutheran Education

Rev. Brian Flamme

Location: Peaks 9-10 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

In this sectional, Pr. Brian Flamme will discuss practical ways of developing a Christian worldview in Lutheran education through worship, devotions, curriculum, classroom conversation, and teacher development. Pr. Flamme will also argue that teaching the children to see creation through a biblical perspective is one of the greatest gifts we can impart to our school and church communities.

Strength in (Any) Numbers: Maximizing Impact with Who You Have

Kristin Highley

Location: Peak 11 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Pastors

We tend to think that "bigger is better" in any element of life, including ministry. However, while numbers are helpful, they aren't everything. This workshop takes a look at how to make the most of ministry, regardless of smaller groups. Whether you work in a classroom, congregation, or youth group, we will consider the blessings and benefits of any size group, and discuss how to embrace and enjoy working with various types and sizes of crews.

Concordia Plan Services: Q&A

Location: Peak 12 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Teachers, Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Pastors

Sectional 4 – Friday 8:30-9:30 PM

Meeting with President Maxwell

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Audience: Pastors

They're Already Using AI

Daniel Robinson

Location: Copper Top III

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers

Artificial intelligence is changing the way we plan, create, communicate, and teach; our students are already using it, too.

This breakout begins with demonstration rather than theory. We'll explore real prompts and real examples of how tools like ChatGPT and Canva can help educators create lessons, resources, images, activities, and ideas more efficiently.

As educators, our role isn't simply to embrace AI or prohibit it. Our students need adults who are willing to help them understand what these tools are good at, where they fall short, and how to use them responsibly. We don't have to be AI experts, but we do need to be willing to learn alongside our students, answer their

questions, set appropriate boundaries, and help them recognize the difference between getting an answer and developing wisdom.

Building a Healthy Ministry Culture

Spencer Peregoy

Location: Peaks 6-8 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

In 2006 Peter Drucker said “Culture eats strategy for breakfast!” It was true then, and true today. If your culture is not healthy, your mission and vision are irrelevant. Leadership is the key to building a healthy organizational culture. It does not just happen, but must be done with intentionality. Learn practical steps to implement, build and create behaviors that strengthen the effectiveness of your team and the part they play to achieve the mission and vision of your ministry.

Grace and Guidance: Christ-Centered Classroom Management

Samantha White

Location: Peaks 9-10 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: LCMS early childhood educators, elementary educators, secondary teachers, administrators, and other school professionals

Classroom management techniques should be centered on more than just rules, rewards, and consequences. Lutheran educators have the privilege of approaching classroom discipline through the lens of Law and Gospel. We can acknowledge the reality of our children’s sinfulness while also remembering that God pours out his amazing grace on them (and us!) every day. In this interactive session, we’ll discuss how LCMS teachers can have high expectations with appropriate consequences, while also creating classrooms filled with grace, forgiveness, accountability, and restoration.

Two Things the Church Doesn’t Talk About Enough

Jonathan Peterson

Location: Peak 11 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Administrators, Pastors

Money and sex are two topics that the church doesn't talk about enough. Yes, we talk about traditional, Christian, God designed ways of living. But how do we present that to our children and youth? When I was growing up, it was simply, "Do it this way because God said so." However, I was never given opportunities to put God's plan into action. In this sectional, you will be presented with a variety of ways to discuss sex and money with the students you teach, be it through Bible studies and DCE ministry or in a classroom setting.

God's Word Experienced in the Digital Age

David Schlecht

Location: Peak 12 (Summit Level)

Intended Audience: Elementary Teachers, Middle or High School Teachers, Parish Educators or DCEs, Pastors

God's Word never changes, but the ways we engage with it does. Throughout history, Lutherans have embraced new technologies to faithfully proclaim the same unchanging message—from translating Scripture into the language of the people, to the printing press, radio, television, and the internet. Today, video has become the primary language of our digital age, yet we have not kept pace with sharing God's Word in the way people consume media today. This session explores how churches, schools, and ministries can faithfully use this medium to create more opportunities for people to encounter Scripture and the truth of the Gospel. Scripture in Motion is a nonprofit animation studio dedicated to creating free, word-for-word Scripture videos and resources that equip ministries of all kinds to proclaim God's Word wherever it is being taught, preached, and shared.

Early Childhood Series – Beaver Den

Leading with Purpose: Building Strong Leaders, Strong Teams, and Strong Classrooms

Location: Beaver Den

Intended Audience: Early Childhood Educators

This series led by well-respected Broomfield early childhood leaders Shelley Jicha & Amy Jackson is designed to engage and equip ECE teachers.

Session 1: Leadership Starts with You

Developing the mindset and habits of an effective leader.

Session 2: Building Strong Teams

Creating trust, communication, and collaboration among staff.

Session 3: Leading Your Classroom

Practical leadership strategies that create organized, emotionally safe classrooms.

Session 4: Leadership in Action

Real-life communication scenarios, coaching conversations, conflict resolution, and applying leadership skills.