

LCMS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE TASK FORCE

Speakers Bureau

Rev. Dr. Richard Armstrong is the executive director of Lutheran Counseling Services (LCS) in Orlando, Fla. He is a fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and a licensed marriage and family therapist in the state of Florida. Armstrong served for over 25 years in the parish ministry of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He is co-author and trainer of the “God’s Care in Times of Crisis” and “God’s Care For Congregations in Times of Crisis” manuals; these focus on selecting and training crisis teams in Christian schools and churches to prepare for, respond to and provide aftercare in crisis situations. Armstrong and his teams have been part of Lutheran disaster response to tragedies in Denver, New York, and Washington D.C. as well as for the Florida and Gulf Coast hurricanes. He has received the Distinguished Service Award for Lutheran Schools Association of metropolitan New York and the Distinguished Alumni Award 2006 for Concordia University — Austin, Texas. In addition to serving as the executive director at LCS and conducting individual, marriage and family system therapy sessions, Armstrong also facilitates organizational consultations and leadership coaching. He is happily married to his wife, Kristi, and they have two daughters, two sons-in-law and six grandchildren.

Certified Lay Minister-Parish Nurse Karen Hardecopf

has served her congregation, Cross Lutheran Church and School in Northern Illinois District (NID), since 1996 as parish nurse-director of care ministries. As of July of 2015, Hardecopf also serves with the LCMS Health Ministries Team as the synod’s parish nursing program coordinator. Through the years, she has had experience in leadership positions for church ministries such as school board, Sunday School, building and grounds, and organist, as well as serving on NID’s human care board and other task groups. Within her community, she has worked at the local hospital and nursing home as



a registered nurse, and has volunteered on the county health department’s advisory committee, the county’s visionary task group and with flu shot clinics. For 14 years Hardecopf was the NID parish nurse representative to the LCMS, developing a core group team leadership. She has been a presenter to various parish nurse-congregational health ministry groups and at conferences.

Sandra Ostapowich serves as the conference executive for Higher Things, Inc. (a recognized service organization of the LCMS) and is currently living in Plano, Texas. Before working full-time for Higher Things, she served on their board of directors for nine years and worked as a Christian education and youth director in Loveland, Colo. She graduated with



a B.A. in theology (pre-seminary) from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Ind; an M.A. in Christian history from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.; and is currently in the process of earning her Ph.D. in Missiology from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. She has also served as a member of the Board of Regents for Concordia University — Irvine since 2010. As a survivor of domestic abuse, Ostapowich works diligently to bring awareness to the issue of domestic violence through her writing and speaking, drawing from her personal experiences.

Dr. Stephen Saunders

graduated from Northwestern University in 1991. He joined the faculty at Marquette University in 1994, where he is now professor of psychology and the director of clinical training for their doctoral program in clinical psychology. In addition to seeing patients weekly in a limited private practice, he has published over 50 articles and



made over 200 presentations regarding the mental health service delivery system, focusing on who needs treatment, who seeks treatment, how treatment is best delivered, and how to document the effectiveness of treatment. He has written about the proper integration of religious beliefs into psychotherapy. Saunders also has a book in press with Northwestern Publishing (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) entitled “A Christian Guide to Mental Illness: A Helpful Guide for Ministers and Church Workers to Recognize and Understand Mental Illness in the Parish and School.”

Deaconess Kim Schave

served as chair of the LCMS Task Force on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse. Currently, she serves as executive director of Humanitri, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization that provides housing resources to families facing homelessness and engages in jail chaplaincy work. Previously, she served as director of project and policy administration in the office of the chief administrative officer of the LCMS. Schave also served as the director of human care for the LCMS Ohio District, and, prior to serving in that role, was responsible for developing and serving as director of a pregnancy resource center in Georgia. She also started a community-based soup kitchen at a mission congregation. Schave is a certified public accountant and has served in various financial positions within institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations. Schave earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of Cincinnati and a master’s degree in religion as well as the deaconess certificate at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. She is a Ph.D. candidate studying organizational leadership with a business concentration at Eastern University near Philadelphia. Schave also serves as an adjunct faculty member in the MBA program at Concordia University Chicago.



Dr. Bernie Tonjes

graduated with a B.S.Ed. and LTD and began his teaching career at Immanuel First Lutheran in West Covina, Calif. In 1982, after completing a master’s degree in school counseling and administration, he accepted a call to Lutheran High School of St. Charles



County in St. Peters, Mo., where he spent the next 24 years serving as school counselor and teaching a broad range of classes. In 2005, Tonjes received a Ph.D. in education foundations from St. Louis University. In 2006 he joined the faculty of Concordia University Nebraska where he presently serves as associate professor of education.

Rev. Larry Vogel is the associate executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. He has served in the public ministry of the LCMS for 35 years: as a worker-priest teacher on the Rosebud Lakota Sioux Reservation, as a missionary/pastor in Queens (NYC), as pastor of Martin Luther Chapel and School, Pennsauken, N.J., and, since 2009, on the staff of the CTCR. His daily responsibilities include writing, editing, and contributing to LCMS position statements on various theological questions and societal issues. He also represents the Synod in discussions with other church bodies. He and his wife, Betsy, have three married children and five grandchildren.



Deaconess Kristin Wassilak has served as an LCMS deaconess for 29 years in both parish and institutional settings. She is the deaconess program director at Concordia University Chicago (1990–2005, 2014–) and serves part-time in a Chicago area parish. Wassilak serves on the LCMS Task Force on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse. She has served as an LCMS reconciler and on Synod and Northern Illinois District (NID) committees, the President’s Commission on Women, and NID Ministerial Health. For many years, she served on the board of directors for Word of Hope (affiliated with Lutherans For Life). She is also a past president of her professional organization, Concordia Deaconess Conference. She is happily married to Rob, her husband of 27 years; they have two children.

Please contact Deaconess Dorothy Krans at Dorothy.Krans@lcms.org if you are interested in scheduling one of these speakers for your venue.

