**Convocation Presenters:**

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**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Rev. Dr. Bryon Williams Jr.**

**Rev. Dr. Byron Williams Jr.**

**Dr. Byron Williams was appointed Head of Middle School at St. Francis Episcopal School on June 1, 2022.**

**Dr. Williams brings more than 20 years of ministry, teaching, and leadership experience at independent and public schools and local churches. He spent 11 years at The Kinkaid School where he served as eighth grade dean, middle school history teacher, and admissions pod leader. Previously, he was with Burbank Middle School where he chaired the social studies department and taught middle school history.**

**A creative and collaborative leader, Dr. Williams offers a wealth of knowledge in curriculum alignment, new teacher mentorship, professional development, and technology integration. He loves helping students and adults reach their full potential and believes that he has a lot to learn from them.**

**Thursday, July 10, 2025- 10:15 am**

**"When students perform on stage, succeed in the classroom, or get their hearts broken, they feel real happiness, gratitude, and pain. They're not preparing for real life, they're living it," he says.**

**Dr. Williams holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Xavier University of Louisiana and a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.  A lifelong learner, he earned his doctorate in education with a focus on curriculum and instruction from Texas A&M University. He received The Kinkaid School's Columbiana Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2016 and was named Burbank Middle School Teacher of the Year in 2008.**

**Workshop Presenters:**

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AI-generated content may be incorrect. Presenter: Sisters in the Spirit (SIS)**

**Ms. Michelle Pitts, DCE**

Michelle Pitts has served as a Director of Christian Education and Outreach in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for 14 years and holds a master's degree in professional counseling. She has also worked with children in the Gwinnett County Schools for 9 years. Currently, she is the facilitator of Sisters in the Spirit (SIS), where she uses her Christian Education, counseling and caring skills to inspire and encourage participants in their faith journeys. She invites others to engage in workshop discussions and share their wisdom and stories to enrich this opportunity for communion.



**Presenter: LifeWise Academy**

**Mrs. Rebecca & Rev. Terry Tieman**

Rebecca Tieman is the Program Director for LifeWise Academy in Cordova, TN. She and her husband, Rev. Dr. Terry Tieman, have been doing ministry together for over 40 years.

Rebecca has a Bachelor’s Degree in Education from Concordia Teachers College, Seward, NE and a Master’s Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She has taught  various grades in K-8 Lutheran Schools in Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee. She also taught Intensive English for Internationals at the University of Memphis for 12 years and ESL in the public schools in Memphis for the past 10 years.

This past year, after retiring from teaching, she began serving as the program director for LifeWise Academy at Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, creating logistical plans with local schools and principals, securing transportation and drivers, hiring teachers, and registering students in order to share the Gospel with their community.  Currently, over 80 students from 4 area schools (covering Grades 1-12) are receiving Bible education during the school day through LifeWise Academy.

A close-up of a person with her hand on her chin

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**Presenters:**  **Ms. Nikki Rochester - Berea Lutheran Church, Baltimore Md**

**Mrs. Shirley Jackson - Transfiguration Lutheran Church, St. Louis Mo**

**Workshop Title:** ***ARE YOU MAKING A DIFFERENCE? (YOU Can!)***

**Description:** This workshop challenges participants to recognize and address factors in their congregational life that might be limiting the commitment of CURRENT members as well as outreach to the NEXT generation.

Nikki serves as convener for the Black Ministry Think Tank and Information Coordinator for the Southeastern District Coalition of Lutherans in Black Ministry.  She is the author of the CPH publication "Harvest Waiting:  Reaching Out to African Americans".

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**Presenter: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of The Lutheran Hour**

**Workshop Title:** **Equipping the Next Generation for Spiritual Conversations**

**Description:** Join the conversation and help equip the next generation to authentically share what’s most important, with wisdom and grace.

Michael began serving as Speaker of The Lutheran Hour in October 2018. Prior to that, he served as a pastor in St Louis, Missouri. Before becoming a pastor, he served as an aircraft maintenance officer in the Air Force. Michael grew up in a military family, moving eleven times before he finished high school. He graduated from the U. S. Air Force Academy in 2001 with a general engineering degree and served 5 years in the Air Force. He left active duty in 2006 to prepare to be a pastor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, completing a Master of Divinity in 2010 and a Ph.D. in 2014. He continues to serve part-time as an Air Force Reserve officer at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, and as a guest instructor at Concordia Seminary. Michael and his wife, Amy, have four children. Amy is a Lutheran educator by training and works with local refugees and immigrants to connect them with Christian communities. She enjoys being a catalyst for events aimed at strengthening bonds between family and friends.

**Convocation Preachers:**

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***Rev. Stephen A. Wiggins Sr. Bio***

The Reverend Stephen Albert Wiggins Sr. was born in 1961 to Reverend James and Katie (deceased) Wiggins Sr. Stephen and his three siblings’ upbringing were deeply Christian and directly tied to the Lutheran Church. His father, Rev. James Wiggins, Sr. was ordained in 1959 and his brother, James Jr. (deceased) in 1986. He wrestled with his desire to be a teacher like his mother or a preacher like the men in his life. For two years, he did in fact teach. The Lord however desired to use him for a greater purpose and redirected his path to pastoral ministry in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

His credentials include a Bachelor of Science Degree and Lutheran Teacher’s Diploma from Concordia Teacher’s College – Seward, Nebraska in May of 1982. He later received in May of 1988 the Master of Divinity Degree from Concordia Theological Seminary – Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Pastor currently serves as President of the Black Clergy Caucus. He has previously served as an adjunct professor at Concordia University – Irvine, California and as shepherd of congregations at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church – Charlotte, & Vacancy Pastor of Crown In Glory Lutheran Church – Salisbury, NC; Redeemer Lutheran Church – Grand Rapids, MI; as well as the LCMS North American Missionary for the Atlanta, GA region. Prior to accepting the call to Saint Paul, Rev. Wiggins served as Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church – East Point, GA for nineteen years.

He has also served the LCMS as a Circuit Counselor, a member of the Board for District & Congregational Service 1998 – 2004, Black Lutheran Advisory School Team (BLAST) 1996- 2010, Lutheran Child & Family Services of Michigan Board of Director 1998- 2002

During the course of his first year at Saint Paul, he has reminded us that we are a community church, tasked with adhering to the Great Commission as we seek to bring others to Christ. We look to the days ahead as pastor and people, working together….” We extend outreach to unbelievers, exalt praises to God, commune with our earthly family, enlighten believers in God’s Word, and engage in service to the community.”

Pastor is married to the former Annetta Scott of Chicago, Illinois; together they have two adult children, Danielle Marie and Stephen Jr.

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**Rev. Byron R. Williams Sr.**

It might seem surprising to some that it took a hurricane to get Byron Williams Sr., a native Texan, to return to his home state. After a decade of service at Trinity Lutheran Church in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana Hurricane Katrina devastated the Ninth Ward and scattered Trinity's members. Pastor Williams returned reluctantly to Houston, TX where he was born and raised.

God showed that the body of Christ and the gospel are not bound by physical or political boundaries when he allowed Rev. Williams to become the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Dallas, Texas, where several of Trinity's members had already been worshipping for months.

Who is Rev. Byron Williams, Sr.? He is a husband, a parent, a pastor, and a patriot. He and his wife have raised two children, and he has also served in the United States Army both at home and abroad in Germany.

He began to answer God's call to preach the Good News by serving in the Houston Area Lay Ministry. He worked as a lay minister at Holy Cross and Calvary Lutheran churches while serving as the head elder in his home congregation at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church.

The year 1996 marked a turning point in his life and ministry as he completed his studies at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis and accepted a call as the full-time pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church.

The Apostle Paul, for whom this SPLC is named, offered the following advice to young Timothy. These words have come to represent the essence of Rev. Williams' life and mission: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17 NIV)

Pastor Byron Ray Williams Sr.

St. Paul Lutheran Church

5725 South Marsalis Avenue

Dallas, Texas 75241

*"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”* Psalms 37:4

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**Bio of Rev. Jeffrey P. Howell**

Reverend Jeffrey P. Howell is the youngest of six children born to Janet and Wesley Howell, Jr. in Maywood, IL.

Rev. Howell attended Washington Elementary in Maywood, IL and later transferred in fifth grade and graduated from St. John Lutheran School, Forest Park, IL; graduated from Walther Lutheran High School, Melrose Park, IL, Concordia University, Seward, NE and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN.

Rev. Howell is currently serving his 36th year in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He has served in Detroit, MI; St. Louis, MO; and Chicago, IL as a teacher, principal, Director of Programs and Services for Lutheran Special Education Ministries in Farmington Hills, MI; and currently, serving in his 14th year as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, 7621 S. Dorchester Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Rev. Howell and his wife Andrea have been married 43 years and from this union God has blessed them with three children and seven grandchildren. Rev. Howell and his wife reside in Lansing, IL.

**Convocation Honorees:**

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**Reverend Doctor James Wiggins Sr.**

The Reverend James Wiggins Sr. is a native of Camden, Wilcox County, Alabama. The son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George Wiggins Sr.

Reverend Wiggins received his elementary education in the Lutheran School System of Wilcox County, Alabama. He attained his high school diploma from Alabama Lutheran Academy and College (Concordia College) in Selma, Alabama (1951). He received a bachelor’s degree from Immanuel Lutheran College in Greensboro, North Carolina (1955).

In 1959, Rev. Wiggins graduated from Immanuel Lutheran Theological Seminary, Greensboro, North Carolina and took further extension courses from Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. He also took graduate courses in the area of sociology at Miles College in Birmingham, Alabama.

He served in the church on the district level in the following areas: Circuit Counselor, Mission Committee, Circuit Youth Advisor, Commission on Adjudication, Treasurer of the District Black Churchmen Conference and is presently serving as the Chairman of the Rosebud Memorial Project.

Congregations served: St. James Lutheran, Buena Vista, Alabama, Mt. Olive Lutheran, Hybert, Alabama and St. Andrews Lutheran, Sedan, Alabama. Those three congregations merged into Immanuel Lutheran in Vredenburgh, Alabama in 1969. He served as the vacancy pastor of St. Paul Lutheran, Oak Hill, Alabama, 1965-1976, Zion Lutheran in Bessemer, Alabama 1976-1983, and Trinity Lutheran in Montgomery, Alabama, 1984 - 1997. He retired in 1995 and relocated to Pensacola, Florida where he remains a faithful member of St. Matthews Lutheran Church.

Rev. Wiggins and his late wife, Katie G. Wiggins, are the proud parents of four children: the late Rev. James Wiggins Jr, Rev. Stephen A. Wiggins Sr., Felicia Thornton, and Karen Wiggins. He has nine grandchildren and five great grandchildren.