

Presenters for the 2016 CNH District Missions Conference



Chris Paavola is the church planter in University City, Missouri, an inner belt city of metro St. Louis. After prayerwalking more than 100 miles through his community, Chris began efforts to plant “a church as diverse as the city it serves” called [All Nations Church](#).

Chris met his wife, **Ashley**, at *St. John Church* in Ellisville, Missouri, where he served as the Worship Production Director until 2013. They have been married for 10 years and have two children, Selah and Isaiah.

Robert Newton grew up in Napa, California. In 1977, he graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, and served as an evangelistic missionary in the Philippines, 1977-83. The Newtons returned to the States in July 1983 for Robert to begin graduate studies at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. He received his PhD from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL in 1993.



- 1985-1998, professor of world missions, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN
- 1996-97, while on sabbatical with his family served the Gutnius Lutheran Church, Papua New Guinea under the Board for Mission Services
- 1998-2003, senior pastor, First Immanuel Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA
- 2003 - present, president of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District



Vicar Dawit (David) Bokre currently serves as Eritrean ministry leader and 1.5/2nd generation church planter at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hayward, CA. Born and raised in the capital city of Asmara, Eritrea, Dawit and his family were faithful members of the Eritrean Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 2003 at the age of 13, he came to the United States and lived in Boston and Houston during the first five years of his life in America.

In 2008, Dawit was called by a small group of Eritrean Lutherans in the Bay Area to be a bivocational church worker and plant an Eritrean Lutheran Church. After his arrival, the group started to meet in homes and also once a month at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hayward, CA.

Also at this time, Dawit began his theological training entering the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology program through Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. In 2015, Good Shepherd called Dawit to help plant a multiethnic church in the Hayward community focusing on 1.5/2nd generation children of immigrants as well as continuing to develop servant leaders in the Eritrean and youth ministries.

Heather Choate Davis is an author, speaker, liturgist, retreat leader, co-founder of icktank, Creative Director of LINC Los Angeles, Board Member of the LCMS PSW District, and Servant of the Living God.



Michael (Mike) Lange has been married to Kristi (Peck) Lange since 1988. Mike is a 1988 graduate of Concordia Seminary and has served as an Associate and interim Sr. Pastor in Wayzata, MN and a missionary-at-large in Dixon and Brentwood, CA and most recently Sr. Pastor in Brentwood, CA. He is serving as Executive Director in Missions, assisting the President for the CNH, since August of 2013. Prior to that, he served for three years as a consulting pastor for the CNH District in Revitalization Envisioning and Mission Advancement.

His continuing education has concentrated on seminars and conferences revolving around outreach and church planting. In addition to this, he is a graduate of Pastoral Leadership Institute class of 2002 and Governance Executive Training, also associated with PLI. He has started his D.Min. classwork in missiology.

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Rev. Aaron Putnam is the city director of LINC Bay Area, a network of individuals, churches and agencies working collaboratively to restore the people of the San Francisco Bay Area through Christ.

In 2007, Aaron was called to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Hayward, California as a church planter focused on ministry with Hispanics. For the past six years he has served as lead pastor at Good Shepherd working with ministries in English, Spanish, Tigrinya and Oromo.

Aaron graduated from Willamette University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and from Lewis and Clark College with a Master of Arts in Teaching. After spending five years as a public high school teacher in Oregon, he moved to Guatemala and worked as a volunteer missionary with Lutheran Church of Guatemala for five years. Upon returning to the U.S., he entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and graduated in 2008 with a Master of Divinity degree.



Rev. Dominic J. Rivkin serves as the Executive Director of LINC Los Angeles. This network is blessed by Rev. Rivkin's 20+ years of experience in the development of strategic systems that clarify, align and implement God's vision for His people.

The path to LINC began in a successful career in business development for Siemens Corporation from 1995-2001. It was then that Dominic returned to Concordia Chicago, where he completed his B.A. in Communications with a focus on Group Dynamics. The Rivkin family then relocated to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, where he entered the Master of Divinity program with an emphasis on Missionary Formation. Rivkin was called as a Mission Developer for the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and ordained into the Pastoral Ministry in 2006. Trinity Temecula, a strong family of faith deeply connected with its community, was officially

"born" in the spring of 2007.

Allan Tong is a Certified Director of Christian Education who has served on the staff at Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in San Francisco, California since 1998. He has graduated from Concordia University, Irvine and pursuing his Masters of Youth Ministry & Leadership. Allan has served as Sunday School teacher, Children Worship Leader, Summer Day Camp Director, Help-U-Learn After School Director, Small Disciples Bible Study Leader, Worship Leader, and Family Ministry Coordinator. He loves speaking at retreats and conferences. He has a big heart for training young leaders and has hosted Young Leaders Conference for young people annually. Allan has consulted and networked with different local church leaders and churches in the Bay Area in starting new ministries reaching to the young people in San Francisco.



Ashley Wong graduated from Concordia University Irvine in 2010 certified as a Director of Christian Education and jumped right into her internship at Hope Lutheran Church in Daly City. This led way to her first called DCE position at Hope Lutheran with God continuing to shape and mold her as a leader. In 2014, God put a calling in Ashley's heart to take advantage of an overseas mission opportunity with Concordia Welfare & Education Foundation, a non-profit in China and Cambodia that improves the lives of people in areas of education and health. This mission opportunity also allowed her to spend valuable time with her family, especially her father, who has taken tremendous steps in his own walk with God. Ashley came back to SF in 2015.

Pastor Thomas Zelt has served in the CNH District for 32 years, 11 at Grace in Crescent City and 21 at Prince of Peace in Fremont where he is the Senior Pastor. He holds a bachelors and teaching credential from Concordia University, Seward, NE, and is a 1984 graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. He completed his Masters course work at the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem with a short stint at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and received his Doctorate. from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. He is the author of *The Lynch Pin, Seven Reasons to Believe Jesus Rose from the Dead*. He is an instructor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and serves as the first vice president of the CNH District.

