

Biographical Sketches of Speakers

2019 Creation and Education Conference



Pre-Suppositional Apologetics Workshop

Dr. Jason Lisle

Biblical Science Institute

“Cosmology – Evolutionary Model and Problems”

Pre-Suppositional Apologetics:

- **“Understanding Genesis”**
- **“The Ultimate Proof of Creation”**
- **“Nuclear Strength Apologetics, Parts I and II”**

Dr. Jason Lisle is a Christian astrophysicist who researches issues pertaining to science and the Christian Faith. A popular speaker and author, Dr. Lisle presents a rational defense of a literal Genesis, showing how science confirms the history recorded in the Bible. Brought up in a Christian family, at a young age he received Christ as Lord. Since then Lisle has always desired to serve the Lord out of love and gratitude for salvation, and to spread the Gospel message to all people.

Dr. Lisle double-majored in physics and astronomy with a minor in mathematics at Ohio Wesleyan University. He then went on to obtain a Master's degree and Ph.D. in astrophysics at the University of Colorado in Boulder. There, he used the SOHO spacecraft to analyze the surface of the sun, and made a number of interesting discoveries, including the detection of giant cell boundaries. Since then, Lisle has worked in full-time apologetics ministry. He wrote a number of planetarium shows for the Creation Museum, including the popular “Created Cosmos.” Dr. Lisle has authored a number of best-selling books on the topic of creation, including: Taking Back Astronomy, Stargazer's Guide to the Night Sky, the Ultimate Proof of Creation, Discerning Truth, and Understanding Genesis.

Keynote Speaker

Mr. Mike Riddle

President, Creation Training Initiative

“Battle for the Next Generation”

“Contending for the Faith”



Mike Riddle is the founder and president of Creation Training Initiative. He is an international speaker and teacher on biblical creation, apologetics, and Christian education. He has been involved in creation apologetics for over 35 years. Mike has spoken at NASA, many secular and Christian universities, churches around the world, state homeschool conventions and secular and Christian schools. Prior to being involved in creation ministry, Mike was a Captain in the USMC and a national champion in track and field. Mike's experience in the education field includes:

- M.S. Mathematics, M.A. Education
- Teacher junior and senior high school
- Adjunct professor Northwest Graduate School of the Ministry
- Instructor at the Institute for Creation Research Graduate School
- Answers in Genesis speaker/author
- Director/instructor U.S. Sprint's worldwide engineer and technical training
- Director/instructor Microsoft's engineer training
- Instructor USMC
- Developed and taught teacher training and communication skills courses worldwide

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Dr. Dean O. Wenthe

President, Concordia University System

Professor of Exegetical Theology and President Emeritus, Concordia

Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN

“The Pivotal and Foundational Role of Creation for Anthropology and Christology.”

Dr. Wenthe joined the Concordia Theological Seminary faculty in 1971, first at the Springfield, Illinois, campus, then in Fort Wayne when the Seminary relocated there in 1976. He is a professor of Exegetical Theology and president emeritus of the Seminary, having served as president from 1996–2011.

Wenthe also serves as president of the Concordia University System for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

He received his M.Div. from Concordia Seminary (1971); Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary (1974); and his Ph.D. in Hebrew Scriptures from the University of Notre Dame with minors in Ethics and Judaica (1991).

He was pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Atlantic, Iowa (1977–1980), and pastoral assistant at Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Haven, Indiana (1989–1996).

He served on the Commission of Theology and Church Relations 1977–1980 and as a member of the President’s Commission on the Sanctity of Life.



President David Maier

President, Michigan District, LC-MS

“Creation and Education in the Michigan District”

Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier, the youngest of two sons, was born May 8, 1956 to Dr. Walter A. Maier, Jr. & Leah M. Maier. His grandfather was the sainted Walter A. Maier, the Lutheran Hour founder. He was married to Patricia (Kemmerling) on July 19, 1980. Their marriage has been blessed with four children, Leah, Joel, James and Hannah. Leah is married to Kyle DeWees and their marriage has been blessed with Beckett and Avery, Pastor and Pat Maier’s two grandchildren. Hannah was married to Garrett Wenzelburger in June, 2016 and Joel was married to Shae Snyder this past Memorial Day weekend.

President Maier received his B.A. from Concordia University Ann Arbor with a double major in Biblical Languages and Christian Doctrine. Attending Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, he served his vicarage year at West Portal Lutheran Church in San Francisco, CA in 1980. After his Ordination on August 15, 1982, he served as Mission Pastor of Our Savior in Marlette, MI and then as Youth Pastor and interim Head Pastor at St. Peter in Arlington Heights, IL. In 1989, he was called to Our Savior in Lansing, MI as Administrative/Senior Pastor. During his tenure, the congregation and school moved to a brand new facility on a 30 acre campus. He served there until he was elected President of the Michigan District, LCMS in June of 2009. During the 2012 and 2015 District Conventions, he was re-elected to another term.

President Maier has been a frequent speaker at youth retreats, men’s gatherings, and District Conferences and Conventions outside of Michigan. He has served numerous times as Dean at Camp Arcadia, Michigan. He has also served the Michigan District as a Pastoral Advisor to Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ, to the LWML and

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LLL, and as a Circuit Visitor, Circuit Visitor Chairman, and as Vice-President.

President Maier's service to Synod includes the Worship Floor Committee for the 2001 LCMS Convention and as a Council of Presidents representative on the Seminary & University Education Floor Committee in 2010, the Theology & Church Relations Floor Committee in 2013, and Chairman of the Floor Committee 18 – Worker Wellness in 2016. He has served on the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Task Force and the Resolution #4-04A Task Force for the Synod. He is currently serving as the Chairman of the Council of Presidents.

In 2007, Maier was awarded his first honorary doctorate by St. Peter Confessional Lutheran Church of South Africa. He was presented with the Outstanding Alumnus Award in May 2010 at Concordia University Ann Arbor during the Commencement exercises where he was also the Commencement Speaker. In the spring of 2012, Concordia University Ann Arbor awarded him the Doctorate of Laws Degree in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding leadership and diligent labor in the Lord's Kingdom. In December, 2012, Concordia University Wisconsin conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters to Maier.

A humbled sinner and cancer survivor, forgiven and healed at the foot of the cross, continually awed by the love of a gracious Savior, President Maier looks forward to the leading and direction of our Lord Jesus as he continues in His service. It is his firm conviction to share his joy in knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation for all people. In Christ, he knows, the best is always yet to come!

President Terry Forke

President, Montana District, LC-MS

“Truth: The Intersection of Faith and Science”



Terry Forke is President of the Montana District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1956. In 1979 he married

Cheryl Koschmann. They have five children, Joshua, Jacob, Ruth, Judy, Christal and eleven grandchildren. Terry and Cheryl make their home in Billings.

He received a BA in 1979 from Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Michigan. In 1983 he received a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and in 1989 a Master of Sacred Theology from the same institution.

Terry has served his entire career in Montana. He served as Pastor of Grace and Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Churches in Three Forks and Ennis from 1983-1993, and Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Columbia Falls from 1993-2006 when he was elected President of the Montana District.

Terry served on the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of the Flathead Valley. He has been active in Lutherans for Life, a pro-life organization, for 35 years. He is now involved in the leadership of the Montana Pastors' Network, an effort to inform and embolden Pastors to speak out on issues of life, marriage and religious freedom.

In addition to serving as District President he also serves as Pastor of Trinity, Harlowton and St. Paul, Roundup, Montana.



President John C. Wille

President, South Wisconsin District, LC-MS

“Creation and Education in the South Wisconsin District”

Rev. Dr. John C. Wille has served as the president of the South Wisconsin District LCMS since 2006. As part of the Council of Presidents, he presently serves as the chairman of the Clergy Call and Roster Committee, on the Board of Regents at Concordia University Wisconsin, and on the Regents for Concordia Seminary St. Louis.

Rev. Dr. Wille has served congregations in Ohio, Central Illinois and South Wisconsin. Immediately prior to being elected President of the South

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Wisconsin District, he served as the church planter and founding pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Tomah, Wisconsin, where he served as parish pastor for 16 years. He has served the church as a circuit counselor, District Vice-President, trained synod reconciler, as a church planter, and as a part of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team from South Wisconsin that was deployed to Alabama and Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina.

As the president of the South Wisconsin District he is responsible for ecclesiastical oversight of 207 congregations, multiple schools, high schools, Concordia University Wisconsin, along with the ordained and commissioned church workers that reside in South Wisconsin. As SWD president, Rev. Wille is also part of a unique partnership that is working to establish a new Lutheran Church body in the Dominican Republic. The FORO has become an emerging model for LCMS international mission work.

As a member of the LCMS Council of Presidents Rev Wille serves as chairman of "Clergy Call and Roster Committee" which is responsible for the COP Manual, as well as the policies and guidelines of the COP. He also serves as the Council of Presidents' representative on the Board of Regents for Concordia Seminary St. Louis. He has also served on variety of floor committees for LCMS conventions, including as the chairman for the ecclesiastical floor committee at the 2016 convention in Milwaukee.

Rev. Wille was granted an honorary doctorate from Concordia University Wisconsin in 2009.

In regards to continuing education, President Wille has completed Pastoral Leadership Institute plus two additional years of governance training, and he has participated in DOXOLOGY. He has also been trained in various methods of conflict resolution; those include LCMS training for reconcilers, Peter Steinke's 'Bridge Builders', as well as Ambassadors of Reconciliation.

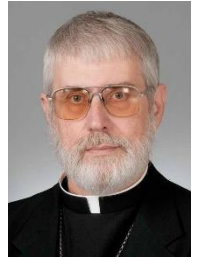
Rev. Wille has been married to his wife, Lynette, since 1978. They are blessed with three daughters; each of whom are married, one residing in Minnesota and one in California; the youngest

now working in Washington D.C. They are blessed with six grandchildren.

Dr. David Adams

Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology, Exegetical Theology

Coordinator of International Seminary Exchange Programs, Ministerial Formation



"Creation and Education at Concordia Seminary St. Louis"

Dr. David L. Adams is an associate professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

A faculty member since 2000, his areas of interest and expertise include biblical theology, ancient Near Eastern culture and religion, biblical archaeology and government activity as it relates to religion.

As former director of the Concordia Center for Archaeology, Adams was engaged for several years as a member of the excavation staff at *Khirbet Qeiyafa* in Israel. This area is associated with the place of the battle between David and Goliath.

Before coming to Concordia Seminary, Adams served as executive director of the Office of Government Information for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in Washington, D.C. There he helped monitor legislative, judicial and executive branch activity that could have affected the ministry of the church.

A recipient of the Tyndale Fellowship, Adams holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in Cambridge, England (1985). He earned a Master of Divinity (1981) and Master of Sacred Theology (1982) from Concordia Seminary. Adams received his bachelor's degree from Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Ind. (1977), and is a graduate of St. Paul's College in Concordia, Mo. (1975).

Adams is the co-editor of *The Anonymous God* (Concordia Publishing, 2005), a volume of essays

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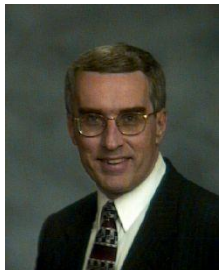
on the subject of civil religion and American society. He has prepared study notes and materials on the Psalms and wisdom literature for the forthcoming *ESV Archaeology Bible* (Crossways, anticipated 2017).

He is currently working on a book on the theology of the presence of God in the Bible.

Adams was assistant professor of religion and philosophy at Concordia College in Ann Arbor, Mich., where he taught Hebrew, philosophy, biblical studies and was director of the Pre-Seminary Education Program. He previously served as manager of Microcomputer Services for the LCMS Office of Information Systems. He also has served in the parish ministry as pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Caseyville, Ill., and as vacancy pastor of a number of congregations through the years.

His hobbies include reading, playing guitar and scuba diving.

Adams and his wife, Lisa, live in St. Louis.



Dr. Joel Heck

**Professor of Theology,
Concordia University Texas**

**“Concerns Regarding the
Teaching of Creation in the
Concordia University System”**

Since 1998, Dr. Joel Heck has served Concordia University Texas first as Vice President of Academic Services and now as Professor of Theology. He has been a parish pastor in Missouri and Assistant Vice President of Academics and Professor of Theology for Concordia University Wisconsin. In 1984, he earned the Doctor of Theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He is the author or editor of fourteen books, including *In the Beginning, God: Creation from God’s Perspective* (Concordia Publishing House, 2011), and he is a frequent speaker and workshop presenter on topics of practical ministry for the local church. His most recent book on Lewis is *From Atheism to Christianity: The Story of C. S. Lewis* (Concordia Publishing House, 2017). He and his

wife Cheryl have three grown children and live in Austin, Texas.



**Reverend Joshua
Scheer**

**President and Editor-in-
Chief of Steadfast Lutherans**

**“Concerns Regarding the
Teaching of Creation in the LC-MS”**

Rev. Joshua V. Scheer is the Senior Pastor at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. He is a 2008 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He is also Editor-in-chief of Steadfast Lutherans and also serves as the organization’s President. At Steadfast Lutherans, he contributes articles, news, and commentary to the sites, plans their conferences, as well as authors and edits their many printed devotionals and books. He is one of the founders of LutheranPundit.com which provides Lutheran news with light commentary. He is a co-host of the radio program Concord Matters on KFJL AM radio. He has been a speaker at various conferences. He is the Stewardship Chairman of the Wyoming District and also serves as one of the Wyoming District’s LWML Zone Counselors. He and his wife Holly reside in Cheyenne with their four children.



**Dr. Barbara S
Helmkamp**

PH. D, Physics

**Board of Directors, Denver
Society of Creation**

**“We Dare Not Allow Materialism’s Foot in the
Door: Why ‘Integrating the Faith’ is Outdated
and Seriously Flawed”**

Barbara Helmkamp has a Ph.D. in physics from Louisiana State University and a B.S. Engineering in physics from Colorado School of Mines, and she

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worked as a petrophysical engineer for the Shell Oil Companies between undergraduate and graduate studies. She completed the Lutheran Teacher Colloquy from Concordia University Texas while teaching at St. Mark Lutheran School in Houston, where she was subsequently called. She is currently on the faculty of Veritas Scholars Academy (an online classical Christian school out of Lancaster, PA). She also taught at Credo Academy (a home school co-op in Lone Tree, CO) while overseeing her daughters' high school educations from home. Both daughters are VSA Honors graduates, are in college presently, and are active in their local LCMS-U congregations. Barbara and her husband Bob are members of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Elizabeth, Colorado.

Pastor Jared Melius

**Mt. Zion Lutheran Church,
Denver**

**Board of Directors, Denver
Society of Creation**

Panel Discussion Facilitator



Pastor Jared Melius graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in 2005 and has served Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Denver as his first call from the seminary. He has been a board member of the Denver Society of Creation for under a year. Pastor Melius and his wife Jan have seven children and they are often parents to foster children.



Pastor John Larson

**Ascension Lutheran Church,
Littleton**

Pastor John Larson has been Pastor of Ascension since the fall of 2005. Prior to his work at Ascension he served as Associate Pastor at Peace Lutheran Church in Arvada from 1992 until 2005. He served as Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Amherst, Colorado and Venango,

Nebraska from the time of his ordination in 1983 until going to Peace in Arvada.

Pastor married his dear wife Marilyn in 1979 and they have been blessed with their three children; Dan, Dave and Eden. Pastor and Marilyn have found that having their children led them to an even greater joy – becoming grandparents!! Their three children have blessed them with nine grandchildren!!

Pastor enjoys participating in or watching a variety of sports. He feels blessed to be a part of the great work that God has been doing at Ascension Lutheran Church!!



Mrs. Judy Finnessy

**President, Denver Society of
Creation**

Judy Finnessy is a “grandma grizzly” when it comes to teaching our children how to defend their faith. (She has three grown children, and six grandchildren.) She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Accounting from Wartburg College.

Judy has spent over forty years holding various positions in IT Architecture and Project Management with John Deere, and now that she has retired, has devoted herself to studying creation apologetics and its impact on the faith of our children.

For the past three years, she has been intensely involved in creation apologetics, culminating in a week-long Creation Apologetics Teachers College taught by Creation Training Initiative in 2016 and 2017. She has facilitated a small group study of Genesis 1-11, taught Sunday school classes on creation and been a speaker for adult Bible Study Classes. She is the Founder and President of the Denver Society of Creation.

Judy is a member of Ascension Lutheran Church in Littleton. She is involved in Lutherans for Life,

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Denver, and has served as a past Secretary. She has a love for Christian music and serves as the Music Director and pianist for the Tin Cup Community Chapel during the summer months. She has also assisted with fund raising events for Love INC, Littleton.

In addition to being certified by CTI, Judy has also been certified as a “Biblical Creation Ministry Professional” by the International Association for Creation.