

For: Immediate Release

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Caitlin McGaffick named 2026 LEA Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Teacher

Lindsey Bahr honored as LEA's 2026 Outstanding New Lutheran Secondary Educator

Caitlin McGaffick was selected to receive Lutheran Education Association's 2026 Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Teacher Award. Ms. McGaffick, has taught for eight years in third grade at Divine Redeemer Lutheran School in Hartland, Wisconsin.



Caitlin earned a B. A. in elementary education from Concordia University, Mequon, Wis. And a M. A. in mathematics education K-6 from Western Governors University in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In initiating Caitlin's nomination, her administrator provided a comprehensive case for Caitlin. She said, "Caitlin McGaffick is a dedicated, faith-filled teacher who inspires students to love math and Jesus. Her creativity, structure, and individualized instruction foster success. She organizes church staff appreciation, community events, mentors peers, and models excellence—making her truly deserving of this award."

Caitlin's former pastor commented, "Throughout the years I served alongside Caitlin at Divine Redeemer, I consistently observed her deep commitment to excellence in Lutheran education and her genuine love for the students and families entrusted to her care. As a third-grade teacher, Caitlin faithfully meets the academic needs of her students while also attending carefully to their social, emotional, and spiritual growth. Her classroom is a place where children are challenged to grow, encouraged to persevere, and continually pointed to Christ and His grace. Caitlin teaches the Christian faith clearly and joyfully from a Lutheran perspective, grounding her students in the promises given to them in Holy Baptism and nurtured through God's Word.

Among her joys in ministry, Caitlin said, "My greatest joy as a teacher is watching students grow academically, spiritually, and in confidence over the course of the year. I am blessed to walk alongside students in their faith journey, helping them learn about God's love and see their gifts as part of His plan. I especially enjoy seeing students discover new ideas, make connections, and take ownership of their learning. I enjoy finding ways to make mathematics engaging such as

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creating my own math games and resources. It is deeply rewarding to witness students engage and enjoy resources I put time and heart into creating.”

Caitlin’s personal mission statement is, “to inspire and instill a lifelong love of learning, exploring, and problem-solving with Christ as the guide. I aim to encourage and inspire the spiritual, intellectual, and social growth of my students during their time inside and outside of my classroom through engaging and relevant content.”

We are excited that DR alumna and Lake Country Lutheran teacher, Lindsey Bahr won an LEA award as well. Lindsey won the *Outstanding New Lutheran Secondary Educator*.

Lindsey Bahr was selected to receive Lutheran Education Association’s 2026 Outstanding New Lutheran Secondary Educator Award. She is an English Teacher and Co-Theatre Program Director at Lake Country Lutheran High School in Hartland, Wis.

Ms. Bahr graduated from Concordia University St. Paul, MN with a Bachelor of Arts in Education with a Major in 5-12 Communication Arts/Literature Education and Minors in Lutheran Theology and Theatre. At Concordia, she served as a peer minister and peer advisor, which provided her with an opportunity to be available to other students (including new students) as someone to talk to about faith and pray with them.



Lindsey finds joy working with students. She said, “Any time I see a moment of growth, I am reminded why I love my job and why I truly know I am doing what God has called me to do. Every day I see my students understand more about the world God has given to us. They make connections about who they are, who the other people in the room with them are, and what the world is like. Because of that, they go out into the world better, ready to pass on what they have learned and make the world a more Christ-centered place.”

Teaching in a Lutheran high school is not without its challenges. Lindsey said, “I love to stay active in my ministry by walking with my students as much as I can. Because of this, and like all good Lutheran educators, I tend to overextend myself. As I keep teaching, I’m learning that focusing on doing only the things I love allows more time to deeply invest in the students involved in those things. We have better conversations about their lives because I know them well. I’m learning to only commit where I need to so that I can fully commit to what matters: my students.”

A parent supported her nomination, saying, “Lindsey demonstrates a strong commitment to excellence in meeting the social, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive needs of students. She teaches and lives out her Christian faith from a Lutheran perspective, modeling Christ-like service and care in her daily interactions. Her influence reaches far beyond the classroom, leaving a lasting impact on students and families alike.



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Lindsey's personal mission statement is, "My life would be nothing without Jesus, so I will live my life daily knowing He is the only reason I am able to make it through. This gives me hope in the tough times and humility in the good times. I also know it is my mission as a Christian to share this Good News with as many people as I can. My students are my primary touchpoint, but I know I am also called to reach their parents, my colleagues, and anyone else I may come across along the way God has set before me."

This Press Release Wording provided by:

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