



2026 District Assembly Workshops

The Long Game: Five Leadership Principles Worth Your Life (3:15PM - Tabernacle D/E)

Dr. Dwight Gunter: MidSouth District Superintendent



What separates leaders who last from leaders who simply lead for a while? The Long Game explores five principles every pastor needs not just to survive ministry, but to thrive in it — from the inside out. Blending story, biblical grounding, and direct application, this seminar is a call to the kind of leadership that outlasts you.

“P.S. (Pastor’s Spouse) - You’re Not Alone” (10:40AM - Red Room/Former Snack Shack)

Karan Gunter: MidSouth District, DS spouse



This session will provide a place for encouragement, community connection, and resourcing for those who identify themselves as a “pastor’s spouse”. You have a name. You have a calling. You have a community. Come, let’s walk together!

Discipleship Place - Resources for the Church of the Nazarene

John Comstock: Director of Discipleship Place



“Developing a Lay Ministry Culture” (10:40AM - Tabernacle A)

Join us as we explore how to cultivate a church culture that activates the priesthood of all believers. Learn a proven discipleship pathway that empowers lay ministers, develops leaders, and sustains local church ministry. Hear how Rev. Tonya Marks and Columbia Grace Church of the Nazarene are putting this into practice—equipping everyday believers to live out their calling with confidence.

“Intentional Discipleship Pathways: Bridging Digital and In-Person Strategies” (3:15PM - Tabernacle A)

Discover free tools at DiscipleshipPlace.org and the DiscipleshipPlace app to create intentional, Spirit-led pathways for growth. Whether discipling individuals or groups, these resources support deeper faith and shared journeys of grace. Get a first look at upcoming video series and early access to an AI-powered platform designed to help you answer questions, build lessons, spark discussion, and strengthen your ministry impact.

“Church Planting Best Practices” (3:15PM - Red Room/Former Snack Shack)

Dr. Bill Wiesman: MidSouth District Missional Catalyst/ Church Planting
Elijah Friedeman: Church Planter; Lead Pastor, The Foundry



Healthy churches multiply disciples, leaders, groups and churches. Best practices include Mission Zone collaboration, online training, leadership development, etc. Learn from practitioners how any size church can effectively engage in the great commission through church planting.

Children's Ministries (Welcome Center)

"Encountering Compassion with Children" (10:40am - Welcome Center)

Rev. Isaac Miller: Trevecca Community Church, Children's Pastor

Rev. Kayla Smith: Trevecca Community Church, Pastor for Intergenerational Discipleship



Children have a unique capacity for compassion that is often overlooked by adults, including church leaders. How might they expand our understanding of empathy? This workshop equips pastors and leaders to nurture compassion in children while providing practical resources for weekly ministry.

"Children's Ministry 101" (3:15PM - Welcome Center)

Rev. Jeannie Adams: 35+ years in Children's Ministry



Are you new to children's ministry or just looking for fresh ideas? Join this hands-on, interactive workshop that will get kids excited to be at church learning about God's love and who he made them to be!

Nazarene Youth International (Jason Chapel Church)

"Supporting Youth in Crisis" (10:40AM - Jason Chapel Church)

Ian Britton: Memphis Grace, Youth Pastor; MidSouth District NYI President



Mental health is being talked about like never before. How do we deal with it in our churches and ministries? Join us as we discuss how you can recognize when there are struggles and how best to support and be present in crisis. We will also have a brief overview of common struggles for youth and some resources you can have on hand.

"Nazarene Youth Conference 2026 - What You Need To Know" (3:15PM - Jason Chapel Church)

Rev. Jamin Wentworth: Trevecca Community, Executive Pastor; MidSouth NYC Coordinator



Leaders, come and get all the updates and exciting final details for NYC'26. There will be information on transportation, pre-trip, swag and so much more.

"Everyone Can Do Something: Engaging Foster Care as the Church" (10:40AM - Tabernacle F)

Amanda Griffin: TN Kids Belong, Restoration Community Member



Foster care can feel overwhelming—but it doesn't have to be. This story-driven workshop will introduce the heart behind foster care, the role of the Church, and simple, meaningful ways anyone can get involved. Through real stories and interactive moments, you'll discover that you don't have to do everything—you just have to find your place.

Ministerios Hispanos (Cole Room/Johnson Lodge)

“Cada Uno Gana Uno, Cada Iglesia planta una Iglesia” (10:40am and 3:15pm)

Pastor Eduardo Lelli: MidSouth Hispanic Coordinator



Programa de Iglecrecimiento y Plantación de Nuevas Iglesias

Nazarene Missions International

“What is happening in Nazarene Global Missions?” (10:40AM - Tabernacle B/C)

Rev. Jim Ritchie: Director of Global Missions for the Church of the Nazarene



Rev. Jim Ritchie will give an update on Nazarene Global Missions.

“NMI 101” (3:15PM - Tabernacle B/C)

Rev. David Johnson: NMI Chair, and NMI District Council Members



This workshop is for Local NMI Presidents and anyone else interested in NMI. NMI basics will be discussed by members of the District Council. Bring your Nazarene Missions questions!

“Partnerships: Increasing Capacity and Relationships” (3:15PM - Youth Chapel)

Steve Sands, Rev. Rebecca Bailey, Rev. Joe Drake: MidSouth District Nazarene Recovery Network



This workshop helps church leaders understand how strategic community partnerships—such as treatment providers, recovery organizations, social service agencies, housing programs, and state faith-based initiatives—expand ministry capacity and strengthen long-term recovery outcomes. Participants will explore practical strategies for identifying, building, and sustaining partnerships that support individuals and families navigating addiction and recovery.

“The Foundations of Young Adult Ministry” (3:15PM - Tabernacle F)

Mason and Emily Mitchell: MidSouth District Young Adult Ministries Directors



Let's talk about discipleship and mentorship as foundations for spiritual formation and communal involvement in Young Adult ministries. We will discuss the importance of creating a space for deeper involvement and community engagement for young adults in the Body of Christ.

“NazSafe Training 101+” (10:40AM - Tabernacle D/E)

Revs. Jeremy and Jessica Byler: Staff Pastors, Erin



We will be discussing the importance of having a Safety System in place as well as training for volunteers. We will provide resources to you to help you develop a safety system that incorporates various aspects of ministry.

“Intergenerational Worship Gatherings” (10:40AM - Drake Room/Johnson Lodge)

Rev. Michele Noel: Worship Pastor, Columbia Grace

Rev. Lauren Lain: Children's Pastor, Columbia Grace



God's Family is Multi-Generational! Join us for a conversation about the "why" behind family gatherings, and walk away with practical tools for how to cast vision, collaborate with your ministry teams, and make Worship & Word accessible and engaging for all ages. We promise, it's easier than you'd think!

“Man Looketh at...but God” (3:15PM - Drake Room/Johnson Lodge)

Dr. David Diehl: Trevecca Nazarene University, Chair of the Department of Music.



Dr. Richard Crawford identifies two primary streams in American worship: Praise (directed to God) and Edification (directed to the congregation). The Nazarene Church—shaped by revivalism, Wesleyan and Protestant traditions, the seeker-friendly movement, and modern Praise and Worship—reflects both. This session will clarify each stream's purpose, build a biblical framework from 1 Samuel 16:7 and John 4:24, and explore practical implications for worship in Nazarene congregations today.

“Pastor as Midwife” (10:40AM - Youth Chapel)

Rev. Dr. Shawna Songer Gaines: Trevecca Community Church, Lead Pastor



Discovering a metaphor of life-giving leadership for the healing of the church.