

# Encourager

FEBRUARY 2023

Mid-South District LCMS



## *A Message from Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President*

**H**ow do we view the call of Christ to bring the message of life and salvation with outreach to a dark and decaying world? We have heard the adage, "The best defense is a good offense." It's been applied to games and military combat. The idea is that a strong offense instead of a passive attitude will preoccupy the opposition and ultimately hinder its ability to mount a counterattack. One style of Kung Fu uses the maxim: "The hand which strikes also blocks."

In World War I, Germany attacked France quickly to knock it out of the war. Its numerical superiority freed up huge numbers of German troops to head east and defeat Russia. In chess, one's ability to prevent enemy attacks often depends on maintaining a series of threats on

the opponent. An offense used in conjunction with this adage upsets an opponent's plan. The best way to stop an opponent is to attack the opponent's king and queen.

In football the adage is an effective offense that keeps the ball on the other team's side of the field, thus not only creating scoring opportunities but preventing the opposing team from scoring. In courts of Law, the adage is applied when the defense counsel attacks and breaks the prosecutor's case.

The topic gained increased prominence as a military strategy during the Cold War with regard to the use of nuclear weapons. It related to the concept of mutual destruction where a full-scale nuclear attack would devastate both parties. Shock and Awe

tactics were used in the Gulf War as a military strategy using overwhelming power and spectacular displays of force to paralyze the enemy.

Military War strategists have identified four vital characteristics of Shock and Awe:

1. Near total knowledge and understanding of one's self, the adversary, and the battlefield environment;
2. Act with Rapidity and a timely application;
3. Maintain Operational brilliance; and
4. Equip for total control and signature management of the entire operational environment.

In two weeks we're entering the season of Lent. For over 30 years of Christ's earthly life, Satan

showed his evil shock and awe – his vulgar offense. But none of it compared to the preemptive assault on Jesus during the week of Christ’s passion. If it was a chess game, observers would have seen an entire nation turn madly against the Man they welcomed days earlier as their king. Leaders of the church worked every strategy to trap Jesus into treason against Rome and blasphemy against God.

His closest friends abandoned him, leaving Christ vulnerable to open attacks. Scribes and Pharisees used Judas in a gambit to capture Jesus. A Roman Governor faded in recognizing Jesus’ innocence. And Roman soldiers took great pleasure in scourging Him and nailing Christ onto the cruelest instrument of execution ever known.

By Good Friday afternoon, it appeared that Satan’s Shock and Awe attack on the Savior of the world was checkmate. Around 3PM, Jesus died in the wrath of God against the sins of the world that weighed down the precious life of Christ. But... Satan’s gambit hadn’t calculated what the death of the very Son of God really meant for you and me and all people.

God’s plan for our salvation for us included Christ’s suffering. It included His friends abandoning Him. It

included the weight of the sins of all the world to be laid on the sacred head of Jesus. But the greatest Shock and Awe in God’s plan of salvation was the glorious, victorious, celebratory resurrection of Christ Jesus in flesh to prove God’s satisfaction of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins, and our justification by God’s grace and mercy on to our eternal salvation.

His resurrection was so powerful, even on that day that the earth shook, many of the faithful also rose to foreshow the final resurrection of all on the Lord’s day. It was no game. This is war! But it is ours... carrying the very message Christ has given to us, His Church... to become warriors in the army of Christ to go on offense, knowing that not even the gates of Hell can prevail over the Gospel message of forgiveness, life, and peace with God... now and forever. Amen.

Your servant in Christ +  
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



## *Welcome to the Mid-South District* **Rev. Myles Schultz**



The installation of Rev. Myles Schultz at Grace Lutheran Church, Holiday Island, AR took place on Sunday, January 8. Those who attended are pictured left, first row: Rev. Richard Mayer, Rev. Myles Schultz, Rev. Brandon Martin, Rev. Hubert (Bernie) Bernthal second row: Rev. Robert Herring, Rev. Ken Haydon, Rev. John Wilke (Pastor, Trinity, Broken Arrow OK), third row: Rev. JD Zischke, Rev. Eric Longman, Rev. Russell Shewmaker.



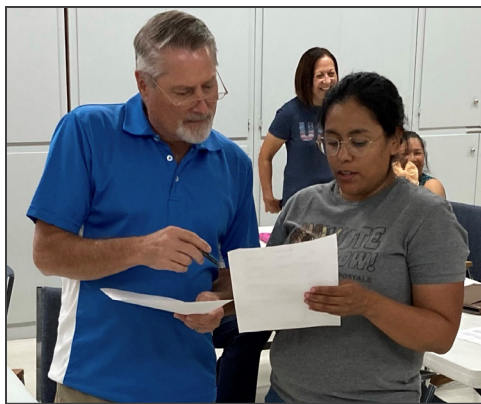
# Salem Lutheran Ministries ESL Classes

## Springdale, AR

Salem is known in our Hispanic community for providing great instruction in English. We offer three levels taught by gifted teachers, with mentors assisting the students in small groups.

But our classes do much more than just teach English. Through these classes, we welcome, encourage, and provide community for our Hispanic neighbors, some of whom are recent immigrants. We play games and explore cultural differences. Above all, we share the Good News of Jesus with them in their heart language. Every evening concludes with a Gospel message in Spanish from Pastor Brandon Martin.

Our ESL classes open doors for us to invite the students to our divine service, comfort families who are mourning, encourage individuals who are oppressed, and proclaim the Gospel to our community!





# God Continues to Bless

## News from Christus Victor

God is good and continues to bless us in abundance here at Christus Victor in Knoxville. Over the past couple weeks we had some exciting things happening. We shared in the baptism of Shelia Descomb. The church got to witness its first dunking as Shelia requested to be baptized by immersion. It was way AWESOME. Then we started the year by bringing in five new members. That being Sharon Blair by transfer. And Carol and LeAnn Synstelien by confession of faith as well as Jason Roberts and Shelia Descomb. We shared in celebrating the day by having a pot bless luncheon (no 'luck' involved—only blessings!) as everybody got to know the newest members of CVLC.

— Submitted by Pastor Bill



(L-R) Carol and daughter LeAnn Synstelien along with Sharon Blair



Shelia's Baptism



(L-R) Pastor Bill, Shelia Descomb and Jason Roberts

# Christ Revealed — A Hymn Festival for Epiphany



David Cherwien  
Organist

February 10, 2023  
7:00 PM  
Grace Lutheran Church

All are invited to join us for a hymn festival for the season of Epiphany on the theme "Christ Revealed." The hymn festival will be held at **Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, on Friday, February 10 at 7:00 PM.** It will be led by guest organist David Cherwien and the choir of Grace Lutheran Church. Commentary will be provided by Rev. Kent Schaaf. A reception will follow.

Organists are also invited to attend an organist workshop on

**"Opportunities in Hymnody" on Saturday, February 11, from 8:30-11:30 a.m.** The workshop will be led by David Cherwien.

There is **no cost to attend**, but we ask that you **please register in advance to assist us in planning.** The registration form can be found on the Grace website: [www.gracelutheranlr.org/hymn-festival](http://www.gracelutheranlr.org/hymn-festival)

## Free Workshop: The Bible in a Day



Dr. Ryan Tietz  
Professor, Concordia Theological  
Seminary

March 18, 2023  
9am-3:15pm  
Shepherd of the Hills

Old Testament professor from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Dr. Ryan Tietz, will be offering a wonderful workshop on Biblical history at **Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church (1461 Sparta Hwy, Crossville, TN).** The date is Saturday, March 18th. The workshop will begin at 9AM and it will end at 3:15PM. There will be plenty of breaks and a period for lunch. Anyone who attends this **FREE** workshop will grow tremendously in their knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures.

Dr. Tietz specializes mainly in the Book of Isaiah, but he has developed a technique for educating groups on the basics of the **WHOLE BIBLE STORY**, which is incredibly useful to Christians who desire increased understanding of Jesus the Messiah and the purpose of His coming.

**Please register** by calling Chris, the church secretary at Shepherd of the Hills: 931-484-3461.

# Henkel Conference — Second Annual

**August 7-8, 2023**

**11am-3pm**

**Ascension Lutheran Church**

The second annual Henkel Conference, devoted to Christian theology and cultural engagement will be held August 7-8, 2023 at Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, TN.

The forum provides the best theological and cultural speakers within the Christian faith in order to educate and encourage in the midst of the present assaults on God's eternal truth. This is conference welcomes everyone, clergy and laity.

**Our lineup this year, the following distinguished presenters:**

**Carl Trueman**

Professor of Biblical & Religious Studies at Grove City College

**Aaron Kheriaty**

Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center for Bioethics and American Democracy

**Jack Kilcrease**

Associate Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at the Christ School of Theology

**Matthew Eppinette**

Executive Director of The Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity

**Peter Scaer**

Chairman and Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary

**Jordan Cooper**

President of the American Lutheran Theological Seminary

**Adam Koontz**

Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church

**David Fowler**

President of Family Action Council of Tennessee

## Follow links for-

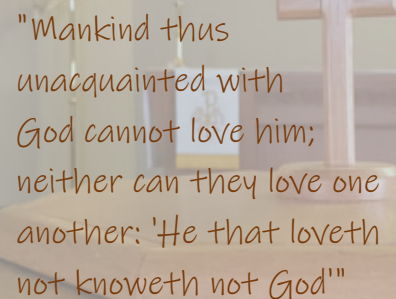
[More Information](#)

[Questions-Contact](#)

[Register Online](#)

- Additional evening dinner plans for August 7
- Lunch provided August 8
- Local bookstore on site selling the works of the speakers and other items

*We ask for your support  
through registration/  
attendance.*



"Mankind thus unacquainted with God cannot love him; neither can they love one another: 'He that loveth not knoweth not God'"

[More Information](#) || [Questions Contact](#) || [Register Online](#)



## Student Financial Aid — Apply Now

To support the education efforts of individuals pursuing a full-time career in church work, the Mid-South District is pleased to once again offer opportunities for student financial aid. To be considered for financial assistance, a student must be a member in good standing in a Mid-South District congregation and be enrolled in a seminary or university to prepare for full-time service to the Church as a rostered worker. Rostered workers are pastors, teachers, deaconesses and Directors of Christian Education.

To be considered for the student financial assistance program, you must first inform the Mid-South District Office that you are or will



be a student enrolled at a synodical school.

All related forms, including the financial aid application, are listed below. **The application deadline is June 15, 2023.**

This information may be sent via email to Julie Tyler or by regular mail to: Mid-South District LCMS / 1675 Wynne Road / Cordova, TN 38016. Forms can be found on the [District website here.](#)

## New Leadership Team for SELVD

On December 9th and 10th of 2022, the General Assembly met at Tumaini Bariadi Congregation and elected Reverend Dr. Yohana Ernest Nzelu to serve as Bishop of the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) for a period of ten years. He had previously served as Assistant Bishop of the SELVD and as headmaster at Mwadui Lutheran Secondary School.

The Assembly also elected Reverend Dr. Daniel Henry Mono who previously served as the District Pastor at Kahama to be Assistant Bishop for a period of four years. Both men have years of experience and demonstrated essential skills in leadership positions.

The consecration of the Bishop Elect and Installation of Assistant to the Bishop Elect will take place on April 30, 2023 at Ebenezer Cathedral in Shinyanga.

We ask for your continued prayers for this new leadership team.

*The Lord is my strength and my salvation....I will praise him—  
Exodus 15:2*

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Learn More About SELVD  
visit their website  
[elct-selvd.org](http://elct-selvd.org)



Reverend Dr. Yohana Ernest Nzelu



Rev. Dr. Daniel Mono



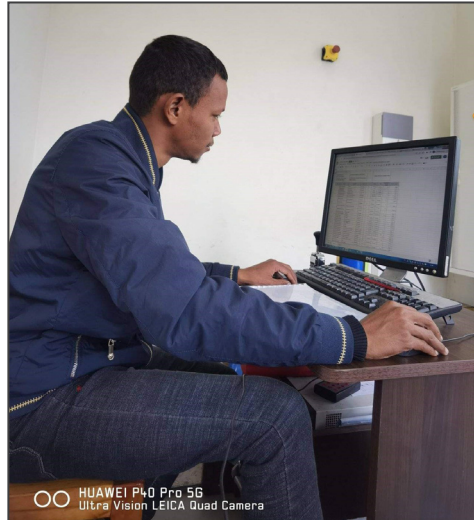
# Graduates from LIME—Update

*The Lord be with you!*

*It is with joy that we are sending you some photos of **our students who got jobs after having finished their studies at LIME.** We could not have all of students sending us photos. But we are sending you photos from four of them.*

*Again, warm and big thanks to you and the Mid-South District as a whole. Because of your steady and faith support in prayers and in finances, Malagasy young people can have jobs or create jobs.*

*Your brother across the ocean,  
Rev. Joseph Randrianasolo  
Lutheran Institute of Managerial Enterprise*



Tanjona at his office. He is the chief director of the Jovenna gas station in Fiainarantsoa. (left)



Razafindralambo Charly Victor working to keep the alley of untouched forest at the East Coast and gives training. (right and above)



Junnot works at a factory which makes compost used for growing greens, rice and so on. He is from the southern part of Madagascar. (above)



Tibaka Nicolas is from the west northern part of Madagascar. He created his own factory making bio charcoal four years ago. He has now under his responsibility thirty workers. He also gives training jobs. (left and above)



# Lutherans Helping Lutherans

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) has served as the financial extension of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) since 1978, offering funding and resources in support of the church. Our investors make it possible for us to provide customized loans and support services to new and growing ministries as well as loans for Rostered Church Workers who dedicate their lives to sharing the Gospel.

This limited-time offer is available for Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:

- ✓ INDIVIDUALS
- ✓ CONGREGATIONS
- ✓ ORGANIZATIONS

The choice is up to you. LCEF offers a variety of term notes from 1 to 5 years.

At the end of the term, the funds remain yours to re-invest or redeem. Interest is compounded quarterly (March, June, September and December).

CALL 800-843-5233 OR VISIT [LCEF.ORG/TERM-NOTE](https://lcef.org/term-note).

# 4%

## ONE-YEAR FIXED-RATE TERM NOTE

 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**  
> where investments build ministry



 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**  
> where investments build ministry

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. Rates as of December 2022. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit [lcef.org](https://lcef.org) for details. 1222N124

You May Also Contact  
Your Mid-South District  
LCEF Vice President,  
**PAUL REAVES**  
901.395.7051 / [paul.reaves@lcef.org](mailto:paul.reaves@lcef.org)

**TOP  
WORK  
PLACES  
2021**

 ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND IS HIRING!

You know that Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is a great way to invest in ministry, but did you also know it is a great place to work? In fact, LCEF has even been recognized as one of the St. Louis area's "best places to work." Currently, LCEF has a number of open positions—including several Vice President openings in various districts across Synod. Please take a moment to visit the Careers page on LCEF's website to see the open positions. Perhaps you or someone you know would be interested in pursuing the opportunity to join the LCEF team!

VISIT [lcef.org/careers/](https://lcef.org/careers/) TO LEARN MORE  
ABOUT OPEN POSITIONS AT LCEF!

# Prayer Summary, January 2023

Following is a list of all the people that have appeared on the Mid-South District website prayer list [www.mid-southlcms.com](http://www.mid-southlcms.com) during the month of January 2023.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**REV. PAUL DONNER** (Emeritus, Paducah, KY)

**REV. RONALD HALAMKA** (Waxahachie, TX)

**MRS. ALISON HAWKINS** (Mid-South District Office)

**MRS. MARY ANN HERD** (wife of Rev. Clifford Herd, Hixson, TN)

**MRS. SHIRLEY EIMMERMAN** (ECE Director, First Lutheran Preschool, Knoxville, TN)

**REV. DAN OTTO** (Emeritus, Murfreesboro, TN)

**REV. CHAD PHILIPP** (St. Luke, DeWitt, AR & St. Paul, Gillett, AR)

**REV. GIL PINGEL** (Emeritus, Chattanooga, TN)

**Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Rev. Roy Bingenheimer** (Emeritus, Concordia, MO) who recently passed away.

**Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mrs. Susie Elseroad** (wife of Rev. Richard Elseroad, Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN) who recently passed away.

**Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Rev. Richard Ames** (Emeritus, Hot Springs Village, AR) who recently passed away.

**Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Rev. William Stevenson** (Emeritus, Dyersburg, TN) who recently passed away.

## CALL UPDATE

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED: Rev. Thomas Boeck**, Senior Pastor to Marco Island Lutheran Church, Marco Island, FL, has accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, AR*. Installation date is pending.

**Rev. Matthew Albright**, Associate Pastor to Messiah Lutheran Church, Mounds View, MN, has accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR*. Installation date is pending.

**PENDING: Rev. Steven Andrews**, Associate Pastor to St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Lees Summit, MO, has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN*.

**Rev. Jason Zirbel**, Pastor to Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN*.

**DECLINED: Rev. Eric Clausen**, Associate Pastor to Christ Lutheran Church, Brea, CA has returned the Call to serve as *Associate Pastor to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR*.

**Rev. Kent Schaaf**, Pastor to Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR, has returned the Call to serve as *Pastor to Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Greensboro, NC*.

### VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

**Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN** - Pastor \*\*Pending Call

**First Lutheran Church, Blytheville, AR** - Pastor

**First Lutheran Church, Harrison, AR** – Pastor

**Messiah Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN** – Pastor

**St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN** – Pastor

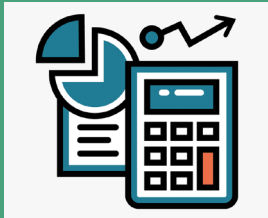
**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Murray, KY** – Pastor

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN** – Preschool Teachers

**First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN** – Teacher for 4th/5th grade





## CONGREGATIONAL MISSION COMMITMENTS

### Mission Commitment Receipts as of 12/31/2022 (12 Months)

Anticipated Amount (100% of budget) .... \$1,517,889  
Actual Receipts ..... 1,562,082  
Over (under) anticipated amount..... \$44,193

### Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (12 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions ..... \$443,625  
Allocated to Tanzania ... 25,000  
Retained for District Mission/ Ministry Support (70% of receipts)..... 1,093,457  
Total Receipts .....\$1,562,082

### Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (12 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 12/31/2022.....\$1,562,082  
Actual Receipts as of 12/31/2021 .....\$1,572,598  
Over (under) prior year receipts ..... (\$10,516)

## What's your latest news?

### Encourager Topics in 2022

We invite you to share your stories with us please email stories by 20th to Rhonda, [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com). [Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2023.](#)

- March – Youth
- April – Volunteers
- May – Small Town & Rural Ministry
- June – Leadership
- July – Veterans
- August – Stewardship
- September – Church Planting
- October – Celebrating Lutheran Heritage
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights 2022

### Lutheran Witness supplement

The monthly deadline is the 15th. Please email your original high resolution digital photo (.pdf or .jpg files only) and a short paragraph, to The Lutheran Witness Supplement editor, Judy Otto. Email: [LW@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:LW@mid-southlcms.com) phone: 662-252-1004. Judy will always acknowledge receipt of your submission if it is sent directly to her.

## Mid-South District, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

### Staff

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*President*

**Rev. William Zwick,**  
*Executive Director of Mission & Ministry & Executive Director for Schools and Early Childhood*

**Angela Fowler,**  
*Executive Director for Business & Finance*

**Paul Reaves,**  
*Executive Director for Development & LCEF Vice President*

**Missy Washburn,**  
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**Julie Tyler,**  
*Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

### Contact

1675 Wynne Road  
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PHONE: 866.373.1343 / 901.373.1343  
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### Stay Connected With Us

ON THE WEB -  
"mid-southlcms.org"

ON FACEBOOK -  
"Mid-South-LCMS"

ON TWITTER -  
"@midsouthLCMS"

