

# Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | April 2021



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

Change happens to everyone. We can have things going our way but become perplexed when something unexpectedly hits us. How many prize fighters were certain of winning a fight, only to miss seeing a left hook speeding toward their jaw? For a year, COVID-19 has been throwing some left hooks, knocking some down, and knocking out some others. But the changes that came from the virus put us in a better position of understanding Easter. Last Easter was almost universally cancelled... for in-person worship that is. We recovered somewhat and were reminded

that nothing can actually cancel Easter. It's still our blessed hope and promise from God.

Just a week before Easter, the disciples were among the most popular people in Jerusalem. They were men the people wanted to see, because they knew Jesus. Everything that was supposed to go right was going right – just the right place and the right time. It felt good. But, they forgot what Jesus said about a change coming. *"We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him,*

*spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. But, on the third day He will rise again."* (Luke 18:31-33 (NIV))

The disciples didn't understand Him because He told some bad news. Sometimes when we hear bad news, like them, we miss the good news. If we don't understand the bad news that Jesus gave us when He said, "In this world you will have tribulations", we won't understand His good news, "Be of good cheer for I have overcome the world." The disciples' lives were turned upside down between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. Their hopes for themselves simply

vanished. They watched as nails were driven in Jesus' hands. They saw their dreams hammered away. A few of them saw Jesus beaten. A few saw Him cry out, "It is finished!," and then die. They saw the tomb where His body was placed and the stone rolled against the entrance. For the first time in the past three years, their purpose and hopes were taken away. Everything they had was gone. They locked themselves inside a house, afraid to go outside. Death threatened them since the people who crucified Jesus wanted to get rid of them as well. Christ's crucifixion had taken away from them someone they loved dearly as a leader, as a friend, and almost as a family member.

This year's Easter will be unlike any other we have experienced before. Many of you can't remember an Easter Sunday that you weren't in church – at least before last year. We were like the disciples: Last year we isolated ourselves behind locked doors. Many friends found themselves

without jobs. We know someone whose life was taken from us. But, not unlike the disciples, in the midst of the fear going through their hearts, Jesus brings Good News.

How Jesus passed through a solid, locked door, we may never know. But when Jesus is trying to get inside, nothing can keep Him out. Jesus showed up to give the disciples a message, *"Peace be with you."* They probably thought He was a ghost. But, Jesus went a step further. He showed them His hands and side so they could see His wounds. He reminded them of what He said (John 11:25-26), *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."*

Jesus is living proof, that the dead will rise to life. No one had any idea that Jesus would rise from the dead. The women who went to the tomb on Easter morning expected to find a dead body. But, instead, they were stunned to see an empty tomb. An angel asked them, "Why are you looking for

the living among the dead. Jesus is not here, He has risen indeed." Later, when Mary Magdalene grabbed Jesus to worship Him, she didn't grab a ghost. It was the living Jesus.

The other women ran to tell the disciples the good news. But, the disciples said the women were confused or just imagining things - they had lost their minds. Peter had to see for himself, so he ran to the tomb with John. John looked in and saw that the tomb was empty. They didn't expect to find a living Jesus. But, they also left the tomb confused and wondering. While they were sitting in a locked room, trying to figure out what was going on, Jesus walked in and talked to them. He didn't bother to knock on the door or to pick the lock. He just appeared inside the room. He showed them His hands, and showed them where the spear had pierced His side. He was no longer dead, He is risen! The disciples eventually went from a huddle of scared men and women to men and women who would rather die, than deny Jesus Christ's Resurrection.

Jesus appeared to His followers, but hundreds of others - Roman soldiers and 500 witnesses who saw Jesus alive. His disciples would be arrested, thrown into prison, and beaten. They were told they would be punished if they kept talking about the Resurrected Christ. But they couldn't stop talking about what they had heard and seen.



HE IS RISEN!

The centrality of Christianity depends solely on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He told His enemies, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." Jesus rose from the dead as the Son of God and Son of Man. The only reason anyone could successfully reject the Resurrection would be to provide overwhelming evidence that Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead. God promised it

was going to happen. Jesus rose from the dead, and hundreds and thousands of people were (and still are) willing to stake their own life on it.

God so loved the world, that He gave us His Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life. It's that simple Gospel message that is made possible when God became our Savior – offered His life as a ransom for our sins – and

rose from the dead to prove God's satisfaction with Christ's sacrifice and guarantee our justification. We are, therefore, saved by God's grace, through faith – all gifts from our gracious and merciful God. The Resurrected Jesus Christ makes all the difference. Count on it! Have a blessed Easter.



## Pastor Davenport Welcomed at Our Redeemer



The **Rite of Installation** was held for **Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport** on Sunday February 28, 2021 at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Ft. Smith, AR.

Pictured (Front Row L-R) Rev. Michael Eckert, Trinity Lutheran Church, Hill City, MN; President

Roger Paavola, Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport; Rev. Josh Willadsen, Circuit Visitor, Bethel Lutheran Church, Ft Smith; Rev. Timothy Henning, Trinity Lutheran Church, Mena, AR. Back Row (L-R) Rev. Josh Ralston, Zion Lutheran Church, Augsburg, AR; Rev.

Thomas Bartzsch, Vacancy pastor, River Valley Lutheran, Lamar, AR; Rev. John Merrill, First Lutheran Church, Ft Smith; and Rev. Tysen Bibb, Trinity Lutheran Church, Norbourne, MO.



# Pastor Beabout Welcomed at Shepherd of the Hills



The **installation of Rev. John L. Beabout** was held on Sunday, February 7 at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN. Rev. Beabout joined SOTH earlier in 2020 and accepted the Call to assist in the growing congregation in Crossville.

Pictured (L-R) President Roger Paavola, Rev. John Beabout, and Rev. Andrew Abraham, senior pastor at SOTH.

## MISSION MOMENTS

### Share Your Ministry's "Mission Moments" for the Upcoming District Convention

The Mid-South District is collecting submissions for Mission Moment video segments to be shared at the 2021 District Convention in July. How does your congregation or school participate? Simply email Renae McElwain (<mailto:rmcelwain@mid-southlcms.com>) with photos of an outreach event or project, along with a short description. The event or project can be from any year since the last convention in 2018. Please share your submissions by **April 15, 2021**.

For an example of typical submissions and how they will be presented, check out one of the

Mission Moment videos from the last District Convention at <https://vimeo.com/276968317>.



## 2021 DISTRICT CONVENTION UPDATES

**July 1 - July 3, 2021**

**Hilton Hotel, Memphis**

The official Convention Notice is posted on the District website. **All the latest updates can be found on the dedicated event page on the District website** ([mid-southlcms.org/resources/convention](https://mid-southlcms.org/resources/convention)).

# Our Experiences at Christ Academy

When our father first told us about a summer opportunity at a seminary in Fort Wayne, we weren't even sure that we wanted to go. We were unsure that we wanted to spend some of our summer vacation learning in a classroom. If you don't already know, the Christ Academy experience means a lot of theology. But because of the pandemic, after being quarantined for so long at home, we were desperate for a change of scenery and were open to ideas. Our dad really encouraged us to go to Christ Academy and so we went.

When we arrived at the seminary, we were welcomed by other people from around the country. We thought we would be roommates, but we each had our own room. The other kids in the dorm were fun and sometimes rowdy (which we liked), but they were also very hardworking and took the program very seriously. It was fun getting to know so many great people.

The theology classes were very deep and educational. They really made us think about our faith and beliefs. The professors were awesome. They were interesting and funny and we enjoyed getting to know them.

We had chapel four times a day! This was one of our favorite parts of the whole experience. The chanting and singing were very joyful and solemn. We had never heard chanting like that before. It was very cool. The pastors who preached to us during the chapel services were excellent preachers. Their sermons made us do a lot



of thinking and questioning (in a good way). It was also quite cool when we had Q & A time with various pastors. They did a great job telling us all about the ministry. And there was time to learn about Lutheran colleges, which we enjoyed.

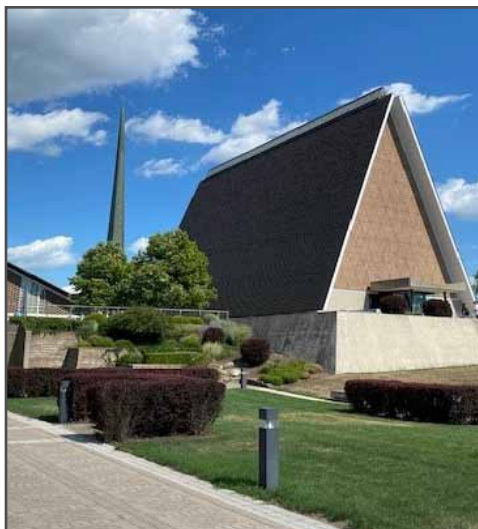
Sadly, this experience was only one week long because of the pandemic, but we are super excited that this summer the program will return to being two weeks long. We hope to do this

every summer as long as we can. The food was exceptionally good.

We are so grateful to Pastor Paavola and the Mid-South District for allowing us to participate in Christ Academy. We hope that other high school students from the district will consider being a part of this terrific program.

For more info on Christ Academy, visit <https://www.ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/christ-academy/timothy-school/>

— Andrew II & Gabriel Abraham





# STUDENT FINANCIAL AID—APPLY NOW

## District Now Accepting Applications for Student Financial Aid

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 on the [District's website](#).

**Application deadline  
June 15, 2021**

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  
Attn: Julie Tyler

### Forms

[District Financial Aid Application](#)

[Financial Aid Letter 02.03.21](#)

[Pastor's Eval Form 2021-2022](#)

[Scholarship Guidelines for 2021-2022](#)

[Agreement of Repayment for 2021-2022](#)

[SMP Scholarship Fund Application 2021-2022](#)



# Easter Blessings

*Jesus stood among them and said  
Peace be with you  
Luke 24:36*

## MISSION TRIP 2021

### Tanzania

We are making plans for a mission trip to Tanzania from the Mid-South District in 2021. We have a mission team from Christ the King Memphis who will be leaving at the end of May 2021 returning home on June 10. A second team from the Nashville area will be leaving on June 10 returning home on June 24th. The trips will consist of outreach and church planting in rural villages of the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) and safari into the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater National parks after the mission.

For more information contact the District office or Bob Allen - [rjallen@prodigy.net](mailto:rjallen@prodigy.net) • 270-535-7370



## 2021 NATIONAL LUTHERAN

### Youth Workers Conference

The 2021 National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference (NATIONAL21) is scheduled for **July 11–14, 2021**, at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Houston, Texas. The National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference is a stand-alone conference for youth ministry practitioners, but also provides a wonderful opportunity to prepare for the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering.

Each NATIONAL21 adult registration and guest room reservation at the Hyatt Regency comes with a complimentary adult leader registration for the 2022 LCMS Youth Gathering. Information regarding hotel reservations will be released at a later date.

For updates and more information, visit [lcmsgathering.com](http://lcmsgathering.com).

[Register Now](http://lcmsgathering.com)



## 2022 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING

**July 9-13, 2022 - Houston, Texas**

The LCMS Youth Gathering provides thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God's people to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity.

Now is the time to begin your planning for attending the gathering. Many resources are available to assist with fundraising, commitments, budgeting and planning. If you have participated in the gathering in the past, you know what an awesome experience it is for youth and leaders. If you have never participated, prayerfully consider this amazing opportunity to spend time with a community of God's people.

Check out the gathering website (<http://www.lcmsgathering.com/>) for information about the gathering, adult leader resources, promoting the gathering and much, much more. Follow the gathering on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/lcmsgathering>



## *As we joyfully enter the Easter Season –*

With the Easter Season upon us, there is so much to celebrate! At the forefront of our minds is the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus. God willing, this year will see many across the Mid-South District celebrating this day face to face. What a blessing!

At the Mid-South District, we are also celebrating the blessing of being able to continue our important work of supporting ministry through a challenging year. But the Mid-South District does not engage in this work alone. District ministry is made possible by the involvement, prayers and financial support of many partners, all working together in pursuit of a shared MISSION and VISION:

### *Mission*

*As an alliance of congregations and schools, the Mid-South District provides leadership, resources and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom and equipping the found for service in our churches, communities and the world.*

### *Vision*

*To witness communities positively impacted and lives changed through the power of the Gospel.*

As we joyfully enter the Easter season, the Mid-South District asks that you prayerfully consider supporting our work as a ministry partner. Whether a long-time or first-time supporter of District ministry, your partnership will be a source of encouragement as we pursue our Mission!



## *Have a Blessed Easter!*

Gifts to the Mid-South District can be shared at [mid-southlcms.org/give](https://mid-southlcms.org/give)



# YOU'RE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHARE THE HOPE ANNUAL VIRTUAL AUCTION



*Check [www.trinityhope.org](http://www.trinityhope.org) for all details!*

**APRIL**

**21-28**

**NATIONAL AUCTION**

**[WWW.TRINITYHOPE.ORG](http://WWW.TRINITYHOPE.ORG)**

**FEED THE CHILDREN**

**SOUGHT-AFTER ITEMS**



**TRINITY HOPE**  
HAITIAN FEEDING PROGRAM

# Prayer Summary, March 2021

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 March 2021.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**REV. NATHANIEL BOL** (of the SSELCL) and daughter, **APAR BOL**

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

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

**REV. DONLEY HESSE** (Emeritus, Mena, AR)

**MRS. SUSAN JONES** (Volunteer, Mid-South District)

**MS. MICHELE LAYNE** (Director, St. John Lutheran Child Care, Fayetteville, AR)

**MRS. MEGAN NAVRATH** (daughter of Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck, Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN)

**REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH** (Chaplain\*U.S. Army through the Board of International Missions\*Our Savior, Searcy, AR)

**We pray for all those affected by COVID 19 and the continuing work to distribute the vaccine.**

## OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO:

The family of **President John Magufuli of Tanzania**, who passed away on March 17, 2021.

We pray for our friends in Tanzania who also mourn his passing and for a peaceful transition and for the leadership of **Vice President, Samia Suluhu**.

**The family and friends of Mrs. Debbie Schoolcraft, wife of Rev. Roger Schoolcraft** (pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR 1989-2007 and Campus Ministry in Fayetteville) who recently passed away.

## CALL UPDATE

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED: Rev. John Beabout**, accepted a Call to serve as Associate Pastor to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN. Installation took place March 7th, 2021 during the morning worship service.

**PENDING: Rev. Dan Hawkins**, Pastor to GracePoint Lutheran Church, Munford, TN has received a Call to serve as Pastor to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Clinton, MS and a Call to serve as Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church and School.

### COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED: Eileen Esget (Candidate)** accepted a Call to serve as Deaconess to Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR. Commissioning took place March 21st, 2021 during the morning worship service.

### VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTERIES

**Mid-South District** – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry

**Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR** – Pastor

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN** – Pastor

**River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR**

– Pastor

**Zion of Avilla Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR**

– Pastor

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR**  
– Director of Parish Music

**Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN**

– Teacher

**Immanuel Lutheran School, Memphis, TN** –

Teachers for lower and upper grades

**First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN** – Teachers  
for middle school

**First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR** – Teacher  
for lower grade

**Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR** –  
Teacher for lower grade

**St. John's Lutheran School, Stuttgart, AR** –  
Teacher for lower grade

## CONGREGATIONAL MISSION COMMITMENTS

### Mission Commitment Receipts as of 2/28/2021 (2 Months)

Anticipated Amount (16.67% of budget)	\$245,603
Actual Receipts	<u>219,451</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$26,152)

### Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (2 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$61,669
Allocated to Tanzania	4,167
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)	<u>153,616</u>
Total Receipts	\$219,451

### Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (2 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 2/28/2021	\$219,451
Actual Receipts as of 2/28/2020	<u>\$239,870</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$20,419)

## Encourager Topics in 2021

The monthly Encourager features news from across the Mid-South District. If your congregation, school or ministry group has a story to share please email the articles and photos to [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com) by April 20, 2021. Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2021

- May – Small Town & Rural Ministry
- June – Leadership

## 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

**Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,**

*President*

**Angela Fowler,**

*Executive Director for Business & Finance*

**Paul Reaves,**

*Executive Director for Development & LCEF Vice President*

**Allen Piepenbrink,**

*Executive Director for Schools and Early Childhood*

**Missy Washburn,**

*Administrative Assistant to the District President*

**Renae McElwain,**

*Communications & Marketing Specialist*

**Julie Tyler,**

*Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

### Contact the Mid-South District

1675 Wynne Road

Cordova, TN 38016

PHONE: 866.373.1343 / 901.373.1343

FAX: 901.373.4826

### Stay Connected With Us

ON THE WEB - "[mid-southlcms.org](http://mid-southlcms.org)"

ON FACEBOOK - "Mid-South-LCMS"

ON TWITTER - "@midsouthLCMS"

