

Encourager

MAY 2022

Mid-South District LCMS



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

Easter is over... at least as the one day set aside on our church calendar. Yet, Easter remains the day we should celebrate every day because of what God did for us when Jesus rose from the dead – giving us life and salvation as we are justified by God’s grace that we receive by faith. God wants this message of life, mercy, and peace to be ours every day. But why is the first Sunday after Easter one of the lowest attendance in the entire church year? Does our gratitude evaporate within seven days? Daily He brings us His grace through His means of the proclaimed Word, Baptism, the Eucharist, and in Holy Absolution. Those are the reasons we should desire to be in worship at every opportunity.

Family devotions and daily Bible readings are the ways in which

God brings us a living relationship with Him outside of Sundays. But, there’s another aspect that gives us our daily assurance of God’s grace. Every day of ours should begin and end in prayer. Prayer is a result of our gratitude for God’s unending mercy toward us for the sake of Christ our Savior on one hand, but our privilege to converse with God on the other hand.

Our prayers begin as a testimony to God of our faith in His faithfulness and divine love. When we say, “Our Father who art in heaven...,” we are praying to the same God who commended faith to us through His Holy Spirit to receive His grace. St John wrote, “*To all who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*” However, our Lord Jesus proclaimed God as OUR Heavenly

Father. He made us justified for His purpose in Christ’s sacrifice. We would never have thought to pray, except that our Heavenly Father invites us to speak to Him and Jesus teaches us how to and what to pray. He promises to hear us. Who would dream of such a thing... that God who created the most intricate detail of the entire cosmos would answer our slightest cry? By our human nature, we’d never expectation Almighty God to hear us.

But God doesn’t leave us mired in Adam’s sin to inherit the dregs of our human depravity. He made us His children when He adopted us into His family by Holy Baptism. He sent His Son as the perfect sacrifice for our sin so we could become His children and eat at His table. St Paul wrote, “*God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born*

under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"

The structure of the entire universe lies in perfect balance as it focuses on God's Son incarnate who saves us – His creatures on some insignificant blue ball in the expanse of His creation. Since we are His we have access to His heart. Just as children ask their parents for things, we are enabled and encouraged to ask for all we need from our Heavenly Father. We're done with being strangers who'd never dare to speak to God or had a right to even think of being His dear children.

If you are a parent, do you remember the times when you suspected that your children were up to "no good" when they were strangely quiet? Our Heavenly Father is saddened if we don't pray. He still invites us to pray. He commands us to pray. He wants us to pray as a child would speak to our earthly parents. He loved us so much that He came to be with us in the Person of His Son incarnate.

Understand this most powerful tool we have: We've been called by God to help form those precious lives He's entrusted to us – children, neighbors, co-workers, and friends. None of our children will forget the multitude of things we teach them. We have dedicated ourselves to Christian education in our homes and congregations. We have a most powerful and eternally necessary tool to teach those precious lives that can



never be discovered anywhere else – their relationship to Almighty God. We can introduce the children God has entrusted to our care to their own close and lasting relationship with God by the example we leave with them. We can tell them of an unending love from God in Christ... the one who suffered and died so that they can have life everlasting in Him.

Is this the only reason why we pray? Do we ask God for our needs because He had the power to change our degraded circumstances through His Son? Our Heavenly Father caused the whole creation to move for our good at the moment of His Son's incarnation and at His suffering and death for us poor sinners. Everything was done for His loving relationship to us and for our eternal salvation. His grace responds to our greatest need. He certainly has the power to hear our paltry prayers. He pleads for us as His children to ask for all our needs, our thanksgiving, and praise of His grace.

Martin Luther wrote in his explanation of the Lord's Prayer, "Our father who art in heaven..." What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true father and that we are his true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask him as dear children ask their dear father." Prayer is speaking to God in words and thoughts that have penetrated the depths for our human needs. As God has spoken to us through His Holy Word, He has asked us and invited us to respond to Him in prayer as He promises to hear our prayers. He is our Heavenly Father who wishes to hear from us as we express our needs to our Heavenly Father just as children as their earthly parents.

But I am sure pastors and laity alike have heard a person who is troubled with some kind of the circumstances of their life say, "I don't know what to pray!" Or, "I don't know how to pray!" With confidence in our Christian faith, we may begin our prayers

knowing God's Spirit knows more so than ourselves the depths of our greatest needs. We can share this powerful gift with those who are either afraid or unaware.


We may all have witnessed the times when knew a person needed help in getting a job, help with homework, or solving some other kind of difficulty. A caring person might say, "I'll contact someone who can help you out." It's worked in business and in school. But, for those whose needs exceed anyone else's ability to help them out, we have

"Someone" who helps. Good Friday and Easter were the events that have made that contact possible for us and for those who come to us for help. Shouldn't that make it clear that not only does God want us in worship on the other Sundays besides Easter? We may be the very person God has chosen to contact someone who can help them out.

Equipped and engaged for the Gospel of Christ happens when we continue in the Easter joy where God comes to meet us and serve us in His Word and Sacraments.

We just may be the contact He arranges to the person who needs to be helped by someone. A blessed continuous Easter.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



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 available the [District website here](#).

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

Application Deadline
June 15, 2022



MID-SOUTH 175TH LCMS ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness (Acts 4:29)

This verse is part of the prayer of the Church in Acts. The people prayed for boldness to speak the Word – the proclamation of the Gospel.

The 175th Anniversary of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod was on April 26, 2022. This is when the confessional German Lutheran Churches in “Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. . .” met to walk together in their confession. There were German speaking Christian churches in America at the time, but the churches were not speaking the whole truth of the Bible – they were not speaking the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It was also a world wanting to suppress that Biblical truth.

Our church body formed to boldly proclaim God’s Word in a place needing to hear the Word of God. Those Lutherans left Germany to be able to speak the truth of God’s Word in its fullness. They knew that God’s true Word was for the German Lutherans in every walk of life – farmers, factory workers, tradesmen, and entrepreneurs. But that is not all. God’s Word was for their neighbors and all people in a world trying to silence God’s true Word.

That tradition remains in the LCMS, today. We boldly speak God’s Word in its fullness. Our confessions speak the Bible in its fullness. Thus, our Book of Concord applies and speaks God’s Word. To be a Lutheran is to boldly speak God’s Word in its fullness to all people in our lives. It is to boldly speak in a world muzzling God’s truth and His Word.

“What does this Mean?” (Yes, that good Lutheran phrase!) We do boldly speak God’s Word in church every Sunday. It is easy for pastors to speak from the pulpit, but what about the people? The meaning includes Lutheran congregation members speaking the confession of God’s Word. So, we as pastors need

to pray with our people the same prayer asking God to grant us boldness to speak the Word. . . and then go and speak the Word.

We need to equip God’s people for this speaking of God’s Word through teaching and training. Obviously, people will not know the truth until it is taught to them. It seems simple, but Biblical scholarship connects God’s Word to the lives of the people. Teach the Word! Training for the people to boldly proclaim involves learning how to apply God’s Word in daily life – within our vocations and a world hostile to God’s truth. A foundational teaching, and great place to start, is the summary of God’s Word also known as Luther’s Small Catechism. It then makes training with Each 1 Reach 1 or Everyone His Witness

more effective to build confidence. With those foundations, the people can speak boldly in a challenging world.

When the people are ready to speak boldly, the Mid-South District offers GROW Grants for assistance. These are one-time grants up to \$15,000.00 for creating self-sustaining

outreach efforts. You are invited to consider how a GROW Grant might be used in your congregation to serve the Gospel to people in your community.

So, in this the 175th Anniversary of our Synod, we remember the boldness of the early Church, and how the truth of God’s Word was brought to “Missouri, Ohio, and other States” in the frontier days of our country. We do the same. This year, we boldly speak God’s Word.

— Rev. William Zwick
Executive Director of Mission Ministry



Great Ideas and Encouragement—from LCEF!

For years, most have known Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) as the “lender of choice” for Lutheran ministries. But today’s LCEF is so much more! For example, LCEF has grown in its role of encouraging and equipping ministries through its Ministry Support programs and services. Over the last year, LCEF’s Ministry Support team began sharing weekly videos online called Ministry Moments. The videos are brief but powerful, packed with practical tips to help ministries move forward, according to God’s will. For anyone who leads in ministry—whether in a large or small way—LCEF’s Ministry Moment videos can be a great way to get inspired. Take a look at the collection of Ministry Moment videos on LCEF’s website at lcef.org/ministry-moments. They are a great example of how *LCEF is so much more than a lender!*

Gift-Giving Is Easy with the LCEF Visa Gift Card



Is someone you know ready to graduate high school or college? Or will wedding bells soon be ringing for a friend or family member? For special occasions like these, a Visa gift card makes a thoughtful gift, affording the recipient flexibility to use it however they wish. **For Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) investors, the LCEF Visa gift card can be a great gift-giving option.** The gift cards are available in \$25, \$50 and \$100 values. An additional \$1.99 fee per gift card will be added to the order.

LCEF investors can learn more or place an order by visiting lcef.org/product/lcef-gift-card/ or calling Lutheran Church Extension Fund at 800-843-5233.

Deadline Is Coming Up LCEF's Kaleidoscope Grant Program

Lutheran Church Extension Fund's (LCEF) 2022 Kaleidoscope Fund grant program is now accepting applications. Kaleidoscope grants for 2022 are open to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) K-8 elementary schools. Funds will be granted in amounts between \$10,000 and \$40,000. Please visit <https://lcef.org/kaleidoscope/> to learn more about the Kaleidoscope Fund and grant opportunity—and explore the ways your school could take part. **The deadline to apply is June 1, 2022.**



Ascension Lutheran Hosting the Henkel Conference

Ascension Lutheran in Madison, TN is pleased to host The Henkel Conference, coming up August 22, 2022. The Henkel Conference is devoted to Christian theology and cultural engagement by hosting the best Lutheran theologians and Christian subject matter experts possible. Although all presenter topics have yet to be submitted, Ascension expects the following topics to be addressed: worship, the mystical union, gender theory, race theory, religious liberty, bioethics, children's rights, and Christian education. Please visit www.ascensionmadison.com/henkel for registration and more information; your greatest support for this new endeavor is your attendance! Both pastors and laity are invited to attend.

Grace Lutheran is Hosting Seminary Extension Class

Grace, Little Rock will be hosting a seminary extension class from **June 8-10th**. They will be welcoming the Prof. Scott Steigemeyer from Concordia University in Irvine and the topic is "What It Means to be Human". Registration is open now.

Grace will be able to help with lodging, meals or other costs involved for attendees, but on a limited basis. A detailed introduction to the speaker and course is included [here](#). For more information contact Rev. Kent Schaaf at 501-663-3631 or kent.schaaf@glclr.org



Professional Church Work An Incentive from Concordia St. Paul

Concordia University, St. Paul's (CSP) [church work tuition guarantee](#) ensures eligible students enrolled in church work programs will pay no more than \$6,000 in tuition each academic year. This move further supports CSP's commitment to preparing more workers for the church as the most affordable church work option in the Concordia University System of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Full-time students enrolled in a church work program will receive a minimum of \$18,400 in combined institutional, state and federal financial aid each year. Scholarships and grants from a student's home congregation, LCMS District and local communities may be stacked on top of this guarantee to further reduce the cost of tuition and living expenses. If you know a student who is considering a career in professional church work, be sure to share this exciting program!

Trinity HOPE's First Female Feeding Program Director



Because Trinity HOPE hires native Haitians to run the feeding programs at all 247 schools, children have continued to be served even during these difficult times. All 31 Feeding Program Directors travel to their schools twice each month to monitor program compliance and to ensure children are hearing the Word of God and feeling the love of His grace.

Sargine is our first female feeding program director. She started with Trinity HOPE in the spring of 2021, and just celebrated her 1 year anniversary with the ministry. She has been such an amazing asset. From Sargine:

"My name is Sargine Bien-Aime. I'm from Les Cayes, the Southern part of Haiti. I'm from a large family of five siblings: One sister and four brothers. My dad [has passed] and I live with my mom Jinolyse, my niece Rose and my nephew Gantt.

I'm an agronomist and I'm working for Trinity Hope organization, which is an international organization that helps Haitian children by providing daily meals in many [Christian] schools in Haiti. My position is a feeding program director. I have to travel twice a month to visit the schools and make sure everything about feeding the students is done well.

This job is very challenging when we consider all the problems that we are facing in Haiti. For example many times we are facing the lock down of some part of the country, which makes it difficult to move from one place to another.

All of these situations makes it uncomfortable, but in any negative situation we can always have a positive part that we truly enjoy. That's the reason why I can say that job has many positive impacts on me [and] on my family. For example: It gives me the opportunity to help my community, it lets me compare the progress of a school before and after being in the program. Thus it makes me understand how important it is for the kids to be fed when studying. As the old Haitian saying said, '[An] empty stomach doesn't have ears.' I can say that job [also] makes me economically independent. Which allows me to contribute to the family budget. I enjoy being part of Trinity hope because it always encourages us to serve God, to be honest and to live like a big family."

To learn more about the Trinity HOPE Haitian Feeding Program, please visit us at www.trinityhope.org.



615-400-4918

Trinity HOPE
P.O. Box 2910
Lebanon, TN 37088
www.TrinityHOPE.org

admin@trinityhope.org

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PRAYER SUMMARY, APRIL 2022

Following is a list of all the people that have appeared on the Mid-South District website prayer list www.mid-southlcms.com during the month of April 2022.

PRAYER CONCERNS

REV. RON BACIC and family (First, Little Rock, AR)
MRS. SUSANNE ELSEROAD (wife of Rev. Richard Elseroad, Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN)
KNOX (3-year-old son to the cousin of Sabrina Gunderson, Early Childhood Director, Crossville, TN)
REV. RONALD HALAMKA (Waxahachie, TX)
MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)
MRS. MARY ANN HERD (wife of Rev. Clifford Herd, Hixson, TN)
REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MR. MARC HIGGINS (Treasurer, Mid-South District Board of Directors) Maumelle, AR
MRS. DONNA MARSHALL (wife of Rev. Stewart Marshall, Trinity, Pine Bluff, AR)
REV. CHAD PHILIPP (Pastor, St. Luke Lutheran & St. Paul Lutheran, DeWitt/Gillett, AR)
REV. GIL PINGEL (Emeritus, Chattanooga, TN)
MR. CHARLES TAYLOR (husband to Pat Taylor, Church Administrator, Our Savior Cabot, AR)
REV. ALAN LUDWIG, (father-in-law to Rev. Derek Roberts, Praise, Maryville, TN) Missionary serving in Siberia.

We lift up in prayer all those assisting in the rebuilding efforts from the devastating December tornadoes in Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky; especially lifting up Ms. Jan Simko, District Disaster Relief Coordinator and Rev. David Appold of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY.

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Ms. Jennifer Zagel Church (Former Employee to the Mid-South District Office) who passed recently passed away.

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mrs. Virginia Prince (Messiah Lutheran Church) who passed recently passed away.

CALL UPDATE ORDAINED MINISTERS

PENDING: Rev. Aaron Unseth, Candidate, Roseville, MN has been issued a Call to serve as Senior Pastor to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN
ACCEPTED: Rev. Robert Portier, Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN has accepted the Call to serve as Senior Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bossier City, LA.
Rev. Gerald Heinecke, Pastor to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Buffalo, Wyoming, has accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to the dual parish of Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville & Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waldenburg, AR. Installation date planned for June 12th, 2022.
Rev. Kory Janneke, Pastor to St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Warren, WI has accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway, AR. Installation date planned for May 15th, 2022.
Rev. Alan Thoe, Assistant Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN has accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN. Installation date planned for May 1st, 2022.

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

First Lutheran Church, Harrison, AR – Pastor
Messiah Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN - Pastor
Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, AR - Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN – Pastor

IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – Teachers (Middle School English/Language Arts)
First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR – Teacher (3rd Grade)
First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN – Teachers (1st grade teacher; Middle School Math/Science; 4th/5th grade teacher)
Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN - Teacher

CONGREGATIONAL MISSION COMMITMENTS

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 3/31/2022 (3 Months)

Anticipated Amount
(25% of budget).....\$378,722
Actual Receipts 351,236
Over (under) anticipated
amount.....(\$27,486)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (3 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World
Missions\$99,121
Allocated to Tanzania 6,250
Retained for District Mission/
Ministry Support (70% of
receipts).....245,865
Total Receipts\$351,236

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (3 Months)

Actual Receipts as of
3/31/2022\$351,236
Actual Receipts as of
3/31/2021\$358,371
Over (under) prior year
receipts.....(\$7,135)



Share your news with us!

Encourager Topics in 2022

We invite you to share your stories with us please email stories by 20th to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com.

[Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2022](#)

- 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
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

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