

# Encourager

MAY 2023

Mid-South District LCMS



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

## What's Our Excuse?

Last month we enjoyed Easter! It's the best time of the year for our congregations. Easter is the most attended worship service across Christendom. Christmas Eve is the second most attended, followed by Mother's Day. The lowest attended worship service is the Sunday after Easter – followed by Father's Day! But unlike the year the Pandemic shut down our Easter celebrations, nothing stopped us this year – no snowstorms (unless you live in the Dakotas), no cold weather, no daylight savings time sleepiness, and the trees were already leafing out, so the allergies didn't act up!

We celebrated that great day with great joy, food, families, and festivities. We may have had record numbers of visitors and people attending worship. They came in worship, hearing the

Good News of God's promise of life everlasting, and receiving the blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

But, then there's that after-Easter slump. It happens every year and in almost every church. When we want to understand why, we hear excuses like, "I just have gotten out of the habit." Habit? "I have so many things to do." Things? "Sure, the kids want to go to Sunday School, but I just can't seem to get going to get them there." Can't? "I went on Easter, what does he expect?" He? Who is "He"?

Excuses.

A college physics professor once told our class, "If we laid all the crutches in the world end to end, they still couldn't support all the lame excuses

I've heard." Do we need a "No Excuse Sunday"? Think about it, we could furnish cots for those who say Sunday is their only day to sleep in. We could install wheels on armchairs for those who think the pews are too hard. Eye drops and hot black coffee could be served for those who have trouble staying awake because they stayed up watching TV or partied on Saturday night. We might issue hardhats for those who say the roof will cave in if they come to church. Blankets could be issued for those think the church is too cold and personal fans for those who think it's too hot.

We could arrange for neighbors or relatives to cook the meal that can't wait. We might even hand out buttons saying, "STAMP OUT STEWARDSHIP" for those who think churches ask for too much money. We

might bring in a pallet of grass and a tree for those who want to worship God in nature. A doctor and several nurses could be available in case someone felt like they were coming down with something. We could put up Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who don't think the church looks any different since the last time they were there.

People have many and any reason for not being an active part of the Christian Church. Many of our congregations are an exception when it comes to volunteering, stewardship, and worship attendance. But Jesus is used to excuses. He's heard them all! "Let me go bury my father, then I will come follow you." "I will follow You, Lord, but first, let me say goodbye to my family." The responses Jesus gave to those kinds of excuses might, at first, seem cold and uncaring. But Jesus comes to us on HIS terms, not ours. He is right where He said He'd be... in Word and Sacraments.

Why is it so difficult? Why are some so willing to commit, but not on the terms of unconditional commitment? Family, friends, work, sports, service clubs, cleaning, cooking, vacation, rest, or just plain too busy seems to cover most of them. Too busy to be bothered by God, today? The issue that the whole Christian Church faces today is the same Jesus faced when He walked this earth. People were ready for commitment, but only on their own terms.

Discipleship is being a follower of Jesus. Discipleship comes with a price. Discipleship and discipline come from the same root word. So, when someone holds something back, there is another god in our way.

I read a story about an elderly gentleman who needed to visit his ailing brother a long distance from the man's home. He couldn't

drive himself because he couldn't read the road signs and he only drove 30 miles per hour when he did drive. What he did is tape one of those bright orange flags on his lawnmower and went 240 miles across the state of Iowa so he could see his sick brother.

It's all about love - unconditional love like that which God gave us when He sent us His Son, Jesus Christ. In Christ, God gave us something we couldn't earn on our own - His grace - that priceless gem of grace we apprehend with the gift faith He offers, and we carry everywhere we go. God's gifts of grace and mercy don't depend on how good I am or how well intentioned I am. They come from God freely in His faithfulness to us and His Holy Christian Church. He is always willing to forgive - more so that we are willing to even ask for His forgiveness. He extends love, even when we don't deserve it nor sometimes even expect it.

Remember your last family reunion? It starts with, "Just bring what you want to eat yourselves, and we'll furnish the drinks for everybody." You really don't want to go. After all, there'd be that small talk about whose kids are growing up so fast. You'd hear about somebody's surgery or latest aches and pains. It's been so long since you've seen some of the relatives, maybe this would be the last time they'd invite you. You drag yourself around, not wanting to get excited about it. You want to dress so that you don't stand out in the crowd. There's nothing in the refrigerator you can find

to bring. Oh well, maybe you can find an old piece of bologna, mustard and some pickles.

When it's time to eat there was a real spread - fried chicken, baked beans, potato salad (the one with lots of eggs on top), fresh cut vegetables, hot dogs,



hamburgers, and the best chocolate cake your eyes had ever seen, and your Bologna and pickles. "Oh, let's put all this together - kinda potluck?" "Nah, I only brought bologna." "Ah, there's plenty for everybody. Come on, eat up!"

And so you ate, that even though you came like a pauper, you were fed like a king. When I think about how little I have to bring to God's "family reunion," I am humbled to think of how He asks us to share in His extravagant generosity. We, ourselves, don't have enough love, grace, faith, or mercy to go around, but God still lavishly showers us in His grace, love, and mercy with more than we expect.

You see, God doesn't need our bologna. He knows that we need so much more. That's why He didn't spare His Son, but gave Him up for us, that we might enjoy the eternal family feast in

His kingdom forever and ever. That's why our daily devotions, our weekly worship, our Bible Study, taking the children to Sunday School, our volunteering and reaching out to others is so important to the Church. Because God has enough to go around for everyone.

So, what's our response? More excuses? Jesus has heard them all. There isn't one that hasn't been tried before. But that doesn't stop Him from saying, "Come on! Let's put all these together and feast like kings." Next time, I'll bring the potato salad. Can we count on you to join in?

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 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](#).

**Application Deadline**  
**June 15, 2023**





# Welcome to the Mid-South District

## REV. MATTHEW ALBRIGHT

The Rite of Installation to the Senior Pastoral office at Christ Lutheran Church and School for Rev. Matthew Albright was held on Sunday, April 2, 2023. Participating in the installation included (Front L-R) Rev. Ross Johnson, LCMS Disaster Relief Executive, St Louis; President Roger Paavola, Rev. Matthew Albright, Christ Lutheran, Little Rock; Rev. Kevin Conger, Hope Lutheran, Jacksonville. (Back L-R) Rev. John Mathis, Christ Lutheran, Little Rock; Chaplain David Witte, Grace Lutheran and Arkansas National Guard, Little Rock; Rev. Tom Boecker, Peace Lutheran, Conway; and Rev. Don Hefta, Emeritus, Hot Springs Village.



## REV. TOM BOECK

The Rite of Installation for Rev. Thomas Boeck on March 19, 2023, into the Pastoral ministry as pastor of Peace Lutheran in Conway. Pictured (from L to R) were Rev. Corey Janneke, St Matthew Lutheran, Conway; President Roger Paavola; Rev. Thomas Boeck; and Rev. Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville (Top L to R) Rev. John Mathis, Christ Lutheran, Little Rock; Rev Leroy Leach, Emeritus, Pastor David Vandercook, Trinity, No. Little Rock & Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle; Rev. Don Hefta, Emeritus Hot Springs Village; and Pastor Bob Benke, Faith, Hot Springs Village.





# Easter Blessings Around The Mid-South District

## The History Of Our Hand Built Cross

### First Lutheran - Little Rock, Arkansas

— Contributed by Joline Kaucher & Nate Brandes

**O**ur wooden cross came to be during the 1989 Lutheran Layman's League's International Convention held at the Convention Center in downtown Little Rock. Joline Kaucher provided the details of the cross in an article at the convention. But as the famous radio commentator, Paul Harvey, would say: "And here is the rest of the story".

The theme of this Convention was "Build On The Rock". Joline, being the convention's "Decorations Coordinator", came up with the theme display idea of having a large wood cross sitting on top of a rock pile, with a decorative arch overhead. Now we know that the featured cross was built by brothers David & Ted Kaucher and that today it still stands in our worship services as our Lent & Holy Week "Rugged Cross", and our Divine Easter Sunday Flowered Resurrection Cross.

For the development of the cross' base 'rock pile' Joline came up with a very unique idea. For the convention's promotional announcement information Joline asked that all attendees bring a rock to the convention with their name and contact

information on the bottom of the rock. And at the end of the convention everyone would come by and pick up a different rock from the pile to take home. This action would provide the means for everyone to have a contact buddy to extend 'post-convention conversations and prayers' with.

Joline stressed that every rock in the pile was different and unique from the others; some were bigger - some were smaller, some were beautiful and some were, well, not so beautiful. She wanted her pile to reflect exactly how we, too, are unique as well as different from each other when it comes to possessing our Blessed Gifts of Talents from the Holy Spirit.

In looking back, Joline believes there must have been about 700 - 800 rocks in that convention pile!

And now, "The Rest Of The Story!"

The convention has closed and Joline & David are on a hotel elevator going down from their room. They still had their convention name tags on. The elevator stops and another couple steps in, also with their name tags on. As the elevator starts down with the two couples aboard the



*They say "a picture is worth a 1,000 words". We use this hand-built wooden cross during Lent, Holy Week and Easter Sunday. From Jesus' Crucifixion (above altar) and His Resurrection's Blessing of faith and eternal life as shown by the beautiful live flowers on His vacated Easter Cross - "It Is Finished".*

lady looks at Joline's tag and with a surprising tone say's: "Joline, I believe I have your rock! Joline, now starring at this lady's name tag, shouts back: "I also have yours, no way!" The couple was from Indiana and they stayed in contact for many years following.

Joline describes this happening as "God's Divine Coincidence"! Out of 700+ available rocks! And upon exiting the convention to come together on an elevator! Why it just has to be so!

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The Lord continues blessing **Chapel of the Good Shepherd**, as they reach out into their community with an Easter egg hunt, donating and supporting local charities.



We celebrated with a baptism on Easter minting at **Christus Victor Lutheran Church**. Our friend and brother in a Christ Zayne was baptized during our second service. What a beautiful day it was.





## LUTHERAN EARLY RESPONSE TEAMS GROW TO SERVE DISASTER-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES



When a deadly chain of intense storms rapidly intensified and dropped dozens of tornadoes during the afternoon and evening of March 31, 2023, the Mid-South District included communities that were hit especially hard: Little Rock and Wynne, Ark, as well as the town of Covington and rural McNairy County in west Tennessee. Several LCMS church members in those communities were among the many whose homes were completely lost or severely damaged, and many lives were lost, as well.

Fortunately Grace, Knoxville, had recently hosted Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) trainings on March 4 and March 25, and the classes had attracted students who showed lots of enthusiasm for volunteerism!

The 38 newly trained LERT volunteers joined Mid-South's existing teams in Paducah and

Hopkinsville, Ky., and Batesville, Ark., giving the District a total of 82 LERT trained volunteers, some of whom (Hopkinsville) are also chainsaw trained, and will provide a home for the District's new skid steer and our disaster trailer.

When the March 31st disaster struck, LERT teams also came from Oklahoma and Tyler, Texas, to support the Batesville teams' response in Little Rock.

Jan Simko, Mid-South District Disaster Response Coordinator, reported

that about 3,000 homes were damaged or destroyed and many families displaced, mostly in North Little Rock, Amboy, Sherwood and Jacksonville. Ark.

LERT assistance was gratefully received. A Jacksonville native left this heartfelt note: *"I wanted to thank you and your*



Newly formed LERT teams at Trinity, North Little Rock, and Hope, Jacksonville, received training on April 10 and 11 from District Disaster Response Coordinator Jan Simko.



*congregation for your acts of kindness and compassion for my family My words can't accurately describe my gratitude, but I cannot thank you enough. GOD bless all of you!"*

"We knocked on many doors with no response," she recalls. "I left business cards at homes with minor damage thinking that homeowners may return.

"There was already some rebuilding going on, mostly roofs, within the first two weeks, but this will be a long-term rebuild—probably 1-3 years," she estimates.

The need for such teams will almost certainly continue, and volunteers are rising to the challenge.

Newly formed LERT teams at Trinity, North Little Rock, and Hope, Jacksonville, received training on April 10 and 11, and the Knoxville team underwent basic and advanced chainsaw trainings in late April.

If your church is interested in LERT training, contact Jan Simko at 931-200-1777.

Continuing prayers are requested for the safety of our district LERT teams as they pursue their ministry to those stricken by natural disasters.



In addition to physical help with clean-up, disaster victims and their families received food, toiletries, towels, and gift cards to cover other emergency needs.



Rev. Kent Schaaf, Grace, Little Rock; and Rev. David Vandercook, Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, Ark., Pastor Kevin Conger, Hope Lutheran, Jacksonville AR thanked the LERT volunteers who responded to assist their Arkansas communities following the devastating March 31 tornadoes.





# 4.5%

## 6-MONTH FIXED-RATE TERM NOTE

Minimum \$500 to invest. New money only.

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

- ✓ INDIVIDUALS
- ✓ CONGREGATIONS
- ✓ ORGANIZATIONS

[CLICK HERE TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT!](#)



**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 April 2023. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit [lcef.org](https://lcef.org) for details.

## LCEF's Take Heart Scholarship Application Deadline Coming Up

The Take Heart Scholarship was developed for LCEF's Y.I. Club members who are high school seniors and will soon advance to the next level of higher education. As students begin this new journey, LCEF's Young Investors Club wants to assist their transition by offering financial support through the Take Heart Scholarship with up to three awards of \$3,000, \$1,000 and \$500. Applications close **May 7, 2023**. Winners will be announced on May 23, 2023. For complete details and to apply, visit [lcef.org/scholarship/](https://lcef.org/scholarship/).



## NOW YOU CAN OPEN YOUR LCEF INVESTMENT ACCOUNT ONLINE!

Here's a great new feature on [lcef.org](https://lcef.org): the option to open your individual or minor investment account online! Print and mail-in applications are also available, but the option to easily complete an investment application online—and check the status of the account—is a welcomed convenience for those who prefer a more automated process. Visit [lcef.org](https://lcef.org) today to check out this great new feature and the latest news from Lutheran Church Extension Fund.



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

[lcef.org](https://lcef.org)

# Mid-South District's Early Childhood Conference



The Mid-South District is excited to offer this year's **ECC Conference July 17-18, 2023**, at Faith Lutheran Church in Collierville, TN. Mark your calendar for this educational event designed for educational hours (up to 8 total credit hours) with your states. Registration for the Early Childhood Teacher conference is available on the District website.

Registration for the ECC Conference will be \$45 per attendee. We have a block of rooms reserved at the Fairfield Inn & Suites – Collierville, near Faith Lutheran, shopping and restaurants. The cost per room will be \$120. The **deadline for registration is June 26, 2023.**

The theme for this year's conference is "Making Learners for Life," inspired by Matthew 28:19-20. Keynote presentations will be from both Arkansas State University (ASU) and the University of Memphis (U of M). ASU presenters will host a workshop on "The Five Commitments of Optimistic Leaders." The U of M speaker will present on early childhood brain development in a presentation titled "LENA Grow - Talk Builds Babies Brains!" Other sessions will include STEM activities for toddlers, developing fine motor skills, emergency preparedness, talking to parents, and so much more.

**REGISTER ONLINE**





## June 5-9 Summer Youth Retreat in TN Mountains



A summer youth retreat is being planned by a Lutheran congregation in the Southern District—and **Mid-South youth groups are invited!** The retreat is planned for June 5-9, 2023 on the beautiful campus of Sewanee, just outside of Chattanooga.

General information on the retreat follows:

- Dates: June 5-9 (arrive the PM of 5th, depart after breakfast the 9th)
- Room cost: \$52.15 per person per night (Double Occupancy); \$208.60 for 4 nights; \$67.15 for a single room per night; \$268.60 for 4 nights
- Meal costs: Breakfast is \$6.70 per person, Lunch is \$9.65 per person, Dinner is \$9.65

Headcounts and deposits for this retreat will be due soon. Please contact Pastor William Parsons ([w.a.parsons.3@protonmail.com](mailto:w.a.parsons.3@protonmail.com)) at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fairhope, Alabama for details and registration information.

## June 15-17 Family Institute



Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is excited to be hosting its first Christ Academy Family Institute June 15-17, 2023. The Institute will precede this year's Christ Academy High School program. The Institute is aimed at parents, families and church workers who treasure passing their faith to the next generation. In a challenging world, Christ Academy Family Institute provides assistance in accomplishing that goal.

**Registration is required and is available at the click of the button below.** It's free for the first 50 families as an inaugural gift. Once the first 50 have registered, the cost is \$110 for each attendee over the age of 13 and \$50 for ages 12 and younger.

**REGISTER NOW**

To learn more about the event, [visit our website](#). If you have questions, please contact us at [ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu](mailto:ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu).

## 2 Family Camps Coming In 2023

A family camp designed especially for families of LCMS pastors and church workers has been added to the 2023 summer camp schedule at Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean Mountain in Arkansas. The summer schedule also has two weekend family camp sessions, which is more convenient for most families, but because pastors who have attended family camp in previous years have had to leave early to lead worship on Sunday, it became apparent that a mid-week session would better serve church worker families.

Family Camp starts at lunch on Wednesday, July 5, and runs through Friday afternoon, July 7. Families are welcome to stay another day to spend time exploring Petit Jean Mountain. The first six families who register will be able to stay in the newly completed retreat lodge at the camp.

Camp Trinity is cutting camp fees in half for families of LCMS church workers as a means of serving the servants. Additional financial aid is available on request.

Family Camp for church workers is for all ages. Camp staff will lead a sampling of summer camp activities – hiking, swimming, canoeing,

large-group games, and a visit to the petting zoo (with horseback riding available for a separate fee). Each day begins with First Word (quiet devotional time), with Bible study after breakfast. Both evenings end at a campfire with lots of singing and message about God's love in Christ.

Those interested in this or any other sessions of summer camp can learn more and register at the camp website: [Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean](https://www.lutheran-camp-on-petit-jean.org/)





# 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 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](#)



# BREAD OF LIFE CAMPAIGN

For many of the children served by Trinity HOPE in Haiti, their school lunch is the only meal they receive in a 24-hour period. Without this meal the children would struggle with malnourishment. Though the ministry continues to grow, there are still over 20,000 children on the waiting list hoping for this meal.

Right now, we have an opportunity like never before. The Bread of Life Campaign.

The idea of the campaign centers on one truth, Jesus is the Bread of Life, and He provides for our every need. With your help and a strong reliance on Christ to make this happen, we believe we can feed another 20,000 children through this campaign.

A very generous donor has agreed to match all new, recurring donations indefinitely. This means any new, recurring donation established today will be matched for as long as

the donation continues. At a cost of about a quarter a meal, every dollar you donate on a recurring basis will provide 8 meals. Not only that, but a second donor has agreed to match the donation for one year. If you establish a new recurring donation today, every dollar will become 3 dollars for the 2022-23 school year and will provide 12 meals.

To establish a new, recurring donation today, visit us at [www.trinityhope.org/match](http://www.trinityhope.org/match). You can also mail your donation to P.O. Box 2910, Lebanon, TN 37088.



## BREAD OF LIFE Campaign

New Recurring Donations  
Matched for a Lifetime

*Then Jesus declared, "I am the **bread of life**. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35*



Make a Donation at:  
[www.TrinityHOPE.org/match](http://www.TrinityHOPE.org/match)



Scan  
Here to  
Donate



Trinity HOPE  
P.O. Box 2910  
Lebanon, TN 37088  
615-394-4950

# Prayer Summary, March 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 March 2023.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**REV. JEFFREY KING** (Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR)

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

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

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

**REV. ED MAANUM** (First, 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)

**REV. JOSEPH RANDRIANASOLO** and the Lutheran Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship (LIME) in Madagascar as they deal with historic flooding.

**COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOL** (Nashville, TN)

All those affected by the tornados in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, and surrounding counties.

All those affected by the tornados in Little Rock and Wynne, Arkansas and Covington, Tennessee.

All those affected by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

## CALL UPDATE

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED: Rev. Jerome Leckband**, Pastor to Golgotha Lutheran Church, Wausa, NE, has accepted the Call to serve as *Associate Pastor and Teacher to All Saints Lutheran Church and School, Jonesboro, AR. Installation planned for July 2, 2023.*

**Rev. Henry Graf**, Associate Pastor to Promise Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, IN has accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN. Installation planned for April 30, 2023, at 4:00PM.*

**Rev. Michael Meyer**, Associate Pastor to The Rock Lutheran Church, Seward, NE, has accepted the Call to serve as *Associate Pastor to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR. Installation is scheduled for June 11, 2023, at 3:00PM.*

**Rev. Joshua Reifsteck**, Associate Pastor to Calvary Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, IN has accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Murray, KY.*

**PENDING: Rev. Daniel Grams**, Pastor to Ascension of Christ Lutheran Church, Beverly Hills, MI has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN.*

**Rev. Dr. Edward Naumann**, Candidate, has received a Call to serve as Pastor to Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR.

**Rev. Mark Taylor**, Associate Pastor to Faith Lutheran Church, Plano, Texas, has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN.*

**Pastor-Elect Jacob Childers**, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis has received a Call to serve as *Associate Pastor to Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN.*

**Pastor-Elect Charles Vincent Shemwell**, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johnson City, TN.*

**Rev. Jeremy McDonald**, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Our Savior Lutheran Church/Zion Lutheran Church, Brinkley/Ulm, AR.*

## VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

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

**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Murray, KY – Pastor**  
\*\*Call Accepted

**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**  
\*\*Pending Call

**Our Savior Lutheran Church, Rich, AR/Zion**

**Lutheran Church, Ulm, AR – Pastor \*\*Call Pending**

**Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, AR – Pastor**

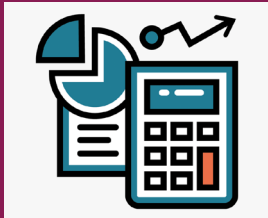
**Christ Lutheran Church, Paris, TN – Pastor**

## IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**Grace Lutheran Church Early Childhood Center, Little Rock, AR – Early Childhood Director**

**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 3/31/2023 (3 Months)

Anticipated Amount  
(25% of budget)..... \$391,068  
Actual Receipts ..... 354,249  
Over (under)  
anticipated amount ..... (\$36,819)

### Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (3 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World  
Missions ..... \$100,025  
Allocated to Tanzania ..... 6,250  
Retained for District Mission/  
Ministry Support (70% of  
receipts)..... 247,974  
Total Receipts ..... \$354,249

### Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (3 Months)

Actual Receipts as  
of 3/31/2023 ..... \$354,249  
Actual Receipts as  
of 3/31/2022 ..... \$351,236  
Over (under) prior  
year receipts ..... \$3,013

## What's your latest news?

### Encourager Topics in 2023

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.](#)

- June – Leadership
- July – Veterans
- August – Stewardship
- September – Church Planting
- October – Celebrating Lutheran Heritage
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights 2023

### 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.  
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phone: 662-252-1004. Judy will always acknowledge receipt of your submission if it is sent directly to her.

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