

Encourager

Leadership

Mid-South District LCMS | June 2020

June's Focus: Leadership

Leadership appears in a variety of roles across the Mid-South District. We celebrate all who step out and step up to help or guide others along their walk in life.

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



Overcome by a Tree

In the old *The Lutheran Hymnal*, there is a communion prayer that says, "We give thanks to You, Holy Lord, Almighty Father, everlasting God; On the tree of the cross, You have given salvation to mankind, that, whence death arose, thence life also might rise again and that, he who by a tree once overcame, likewise by a tree might be overcome through Jesus Christ our Lord." It's a one sentence prayer that packs a huge amount of theology into a few words. It calls us look away from the tree of knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:1-5), an instrument of sin and death; and turn our eyes, instead to a second tree – the tree of the cross. In that second tree we

see the means by which God reversed the effect of sin and death and bore the fruit of our salvation.

The ironic aspect of the Leader of our Christian hope and life came at His Passion. The death that comes by the one tree is overcome by the life that comes from the second tree. The death that came in the second tree gives life to those afflicted by the effects of the first tree. Confused? No. Satan defeated Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden by using the fruit of a forbidden tree. But, Christ allowed Himself to be crucified by a tree on Golgotha's hill. The wood planted on Calvary was cut off in the prime of its fruit-bearing life to become the raw, rough timbers on which the Lord of Life died. What had appeared fruitful, attractive and tasty to the eye in Eden that seemed to produce a delicious treat (Genesis 3:6), now appeared unfruitful and grotesque. The second tree's limbs were sawn and shaped to become an instrument of death.

Yet, what appeared fruitless and barren, unattractive, grotesque and forbidding, became the very source of all fruitfulness – a tree filled with grace for the eyes of faith to

see. What our first parents thought was beautiful and appealing introduced death into the world. What seems as an ugly, cruel instrument of death introduced the only means by which life can be restored. At the cross, the tree of death became the tree of life.

The irony is that Satan, using his greatest and most feared weapon - death - was himself defeated when Christ turned and used that weapon against him by dying the Supreme death - the death of the Son of God on the cross for the sins of all the world, our tree of life. Our Lord was wounded on His sacred head by a crown of thorns. The thorns and thistles God pronounced against Adam in his cursed ground, laid upon the sacred head of an eternal and gracious God. The brow of Christ - the Lord of life - flowed with crimson cleansing the curse laid on mankind. The bloody stains on our Savior's face canceled the curse of the ground. But, we can bless the suffering as the sign of God's love, mercy and grace on us when His wrath and anger against our sin was carried out on His Son - our Leader of forgiveness unto life everlasting.

Fig leaves were sewn together by Adam and Eve to cover their shame, when they discovered they were naked. The leaves do little to hide what is obvious to God. Adam and Eve had fallen into unbelief. They rejected the warning of God and turned His Holy Word of Promise into a curse. It would take far more than a few leaves that eventually shrivel and die, to cover our shame. To cover their shame, God sacrificed an animal and prepared the skins to cover Adam and Eve's bodies. (Genesis 3:21) What was cursed by the Lord could never be covered by our efforts or by anything in creation.

Christ is not a fig leaf to cover our shame and sin. On the cross God prepared Human flesh as a garment of righteousness to cover the wickedness and depravity of our humanity. Christ died cursed that you and I need not seek the fig leaf of excuses or try hide from God's wrath against our sinfulness. The curse suffered on the cross covers us with Himself and protects us from the righteous

ever-all-seeing eye of God. God's question to Adam and Eve in the Garden, "Where are you," wasn't an indication that the fig leaves hid them from His sight. Rather, it's His rhetorical question, "Where have you put yourselves and all of your offsprings?" The rhetorical answer, of course, "We are here, dead in sin."

"Christ be my Leader by night as by day; Safe through the darkness, for He is the way. Gladly

I follow, my future His care, Darkness is daylight when Jesus is there." [Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 861, Timothy Dudley-Smith, Hope Publishing, 1964] These words remind us that our Savior Jesus Christ reversed all the curse and wrath against us in the righteous exchange on the tree of the cross. Now, when the searching eye of God searches our hearts and asks, "Where are you," we may respond, "Here I am Father... covered in Christ and His righteousness."

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola





TEACHER APPRECIATION

Teacher Appreciation Week in May was a well-deserved acknowledgement of the many things our teachers had accomplished during the year. I personally would like to thank all the teachers in the district for the extraordinary work that has been done during this unprecedented time. I show my bias when I say that teachers are one of the most passionate and dedicated workforces of any occupation. Teachers' commitment to their students is unequalled. It's hard to imagine how stressful it must have been to begin a totally new way of teaching in such a short period of time when the stay at home orders were given. And now that parents are back to work and the end of the school year has passed, it will be an interesting summer trying to figure out how the fall semester will begin. Will the teachers be able to teach in a face to face environment, or will the online learning continue? Thanks to all the teachers for all you are doing to keep the lines of communication open with parents and students and for continuing to share the love of the Lord with those whom the Lord has sent to you to serve. Be that good servant and continue to help those children grow spiritually and mentally.

In His Service
Allen Piepenbrink
Mid-South District Education Executive



WE HAVE CEMENT BLOCKS!

Chapel of the Good Shepherd

Hopefully the construction will be finished in late fall. We had a number of rain delays this past winter -- 52% of the total annual rainfall occurred in Jan-March.

Chapel of the Good Shepherd's building site is located at 681 Sharps Chapel Road, Sharps Chapel, TN. Construction has commenced in earnest even without an official ground breaking because of COVID-19. The congregation's members are all at or near retirement age. The vision is to provide a permanent place for worship and community service for ourselves and for those who will follow us. Our church's motto is from Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "Christ leads the way, stay close to Him."

— Paul Kritsch, Pastor



SQUARES WITH PRAYERS

Ladies sewing ministry at Friends in Christ (Bryant, AR) making masks

These ladies are members of Friends in Christ Lutheran Church's sewing group, "Squares with Prayers." They began last year by making quilts (hence the name) and quilted lap blankets and bibs for nursing homes, hospice, shut ins and for our Kids Closet ministry. They meet every Friday and begin with a devotion (also the name), then sewing. Their meetings were suspended at the outset of the pandemic, but recently resumed, making masks. They've made 44 masks. The masks will be used for our worship services when they resume, and also given to those who need one, or for a donation to their ministry. The ministry will continue and once the pandemic subsides they will resume making quilts.

— Emil Woerner



The ladies in the picture are: Annette Queck (teal Thrivent shirt), Kay Fletcher (purple shirt), Virginia Rupe (gray Thrivent shirt)
Not pictured: Peggy Hill, Barbara Hamm, Susan Clausing, Sheril Cooper



VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

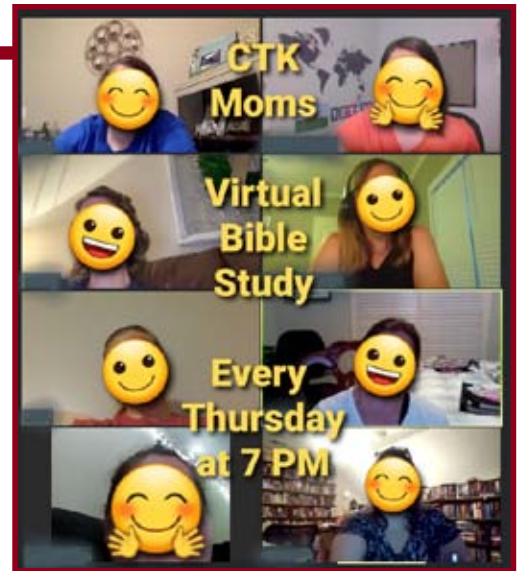
Christ the King, Memphis

In these uncertain times, it becomes a challenge to forge and keep bonds of friendship and spiritual kinship alive and flourishing – no in-person Bible Class, no Small Groups, no fellowship over a cup of coffee in the narthex or in the nursery sharing childcare tips. The traditional methods of engendering closeness and community among church members are disrupted; what's the answer to make sure our people are cared for spiritually and to keep those friendships thriving? For as we know, it is often those very friendships which give the impetus to church outreach ministries and produce God-pleasing fruit.

As one answer to this challenge, a group of young moms at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, began a Zoom Bible Study and

fellowship time. The group meets once a week in the evening, and has adapted Bible Studies from the LWML's Lutheran Women's Quarterly. The leader, new member Jessica Peralta, was identified as a potential Bible Study leader based on the Time and Talent Survey she completed upon joining CTK. In a bold step of faith, she agreed to lead this new group and set about recruiting interested moms, including forming a Facebook groups called "CTK Moms" in which each mom was invited to share a photo of her family and tell a little about herself. Common hobbies and vocations were discovered and instant bonds created.

As the leader Jessica stated, "I was starting to get to know other moms before COVID-19 struck, and it is a blessing to have the opportunity



to continue developing relationships with moms from church through virtual means while strengthening our faith through the Word." When normal returns, whatever shape that takes, these moms will have this Bible Study group to turn to for stability in transition.

— Genie Swan

PRAYER INITIATIVE

Christ the King, Memphis

"We Lutherans are a praying people. We pray all the time, not just in times of crisis, when the 'ship is in danger,' but through private devotional prayers, Bible study group prayers, email prayers, and bulletin and worship service prayers; we pray for and with each other daily. But in such a time as this, we are moved to offer additional prayers for our families, friends, neighbors, first responders, healthcare workers, and anyone affected by COVID-19." *Excerpt from lifeatctk.com blog, posted on 3-26-20*

In such a time as this, members of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, have added special prayer initiatives, covering

their families, friends, and fellow members with a blanket of care.

Each Wednesday evening at 7PM, Pastor Mark Goble leads a half-hour live-streamed prayer service from CTK's sanctuary. Anyone can watch and pray along with Pastor Mark as he brings petitions which have been sent to the church office in advance or texted to his phone during the service. The prayer service will continue every Wednesday through the month of June. You can watch via live streaming at <https://ctkmemphis.sitewrench.com/live-video-streaming>.

Similarly, CTK's Stephen Ministry is sponsoring a designated prayer time

each day. Using Ephesians 6:18 as the foundation of this group effort -- *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people* -- people are asked to pray every day at 6:18am or 6:18pm, taking strength in the knowledge that others are praying with them across the community of believers.

For more information on either of these prayer initiatives, contact CTK's church office at churchoffice@ctkmemphis.com.

— Genie Swan

THANKS BE TO GOD!



We are excited to share with you pictures of the children and their families receiving uncooked food at school during these challenging times. Even though the schools have been closed in Haiti, we have had the opportunity to continue feeding the children and their families using their schools as distribution centers. This has been an amazing witnessing tool, allowing us to share God's love and message with the families. Letters were written and read to the parents explaining the food is provided to them through Christ's love during this coronavirus pandemic.

Scripture was also shared with a message of peace and hope.

- ***"The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."* Deuteronomy 31:8**

- ***"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:6-7**

- ***"But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish."* Psalm 19:8**



Even in times of trouble, we know God never abandons us. Through the sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ, we are assured of His love. Not only does that sacrifice give us hope for today, it guarantees each of us, as believers in Jesus Christ, eternal life in heaven forever. For that reason, regardless of what is happening in our world, we can boldly say, **"Thanks be to God! All is well with the Lord."**

If you would like to help Trinity HOPE provide critical food to children and their families during this devastating time, you can donate by check to Trinity HOPE, Memo: COVID 19 Relief, 2024 Hunters Place, Mt Juliet, TN 37122 or donate online at our website <https://www.trinityhope.org/covid19-relief>.

Thank you for your continued support to share God's love with the children and their families in Haiti!



June 15 Deadline

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. This information may be sent via email to Julie Tyler (jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) or in a written letter (Attn: Julie Tyler / 1675 Wynne Road / Cordova, TN 38016). All related forms, including the financial aid application, are on the District's website. **The application deadline is June 15, 2020.**



jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) or in a written letter (Attn: Julie Tyler / 1675 Wynne Road / Cordova, TN 38016). All related forms, including the financial aid application, are on the District's website. **The application deadline is June 15, 2020.**

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 4/30/2020

(4 Months)

Anticipated Amount

(33.33% of budget)..... \$512,990

Actual Receipts 478,754

Over (under)

anticipated amount **(\$34,236)**

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (4 Months).....

Allocated to Synod for

World Missions \$135,293

Allocated to Tanzania 8,333

Retained for District

Mission/Ministry

Support (70% of receipts) . 335,128

Total Receipts \$478,754

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (4 Months)

Actual Receipts as of

4/30/2020..... \$478,754

Actual Receipts as of

4/30/2019..... \$529,699

Over (under) prior

year receipts **(\$50,945)**



By the Grace of God, the Cross of Christ will be raised high once again in the public square on Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena California on New Year's Day 2021

The title of the Lutheran Hour Ministries Tournament of Roses Parade float is to be JESUS TEACHES - the only Christian float in the parade.

There are two exciting tours available this year. They can be found here: <https://www.christiantravelplanners.com/tours/itemlist/>

The first option is: 2020 Rose Parade, Float Decorating & Southern California; December 28, 2020 - January 02, 2021

The second option is: 2020 - Float Decorating and Rose Parade Mini-Package; December 28, 2020 - January 02, 2021

Prayer Summary, May 2020

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 May 2020.

PRAYER CONCERNS

MR. TODD BARINGER (former principal at Immanuel Lutheran, Memphis)
MRS. CINDY BOSTER (spouse of Rev. Kory Boster)
MS. AMY BROWN (eldest daughter of Rev. Dan McDougall and his wife Lucy)
MR. RAYMOND BROWN (son of Gladys Brown)
MS. EVELYN DOUGLAS (friend of Julie Tyler, Mid-South District Office)
MRS. SARA FEUERSTEIN (daughter of Pastor Donley Hesse, Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MR. MARK GUDLIN (spouse of Denise with Trinity Hope)
MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)
REV. DONLEY HESSEE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MRS. SUSAN JONES (volunteer, Mid-South District Office)
MS. MICHELLE MORGAN (niece to Carolyn Metzger, Mid-South District Office)
MRS. MEGAN NAVRATH (daughter of Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck, Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN)
REV. MERLIN SEPMAYER (Crossville, TN)
REV. HERBERT SWANSON (River Valley Grace, Lamar, AR)
REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Chaplain*U.S. Army through the Board of International Missions*Our Savior, Searcy, AR)

REV. DR. ROGER PAAVOLA, President, Mid-South District, as he continues to lead our staff and the Pastors and congregations of our District during this very difficult time

ROWAN, the brother of a District dial-in worship attendee, who is hospitalized

All those affected worldwide by the Coronavirus; hospital workers; doctors; nurses; our government leaders; pastors and the citizens of our country as we work within this ever changing situation.

With thanksgiving we celebrate Cara Steely being named Principal, Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR.

Our deepest sympathies to:

The family and friends of David Wurm (served as a Deacon, Spirit of Joy, Chattanooga, TN) who passed away on Friday, May 8, 2020.

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: Rev. Edward Maanum, Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Dual Parish with Bethany Pueblo) Pueblo West, CO, has accepted the Call to serve as **Pastor at First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN**. Installation planned for May, 31st, 2020 at 4:00PM

Rev. Paul Leigeber, Pastor, Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church, Lillian, AL has accepted the Call to serve as **Pastor to the Dual Parish of Faith Lutheran Church, Union City, TN & Trinity Lutheran Church, Dyersburg, TN**. *Installation planned for July 26th, 2020

PENDING: Rev. Kevin McReynolds, Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Central City, NE, has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR.

SEMINARY: PASTOR-ELECT Sawyer Meyers, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, has accepted the Call to serve as **Missionary-At-Large to the Mid-South District** and will be placed as **Pastor at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olive Branch, MS**. *Ordination and Installation planned for July 25th, 2020

CONGREGATIONS-IN THE CALLING PROCESS

First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN – Pastor
Mid-South District – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry

Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Jonesboro, AR – Pastor
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR – Pastor ** A Call has been issued

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS-IN THE CALLING PROCESS

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

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN – Director of Christian Education

Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR – Principal
Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN – PreK 3 Teacher

Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN – 1st Grade Teacher

Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – Kindergarten Teacher

First Lutheran School, Ft. Smith, AR – Kindergarten Teacher

Immanuel Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – 1st Grade Teacher

Encourager Topics in 2020

We invite you to share your stories with us please email it by **June 20, 2020** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com

- July – Veterans
- August – Stewardship
- September – Church Planting
- October – Celebrating Lutheran Heritage
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights of 2020

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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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*

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Julie Tyler, *Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

Contact the Mid-South District

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Cordova, TN 38016

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FAX: 901.373.4826

Stay Connected With Us

ON THE WEB - "mid-southlcms.org"

ON FACEBOOK - "Mid-South-LCMS"

ON TWITTER - "@midsouthLCMS"

Contribute

If you would like your article or event published in the next *Encourager*, please email it by **June 20, 2020** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com

District Introduces New Policy for Sharing Photos and Other Media

The Mid-South District is grateful for the photos, videos and other visual media contributions it receives to share in publications and online outlets. Please note that effective immediately, the Mid-South District is operating under a new policy regarding usage of pictures received for publication that include minors. Specifically, the policy requires the following acknowledgement for image submissions:

"By providing the Mid-South District with this picture, video, or multimedia, you are stating to the Mid-South District affirmatively that you have obtained verifiable consent from the parent or legal guardian of anyone pictured under the age of 18."