

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | June 2021



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

IT'S NOT ROUTINE!

In the little farming town where I grew up, there was a regular occurrence that could be startling to anyone who was unfamiliar with the town. The town had its regular essential businesses on main street (a block and a half long), restaurants, clothing store, dentist office, drug store, bank, a Five&Dime, and two beer joints. The town was a gathering place for the farmers and their kids on warm summer nights. Just a short walk from Main Street was the favorite stopping place for the towns people and travelers who were looking for some relief from a hard day of driving. It was called "The Dairy Bar." It was connected to the local creamery

where the local farmers brought their milk for processing. But during the processing, one of the by-products produced the ingredients for the absolute best ice cream found anywhere. It was THE booming business in our town.

But, there was a problem related to the every-day, regular occurrence. At 9:30 every night, the whole town was alerted by the fire whistle blowing for 30 seconds. Townspeople knew it was 9:30pm. Visitors and travelers looked in the sky to see if a storm was coming, or if there was a fire burning nearby. Nope! It was 9:30pm, and every kid under 16 years of age was supposed to be in their homes –

it was curfew. The park benches at The Dairy Bar, occupied by all ages of kids looked around at each other to see if anyone had seen the police car go by, looking for curfew delinquents. No one really moved. The policeman's oldest son was sitting on the park bench at The Dairy Bar. In the summer time it was a safe place where we could continue to fill ourselves with high caloric intake for the next days chores so we could produce more milk, cheese, and delicious ice cream. No one paid much attention to the curfew because it was routine.

Recently, as I listened to a devotion, the prayers included another regular routine

occurrence that struck a unusual note. The devotion leader paused for a longer than the usual period of time when he began the Lord's Prayer. He began, "Our Father..." and stopped only briefly. But, as often as we've said the prayer, that long pause struck a significance like a fire siren signaling something special. Like a traveler driving through my hometown, that pause made me sit up and take notice.

Did the devotion leader forget the next words, or was his microphone cut off? No, it was a dramatic pause, "Our Father..." Those first two words Jesus taught His disciples has astounding significance! By beginning, "Our Father..." Jesus made it very clear that His model prayer begins with God. But there's so much more. In those two words, Jesus has meant that we are embraced all together into one Christian family – Our Father...

Everyone who has ever prayed the Lord's Prayer is joined together with us. Those who are yet to be born will be taught and will repeat this wonderful prayer. It is reverential worship. The pause taken by the devotion leader presented a renewed importance of the prayer that teaches us a lesson of what God the Father has done for us; and what God, the Son, accomplished for us – life and salvation through His grace and mercy in the forgiveness of our sins.

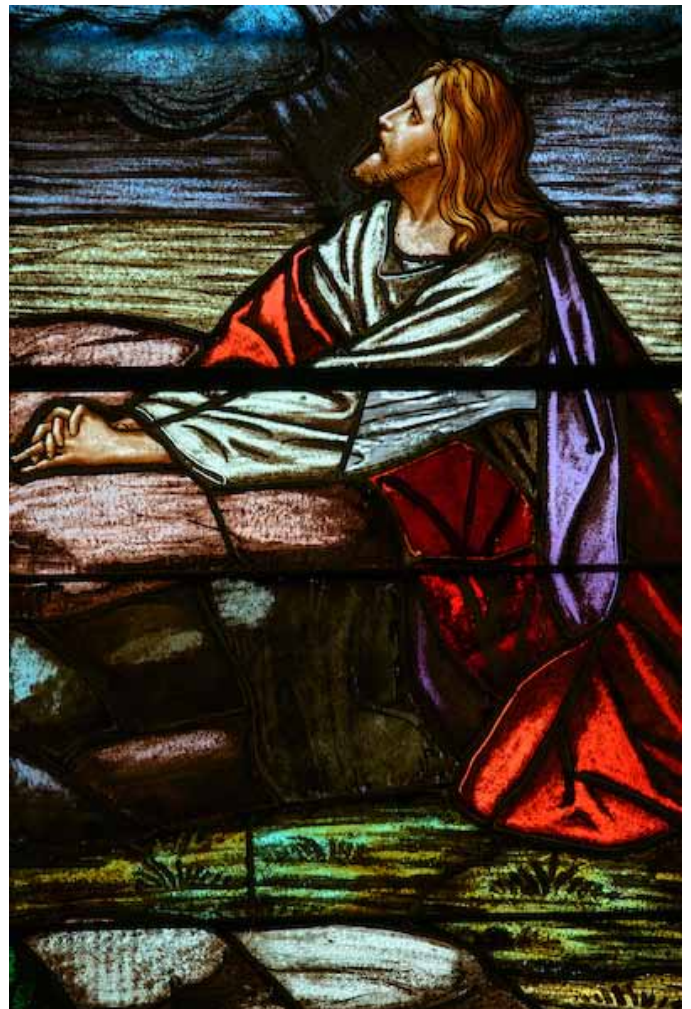
Martin Luther divided the Lord's Prayer into an introduction,

seven petitions, and a conclusion – a doxology. But the introduction uttered from the lips of Jesus sets the stage for the petitions and really becomes a preface petition. "Our Father..." is a simple invocation and requesting petition to bring the person speaking the prayer into the glorious presence of the Almighty and gracious Lord God, but by God's invitation. In his explanation of the introduction, Luther wrote in his Small Catechism, "God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may with all boldness and confidence ask Him as dear children ask their dear father."

In his Large Catechism, Luther states, "By this commandment [to pray] [God] makes it clear that He will not cast us out or drive us away, even though we are sinners; He wishes rather to draw us to Himself so that we may humble ourselves before Him, lament our misery and plight, and pray for grace and help. These are the most necessary parts of Christian Instruction. We should learn to repeat them word

for word. Our children should be taught the habit of reciting them daily when they rise in the morning, when they go to their meals, and when they go to bed at night;... Every father has the same duty to his household;..." (*Book of Concord*, pp. 363-424)

The unanticipated pause during the devotion was delightfully refreshing. So often we rush through prayers with our lists. All the more often, we succumb to the routine and don't stop long enough to drink in the beauty of what God gives and how God forgives. We begin most of our prayers with what we want. But, Jesus began His prayer to give God the adoration and praise He



deserves. The Lord's Prayer trains us to focus on God alone and shows us that there is more to reality than what we can see.

By saying, "...Who art in heaven," we acknowledge our Father is surrounded by the angelic host. But, it also identifies our true home, a home promised to us and prepared for us by a loving and merciful God in our Savior Jesus Christ. We're used to and preoccupied with the changes and chances of life that sometimes we forget that we are mere sojourners and that heaven is where Jesus wants us to be... with Him...forever. Our prayer is like those of us who remember phoning home – collect – just to let our families know that we're alright.

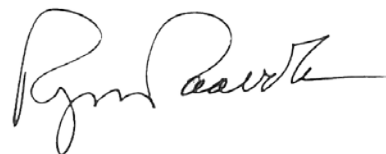
Heaven may seem like a far-away place. Yet our omnipresent God is both there and with us as we travel this pilgrimage. Everyone who prays is as close to that "Home" as we can get on this side of eternity. But, it's the next best thing to being there! The Lord's Prayer springs back to the unity of our fellowship with Christians for eons past and eons to come.

"Our Father..." is a connection not only to God but to others as it unites us Christians within the fellowship of believers. We realize that in prayer we're not alone. We are together in one "Common-union" of Faith in Christ Jesus.

When Jesus said, "Our Father..." He startled people by calling God His Father. To address God as Father seemed too familiar. But, in this prayer and through the work of Christ, we are privileged to call God our Father. He is no longer a distant divinity. He is "Our Father." Those who pray the Lord's Prayer know God as a loving, merciful, and involved Father. "Father" is a family word. It's our prayers to a gracious God – not some anonymous, vague "higher power," or spiritual force. Our trust confesses a close, intimate relationship of love. St Paul wrote, *"You are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ... because you have become His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts and now you can call God, 'Abba, Father'."* (Galatians 3:26, 4:6) St John exclaims in his first epistle, *"How great is the love the Father has*

lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1).

When our son Chris was on a mission trip in Israel, he heard a young boy running in the streets shouting "Abba, Abba, Abba!" He was calling for his Daddy. Jesus wants us to be just as comfortable in God's presence and call on His name often as a little child calling for his father. During June, the whole nation celebrates (at least in one form or another) the observance of Father's Day. Isn't it wonderful for us "townspeople" who are familiar with "Our Father," may give thanks for our Christian fathers who took the privilege and responsibility to teach us the values of Christian living? Let us pray that it isn't routine. When we gather for devotions, let us also pause as we begin, "Our Father..." giving thanks for the grace, mercy, life, salvation, and promises of Him who has adopted us as His dear children...now... and forever – Our Father.





Meet District President Candidate

Rev. Lane B. Reuter

Each candidate was asked to describe the challenges, opportunities and priorities that face the Mid-South District over the next five years and to limit their answers to 300 words or less.



*Rev. Lane B. Reuter
Senior Pastor
Our Savior Lutheran Church
Nashville, TN*

I see 5 key challenges, opportunities and priorities facing our District the next five years:

1. **FAITHFULNESS TO GOD'S WORD AND THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS:** When other church bodies abandon the Truth, we stay true to it! We have the most solid doctrine around and must never dilute it, or be afraid to boldly proclaim it! I will uphold our Biblical and Confessional identity.
2. **PASTORAL RECRUITMENT:** We should seek the most gifted and dedicated pastors and church workers available. We are blessed with a myriad of wonderful servant leaders, and the Mid-South District must aggressively recruit even more of these workers. I will treat both seminaries with equal respect and will build relationships with them to help ensure we get the best pastors available.
3. **MISSIONS AND OUTREACH:** The Great Commission cannot be lip service. Every congregation should be encouraged, challenged, and assisted in reaching as many people in their communities and beyond with the Gospel. I will set up initiatives that will assist every congregation in this endeavor. I will also be committed to filling the position of Mission Executive at the District within my first 12-15 months in office.
4. **CHURCH PLANTING:** We need a robust LCMS presence in our communities. I will be dedicated to partnering with congregations that are interested in planting churches, and I will also cultivate a church planting atmosphere within our District by highlighting congregations that have been successful and how others might duplicate their strategies.
5. **CLERGY AND SPOUSAL CARE:** Covid was a nightmare experience for many of us church workers. Yes, we witnessed God's blessings through it all, but we also struggled daily, weekly, and monthly, attempting to navigate through scenarios we had never experienced. The stress of it took a toll on many of us emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. The District must lead in this ministry and care.



Meet District President Candidate

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola

Each candidate was asked to describe the challenges, opportunities and priorities that face the Mid-South District over the next five years and to limit their answers to 300 words or less.



*Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President
2012-Present*

Jesus said, "Go, make disciples of all people, baptizing... and teaching them to observe all that I have given to you." In 2018, our Baptized membership increased – a first in the LCMS in three decades. Outreach during COVID didn't happen, resulting in lost memberships.

Christ's command builds Churches. God's blessings grow churches and strengthens His people's faith. Strong Lutheran churches embrace Scripture and our Confessions – preaching, teaching, and reaching that focuses on Christ. Christ wants people in His Church. Outreach, assimilation, and retention reverse membership erosion. Christ promises His blessings in His Word to be encouraged, equipped, and enabled to reach the lost.

Our District purpose with all member-congregations is a vital partnership. Our partnership will establish:

1. A district mission committee, with leaders who receive, evaluate, and create mission and church-planting partnerships through wise stewardship; by emphasizing mission and ministry for planting, sustaining, and strengthening our Lutheran presence. Local mission development assures church planting for optimal resource use with partnering congregations.
2. Strengthening small and rural congregations in the context of their community ministries.
3. Increasing **Each1-Reach1**, **C.A.R.** and **COMPASS** to strengthen congregations' missions and ministries.
4. Creating Town Hall meetings, seeking needs, concerns and ideas to strengthen congregations and distributing District essential resources.
5. Focusing on continuing education and conferences for professional church workers to equip their ministries.
6. Supporting congregation visitation, addressing needs, and partnering in their unique ministries.
7. Recruiting/supporting Church workers with formal education, colloquy, and second career options to meet growing ministry needs.
8. Establishing alliances between congregations for optimal financial, professional, staffing and outreach opportunities.
9. Distributing District resources to preserve, strengthen and provide stewardship of time, talents and treasures.

The Districts purpose is driven by vital partnerships with member congregations, schools, workers, and auxiliaries that preserve our ministry's unity and responds to the needs of our congregations and individuals.

TEAMWORK

The building expansion story



Work continues in the rotunda, which will serve as a remarkable entrance from which one can enter the sanctuary or the office and classroom complex.



Lulloff brought each class from Christ the King Lutheran School to the construction site to allow each child to add a Bible verse or prayer to the beams so that when the building opens, everyone will be surrounded by the Word of God.

Proverbs 27:17 *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."*

In the story of the building expansion at Christ the King Lutheran Church, one running theme stands out when speaking of the process: Teamwork! In picturing how the foundation, beams, brickwork, and all the other elements and systems that make a building solid and functional came together, we can also picture the many people who worked together, building upon one another's strengths, laying a foundation of faith and raising hope along with walls, making the whole much more than just the sum of its varied parts.

As the idea and process unfolded under the guidance of Senior Pastor Chuck Neugebauer and Associate Pastor Mark Goble, two people stood out in the four-year drive to bring the ideas laid out in emails and committee discussions to an actual plan to present to the congregation and then, with approval from the voters, to bring the plan into reality. Mike Jurgensen, then-president of the congregation, and Rusty Lulloff, CTK's director of operations, formed a mighty duo as leaders of the project. How blessed CTK has been to have these two men take the helm. As Pastor Neugebauer stated, "Our gracious and

generous God, as He always does, provided CTK with exactly the kind of amazing people we needed....Their incalculable time and sacrifices over these past years have greatly blessed our Savior, our congregation and our community. I couldn't be more thankful!"

They divided the responsibilities thusly: Jurgensen, as president and long-time member of Christ the King, served as the "face" to the congregation, leading voters meetings, fielding questions about financing, handling differences of opinions with prayer and determination to do what was best for Christ the King; Lulloff, with a career-long knowledge of building and construction, was the "face" to the architect (Hord Architects) and the general contractor (Grinder Taber Grinder). Having one voice for each aspect served to keep decision-making and communication running smoothly.

As a result of the professionalism and commitment shown by these two men, as well as the leadership of Dr. LaVerne and Peggy Lovell as co-chairs of the "Now Is Our Time" capital campaign, and the unflagging support elicited from the congregation -- even when faced with delays caused by the wettest season in recent memory, not to mention the COVID19 pandemic -- Christ the King is nearing completion

on a 20,000+ square foot, \$6.3 million building project featuring an impressive rotunda, a state-of-the-art Fellowship Hall, multiple offices and classrooms, facilities to host Room in the Inn, a large youth area, a library, an expanded nursery, and many other top-of-the-line features, all ADA-approved and energy-conscious.

Jurgensen, in looking back at the time that has passed since his initial emails to Pastor Neugebauer broaching the subject of aging facilities and needed space for ministry, said, "The support of our congregation has been absolutely amazing. Our members have continued to support this building campaign prayerfully and monetarily. All glory be to our God in Heaven!" And praise be to God for providing the pivotal leadership to carry forward the vision needed for Christ the King to grow and bear fruit in ministry to its community and beyond.

Soli Deo Gloria

Genie Swan, with assistance from Mike Jurgensen and Rusty Lulloff



Jurgensen addressed the crowd of approximately 350 members and friends who gathered for the kickoff of the "Now is Our Time" capital campaign.

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.

[Register Now](#)



APPLICATION DEADLINE JUNE 15 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



ANNA YOUNG WINS TN RTL STATE PRO-LIFE ORATORY CONTEST

"If abortion is so empowering, why does the culture have to disguise it to make it seem more appealing to society. They use talking points and euphemisms to deceive... 'a woman's right to choose, her reproductive rights, or exercising her bodily autonomy.' Why can't they just call it what it is?" These were some of the remarks in a speech given by Anna Young, winner of the recent Tennessee Right to Life Pro-Life Oratory Contest for high school students.

The 22nd annual event was held at the Parish Life Center for St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Madison. Winners from participating chapters across the state qualified to attend by competing against public, private, and home-schooled students in grades 9-12 from their respective counties. Each contestant researched, wrote, and presented an original 5-7 minute pro-life speech on abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, or stem-cell research.

Anna, a high school senior, represented Williamson and Davidson Counties. After seeing a post from the largest abortion provider in the nation in her social media feed, Anna questioned whether or not having an abortion was truly empowering women as the post indicated. So she decided to find out for herself. She and a friend spent a day outside a local abortion facility last spring, and Anna was shocked at what she saw. "(The parking lot was surrounded with) an 8 foot tall privacy fence with blue plastic covering the slats. I couldn't help but wonder, 'If Planned

Parenthood was truly empowering women from the moment they walked in, why didn't they want us to see? What were they trying to hide?"

Other finalists in the state contest were Hannah Meier, a sophomore representing Rutherford County, who explained ways to help end abortion; Violet Thorne, a senior from Wilson County, who carefully outlined the differences in being anti-abortion or pro-life; Lindsay White, a sophomore representing Lawrence County, who described the situation when her own mother was pressured to have an abortion when her baby was diagnosed with a serious tumor while in the womb; and Isabelle Saunders, a freshman from Shelby County, who explained the inhumanity of infanticide.

Later this summer, Anna will represent Tennessee at the National Right to Life Jane B. Thompson Oratory Contest to be held during the National Right to Life Convention in Herndon, VA just outside of Washington DC.

"These students were impressive! I was so proud to see such amazing young people as they shared their impassioned speeches" exclaimed Frances Arthur, oratory contest chairman. "I hope that each of the county winners will be given local opportunities to share their speeches again. These are our future leaders, and it is our responsibility to support them in their endeavors."



Pictured are, from left, Frances Arthur, TN Right to Life Oratory Contest Chairman; Lindsay White, Lawrence County; Hannah Meier, Rutherford County; Isabelle Saunders, Shelby County; Violet Thorne, Wilson County; and Anna Young, Williamson/Davidson counties. Courtesy / Tennessee Right to Life

LIFE LEADERSHIP



Exercising leadership in the Church's ministry for life remains critically important. In an effort to encourage and learn from one another, Pastor Mark Rhoads from Christ Our Savior, Loudon, TN, has answered five questions on behalf of his congregation's life team. We pray for this wisdom and experience to help us all grow as life leaders.

Rev. Mark Rhoads and the Life Team of Christ our Savior Lutheran Church:

1. How are you and your congregation leading on the issue of the sanctity of life?

Our Lutherans for Life team has a line item in our congregational budget. We provide pamphlets for free distribution and numerous books on the topic in our church library. We support a local pregnancy resource center with fund raising drive, baby showers and tours of

mobile units. Representatives from this center speak at our church several times a year. We provide Life Thoughts (from the Lutherans for Life website) in our church announcements and monthly newsletter. We have a bulletin board that promotes activities, opportunities and information to the congregation. We have a Life Sunday worship service each year. This past year, we handed out carnations with a Bible verse to each person. In the near future we will be purchasing fetal models and donating them to local Lutheran Schools. This is possible through Thrivent Action Team grants.

2. Why did you start a life team, and how long has it been in existence?

We started our Life team two years ago out of a strong desire to give a voice to so many in our community that don't have one. A group of

people in our church became alarmed at reports of sex trafficking, homelessness, end of life issues and abortion in our community. These were not issues that our church members had direct contact with, but felt led to address.

3. What are the top priorities and activities for your life team?

Keeping ourselves informed on life issues and then sharing it with the congregation through: Education—through the bulletin board, newsletter, and weekly announcements and written materials.

Advocating—through partnering with organizations involved with life issues.

Prayer—keeping individuals known to us as well as the “big issues” in prayer.

4. Would you advise small congregations to have a life team, and, if so, how should they accomplish this with limited servants filling other roles?

I would encourage each congregation to be a voice for life. It starts with one person. It can be as simple as reprinting information off the Lutherans of Life website. You can also partner with other groups like LHM, LWML and Thrivent for special events.

5. How would you advise pastors and congregational leaders to make the sanctity of human life a continual priority?

Recognize that these are issues that directly impact our faith. They may not touch our people's lives directly, but they do touch us indirectly. The church needs to speak to them in a way that draws people closer to Christ. Too often, society sees the church as judgmental and condemning. Jesus had a much different approach. Pastors have the opportunity to voice a gospel motivated response to issues of life and sexuality. Help our people model the love of Jesus and they will be blessed.

Submitted by:

Rev. Philip Young

Mid-South District Life Coordinator

LUTHERAN MINISTRY IN MADAGASCAR NEEDS OUR HELP

For nearly a decade, the Mid-South District and its ministry partners have supported the Malagasy Lutheran Church, along with the ministry of Rev. Joseph Randrianasolo and the Lutheran Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship (LIME) in Madagascar. But now the combination of a serious COVID-19 resurgence and severe drought across the island nation of Madagascar are threatening the future of the LIME ministry. As Rev. Joseph Randrianasolo recently shared in an urgent communication with Mid-South District President, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, the current situation for LIME is very dire. Madagascar is experiencing another severe outbreak of COVID-19, leading to a government-imposed isolation of six regions, including the location of the LIME ministry. This has meant another lengthy closure of the school and the devastating financial impacts of no tuition. A severe drought is compounding the situation, requiring LIME to use financial resources to transport water from a neighboring community to meet basic needs of faculty and their families.

As our friends in Madagascar prayerfully await the availability of COVID-19 vaccines and the end of a devastating drought, they look to us for help. The Mid-South District invites our many ministry partners to prayerfully consider sharing a financial gift to help sustain the LIME ministry through this current crisis. Gifts can be [shared online](#) or by check. Donations by check can be made payable to the Mid-South District-LCMS, with "Madagascar Covid Relief" noted as the designation. Please mail donations to: Mid-South District, 1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016

PRAYER SUMMARY, MAY 2021

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 2021.

PRAYER CONCERNS

REV. NORM GROTELUSCHEN (Emeritus, Mid-South District)

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.

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Andrew Lehman**, Associate Pastor to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fairhope, AL, accepted the Call to serve as Associate Pastor and Head Master to Pilgrim Lutheran Church (and School*) in Jonesboro, AR. Installation planned for June 6th, 2021, 4:00PM.

Rev. Mark Hass, Candidate, Fort Smith, AR has accepted the Call from the Office of National Mission Specialized Pastoral Ministry to serve as Chaplain to Mercy Hospital, Fort Smith, AR,

DECLINED: **Rev. Dan Hawkins**, Pastor to GracePoint Lutheran Church, Munford, TN has returned a Call to serve as Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, Aurora, IL.

Rev. Dan Hawkins, Pastor to GracePoint Lutheran Church, Munford, TN has returned the Call to serve as Pastor to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Clinton, MS

PENDING: **Rev. Thomas Bartzsch**, Candidate and vacancy pastor, River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR, has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR.

Rev. Jonathan Rusnak, Pastor, Pilgrim Ev. Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, WI, has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR.

Rev. Neil Vanderbush, serving as Vacancy Pastor to Our Savior Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR has received a Call to serve as Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Mission and Ministry

Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR – Pastor

River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR – Pastor
**A Call has been issued

Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN – Pastor

Zion of Avilla Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR – Pastor
** A Call has been issued

IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Sarah Lynn Barber**, teacher at Timothy Lutheran Church & School, Blue Springs, MO, has accepted the Call to serve as a teacher at First Lutheran Church & School, Chattanooga, TN.

Lauren Chumbley, Candidate, Concordia University, Seward, NE, has accepted the Call to serve as a Middle School teacher (and assist with the Youth Program) at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Memphis, TN.

DECLINED: **Stacy Sato**, Candidate, Henderson, NV has returned the Call to serve as Principal at Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR.

PENDING: **Sharon Anne Nesman**, teacher at Grace Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, FL has been issued a call by First Lutheran Church & School, Knoxville, TN to serve as Teacher & Athletic Director.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR – Principal

Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN – Teachers
- *A Call has been issued

Christ the King Lutheran School – Teacher for Special Education

Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – Teacher for part time to service 3rd Grade

First Lutheran Church & School – Teacher, Chattanooga, TN.

First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN – Teachers for middle school **A Call has been issued

First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR – Early Childhood Lead Teacher

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

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

CONGREGATIONAL MISSION COMMITMENTS

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 4/30/2021 (4 Months)

Anticipated Amount
(25% of budget).....\$491,205
Actual Receipts486,531
Over (under) anticipated amount..... **(\$4,674)**

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (4 Months)

Allocated to Synod for
World Missions..... \$137,626
Allocated to Tanzania 8,333
Retained for District Mission/Ministry
Support (70% of receipts)340,572
Total Receipt \$486,531

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (4 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 4/30/2021 \$486,531
Actual Receipts as of 4/30/2020\$478,754
Over (under) prior year receipts\$7,777

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 by June 20, 2021. Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2021

- July – Veterans
- August - Stewardship

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

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,

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Contact the Mid-South District

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ON TWITTER - "@midsouthLCMS"

