

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | July 2020



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



Here in the Mid-South, we have an historic connection to Armistice Day (aka – Veteran’s Day). In the Battle of the Argonne Forest, in October 1918, the allies were trying to break through German lines in a final push to seek the German surrender. A little known Corporal named Alvin York played a huge part in the battle – just a month before the German army finally surrendered. York and his men stumbled across a heavily fortified machine gun nest. York recalled, “The Germans got us, and they got us right smart. And I’m telling you they were shooting straight. American soldiers just went

down like the long grass before the mowing machine back home.”

York and his men had somehow ended up behind the German lines, overran the unit, and captured the enemy. But, suddenly there was new machine-gun fire from a ridge, and six more Americans went down. York was in command remained cool and he began to shoot back. “All I could do was to touch the Germans off just as fast as I could. I was sharp shooting. All the time I kept yelling at them to come down. I didn’t want to kill any more than I had to.” York succeeded, the Germans surrendered, and York and his small squad of eight men marched 132 German prisoners back to the American lines – captives of a Tennessee farm boy who had to hunt to help his family survive years before the war.

York wasn’t born a hero. Alvin York was born in 1887 into a Tennessee farming family that didn’t have much. He was the third of 11 children.

When World War I came, York has a crisis of conscience over whether to fight. His mother's church tugged him toward more or less pacifist thinking. He reflected on the struggle after the war, "I didn't know what to do. I'm telling you there was a war going on inside me, and I didn't know which side to lean to. I was a heap bothered." But, Alvin York had his doubts erased by faith and trust. A veteran of war was revealed. (Excerpts from *Sgt. York: His Life, Legend & Legacy: The Remarkable Untold Story of Sgt. Alvin C. York* – September 15, 1997, by John Perry, Broadman and Holman Publishers.)

The Old Testament tells another story about Joshua - the leader of an untested army that had their doubts. Their objective was to possess the Promised Land and win Independence for Israel. Their doubts were erased by faith. For Israel this was their opening battle of their War of Independence.

Early in the morning, the Israelites marched from Shittim toward the Jordan River. After three days the officers gave their orders to the soldiers, "*When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.*" (Joshua 3:1-3, 5)

The Levite priests carried the Ark across the water without their feet getting wet. But the miracle happened up stream in a town called Adam. God's Word explains: "*In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.*" (Joshua 4:6-7)

On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.

When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "*Are you for us or for our enemies?*" "*Neither,*" he replied, "*but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.*" Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "*What message does my Lord have for his servant?*"

Then the Lord said to Joshua, "*See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the Ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in.*" (Joshua 6:2-5 NIV)

From a military point of view, this isn't much of a battle plan. Patton would have passed out in disbelief. Tooting horns and marching around a city doesn't have the same impact as a gigantic army on white horse, or a phalanx of armored vehicles and tanks. But where is the source of power? It's from God! God had to do something for this plan to succeed. But the soldiers of Israel had to follow orders. Why go through all this? Could God not just have said, "Watch this." What's the point of marching around the city? Why have the priests blow their horns?

By stepping out in faith like this, the soldiers were saying, "God we trust you! Despite the uncertainty, despite the risk, despite the doubts, we will step out in faith and march around this city." What would have happened if they had refused? What would have happened if they said, "Nothing's happening here. This is dangerous. I quit."

Independence Day happens in July. It's a day for us to give thanks to God for allowing us the unparalleled privilege to live in the country that set the standard of freedom. That freedom is being challenged – both from outside our borders and inside our towns and cities. But, God's Word and the examples of historic veterans remind us that we are all still at war. We are at war socially, economically, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Ephesians 6:12 states, *"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* We are in a spiritual war. Each day is an assault of the enemy against the Kingdom of Christ. Every day more casualties fall to the fiery darts of the evil one. Can we win this battle? What we can learn from a Veteran who has fought that battle several times?

The Veteran of this battle is our Captain in this fight. St John records, *"Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the*

earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!" (Revelation 12:7-12a)

Despite all of the confusing and troubling events happening around us and around the world, we have a Veteran who took the enemy captive already. He defeated Satan when he threw his strongest weapon – death – at the Veteran of our battles. But, in the innocent death of the Lamb of God, Jesus has won our victory that not only gives us freedom for this day and age, but peace with God forever. God bless all our veterans. We thank you.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



Fall Pastors Conference — October 19-21, 2020

Hilton Hotel in Memphis, TN

Online registration can be completed by going to the District website (<https://mid-southlcms.org/2020-fall-pastors-conference/>). Click on 2020 Fall Pastors Conference Registration on the home page and follow the instructions there.



GOOD SHEPHERD BREAKS GROUND

Sharps Chapel, TN

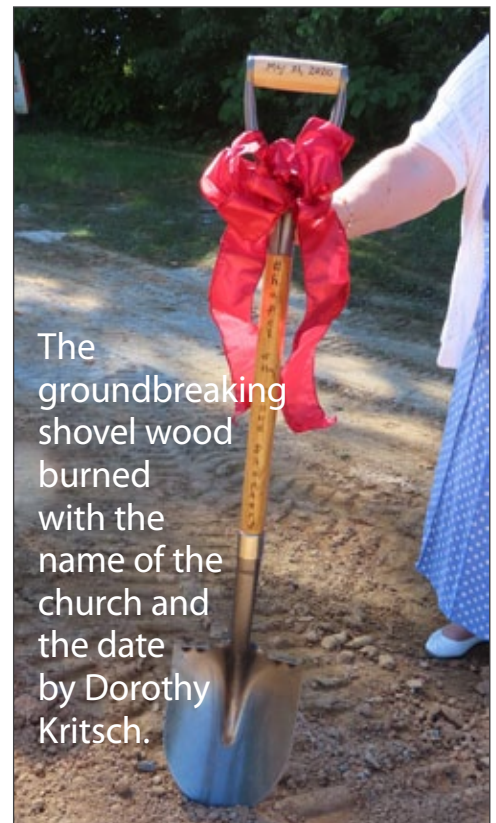
On the Day of Pentecost, May 31, Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Sharps Chapel celebrated the fifth anniversary of their first worship service by officially breaking ground for their first church building. "Normally a groundbreaking occurs before construction begins," Rev. Paul Kritsch, pastor of the church noted. "However, these last several months have been anything but typical."

The day began with the congregation gathering inside what will be the lower level of their building. Officers and members took turns turning over shovels full of dirt "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." From there they processed to the Norris Shores Pavilion for a worship service followed by a church picnic, all while observing safe distancing practices.



Margo McCaffery turns over shovels full of dirt. The flowers mark the approximate location of the altar which will be on the main level.

While waiting for their building to be completed, the church continues to hold Sunday worship services at 10:30 am on Zoom.



The groundbreaking shovel wood burned with the name of the church and the date by Dorothy Kritsch.



6-24-2020, View from the pulpit looking toward the fellowship hall. Photo-Tom McCaffery

Welcome Pastors



Kimberly Elliott (left), David Miesner, Malcom Koch, Ted Blackwell, Pastor Paul Liegeber, Bobby Richardson, and Jim Holford at June 2020 Church Council Meeting. — Mike Elling photo

Paul Liegeber's Installation set for July 26

Pastor Liegeber (said lie-gebor) met with council members of Faith Lutheran Church on Wednesday, June 3, 2020. He and his wife Kara have moved from Sheperd of the Bay Church in Lillian, Alabama (near Mobile) to our church location at 2012 East Reelfoot Avenue in Union City, Tennessee in their mobile travel trailer. They are looking to purchase property nearby in Obion County Tennessee for a permanent residence.

Pastor Liegeber is looking forward to serving both LCMS churches in Dyersburg and in Union City. Union City worship service began meeting at 8:30 AM, Sunday, June 7, 2020.

Reverend Edward Maanum Installed

The installation of the Reverend Edward Maanum at First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN, took place on Sunday, May 31, 2020. The congregation met in the sanctuary, observing precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic, but accommodated the event with a picnic-style reception in the school parking lot following the service.



(Front row L-R) Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, District President; Rev. Ed Maanum; Rev. Larry Rockemann, vacancy pastor; Rev. John Schultz, Emeritus Pastor. Middle row (L-R) Rev. Robert Portier, Circuit Visitor; Rev. Lou Trebus; Rev. Phil Bohlken; Rev. David Graves. Top row (L-R) Rev. Derek Roberts; Rev. Paul Becker; Rev. Paul Muench; Rev. Adam Woldt.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION DURING COVID-19



Kaitlyn Kerchoff – *“To me, the importance of Confirmation is the understanding of Christ. Before taking this class, I didn’t know much about being a Christian; now I understand the importance of Holy Communion and how it originated.”*

Graham Gilchrist – *“The most interesting thing I learned in Confirmation Class was about the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion...and how they came to be...Pastor Mark has influenced me in this journey because he has made it so much fun to learn about*

my faith and brings so much knowledge to the table.”

Donovan Smith – *“Confirmation Class has gotten me to see some things I have heard over and over in a new perspective...I know that soon I will have to make the choice to shine my light in the world or put it out and stay where I am...I believe that I am able to say that I will shine my light throughout the world. With my light in hand I will follow Jesus.”*

Ethan Thompson – *“The Ten Commandments taught me the Christian laws that I should be following in every decision. The Apostles’ Creed laid out my beliefs in a prayer. These things helped me in my Christian and Confirmation journey.”*

Rylee Tittle – *“My parents have always seemed to care about making sure I understand that there is only one God and that He sent His Son to save us from our sins...I know the Lord will be true, always and forever, and I know I’ve been given eternal life.”*

Andrew White – *“Life as a Christian isn’t always easy...I’ve learned it is important to go to God in prayer and tell Him about all the struggles and doubts...He is still here, He hasn’t left me and He never will...In Confirmation I learned that when we go up to take Communion, Jesus needs to be our number one focus.”*

May God continue to bless and keep the Confirmation Class of 2020!

— Genie Swan

The Confirmation Class of 2020 at Christ the King Lutheran Church looked a little different from the classes of years past; the CTM masks that the students wore marked the time as unusual but the robes they wore assured us of the continuing loving grace of God which covers all.

Because the last few months of in-person study were truncated, Pastor Goble used various methods – including his YouTube videos made just for the class, outlines and quizzes through email, and class Zooming – to reach the group. Final essays from the class describing what Confirmation meant to them were in turn pithy and humorous, and the faith they shared and the hope for the future of our church that they inspired were contagious.

Here are a few excerpts from the essays:

Coleman Byrum – *“In Confirmation class, I have learned what the Lutheran faith is all about...why we do what we do...what the Sacraments are and how important and meaningful they are...I’ve learned the proper way to say a prayer; now they feel more meaningful.”*

Rodkaevious Ellis – *“In class, I learned it is not just about following God. You also have a job given to you by Jesus our Lord. You are not your own, for you were bought with a price...I learned this in class with Pastor Mark.”*



News from Trinity HOPE

This is one of a series of articles which we make available each month to keep our supporters informed about our activities. Trinity HOPE, a not-for-profit charitable organization, raises funds and administers feeding programs that provide a noon meal for the hungry children who attend our schools in Haiti where the Good News of Jesus is shared daily.

2024 Hunters Place, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122 ● admin@trinityhope.org ● (615) 394-4950

● Web Page: www.TrinityHope.org ● Facebook: trinityhopehaiti

We are all in this Together!

Written by Lars Helland

How many times have you heard or read "We are all in this Together?" The COVID-19 has impacted the entire world. Our part of the world is more focused on where we live and Haiti. Eternal Shepherd, Seneca, SC helped start the schools in Pas Bonbon and Rocky Road in the Central Plateau of Haiti. Trinity HOPE was already well established in the area and the growth of the Church in all of Haiti is blessed every day by the Trinity HOPE feeding program. When the COVID-19 became a pandemic, we were extremely concerned about our sister congregations in Haiti. I contacted Pastor Walta Clercius and asked what we could do to help. He replied they needed money for school supplies and personal hygiene supplies. Within two weeks they purchased and distributed 50 handmade "spigot" buckets and antibacterial soap to provide a solution to washing their hands at home. Keep in mind, very few have water available in their house, and they must travel to a common well and carry jugs of water home.



How are the children being fed when the schools had to shut down? Pastor Walta shared that Trinity HOPE provided the raw ingredients to each family, enough for a month. They have since duplicated that distribution as the virus continued to be a threat. "We can thank Trinity HOPE for their blessings. People in Pas Bonbon did not have anything to eat. Praise God, they receive food from Feeding Program. The situation of Haiti become worst. No Hope for people who do not have Christ. In fact, seven years ago, you needed around 40 gourdes (Haitian money) for 1 US dollars. Today we need 107 gourdes for 1 US dollars. We have extreme poverty in Haiti. When an institution like Trinity Hope is blessing us, we really appreciate that. Trinity Hope is saving life in Pas Bonbon and Rocky Road. The Government does not know Rocky Road but, you in USA are helping the people there. You are doing a very good Job. You are saving life by feeding and educating. By feeding and educating, you are evangelizing, and more people receive Christ."



The number of people infected by the virus in the Central Plateau is very low. They practice good hygiene and social distancing. The pictures show the family members patiently waiting to receive the food, the filling of the bags to take home, and the hand washing buckets.



Thank you, Trinity HOPE. You are blessed to be a blessing! To God Be the Glory!



NEWS RELEASE

CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

www.csl.edu



NEW ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES FOR PASTORS

Concordia Seminary is partnering with Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, for the first time to offer two online Continuing Education courses, one in the fall and one in the spring. The courses are especially appropriate for ordained pastors, commissioned church workers and lay leaders.

The courses are asynchronous, meaning they can be completed at any time after the launch dates. Each course features six modules over six weeks, with video lectures, optional readings, recommended assignments and peer discussion activities.

For more information, contact Concordia Seminary's Continuing Education department at ce@csl.edu or 314-505-7286, or contact CUW's Continuing and Distance Education department at continuing.education@cuw.edu or 262-243-2027.

[Registration/Info](#)



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NEW DEACONESS STUDIES PROGRAM

A new distance Deaconess Studies Program (Online-ODS) will launch in the spring 2021 semester at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This program will allow students to become certified to serve as commissioned deaconesses in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

The Seminary is currently **accepting applications for enrollment in the spring 2021 semester; the application deadline is Aug. 31, 2020.**

For more information visit <https://csl.edu>.

Prayer Summary, June 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 June 2020.

PRAYER CONCERNS

MS. AMY BROWN (eldest daughter of Rev. Dan McDougall and his wife Lucy)

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. ROBERT and CLAIRE HALAMKA (Waxahachie, TX)

REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)

MRS. SUSAN JONES (volunteer, Mid-South District Office)

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

REV. MERLIN SEPMYER (Crossville, TN)

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

We pray for our country, citizens and government leaders at this overwhelming time of public unrest throughout our communities.

All those affected worldwide by the Coronavirus; all healthcare workers; pastors; state and city governments and the citizens of our country as we work within this ever changing situation.

With thanksgiving we celebrate the gift of baby Lois Lynn Jackson, born May 27th the newest grandchild of Rev. Darrell Kobs and wife, Terri.

Our deepest sympathies to:

The family and friends of Ruben Charette (Kirkland Lake, Ontario, Canada) step-father of Donna Marshall, father-in-law of Rev. Stewart Marshall, who received his Crown of Life on May 29, 2020

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS

ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **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

Rev. Kent Schaaf, Pastor, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI has accepted the Call to serve as **Pastor to Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR**

PENDING: **Rev. Dean Herberts**, Pastor, to the Dual Parish of Trinity Lutheran Church/Zion Lutheran Church; Sheldon, WI/Gilman, WI, has been issued a Call to serve as **Pastor to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR**

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
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR – Pastor**A Call has been issued

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

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 5/31/2020 (5 Months)

Anticipated Amount (41.67% of budget).....\$641,238
Actual Receipts596,435
Over (under) anticipated amount..... **(\$44,803)**

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (5 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions \$168,514
Allocated to Tanzania 10,417
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts).....417,505
Total Receipts**\$596,435**

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison

(5 Months)\$596,435
Actual Receipts as of 5/31/2019\$635,023
Over (under) prior year receipts.....**(\$38,588)**

Encourager Topics in 2020

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

- 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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