

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | July 2021



A Message from Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President

The Greatest Battle Ever Fought

Our family had a rare opportunity to visit one of our nation's National Historic sites on our way to a family wedding in Virginia, we stopped in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to view the site of one of the bloodiest, epic battles ever fought on American soil. The Battle of Gettysburg early in the war between the states was fought by armies made up of mostly volunteers. In July of 1863 the Battle of Gettysburg was waged where, for three days, more men fought and died than in any other battle before or since. The battle was not planned, but happened because reconnaissance by either army – Confederate and Union – knew how close they were to the enemy. The Army of the Potomac, under General

George Meade met the Army of Northern Virginia, under the command of General Robert E. Lee became entangled in brutal battle they had never planned. For three intense days, over 172,000 troops bombarded and shot at each other with over 634 cannons, firing over 569 tons of ammunition, and leaving over 8,000 soldiers dead, 5,000 horses dead, 27,000 soldiers wounded, and over 11,000 captured or missing in action.

As the battle ebbed back and forth, General Lee's third day's strategy was to attack Culp's Hill and Cemetery Ridge where the Union army was entrenched. A secret launch of a rear offensive by the Confederate cavalry strategy was hoped to split the Union lines. General Pickett's

Charge was meant to be the frontal assault upon the Union troops while two brigades of Confederate cavalry attacked from the rear of Union lines. Over a wide-open field, over a fence, and over a long open road, Pickett's Charge was turned back and left the strong Confederacy military might decimated from the Union bombardment and rifle fire.

Unbeknownst to either side, the rear assault was thwarted by a mistake. General Jeb Stuart's Confederate cavalry battalion, with an estimated 1200 mounted men, was met by the Union Army's General George Armstrong Custer. Custer was supposed to be leading a scouting team with 400 mounted men. Custer

mistakenly saw Stuart and prepared to engage him in battle. General Stuart, thinking Custer's obvious mistaken diversion was only a trap into an ambush, turned his troops slightly to the northeast and was never able to penetrate the Union lines. The Union forces repelled Pickett's charge, forcing General Lee to retreat to Virginia to re-assemble his army.

Four months later, on November 19, 1863, President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg to dedicate a cemetery for all the fallen soldiers. Lincoln was shocked when he saw the carnage. Words that he had scratched out on the train ride to Gettysburg serve a memory for us all of what happened in July, 1863. His dedication speech began, "Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal..." He concluded, "From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Today our country gathers to celebrate our Independence and honor those who fought to preserve it. As ironic as it may have been, the day after the battles in Gettysburg had been silenced, our nation celebrated Independence Day - July 4. Veterans who have served in the American, the Civil War, the two world wars, the

Korean War, Vietnam War, and the recent battles in the Middle East gave us something to celebrate this July. It literally takes an army to do battle - keeping supplies, moving troops, coordinating infantry, cavalry, reinforcing battle lines - in order to win the battle.

We owe our veterans in every generation more than we can ever offer. Our nation's veterans left jobs; the farms; their homes; their spouse, children, and parents to defend what we may some days take for granted. They didn't do it for fame or fortune. They did it for freedom and for our country. They did without the comforts of the security and warmth of their homes. They oftentimes went without food, water, or a place to sleep. Their daily duties were hard and dangerous. Split second decisions were needed if they held any hope of success to win the battle. So how are we going to dedicate this day to them? How are we going to do one thing to honor their suffering, their sacrifice, their service? Like Lincoln, we ask, "How are we going to dedicate a day for the men and women who offered their sacrifice that we can live in a country that respects all opinions, gathers every diverse culture, and enjoys the greatest economic-social society every known in the history of this world?" WE CAN'T. So, what can we do to honor them and their legacy?

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address says, "We cannot consecrate - we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we

say here; while it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead, we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

We're faced with another battle today. We need to stand up for our country and its values. We should never degrade the sacrifice that gives the freedom to speak your mind. Our country and its government aren't perfect, but we should value our freedoms, respect other's opinions and causes - with gentleness. Our veterans gave of themselves to preserve our freedom of speech, freedom to bear arms, freedom to vote, freedom to worship, freedom to assemble, and freedom to live as free people.

My wife's uncle was wounded when served as a soldier on D-Day when the Allies landed on the shores of France. Thousands of troops waded ashore while German machine guns attempted a counter punch to the Allied frontal assault. Paratroopers were dropped behind enemy lines to break the German defense. Hundreds and thousands of men were either killed or critically wounded in the assault. The Allied soldiers stormed the beach and then spent hours that lengthened into days and gave their lives to climb the hills to cut down the German fortified machine gun pits. The cost in casualties was high, but more costly to not do.

When the hill was finally taken and the city of Caen was finally liberated by the Allies, a flag was placed on top of the hill to signal victory.

But, as well and good as it is to honor our veterans and support our nation, what about the other Kingdom in which we reside – the Church? There was another major assault on a hill in the history of great battles. The enemy was entrenched and heavily fortified. The enemy was trying to kill every soldier that tried to climb the hill. It seemed that no warrior could get through the enemy's fiery arsenal. The situation seemed hopeless. Looking through the wounded and tattered survivors of the most frequent battles, there seemed to be no one who could save the people from the assault of the enemy.

There was only one hope. There was only one person who could manage to take the hill. So he was sent to face the enemy. He was, at first, seeming to make some progress. The enemy mustered all of their forces for one final, decisive battle. The enemy's assault would have been carefully planned to bring an end of the Captain of the Allied army.

At first, the enemy forces seemed to be successful. The man sent to defeat them was captured, beaten, and sentenced to die at the hands of the enemy. The enemy's allies took the man to the top of the hill, where everyone could see a dying man who was supposed to be their last hope. Blood flowed from his side, and from his wounded head, hands, and feet. The enemy shouted out with sinister joy, celebrating

his victory. But, then something stopped his taunting. He couldn't run. His greatest and most powerful weapon – death – was the counter assault on the man sent in against the enemy. Then came the blast! The heavens and earth shook! Rocks split and the sun's radiance was covered with a thick darkness. The man died.

Yet, three days later, the miracles of miracles happened. Witnesses began to tell that the slain man wasn't dead! He was alive. He arose from the dank darkness of the grave proving his victory for the people. The Man who was slain was now alive. The hill He conquered was called, "Sin." The minions of the enemy were fortified by death, temptations, and desolation – the entrenchment of the Mountain of Sin.

We know the hill is called Calvary where the cross bearing the dying body of our Lord Jesus became our banner of victory. The enemy was defeated completely by his own weapons. Mankind received the spoils of victory from the Man, Christ Jesus who saved us from the consequences of our sin.

We were charged to write in honor of our veterans from every era who fought to preserve our



Savior Risen-Simon Dewey

right to serve, honor, and worship God. But we are most thankful to God for the greatest battle that has ever been fought – Satan's battle against our souls – and Christ's victory for our salvation. Give thanks to God that we can still live in a country where we can worship the true and living God without fear. Certainly because of the sacrifice of the men and women who volunteered to preserve our nation's heritage. But what is more, praise and thanksgiving to the Man who gave us this privilege to live in today, but in His glorious kingdom forever.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



Mid-South District Convention to Livestream Via Zoom

July 1-3, 2021

The Mid-South District will host its **21st Regular Convention in Memphis July 1-3**. The entire convention will be livestreamed on Zoom. To view the livestream schedule and access the Zoom links for each convention session (Thursday, July 1-Saturday, July 3), please visit:

mid-southlcms.org/conventionlinks

You may also type the above URL directly into the address bar of your search engine (Google, Explorer, Safari, etc.) to access the page.

Join the Opening Worship Service Livestream: July 1 @ 7:30 PM CT

The District Convention's opening worship service at Christ the King Lutheran Church and School (Memphis) will be livestreamed at **7:30 PM CT on Thursday, July 1**. The service will be lead by Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, LCMS President. To join this special event online, please visit <https://ctkmemphis.sitewrench.com/live-video-streaming>



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Welcome Pastor Lehman



The Rite of Installation for the Rev. Andrew Lehman took place at All Saints Lutheran Church on Sunday, June 6. Rev. Lehman accepted the Call to become the Associate Pastor and Headmaster for All Saints Lutheran Church and School. All Saints Lutheran School is a new ministry to Jonesboro that will be a Classical Education Ministry.

Pictured with Pastor Lehman are (L-R) Rev. Bill Zwick, Rev. Jefferey King, President Roger Paavola, Pastor Andrew Lehman, Rev. Joshua Leigeber, Rev. Paul Leigeber, and Rev. Joel Krogen.

Join Rev. Andrew Abraham, for an Exciting *11-Day Pilgrimage to the Holy Land* Nov 28 - Dec 8, 2022

See with your own eyes the hills and landscapes and walk the roads and visit places Jesus knew intimately throughout His earthly life! Join experienced Holy Land traveler and Bible instructor, Lutheran pastor, Andrew Abraham, to encounter more fully the power of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection in those places where it happened! Dramatically increase your knowledge of Jesus and the Holy Scriptures, creating a deeper, more fervent love for Jesus and his Word.

[Proposed Itinerary is available here.](#)

A little story of two men from the greatest generation

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, White House, TN

Mr. Ed Kramer was born in February, 1926 and Mr. Frank Jenks was born in August, 1926. Ed was born and raised in California and Frank in New York - opposite ends of the country.

When America entered World War II, Frank and Ed were only 15 years old. As soon as they were "of age" they both joined the U.S. Navy. Truth be told, I don't think they were actually "of age" but they wanted to serve their country and they did so honorably.

After the war, they both went to their home States and went to work, started families, and lived their life.

In 2009, Ed and his wife, Milma, moved to a small town in

Tennessee just outside of Nashville to be closer to their daughter. Ed and Milma started attending Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in White House, TN.

In 2014, Franks and his wife, Joy, moved to Tennessee to be closer to their daughter and they too started attending Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

It was at this time that Ed and Frank first met. They shared stories of their service during WWII and their world travels while in the Navy.

As it turns out, these two men were only about a mile from each other half way around the world in the Pacific theater...and never knew it! They never met

one another until some 70 plus years later, while worshipping together in the same small church in the same small town in the middle of the country!

On March 2021, Mr. Frank Jenks, went to be with his Lord and was laid to rest in his hometown in New York. They will again, one day, meet again for that is the hope we have in Christ our Lord.

At the age of 95, Mr. Ed Kramer continues to worship and serve his Lord at Prince of Peace. **We thank Frank and Ed for your service to our country!**

— Rev. Randy Sakach



Ed Kramer

Frank Jenks

Memorial Day 2014



Frank

Ed



*Happy Well-Nourished Students Piton
Community - Leogane Haiti*



*A Young Smiling Student
Sursum Corda - Jacmel Haiti*



*Student Praying Before a Meal
Bazin Jacmel Haiti*

MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE PRAYER AND ONE MEAL AT A TIME

As another school year comes to an end, we are once again reminded how grateful we are for your support. Life in Haiti can be difficult, but the children you feed are incredibly blessed by the assurance that each day they come to school, they know they will receive a nutritious meal. For many of these children, it is the only sustaining meal they can rely on every day.

Life in Haiti is not getting any easier. Social unrest and instability is leading us into hurricane season. They still struggle with the pandemic as well. As a very poor, third-world country, the Haitian government has not purchased (or received) any vaccines. It is a very scary time for the people who live there.

Though times are hard for our Haitian friends, and for all of us, we are bonded by our Father. We seek Him first for comfort, rest, and provision. We must continue to pray for the people of Haiti every day. Pray that God will protect them. Pray that God will lead them out of this crisis and that the people of Haiti will turn to Him for refuge. ("God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalms 46:1). As the body of Christ, we must also stand firm with our brothers and sisters, and not abandon them. The assurance the children in our schools have by knowing we are never going to leave them, and that they can rely on our help by providing a daily meal, is very comforting. Although working in Haiti remains difficult, we hold on to God's words in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."



PRAYER SUMMARY, JUNE 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 June 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)
MS. MICHELE LAYNE (Director, St. John Lutheran Child Care, Fayetteville, AR)
MR. LEE ROHLF (LCEF Marketing Department)
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.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO:

The family and friends of Mrs. Susan Jones (Volunteer, Mid-South District) who passed away June 9, 2021.

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: Rev. Thomas Bartzsch, Vacancy pastor, River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR, has accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to River Valley Grace Lutheran Church, Lamar, AR. Installation was June 20th, 2021.

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. Installation was June 13th, 2021.

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 was June 6th, 2021.

DECLINED: Rev. Jonathan Rusnak, Pastor, Pilgrim Ev. Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, WI, has returned the Call to serve as Pastor to Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR.

Rev. Neil Vanderbush, (Chaplain*U.S. Army through the Board of International Missions) has returned the Call to serve as Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.

PENDING: Rev. Morgan Hamilton, Assistant Pastor, Peace Lutheran Church, Hurst, TX has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR.

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Mission and Ministry

Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR – Pastor *A Call has been issued

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN – Pastor

Zion of Avilla Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR – Pastor

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.

Tina Kassebaum, DCE, Florissant, MO, has accepted the Call to serve as Principal to Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR.

Cameron Pullman, DCE at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR, has accepted the Call to serve as a Religion teacher at Faith Lutheran Junior/Senior High School in Las Vegas, NV in the California-Nevada-Hawaii District.

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

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

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 5/31/2021 (5 Months)

Anticipated Amount
(41.67% of budget) \$614,006
Actual Receipts 612,119
Over (under) anticipated amount..... **(\$1,887)**

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (5 Months)

Allocated to Synod for
World Missions..... \$173,219
Allocated to Tanzania 10,417
Retained for District Mission/Ministry
Support (70% of receipts) 428,483
Total Receipts \$612,119

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (5 Months)

Actual Receipts as
of 5/31/2021 \$612,119
Actual Receipts as of 5/31/2020 \$596,435
Over (under) prior year receipts \$15,684

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

- August - Stewardship / Convention Recap

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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