

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | August 2021



A Message from Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President

A Travel Brochure

Do you remember the children's cartoons where you're supposed to find the 6 things different between two similar cartoon characters? In one, the character may have a different dress or might be wearing a different hat. Or there may be a dog with a curly tail in on and in the other the dog has a straight bushy tail. But, the picture John painted in his revelation from God is kind of the same thing. It's a first century, "Where is Waldo." In fact, the thing missing from John's picture into heaven is so remarkable that he noticed it right away. In cartoon puzzles we're supposed to see things differently. But, St.

John isn't looking at a cartoon. He's looking directly into heaven.

God gave John this vision so he could tell all Christians about the promise of God. God showed a vision of heaven so John could pass along what he saw to the rest of Christianity. God heard the cries of despair from His people who were being whipped and beaten because they carried the name of their Savior - Christ. God heard the cries of anguish from men, women, and children alike who were thrown into the arena to face wild, savage animals and brutal gladiators. God saw the delight of some of the people His Son had died for, who departed from their faith, to live in sin, lust

and debauchery and living as if Jesus was only a passing fancy.

It's difficult to understand exactly what John saw. It was like explaining a first century Christian travel brochure, sent by God, on behalf of all Christians to whom He announced that they were the recipients of a free, one-way pass into Paradise. Until John was really taken in heaven, he had no comprehension of how beautiful it was going to be – a view that is impossible to describe in words.

He saw a throne of God and the gigantic city gates made of a single pearl. He saw the gold lined streets and throngs of saints and martyrs singing with the

heavenly choirs before the throne of the Lamb of God. John saw the Tree of Life restored in Paradise which had been taken from Adam and Eve, but now stood forever, watered by the Waters of Life that flows from the side of the Lamb. But, when John looked for the Temple... the place where the people worship - it wasn't there! "I didn't see a Temple in the city," John writes, "because the Temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, the Lamb."

Can you imagine that?! Probably the most important building that we might think is going to be in heaven, IT ISN'T THERE! NO TEMPLE! You would imagine that the most magnificent, the most beautiful, most spectacular church we could ever see would be the one in heaven. But, it's not there.

When we read the Old Testament accounts about the Temple of God, it's a pretty important place with the Jews. The converts to Christianity found the synagogues and churches a mainstay in their walk with God. Until the time when Jesus walked among us, the Temple was a place where animals were sold for sacrifice. The sacrifices were a reminder for the people that they needed a Savior and the shedding of blood. The Temple sacrifice reminded them that God promised a Savior who would take away their shame, guilt and punishment of their sins. It reminded the Old Testament faithful that they walked in faith -

not by sight - but in faith founded on the faithfulness of our merciful God.

Today we have church buildings where people come to worship and sing praises to God. We don't have to wonder about God's faithfulness to send a Savior, because Jesus already came, suffered and died in our place when He became the Lamb of God's own sacrifice for us; but then rose victorious over sin, death, and Satan.

We have altars, but the altars are reminders of the sacrifice Jesus Christ offered on our behalf. We believe the altar is the presence of God who comes to visit us, by His grace and serve us through His Word and His sacraments. The altar is the mercy seat where the Almighty God sits in judgement over all creation. The sacrifice of the blood in the Old Testament, allowed the high priest to enter into the Holy of Holies to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people, once a year. The blood of the sacrifice covered the mercy seat and the high priest. But each year the sacrifice had to be offered, never ending, because the real atonement for sins had yet to come.

We don't have to bring animals for sacrifice, anymore. Instead, we come before the altar to hear the message of God's peace, redemption and grace, through the blood of His own Son. We come to the altar after the curtain before the Holy of Holies was ripped open from top to bottom

because God's own sacrifice superseded all the others for all time and in all places.

Creation ripped wide open on the day Christ was offered as the sacrifice for us. Earthquakes and the covering of the sun, were violent reminders that God was making everything new - the old had passed away and everything was made new in Christ. God destroyed the evil that sin brought into the world. God received the blood sacrifice of His very own Son on our behalf.

But, it remains a picture of amazement that in heaven there is no Temple. There are no church buildings, no kinds of altars, or curtains hiding the mystery of God's presence among His people. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was a pure acceptable offering to God for all the sins of all of mankind. Easter morning, the door of the tomb was burst open. It showed an empty tomb because Jesus Christ had walked out, alive and breathing new life. Sin and death had no more power over Him. And anyone... you and me... anyone living in the righteousness of the Risen Christ has been given the promise of Christ's power over an everlasting death and punishment.

St. John writes to tell us why there is no Temple in heaven. He was told, "*The city's Temple is the Lord God Almighty, the Lamb.*" Instead of a carved image that serves as reminder of our crucified and risen Lord, in heaven we shall see Him face to face. There's no

need for a Temple OR an altar. Christ – the final edifice of the presence of God with His people is with all those who are present with Him in everlasting peace, life and blessedness.

On earth we still need a reminder of the altar and the church. We need to be fed for this short journey on earth through the means of grace that come from God. We need to receive forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of faith through the Word and the Sacraments, which connect us to our risen and glorious Christ.

Our sacrifices today are not animals and birds-- offered to God in a hope of a coming Messiah. The Messiah is here, now and on to eternity. Our sacrifices today, instead of expressing our faith in the COMING of the Messiah are, instead, an expression of our honor, praise and thanks to God for what He has already accomplished for us in Christ Jesus. Our sacrifices and offerings today are still by faith and show us today who is our God.

The book of Revelation is a travel brochure. It gives all the information we need, to travel

where we are today and how to get to where God wants us to be throughout all of eternity. The journey here may have a few bumps and a few misfortunes. But they don't keep us from pressing on to that glorious homecoming planned for us and all the others who are joined together in Christ. God grants this to us all, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, our Savior and God.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



Welcome Pastor Bartzsch. The installation of Rev. Thomas Bartzsch took place at River Valley Grace Lutheran Church in Lamar, Arkansas, on Sunday June 20, 2021. Pictured (L-R) are Rev. John Truede, Rev. John Merrill, President Roger Paavola, Rev. Thomas Bartzsch, Rev. Richard Davenport, Rev. Joshua Ralston, Rev. Timothy Henning, and Rev. William Ringer.

A SPECIAL FAMILY HONOR

By Rev. Paul Hass, Senior Pastor, Bella Vista Lutheran, Bella Vista, Ark.

On June 13, 2021, the Mid-South District welcomed Rev. Mark C. Hass. Rev. Hass received his Call to serve as Chaplain at Mercy Hospital, Fort Smith, Ark., through both the Mid-South District and the Board for National Mission under its authority to place candidates for Specialized Pastoral Ministry (SPM).

SPM includes Chaplains as well as Pastoral Counselors and Clinical Pastoral Educators.

District President Paavola was unable to be present to accommodate this Installation, so, as Region One Vice President, I was asked to connect with this other Rev. Hass to enable the Installation.

What a joy and honor it was to serve by asking my brother to recite again those familiar pastoral vows as he took on this new role! And, in this instance the term 'brother' has many meanings. Mark is not only my biological brother--both sons of Wesley and Nancy; we are brothers by baptism, brothers in the Pastoral Office in Service to our King, and we are also brothers and fellow servants in the Mid-South District.

It was a great privilege to lead the Rite of Installation and say those familiar words that occur in Pastoral Installations, but in which, in this instance, had special levels of meaning, "Dear brother,..."

This amazing and humbling opportunity to serve is but one of many memorable events I will cherish as I finish my term as a District Vice President. I thank President Paavola for this unique opportunity.

Please rejoice with me, and our entire District family, in Christ's special care and provision for His family, as Chaplain Hass serves our District in and through Mercy Hospital, Fort Smith!



Rev. Paul Hass installs his brother, Rev. Mark C. Hass, as Chaplain at Mercy Hospital, Fort Smith, Ark. Participating in Rite of Installation were (from left) Rev. John Merrill, First, Fort Smith; Rev. Paul Hass; and Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport, Our Redeemer, Fort Smith.



11-DAY PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

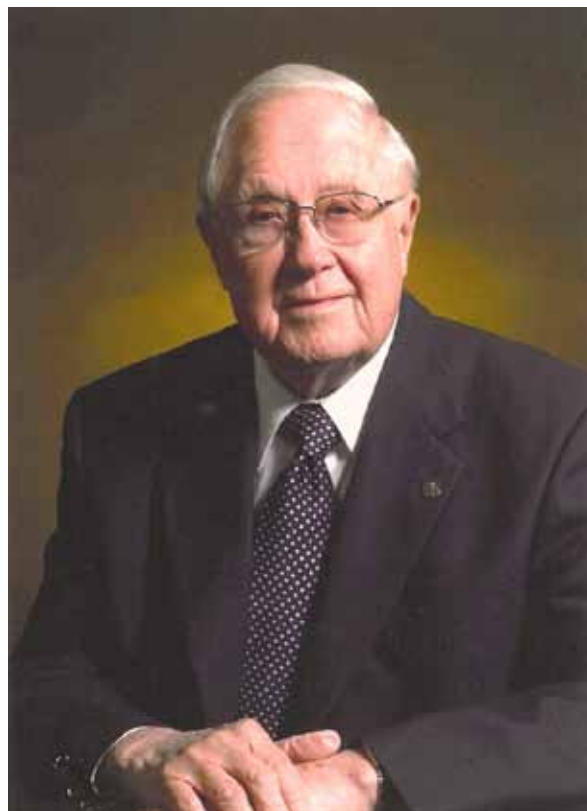
Nov 28 – Dec 8, 2022 — Limited space!

Visit the Biblical villages, explore the center of Jesus' ministry, Capernaum, and relax on the Sea of Galilee. That is just the beginning of the tour with your host Rev. Andrew Abraham, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. [Download proposed Itinerary is available here.](#)

Remembering a Dear Friend of the Mid-South District —

PRESIDENT EMERITUS **Rev. Norman Groteluschen**

November 18, 1924 - July 23, 2021



Rev. Norman Groteluschen served two terms
as President of the Mid-South District from
1985-1991.

Rev. Norman L. Groteluschen was called to his heavenly home on July 23, 2021. A dear friend and faithful servant, “Pastor G,” as he was known to many, was a driving force in shaping the mission-minded character and heart of the Mid-South District.

Rev. Groteluschen was part of the district’s first leadership team when the former Western District voted to divide into two districts in 1966, forming the Mid-South District and the Missouri District. A seasoned pastor and church planter with 26 years of experience leading various congregations, his initial role was that of the Mid-South District’s Second Vice President. By the mid-1970s, he had been selected to serve as the District’s Mission Executive.

His passion for the mission of the church made him well-suited for the Mission Executive role, which, in turn, prepared him for his next position: District President. Rev. Groteluschen was elected the second President of the Mid-South District in 1985. During his two terms as President, the mission mindset was emphasized and nurtured. A “Church Planter’s Manual” was developed and new ministry growth accelerated rapidly. By the time of his retirement from the District President role in 1991, the Mid-South District was home to 110 congregations, after starting just 25 years earlier with 77 congregations. Following his retirement from the presidency, Rev. Groteluschen continued to share his leadership expertise and passion for ministry growth for the next several years as the District’s part-time Mission Executive. Even after his complete retirement in 1994, “Pastor G” remained a faithful friend and servant of the Mid-South District, frequently sharing encouragement, advice, and wisdom with those who would lead after him.

Rev. Groteluschen was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Margaret, and two children who died in infancy. He is survived by sons Rick and Ron, and daughter Becky. Rev. Groteluschen’s long-time church home, Christ the King Lutheran Church in Memphis, hosted his funeral service on Thursday, July 29, 2021. A recording of this Service of Victory and Celebration is available at:

<https://ctkmemphis.sitewrench.com/live-video-streaming>





CONVENTION RECAP

Thanks to all who took part in the Mid-South District's 21st Regular Convention, July 1-3 in Memphis. Over 135 voting delegates attended, with over 100 additional guests and advisory delegates. The theme for the Convention was, "Declare His Marvelous Works" – 1 Chronicles 16:24.

The following highlights provide a glimpse of Key Resolutions, election results along with the business and fellowship that comprised the 21th Regular Convention of the Mid-South District, LCMS.



The Convention dinner preceding the worship service was held in Christ the King's (CTK) new facility. On Sunday, August 1, CTK dedicated their new building.



The 300 people in attendance at the Opening Service of the Convention boldly declared the Lord's glory, praising God for His marvelous works. The worship service was live-streamed and may be watched on-demand.



President Harrison, LCMS President, gave the State-of-the Synod report which covered a variety of challenges locally and nationally followed by a Question and Answer session.

Election Results —

District President – Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola (re-elected 4th term)
1st VP – Rev. Lane Reuter (Our Savior-Nashville,TN)
2nd VP – Rev. Kevin Conger (Hope-Jacksonville, AR)
3rd VP – Rev. Robert Portier (St. Paul-Sevierville,TN)
4th VP – Rev. Joshua Willadsen (Bethel-Fort Smith, AR)
District Secretary – Rev. John Gierke (Peace-Conway, AR) – re-elected

Congratulations to those elected to serve by the delegation



Rev. JD Zischke (center) displays the charter certificate of Restoration Lutheran Church with Mid-South District President, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola (right) and Restoration board member, Rev. Bob Herring (left).



Video Presentations were given by Bishop Emmanuel Makala, Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese, Tanzania and Reverend Joseph Randrianasolo, LIME Institute, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar

MISSION MOMENT VIDEOS

The three Mission Moment videos shared during the convention are available to view and download from the district's Vimeo channel. <https://vimeo.com/midsouthlcms> Thanks to the ministries that submitted photos and information for the videos.

Key Resolutions —

To Reject Racism and Advance the Gospel: by a 85.47% majority vote, delegates supported addressing and rejecting the world view of Critical Race Theory and doctrines that promote racial division. It also encouraged congregations to conduct conversations on race and diversity to strengthen unity within the congregation, and to engage members of their communities in these conversations in the light of the Gospel. It also commended those within the LCMS Mid-South District who intentionally proclaim and work to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus to those who are different from themselves in the light of the Great Commission.

for personal involvement. These resolutions support: Trinity HOPE in Haiti (a partnership begun in the Mid-South District to provide low-cost meals for children as they are spiritually fed by the Lutheran schools); and to continue relationships with the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania and the Confessional Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar and its Lutheran Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME University). Greetings from Bishop Makala (SELVD) and Rev. Dr. Randrianasolo (LIME) were also presented by video due to COVID travel restrictions.

18-03 regarding the challenges and burdens of educational debt while serving the church, and for finding funding to lessen future workers' debt to aid in recruitment. This resolution commits the district to fund designated contributions to MinistryFocus for professional church workers in the district who are burdened with significant educational debt, and to establish additional funding from the District Sunday and designated convention offerings.

Support of International Missions and in Haiti, Tanzania, and Madagascar: by votes of 97.79%, 98.55%, and 97.83% respectively, three separate resolutions directed continued financial and mission support from the district with encouragement

To Encourage Financial Support for Professional Church Workers: by a 98.55% majority vote, delegates supported encouraging professional church workers by continued assistance in reducing student debt. The resolution emphasized Synod's 2016 Res.

Visit the **CONVENTION NEWS PAGE** of the Mid-South District website (<https://mid-southlcms.org/convention-news-2021/>) for additional election results, video links, convention newsletters, photos and more.



Pictured with state & national contest winner Anna Young is Frances Arthur, Chairman of the Oratory Contest for Tennessee Right To Life.

TENNESSEE STUDENT WINS NATIONAL RIGHT TO LIFE ORATORY CONTEST

On June 26, 2021, Anna Young, daughter of Pastor Philip Young, Redeemer Lutheran, Nashville, won the National Right To Life Pro-Life Oratory Contest for High School Students,

After winning the Right to Life Pro-Life Oratory Contest at the state level on April 24, she received a cash prize for first place, and the honor of representing Tennessee in the national contest, where she competed alongside 10 other state winners during the National Right to Life Oratory Contest held in Herndon, Va.

As the national winner, Anna delivered her first-place speech to the full assembly, speaking just before Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton. [Watch her speech on youtube.](#)

Anna plans to attend Concordia University Wisconsin in the fall.

Blessings to Anna as she continues to reach more listeners with this vital message.

22nd annual Christ Academy: Timothy and Phoebe School Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana

Thanks be to God — Christ Academy High School was greatly blessed this year! From June 20th through July 3rd, thirty-nine young men and twenty-six young women participated in the 22nd annual Christ Academy: Timothy and Phoebe School at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This is a two-week discernment program on the seminary campus for high-school-aged men and women who are interested in theology and who are considering pastoral and diaconal work.

These students are immersed in the daily life of the seminary, especially through confessional catechesis in the classroom. The



Christ Academy students learned from fourteen professors from the Seminary and abroad, one guest lecturer, and a panel of local pastors and deaconesses. Along with daily classes in the study of the Word, the students also worshipped with the seminary community in Kramer Chapel four times a day. They even had opportunities to form lasting friendships through group activities like bowling, a TinCaps baseball game, and various team sports throughout the Academy! Lastly, the Christ Academy

students participated in service projects on campus and around Fort Wayne.

This year we were blessed to have three students from the Mid-South District: Andrew Abraham II, Gabriel Abraham and Alyssa Vandercook.

Above is the entire who attended Christ Academy. We pray that the Lord would continue to work through the pastors, teachers, and workers of the Mid-South District to continue to send out laborers into his harvest. To God be all the glory!

Salem Lutheran Ministries (Springdale, AR) **LEADERS IN TRAINING 2021**

Written by Pastor Brandon Martin



Each summer, Salem Lutheran Ministries (Springdale, Arkansas) develops a summer experience for teens and young adults called Leaders In Training (LIT). The purpose is to motivate and equip youth to follow Jesus, serve others, and become leaders in our community.

This year we offered two tracks: The first was for teenagers to grow in their faith and explore how they can become leaders. The second was a ministry internship for young adults to grow in faith and leadership in order to mentor teens in their faith. Three teens from our congregation and two young adults from Memphis participated this year.

Our theme this year was: Following Jesus (The Gospel of Mark). The youth read the entire Gospel as we studied what it means to follow Jesus . . . with all of our hearts . . . and for all of our lives. We were encouraged and challenged to take steps to turn away from our selfish nature and learn to love and serve as Jesus loved and served others (especially us!).

I am excited to see how our God will continue to work in and through these youth!



MÈSI ANPIL (THANK YOU VERY MUCH)

In early July, the Mid-South LCMS District had their convention in Memphis. Trinity HOPE was honored to be invited, and we felt blessed with the support. After entertaining the masses with the assembly of our booth, we were geared-up, excited, and ready to share our work with all of you!

Not long into the day, we received the news that there was an exciting surprise that would be presented to us! We did not anticipate anything, but we eagerly waited. We could never have imagined the gift to come. Pastor Paavola had put forth a resolution asking the Mid-South District to support Trinity HOPE with a \$10,000 annual donation. It was overwhelmingly supported by the congregations, and this generous gift will begin in 2022!

What you may not know is that we have a very generous donor who has agreed to match NEW recurring donations. This means that the \$10,000 donated by the Mid-South LCMS will be DOUBLED! Praise be to God!!

You know the important work we do at Trinity HOPE. However, the impact of these gifts is significant. \$20,000 translates to 80,000 meals. This means your generous donation and its matching funds will feed approximately 400 children for the entire school year both physically and spiritually!



Their ears will be opened to receive the Good News shared with them each day at school! We have always had a sense of urgency about the work we do, but considering recent events in Haiti, the need is greater than ever.

2 Corinthians 9 reminds us that giving should come from a cheerful heart, and we are ever rewarded with riches in heaven for the gifts we share. 9 As it is written, *"He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."* (ESV)

From the bottom of our bowls of rice and beans, we thank you for your continued support and sincere generosity. Thank you for working alongside of us to do God's work and for feeding our children. Mèsi Anpil (Thank You Very Much).



PRAYER SUMMARY, JULY 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 July 2021.

PRAYER CONCERNS

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)

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of:

REV. NORMAN GROTELUSCHEN (Emeritus, Germantown, TN) **who was Called to Glory on July 23, 2021.**

REV. JOEL KROGEN (Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR) **who was Called to Glory on July 26, 2021.**

MRS. KATHY MARTIN, mother of Pastor Brandon Martin, Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, AR at her passing on July 27, 2021.

We pray for all those affected by COVID 19 and the continuing work to distribute the vaccine.

We pray for the ministry of Trinity HOPE as they manage in the aftermath of the death of Haitian President, Jovenel Moïse.

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Morgan Hamilton**, Assistant Pastor, Peace Lutheran Church, Hurst, TX has accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR. Installation planned for August 1, 2021 at 3:00PM.

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTERIES

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Mission and Ministry

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: **Tina Kassebaum**, DCE, Florissant, MO, has accepted the Call to serve as Director of Education to Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR.

PENDING: **Natalie Marie Bahr**, candidate, Concordia, Austin, TX has been issued a call by First Lutheran Church & School, Knoxville, TN to serve as Middle School Teacher & Athletic Director.

Pamela D. Chatham, candidate, Concordia, Irvine, CA has been issued a call by Christ Lutheran Church & School, Little Rock, AR to serve as 7th & 8th grade Teacher.

DECLINED: **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

Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN – Teachers
Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – Teacher for part time to service 3rd Grade

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 6/30/2021 (6 Months)

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Anticipated Amount (50% of budget)..... | \$730,187 |
| Actual Receipts | <u>735,660</u> |
| Over (under) anticipated amount..... | \$5,473 |

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (6 Months)

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Allocated to Synod for World Missions | \$208,198 |
| Allocated to Tanzania | 12,500 |
| Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts) | <u>514,962</u> |
| Total Receipts | \$735,660 |

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (6 Months)

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Actual Receipts as of 6/30/2021 | \$735,660 |
| Actual Receipts as of 6/30/2020 | <u>\$728,989</u> |
| Over (under) prior year receipts | \$6,671 |

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

- September- 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

Rena McElwain,

Communications & Marketing Specialist

Julie Tyler,

Administrative Assistant for Missions and

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