

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | September 2021



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



Many years ago there was a wealthy man who, along with his devoted son, had a passion for valuable art. They had Picasso's, Rembrandt's, Van Gogh, Monet, and Whistler's, among many other works of art. As collectors, Andrew Bingham from New York was second to none. His son, Andrew Bingham, Jr., knew as much about fine art as his father. But World War I broke out interrupting his work in the art world. His son was on duty in Germany in the US Army for a few short weeks. Not much later, the elder Bingham received a telegram that his son, Andrew was missing in action. His father feared the worst. Days later, his worst fears were confirmed. Andrew had been killed.

On the Christmas Eve after his son was killed, Andrew Bingham greeted an unknown visitor at his front door. He was an Army buddy of Andrew. He told his father about the way Andrew talked about the home, the art collection, and how he loved his father. "I'm kind of an artist," the soldier said. He handed him a package. The father unwrapped the package and was amazed to find a painting of his son. It was, by no means, a masterpiece. But it was well done and brought grateful tears to the father's eyes. He thanked the soldier for his gift and placed the portrait over the fireplace. The two gazed at the painting of Andrew and shared hours of stories about their mutual love for him.

The following Spring, Andrew's father died in a hospital from tuberculosis. The art world was all abuzz that one of the world's greatest art collections was going up for auction. Bingham had no remaining relatives in their family. So according to the father's will, all the art work would be auctioned off on Christmas Eve... the day he received his prized art piece – his son's portrait.

The auction began with a painting that wasn't assumed to be a museum piece. It was the portrait of his son. Snobbish bidders rolled their eyes at the first piece as the auctioneer asked, "Whose going to give me \$100?" An uncomfortable silence fell over the whole room. "Whose going to give me a bid," asked the auctioneer. Finally from the back of the room, someone hollered, "We don't want that painting. It's just a picture of his son. We came here for the real art collection." Immediately the room was filled with cheers. "No," said the auctioneer, "We have to start the auction with this portrait. It's in the will and I can't proceed until this portrait - his most prized possession - is sold first. So, who will give me a bid. Who will take the picture of this man's son?" Again there was an uncomfortable silence. Finally a friend and neighbor of the Bingham family spoke up, "I'll give you \$10 for the painting - that's all I have."

The rest of the bidders laughed that a man would so foolishly show up to an art auction with only \$10. But they were relieved and turned with eager anticipation to the rest of the invaluable art that they had come to see. "I have a bid of \$10. Do I hear any more bids? Going

once, going twice, sold to the man with the \$10 bid," the auctioneer proclaimed with a loud voice. A cheer went up from the others. When the noise settled down, the auctioneer pounded his gavel and announced the auction was over. Stunned, angry in disbelief, someone in the room finally asked, "What do you mean it's over! We didn't come here for the portrait of his son! What about all those other paintings? There's millions of dollars worth of art here. We demand an explanation!" The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the father's will, whoever gets the son, gets everything else."

St. Paul's letter to the Colossians tells us, *"Since you then have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things*

above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." In other words, "Whoever gets the Son, gets everything else."

Our world seems to be filled with snobbish materialism. The more some people get, the more they want. Standards of success, at least as far as the advertisers would say, are people who have everything, are the ones who set the standards for what we should be striving for and setting our own goals. Howard Hughes, once the world's richest

man (and probably the strangest man) was once asked, "What would you want, now that you are the richest man in the world?" His reply was almost funny, if it wasn't so tragic, "I'd like to have just a little more money."

Jesus Christ set a different standard for us. He came from the glory of the riches of heaven, where He sat on the throne of the Most High, Almighty God. He came in humility to suffer and die for our punishment of sin. He willingly offered Himself in the war waged against our eternal souls and exchanged His poverty for us to gain the riches of the everlasting kingdom of God.

From Wall Street and high class marketeering, we may not seem like we're on top of the world. But, from God's point of view, we are His favorite sons and daughters. We are chosen by God to receive the treasures of all the beauty of His love and grace to us for this life. But, what is more, He gives us the treasures of an eternal home, the entire collection of His bounty, and the glory of the riches of His entire kingdom.

Why do you suppose God has laid up such an abundant treasury? Why does He draw our attention away from the trivial, worldly worthlessness and point us in the direction of the heavenly treasures that we can't yet quite see? The only reason and the only possible answer is that He wants



us have everything needed when we receive His Son. Where His Son is, we shall also be. We receive the riches of His bounty - all of God's treasury of peace, love, and His divine mercy.

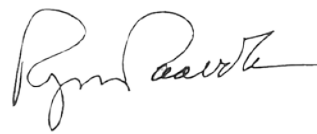
Why settle for anything less than ALL of God's blessing. Why strive for things that wilt, rot and rust away? God most valuable treasure was His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Christ paid everything He had for something from the treasury of love, blessing, and forgiveness with His own blood and life, and He wants to give it to us... and everyone out there.

That is what Church Planting and witnessing is all about. Isaiah wrote, *"Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of*

sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as One from whom men hide their faces, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

We settle for nothing less! God's will for us is to have it all we will ever need or desire – now and forever. Because He sent us His Son, those who have received His Son, have everything. May God grant this to us all, through His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

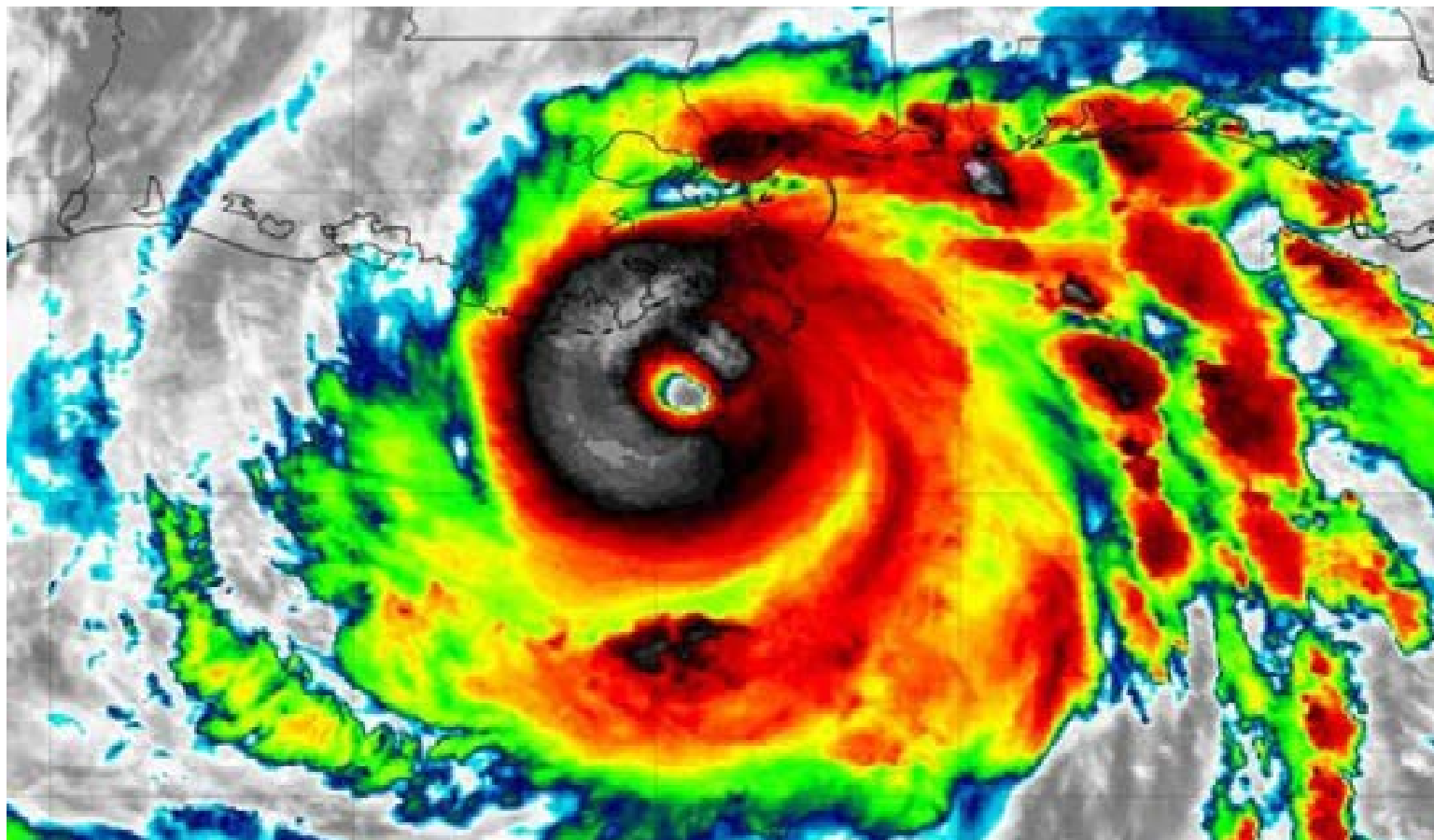
Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



2021 FALL PASTORS CONFERENCE

Registration Deadline September 10

The Mid-South District will host the 2021 Fall Pastors Conference in Memphis October 11-13 at the Hilton Hotel. The registration deadline is September 10. Online registration (<https://mid-southlcms.org/2021-fall-pastors-conference/>) for the conference is now available on the District website, along with more details about the event. Please note the conference dates in your calendar and register to attend this special gathering!



HELP IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE IDA

It is heartbreaking and overwhelming to see the devastating effects of yet another gulf coast hurricane—especially for the greater New Orleans area where disasters have had such a lasting impact. We pray for all those who now face a long recovery in the wake of Hurricane Ida, especially our brothers and sisters in the Southern District. As our congregations and individuals seek ways to help those impacted by this disaster, the Mid-South District recommends the following avenues of support:

LCMS DISASTER RESPONSE —

Make an online donation to LCMS Disaster Response as they work directly with the Southern District to identify needs and provide aid in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida —

GIVE: LCMS Disaster Response

LUTHERAN CHURCH CHARITIES —

Share an online gift to be used by Lutheran Church Charities in their hands-on recovery and relief efforts in greater New Orleans and other areas impacted by Hurricane Ida —

GIVE: Lutheran Church Charities

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT HURRICANE IDA RELIEF —

Ida relief funds received by the Mid-South District will be used specifically for the recovery effort. Checks made payable to the Mid-South District and designated for “**IDA RELIEF**” can be sent to:

Mid-South District / 1675 Wynne Road / Cordova, TN 38016

WELCOME PASTOR

Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock AR



The **Rite of Installation** was held for **Rev. Morgan Hamilton as Senior Pastor** at Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock on Sunday, August 1, 2021. Attending the installation included (Front Row L-R) Rev. Kent Schaff, President Roger Paavola, Rev. Morgan Hamilton, Rev. Kevin Conger, Rev. LeRoy Leach. (Back L-R) Rev. Jon Mathis, Rev. David Vandercook, Vicar Anthony Johnson, Rev. Emil Woerner, Rev. Jon Beyer, Rev. John Gierke.

DEADLY FLASH FLOODS HIT MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Mid-South District Relief Fund Will Support Aid Efforts

Historic and deadly flash floods struck the middle Tennessee town of Waverly and the surrounding area the weekend of August 21. While no LCMS congregations were in the path of these deadly floods, a number of our churches are in communities that surround Waverly—and these congregations stand ready to lend aid to their neighbors. **The Mid-South District has established a relief fund to support aid efforts for those impacted by this disaster in Middle Tennessee.**

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

*In the aftermath of such a horrific disaster, **our first and most significant response is with prayer.** Please pray for all those impacted by the floods—especially those who are missing, those who are part of the difficult search effort, and those who have lost loved ones.*

To assist with the relief effort, the Mid-South District has established a fund designated for "**Middle TN**

Flood Relief." Donations to this fund will be directed to relief efforts in the affected areas. If you would like to contribute to this fund, you may donate online or by check payable to the Mid-South District Office / 1675 Wynne Road / Cordova TN 38016. Please note "Middle TN Flood Relief" on any gifts sent by check.

Online donations: Restrict gift (\$ amount) and enter "Middle TN Flood Relief" in designation box.



photo credit from breitbart.com

STATISTICS TO EXCITE YOU

Trinity HOPE



We at Trinity HOPE have been watching in awe as yearly statistics roll in. Ever grateful for the opportunity to serve the children in Haiti, we are often guilty of underestimating God's plan and the impact of this ministry because our mortal minds cannot conceive of His divine greatness. Here are a few numbers we want to share.

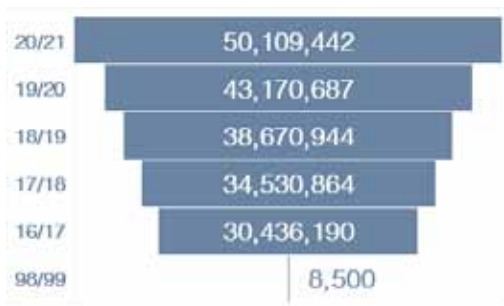
9/6/2021: This is the date of the start to the new school year. In recent weeks, Haiti has been bombarded with tragedy. On July 7, 2021, the Haitian president was assassinated, leaving an increase in political unrest. One month later, the country was hit by a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in the areas around Jeremie and Les Cayes. As of the date

of this article, 2,000 have been found dead, and up to 13,000 more are estimated. In the wake of this mass tragedy, aftershocks led people out of buildings and into streets where they stood under tarps trying to keep dry as tropical storm Grace made landfall.

We have spoken to our staff, and all are safe and well with a few minor injuries. We await assessment of each of the schools we serve in those areas, but we are assured that regardless of damage, school will start on 9/6/2021. If necessary, schools will meet under tarps, and through the Grace of God, children will receive a noon meal! We are in awe as we watch God's plan for this ministry as His plan continues to reign in the wake of this tragedy. Please continue to pray for our Haitian neighbors.

30%, 52,000, 241, and 13: Each year, about 30% of our funding comes from annual fundraising events. Last year, the Covid closures meant we struggled to have our events. Our November Hunger Fights were often cancelled, and we were unable to travel to churches to meet with new, prospective donors. We were confronted with what seemed to be a barrier regarding efforts to fundraise. The Share the HOPE, on-line auction helped to meet some of that need, and raised over \$20,000! Through networking and collaboration, we were introduced to a few donors who were new to us, and they joined the ranks of our always faithful donors and together we exceeded our goals. Coming into the 2021-22 school year, Trinity HOPE will serve over 52,000 meals a day in 241 schools throughout 13 districts in Haiti! "Ain't God Good?!"

50 Million: In 1999, when the organization started, we served 42 children a day which resulted in about 8,500 cumulative meals that first year. When tallying our end of year numbers for 2020-21, one number jumped off of the page. Since 1999, Trinity HOPE has served a cumulative 50 million meals! WOW! 50 million meals translate to 50 million prayers, 50 million times the Gospel was shared, and 50 million times our children heard about God's love for them. We estimate we will add about 9 million meals this school year.



20,000: Though we are now serving 52,000 meals every day throughout Haiti, we still have 20,000 children on our current waiting list! These are children who attend Christian schools but have no regular access to food. The Haitian proverb, "A hungry stomach has no ears" explains what we all know to be true: When children are hungry, they cannot learn. They cannot hear the message of the Gospel the schools are trying to teach. With opportunities for company match programs, online donations, silent auctions, etc., we can help you find the donation method that works best for you. Use the QR code on the left to access our website for details.



4: Trinity HOPE has been recognized by two of the top non-profit assessment firms in the nation. We have received the top rating of 4 stars from Charity Navigator and the top rating of platinum from Guidestar. These ratings make us more visible to those looking to make donations, and we are working hard to keep these ratings.



SELVD holds Annual Theological Symposium

Contributed by Dr. Naomichi Masaki

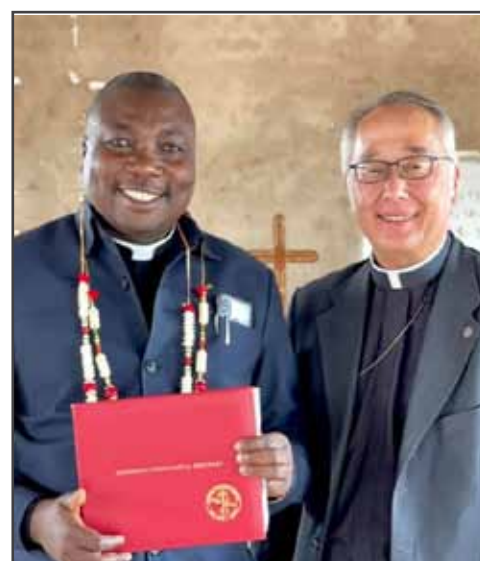


CTSFW (Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, Indiana) in partnership with St. John Lutheran Church, Decatur, Indiana and the ILC (International Lutheran Council), served the South East of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (SELVD) at the Fifth Annual Theological Symposium held at its Training Center in Negezi on August 3-6.

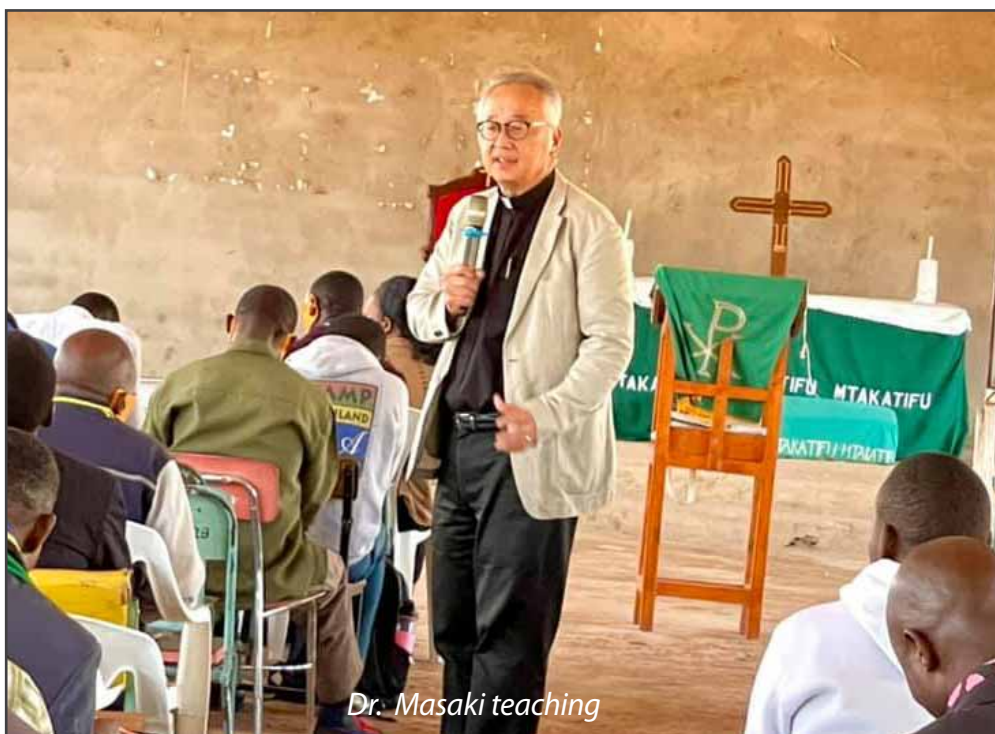
According to Assistant Bishop, Dr. Yohana Nzelu, there was the largest attendance compared to the past years, some 120 pastors, evangelist, deaconesses, and lay leaders. Pastor Peter Brock of St. John and Dr. Naomichi Masaki were invited to lecture. On the last day, I was privileged, on behalf of President Lawrence Rast, to present to Rev. Yohana Nzelu (DMin) and Rev. Odolous Gyunda (MA) diplomas of respected degrees that they had successfully completed during the 2020-2021 academic year. What a joy to witness to the steady and continual growth of the Gospel here under the able and faithful leadership of Bishop Dr. Emmanuel Makala!



Pastor Peter Brock teaching



Dr. Masaki with Dr. Yohana Nzelu and his degree



Dr. Masaki teaching

Prayer Summary, August 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 August 2021.

PRAYER CONCERNS

REV. RONALD HALAMKA (Waxahachie, TX)
JOHN HASS (son of Chaplain Mark Hass, Fort Smith, AR)
MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)
REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)
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)
MR. MARK PIEPENBRINK (brother of Allen Piepenbrink, Mid-South District Office)
REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Chaplain*U.S. Army through the Board of International Missions)
REV. Carl Wenck, Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN

We pray for all those affected by the devastating floods in Middle Tennessee.

We pray for all those affected by Hurricane Ida and the devastating aftermath.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS:

DECLINED: Rev. Willie Grills, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mattoon, IL returned the Call to serve as Pastor to Zion of Avilla Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR.

PENDING: Rev. Duncan Cox, Vacancy Pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR.

Rev. Michael Huebner, Pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Lexington, KY has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR.

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTERIES

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Mission and Ministry

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR – Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN – Pastor

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

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS:

ACCEPTED: Pamela D. Chatham, candidate, Concordia, Irvine, CA accepted the call by Christ Lutheran Church & School, Little Rock, AR to serve as 7th & 8th grade Teacher.

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.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR – Teachers (Preschool; Middle School; High School)

Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN – Middle School Teachers (Science/Math; Music)

Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – Teachers (Early Childhood)

First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN – Part-Time Teacher (Early Childhood)

First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR- Part-Time Resource Teacher

Holy Trinity Lutheran School, Bowling Green, KY – Teachers (Preschool) and Classroom Aids

St. John's Lutheran School, Stuttgart, AR – Teachers (Early Childhood and Extended Care)

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



ROSE PARADE & FLOAT DECORATING PACKAGE

For information and to make your reservations go to: <https://www.christiantravelplanners.com/tours/item/193-special-event-tour-rose-parade-december-28-january-2-2020.html>

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 7/31/2021 (7 Months)

Anticipated Amount (58.33% of budget)	\$859,609
Actual Receipts.....	<u>871,616</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$12,007

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (7 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$246,901
Allocated to Tanzania	14,583
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts).....	<u>610,131</u>
Total Receipts.....	\$871,616

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (7 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 7/31/2021	\$871,616
Actual Receipts as of 7/31/2020	\$868,627
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$2,989

Encourager Topics in 2021

We invite you to share your stories with us please email it by **September 20, 2021** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com

- October – Celebrating Lutheran Heritage
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights of 2021

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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