

# Encourager

SEPTEMBER 2023

Mid-South District LCMS



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

Zig Ziglar wrote a story about a situation that happened in the Great Smokey Mountains several decades ago. It seems some hogs escaped from a farmer's pen, and, over the generations, the hogs became more and more wild. They were a menace to everyone who traveled in the park and on vacations. They ate up gardens and threatened children, pets, and livestock. Hunting down the hogs was unsuccessful because the population seemed to flourish in the unlimited environment of the Smokies.

One day an old farmer came to the officials in the park and said he could get rid of the hogs. All he had was his mule, an old wooden cart, a couple of sacks of grain and some rough sawn lumber. The

park officials doubted his promise to get rid of all the hogs – since the hunters were unsuccessful – but let him proceed. He went to a clearing near the highest point in the park and watched for the place where the hogs congregated to eat. When he found it, he put out a few handfuls of grain. At first, the hogs were hesitant, but eventually ate the grain. The next day he put a plank next to the grain. The hogs were hesitant, but eventually ate the grain. Then came the first corner post, a few more posts, a few rails. Each time the wild hogs were hesitant, but eventually ate the grain.

The farmer made a trap. Every time he added something, the hogs hesitated, but eventually came back to get "Something for

nothing." What happened took a long time and a lot of patience. But, the luxury of a "free lunch" made it possible that the farmer eventually captured the whole herd. When they became dependent on someone else to give them food, they easily became captive to their desires.

The same is true for human beings: If we give a man a free lunch long enough, he will soon be in the habit of getting something for nothing, and then he's trapped. In a study, led by health economist, Dr Tor Dahl, I helped compile data from 1967 through to 1976. We looked at various governmentally run entitlement programs related to healthcare and its relationship to a person's health. What we

discovered is that there is an undisputed inverse proportion of a person's responsibility for their health and the 21 major factors of health. In other words, the less a person spends in their own time and money on healthcare, the less healthy they will be and their quality of life. The more a person spends with their own time and own money on concerns for healthcare, the healthier they become and with a higher quality of life standards. (That led us to the conclusion of what seven factors created an increase in life expectancy, up to 21 years of life!) But, that's for another subject and another time for us to discuss those items.

This is not a newsletter about the current national debate over healthcare – wherever that may be going. This is about work and our national holiday we call, "Labor Day." In the Gospel of John, chapter 6, Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life... the Bread that the crowds could eat and live forever. When the crowds asked for this

"free bread" Jesus didn't rebuke them for their shortsightedness, but rather, Jesus says, *"...to work for bread that does not spoil."*

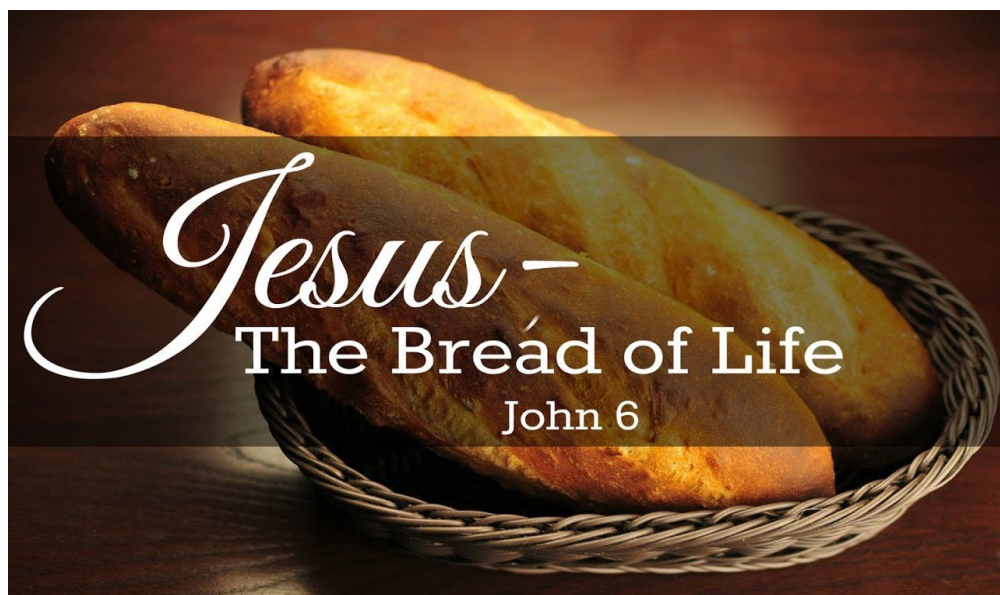
In response, the crowds ask, *"What must we do to accomplish the work God requires?"* Once again, the Old Adam kicked in, thinking there is something we can do to please God, to accomplish His Will, to develop our relationship to Him, and so forth. Law-keeping doesn't earn God's favor. Our obedience doesn't earn a place for us in His eternal and heavenly mansions. Only the work of Christ on the cross and victorious resurrection from the grave are acceptable to God for the redemption of man.

God is the source of life. The Bread Jesus spoke of isn't crushed grains or Wonder bread – it is the Person of Christ and His means of grace. *"No man can come to Me unless My Father draws him. And I will raise him up at the last day, for whoever eats of My flesh and drinks of My blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the Last Day."*

That's a promise no other person can make, nor any other bread can give.

What is the work that God requires for eternal life? Jesus said, *"The work of God is this: To believe in the One He has sent."* Doesn't sound like a hot and sweaty job, does it? But why is it so difficult to accomplish? As we read further in John's sixth chapter, the crowd quickly left Jesus when He told them His flesh is real food and His blood is real drink. We understand Him to mean the blessed sacrament of Holy Communion. The crowd didn't mistake this as being something symbolic. They left Him in disgust! They left Him thinking He was too gross or maybe insane. But make no mistake of it, they left Him. They left behind the Son of God who offered His true body and His true blood because it didn't make sense to their human logic that Jesus could do such a thing. Did Jesus capitulate and beg the people He offended to come back? No! He asked His disciples if they too were going to leave Him (Imagine: Leaving Jesus because they couldn't grasp the idea of eating of Him, the Bread of Life!) It takes faith, not logic or reason; but pure, child-like faith.

There is no free lunch. Getting drawn into something that sounds too good to be true is probably too good to be true. This month we celebrate Labor Day – a time to reflect on the work of millions of people who have made this country great – the



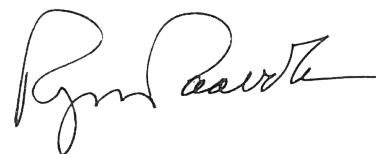
most prosperous and powerful nation in the history of mankind. If we don't think it takes hard work to accomplish that quality, we can find plenty of examples around the world where lack of industrious efforts creates a worthless existence where every person expects someone to bail them out.

The only vivid and holy contrast to a totally free gift

comes to an inheritance of an eternal peace with God. It took work, to be sure. But, in the case of securing our eternal life, it was the work of Christ, who, on our behalf suffered and died so we may receive His eternal peace. By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus won God's favor for our justification. The only work we can do in this mystery of God's grace is to believe and accept Him

in faith. *"The work of God is this: To believe in the One He has sent."* Have a blessed Labor Day as we remember the work Jesus did for us and our everlasting life.

Your servant in Christ +  
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



## A Successful Second Annual Henkel Conference

The Second Annual Henkel Conference was well received by over 120 clergy and laity in Ascension Lutheran Church in Madison, TN on August 7 & 8. The conference focused on contemporary issues we, as the Lutheran Church, will be dealing with in our ministries.

This year's speakers included Dr. Carl Truman from Grove City University; Aaron Kheriaty, Public Policy Center for Bioethics; Matthew Eppinette, Director of The Center for Bioethics; Dr. Peter Scaer, Chairman of Exegetical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; Dr. Jordan Cooper, President of American Lutheran Theological Seminary, Dr. Adam Koontz, pastor and adjunct professor at CTSFW; Katy Faust, Founder and President of Them Before Us; and David Fowler, President of the Family Action Council of Tennessee.



(Left) Katy Faust, Founder and President of Them Before Us  
(Below) Matthew Eppinette, Director of The Center for Bioethics





## Honor a Special Church Worker During DISTRICT MINISTRY MONTH

As you know, your Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregation is part of a regional group of LCMS ministries and church workers called the Mid-South District. You can think of the Mid-South District as your congregation's extended LCMS family! Just like your congregation, the Mid-South District engages in ministry, driven by the mission to **"provide leadership, resources and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom and equipping the found for service in our churches, communities and the world."**

A significant emphasis of district ministry is encouraging and supporting current church workers, as well as helping new workers answer the Call to serve. Over the last several months, newsletter articles and bulletin inserts called "A Closer Look" have been shared with congregations, detailing these district ministry programs that support our church workers. This work—and all district ministry—is made possible by both mission commitments from District congregations and support from generous donors, like you.

To celebrate all district ministry and highlight the cooperative effort that makes it happen, we will celebrate District Ministry Month across the Mid-South in October. To make this celebration even more special, the **Mid-South District will invite individuals to partner in district ministry by sharing a gift in honor or memory of a church worker.** If there is a Lutheran pastor, teacher, principal, Director of Christian Ed, or other church worker who has impacted you in a special way, you can share a gift in their honor. What a great way to support district ministry! (And what a great way to observe Church Worker Appreciation Month, which will also be celebrated across the LCMS in October).

Watch for more on District Ministry Month and this unique support opportunity on the Mid-South District website ([mid-southlcms.org](http://mid-southlcms.org)), in the October Encourager, and in information shared through your home congregation.

# DISTRICT

# MINISTRY MONTH



# WAYS TO HELP WILDFIRE DEVASTATION IN HAWAII



photo from news.sky.com

As we all pray for a swift end to the wildfires currently raging on the island of Maui, we also seek ways to help those impacted by the disaster. The Mid-South District has received communications from both the California-Nevada-Hawaii District of the LCMS and Lutheran Church Charities regarding their relief and assistance efforts.

**Please see the links below for details on these efforts and ways to share a supporting gift:**

[California-Nevada-Hawaii District, LCMS](#)

[Lutheran Church Charities](#)

*If you or someone who desires to give is unable to donate online, donations by check can be made payable to the Mid-South District-LCMS, with "Maui Wildfires 2023" noted as the designation. All funds will be forwarded to the California-Nevada-Hawaii District, LCMS. Please mail donations to: Mid-South District, 1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016*



# UPON THIS ROCK

## A Hymn Festival on the Church

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2023 | 3:00 PM



Rev. Dr. Todd Peperkorn,  
Speaker



Jacquelyn Magnuson,  
Organist

**Grace Lutheran Church**  
5124 Hillcrest Ave  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
[www.gracelutheranlr.org](http://www.gracelutheranlr.org)

Free admission | Reception to follow

## COMING IN OCTOBER

*Luther Classical  
College  
Reformation  
Mission Festival*

**Saturday, 10/28/2023  
11am-2pm @ Trinity North Little Rock**

A presentation and Q&A by Samuel Preus along with Christian fellowship among pastors and church leaders.

More information coming soon.



# LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

*Uncovering the Shadow World  
of Human Trafficking*

**SAT. SEPT. 30, 2023**  
**9 AM - 1 PM**

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**HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

1101 W. HUDSON / ROGERS, AR

Representatives from  
LOCAL, STATE & NATIONAL Agencies  
will share knowledge on how to

- **IDENTIFY SIGNS**
- **REPORT ACTIVITY**
- **HELP VICTIMS**  
of Human Trafficking

**FREE EVENT • LUNCH PROVIDED**

▶ **REGISTER ONLINE**

This free community event is hosted by the Mid-South District, LCMS.



# HOW ARE THINGS IN HAITI?

## *We serve a mighty God!*

In recent weeks, we have had a lot of questions about the work we are doing in Haiti, and whether we are able to continue. Trinity HOPE feeds about 60,000 children each school day throughout 269 Christian schools in Haiti. Though the danger is heightened, and the food prices are fluctuating, we have been blessed with an infrastructure that has allowed us to continue this work, even in hard times.

To be frank, conditions in Haiti are dire. However, because we have native Haitians doing this work, we invest in their economy rather than ship food down, and most influentially, we serve a MIGHTY God, the children in the Christian schools we serve are continuing to hear the Good News of the Gospel as they find sustenance in a hot lunch.

Thank you for all you do to help us keep these children fed. Without you, none of this would be possible.

Please visit us at [www.trinityhope.org](http://www.trinityhope.org) to learn more about the ministry.



Even in dangerous times, parents are determined to bring their children to school to receive a hot lunch.



Because of you, these children are fed spiritually and physically.



615-394-4950

Trinity HOPE  
P.O. Box 2910  
Lebanon, TN 37088

[www.TrinityHOPE.org](http://www.TrinityHOPE.org)

[admin@trinityhope.org](mailto:admin@trinityhope.org)

Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

Candid.



# CHURCH ROOFS FOR TANZANIA

The Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Lutheran church of Tanzania has witnessed tremendous growth. When a new congregation is formed, the members purchase and clear the land, pour the foundation, make the bricks, and construct the walls for the new building. This is a labor of love by the members many of them new Christians. Their biggest challenge is to raise money to purchase wood and steel sheets for the roofs. Most of these new church plants are in rural areas where the congregation consists of subsistence farmers. Money is a scarce commodity.

In 2012, when the SELVD was established, it was made up of 14,371 members, 5 Districts, 37 Parishes and 70 Sub Parishes. In 2022 when it marked its tenth anniversary, it had 28,498 members, 15 Districts, 105 Parishes and 312 Sub Parishes.

With this phenomenal growth comes challenges. Currently over forty congregations are meeting without a roof to protect them from the weather. The diocese estimates 24 more congregations will be formed in the next 2 years.

Please consider making a donation for church roofs in Tanzania. You can send a check earmarked Tanzania Roofs to the Mid-South District LCMS, 1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016.



(L and R) Making bricks







**Lutheran Church Extension Fund**

> where investments build ministry

# 5%

APPLY ONLINE AT  
**[lcef.org](https://lcef.org)**

## 18-MONTH FIXED-RATE TERM NOTE

This limited-time offer is available for Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod:

✔ **INDIVIDUALS**    ✔ **CONGREGATIONS**    ✔ **ORGANIZATIONS**

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. Rates as of August 2023. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit **[lcef.org](https://lcef.org)** for details. 0823N134



# PRAYER SUMMARY, AUGUST 2023

Following is a list of all the people that have appeared on the Mid-South District website prayer list [www.mid-southlcms.com](http://www.mid-southlcms.com) during the month of August 2023.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**REV. RONALD HALAMKA** (Waxahachie, TX)  
**MRS. ALISON HAWKINS** (Mid-South District Office)  
**MRS. MARY ANN HERD** (wife of Rev. Clifford Herd, Hixson, TN)  
**REV. ED MAANUM** (First, Knoxville, TN)  
**REV. DAN OTTO** (Emeritus, Murfreesboro, TN)  
**REV. TOM SAYRE** (Emeritus, St. John's, FL)  
**MRS. NORMA MOORE** (wife of Rev. Tom Moore, Emeritus, Cordova, TN)  
**MR. ZAC ENKO** (son of Rev. Keith Enko, Emeritus, Lebanon, TN)  
**MR. MARC HIGGINS** (MDS Board of Directors, Maumelle, AR)  
**MR. WAYNE LAURY** (spouse of Ann Laury, Principal, Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN)

**All those affected by the devastating fires in Maui, Hawaii.**

**Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Rev. Peter Ave-Lallemant** (Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR) who recently passed away. A memorial service is planned for September 15, 2023, at 11:00AM, Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR.

## CALL UPDATE

### ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED:** **Rev. Donald Hefta**, Emeritus (Hot Springs Village, AR) accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, AR. Installation is planned for September 24, 2023.*

**Rev. Adam Gless**, Senior Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Mayer, MN accepted the Call to serve as *Senior Pastor to Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, A. Installation is planned for October 22, 2023.*

**Rev. William Ringer**, Pastor, St. John's Russellville, AR accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, North East, PA.*

**PENDING:** **Rev. Seth Korte** (Candidate) Fort Wayne, IN, has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN.*

**DECLINED:** **Rev. Dr. Brian Kachelmeier** Pastor to Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, San Antonio, TX returned the Call to serve as *Pastor to Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN.*

### COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED:** **Mr. Aaron Jackson** (Candidate) has accepted the Call to serve as Director of Parish Music to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR. *Installation to place August 6, 2023.*

### VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

**Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN- Pastor**  
**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor**  
**St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN – Pastor**  
**Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, AR – Pastor**  
**Christ Lutheran Church, Paris, TN – Pastor**

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – Pre-K 3 Teacher**  
**Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – 7th/8th Grade Math Teacher**  
**Our Savior Lutheran Academy, Nashville, TN – Part time teachers ECC and After Care Program**

# CONGREGATIONAL MISSION COMMITMENTS

## Mission Commitment Receipts as of 7/31/2023 (7 Months)

Anticipated Amount (50% of budget).....\$912,491  
Actual Receipts .....862,899  
Over (under) anticipated amount..... (\$49,592)

## Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (7 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions.....\$244,286  
Allocated to Tanzania ..... 14,583  
Retained for District Mission/ Ministry Support (70% of receipts).....604,029  
Total Receipts .....\$862,899

## Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (7 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 7/31/2023 .....\$862,899  
Actual Receipts as of 7/31/2022 .....\$852,870  
Over (under) prior year receipts .....\$10,029

## What's New With You?

### Encourager Topics in 2023

We invite you to share your stories with us please email stories by 20th to Rhonda, [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com). Here's a look at the upcoming topics.

- October – District Ministry Month, Celebrating Lutheran Heritage
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights 2023

### 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](mailto: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*  
**Rev. William Zwick,**  
*Executive Director of Mission & Ministry & Executive Director for Schools and Early Childhood*  
**Angela Fowler,**  
*Executive Director for Business & Finance*  
**Paul Reaves,**  
*Executive Director for Development & LCEF Vice President*  
**Missy Washburn,**  
*Administrative Assistant to the District President*  
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### Contact

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