

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | October 2021



IT'S GOOD NEWS

How important is our observance of The Lutheran Reformation? I'm reminded of a silly story about the time when God had seen enough. He decided He'd let the world know the end of the world was coming. So, He called together three influential people so they could let their constituency know. He called Joe Biden to talk to Americans. He called Kim Jun Un to talk to the world's unbelievers. And God called Bill Gates to tell the techies who don't do anything without the Internet.

God said, "The world will come to an end. Tell your people. Biden went to CNN, "Hey, man, I think have some good news and some bad news: "First, there is a God. But, the bad news is He's ending the world very soon." Jun Un sent a message to all unbelievers saying, "I have bad

news and even some worse news: First, we're wrong! There is a God. But worse, He's ending the world." Bill Gates got out his laptop and sent an e-blast, "I have good news and even better news: The good news is God thinks I'm one of the most influential persons in the world. The better news is that you won't have to update your current version of Microsoft Windows."

Christians understand Good News and better news. The Good News is, there is a God! But the better news is that He's coming again, but He's never left us alone. We celebrate a God who is real. We celebrate a God who loved us so much, that He came to bring us His presence and unending grace - a God who loved us so much that He sent His Son to suffer and die in our place that we may have eternal life.

He isn't off in some distant land. He doesn't exist like some elusive, mythical being like the Loch Ness Monster or Big Foot. God isn't even the invisible, unknown God most of the rest of the religions of the world worship. Our God is alive and real.

He came to be One with us - in the flesh. He became close enough to touch. He is close enough to hold on to us. He is close enough to be God-with-us. Jesus the Christ came in flesh to dwell among us and take on our human frailty so we

are joined together with Him as justified sons and daughters of God.

But there's even better news: We have a live, touchable, loving God, who came to hold on to us, so that we will belong to Him now and throughout eternity. He came to join us together in His perfect life. Inherently, we want to belong. It starts in our relationship with family. We develop relationships through friendships because we want to belong together.

One of the most horrible diseases I ever saw in the hospital world wasn't cancers, Alzheimer's, ALS, or the heart diseases. These are as horrible diseases. But the disease that breaks every hospital worker's heart is called "failure to thrive." It's a real disease that strikes tiny babies up to the elderly. "Failure to thrive" comes from the inner sense of not belonging - having no one with whom the victim can relate.

When we live as a family member of the living God, we capture the vision of being one - just as the Son and Father are One - loving, giving supporting and caring. There's power in divine togetherness. When God calls on us to be one, we can't

ignore His plea. We shouldn't divide or bicker. How can we fight and be at odds with the members of the greater Christian community? Listen to the heart of God! Being in Christ is being of ONE heart of love and compassion. He urges us to put aside the things that separate and create conflict because divisions destroy love. God desires our hearts to be one?

God's greatest delight is to see His people working together - building together for the glory of God. On a grand scale, God's delight would be for us all to be one in fellowship within the whole Christian Church on earth - to be of one in doctrine and one in confession of faith. Surely, He'd love to see an end of violence, bloodshed, and war; an end to drugs, poverty, injustice and hatred. But, above all, Jesus wanted people who are one with God in love, who would finally and truly reflect the oneness that is in His Son with our Father and the Holy Spirit.

But we're born into another existence. That's why Jesus came to join Himself to us. He took on that dregs of everything that separates us from God, took our sinful desires to the cross, and suffered our shame. His sacrifice cleansed, lifted, and by grace, reshapes our deadly human condition into His glorious and eternal image.

That's the kind of good news that is the proclamation of God's Word and the offering of His sacraments that happen in a thing we call fellowship - the sharing of Christ only found in His house. The Church and in His Word is where God gets in touch with us. We're touched by His means of grace in His presence. So, when we're covered with His overflowing abundance of forgiveness, love, and mercy, we're enjoined in His blessed assurance which we may share with everyone God brings into our lives.

Being a member of a Christian congregation brings us meaning and purpose because of the fellowship of being together in Christ. We don't join a church to believe that it makes us perfect. But rather, we join a church to be uplifted, fed, and healed from the affliction that surrounds everyone born of natural means.

As in God's means of grace, He covers us with Christ's perfection. We can then show the world the Light of hope and peace, because in Christian fellowship, we gather together intentionally in worship around the Light of the world - our Savior Jesus Christ. Fellowship happens in the one, Holy Christian Church. But, doing and being the Church is not optional. It's a privilege! It's our Christian responsibility.

OUTREACH MINISTRY CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

In April, 2001, twenty years ago, First Lutheran Church in Little Rock launched a new ministry to help blind and visually impaired persons in the area. It was named "First Care Outreach for the Blind and Visually Impaired". FCO meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month for a meal prepared and served by volunteers, followed by an educational program, entertainment, fun and games (Bingo is the favorite), an opening devotion, a time for prayer requests and prayer. A Bible study led by Pastor Ron Bacic is offered each month preceding the meeting. Volunteers help provide transportation, etc. The ministry is funded by contributions from the congregation, as there is no cost to the participants. FCO has met year round since its beginning until the COVID 19 pandemic, but has now resumed regular monthly meetings. We have been blessed to be a blessing to others.

Attending Church is a statement of whether Christ Jesus is real or just a utility. The Church is not just a building or a specific group of churches that hold the keys to the kingdom of salvation. Rather, the Church is the people inside the church who confess Christ as Lord and Savior. The Church is not a solo act. The Church is still the body of Christ that is joined to Him. It's work belongs to the people He has called into the Church, yet guided by His Spirit.

The true, unified, and living Christian Church is a place where the people look forward to, and delight in the privilege of coming into worship to receive the service of God toward His people. The Church still belongs to God. He cannot be outvoted on doctrine, its proper, or its function. Even if the Church on earth voted unanimously to change His holy and perfect order, the centrality of Christ's Church would prevail.

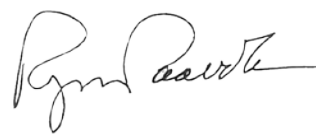
This is why members in the Christian Church cannot function outside its intended relationships - relationship to

God and relationships to our brothers and sisters in Christ. On our own we would be powerless. But, together, and united in Christ, even the gates of Hell cannot stand against the Holy Christian Church.

Don't we - as Christians, and members of our blessed congregations - have something most important to share? Don't we have something that lasts forever? Don't we have what Jesus wants: the Father's will...the precious gift of life...the best news any soul could hear? That's what the Lutheran Reformation means - sharing the Good News as God meant it to be shared.

Your servant in Christ +

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



The **Rite of Ordination and Installation** was held for **Rev. Anthony Johnson** at First Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, AR on August 22, 2021. He was installed as Associate Pastor for First Lutheran. Joining Rev. Johnson were (L-R Front Row) Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Rev. Anthony Johnson, Rev. Jon Beyer, Rev. Dan McDougal. Top Row (L-R) Rev. Henry Thompson, Rev. Morgan Hamilton, Rev. John Mathis, Rev. Kevin Conger, and Rev. Gregg Bearss.

WAVERLY FLOOD AID

Thank you to all who gave

The District response to the need in Waverly, TN, has been tremendous. On September 10, Pastor Philip Young (Redeemer, Nashville) and Pastor Ken Shaw (Trinity, Gallatin) delivered \$23,000 of aid to organizations in Waverly and the families they serve. Pastor Young and Pastor Shaw met with the elders and volunteers at Waverly Church of Christ. They also met with flood victims at First Baptist Church of Waverly and the Humphrey's County Sheriff's Department. Bank cards in the amount of \$500 were distributed.

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Families that received aid at the First Baptist Operation



Sheriff Chris Davis, two recipients of aid and Pastor Shaw, Pastor Young



First Baptist Operation

WAVERLY FLOOD AID, continued

Additional funds that come into the District are sent directly to the partner organizations in Waverly. Well done to all who gave so generously in the name of Christ.



Waverly Church of Christ Operation
(above and right)

Pastor Young, David Nowlin (elder from Waverly Church of Christ), Pastor Shaw and George Palmer (elder from Waverly Church of Christ) (L-R)



WAVERLY AID

From Vanderbilt Army ROTC

Waverly flood relief cleanup led by Redeemer's Benjamin Nissing on 9/11/21. Benjamin is a Vanderbilt student (senior) and Army ROTC cadet. His home congregation is Trinity Lutheran, Bridgeton, MO. He attends Redeemer Lutheran, Nashville, during the academic year. Eighteen students from various universities around Nashville (Trevecca, Lipscomb, Belmont, TSU & Vandy) participated. All are part of Vanderbilt Army ROTC.



2022 TANZANIA MISSION TRIP

We are making plans for a team from the Mid-South District to return to Tanzania, Africa in May of 2022. To communicate to the people of Tanzania the life-changing power of Jesus Christ in a practical and understanding way; to develop them into responsible, productive, successful Christians, and equip them for their ministry in the church and like mission in the world.

We plan to visit the city of Shinyanga, home of the Southeast Lake Victoria Lutheran District. The main emphasis of the trip will be to share the Good News of Jesus with the Sukuma people, located in Northwest Tanzania. We will also visit other areas of past ministry; such as food ministry to albino children, Mwadui Lutheran secondary school, widows ministry. Team members will go door-to-door in villages to spread the Word of God and the wonderful news of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. The team will be accompanied by local ministers and lay persons who will act as translators. We will be using



simple techniques such as: an Evangecube or Bible story telling. So, if you can share a 4th-grade level Sunday school lesson in your own words, you are qualified!

Please contact, Bob Allen for more information about the trip.

270-535-7370 || rjallen@prodigy.net



DISASTER RESPONSE FUND

Trinity HOPE feeds over 52,000 children across 13 districts in Haiti. Two of our districts were hit hard by the recent earthquake. Since 1999, Trinity HOPE has continued to serve our Haitian neighbors despite the many natural disasters and we have learned that when the aid goes away, they still need our help. The "Disaster Response Fund" is earmarked to off-set costs associated with natural disasters and will be used for rising food costs and as seed money for new feeding programs in the areas impacted. To donate, visit us at trinityhope.org/donate or scan the QR code at right.



MID-SOUTH DISTRICT HOSTS NEW WORKERS FOR ORIENTATION AND FELLOWSHIP

The Mid-South District was pleased to welcome 15 new workers, along with several spouses, for an orientation event at the District Office in Memphis on September 20 & 21. Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) kicked off the event by hosting an evening reception, giving attendees the chance to get to know one another and learn some interesting facts about the Mid-South District's 55-year history. The following day's agenda included an introduction to District staff and a look at District services and resources that workers may find helpful for their ministries. As the gathering drew to a close, many attendees shared that they appreciated the unique opportunity to connect with the District—and meet some great new Lutheran friends!



Are you an LCMS rostered or lay church worker?

LCEF has an exclusive investment for you...

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) wants to help you focus on your mission by making it easy and worthwhile to put a little money away each month. More importantly, your investment allows LCEF to provide funds and resources to help start, support and sustain Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) church workers and ministries—today and far into the future.

FOR DETAILS ON THIS EXCLUSIVE INVESTMENT, VISIT [LCEF.ORG/CWSA](https://lcef.org/cwsa) OR CALL 800-843-5233.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund
where investments build ministry

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, 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. StewardAccount access features are offered through UMB Bank n.a. StewardAccount products are not available to investors in South Carolina. The Family Emergency StewardAccount is known as the Family StewardAccount in the State of Ohio. Visit lcef.org for details. 0421D-N098



ALASKA MISSION FOR CHRIST NEEDS YOU!

Alaska Mission for Christ (LCMS) is looking for volunteers with a servant heart to work at a 74-year old log cabin Christian camp outside of Fairbanks. Skilled and non-skilled laborers are welcome. Volunteers are welcome any time between May 15-June 12, 2022. Covid vaccinations will be required on this particular team. To learn more, contact Jan Bruick, Servant Event Coordinator: 402-641-9691 or janbruick@alaskamissionforchrist.org.



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.](#)



ROSE PARADE

& FLOAT DECORATING PACKAGE

Mark 1:22 The people were amazed at his (Jesus') teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

The Lutheran Hour Ministries Float Committee is pleased that their 2022 Rose Parade float will feature Jesus teaching, surrounded by 12 modern day disciples. This year's float is titled Jesus Teaches.

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>

Prayer Summary, September 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 September 2021.

PRAYER CONCERNS

REV. ANDREW ABRAHAM (Pastor, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN)

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)

MR. MARK PIEPENBRINK (brother of Allen Piepenbrink, Mid-South District Office)

REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Chaplain*U.S. Army through the Board of International Missions)

We pray for all those affected by the devastating floods in Middle Tennessee and those recovering from the damage of Hurricane Ida.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS:

DECLINED: **Rev. Duncan Cox**, Vacancy Pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR has returned the 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 returned the 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

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.

Natalie Marie Bahr, candidate, Concordia, Austin, TX has accepted the 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 (Middle School Grades 5th&6th; Part-Time High School)

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

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

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 8/31/2021 (8 Months)

Anticipated Amount (66.67% of budget).....	\$982,410
Actual Receipts.....	<u>992,899</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	\$10,489

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (8 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$281,203
Allocated to Tanzania	16,667
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)	<u>695,029</u>
Total Receipts	\$992,899

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (8 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 8/31/2021	\$992,899
Actual Receipts as of 8/31/2020	<u>\$987,543</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts\$5,356

Encourager Topics in 2021

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

- 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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