

Encourager

OCTOBER 2026

Mid-South District LCMS



A Message from
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,
President

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

A young Martin Luther was a distraught soul. He grew up with a distorted perception of God. As an Augustinian monk, he dutifully followed all the rules of the Roman Church: praying, pilgrimages, frequenting mass, and doing everything imaginable to make himself acceptable to God. But, nothing brought him a peace to his troubled mind. At the onset, to him God was a relentless tyrant rather than our kindly heavenly Father. However, through an intense study of Scripture, Luther soon attained a different understanding about God. In Scripture Alone, he found the God who offers sinners a perfect righteousness as a gift in Christ Jesus.

Scripture is devoid of such things as penances, pilgrimages, or personal effort that would make one acceptable to God. God accepts us sinners not because of anything we can do, but because He Himself paid for our sins in the joyous exchange of His perfect and complete righteousness for our wretchedness. Luther discovered this grace - The just shall live by faith; giving Luther and the rest of Christianity a peace that had been shrouded by the Church for centuries. The simplicity of God's grace finally gave Luther peace of mind and thus began a wave of biblical enlightenment across Europe!

The beginning of Luther's quest for peace began in October 1512 when he joined the faculty at Wittenberg. Four years later, Rome commissioned a Dominican priest named Johann Tetzel to peddle something Rome called indulgences. It was a cryptic way to raise money to rebuild St Peter's Basilica, by "selling indulgences as a way to "pay for" one's time in purgatory. These indulgences were actually "sold" as means of self-fulfillment, satiation, or appeasement.

We are puzzled as to how did that contrivance ever sneak into Christian theology? The foundation for the ruse actually goes back to 382 AD - 1200 years before the Reformation. Pope Damasus commissioned a priest named Jerome to revise the Latin in the four Gospels from the original Bible languages. Instead, Jerome spent five years translating, not only the Gospels but translated the entire Bible. He created the Vulgate... a variant Latin. For example, he translated the Greek term in John's Gospel - *archereia*, (high priest) as *pon-ti-fex* where he got, "Pontiff," aka, Pope. He translated the words Jesus, "Give us this day our *ἐπι-ι-ού-σι-ον* **daily** bread (Matthew 6:11) into, "Give us this day our *ὑπερ-φυ-σι-κός* - or *su-per-sub-stan-ti-a-lem* or supernatural bread thus laying the foundation

for their doctrine of transubstantiation. In Genesis 3, he made a gender change in God's declaration by saying, "SHE shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel," leading to the sixth century Roman doctrine declaring Mary as the co-redemptrix.

Where did the idea of indulgences even come from? Isaiah 61:1 is where we find Jerome's translation that relates to the debate surrounding the Reformation. Our English translations say, "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.*" However, Jerome's translation reads "*He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted (et praedicarem captivis indulgentiam) to proclaim liberty to the captives; and freedom to the ones who are bound to justice...*" Jerome exchanged the word for 'liberty' - *dārōwr* – with מִשְׁפָּת - *mishpath* – to 'justice!' His translation wouldn't have released the captives but subjected them to buy restitution by personal merits, contributions, or works – *indulgentiam*! It wasn't until 1200 years after Jerome that Luther found in Scripture's original languages that teaches that salvation is a complete and a free gift of God's grace, by faith. This is why Luther wanted answers as to how Rome could sell *indulgentiam* to gain freedom from the punishment of sin and time in purgation.

Luther concluded that Scriptures clearly states that Christ's suffering, death and resurrection is complete! Christ fully paid the price for our sins! Luther protested to his Bishop - Albert of Mainz – sending him a copy of what became known as the Ninety-Five Theses. On October 31, 1517, he posted his theses on the door of the Wittenberg Church. He wanted a debate – *disputatio* as was the practice of that day. By January, 1518, Luther's Theses was translated into common German. Within two weeks it spread throughout Germany. Within two months it spread all across Europe!

Additionally, for hundreds of years, the Roman Church had maintained tremendous secular and political power. Two authorities ran Europe: the church and secular government. But, if any differences between the two arose the church claimed the higher authority. Any challenge to the

church's theology meant the government would be deployed to carry out punishment. So, if the Church condemned a heretic, it turned the person over to the state to carry out punishment.

By 1518, word about the Theses reached Rome. Pope Leo X asked Cardinal Thomas Cajetan to meet with Luther in Augsburg to bring him back in line. Luther explained his understanding of justification by grace through faith as revealed in Scripture. Cajetan demanded he recant. Luther refused. Cajetan warned Luther that if he insisted on maintaining his position he'd be imprisoned and deported to Rome.

Luther held fast to his convictions. He was then forced to meet with the Roman priest Johann Eck in Leipzig. They discussed purgatory and *indulgentiam*. Luther argued that the Bible is the only foundation for doctrine, and neither purgatory nor indulgences are ever mentioned or even implied in Scripture. When Eck demanded that Luther recant, he refused again. As a result, Pope Leo X issued a papal bull that threatened excommunication unless Luther recanted 41 sentences in his 95 Theses. But, a defiant Luther burned the bull in public on December 10, 1520. The Pope excommunicated Luther. On January 3, 1521, Luther was officially named as a heretic and turned over for punishment by the Holy Roman Empire.

Emperor Charles V convened a diet in the city of Worms to consider Luther's case in which Luther defended his teachings before the emperor, concluding with his famous statement, "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason, I am bound by the Scriptures, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me." On May 25, 1521, the emperor presented the Edict of Worms declaring Luther an outlaw. His literature was banned. He was ordered to be executed as a heretic. It was also a crime for anyone to give Luther food or shelter and authorized anyone to kill him without the danger of prosecution.

How did he survive such a hostile environment when the both church and state demanded his execution? Simply, it's because Frederick III, the

elector of Saxony, refused to turn Luther over to the authorities. He wanted him to return home safely. Frederick arranged to “kidnap” Luther to be carried off for his protection at Wartburg Castle.

But, a more complex answer to Luther’s survival is that by the middle of 1521, Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses had been translated into several languages, making Luther a hugely popular figure. Guttenberg’s printing press had been invented some 60 years prior to the Ninety-Five Theses making it possible for Luther’s hundreds of pamphlets and books and the majority of his works to be printed in common German. The people loved it! Anything he wrote was produced and scooped up by the thousands. Even though Rome also produced pamphlets denouncing Luther, very few people bought them. Even if Rome banned Luther’s publications, the people bought them and shared them anyway. Luther’s German translation of the New and Old Testaments in 1522 and 1534, respectively, quickly became a popular translation many commoners could afford.

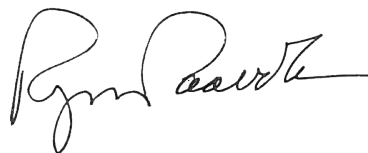
His numerous writings re-stated the truth that God doesn’t hate sinners; He loves us. He offers a salvific plan to save mankind from their sins and bring them back to a loving relationship with Him. God forgives us our sins for the sake of Christ’s perfect sacrifice, making us acceptable to God. Luther declared, “Christ died for me. He made His righteousness mine, and made my sin his own; and if He made my sin His own, then I do not have it, and I am free.” This truth is called “justification by grace alone, by faith alone, revealed in Scripture alone.”

For Luther’s Reformation, he penned these words: “We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us; The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not of him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, One little word shall fell him.”

As I re-read Martin Luther’s Theses, Theses 62 is a great summary of what Luther believed that prompted him to willingly risk his life. It states, “The true treasure of the church is the most holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.” It seems God chose Luther to reach Germany, Europe, and eventually the world with the truth that, “It is by grace we are saved, through faith—and this is

not from ourselves, it is the gift of God—not by *indulgentium*, so that no one can boast.” The truth that finally brought Luther peace with God is still entrusted to us today to stand on the centrality of Scripture that makes one wise to salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. May God preserve us.

Your servant in Christ Jesus,
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



Rev. Dr. Leroy Leach Serving at St. Matthew & Peace Lutheran

Rev. Dr. Leroy Leach was installed as **Assistant Pastor at St. Matthew** (Conway, AR) on Sunday, August 16. He serves St. Matthew on an as-needed basis and is **also currently serving as the vacancy pastor at Peace Lutheran** in Conway.

Pictured from left to right are Vicar Jacon Hancock (Peace, Conway; Rev. Kory Janneke (St. Matthew); Rev. Dr. Leach; and Rev. Kevin Conger (District Second Vice President and officiant).



Pastors' Wives Gather for Fun & Fellowship

The Mid-South District's 2026 Pastors' Wives Retreat welcomed 30 women to St. Columba Retreat Center in Bartlett, TN September 11-13. What a great

gathering it was! Speaker and author, Deb Burma joined and led the retreat's Bible studies and discussions centered around the theme "Sip & Savor: Receiving God's Overflowing Gifts." Great fellowship took place at the firepit with s'mores and during a special Saturday night activity that included a wine tasting of selections from across the Mid-South District and painting wine glasses. The weekend closed Sunday morning with worship before the ladies headed home. Attendance at this year's retreat was the best ever—and we hope to host even more ladies next year!



AUGSBURG FALL FEST

OCTOBER 10, 2026

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Zion Lutheran Church, 93 Augsburg Rd, London

German Food, Silent Auction, Entertainment,
Dunking Booth, Bingo, Cake Walk,
'Anything with Wheels' Show and Shine,
Craft & Educational Booths, Petting Zoo,
Daisy BB Gun Shoot, Charitable Drawing
FREE KIDS' GAMES

All proceeds will go to the River Valley Christian Clinic
and the Augsburg Food Pantry.

Learn More at
Facebook.com/AugsburgFallFest

Get Ready for CARE-Van 2026!

The Mid-South District's fall 2026 CARE-Van dates will be November 6-7. Many congregations in our district are long-time participants in CARE-Van projects, which aid the outreach efforts of Lutheran World Relief. If your congregation plans to participate in CARE-Van this fall, please mark your calendar. Information was recently mailed to all previously participating congregations, with details available on the district website.

In 2025, Mid-South Congregations Collected...

- 996 Handmade Quilts • 1,425 Personal Care Kits
- 101 Fabric Kits • 535 School Kits • 75 Baby Care Kits
- \$5,488 for Shipping Costs



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

If your congregation has not participated in CARE-Van in the past, but you would like to know more about the program, please contact the Mid-South District's CARE-Van coordinator, Diane Reimold, at dianereimold@hotmail.com.

Mid-South District Kicks-Off 60th Celebration Banquets!

In thanksgiving for its 60th Anniversary, the Mid-South District is blessed to partner with congregations across the District to host a number of Celebration Banquets this fall—the first of which took place in late September in Arkansas. The congregations of Holy Trinity Lutheran in Rogers, First Lutheran in Fort Smith, and Redeemer Lutheran in Mountain Home graciously hosted the events on September 27, 28 and 29. The final Arkansas banquet is at Hope Lutheran in Jacksonville on October 1. Together, the first three banquets gathered about 250 members from the hosting and surrounding congregations for fellowship, a delicious meal, reflection on the District's 60-year ministry history, and an opportunity to support that work as outlined in the "Blueprint for Ministry." The Mid-South District is so grateful to the hosting congregations and all who have attended these special gatherings. What a wonderful way to celebrate as a faith family! We look forward to four additional banquets for the central and eastern side of the District in November and December.

Sept. 27
Holy Trinity Lutheran
Rogers, AR



Sept. 28
First Lutheran
Fort Smith, AR



Sept. 29
Redeemer Lutheran
Mountain Home, AR



Celebrating Together

60 YEARS OF MINISTRY BLESSINGS!

Join Us for the Banquet in
KNOXVILLE

The next Mid-South District 60th Celebration Banquet will be hosted by **Grace Lutheran Church in Knoxville, TN on Sunday, November 8, from 5-7:15 PM.** There is no cost to attend the 60th Celebration Banquet, which will include hors d'oeuvres with fellowship time, dinner, District greetings, an update on the Blueprint for Ministry, an inspiring local ministry impact story, an opportunity to financially support District ministry, and a special keepsake to commemorate the District's 60th anniversary. Reserve your seats for this special celebration at:

<https://midsouthdistrictlcms.regfox.com/msd60thbanquetknox>



Fall Pastors Conference October 11-14

The Mid-South District looks forward to welcoming attendees and guests to the 2026 Fall Pastors Conference at Pickwick Landing State Park in Counce, TN. Registration for the conference and complete event details are available on the District website. If you haven't registered yet, it's time, [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the online registration page.

Faith Lutheran Church Celebrates 50 years!



On September 20th, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Faith Lutheran Church in Bentonville, Arkansas. Pastor Schmidt said it best in his morning's sermon.

"We come, vulnerable and humble, knowing that we do not deserve anything from our Lord, but by His grace He seeks us. It is overwhelming to see what Jesus was willing to do so that we, who were lost, are now found. Today you can walk confidently out those doors knowing that Jesus has met you here. Confident that every sin that weighs you down, Jesus forgives today. Where else can you do that? This is what we have been handed down by those who had the foresight and saw the need for a Lutheran congregation in Bentonville 50 years ago."

To mark the occasion, we had a congregational lunch and enjoyed ice cream from a local small business. There were bounce houses for the kids and a few intense rounds of bocce ball. We heard from a few members who have been part of the church for many years, and we had a wonderful time celebrating.

A CELEBRATION OF THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT'S
60TH ANNIVERSARY

OKTOBERFEST



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026
11 AM - 3 PM

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Memphis
6325 Raleigh Lagrange Road • Memphis TN 38134

GERMAN FOOD FAVORITES & BEER from GHOST RIVER BREWERY
OOMPAH MUSIC • LIVE AUCTION of THEMED BASKETS*
BALLOON ARTIST • BOUNCE HOUSE • FACE PAINTING

** Live Auction Proceeds Benefit Neighborhood Christian Centers, Inc. of Memphis*

\$10 ADULTS (13 & UP)
*Includes German meal
& 2 craft beers/beverages*

\$5 KIDS 4-12
*Includes meal & beverage
FREE admission under age 4*

CLICK
FOR TICKETS!



Oktoberfest CLASSIC 2026

1st Corinthians 1:23

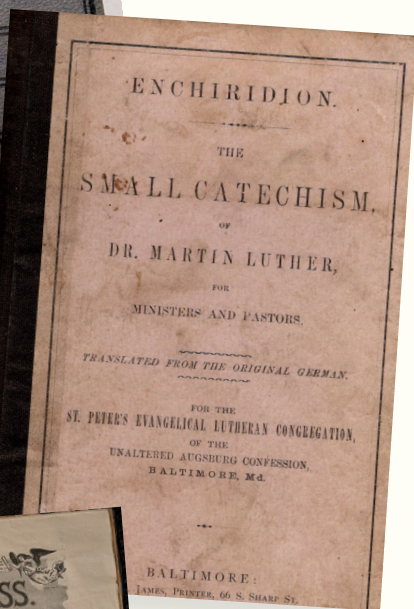
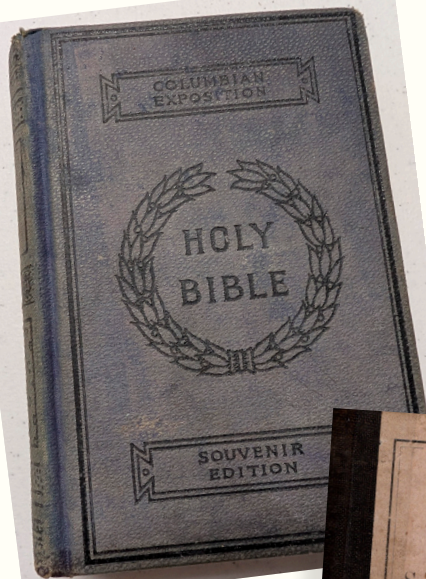
*Supporting families in need
through the Hope Lutheran Church Family Life Pantry.*

Don't Miss Hope Lutheran's OKTOBERFEST CLASSIC Golf Scramble

Hope Lutheran Church in Batesville, AR invites you to be a part of their OKTOBERFEST CLASSIC Golf Scramble on **Friday, October 2** at The Course at Eagle Mountain in Batesville. The event will raise funds for Hope's growing Family Life Pantry ministry. There are several ways to get involved, from team entries to formal sponsorships and high-impact in-kind donations. Player entry is \$600/team or \$150/individual. Sponsorships range from \$500 "Hole Sponsorships" to \$5,000 "Ace Sponsorships." The event will also feature "Prost" Mulligans for players and a "Fill the Stein" donation challenge to drive further support for the Family Life Pantry on the course. **For details and registration information, see the event's page on the Mid-South District website:** <https://mid-southlcms.org/oktoberfest-classic/>



The cornerstone had a cavity where a copper box was stored. It contains many items from 1896.



Salem Lutheran Celebrates 150th Anniversary

Salem Lutheran has celebrated their 150 years with a series of events and their final celebration is on **October 4. Everyone is invited to attend this special day located at 1800 W. Emma Avenue, Springdale, Ark.**

They recently discovered the cornerstone of their old church which was built in 1896. It has been opened and the contents will also be on display.

A few items contained in the Time Capsule are

- 3 1896 pennies
- Holy Bible – published 1893 by American Bible Society
- The Small Catechism by Dr. Martin Luther for Ministers and Pastors. – 1879
- The Lutheran Witness – dated April 21, 1896 (official magazine of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) originally founded in 1882. It has been in continuous publication ever since.)

The box was apparently opened at some point and these 2 items were added:

- Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church 75th Anniversary History Book – 1951
- A list of the members of Salem as of July 10, 1952.

Their October 4 celebration will have a combined congregational bilingual worship service in the Salem sanctuary at 10 a.m., followed by a picnic style meal in the Family Life Center, and an outdoor carnival with games, live music and goodies for the entire family.





Lutheran Women
in Mission

LWML SUNDAY IS OCTOBER 4

This special Sunday celebrates the LWML and is an opportunity to share and celebrate the work of Lutheran Women in Missions. Learn more and download materials here: <https://www.lwml.org/lwml-sunday>



New Stained Glass

St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Conway, AR dedicated a new stained glass window in its chancel on Sunday, August 23. The window was designed by St. Matthew member, Scott Roper, and created by Soos Glass of Maumelle, AR. It weaves together several sacramental and trinitarian symbols and fills the nave with beautiful color and light.



75th Church Anniversary

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church



Sunday, November 1, 2026



822 Belvoir Ave., East Ridge, TN 37412



One Worship Service at 10:00 AM
Celebration Following the Service



Venue 1921
1529 Tombras Ave., East Ridge, TN 37412



Sponsor a Table: \$220
Sponsor a Meal: \$20



RSVP: office@gslcflock.org

2027 LCMS LIFE CONFERENCE FEB. 26-27, 2027



The 2027 LCMS Life Ministry Conference, which will be held online and feature video presentations on life issues for the strengthening and support of lay members and church workers as they advocate, educate and share the truth of God's Word, the sanctity of life at all ages, and Christ's mercy for all people.

Registration for the conference is free, although attendees may choose to purchase extended

access to the library of presentations for on-demand viewing. Several sessions conducted in Spanish will be included.

Congregations are encouraged to host watch parties during the conference to facilitate further discussion of the presentations.

More information [CLICK HERE](#).



*Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way you will fulfill
the law of Christ.*

— Galatians 6:2 —

Treasurers' Workshops

Mid-South District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

REGISTER ONLINE

Congregational treasurers the Mid-South District's **2027 Treasurer's Workshop dates have been set—and registration is now open!** New for 2027, the workshop topic will be Understanding Restricted, Unrestricted and Endowment Funds, presented by Mr. Charlie Rhodes, Executive Director of Synod Accounting (Retired) and Angela Fowler, the District's Executive Director for Business & Finance.

The session will provide church leaders, treasurers, and finance committees with a practical understanding of the differences between unrestricted funds, restricted funds, and endowment funds. Participants will learn how donor intent and governing documents affect the use of funds, how each type of fund should be properly tracked and accounted for, and the importance of maintaining clear documentation and internal controls.

The workshop will also address common challenges such as accidentally using restricted funds for unintended purposes, properly recording donor-restricted gifts, managing endowment principal and earnings, and communicating financial information transparently to church leadership and donors.

For additional information/questions Angela Fowler
E-mail afowler@mid-southlcms.com
Telephone 866-373-1343, ext. 3105

REGISTER NOW

Dates and Locations

January 9, 2027 — Knoxville, TN

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch (provided)
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Session 2
Grace Lutheran Church
9076 Middlebrook Pike
Knoxville, TN

January 16, 2027 — Nashville, TN

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch (provided)
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Session 2
Our Savior Lutheran Church
5110 Franklin Pike
Nashville, TN

January 23, 2027 — Springdale, AR

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch (provided)
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Session 2
Salem Lutheran Ministries
1800 W. Emma Ave.
Springdale, AR

January 30, 2027 — Cordova, TN

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch (provided)
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Session 2
Mid-South District Office
1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, TN

February 6, 2027 — Jacksonville, AR

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Session 1
11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch (provided)
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Session 2
Hope Lutheran Church
1904 McArthur Blvd.
Jacksonville, AR

CHURCH ROOFS FOR TANZANIA... HOW CAN WE HELP OUR SISTER CONGREGATIONS?



A Growing Diocese with Urgent Building Needs

The Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania has experienced tremendous growth. **These newly formed congregations have already poured foundations, made bricks, and built church walls as a labor of love from their own members.** Having a church building is very important to them and they show their eagerness by their labor. Their next challenge is raising the money needed to purchase wood and steel sheets for roofs. Because many of these church plants are in rural areas and are served primarily by subsistence farmers, financial resources are limited.

Growth Since 2012

When SELVD was established in December 2012, it included 14,371 members, 5 districts, 37 congregations, and 70 preaching stations. By 2026, it had grown to more than 15 districts, 49,700 members, 108 congregations, and 324 preaching stations. **Despite this growth, 42 percent of SELVD preaching stations still do not have a church roof. While congregations continue raising funds for roofing materials, many still gather for worship without protection from the weather.**



How can we help?

Raising funds for a church is a wonderful project for a Sunday School class, youth group or women/men/ senior group. Maybe a Thrivent Action Team project. You can focus on one church and extend the love of Christ to our brothers and sisters. **Can you imagine walking to church each Sunday to worship in a church with no roof? We can because we have personally witnessed this on our mission trips.**

Ways to donate

Send your charitable donation check marked "Tanzania Roofs" to: Mid-South District LCMS 1675 Wynne Road Cordova, TN 38016 or go the website, <https://www.mid-southlcms.org>. Click on the give now button on the top right on the front page. Scroll down to Tanzania and put in the amount you want to donate and write Tanzania roofs in the purpose box.



Protecting What Comes From God

Stewardship [noun]: recognizing that God owns everything and that we are chosen managers, trusted to carefully and responsibly care for what He has placed in our hands.

Stewardship is a commitment Trinity HOPE takes extremely seriously. God continues to bless this ministry greatly, and we never forget that those blessings come with great responsibility. Jesus reminds us in Luke 12:48, **“Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required.”**

Over the past six months, Trinity HOPE has added feeding programs in 68 additional Christian schools. Thanks be to God! Today, we are serving approximately 80,000 meals every school day, more than 1.5 million meals each month. With that growth comes increased giving, increased purchasing, and an even greater responsibility to consider the scale for a moment. Each month, Trinity HOPE purchases approximately 300,000 pounds of rice and 200,000 pounds of corn, along with beans, oil, seasonings, and other supplies needed to feed children throughout Haiti. When we are purchasing food at that volume, even small improvements in pricing and accountability matter. Every penny we can protect is a penny that can help put food into the stomach of a hungry child.

That is why, as Trinity HOPE grows, our systems of accountability must grow with us.

Beginning this school year, we are strengthening our operations in Haiti with National Purchasing Agents who will manage a new competitive bidding process for food purchases, as well as eight Internal Auditors strategically located throughout the country. These auditors will make unannounced visits to schools and vendors, providing another layer of accountability and helping ensure that food, funds, and program resources are being used as intended.

And this ministry reaches beyond the children we feed. Trinity HOPE operates in the United



States with only two full time and two part time American employees, while employing 55 Haitian staff members. In addition, more than 600 Haitian cooks and food vendors earn income through the feeding program. We have a responsibility not only to the donors who entrust their gifts to Trinity HOPE, but also to the hundreds of Haitian families whose livelihoods are connected to this ministry.

Our expectation is that competitive purchasing will generate enough savings to more than cover the additional accountability staff and help lower our overall cost per meal. In other words, stronger stewardship does not simply protect the ministry. It helps us feed more children with the resources God provides.

We give God thanks for every resource He has entrusted to Trinity HOPE and for each person who makes this work possible. As He allows the ministry to grow, we remain committed to growing responsibly, protecting what He provides, and using it faithfully for His purposes.

Thanks be to God that we get to serve Him together.



Learn more at www.Trinityhope.org

Prayer Summary, October 2026

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 October.

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. TOM SAYRE (Emeritus, St. John's, FL)
REV. ALBERT EICHELBERGER (Emeritus, Knoxville, TN)
REV. RICHARD MAYER (Messiah Lutheran Church, Peas Ridge, AR)
REV. STEWART MARSHALL (Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff, AR)
REV. MICHAEL CROOM (Candidate, Bartlett, TN)
MRS. NANCY CALLIES (wife of Rev. David Callies, Emeritus, Former District President MDS)
MRS. BERNADINE HAYDON (wife of Rev. Kenneth Haydon, Emeritus, Eureka Springs, AR)
MRS. FLORENCE EICHELBERGER (wife of Rev. Albert Eichelberger, Knoxville, TN)
MRS. NORMA MOORE (wife of Rev. Tom Moore, Emeritus, Cordova, TN)
MS. STEPHANIE ELSEROAD (daughter of Rev. Rich Elseroad (EM) Knoxville, TN)
MR. ROBERT NERGER (Former Mid-South District Board of Directors, Wartburg, TN)
MR. JEREMY HOWE (Huntsville, AL)
MRS. JODICE BELISLE (wife to Rev. Russell Belisle, Cross of Calvary Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN)
FRANK ADCOCK (father of Renae McElwain, Mid-South District Office)

Our deepest sympathies to the Rev. Andrew Toopes and family on the loss of his sister, Beth Smallbeck (Las Vegas, NV) who passed away June 9, 2026. During her time as a member in the Mid-South District, Ms. Smallbeck served as a DCE to First Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR; and Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Andre Frandle**, Chaplain US Army Reserve, Clarksville, TN accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Stuttgart, AR. Installation scheduled for November 1, 2026.*

Rev. David Reedy, Pastor to Immanuel & Trinity Lutheran Churches, Cooperas, TX accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Peace Lutheran Church, Cherokee Village, AR. Installation scheduled for November 14, 2026.*

PENDING: **Rev. Gregory Bauch**, Pastor to Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, TN received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Oklahoma City, OK.*

Rev. Gerald Heiencke, Pastor to the dual parish Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR & Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fairhaven, MN.*

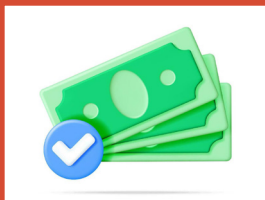
DECLINED: **Rev. Chase Lefort**, Pastor to Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN returned the Call to serve as *Pastor to Trinity Lutheran Church, Clinton, IA.*

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN – Senior Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN – Pastor

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Pending update for the upcoming academic year.



Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 8/31/2026 (8 Months)

Anticipated Amount (66.67% of budget).....\$1,100,081
Actual Receipts1,075,433
Over (under)
anticipated amount (\$24,648)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (8 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World
Missions..... \$305,963
Allocated to Tanzania 16,667
Retained for District Mission/
Ministry Support
(70% of receipts) 752,803
Total Receipts \$1,075,433

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (8 Months)

Actual Receipts as
of 8/31/2026 \$1,075,433
Actual Receipts as
of 8/31/2025 \$1,057,928
Over (under) prior
year receipts \$17,505

Share your news with us!

Encourager Topics in 2026

We invite you to share your stories with us! Please email stories by the 20th of the month to Rhonda at webmaster.contact@mid-southlcms.com.

Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2026:

- November — *Thankful Hearts*
- December — *Highlights of 2026*

Lutheran Witness Supplement

The monthly deadline is the 7th, 2 months prior to production. Please email your original high resolution digital photos (.pdf or .jpg files only) and a short paragraph to *The Lutheran Witness* Supplement editor, Judy Otto at lw.contact@mid-southlcms.com or by calling 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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