

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | November 2020

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



We approach the season of Thanksgiving in 2020 with a gigantic question, “Can we find real reasons for celebrating Thanksgiving this year?” Of course we can! This year has been like a script from a Sci-Fi movie where a world is battling against an invasion of an unseen alien. Yet, in retrospect, 2020 has given us plenty of things for which we are thankful. You’re reading this, you’re able to connect with loved ones, you’re able to attend worship, there’s food on the table, and thousands of other things that prove God’s continue provision for all we need.

Politicians are accusing their opponents of corruption, malfeasance, ineffectiveness, and lying about their record. Nowhere in the political ads (as much as I avoid them, they still appear!) have I seen anyone thankful for the great country we live in and

our ability to worship God in a way we choose.

But unlike a secular world’s “Thanksgiving,” where gathering with family, carving turkey, and watching six back-to-back football games, Christians always understand thanks-giving is our privilege for the relationship God carved for us for our life in His grace and provision. Christians have been celebrating thanksgivings for divine provision and rescue for centuries. But, the history of thanks-giving to God goes far beyond the Christian era. Holy Scripture notes a record of thanks-giving beginning with Noah’s thanks-giving after the worldwide flood and when the Israelites gave thanks after God delivered them through the Red Sea on dry ground, rescuing them from the Egyptians, just to mention a couple. The Old Testament is filled with examples of thanks-giving.

If we think about it, St Paul begins most of his letters to congregations with thanks-giving to God. Yet, like most of the annual events associated with our relationship with God, a secular world pictures our Thanksgiving as the first time people came together to offer thanks for one reason or another. Several years

ago, there was an article in a newspaper that claimed most of what we understand about American Thanksgiving is a myth. As nice as the image of pilgrims sharing their corn, pumpkins, and turkeys with the indigenous people, it is unlikely most of that happened the way the artists portray.

The article included information about the first thanks-giving event on American soil occurred over sixty years before the pilgrims came to the Jamestown colony. In 1565, the Spanish explorer, Pedro Menendez de Aviles celebrated thanks-giving in St. Augustine, Florida. His celebration was Spanish, not American. By the same token, the pilgrims were not "American," since they were still subjects of England and paid their allegiance to the king of England. The American "Thanksgiving" wasn't "American" since the pilgrims were not disloyal to England. The American Revolution was still over 150 years away. The pilgrim's colonization certainly had identified religious implications, but they were still subject to the British crown.

What makes the American Thanksgiving our thanks-giving? The first official thanks-giving proclamation was from President George Washington in 1789. But, then President Abraham Lincoln made an official declaration of the American Thanksgiving in the Nineteenth Century around the time of the war between the states. Even in my short time of living in Canada, Thanksgiving was introduced to my family in the history of a day celebrated

much earlier than our November festivals. Canadians put on "all the fixin's" that rivaled the biggest feasts around because of a national thanks-giving introduced by Martin Frobisher, an English explorer, in 1578.

Who was first? It doesn't really matter if we understand what thanks-giving is all supposed to be about in the first place. St Paul's writes to the Corinthians, *"I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge"* (I Corinthians 1:4-5). Thanksgiving is focused on giving thanks to the Giver. Thanksgiving is celebrated reverently by the receivers in a way that gives a foundation for our Christian understanding of real thanks-giving. We know Who gives us all things.

In other words, the earliest records of "American" thanks-giving – whether secular or religious – were never focused on feasting and watching the Detroit Lions getting thumped in another Thanksgiving Day football game. The priests with the Spanish explorer, de Aviles said mass for the sailors and troops in St Augustine in 1565. The pilgrims thanks-giving in the Jamestown colony consisted of a day of prayer and worship.

The Old Testament Scripture writers gave us vivid pictures of the eyes of the faithful who knew their provision was given by a gracious God who promised them a Savior. True thanks-giving for Christians goes back in recorded history thousands of

years ago. Thanks-giving brings our eyes to the cross of the promised Messiah – Christ Jesus. Thanks-giving should remind us of a gracious and loving heavenly Father. For God has prepared for us an unending feast of victory in His glorious and eternal Kingdom.

Compared to those devout thanksgivings of long ago what we call Thanksgiving bears very little resemblance to the faithful Christian worship of those who first gave thanks here. It doesn't really matter who gave thanks-giving first, or what they ate or what they shared with their neighbors. However, it does matter if we are uncertain to Whom we are thanking. Our thanks-giving is our response to what God has and continues to give to us out of His fatherly love. *"Let us give thanks to the Lord, for He is good and His mercies endure forever."* (Psalm 107:1)

Have a blessed and meaningful Thanksgiving for all things He continues to shower on us in His great grace and mercy.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



The Installation of Rev. Donald Welmer at First Lutheran Church (Chattanooga)



The installation of The Rev. Donald Welmer as Pastor at First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga took place on Sunday, October 4, 2020. Present for the Installation are [Pictured (L-R)] Rev. Mark Rhoads, Rev. Jim Watson, Rev. Barry Hildebrandt, Rev. Clifford Herd, President Roger Paavola, Rev. Donald Welmer, Rev. Gil Pingel, Rev. Josh Woodrow, Rev. Adam Salinas, Rev. Timothy Matthew, and Rev. Chris Sheets.



Thankful For Our Faithful Supporters

Avilla Christian Academy (a mission and ministry of Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Arkansas) is very thankful to our faithful supporters! Our school is blessed by the support of prayers and donations of so many. From donations, golf tournaments and fish fry events to sharing your time and talents with some of the classes-- thank you. Some of our younger classes wanted to say "Thank You" to a few of those special folks in a special way.

Avilla Christian Academy currently has classes PreK-12th and is accredited with NLSA (National Lutheran School Accreditation) and ANSAA (Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association). Mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ who will be equipped spiritually, socially and academically to further God's kingdom in this World.





Holy Communion and More

Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

It was wonderful to be able to receive Holy Communion in our new church building on October 4, 2020 and to see firsthand all the progress. The idea to write Bible verses, prayers, and blessings on the studs came from Anne GlenSherrill. Dorothy Kritsch will commemorate the event with photos in our church album so that we have a historical record to share with future members. Thank you to Kevin & Jeff for building the temporary steps, and to Karen for sweeping the entire building so that it was ready for communion.

Although we don't have a definite date for completion, we are hoping that we will be able to use the church building by the end of this year. A Dedication Service will be scheduled at a later date.



Thanksgiving

Written by Pastor John Gierke

T Time to eat!
H Hands that are washed with HOPE!
A Ample satisfied smiles
N New friends and family in Christ at school
K Kitchens preparing daily meals
S Smiles, did I mention smiles that are ample?
G Grins, did I mention smiles and grins?
I Impacted and improved children's lives
V Victory over hunger
I Inspiring smiles and brightened eyes
N New learning about Jesus and HOPE each day
G Giving Glory and ThanksGiving to the Holy Trinity and His people of Trinity HOPE!



For this, and so much more, I give thanks, as I remember being with the school children. Trinity HOPE gives THANKSGIVING to God for all your prayers and donations which bring Thanksgiving and renewed HOPE to the children and their families in Haiti. Close your eyes - can you see the smiles of the children? Hold your hands to your ears - can you hear the praises of Thanksgiving being sung before mealtime? Open your hands and lift them up in praise to our gracious, generous God and Savior!



A note from Madagascar

Dear Brother Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,

The Lord be with you!

We are very grateful and indebted of love to Jesus Christ, the Teacher and the Head of the Church, and to you all who have accepted to be the heart and the hands of Jesus Christ to feed us and to take care of our LIME. What you have done points to the miraculous multiplication of the five loaves and of two fishes done by Jesus Christ in the desert.

We have only one word from the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love. That is THANK YOU ALL. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. MAY JESUS CHRIST, THE LOVE MADE FLESH, REWARD YOU ALL ONE HUNDRED TIMES MORE!

Your brother across the ocean, Joseph.

We all thank you and thank you very, very much. Praise be to Jesus Christ!



Mother (member of our staff) with her children

Ed. note: Above is an email from Rev. Dr. Joseph Randrianasolo of the Lutheran Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME) in Madagascar.

If you wish to help, please send donations directly to the District or give online via the District website. Please mark all donations for "LIME". The total amount sent to LIME is \$7,100.



LIME staff and Rev. Dr. Joseph Randrianasolo



Treasurers' Workshops

Mid-South District
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

Register Online Now

Please mark your calendar to attend one of the Mid-South District Workshops. The Presenter for the Treasurer's workbook sessions will be Mr. Charlie Rhodes, Executive Director of Synod Accounting (Retired). Angela Fowler will be the presenter for a brief afternoon session covering an overview of the new CPS Compensation Decision Tool as well as any QuickBooks issues or questions.

Please respond by December 31, 2020, if possible

The morning session will be devoted to updates in the Treasurers' Manual (volume 1) with time reserved for specific questions and answers. It would be helpful for you to have a copy of the manual with you, either the CD, hard copy or online version. The afternoon session will focus on the CPS Compensation Decision Tool, how to use as well as interpreting the results along with QuickBooks issues and questions. Please email Angela with specific items that you would like for her to address regarding QuickBooks.

The Treasurers' Manual can be found on the LCMS website.

For additional information and to register

[Register Online Now](#)

Contact Angela Fowler by e-mail afowler@mid-southlcms.com or telephone (866-373-1343)

Dates and Locations

January 2, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Treasurer's Manual – Volume 1

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided)

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. CPS Compensation Decision Tool/QuickBooks

Grace Lutheran Church, 9076 Middlebrook Pike
Knoxville, TN

January 9, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Treasurer's Manual – Volume 1

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided)

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CPS Compensation Decision Tool/QuickBooks

Grace Lutheran Church, 5124 Hillcrest Avenue
Little Rock, AR

January 16, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Treasurer's Manual – Volume 1

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided)

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CPS Compensation Decision Tool/QuickBooks

St. John Lutheran Church, 500 N. Cumberland Avenue
Russellville, AR

January 23, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Treasurer's Manual – Volume 1

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided)

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CPS Compensation Decision Tool/QuickBook

Mid-South District Office, 1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, TN

January 30, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Treasurer's Manual – Volume 1

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided)

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CPS Compensation Decision Tool/QuickBook

Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5110 Franklin Road
Nashville, TN

Mid-South District 2020 CARE-VAN

November 6-7, 2020

Locations and Coordinators



Loading Friday and Saturday, November 6-7, 2020
 Friday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
(time for drop-off donations may change according to church)

Call church to verify the time

you will be bringing your LWR items so someone will be there to help you.

Please package boxes properly. Thank you.

Arkansas

CITY	Location for YRC Freight	Contact Person	Pastor of Church
Fort Smith, AR	First Lutheran School 2407 Massard Road Fort Smith, AR 72901	Mr. Lou Fellwock 1-479-650-5886	Rev. John Merrill 1-479-785-2886 (church) jfmerrill@gmail.com
Little Rock, AR	Grace Lutheran Church 5124 Hillcrest Little Rock, AR 72205	Rev. Kent Schaaf 1-501-663-3631 (church)	Rev. Kent Schaaf 1-501-663-3631 (church)
Springdale, AR	Salem Lutheran Ministries 1800 West Emma Avenue Springdale, AR 72762-3905 Only Saturday - Nov. 7 (9a.m.-12p.m.)	Ms. Darlene Diercouff 1-479-751-9500 (church) ddiercouff@aol.com	Rev. Mark Krause 1-479-751-9500 (church) 1-479-841-4898 (cell) mekrause56@gmail.com

Tennessee

CITY	Location for YRC Freight	Contact Person	Pastor of Church
Chattanooga, TN	Cross of Christ Lutheran Church 3204 Hixon Pike Chattanooga, TN 37415 Only Friday, Nov. 6 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)	Ms. Eunice Timm 1-423-624-2588 4betimm@epbfi.com	Rev. Barry Hildebrandt 1-423-877-7447 (church) 1-423-255-4746 (cell) church@cocluth.com
Nashville, TN	Our Savior Lutheran Church 5110 Franklin Pike Nashville, TN 37220-1814	Mr. Kenneth Priest 1-615-969-6225 kapslp10@comcast.net	Rev. Lane Reuter 1-615-833-1500 (church) osloffice1@gmail.com
Knoxville, TN	Christus Victor Lutheran Church 4110 Central Avenue Pike Knoxville, TN 37912-0312	Ms. Carol Rauch 1-865-687-6622 (church) carolrauch44@gmail.com	Rev. William Ondracka 1-865-687-6622 (church) 1-734-368-1703 pastorbill@christusvictorknoxville.org
Memphis, TN	Immanuel Lutheran Church 6325 Raleigh LaGrange Road Memphis, TN 38134-6907	Ms. Diane Reimold 1-901-679-0626 dianereimold@hotmail.com	Rev. Greg Prauner 1-901-373-4486 (church) gprauner@immanuelmemphis.org

Prayer Summary, October 2020

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 2020.

PRAYER CONCERNS

REV. RONALD HALAMKA (Waxahachie, TX)
MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)
REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MRS. SUSAN JONES (Volunteer, Mid-South District Office)
MRS. NANCY LEE (Retiree, Mid-South District Office)
REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Chaplain*U.S. Army through the Board of International Missions*Our Savior, Searcy, AR).

We pray for all affected worldwide by the Coronavirus as we continue to navigate within this ever changing pandemic.

Our deepest sympathies to:
THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF REV. DAVID RUBKE,
Emeritus, (Tullahoma,TN) who recently passed away.

THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF DEACON THOMAS KYNER (Rogersville,TN) who recently passed away.

CALL UPDATE ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Donald Welmer**, Associate Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church, Plano, TX accepted the Call to serve as **Pastor to First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN. *Installation was October 4, 2020.**

Rev. Dan Hauser, Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR, accepted the Call to serve as **Pastor to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, IN.**

DECLINED: **Rev. Jonathan Beyer**, Pastor, First Lutheran Church, Hot Springs, AR, returned the Call to serve as **Pastor to Redeemer Lutheran Church, Shawnee, OK.**

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR – Pastor

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

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

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 9/30/2020 (9 Months)

Anticipated Amount (75% of budget) \$1,154,228
Actual Receipts..... 1,134,291
Over (under) anticipated amount (\$19,937)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (9 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions \$321,537
Allocated to Tanzania 18,750
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)..... 794,004
Total Receipts \$1,134,291

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (9 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 9/30/2020 \$1,134,291
Actual Receipts as of 9/30/2019..... \$1,157,788
Over (under) prior year receipts (\$23,497)

Encourager Topics in 2020

We invite you to share your stories with us please email Highlights of 2020* by **November 20, 2020** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com

**Please note due to Christmas January 2021 there will be an early deadline of December 15. School week and looking ahead to 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

Staff

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,
President

Angela Fowler, *Executive Director for Business & Finance*

Paul Reaves, *Executive Director for Development & LCEF Vice President*

Allen Piepenbrink, *Executive Director for Schools and Early Childhood*

Missy Washburn,
Administrative Assistant to the District President

Renae McElwain,
Communications & Marketing Specialist

Julie Tyler, *Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

Contact the Mid-South District

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ON FACEBOOK -
"Mid-South-LCMS"

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"@midsouthLCMS"