

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | November 2021



Give Thanks to the Lord of the Harvest

While driving through our District recently, I watched thousands of acres of rice, corn, soybeans, and cotton being harvested. The harvest is going full bore. Monstrous combines gobbled up hundreds of acres of golden corn, wheat, and rice. Huge semi-trucks and tractors dot the edge of the endless fields, waiting to carry the fruits of the harvest away. Gigantic pink and yellow rolls dot the landscape where an abundant harvest of cotton has been granted.

Another sight that fills the skies is a slender white column of smoke that can be seen for miles along the flat prairie landscape. The farmers burn

the straw from the harvested fields. The demand for straw is minimal – not worth enough to bother taking off the field. Just like sentinels watching over the fields, the white pillars of smoke rise above the vast fields, signaling another completed and successful harvest.

But, voluntary burning is a recent development in the North American prairie farming. Today's farmers have only a few animals, if any. In the past, the farmers needed the straw for bedding for animals. A pillar of smoke in the centuries past meant something quite different - it meant there was a prairie fire that was burning out of control.

The story of one such fire is told, when the autumn grass lands were dry, and how wildfires would rip through the prairies, consuming all the crops, the grasses and even the humus in the soil within minutes. Hundreds of acres were consumed in minutes. In late 1871, a farmer saw an ominous cloud of white racing toward him and his family... on an otherwise crystal-clear day. The hot, strong Fall winds carried the smell of smoke into his nostrils, making his eyes turn toward the West where a cloud of smoke covered the entire horizon.

He knew wildfires were fast...too fast to outrun with a team of horses. He knew the fires could sweep over him, his family, and farm in a matter of seconds, snuffing out every living thing. Panic would have normally filled a man's heart. There seemed to be no place to turn or to run. Gathering all his livestock, his family, and everything they might need for a few days, the farmer stood at the western edge of his own fields and lit a match. The match caused the grass to burst into flames, quickly spreading toward the house and barn, spreading around all his fields, crops, trees and shelter grasses...everything was consumed in minutes.

But, while he and his family stood there amid all the smoldering black soot, they turned their eyes, again, to the West, where the heat of the wildfire pressed against their faces and the flames of destruction could be seen. As the wildfire roared with angry assault nearer to them, they stood in the middle of the charred remains of all their earthly possessions. Yet, when the angry tsunami of fire and smoke came passed their farm, the family stood safe because the farmer had already burned everything that could burn...the wildfire had nothing more to destroy. His family was safe. Exactly 150 years ago, the Peshtigo (Wisconsin) fire stands as one of the most devastating wildfires in our nation's history. It burned over 1.2 million acres of land, claimed more than 1200 lives, and swept across the waters of Lake Michigan's Green Bay, wiping out towns, timber, and homes in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

St. Paul draws our attention to a similar scene. No, not the destruction – the sentinel of the smoke. He urges us to keep our eyes, not on things on earth, but on things above in heaven, where Jesus Christ is seated at the throne of God. *"For you have died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God,"* he writes. *"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."* (Colossians 3:4-5)

The evening TV news and newspapers are filled with stories of people who will do just about anything to save themselves and their earthly possessions. There are stories told of men who have destroyed themselves, their wives, and children because they lost \$100,000 in the stock market. In 1929, a wildfire of crimes, suicides and bizarre events were triggered when people saw their worldly wealth

going up in smoke. Orson Welles infamously triggered wide-spread panic several years later with a preposterous story about an invasion from Mars. On New Year's Eve in 1999, there were more people who were convinced that there would be massive destruction and outages because computers might not convert from one century into the next. People couldn't find enough portable generators in the hardware stores. They hoarded water, food, and clothing to withstand months of electronic crashes. Some preachers even preached unusual and strange solutions to withstand the impending disasters.

Does the flip of a page, the tick of a clock or the downturn in stock values demand that kind of attention? Does it make sense that the split second between December 31st at 11:59 PM and midnight of January 1st as we dove into the Twenty-first century should really drive us beyond reason?

What does all this mean? The story of the prairie fire is a vivid contrast to newspaper accounts of destruction over earthly riches. On one hand, the farmer saved his family and their lives by creating a back-fire barrier. On the other hand, the people in the newspaper articles and in Orson Welles' time were taking their lives because they believed life was over when their possessions were taken away. St. Paul begs us to be like the prairie farmer and like Job... look to your life that is hidden away in Christ... hidden from the world, but visible in the eyes of faith.

We only have one goal as Christians... to be with Christ when the clouds and fires of destruction pass by us. The beauty of what St. Paul describes is that all the stuff of this world will pass away. But we will, as St. Paul writes, *"When Christ appears, then we also will appear with Him in glory."*

Perhaps, in the eyes of the world, the prairie farmer foolishly destroyed everything he owned. As Christians, we understand what he did, because without our lives being saved from destruction (I Corinthians 1), possessions are worthless anyway. St. Paul painted a picture to illustrate that our lives and our call to glory in Christ will let us see things from an entirely different perspective. Get back to the prairie farmer... he stood in the middle of smoldering ashes...but he and his family were alive, saved to live another day! We see the signs of devastation around the entire world. We hear horror stories of every kind around

the globe. But we remain firm in our trust in God and we shall not be overcome. We have a Savior, Jesus Christ. We stand today and we will stand on the last day - whenever God decides that is going to be. We will stand saved to live a life in eternity because the fires of destruction will pass over us.

So where do we stand? Where is it that the ravages of the fires of destruction and devastation have already gone? What wildfire of economic uncertainty or of our own health raises ominous clouds on our horizon? What enemy gnaws at our confidence that makes us want to run, but with no place to turn? We've all read about the seventeen hostages held captive by Haitian terrorists. The wondrous thing about their plight is that they are Christian missionaries. They knew the dangers; they read the signs of what was happening in that country. Their lives were living examples of faith in what God has promised all of His elect.

On the day we call Good Friday, the fires of God's wrath and God's entire judgement against rebellion, iniquity, and

sin seared out across the sacred shoulders of His own Son. Jesus Christ stood in our place to receive the firestorm of God's vengeance against the sins of all the world. When we stand beneath the cross of Jesus, the eyes of the world may think of us as strange. But, instead of relying on our earthly possessions and ourselves, we stand in faith beneath the cross of Jesus, where our life is hidden in Christ... to live another day... a day that has no end. We shall live in the glory of Christ Jesus, as we give thanks to the Lord of the harvest, Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, forever. That is more than enough for us to offer Thanksgiving to our gracious God and Lord. Have a blessed and joyous Thanksgiving.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



Rev. JD Zischke was installed as pastor to Restoration Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR on October 17th, 2021. The Rite of Installation was performed by Rev. Joshua Willadsen, Fourth Vice-President. Front row (L-R) Rev. Joshua Willadsen, Rev. JD Zischke, Rev. Mark Krause; 2nd row Rev. Richard Mayer, Rev. Duncan Cox, Rev. Russell Shewmaker; 3rd row Rev. Christopher Gorshe, Rev. Hubert Bernthal, Rev. Brian Bibler, Rev. Eric Longman, Rev. Robert Herring and Rev. Paul Hass.

2021 CARE-VAN

Dates & Locations

November 5-6, 2021

Friday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Find the location and drop off time on the next page

Please call the church to verify the time so there will be someone there to help you. The times may change according to the church.

A Meaningful Way to Make a Difference

Lutheran World Relief Kits of Care are a perfect way for you to gather a group of people you know and turn ordinary items into extraordinary gifts. You can help people dealing with some of life's most difficult situations –the aftermath of earthquakes and floods, fleeing home to escape violence, and living in extreme poverty. Partner with us and energize your congregation for global good.

What You Can Do

We can't control when disasters strike and we can't end poverty overnight. But there are things we can do now to help people around the world reach their full potential. Learn how simple items can transform lives and how you can too.

1. Choose – a type of kit
 - Personal Care Kits
 - School Kits
 - Baby Care Kits
 - Fabric Kits
 - Quilt Kits
2. Collect – items for the kits and money to help ship kits overseas
3. Pack – the items and send to the warehouse; or find a local collection site
4. Track – your kits as they travel the world to people in need
5. Share – photos and videos of your work on your social pages with #KitsofCare. Your posts can encourage others to get involved, too!

LWR Quilts & Kits convey a priceless message of love and commitment to people in desperate need. First and foremost, recipients use their LWR Quilts to shield against the cold and rain, and for warm bedding. But their versatility also makes Quilts useful as simple tents, floor coverings, or a wrap to hold a baby on a mother's back. In 2020, Lutheran World Relief delivered



more than \$11.1 million worth of Quilts and Kits to 616,210 beneficiaries in 23 countries. Here is the breakdown of the quilts and kits that were delivered in 2020 (264,585 quilts, 174,055 school kits, 12,960 blankets, 71,900 personal care kits, 12,300 fabric kits, 52,860 baby care kits, and 40,750 face masks).

Shipping costs LWR about \$2.25 per quilt. Please give to the Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund, which pays for the shipping of donated Quilts and Kits. You can also encourage your congregation to support your quilt or kit ministry by donating to LWR's Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund <https://lwr.org/donate/shippingfund> to ensure that LWR can continue working with partners around the world to deliver your gifts. Those funds, combined with the generosity of donors, ensure LWR has the resources needed to move these items around the world. You can help!

If you are interested in the **assembly instructions for quilts and kits** you may request a copy of these pamphlets by calling 800-597-5972 or logging on to the <https://lwr.org> website.

If you have a **questions or need labels**, don't hesitate to e-mail Julie Tyler at: jtyler@mid-southlcms.com or give her a call (1-866-373-1343 toll free). The work of our hearts and hands is an immeasurable blessing to families in need around the world!



Mid-South District 2021 CARE-VAN

November 5-6, 2021

Locations and Coordinators



Loading Friday and Saturday, November 5-6, 2021
 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	Monica Whitfield 1-501-663-3631 (church) monica@glclr.org	Rev. Kent Schaaf 1-501-663-3631 (church)
Springdale, AR	Salem Lutheran Ministries 1800 West Emma Avenue Springdale, AR 72762-3905 Only Saturday - Nov. 6 (9a.m.-12p.m.)	Ms. Darlene Diercuff 1-479-751-9500 (church) ddiercuff@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. 5 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.)	Ms. Eunice Timm 1-423-624-2588 4betimm@epbf.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) oslcoffice1@gmail.com
Knoxville, TN	Grace Lutheran Church** 9076 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923	Mr. Dale Henderson 1-865-235-4304 (cell) daleh@visitgrace.org	Rev. Richard Elseroad 1-865-691-2823 (church) relseroad@gmail.com
Memphis, TN	Immanuel Lutheran Church 6325 Raleigh LaGrange Road Memphis, TN 38134-6907	Ms. Diane Reimold 1-901-679-0626 dianereimold@hotmail.com	1-901-373-4486 (church) churchoffice@immanuelmemphis.org

** Grace Lutheran, Knoxville, TN is the new drop site for the Knoxville area.



HAITI HUNGER FIGHT

Trinity HOPE serves over 52,000 meals a day to children in Christian schools in Haiti. At \$0.27 each, these meals are completely funded by our donors. The work God does through your generous donations is amazing! Each year, we partner with local churches to FUNdraise for the schools they sponsor. These Haiti Hunger Fight events vary from Octoberfest and silent auctions to a Sunday breakfast. Each one is a guaranteed good time full of

fellowship, and the children in Trinity HOPE feeding programs benefit with warm tummies brought through the love of God.

Below is a list of Haiti Hunger Fight events happening this year. They are open to the public and will be great fun! We HOPE to see you there.



Date & Time	Church	Event Name	Address
2021-Nov-07 @12p	St. Timothy Lutheran	Haiti Hunger Fight	650 E. Main St. Hendersonville, TN 37075
2021-Nov-12 @6p	Emmanuel Lutheran	Haiti Hunger Fight	1003 Hickory Hill Ln Hermitage, TN 37076
2021-Nov-13 @6p	Trinity Lutheran	Haiti Hunger Fight	720 Lock Four Rd. Gallatin, TN 37066
2021-Nov-14 @12-2p	St. John's Lutheran	Haiti Hunger Fight	901 W. Jefferson Ave. Effingham, IL 62401
2021-Nov-14 @9a	Our Savior Lutheran	Second Sunday Breakfast Haiti Hunger Fight	5110 Franklin Rd. Nashville, TN 37220
2021-Nov-14 @12-4p	Christ the King Lutheran	7th Annual Chili Bowl	(new fellowship hall) 5296 Park Ave. Memphis, TN 38118

CONSECRATION OF THE SSELB BISHOP AND PRAYER REQUEST

*Ed. note email from Rev. Nathaniel Bol to
President Paavola*

Hello brothers in Christ,

The consecration and installation of the SSELB Bishop (Rev. Nathaniel Bol) is scheduled to take place in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya on the 21st of November 2021. That is so because the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya ELCK Joseph Ochola who will preside over the consecration has a very serious eyesight problem which cannot let him travel outside Kenya especially to places where he will get treatment when his eyesight problem worsen and because I am currently pursuing my treatment in Kenya.

Due to the above reasons and the long duration taken by consecration since the election was done in December 2011, the SSELB leadership in South Sudan met 3 months ago and proposed that the consecration be done in Kenya and Archbishop Ochola accepted the proposal.

I found it appropriate for this consecration to be done in Kakuma because we have 4 Lutheran congregations in Kakuma refugee camp. Three of these 4 congregations are South Sudanese and one congregation is for Sudanese.

So I am requesting your support and prayers for the success of this plan and I invited you all to attend this consecration.

Pastor Bol

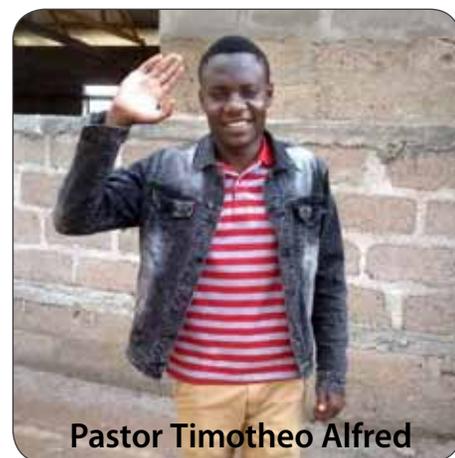


Dave Brown, member at Ascension Lutheran Madison, recently sent the attached pictures from our friend Pastor Timotheo Alfred from Emmau Lutheran Church in Lyalu Tanzania. Emmau Lutheran currently is worshipping over 170 each Sunday.

Pastor Timothy expressed his thanks to those in the Mid-South District who sent money to the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) to support the purchase of materials to build roofs for churches. As most of you know, when a new congregation is formed the church members purchase the land, clear it, make the bricks, and construct the building. Often the building is without a roof because the congregation has no money to purchase wooden rafters and sheet metal for roofs and cement for floors.

Money from Mid-South District congregations was sent by the District office to the SELVD for church roofs. This congregation started in 2018 after a District mission team visited Lyalu. Team members from Immanuel Lutheran in Memphis were instrumental in the formation and support of Emmau Lutheran Church. They are very proud of their accomplishments and we rejoice with them.

Bob Allen
270-535-7370



2022 TANZANIA MISSION TRIP

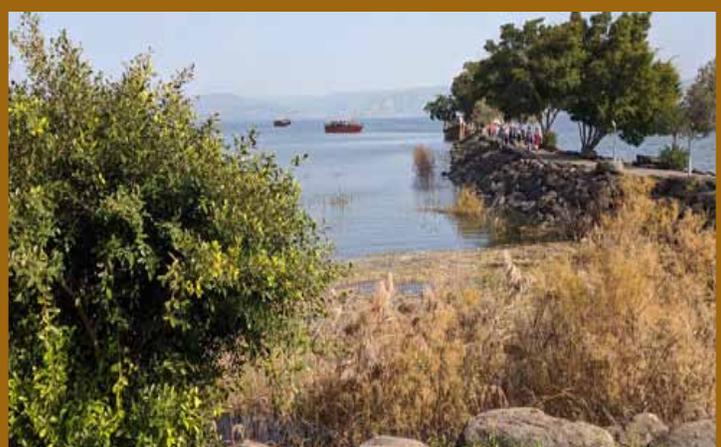
We are making plans for a team from the Mid-South District to return to Tanzania, Africa in May of 2022. To communicate to the people of Tanzania the life-changing power of Jesus Christ in a practical and understanding way; to develop them into responsible, productive, successful Christians, and equip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



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, October 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 October 2021.

PRAYER CONCERNS

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

MRS. SUSANNE ELSEROAD (wife of Rev. Richard Elseroad, Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN)

REV. RONALD HALAMKA (Waxahachie, TX)

MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)

REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)

MS. MICHELE LAYNE (Director, St. John Lutheran Child Care, Fayetteville, AR)

REV. GIL PINGEL (Emeritus, Chattanooga, TN)

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

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of John Hass, son of Rev. Mark and Gina Hass, Fort Smith, AR) who recently passed away.

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mark Piepenbrink (brother of Allen Piepenbrink, Mid-South District Office) who recently passed away.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS:

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

Rev. JD Zischke, Mid-South District Missionary-at-Large accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to Restoration Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, AR. Installation was October 17, 2021

PENDING: Rev. Neil Vanderbush, Chaplain, U.S. Military-LCMS Ministry, has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, Memphis, TN.

Pastor-Elect Trae Fistler, Candidate, has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor-Elect to Faith Lutheran Church, Hopkinsville, KY.

Rev. Michael Edwards, Pastor to Faith Lutheran Church, Springfield, MO, has been issued a Call to serve as Pastor to Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR.

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTERIES

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Mission and Ministry

Faith Lutheran Church, Hopkinsville, KY – Pastor **A Call has been issued

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR – Pastor **A Call has been issued

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor **A Call has been issued

Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR – Pastor

First Lutheran Church, Blytheville, AR – Pastor

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Conway, AR – Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN – Pastor

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS:

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 9/30/2021 (9 Months)

Anticipated Amount (75% of
budget).....\$1,105,211
Actual Receipts 1,104,324
Over (under) anticipated
amount..... (\$887)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (9 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World
Missions \$312,547
Allocated to Tanzania 18,750
Retained for District Mission/Ministry
Support (70% of receipts)..... 773,027
Total Receipts \$1,104,324

Mission Commitment Receipts
Prior Year Comparison (9 Months)
Actual Receipts as
of 9/30/2021 \$1,104,324
Actual Receipts as
of 9/30/2020 \$1,134,291
Over (under) prior
year receipts (\$29,967)

Encourager Topics in 2021

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

- 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

Staff

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,

President

Angela Fowler,

*Executive Director for Business &
Finance*

Paul Reaves,

*Executive Director for
Development & LCEF Vice
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Allen Piepenbrink,

*Executive Director for Schools and
Early Childhood*

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